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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY OF FINDING MEANING THROUGH THE
DEVELOPMENTAL NATURE OF A
DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN ORGANIZATION CHANGE

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organization Change

by

Joseph C. Holler

April, 2015

Kenneth Murrell, D.B.A. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Joseph C. Holler

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-------|
| LIST OF TABLES | vi |
| LIST OF FIGURES | vii |
| DEDICATION | viii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ix |
| VITA | xiii |
| ABSTRACT | xviii |
| Chapter I. Introduction | 1 |
| Background of the Issue | 7 |
| The Issue | 10 |
| Purpose | 10 |
| Conceptual Approach | 11 |
| Definitions and Assumptions | 12 |
| Significance of the Study | 13 |
| Chapter II. Review of the Literature | 15 |
| Social Construction and Dialogue | 17 |
| Foundations of Relationship in Knowing: Philosophical Roots | 26 |
| Adult Learning Theory | 45 |
| Self as an Instrument of Change | 71 |
| Narrative Stories, Narrative Therapy, and Sensemaking | 74 |
| Chapter II Summary | 83 |
| Chapter III. Method | 88 |
| Introduction | 88 |
| The Research Strategy | 91 |
| Limitations | 110 |
| Chapter IV. Results: The General Structure for Finding Meaning | 115 |
| Overview | 115 |
| Terms Used by Co-Inquirers in the Description of Their Experience | 117 |
| Meaning Found by the 10 Co-inquirers | 119 |
| General Structure of the Lived Experience for Finding Meaning | 122 |
| Key Constituents, Including Empirical Variations, and Contexts | 122 |
| Relationship Among the Constituents | 147 |
| Anecdotal Data | 148 |
| Chapter V. Discussion, Reflection, and Conclusions | 154 |
| Introduction | 154 |
| Elaboration of the Key Constituents | 156 |

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Applying Wilber’s Four Quadrant Framework to State Propositions for Progressive Educators and Organization Development Professions | 187 |
| Reflections on the Study with Thoughts for Further Research..... | 190 |
| Conclusions..... | 195 |
| Closing statement..... | 197 |
| REFERENCES | 199 |
| APPENDIX A: Overview of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) Program..... | 216 |
| APPENDIX B: Communication to Potential Co-inquirers..... | 223 |
| APPENDIX C: IRB Approval Letter..... | 226 |
| APPENDIX D: Interview Questions Guide..... | 229 |
| APPENDIX E: The Disciplinary Orientation of Organization Development and Progressive Education | 231 |
| APPENDIX F: Assumptions about the Pepperdine EDOC Program | 237 |
| APPENDIX G: A Soft Walk Through Vietnam..... | 242 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Table 1. Seven Ways of Leading | 62 |
| Table 2. Constituent 1: Self-Aware Learners Who Joined the Program With Assumptions Concerning its Nature | 139 |
| Table 3. Constituent 2: A Social Construction That Facilitates the Formation of Relational Sets and Community Engagement | 140 |
| Table 4. Constituent 3: Dialogic Relationships Among Participants Within the EDOC Learning Community | 141 |
| Table 5. Constituent 4: Co-Constructed Learning Through Collaboration With Faculty and Fellow Students | 142 |
| Table 6. Constituent 5: Free-Space in Learning Enabling the Transcendence of Boundaries to Personal Growth | 143 |
| Table 7. Constituent 6: A Helping and Caring Environment..... | 144 |
| Table 8. Constituent 7: Opportunities to Challenge and Broaden Worldviews Through Program Experiences | 145 |
| Table 9. Constituent 8: Validation of Progress Toward Goals | 146 |
| Table 10. Summary of Anecdotal Co-inquirer Data With Variations | 149 |
| Table 11. Constituent Propositions for Progressive Educators and Organization Development Professionals in the Phenomenon for Finding Meaning Using Wilber’s Four Quadrant Framework | 189 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Figure 1. An example of the four-step story analysis coinquirer workbook. | 105 |
| Figure 2. The structure for finding meaning within Pepperdine University’s Doctor of Education in Organization Change program. Self-aware learners who were students within the program found meaning when surrounded by the constituents | 153 |

DEDICATION

This dissertation research is dedicated to the men and women of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program who have come away from a learning experience with a deep sense of purpose and far reaching capabilities to serve.

Our community of graduates, faculty, and students endures and connects us forever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was written for the purpose of making a contribution to educators and practitioners engaged in helping others grow and develop through higher education and the field of organization development and change. There are many to acknowledge who have been helpful in bringing home a study that explores the developmental nature of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program.

I would like to begin by thanking the EDOC community; faculty, guest faculty, students, graduates, and program administrators, Christie Dailo, and Gabriella Miramontes. Everyone within the community has been an integral part of this research. You are my co-inquirers because you have been with me on this journey. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

There are those who have contributed most directly to my research and in this group, I acknowledge first my outstanding dissertation committee. They include my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Kenneth Murrell, a remarkably educator and wonderful human being whose faith in me and all of his students is unending; Dr. Susan Nero, a well respected progressive educator who led me to discover more about myself in so many ways; and Dr. Kay Davis, the glue and guiding hand for students and faculty within a program that has sent many graduates into the world as better practitioners, researchers, and stewards of the discipline of organization development and change. Thank you for patiently guiding me through this dissertation process and helping me find deeper meaning for my life. I also acknowledge the late Dr. Chester McCall Jr. who through his warmth and generosity made everything interesting, the late Dr. Bob Canady who is honored for founding the program, Dr. Ed Kur a wonderful educator who gave heart and soul to the program and who was always sensitive to everyone's needs, and Dr. Kent Rhodes who also gave his all to the program. You were all instrumental in my educational journey. I would also

like to thank Dr. Daphne Deporres and Dr. Rogelio Martinez for being wonderful exemplars of educators as well as remarkable graduates of the program. Thank you, Rogelio, for your contribution to this research.

There are those graduates in the EDOC community to whom I offer particular thanks for their interest, time, and material in the form of stories, anecdotes, and perspectives for this research. You are identified by number where I have used your words in the research. In these acknowledgments your names are listed for the many contributions you have made: Mary Wayne Bush, Donald Chick, Carol (Grey) Craig, Pete DeHart, Enrique Garza, Denise Fazio, Laura Garza, Don Gilman, Kim Foxworth, Terrill Franz, Anna Gomez, Susan Hunt, Mary Pat Huxley, Jean Ann Larson, Sharon Liu, Roland Livingston, Rogelio Martinez, Tracey Maylett, Janet McCollum, Foster Mobley, Alejandro Molina, Jennifer Moore, Reggie Murray, Fonda Na'Desh, Jim Peppitone, Kristine Quade, Ernesto Olascoaga, Larry Powers, Jared Roth, and Joaquin Sainz. Thank you for becoming such an important and intimate part of this study. Special thanks again to one among this group, Dr. Fonda Na'Desh, for her expertise, help, and support in preparing this dissertation manuscript for review and ultimate publication.

I also offer special thanks to Kris Kuhl-Klinger who has been a great friend and listener throughout my dissertation process. I render special thanks to Ramone Taniola, my dear friend and brother from the Philippines. Thank you, Ramone, for the part you played in introducing me to a wider world. Thank you Amanda Harris for helping me prepare for the work of gathering storied data.

The greatest acknowledgement I can possibly give is for those closest to me. Thank you, Ellen, my wonderful wife, for being by my side in this huge endeavor. Your love and support, no matter what hurdles life put before us, was what I needed most. The degree that I earn is as

much yours as it is mine. You are a love. Thank you to my loving family: my son, David, and daughter, Cynthia; my daughter-in-law, Jeania, and son-in-law, Wayne; my granddaughter, Katie, and grandson, Jeremy, for all of your encouragement to Dad and Big “G” knowing that this work was important to me and the right thing to do. My success was assured by the support from all of you.

This doctoral dissertation came about as a consequence of these relationships and a life that spans almost 50 years of combined service in the Army, private industry and education. Those experiences led me on a path of life-long learning. I am grateful to so many people who have impacted my life in a way that assured my readiness for this research: my Mom and Dad who valued education, my Grandfather who gave me a strong work ethic and a will to persevere, and teachers and educators from kindergarten to graduate school. I note three people in particular from my graduate experience at the University of West Florida: Dr. Ken Murrell who years later became my dissertation chair, Dr. Terry Armstrong who was most influential in helping me reach an appreciation of my inner core, and Dr. Judy Vogt who in valuing me, gave me an appreciation for how my thoughts and ideas could be transmitted to a wider world.

Much of the work in my career involved organization development and change. I am grateful to those who called me during the Vietnam War to train soldiers having difficulty in basic combat training. The selflessness of a strong cadre of officers and noncommissioned officers helped them succeed lending credence to the words “duty,” “honor,” and “country.” They were role models in my life and an early link to a business and education career that focused me toward helping others grow. With the help of many, I found my place in organizations that sought to provide highly productive, secure, and socially fulfilling workplaces for people. It was a career that eventually led me to Wilmington University where I used my

energies to help adults achieve long-held goals through higher education. These experiences culminated through the EDOC program because the program was not only a gateway to finding meaning but also an avenue to understanding the elements for how it might have come about.

Mentioning all of the people who were with me along the way would be a task more fitting an autobiography. Nevertheless, I have to acknowledge them, if not by name, by recognizing their presence as contributors to my personal journey. So many people have enriched my life and made me what I am today – a person able to experience the world in ways that are beyond anything I ever expected or imagined. Thank you all for being so much a part of my experience and for making possible what is within these pages.

VITA

Joseph C. Holler

| | |
|---|---------|
| Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organization Change, Pepperdine University | Present |
| MA - Industrial/Organizational Psychology, University of West Florida | 1990 |
| BS - Business Administration, Pennsylvania Military College | 1964 |

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

A caring, results oriented professional with forty-five years experience spanning the armed forces, the consumer products industry, and academia with particular knowledge and skills in the areas of human development, change, leadership, and management with specific expertise in:

- Leading organizational change
- Transforming organizations
- Developing organizational effectiveness systems
- Managing human resources
- Designing and developing high performance work systems
- Developing educational programs and curriculum
- Teaching and consulting

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Consultation and Education

- Shared concepts on work system design and organizational transformation with such firms as Kraft Foods, DuPont, Phelps Dodge Mining, and Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) with learning applied by these organizations. Phelps Dodge and DEC transformed their organizations by creating team-based work systems within their operations. Work with DEC included an assessment of their culture and facilitation in the development of the organization's work system and daily management process consistent with leadership's strategic plan and direction.
- Appointed by Delaware Governors spanning two administrations to commissions on workforce development, personnel reform, and welfare to work initiatives. Progress made in state work practices. Welfare roles in Delaware significantly reduced.
- Envisioned college teaching and became an adjunct instructor in 1992 at Delaware's Wilmington University. Joined the University as a full-time graduate business faculty member in 2000. Designed and implemented curricula consistent with adult learning theory and practices. Developed and instructed undergraduate and graduate courses in management, human resources, leadership, creativity, organizational development, change, and organizational theory. Led and managed the faculty of the Master of Science in Management program.
- Participated in the development of a graduate program in organizational leadership with the first cohort beginning their studies in less than a year from conception to Faculty Senate approval.
- Contributed toward the development of a Master of Science in Management degree program that focused on the needs of contemporary organizations while widening the choice of studies for students seeking this degree.

Leading Organizational Change

- Developed and implemented aspects of a corporate restructure, documented due diligence for a subsequent merger and acquisition, and promoted the business to prospective buyers. The world's leading consumer products company acquired the business and left 100% of its people in place to run what had been a highly successful global organization.
- In participation with the business leadership team, defined and led aspects of an acquisition strategic plan. Performance in the execution of the plan exceeded expectations by nine times distinguishing the organization as the benchmark for acquisitions.

Work Systems Design

- Planned, developed, and implemented the integration of compensation and benefit programs, staffing systems, performance accountability, assessment and team building processes into an existing culture. All goals were met. Trust and commitment grew through extensive employee involvement and recognition for performance in meeting goals.
- Played a lead role in the development of a work system that included the integration of manufacturing, marketing, and product development in a global business environment. The business achieved market leadership in its product category, expanded globally, and funded its own growth.

Organizational Transformation

- Transformed, as part of a leadership team, a traditionally structured organization to an empowered, high performance organization that became the low cost producer among its competitors in the forest products industry. Documented the transformation empirically. Developed and employed a “readiness” framework for this transformation that is cited in the literature on organization change.
- Planned and instituted a comprehensive trades training program within a large, complex unionized organization that provided skills for manufacturing operations and career opportunities for workers.
- As a lieutenant, United States Army, developed and implemented training systems for reduced standard recruits to meet the manpower needs of the Vietnam War effort. The programs established have become an enduring part of the Army’s Basic Combat Training system.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

| | |
|--|--------------|
| <u>Wilmington University</u> , New Castle, DE | 2000 – Pres. |
| <i>Associate Professor</i> – Leadership accountability for the design, development and coordination of the Master of Science in Management program. Currently serving as an adjunct professor. | |
| <u>Holler & Associates</u> , Dover, DE | 2002 – 2009 |
| <i>Principal</i> – offering consulting services in the areas of organizational effectiveness, leadership development and change management. | |
| <u>Procter & Gamble</u> , Dover, DE - formerly <u>Kimberly Clark</u> and <u>Scott Paper Company</u> | 1987 - 1999 |
| <i>Group Director, Human Resources</i> – leadership accountability that facilitated change and development in a complex, dynamic, market oriented, high performance organization. | |

Scott Paper Company, Natural Resources Division, Mobile, AL 1981 - 1987
Human Resources Manager – leadership accountability contributing to the transformation of an organization that served the consumer and forest products industries.

Scott Paper Company, at six geographic locations. 1967 - 1981
 Various human resource leadership positions involving training and development interventions, diversity, labor negotiations, union elections, and plant closure in manufacturing and corporate environments.

1965 – 1967

United States Army (Infantry), Fort Benning, GA and Fort Jackson, SC
 Developed and implemented with fellow officers and non-commissioned officers a program to support the Army’s basic combat training needs. Served as leader of the Motivation Platoon and Commander of Special Training Company. 1964 – 1965

Acme Markets, Philadelphia, PA
 Management trainee for this leading grocery marketing firm. Learned basics of business and operations management in an on-the-job environment. Served in various positions with a focus on customer service.

Professional Presentations:

- 2011 “Dissertation Prospective: *THE PHENOMEON of FINDING MEANING: An exploratory examination of how meaning might be found through relationships among students and their professors in the Doctor of Education program in Organization Change at Pepperdine University.* Oral presentation to OD (organizational development) Program Directors. Academy of Management, San Antonio, Texas
- 2010 “From Millennial Business Student to Caring Manager.” Professional Development Workshop (PDW) presented at the Academy of Management, Montreal, Canada.
- 2008 “Strategic Work and Development Planning.” Delaware Electric Cooperative Management Meeting, Greenwood, Delaware.
- 2007 “Planning a Future with a ‘Possibility’ Mindset.” Delaware Cultural and Recreational Services, Blue Ball Dairy Barn, Wilmington, Delaware.
- 2006 “A Soft Walk Through Vietnam.” Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, Los Angeles, California & Wilmington College, Business Division, New Castle, Delaware.
- 2006 “Cultural Assessment.” Delaware Electric Cooperative Board of Directors Meeting, Greenwood, Delaware.
- 2004 “Thinking, Change, and the HR Strategic Partnership.” SHRM Human Resource Conference; ‘*Champions of Change,*’ Wilmington, Delaware.
- 2004 “Perspectives on Global Change.” Colonial Rotary Club, Dover, Delaware.
- 2003 “Wilmington College Graduate Business Programs.” Colonial Rotary Club, Dover, Delaware.
 “Change – Considerations for the Small Business.” Small Business Leadership Forum, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.
- 2001 “Leadership Development and Change.” Atlantic General Hospital, Berlin, Maryland.

- 1999 "Acquisitions, Lessons of Experience." Organizational Development Institute, San Antonio, Texas.
- 1998 "Self-Directed Learning." Wilmington College Faculty Learning Forum. Wilmington, Delaware.
- 1997 "Self-Directed Learning." Wilmington College Faculty Learning Forum. Wilmington, Delaware
- 1996 "Surviving and Thriving in the Corporate Restructure." Sigma Beta Delta International Honor Society. Wilmington, Delaware.
- 1995 "Literacy in the Work Force." Delaware Association of Adult and Community Education (DAACE). Dover, Delaware.
- 1994 "Performance Management in the Participative Work System." Southern Organizational Development Interest Group. Atlanta, Georgia.
- 1992 "High Performance Work Systems." Tashkent Iman Al-Bukhari Islamic Institute - Kasakhstan. Dover, Delaware.
- 1991 "The Scott Paper Experience with Participative Work Systems." Delaware Health and Social Services. Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.
- 1988 "A readiness framework for changing traditional organizations to the all-salaried structure of the future with a case study from industry." Southern Management Association. Atlanta, Georgia

Publications and Citations:

- Organizational readiness: Definition, conceptualization, and application. A Scott Paper Company case study of a transformation to an all-salaried work force. Masters Abstracts International, Volume 29, Number 4, 1991.
- Vogt, J. F. & Murrell, K. L. 1990. Empowerment in Organizations: How to Spark Exceptional Performance. University Associates, San Diego. (Transformation Theory Citation p. 153).
- A readiness framework for changing traditional organizations to the all-salaried structure of the future with a case study from industry. Southern Management Associations Proceedings, 1988, p.200.
- Holler, J. C. & Murrell, K. L. "Organizational Readiness: A Conceptualization for Transformational Empowerment." Unpublished manuscript.

Selected Professional Training / Seminar Experiences:

- 2000 "Developing High Performance Organizations." Alexander, Scott & Associates, Inc., Decatur, GA.
- 1999 "Integrated Work Systems." Procter & Gamble. Cincinnati, OH.
- 1997 "High Performance Work System Learning Forum." Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, OH.
- 1996 "High Performance Work Systems." Procter & Gamble, Dover, DE.
- 1992 "The Phoenix Seminar on the Psychology of Achievement." Brian Tracy Learning Systems, Solana Beach, CA.
- 1988 "Methods for Management of Productivity and Quality." Dr. W. Edwards Deming, The George Washington University, Washington, DC.
- 1985 "Behavior Management for Productivity." L. M. Miller & Company, Atlanta, GA.

- 1977 “Scott Scope Conference for Executive Development. “ Scott Paper Company, Philadelphia, PA.
- 1965 “Infantry Officers Basic Course.” United States Army, Fort Benning, GA.

Listing of Career Positions

- 2007 Associate Professor, Wilmington College, New Castle, DE.
- 2000 Assistant Professor, Wilmington College, New Castle, DE.
- 1996 Group Director – Human Resources, Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, OH.
- 1995 Human Resources Manager, Kimberly – Clark Corporation, Dover, DE.
- 1987 Human Resources Manager, Scott Paper Company, Dover, DE.
- 1981 Human Resources Manager, Scott Paper Company Natural Resources Division, Mobile, AL.
- 1978 Personnel Manager, Scott Paper Company, Sandusky, OH.
- 1974 Training Manager, Scott Paper Company, Chester, PA.
- 1972 Training Manager, Scott Paper Company, Brunswick, GA.
- 1969 Employee Relations Manager, Scott Paper Company, Holyoke, MA.
- 1968 Test Validation Specialist, Scott Paper Company, Philadelphia, PA.
- 1967 Consumer Representative, Scott Paper Company, Mobile, AL.
- 1966 Company Commander, Special Training Company, United States Army, Fort Jackson, SC.
- 1965 Training Officer, Second Training Brigade, United States Army, Fort Jackson, SC.
- 1965 Infantry Platoon Leader, United States Army, Fort Benning, GA.
- 1964 Management Trainee, Acme Markets, Philadelphia, PA.

Awards, Honors and Appointments

- 2008 Appointed Chairmen of the Board of Directors, Kent Sussex Industries (KSI), Milford, DE.
- 1999 Appointed to the Board of Directors, Kent Sussex Industries, Milford, DE.
- 1996 Honorary induction into Sigma Beta Delta National Honor Society for distinction in business, management and administration.
- 1995 Appointed by the Governor of Delaware to the State’s Workforce Development Council and Welfare Employment Committee.
- 1993 Appointed by the Governor of Delaware to serve on the Lieutenant Governor’s Task Force on Workforce Quality and Personnel Reform.
- 1991 Appointed by the Governor of Delaware to serve on the Private Sector Resource Council for improvement of State services.
- 1991 Certificate of Appreciation from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Delaware for the promotion of adult literacy.
- 1990 Delaware Appreciation Award for leading the Kent County Industrial Sector of the United Way Campaign.
- 1967 Army Commendation Medal for Exceptionally Meritorious Service as Training Officer and Company Commander during tour of active duty at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological case study of finding meaning explored the developmental nature of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program through graduates, who as students, found deep, visceral, and life changing meaning. The primary request of participants, identified as co-inquirers, was to: describe in as much detail as possible how meaning was found through their participation in the EDOC program. Detailed storied descriptions from 10 graduates were gathered through interviews. Anecdotes were gathered by email from other graduates concerning the meaning found, relational experiences, and vivid program experiences. In my analysis of data, I explicated the structure (the relationship among the most invariant constituents of the phenomenon) and meaning (implications) from their lived experience. Though particulars differed, the interview data revealed a structure surrounding each of the ten co-inquirers as being (a) self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning the challenging nature of the learning experience; (b) a socially constructed environment that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement; (c) deep and rich dialogic relationships among participants within the learning community; (d) co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students; (e) abundant free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth; (f) an immensely helping and caring environment; (g) significant opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences; and (h) consistent validation of progress toward personal, educational and life goals. In coming to understand the phenomenon for finding meaning, I used descriptive phenomenology and given my presence as a student in the program being studied, I offered my own observations. I framed propositions from the study's findings for progressive educators and organization development professions. Meaning found led to life

changes such as improved personal and professional effectiveness, a deeper sense of self and self-worth, a clearer view of the world, and an ability to enact what had been taken from the experience; a significant educational outcome in addition to cognitive competencies, field knowledge and application. Those who have experienced the program came away with a deeper sense of purpose and far reaching capabilities to serve.

Chapter I. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the relevancy for studying a phenomenon for finding meaning within Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program. To begin, I show why this study makes sense by presenting two anecdotes from graduates of the program, which were obtained through the research process. They are reflective of a high order developmental outcome: that of finding meaning that was deeply felt, visceral, and life changing. The finding of meaning was an unexpected outcome for graduates, none of whom entered the program with that purpose in mind. It came through the developmental nature of the program experience. As one graduate of the program said, "... personal growth from within the program was of greater value than acquiring knowledge" (Co-inquirer 8, personal communication, November 17, 2012) a theme quite common among graduates. The following anecdote is indicative of the kind of meaning that came about through the program experience. It was life altering for this person whose work impacts the lives of others.

The best way to describe what my experience in the EDOC program meant to me is by means of a metaphor. This metaphor is the simplest way for me to explain the deep and complex changes I experienced during this process of learning and sharing. For many years I had striven, successfully, to be that highly competitive person, whose main aim in life was to move up the hierarchical ladder, looking always to get to the top no matter the cost or sacrifices to myself or others. This involved the development and mastery of certain skills and leadership styles typically needed at that stage of my career.

Following my EDOC studies I found myself approaching life differently. Little by little I stopped fighting my way up the ladder and instead I became the ladder itself. I've become a person who serves others not only by offering support but by actually promoting the growth of others. I'm a ladder on whose rungs are supported the developing executives that I have in my charge as well as entrepreneurs who seek my advice. Nothing is more satisfying at this point in my life than to see others grow. Nothing pleases me more than to be the guide of those who, like me in the past, spent their days trying to scale the ladder. The wonderful thing is that now I can alert them to unnecessary risks, to the importance of maturing on a step before climbing to the next and advise them to enjoy their stay on the step in which they find themselves.

I had to make some difficult decisions to make way for this new phase of my life. The most important decision was to step down from my executive post of 20 years ... where I held one of the most important positions in the company to look for an organization where I could develop more intensely my new role. I needed a young organization of a size where my influence could provoke economic and organizational growth.

With it a little help of my best friend - God -, I found such a company and there I have been strengthening my rungs every day. In my position, as Organizational Effectiveness Officer, I am responsible for guiding the formation of the many and talented executives who make up the corporate group. It is no small wonder and it is important to mention that this change has not only brought great personal satisfaction, but that I have progressed economically. (Co-inquirer 14)

Statements like these caused me to wonder how such outcomes came about. What was it about the learning environment that was so empowering? I know these people and I know their statements are real and very personal. I also know that they had help from fellow students and professors in achieving outcomes so important in life. The first person quoted helped me determine that Pepperdine was right for me. The second person quoted was in my program cohort. We learned together and beside us were fellow students, a highly skilled faculty, administrators, and many others who were influential in our development even though some were on the edges of our program. In short, we had a learning community that reinforces the appropriateness of this research for those educators and others interested in how relationships might open possibilities for growth, development, and meaning. Relationships are nothing new to most people but to appreciate the context in which they are evolving, a perspective is offered on the cultural context of Western society in which this study is grounded; its individualistic orientation to the emerging relational consciousness of the 21st century.

Robert N. Bellah (1986), an American sociologist and educator who has lectured on individualism and commitment in American life, worries if this free society, governed through the consent of its people, is still possible given the realities of the 21st century. He wondered if individualism has become so dominant as to weaken the sustainability of freedom. Bellah was

concerned that individualism might cause citizens to withdraw from the public world and not participate in a democratic process. He noted; however, that de' Tocqueville, who also worried about the impact of American individualism, observed several relational strengths of American society suggesting that citizens are joiners – willing to do something together when the need is there and that faith is placed in certain institutions like church and family. Yet de' Tocqueville saw an intense competitiveness and restlessness in the character of people even in the midst of prosperity. Bellah (1986) quoted him as saying:

In America, I have seen the freest and best educated of men in circumstances the happiest to be found in the world; yet it seemed to me that a cloud habitually hung on their brow, and they seemed serious and almost sad even in their pleasures because they never stop thinking of the good things they [do not have]. (p. 4)

While de' Tocqueville worried about American individuality, Ralph Waldo Emerson celebrated it (Bellah, 1986). Individuality meant independence made possible by a free enterprise system that created wealth for many. According to Bellah (1986), the individualistic nature of society has effected most institutions. For example, Bellah referenced a Gallop poll in the mid 1980s that showed 80% of Americans agreed that an individual should arrive at his or her own religious beliefs independent of any church or synagogue. Through preceding decades, more and more relationships were being translated into marriage, work, and even friendship contracts. Gergen (2000) wrote about the saturated, material, and social self who constantly looks for positive potentials in a society where the language of the individual has been dominant. Bellah found in the research for his book *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Ann, & Tipton, 2007) a decline in social capitalism, public trust and a diminished role of social and religious institutions. Yet society continues to have an idealistic vision of helping and caring and it is through acts such as these that meaning might be found.

Western culture values individualism (Bellah, 1986; Gergen, 2000, 2009; Rinpoche, 2002) as seen through activities like work, politics, and education – the setting for this study (Gergen, 2000, 2009). Change, however, is evident within organizations that seek to shift their culture from command and control to teams which embody relational values (G. Morgan, 1998), among politicians who seek ways of working together, and educators who progressively experiment with new ways of knowing. Something is happening with politics as usual, the boss as supreme, and the professor – the source of all student learning and meaning. There is meaningful activity, and calls for exploration and study of new approaches abound.

According to Gergen (2000), centralized power relationships in Western culture trace backward to the age of enlightenment which emphasized individual worth and capabilities over community. Literature of that period illuminates many wonderful stories of a new American democracy; strong individuals providing for their community, and abundant opportunity for land and mineral wealth which encouraged the Westward migration of a people (Diamond, 1999). The rewards reaped by determined pioneers, some of whom were prospectors, are romantically captured in stories of these “rugged” individuals – a trait that is much admired today; however, today we are a global community that is easily connected through technology. These useful and wonderful changes have opened opportunity, possibility, and challenges in a world that is in need of harmonious relationships among people to promote peace and the well being of all.

Many people today would agree that a good education and a fulfilling career are important in life and that relationships play a role in almost everything we do. Some would also agree that these factors are becoming more and more important as our world becomes further connected: economically, politically, and culturally. Today’s relationships are facilitated through systems of transportation, ease of travel, availability of interest groups, and

organizations of all kinds that enable discourse on a wide variety of subjects. Relationships form through the technological power of the Internet and the many social networking possibilities that connect people globally like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Relationships often grow without any face-to-face interaction. These enablers open possibilities for people to come together in ways that bring mutual meaning for all. A very compelling example is found in Paul Hawken's (2008) "Blessed Unrest" movement, which shows how people the world over have formed a powerful non-ideological movement that has the potential of healing an environmentally needy planet, diseased political systems, and economic depravity. This strongly connected movement of millions of people has largely gone unnoticed for now by politicians and the media (Hawken, 2008).

There are examples within industry that show how people working together in the soundest of relationships contribute to the common good. Kanter (2009), for example, reports how global companies like IBM and Procter & Gamble (P&G) consistently improve productivity and encourage innovation through their people while reaching out in times of need. These organizations were instrumental in relief efforts following the 2004 Indonesian tsunami by providing technological, material, and human support. In a similar manner, hundreds of organizations contributed to rescue Chilean miners in 2010. The people of these empathetic organizations had a sense of urgency and relational capability that helped the rescue effort succeed. Responses like these build an optimistic relational narrative and lend credence to Gergen's (2009) assertion that we are relational beings. According to Rifkin (2009), we might even carry a relationally empathetic trait from birth as recent brain research has shown. Kanter's (2009) research predicted that businesses of the future are becoming more relationally based and

are securing in the process an ability to move quickly in the marketplace while contributing to the social good.

Questions are provoked for educators through their dialogue on relational learning. For example: What value is there in shifting from an individualistic to a relational orientation in the classroom? What would have to change in course and classroom design? What assumptions would need to be drawn about how learning occurs? Assuming relational learning has value, what should be known about dialogue in the creation of meaning? How might relational competencies be defined and how do relationships form between and among instructors and students?

Educational programs like the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) at Pepperdine University have grappled with many of these questions. I am a student in this program who has found it to be highly relational and also unique to each individual participant. It is a cohort-based model with a core and guest faculty that brings a breadth and depth of experience from around the world. The program incorporates intensive, immersive face-to-face sessions with computer based technology that enables the dissemination of information and collaboration among the learning community. It builds scholarly, research, and practitioner capabilities with a central focus on the “self” as an instrument of change (Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010). Students co-construct experiences with their professors to learn and demonstrate competencies in the context of organizational change. Students create and enact experiences that are unique to their needs, which allow each student to see himself or herself as a competent and confident person who is able to function and find meaning in the most ambiguous of circumstances. The learning and the meaning that might be found are different for everyone

with meaning being contributed by anyone who becomes involved in the process. A complete description of the program's delivery system is found in Appendix A.

This research focuses on the aspects of the program that might enable one to find meaning of a very deep and personal nature through the classroom experience. Classroom, for the purpose of this research, is considered the whole of the learning experience. Therefore, the face-to-face meetings of student and faculty, collaboration through technology, field experiences – collective and individual, as well as other components, are all considered as being within the classroom.

Background of the Issue

In 1996, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) task force for education in the 21st century posited four goals for the new millennium. These goals respond to the needs of a globalized economy and knowledge society (UNESCO, 1996). The task force report called for educators to help students learn how to “know” and to “do” as a foundational basis for the world's future development and productive use of resources. It also challenged educators to help students engage interculturally and cross-culturally with certainty, harmony, and community with its goals of “learning to be” and “learning to live together” (Gergen, 2009, p. 23). We are called by this body to be in relationship with others throughout the world.

The United States (US) has a reputation of being one of the best countries in which to secure a good education. Zakaria (2010) of Yale University reports that 18 of the top 20 institutions of higher learning and 32 of the top 50 premier colleges and universities are within US borders. The United States not only leads the world in educational excellence but is also sought after by many for its advanced research capabilities. There is much to appreciate about a

system that has helped to develop the economic and social systems of the world. Still, progressive educators continue to ask how their system of delivery might be improved. One avenue gaining increasing attention through the work of scholars like Kenneth Gergen is the professor to student and student-to-student relationship that facilitates the discovery of meaning for those engaged. To understand the issue and to provide a glimpse of possibilities, attention is given to the needs identified by several leading educational scholars.

Scholars like Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) and transformational theorists Jack Mezirow (1997) and Bill Torbert (Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2003) wrote about the social processes of education. Joined by Gergen (2009), they argued that education, specifically teaching, is a relational process whether enacted in participative and collaborative ways or through the unidirectional model that makes the teacher the focal point for knowledge and meaning. Education is a profession that is asked to prepare students for life's challenges and each of these scholars identifies the relational need of the 21st century. Their writings are encouraging to those in education who experiment with pedagogies in ways that help students prepare for their roles in life.

For several decades, Howard Gardner, a professor of cognition and education at Harvard University, has been involved in creative pedagogies and the quality of interdisciplinary efforts in education. Gardner (2008) articulated five minds that are needed for one to thrive in today's world. These include (a) expertise in a discipline, (b) the ability to synthesize disparate sources of information, (c) creativity, (d) respect for differences, and (e) the ability to act ethically beyond one's own self-interest. He noted that educators, trainers, supervisors, and leaders of all kinds should embody these capabilities but says that as a society "we have been until recently relatively blind to the importance of these minds" (p. 163). Gardner asserted that these distinctly

human potentials must be nurtured for the very survival of our species and argues persuasively that education must play a leading role so that people across the globe are able to come together and be together for the betterment of the world.

Russell Ackoff, educator and systems theorist, expressed, without generalizing, a view that teachers and administrators in education often operate under the tacit “assumption ... that everyone knows what specific knowledge is needed in today’s world” (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008, p. xv) and bluntly pointed out that many educators believe that what the adult student needs is clearly evident. Top down decisions in learning design are what Ackoff calls the “reductionist” (p. x) view, which rests on the assumption that teachers know what to teach and that all teaching produces learning. Accordingly, students come to class to be taught as individuals as opposed to being a partner to a process that generates meaning from the learning. Ackoff argued that “teaching is the major obstruction to learning” (Detrick, 2002, p. 56) and that the focus must be on how we can better learn and find meaning. Progressive educators, exemplified in this research, strive to create an environment that helps students make the most of their learning experience.

Gergen (2000) believed in a rich dialogue within the educational process. He envisioned a learning environment where professors and students would collaborate in the learning process. He called for a discourse within education about how learning can be “opened to extension, elaboration, and enrichment through the comingling of differing ways of learning” (Gergen, 2000, p. 250). He further noted that experiments with interactive co-constructed education taking place with increased frequency support the efficacy of relational involvement.

The Issue

We all have relationships that are the foundation for our being. Relationships are a social link to other people and groups and it is through them that “meaning is born of use” (Gergen, 1997, p. 195). Such useful meaning takes one to new places and new possibilities. We often draw upon our relational foundation when faced with challenging situations. When supporting and enabling relationships are found, meaning is more likely to be found. It is therefore appropriate to assume that we are relational beings (Gergen, 2009) and that our relationships impact our current and future circumstance. For education to play a leading role in making this planet a better place for all, greater understanding of how meanings are found in the classroom process is required (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). It is in this need that the purpose of this research is formed.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the developmental nature of the Pepperdine EDOC program through the lived experience of graduates who have found meaning in a way that reveals how it came about. Meaning, as used in this research, is defined as deeply felt, visceral, emotional, and life changing as accounted by actions that might emerge from its very discovery. It is meaning such as described by Frankl (1984) as finding or understanding love for self and others, successfully meeting a seemingly difficult and insurmountable challenge, or doing something of deep personal significance. It is meaning that might affirm or alter one’s worldview and change the very course of one’s life. It is meaning that might add to or even define life’s purpose more completely and fully. Implicit in this kind of meaning is change that could redirect life’s course and even the lives of others.

As a Pepperdine EDOC student, I found very deep, personal, and visceral meaning that came about through relationships with students, professors, and many others with whom I have engaged over the course of my program. There are those who have had similar experiences. I have wondered how that meaning came about and what constitutes the phenomenon. The research aims to identify (Creswell, 2003) the constituents for the phenomenon for finding meaning such as the relational interaction (Raider-Roth & Holzer, 2009) between students and professors that facilitate the discovery of meaning within the classroom environment. There is one central question asked of co-inquirers in the research followed by two secondary questions labeled 2 and 3:

1. Describe in as much detail as possible how meaning was found through studies in the EDOC program.
2. How do professors establish collaborative, dialogic relationships with their students in a graduate doctoral learning environment so that new meaning can be found within the learning experience?
3. How do students, in a reciprocal manner, establish a similar relationship with their professors, fellow students, and others in a graduate doctoral learning environment so that meaning can be found within the learning experience?

Conceptual Approach

The study is conducted through the descriptive phenomenology of Giorgi (2009) to determine the structure and essence of the phenomenon and the theoretical Four Quadrant framework of Wilber (2000a; 2000b), which is used as a framing analysis, exclusive of A. Giorgi, to help make meaning of what is presented in the text. Wilber's (2000a) framework enables a view of the various dimensions of human experience that includes the person or the

“I,” the person in relationship which is the “We,” and the “Social,” and “Cultural” aspects of lived experience. The method employed in this study is thoroughly presented in chapter III with an emphasis on how the research was performed so that others might replicate it. A review of literature that grounds the study is presented in chapter II. The following definitions and assumptions further establish the research structure.

Definitions and Assumptions

The study of the developmental nature of the EDOC program used the qualitative tradition of inquiry known as phenomenology. Phenomenology is research “in which the researcher identifies the ‘essence’ of human experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by participants in a study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). Kupers (2008) defined it as “the study of phenomena as it appears in human experience; particularly the experientially realized meanings that things have” (p. 390).

Integral theory offers an approach for bringing together and understanding the whole of human experience in its intersubjective and interobjective forms. Wilber (2000a, 2000b) notes such experience as emanating through the “I,” the “We,” and the social and culture context which is often referred to as the “Its.”

Relational learning occurs in the context of rich dialogue in which all benefit. In a classroom environment, it is where professors “... invite students into modes of dialogue as participants rather than pawns in the learning process; as collaborative interlocutors instead of slates to be filled” (Gergen, 2009, p. 250). It rests on the assumption that “learning is an activity of interdependent people” (Stacey, 2003, p. 325) and that meaning forms among people who are together in a responsible and intelligible order. It is also assumed that participants are capable of skilled action and that they are capable of self understanding that results from relationships

(Gergen, 2009). Relational learning occurs between people who are autonomous and capable of collaborative co-action, and who also can step outside of self to make the relationship primary. This research assumes that people are relational beings and therefore seek to form relationships that are meaningful and that all outcomes within the human experience are a consequence of relationships.

Relational context refers to

The web of relationships in which learning occurs ...: the student's relationship to [professors], peers, ... the self [and the community]. The relational context of learning is one where students [and professors] ... [develop] their social interactions with the intention of [learning and finding meaning]. (Raider-Roth, 2005, p. 582)

In this context, the people in the learning community come to know each other and discern interactions and interdependencies that are appropriate for the purposes of the classroom environment. Co-constructed learning is the generation of knowledge that is constructed by participants within the community and valued by the collective community (Gergen, 2009).

Significance of the Study

Kenneth Gergen, Russell Ackoff, and Howard Gardner, UNESCO and others have each called for research of this kind. This study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of empowering learning environments and the role that relationships play in the learning process. The study provides a basis for further research into higher education. Relationships of the kind examined in this study help with our understanding of how people as citizens of the world can go on together.

I speculate that finding meaning through relationships in an educational context might someday come under the rubric of transformative learning. The possibility is emerging based on the literature investigated in this study. Taylor (2008) noted that there is much not known about the practices of transformative learning in classrooms. He asked,

What are the student's responsibilities in relationship to the transformative educator? Second, there is a need to understand the peripheral consequences of fostering transformative learning in the classroom. For example, how does a student's transformation affect peers in the classroom, the teacher, the educational institution, and other individuals who play a significant role in the life of the student? (p. 13)

The study is important to the generations who are growing up in the digital age who will need the kind of relational knowledge and capabilities that education could provide (Na'Desh, 2008). Studies like these might provide the transfer of useful knowledge to those who will be assuming global leadership roles.

The study might be important to Pepperdine University as program administrators seek ways to evolve the EDOC program. In like manner, it might be of use to other institutions that seek to understand approaches to doctoral programs. Learning from this study might also inform leaders of organizations that seek further knowledge and understanding of how relationships help people join together in rich and meaningful ways for their own growth and that of the organization.

Chapter II comprehensively reviews literature that grounds this study. It discusses philosophical and scholarly contributions to relationship and meaning, and focuses specifically on the development of adult learning theory and supporting themes like social construction, dialogue, adult learning and so forth. The goal is to have a rich array of thought that enables a robust discussion of the study's questions and findings.

Chapter II. Review of the Literature

This literature review begins with a discussion of relationship, a construct present in philosophy, theory, and research. Socrates and Plato, for example, reflect one of the earliest themes of philosophy; the enlightenment of thought in communion with people seeking wisdom and knowledge (Baiz, 2011). Buber (1937), in his book *I and Thou* defined human relationships as being the “I” and “thou” spoken of as human life finding its meaning through “mutually absorbing” (Gergen, 2009, p. xxiii) relationships. Buber thought of the “I” and “thou” as being in relationship with the very presence of God in human beings. Wilber (2000b) wrote of the great wisdom traditions bringing meaning through the transcendental aspects of the spirit in people’s relation to a deity. Recent contributors like Gergen, Wilber, and Torbert raise relational consciousness and build theory that relates relationship to meaning.

Freud and Jung provide a theoretical foundation on the psychological dimension of relationship. The social foundation is associated with scholars such as Polanyi, Lewin, Dewey, and Gergen. Relationship is found within literature on education and it is also found in organizational literature particularly in the context of leadership, teams and teamwork, organizational learning, culture, and organizational development and change. It is most prevalent within social construction literature, which includes robust discussions of dialogue where people engage with one another for the purpose, among others, of finding meaning. Within these areas, relationship is examined at the individual, group, and collective levels. The individual level is that of a person, the “self” as one who is self-preserving, self-adapting, self-transcending or self-transforming, and self-dissolving (Wilber, 1995, p. 48). Luft (1984) defined group as “a living system, self-regulating through shared participation, and inter-action, sensing, and feedback, and through interchange with its environment” (p. 2) that continually evolves.

The collective level refers to relationships between varied groups, which can be small or large in number. Relationship as a pillar for meaning has been identified through the social constructionist work of Kenneth Gergen (1985, 2007, 2009). The construct of relationship as a medium for finding meaning at the self, group, or collective levels has been identified among educational scholars like Mezirow and Torbert who see it as an opportunity for research and practice. Relationship is a widely written subject, which in total is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, the review centers largely on relationships as they exist within the philosophical, sociological, organizational, and educational literature, and but for a few exceptions, are within the context of fully mature and experienced adults who are the subjects of this research.

This chapter examines the relational construct with consciousness toward Wilber's (2000a) "Big Three" (p. 111) of his Four Quadrant integration model that deals with (a) the factor of the "I" (the person), which includes subjective presence, consciousness, and subjective awareness; (b) the "We" which is the intersubjective dimension of relationships in a cultural context; and (c) the "It" that is objective, neutral, analytic and empirical in systems and behavioral contexts (pp. 110-111). The complete Four Quadrant model incorporates the above elements and breaks the "It" into two external elements that can be empirically observed. These include the aspect of behavior that is observable and the aspect of systems, which is also subject to observation. Wilber, for the sake of simplicity, the observable nature of each, and the utility of summary, has incorporated the behavioral and systems aspect of his four quadrant model into "It" noting that using the word is "language [that is] objective, neutral, value-free surfaces [which is] standard language of the empirical, analytic, and systems sciences" (p. 110). Within this text, use of the quoted "I," the "We," and the "It" all refers to Wilber's framework described

by him as his "... Big Three" (p. 111). Wilber's integral framework provides a way of integrating "distinct forms of consciousness that are significant in the context of transformational learning" (Gunnlaugson, 2007, p. 147). In this way, consciousness is raised between human agency and social structures as important influences in adult learning environments (Merriam, 2001). With Wilber's model for context, the review begins with a discussion of social construction and dialogue because this research assumes that education, its method of delivery and the meaning flowing from it might be best understood from this point of view. It then delves into philosophical thought and how certain philosophers have raised awareness about the merits of understanding alternative ways of knowing from the rational empiricism to interpretive qualitative methodologies. With that groundwork, the review proceeds with the contextual aspects of the study that include subjects appropriate for the research; adult learning theory, sensemaking and self as an instrument of change, and narrative stories. The review concludes with a summary that creates a bridge from the literature encompassing the study to the methodology within chapter three.

Social Construction and Dialogue

Social construction is seminal in the work of Michael Polanyi who argued for recognition of the "social nature of science" (Nye, 2011 p. xx), which was contrary to rational empiricism of the early part of the 19th century. In turn, Berger and Luckmann (1967) contributed by introducing social construction into the social sciences in their book *The Social Construction of Reality* and from this work emerged greater understandings of the actions of people, their relationships and how meaning might flow from them. Gergen (1997) has written that: "Meaning is born of use through relationships" (p. 195). Following this logic, for meaning to be found and acted upon, it is best understood as coming through relationships which establish

meaning for self as interpreted through one's experiences; his or her subjective knowing. Meaning within group or within community is a consequence of relationships among people within these bodies. For meaning to extend in these contexts the rules and language of other groups and communities must come together. It is in this dynamic that social construction raises consciousness about how people might come together in order to go on together on common ground (Gergen, 2009).

The logic of social construction has given rise to forms of inquiry that enable relationality within research methodology (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). Its logic has also facilitated the gradual acceptance of qualitative research among empiricists (Giorgi, 2005). Social construction has encouraged practitioners to develop new methods of therapy where, for example, life narrative plays a role in constructing a preferred reality (Freedman & Combs, 1996). It also has provoked different praxes for change like appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Dutton, 1999; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Those who seek to understand or create a social environment rely upon dialogue (Bohm, 1996), an important tool for establishing meaning among people. Social construction has stirred various scholarly communities like psychology to examine established paradigms. The controversies it has provoked in challenging existing paradigms like attention deficit disorder and teacher directed learning is acknowledged by Gergen (2011) who is considered radical by some for his constructionist views (Heckelman, 2002). However, Gergen (1997) stressed that constructionists honor all traditions and see pedagogical potentials through the social constructional lens of relationships. Social construction practitioners see potential in bringing diverse views together from varied sectors like business, the sciences, education, and politics for the purpose of meeting societal needs.

Constructionists propose that whatever is presented as true or real is a consequence of relational understanding communicated through language. People's understanding of the objective, neutral, and empirical might differ from one community to another because the language used to describe it often carries different meanings. Therefore, constructs have value through community definition and since language has different meanings, objects often have different meaning from one community to another (Gergen, 2007).

Social construction enables an appreciation of other realities like the opposing economic philosophies of communism and capitalism and different faith traditions like Christian and Muslim, the differences between liberals and conservatives, and even command and control managements and their participatory, high involvement opposite. Social construction propositions are useful in appreciating differences in teacher directed and co-constructed learning (Gergen, 2009).

Constructionists recognize that the moment one wants to describe something; he or she is coming from his or her own set of rules, their own social construction. Yet if one considers all the different possibilities within a given paradigm or paradigms, it is like turning a kaleidoscope, which opens multiple realities within a given group of meaning simply by putting the crystals in different positions to mirrors. The possibilities are endless when artfully applied (Zander & Zander, 2002). By appreciating how one's reality is constructed through relationship, invitations are extended by the constructionists for collaboration, dialogue, and action (Gergen & Gergen, 2008) which are significant tools for understanding how people might go on in this world together (Gergen, 2009).

Constructionists emphasize a relational process from which meaning that is rational, moral and philosophic might emerge. For example, society has labeled aging with decline.

Social constructionists, Ken and Mary Gergen ask why that is necessary. Why not look at it as a positive – life enriching process? Their web site, www.healthandage.com, reaches more than 12,000 subscribers who are seeking a good or even better life in old age (Heckelman, 2002). This example of how constructionism brings about new ways of knowing in many of life's sectors and new ways of finding meaning raises possibilities within many different segments of society including education.

Education is characterized by some as stemming from the knowing professor who defines what knowledge and meaning should be gained by students in a learning experience (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). It is a posture similar to the command and control manager who operates his or her business organization in a bureaucratic or machine like manner (G. Morgan, 1998). Building upon education, social constructionists emphasize learning in the context of a progressive social process which shifts a pedagogy toward (a) dialogue, (b) group problem solving, (c) participant interdependency in which a professor assumes a role of process manager (Schein, 1969), and (d) the potential of students as teachers (Gergen, 1997). This kind of social consciousness is grounded in part by Freire (1970) who educated through social participation. It is further grounded by Gardner (Gardner & Hatch, 1990) who respects the intercultural aspects of learning, and Mezirow (1978; 1997) in his work with transformational learning which recognized learner engagement. It also includes Torbert who in action inquiry dealt with aspects of relational learning in a developmental context (Fisher et al., 2003).

Social construction in education implies an emphasis on the character of the social process, an aspect of this study, rather than attempting to acculturate the mind of an individual student. Gergen's (1997) vision of what constructionist classrooms look like includes a place where:

Relational process between [professors] and students, among students, and between students and those outside the classroom ... become focal. From the constructionist perspective the traditional bodies of disciplinary knowledge do not go unchallenged Rather, reflexive consideration of multiple standpoints is emphasized, and greater respect is given to the 'interpretive communities' from which the student comes and into which he or she will return. There is less emphasis, then, on mastery of existing bodies of knowledge and greater interest in fostering collaboration across diverse communities [Traditional] practices of evaluating the student according to fixed or universal criteria are challenged. For the social constructionist, student success or failure is a communal achievement, and there are multiple communities (or standards) of possible evaluation. (p. 5)

In this environment, the professor is no longer the classroom "commander" (Gergen, 2009, p. 240). What takes place is co-constructed achievement.

The work of Kenneth Gergen brings relationship to a level of consciousness that is "beyond self and community" (Gergen, 2009, p. 1). He opined that people live in times where "[they] must worry about how [they] compare to another, and whether [they] will be judged inferior" (p. xiv). Such view pervades wherever individual evaluation is present like performance in classrooms and organizations. It is rational and reasonable to judge a person for whatever contribution he or she might make. Gergen, however, argued persuasively for other ways of being; a relational way that places knowledge and its creation within relationship and ways of knowing as its derivative. Gergen believed that "individual psychological functioning is a cultural derivative" (p. xviii) and that through scholars like Chad Gordon, Mary Gergen, and Harold Garfinkel we can better appreciate the "natural yearning for relationship ... in which mutual empathy and empowerment are central (Gergen, 2009, p. xix).

Gergen (2009) described the individualistic orientation of Western society as a social construction derived from the age of enlightenment and makes the point that the construction itself can be an imprisoning boundary if allowed. He joined Bellah et al. (2007) in saying that people see individualism as a birth right which authenticates one's breaking free from

established structures like family and community to become one's own person; a limitation for people in finding meaning through relationship. Individualism is an important dimension in one's life. According to K. Murrell (personal communication, July 10, 2011), it was Kant who "said in 1783 we should be able to learn to organize and govern ourselves and in this he could not have meant that the direction for our lives would only come through strong leaders." Murrell further noted, Kant "wanted us to create our own world and our own place within it." There is, therefore, individual strength in relationship. Bellah's context is suggestive of social boundaries which Gergen (2009) challenged as an unfortunate tradition of Western culture when they get in the way of genuine relationships. As pointed out by Gergen (2009) boundaries often polarize through competition for grades, recognition, financial gain, and so forth. Like Lewin (1948), Rogers (Rogers, 1969), and Wilber (2001); Gergen (2009) raises relational consciousness which opens possibilities for co-action – the relational construction of Wilber's intersubjective "We." Gergen proposed that what we call thinking, experience, memory, and creativity are all constructs of relationship and that joining in collaboration takes people to a promising future that is literally beyond description.

Gergen (2009) also saw personal, group, and community identity as coming through relationships. A study by Raider-Roth (2005) showing how relationally conscious one is, even at a young age, illustrated the point. The research showed that sixth grade students mostly age 13 read "the relational tenor" (Raider-Roth, 2005, p. 588) of their classroom and shared knowledge among participants that they believed acceptable. The study reinforced identity, "a development marker for growth" (p. 623), previously reported by J. B. Miller and Stiver (1997) as embedded in "mutually empathetic" (Raider-Roth, 2005 p. 623) relationships that foster growth.

In the same study, Raider-Roth (2005) proposed the term “relational learner” (p. 264) as a person who “initiates action, makes meaning of [their] experience, and develops awareness of ... experience[s] in an ongoing, mutually regulatory web of relationships” (p. 264). The study also dealt with the core sense of self as being important to making meaning from the learning experience. Raider-Roth issued an urgent plea as a consequence of her research to attend to relationships in educational environments. Her research provided a helpful understanding of how relationships shape young people for the future. Given the call from Gardner, Ackoff, and Gergen, the need for relational understanding is there perhaps through the context of the social construction of adult education.

Gergen (2009) declared that people of all backgrounds are profoundly woven together and imagines possibilities for the world through a confluence of relational actions. Dialogue, a relational action, is a way of bringing people together in relationships and is thus a primary tool of the social constructionist. According to Isaacs (1993), it “is a discipline of collective thinking and inquiry, a process for transforming the quality of conversation and, in particular, the thinking that lies beneath it” (p. 25).

Dialogue reaches into the essence of human relationship and to appreciate its potential, it is helpful to broaden Isaac’s context. According to Senge’s introduction in Bohm (1996), dialogue is a foreign process to some because the core problem is that people do not know how to live together in the world. People only know how to live based on truths from the past which often results in one group trying to impose their truths on another group. The implications of dialogue for society are poignant and it is important to be clear about what it might provide. Gergen (2009) shared how he asks his graduate students to develop criteria for good dialogue. They say “effective dialogue is one that entertains multiple ideas and does not close down voices

of possibility ... [and] in a good dialogue the participants care for each other” (p. 257). Gergen further noted,

most students find ... dialogues wonderfully energizing and intellectually stimulating ... [as] there is no pecking order; no one dominates the conversation; all contribute. All feel welcome, and at the close of the conversation, they will often congratulate or thank each other for their contributions. (p. 258)

One of the most prominent figures in the study and practice of dialogue is physicist and social scientist David Bohm who bridged these disciplines into his dialectic studies. As a physicist, Bohm experienced a participatory universe: planets, galaxies, and solar systems all in a physical relationship. In the same vein, he envisioned the possibility for similar understanding in human relationships and used dialogue as a means of bringing separate truths together by making the content of disparate meaning coherent. Bohm (1996) encourages dialogue “as a free flow of meaning among all ... participants” (p. xix) who let go of fixed positions or assumptions which they tend to defend, in order to maintain feelings of friendship. People then are no longer in opposition but “are participating in [a] pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change” (p. xix). Bohm saw no pre-established purpose in dialogue. It flows through each movement of interaction and “participatory consciousness” (p. 30) with the unified assent of all similar to Weick’s (1998) view of sensemaking as being in part a matter of improvisation.

According to Bohm, Factor, and Garrett (1991); “Suspension of thoughts, impulses, judgments, etc., lies at the very heart of dialogue” (p. 8). Suspension of these structures involves attention, listening and looking and is essential to exploration; the listening to self and others so that meaning can be noticed. To suspend thought, impulse, and judgment requires attention to the overall process; one’s own process and the process within group. Bohm et al. related how dialogue is needed because “it allows a wide spectrum of possible relationships to be revealed ...

and how power is assumed or given away and how pervasive are the generally unnoticed rules of the system that constitute ... culture” (p. 5).

Isaacs (1993) described a three stage process for dialogue within the metaphor of a container. The first stage involves instability within the container where individuals loosen the grip of assumptions and learn to slow down thought patterns and behavior. The second stage involves inquiry that might parallel a form of therapy. The third stage involves creativity within the container in which people are participating in a common pool of meaning. This model appreciates an aspect of dialogue where participants surface tacit thought as an avenue to shared mindfulness. Tacit in Bohm’s (1996) construction of dialogue means “that which is unspoken, which cannot be described – like the knowledge required to ride a bicycle” (p. 16). To Bohm, most communication takes place within tacit thought that establishes coherent patterns of communication among people who have gotten to know each other.

Dialogue, as a form of social construction, requires a spirit of good will and friendship that enables a free flow of meaning. It reaches for tacit knowledge and a high level of social intelligence. Individual intelligence is not what is most important because the outcomes in dialogue are the work of the participants. Bohm (1996) stressed that dialogue on tacit knowing is needed because of all the fragmentation in the world:

The tacit process is common. It is shared. The sharing is not merely the explicit communication and the body language and all that, which are part of it, but here is also a deeper tacit process which is common. I think the whole human race knew this for a million years; and then in five thousand years of civilization we lost it, because our societies got too big to carry it out. But now we have to get started again, because it has become urgent that we communicate. (p. 16).

According to Bohm (1996), dialogue is much more than solving problems in society. “Dialogue represents a possibility for transforming the nature of consciousness, both individually and collectively, and ... whether [problems] can be solved culturally and socially depends on

[it]" (p. 54). Bohm warned that if problems cannot be solved then "love will go away" (p. 54) and we could not communicate effectively or have shared meaning. When we can communicate, "... we will have fellowship, participation, friendship, love, growing and growing" (p. 54). The challenge is seeing the process of dialogue as an absolute necessity. Dialogue opens boundaries for the sharing of meaning. In Gergen's (2009) view, a broad and vital movement is taking place today. It is a movement concerned with the significance of dialogue in creating more promising futures. "Receding is the emphasis on improving and strengthening individual entities – persons, organizations, or nations. [We are slowly realizing] the preeminent significance of extended practices of relationship" (p. 198).

To the social constructionist, dialogue is a principle vehicle for transforming meaning. Dialogue has the potential of expanding the range of voices in society and with that comes a sharing of common understanding and meaning that might bring people closer together. It is a challenging and rewarding journey that enlightens consciousness and removes boundaries to knowing.

Foundations of Relationship in Knowing: Philosophical Roots

This section of the literature review is offered to establish an appreciation for philosophies of knowing which serves to open consciousness of possibilities for how relationship and meaning might be explored within the context of this research. It attempts to show how the foundations of social construction emerged at least in part from philosophical voices advocating freedom and unity, and offers perspectives on how these voices raise relational consciousness. The philosophers in this section were selected to build a story about how consciousness is opened to new narratives about relationship and meaning that might be applied in varied

contexts. Wilber (2000b) appropriately encouraged this discourse in the belief that there is something to appreciate about wisdom from other times and eras as it further enlightens.

In the 18th century, Immanuel Kant (1784) penned an essay to answer the question: What is enlightenment? “Enlightenment” he wrote,

is the human being’s emergence from his minority. Minority is inability to make use of one’s own understanding without direction from another. ...For this enlightenment, however, nothing is required *but freedom* ... freedom to make *public use* of one’s reason in all matters. (pp. 1-2)

Kant “declares clearly [in his essay] why we need to [learn how to] self organize and ... reach for our full potential in both intellect and ... action” (K. Murrell, personal communication, April 14, 2011).

Literature suggests separate themes to the consequences implied in Kant’s call for freedom. On one hand, freedom of the kind espoused by Kant widens the capacity for people to creatively seek, examine, and apply new knowledge. In this vein freedom opens space for people to be without restricting boundaries. To Kant’s (1784) wisdom of “*self-incurred minority*”([author’s emphasis added]; p. 1), Senge (1990) noted that people individually have a capacity to bind themselves to rigid paradigms – fixated ways of knowing, mental models that can restrict one’s capacity. Such mental models might be found in groups and even communities and are often understood as an aspect of culture. At a societal level, Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* discussed an oppressive tendency among people, even those who have found freedom, by noting that free people can become oppressors even when their cultural experiences were generated within oppressive circumstances. Wilber (2001) added further perspective in *No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth* by calling for the reduction and elimination of boundaries. Gergen (2000) expressed similar views in the dilemmas of the bounded saturated life of the 20th century and issues a strong and urgent call to understand how

people might be released from their bounded ways through conscious awareness of relational being (Gergen, 2009).

The contributions of Polanyi, Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida. Philosophers Michael Polanyi, Richard Rorty, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Michael Foucault, and Jacques Derrida challenge institutions to release people from boundaries by proposing ways of knowing that differ from the rational empirical (Bioland, 2005); a binding paradigm when it is taken as the only acceptable way of knowing. Polanyi (1962) was among the first to bridge the rigidity of rational empiricism through a belief that science cannot reject the presence of tacit knowledge in the facts and values of scientific research. Mourad (1997b) traced how the work of Rorty, Lyotard, and Foucault encouraged “intellectual activity and experience over the discovery and production of knowledge” (p. 6); ideas central to meaning. The thoughts of these five philosophers toward reason’s centrality and steadfast faith in the scientific method opened alternatives to established and structured empirical ways of knowing; moreover, their ideas raise consciousness about how relationships might empower a process by opening new avenues for research into contemporary learning environments. These selected philosophers have helped leaders consider broader possibilities for ways of knowing. Their ideas apply to institutions that seek freedom and wide capacities for creativity and innovation. I begin this section by reviewing the contributions of Polanyi who was among the first of these philosophers to jettison the idea that scientific findings were bounded solely in logical empiricism. He is credited with moving science into its sociological and psychological side (Nye, 2011).

Michael Polanyi (1891 – 1976), chemist, economist, and philosopher introduced new thought into the sociology of science, dominated in his time by rational, empirical, positivistic thinking. His social awareness is likely to have developed from being part of the refugee

generation of the 1930s. He was raised among the European people who were expelled from home countries or fled the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich. He was an empirical scientist who followed the logic and structure of his craft. Criticism of his research caused him to examine the social aspects of his profession, an idea foreign to objective empiricists of the time. He answered his critics through his understanding of the intersubjectivity of empiricism. Polanyi introduced subjective thought into the all-knowing rigid scientific paradigms in use, which put him at a distance from mainstream thought. He did the same in his philosophical persuasion that thinking resting solely on logic is a path toward moral atrocities. His approach to knowledge was a trigger in turning objective, rigid science toward sociology within the paradigms of scientific knowledge (Nye, 2011).

Polanyi (1962) considered tacit knowledge as being his most influential contribution to scientific thought. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that cannot be transferred to another person simply by writing it down. Dialogue among those dealing with a scientific matter is required for it to become clear and in the day of rational empiricism, scientific works were valued simply for the facts they yielded. Polanyi argued passionately for scientific discourse believing that the selection of “good questions for investigation is the mark of scientific talent, and any theory of inductive inference in which this talent plays no part is a Hamlet without a prince” (p. 30). He was devoted to scientific inquiry believing it was at its best when passions among all involved were able to rise to the surface. He wanted engagement with others in formulating and critiquing research. Other philosophical thought leaders reflected a similar direction.

Richard Rorty (1931 – 2007) laid the critical groundwork for what Wilber (2000a) called the enlightenment which reduces knowing to an empirical stance of the “It” (p. 67). “It” is representing a single phenomenon, physical or human examined through scientific methodology

as opposed to intersubjective ways of knowing. Rorty (as cited in Mourad, 1997b) criticized the paradigm as an unfortunate “permanent, neutral framework for inquiry” (Mourad, 1997b, p. 8) and argued that knowing is indiscrete and, therefore, does not necessarily need theory to derive meaning. Rorty (1979) proposed knowing as hermeneutic, coming from many sources, implying that such a way of knowing requires cross-discipline awareness; that is, people of different minds, talking and sharing – one to another. His thinking departs from the conventional wisdom of the enlightened age, which Wilber (2000b) criticized as “flatland” (p. 70) by its rejection of the distinction between science and non-science.

Rorty is recognized by Gergen (2008) for having served the educational community, and therefore other communities of practice, with distinction; expressing a preference for an educational system where spontaneously creative students, professors, scholars, practitioners, and researchers were free to move about in lively inquiry. For example, clinical psychology might mingle with social psychology – medicine with engineering, and management with education. He encouraged a dialogue that widened potential for participant co-inquiry. According to Gergen (2009), Rorty understood “epistemological problems as language games” (p. 205 in foot note #1) defined by Wittgenstein in Strong (2011) as the “particular ways people understand, communicate, and evaluate experience” (p. 100). Gergen (2008) went further with language in saying, “the problem of individual knowledge [that] could not be solved was not a function of insufficient analysis, but of [obscure and confusing] discursive traditions” (p. 335).

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924 – 1998) is noted for identifying the post-modern condition broadly defined by Wilber (2000a), as “postmodernity” (p. 48), the whole of post-Enlightenment developments. Postmodernism critically argues fixed positions of rationality like meta narratives (Strong, 2011), empiricism, and reason in the search for truth (Wilber, 2000b). Lyotard

challenged science as having the final word and presumed knowing as arising through social interaction. Consequently, his philosophy encouraged mixed research methodology and collaboration among competing disciplines, and like Rorty, criticized a language game that was protective and limiting. He, therefore, called such use of language into question by arguing for the wisdom of co-mingling disciplines so different constituencies would appreciate each other's language in a way that promoted mutual understanding and respect for each other's intellect and process (Mourad, 1997a, 1997b). "Lyotard's ideas offer an important critical and generative stance on correctness or fixed meanings of any kind, so that new ways of understanding and talking can be attempted" (Strong, 2011, p. 101).

Michael Foucault (1926 – 1984) criticized a modernity that held men and women as "objects of information, never subjects in communication" (Kroth & Boverie, 2000, p. 135); a reductionist view that places people in limiting contexts. Or, stated another way, reducing one to Wilber's (2000a) "It" as opposed to the intersubjectivity of the "I" and the "We." Humanistic and relationally conscious, Foucault engaged others in believing that the pursuit of knowledge is embedded in human practices. He warned, however, that knowledge could be created solely as a means of gaining power. While recognizing that power has a role in the creation of knowledge when coming through relationships he argued that "to embrace a given community's claims to knowledge is to become a 'docile body,' unthinkingly subject to the power of [the] community" (Gergen, 2009, p. 204).

Foucault legitimized human experience as a subject for scientific inquiry within the social sciences and humanities (Mourad, 1997a). He puts few constraints on humans in the quest for knowledge and meaning. According to Collard and Law (1989), Foucault provided a philosophical justification for departing from traditions and requirements of the disciplines that

tend to focus on empiricism as opposed to dialogue and propositions except as they are ordered in the formation of a discourse through interest in a knowledge/power dynamic. Foucault, therefore, departed from traditions and requirements of the disciplines with concern that the pursuit of knowledge is controlling of human thought. According to Gergen (2011), Foucault convincingly argued that any declaration held to be true can dominate others; a key point made by social constructionists and Wilber's (2001) views on bounded beings. Mezirow (1996b), in turn, believed that Foucault "demonstrated how social reality is defined by the nature and distribution of domination, power, and influence" (p. 161). Foucault's work and that of Lyotard resulted in widespread concern and suspicion of the concepts of rationality.

Power and the use of power are dominant themes within Foucault's philosophy and are consequently widely applied in social construction venues like education and narrative forms of therapy. Carr (1998), for example, noted how Michael White, considered a seminal leader in narrative therapy, drew on Foucault's belief that "people are unconsciously recruited into the subjugation of their own lives by power practices that involve continual isolation, evaluation, and comparison" (p. 489). White, according to Carr, referred to "the process of applying psychiatric diagnoses to clients and construing people exclusively in terms of these diagnostic labels" (p. 486), which manifest as a form of oppression as clients are treated within the confines of those labels. Foucault spoke for freedom as opposed to oppression manifested through power.

Jacques Derrida (1930 – 2004) would argue along with social constructionists that knowledge could not be relied upon as something unblemished, pure and whole believing that knowing rests on language, which relies on human interpretation for meaning. Derrida provided the fundamental idea of deconstruction which calls logic into question by "carefully attempting to move language out of the idea of true and false, to another way of thought and discourse"

(Mourad, 1997b, p. 69). This is consistent with Gergen and Gergen's (2008) conviction that language is a social construction and it is people who create its definition. These philosophers clearly imply that the process of creating knowledge and the process of knowing can be constrained by language. According to Carr (1998), Derrida's philosophy suggested empowering people on the premise that "lives and identities are constituted by three sets of factors:"

- The meaning people give to their experience or the stories they tell themselves about themselves.
- The language practices that people are recruited into along with the type of words these use to story their lives.
- The situation people occupy in social structures in which they participate and the power relations entailed by these. (Carr, 1998, p. 489)

These factors can constitute oppression or they can be empowering. The choice is dependent upon their use.

To summarize, the philosophers are united in calling for freedom in knowing, less constraint and structure within disciplinary subject matter, predominant theories and methods, and primary schools of thought (Mourad, 1997b). Their encouraging critique offers possibilities for organizational leaders in various segments of society and their institutions. Their embodiment of freedom as a means for relieving impediments to ways of knowing opens avenues to mind and spirit, and potentials and possibility (Delbecq, 1997; Wilber, 2001; Zander & Zander, 2002). Progressive educators interested in pursuing innovative pedagogies are actively experimenting with learning structures; an interesting development since many within education and other institutional organizations consider structure and boundaries sacrosanct (Gergen, 2009).

Nye's (2011) discussion of Polanyi's contributions and Mourad's (1997b) exploration of the thinking of Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida showed how scholars, contrary to the

views of their progressive counterparts, might be unduly limited by the belief that inquiry is fundamentally about gaining knowledge about phenomena that is assumed to exist prior to the inquiry. The social dimension opens the argument that the constraint is unnecessary and undesirable. The disciplines are resuscitated into a more flexible foundation that expands what counts as legitimate inquiry placing the inquirer as the cause of reality not just an observer. Through these philosophers, Nye and Mourad have argued for a dynamic synergistic positioning of multi-disciplines for inquiry as a basis for new forms of inquiry. It is appropriate to build upon a foundational understanding of organizational and learning thought through the work of several additional renowned scholars and theorists. These, too, are chosen for their legacy and for how they continue to build a narrative of understanding into relationship and meaning.

The contributions of Lewin, Rogers, Freire, and Dewey. The seminal work of Kurt Lewin, Carl Rogers, Paulo Freire, and John Dewey further ground the context of this research. Lewin (1935; 1948) provided a foundation for psychological and organizational theory that is widely applied in research, therapy, organizational design, and education. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), and Dewey's (2011) *Democracy in Education* provide perspective for how meaning might be found through relationships in a classroom. Based on the assumption that all knowing is relational, these scholars lay the groundwork for how relationships and learning come together. Moreover, they help in understanding how democratic processes might impact organizational and educational practices.

Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947), social psychologist and educator, developed personality theory and group dynamics by centering much of his work in the areas of individual and group autonomy. His research focused mostly on organizations where he developed group decision making in the context of process and task behaviors. His theories have been used in therapy,

research and change and were tested in “T” Group learning that dramatically revealed the core of one’s conscious psychological structure (Lewin, 1935). He made any environment his classroom and appropriated ideas to higher education as places where relationships can contribute to knowing. Unlike the psychoanalysts Freud and Jung, Lewin’s theories recognized the conscious side of one’s being and his model for a change process in human systems provided the foundation for theory (Schein, 1996).

Lewin is credited with developing action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2001); a disciplined inquiry done by participants with the intent that research will inform those collaborating within steps of a change process. Action research is a methodology designed to open participants to change (G. Morgan, 1998) through process steps involving (a) an “unfreezing” (p. 251) which is a readiness to let go of tightly held assumptions, (b) “change” (p. 251) involving a readiness to experiment with and adopt new assumptions and behaviors through processes like dialogue and reflection, and (c) “refreezing” (p. 251) where ownership of new behaviors is based upon newly held assumptions, knowledge, and meaning. The methodology is applied in steps of a repeat cyclical process of “diagnosing [a situation], planning [intervention strategies], tacking action and evaluating [the consequences of the action] in relation [a] project” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001, p. 19). Persons engaged in this kind of learning might test assumptions, unfreeze, and refreeze often. Those with a commitment to and history of personal growth and development efforts might see the process as highly desirable. Action research is appropriate in situations where participants wish to participate in a change process. This kind of research is actionable at the individual, group, and community level.

According to Lewin (1935), individuals are most amenable to change when they are relaxed and free from defensive posture – an ideal situation for learning. At an individual level,

a person can move to membership of a larger entity by dropping the assumptions or behaviors that suggest the environment is considered unsafe, and replacing them with more positive assumptions like the individuals to whom one is moving toward are trustworthy, competent and capable (Reina & Reina, 2006). Such environments enable experimentation of new behaviors like making an intervention or checking an engagement behavior. Adopting a new behavior and considering it as one's own requires work and patience to sustain as levels of consciousness need re-organization. Even though one may have adopted new assumptions and behaviors, sustaining change is difficult because of factors like the pull of cultural tradition, and the emotional content of individual being (Goleman, 1997; Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Unlike Skinner who theorized that environmental manipulation was the key variable in behavior (Miller, 1978), Lewin (1935) theorized the internal aspect of psychological presence, the here and now, and made that an integral part of the environment in what he termed "life-space" (p. 173). Life-space, being congruent or incongruent with one's environment, is in the moment or experienced over time and situations. Being congruent in life-space is the feeling of positive regard for one's environment. Negative feelings reflect incongruence. Lewin's life-space is a widely applied concept in psychology, education, and organizations whose management creates it by reducing boundaries to development, decision making, creativity and innovation. Lewin wrote:

Only in a sufficiently free life-space in which the [person] has the possibility of choosing his goals according to his [or her] own needs and in which, at the same time, he [or she] fully experiences the objectively conditioned difficulties in the attainment of the goal, can a clear level of reality be formed, on thus can the ability for responsible decision develop. (Lewin, 1935, p. 179)

Individuals seeking congruency in their environment predicate goal attainment on an ability to accept the ambiguity within the process of finding life-space.

Lewin, group facilitator and educator, opened boundaries that created space for learning. This dimension of his theory has implication for learning teams and educators who are helping students in self-discovery processes. Leaders who see the significance of life-space and are making it a priority open boundaries for others and accept the risk and ambiguity of their actions. A professor might adjust life-space for students according to their readiness, the greater the life-space, the greater the room for interdependent relationships and ownership of decisions. By Lewin's account, life-space is democratic and gives rise to interdependent relationships and ownership of decision and meaning. Lewin emphasized that "*objectivity cannot arise in a constraint situation; it arises only in a situation of freedom*" (Lewin, 1935, p. 177).

In addition to life-space, Lewin is noted for Field Theory (Lewin, 1935; Segal, 1997, pp. 262-265) acknowledged by Knowles (1989) as forces within social systems (the Wilber "'I," "We," and "It") that "operate to facilitate or inhibit learning" (p.75). The forces in consciousness, attracting or restraining, made one aware of the congruent and incongruent factors within his or her life-space. The appreciation of these forces in one's field of consciousness led to the action of mitigating restraining forces, often psychological defense mechanisms, and reinforcing attracting forces. The positive effects of such actions led to the development of learning tools under the rubric of "group and organizational interventions that formed the core of organizational development" (Segal, 1997, p. 263).

Lewin is grounded in the Montessori tradition where students learn how to decide for themselves. He opens a welcoming environment to students in settings where possibilities for learning are boundless. Participants experience life-space in an open system classroom environment that enables participants to be grounded in the "reality of the stratum in which the center of gravity of a particular individual lies" (Lewin, 1935, p. 175). Lewin's pedagogy

recognized multiple realities in which the real and imagined are brought into focus through force field examination. Thus for Lewin, the social context was the medium for growth, for change, and for learning. And, to repeat, it had to be free for “*Objectivity cannot arise in a constrain situation; it arises only in situation of freedom*” (p. 177). Lewin’s legacy is etched in group dynamics, psychology, open systems, self-directed work teams and co-constructed learning.

Allport’s foreword to Lewin’s collection of papers on group dynamics (Lewin, 1948) noted that he, like John Dewey, who will be discussed later, had a passionate respect for democratic institutions. Both appreciated the need for knowledge and obedience to laws of human nature in group settings and recognized that there must be respect for these laws in order for democratic environments to succeed. Freedom, they believed, needs to exist in research and in applied social science theory. Lewin, from a psychological perspective, and Dewey, from a philosophic perspective, believed in democratic group structures (M. K. Smith, 2001b). Smith quoted Reid in noting that in collaboration with Lippitt, Lewin concluded that there was “more originality, group-mindedness and friendliness in democratic groups. In contrast, there was more aggression, hostility, scapegoating, and discontent in laissez-faire and autocratic groups” (p. 8). Lewin and Dewey believed in the potential of democratic group structures in venues like work organizations, politics, and education.

Carl Rogers (1902 -1987), humanist and social scientist, is important to the understanding of interpersonal helping relationships in which participants to the relationship are bounded by purpose, acceptance of “unconditional positive regard” (Segal, 1997, p. 186) and empathetic understanding. To Rogers (1980), each person is to be valued without condition. In his worldview, helping relationships enable a person to make appropriate life choices and find their “inner wisdom and confidence” (Segal, 1997, p. 187); an idea that is complimentary to Maslow’s

need hierarchy that reaches actualization at its highest level (W. L. French & Bell, 1984).

Roger's optimistic and humanistic psychology encouraged psychological growth through relationships. Segal (1997) suggested that a Rogerian principled leader would ask of self: Do I trust myself enough to not influence others; do I trust the basic capacities of others to solve their problems; do I establish an environment that frees others to learn and participate; and do I accept responsibility for what I am charged to do, do I trust, and do I bring conflict into the open.

Rogers (1980) encouraged sensitivity to one's own feelings and those of others. He operated from a belief that it is through a respect for feelings that individuals grow in their self worth. His empathetic theory of unconditional positive regard cautions the usage of judging words so that individuals are free to find meaning from their own inner wisdom and confidence. Rogers is a transactionist who offers comprehensive ideas on how to come together in group. These ideas have been brought into client centered therapy and have raised consciousness in terms of relationship with self and others (Segal, 1997). A study by Kember (2009) at the University of Hong Kong demonstrated the importance of relationship building on student-centered active learning. The study concluded that disciplines, which reserved the initial parts of their program for building knowledge, had a more difficult time implementing active learning. Conversely, up front time in relationship building had positive effects as the study showed a significant increase on nine dimensions of learning effectiveness (according to the Cohen measurement of effect sizes (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002)) including relationships between teachers and students and relationships with other students over a two year period.

Paulo Freire (1921 – 1997) adds further substance by bringing cultural and social aspects into the discussion. Born into Brazilian repression, Freire formulates a liberating education philosophy based upon freedom. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970), he

philosophically synthesized anthropology, sociology, theology, and psychology into a social theory which has been used throughout the world (Braaten, 1987). Freire's (2003) critique of political power structures and education work was considered revolutionary because he believed that his society socializes its citizens into oppression. He worked, therefore, to bring people to a place that was "less ugly, more beautiful, less discriminatory, more democratic, less dehumanizing, more humane" (Freire, 2003, p. 25).

Freire (2003) recognized oppression where a people were held down by a political system or ruling class. In today's world he might even see it in the context of a technological society that is programming people into the logic of a system that submerges them into a "culture of silence" (Freire, 2003, p. 33). He is noted for pedagogy of *conscientiacao*, in which participants learn "to perceive social, political, and economic contradiction and ... take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 35). It is a theory of consciousness raising, *conscientization*, in which learners analyze, pose questions, and examine structures through dialogue to develop an awareness of the impact that society is having on their lives (Dirkx, 1998). People, Freire believed, provided with the proper tools are capable of finding meaning by looking critically at the world and engaging in dialogue with others. They educate each other through their mediation of world realities. Education, he believed, is a process that builds conformity of its participants or it becomes the very practice of freedom by empowering participants to critically and creatively discover how to transform their world (Freire, 2003). There is no neutral ground in Freire's pedagogy. His belief in freedom and democracy in education ultimately made him a threat to the political structure around him and for that, he was imprisoned.

Freire's pedagogy involves a reflective commitment to egalitarianism using the unfolding critical consciousness of the perceived reality to empower individuals to action (Braaten, 1987).

As in religious traditions, Freire saw dialogue through a lens of love. That is, if one does not have a capacity for love, one should not enter a dialogue. Teachers in the application of Freire's principles would have characteristics supportive of these theories, ideas, and beliefs. To Freire, it is a process that requires a headset of co-learning among participants. In a manner similar to Lewin, it enables one to unlearn (unfreeze), relearn, (change), and recreate (refreeze).

Braaten (1987) reported how practitioners have applied Freire's principles in North America. These include (a) Latino educators who have totally applied the social, political, and cultural aspects of his concepts, (b) educators in secondary or higher public classrooms who applied Freire's ideas of dialogue and critical reflection toward class content and social issues, (c) educators, administrators, psychologists who used Freire selectively to "deradicalize" (p.66) him, (d) community organizers who used his consciousness raising techniques, (e) religious educators in the context of social justice, and (f) "transformationalists" (p. 68) who seek personal transformation.

Unpublished research by Heaney (1980), in Braaten, on two private, liberating education programs with working class adults in Chicago showed that Freireian methodology was that of collective participants who formed their own culture in a way that was creative, actionable, and critical in terms of consciousness. This was in contrast to nonliberating education, which was individualized, subject to compromise and acquiescent in consciousness behavior. Clearly, Freire promoted collective as opposed to individual action. He emphasized collaboration over competition, took culture into account, and advocated conflict resolution within the context of critical reflection.

Richard Shaull who wrote the foreword in 1972 to the *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (Freire, 2003) expressed an implication of Freire's work in education by stating the Freirian belief that education is not neutral, he wrote:

Perhaps most important of all, Paulo laid before me the imperative of contributing, as an educator, to the emergence of subjecthood, and the development of processes and patterns of community relationships which contribute to this. As a result, I was compelled, as a professor, to do everything possible to create conditions under which students can DISCOVER rather than receive, become the SUBJECTS of their own learning process, and of their own lives. (Shaull, in Braaten, 1987, Appendix C)

Freire's immense contributions are beyond the scope of this research. It is clear, however, that he added further dimensions to the overwhelming philosophical call for democracy, justice, and respect for the way in which higher education is achieved. Research summarized by Braaten (1987) showed how his ideas have been tested and shown useful to pedagogical development. John Dewey is in pace with Freire in offering views on how education might be pursued.

John Dewey (1859 – 1952), American philosopher, social activist and educator, advocated learning by doing. Philosophically pragmatic, Dewey rejected absolutes by embracing uncertainty, provisionality, and the continuous testing of hypothesis through experimentation (Berkowitz, 2010). Gergen (2009) quoted Dewey:

...all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness' [and in] this sense [says Gergen], Dewey foreshadows themes central to relational being" (p. 242). If raised in social isolation, what would an individual think about? There would be no capacity to think about science, literature, ..., or global well-being. (p. 242)

Dewey supported the goals of citizens in a democratic society as being best served by learning within such community. In this respect it was important that one participating as part of an ongoing collaborative process was in relationship with others (Gergen, 2009) and it is through this that Dewey gave ideas on presence.

Dewey expressed what it means for an educator to be present to his or her students.

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2005) noted the following on Dewey:

John Dewey (1933), in *How We Think* used the adjective ‘alive’. The teacher, he wrote, must ‘give full time and attention to observation and interpretation of the pupils’ intellectual reactions. [He or she] must be *alive* [original emphasis] to all forms of bodily expression of mental condition...as well as sensitive to the meaning of all expression in words. (p. 275)

By including attention, observation, and interpretation, Dewey addressed both attending and perceiving as described above (p. 268). These factors toward process within a learning environment are consistent with Edgar Schein’s principles of process consultation (Schein, 1969), a widely used method by consultants and leaders to help people in organizations learn.

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) elaborated on a dimension of process within self:

John Dewey (1938), in *Experience and education, also referred to a divided self*. When there is continuity and wholeness in one’s life and learning, he argued, an individual passes from one situation to the next and ‘does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world’ (p. 44). In contrast, ‘[a] divided world, a world whose parts and aspects do not hang together, is at once a sign and a cause of a divided personality. When the splitting-up reaches a certain point, we call the person insane’ (p. 44). When there is a lack of continuity between a teacher’s professional life and personal self such that a teacher refers to herself in opposing terms—‘me as a teacher and me as a person’—the apparent lack of continuity between her worlds can become worrisome and her ability to be present is compromised (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 272).

Teaching must have an ‘end-in-view’ that is moral (Dewey, 1933, 1938), not only in terms of the immediate lessons being learned and taught but the ends to which education itself aspires. In Dewey’s (1916) view, these ends are realized in a democratic society. Presence, in the end, is not neutral, nor is it bounded by the persons of teacher and student, but reaches toward and is grounded in such a moral imperative. (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 273)

Kolb, a translator of Dewey, considered learning that occurs as life unfolds. His “interest lay in exploring the processes associated with making sense of concrete experiences – and the different styles of learning that may be involved” (M. K. Smith, 2001a, ¶ 4). In this way, he applied the work of Dewey and Lewin and with David Fry developed an experiential learning

theory (Kayes, 2002). Kolb's theory of experiential learning (ELT) provided a clear model for learning as life unfolds. It has been widely applied by consultants, trainers, and professionals in higher education, business organizations and institutions who might use it in ways that bring change to structure, raise consciousness within groups, and promote personal growth and self-awareness. Kolb's ELT is used time and again in practice. It encompasses a four-step process of (a) acknowledging a concrete experience, (b) observing and reflecting upon it, (c) forming an abstract conceptualization of the meaning of the learning that, (d) might be tested in new situations. Kolb and Fry stressed that the learning process within these four steps can begin at any point and suggest that it can be thought of as a continuous spiral (M. K. Smith, 2001a). Kolb's work acknowledged Dewey's consistent theme that experience is important to adult learning and that such experience offers opportunities for personal growth.

The philosophers, educators, and social psychologists presented in this section inspire a relational consciousness that offers possibilities for education and other institutions. As a community of thought leaders, they propose the possible while encouraging a reduction of boundaries of tradition that often are imposed in seeking to understand the unknown (Wilber, 2001). They expressed a common understanding of the cultural imperative for learning which rests in democratic ideals. Each of the philosophers called for presence and mostly on behalf of Lewin, Rogers, Freire, and Dewey, a presence among participants in the act of learning. Their ideas laid a foundation for contemporary thought on the relational aspects of learning. Because of their work, we are more able to appreciate the context for which they advocate – relationship and freedom in the learning process. Their contributions, along with Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida, made a point that research in the psychology of knowing has been approached with a natural science bias when ways of knowing are more psychologically based and that finding

new ways of knowing in either theory or practice are found through conscious thought (Giorgi, 2009).

Adult Learning Theory

An important aspect of this study is how adult learning theory might apply to the research questions posed. This section seeks to encompass a review of learning theory in the context of andragogy, an adult self-directed methodology developed by Knowles, transformational learning through the different approaches of Mezirow and Torbert, and further discussion of presence in learning as espoused by Senge, who along with Torbert, bridges learning into organizational contexts. The seeds of adult learning laid by Eduard Lindeman and Malcolm Knowles are discussed along with perspectives of John Dewey. The contributions of Mezirow and Torbert are presented with regard to their respective transformational learning theories. The section includes a perspective on how Edgar Schein's work with helping might contribute to adult learning and ends with a brief review of emotional intelligence. The assumption for this portion of the literature review is that adult education is a paradigm from which theories are developing. Some consider adult learning a creative and artful field that testable theories elude while others believe it to be an art and a science (Merriam, 2001). This section takes both perspectives into account.

Adult learning perspectives. According to Brookfield (1984), Eduard Lindeman expressed ideas that initiated an understanding of adult learning. Many of his themes are consistent with the aforementioned philosophers, Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Lewin, Dewey, and Freire. For example, Lindeman's 1926 book entitled *The Meaning of Adult Education* reflects a philosophy that grounded leaders of educational thought (Knowles, 1989). Knowles credited Linderman for the progress he made in defining andragogy and its principles for teaching adult

learners. Lindeman's contributions are clearly established in the growing body of adult learning theory and practice.

Experience is a primary aspect of Lindeman's adult learning construction. Adults, he believed, develop from an interpretive understanding of their experience through an interpersonal exchange with others. Lindeman (as cited in Brookfield (1984, p. 187) described adult education as:

... a cooperative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life, and hence elevates living itself to the level of an experiment. (p. 187)

Lindeman's philosophy affirmed educators who honor a student's experience by helping them with its interpretation and critical evaluation upon which to base meaning. Lindeman echoed the philosophy of Freire who proposed dialogic, problem solving learning as "the antithesis of narrative or banking system of education" which simply deposits knowledge in a student's mind (Brookfield, 1984, p. 188). Lindeman, like Lewin, saw life as the adult's school and adulthood in the context of education as an awareness of self, coupled with a readiness and ability to make affirming life choices.

Lindeman viewed adults as part of the social milieu, stakeholders in society by virtue of need (Brookfield, 1984). Gergen (2009) broadened his context to include all factors that are influential to one's well-being in today's world. By both accounts, society brings people into relationships through their participation and is best served through democracy as opposed to forms of dominance and the oppression. Lindeman advocated discussion within small groups of adult learners allowing students and professors the opportunity to understand each other's life

experience as a basis for learning. He and Freire emphasize curriculum development that opens the possibility of experience as a basis for learning and meaning.

Brookfield (1984) reported several themes in Lindeman's adult learning conceptualization. Known to him as andragogy, it is (a) a "collaborative, informal, yet critical ... [and] non-coercive [process where] the learner is of prime importance;" (p. 194); (b) it rests on the learner's personal history and social environment; (c) it is established in a social context; (d) it is facilitated in small group discussion as a unique mode of adult education; and (e) it is focused on the merits of various economic paradigms and racial joining. In practice, it combats "racial discrimination ... [and acknowledges] the international role of the United States" (p. 195).

Lindeman, according to Brookfield (1984), believed that "curriculum development" (p. 192) was an unfortunate reality of educational practice. It places shallow, rigid boundaries on education requiring technicians in the facilitation of learning rather than educated men and women. Lindeman was very influential to Malcolm Knowles who developed the practice of adult education.

Malcolm Knowles (1980), scholar, visionary, and adult educator, is credited with proposing andragogy, a word applied to adult learning, which he thought of as both the art and science of helping adults learn. It is argued whether Knowles's work resulted in a theory of adult learning or if his contribution was in its definition and applied principles. According to Brookfield (1984), "He uses the term andragogy as an empirical descriptor, summarizing what he considers to be deriving the chief features of adult learning and development, and, from this summation, a set of teaching procedures to use with adults" (p. 190). Merriam (2001) suggested that Knowles himself concluded that his work was less of a theory and more of a model of

assumptions that could serve as a basis for theory. His work is recognized as being in the greatest of humanistic and democratic traditions and is foundational for educators who have built upon his principles.

Knowles (1989) quoted Lindeman who wrote in his 1926 book entitled *The Meaning of Adult Education*:

In what areas do most people appear to find life's meaning? We have only one pragmatic guide: meaning must reside in the things for which people strive, the goals which they set for themselves, their wants, needs, desires, and wishes.

I am conceiving adult education in terms of a new technique for learning It represents a process by which the adult learns to become aware of and evaluate his experience. To do this he cannot begin by studying "subjects" in the hope that someday this information will be useful. On the contrary, he begins by giving attention to situations in which he finds himself, to problems which include obstacles to his self-fulfillment In this process the teacher finds a new function. He is not the oracle who speaks from the platform of authority, but rather the guide, the pointer-outer who also participates in learning in proportion to the vitality and relevancy of his facts and experiences. In short, my conception of adult education is this: a cooperative venture in nonauthoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience; a quest of the mind which digs down to the roots of the preconceptions which formulate our conduct; a technique of learning for adults which makes education coterminous with life and hence elevates living itself to the level of adventurous experiment. (pp. 73-74)

Adult education, andragogy, comes from the work of Lindeman and Knowles.

According to Merriam (2001), andragogy is based on the assumption that the adult learner is one who (a) "has an independent self-concept and can therefore direct his or her own learning" (p. 5), (b) has accumulated life experiences that are a rich resource for learning, (c) has learning needs related to changing social roles, (d) "is problem centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge" (p. 5), and (e) is intrinsically motivated to learn.

Knowles (1989) credited Jack Gibb with putting adult learning principles into six actionable learning steps that include:

1. Learning must be problem-centered
2. Learning must be experience-centered
3. Experience must be meaningful to the learner
4. The learner must be free to look at the experience
5. The goals must be set and the search organized by the learner
6. The learner must have feedback about progress toward goals (pp. 77-78)

Accordingly, these steps rest on six core assumptions of adult learning needs that include: (a) having a need to know why learning something is important “before undertaking to learn it” (Knowles, 1989, p. 83), (b) a self concept wherein a person moves to “being responsible for their own lives” (p. 83), a transformation from dependency to self-direction, (c) an ability to draw on experience in the learning process with acknowledgement that experience is a rich resource for learning, (d) a “readiness” (p. 84) to assume new social roles within the context of a learning environment based upon a need to “cope ... with ... real life situations (p. 84), (e) an “orientation to learning” (p. 84) that can be applied, and (f) a drive to apply new learning derived from “intrinsic motivators” (p. 84).

Knowles provided a *self-directed learning* (SDL) methodology which sets forth a framework for how students and professors might co-create learning goals, learning plans and outcome measurement. SDL is described in *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers* (Knowles, 1975). It contains practical guides for students and professors that include, for example, goal setting, learning contract development, and learning assessment processes. Self-directed learning is best used by students and professors “together” (p. 7) in learning how to be self-directed and for developing strategies that participants in the process might use in taking responsibility for their learning. The context of self-directed learning is comprehensive and includes climate setting for learning, diagnosing learning needs, and learning plan design. The recognition of the learner as having the capability for self-direction provides an alternative to “teacher-directed learning” (p. 19). Self-directed learning calls for a professorial role that is

helping and facilitative in nature combined with a student who assumes responsibility for his or her learning; a behavioral shift that might be in order for those making a decision to practice SDL.

Knowles (1980) stressed the competencies needed by students and professors in self-directed learning classes as having an ability to learn in ambiguous contexts and an ability to learn with the help of other. It is a mutually facilitating process in which participants have a clear understanding of self and use that capability to confidently help others within the group. Students develop these capabilities with the help of professors. As pointed out by Merriam (2001), the goals of SDL vary. For those with a humanistic orientation, the goal is to develop the capacity to self-direct. Another goal is to foster transformational learning which was theorized under different rubrics by Mezirow (1997) and Torbert (Fisher et al., 2003).

Knowles is criticized for failing to consider the big picture (Dirkx, 1998) or as Wilber (2001) might put it, the “We” and the “It.” That inclusion might have more clearly put the social context of learning beyond the immediate classroom environment. Nevertheless, a powerful framework for self-directed learning emerges when its principles are combined with specific guidelines for learners, professors and teachers as Knowles helps one appreciate that self-directed learning creatively invites one into a co-constructed learning process. For example, learning contracts formed through the active participation of student and professor might be similar in structure but vastly different in goal, context and methodology. SDL, therefore, provides a mechanism for opening life-space (Lewin, 1935) for students and their professors in the context of freedom in the learning environment, voice in the process, and co-construction of method and outcomes. It is a socially constructed relational pedagogy that enables learning. There are many constructions for SDL such as a focus on the self within the process of learning

to a social-political context, which might encompass a social arena. Knowles, according to Merriam (2001) provided the andragogical pillar of self-directed learning which provides a foundation for adult education theory and research. Self-directed learning in the context presented by Knowles is a sort of learning that is mostly associated with institutions, schools and the professor/student relationship. For the adult learner, it is based largely on experience coming in the context of life experience and in the context experience created in a learning environment known as experiential learning, which was discussed earlier.

Kayes (2002) has written that experiential learning occurring in the context of a classroom environment comes with its critics such as empirical researchers who have difficulty validating instruments like the Learning Styles Inventory and theorists who argue that the theory provides limited accounts of the factors involved in learning. Kayes reported, however, that the critics have been slow in coming up with alternatives and focuses his efforts toward enhancing the value of experiential learning theory in ways that include (a) how action approaches to management learning change behavior, (b) how “cognitive approaches emphasize the intra- and interpersonal transformations that occur with and between managers” (p.138), (c) how reflective approaches enhance management practice, and (d) how managers use experience to gain a greater sense of satisfaction and more complete views of themselves (p. 138). To Kayes, the key is in the language that ultimately defines the experience as opposed to “mental or emotional processes” (p. 146). Moreover, it is language according to Kayes that provides a link to the social context of the experience. Kayes, therefore sees a link of experience to the social world and all that might be there like the “We,” and the “It.” Kayes believes the value is in learning methods “that increase vocabularies, introduce proximity of knowledge sharing, aid in making connections between personal and social knowledge, and organize experience in meaningful

ways ... ” (p. 147). Ways that this is applied in organizations including education is writing of stories, critical incident reviews, and storytelling. Kayes (2002) reported that Fisher et al.’s (2003) in their work with action inquiry proposed parts of spoken language as framing, advocating, illustrating, and inquiring within themes that have been expressed in this review like dialogue and narrative stories, reviewed later in this chapter, which could develop the meaning and understanding inherent in spoken language. A great deal of the adult learning dialogue has focused on experience as an instrument for learning. Two theorists, Mezirow and Torbert took the discussion a step further by their engagement in transformational learning theory.

Transformational learning theory. Jack Mezirow, Emeritus Professor of Adult and Continuing Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, developed a transformational learning theory that continues to emerge. It is a theory for educators and adult learners who are focused on making meaning from their learning process (Mezirow, 1994). Mezirow defined learning “as the social process of construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action” (p. 222). He based his transformational learning theory on an emancipatory paradigm involving meaning schemes defined as “the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feeling which shape a particular interpretation” (p. 223) and meaning perspectives that are “broad sets of predispositions resulting from psychocultural assumptions which determine the horizons of ... experiences” (p. 223). The theory relies on dialectics, referred to by Mezirow as discourse in the synthesis of objectivist and interpretive paradigms. Discourse, a kind of dialogue, focuses on content and attempts to defend or justify beliefs by examining the evidence for and against competing viewpoints. It requires accurate information, freedom from coercion and self-deception, and participants who can objectively weigh evidence and remain open to alternative points of view that might or might not

be consensual. Subjects for discourse within a learning community include critical reflection and discourse on empirical instrumental learning and communicative, interpretative learning involving morals and values. These are elements within the theory (Mezirow, 1994).

Transformational learning, therefore, is a communicative learning theory, which focuses on the making of meaning as opposed to finding meaning. There have been published papers on aspects of transformational learning such as instructor/student characteristics, and learning environment. However, as the theory emerged these factors become clear. A review of the theory is important to this study as finding the kind of meaning spoken of by Frankl (1984) as emanating from “love (caring for another person), ... courage during difficult times, and suffering” (p. x) is assumed to be transformational. Therefore, Mezirow’s theory informed the research for how meaning might be found.

Mezirow (1997) applies his transformational learning theory in education. The theory considers (a) the objectivist paradigm of learning built upon Western learning traditions and (b) an interpretive hermeneutic paradigm allowing for the consideration of different texts and interpretations of meaning as a methodological alternative to a rational approach. Similar to Gergen (2009), Mezirow made the point that language is social in origin and discloses the world in which knowledge, information, and meaning are embedded. The disclosing of meanings differs since language is cultural with different meaning often attached to it.

Mezirow’s (1996b) transformative learning theory encompasses twelve propositions presented as summarized by the theorist. These propositions are shared in their entirety so understanding is clear in the way Mezirow dealt with themes within his propositions that relate to relationship and meaning:

1. A learning theory framed as a general, abstract, and idealized model, used to explain the generic structure, dimensions, and dynamics of the process of learning can be

- useful to action-oriented adult educators. A learning theory should be grounded in the nature of human communication. Seeking agreement on our interpretations and beliefs is central to human communication and the learning process.
2. Learning is understood as the process of using prior interpretation to construe new and revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action.
 3. We make meaning by projecting images and symbolic models, meaning schemes (see 6 below) based upon prior learning, onto our sensory experiences and imaginatively use analogies to interpret new experiences.
 4. Construal of meaning may be intentional, propositional (unintentional, incidental), or presentational without the use of words as when we discern or intuit presence, motion, directionality, kinesthetic experience, and feelings (Heron, 1998).
 5. Sense perceptions are filtered through a frame of reference which selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition, and feeling by predisposing our intentions, expectations, and purposes.
 6. A frame of reference is composed of two dimensions: a *meaning perspective* (habits of the mind), consisting of broad, generalized, orienting predispositions, and a *meaning scheme* which is constituted by the cluster of specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and value judgment that accompany and shape interpretation. A more fully developed (more functional) frame of reference is one that is (a) inclusive, (b) differentiating, (c) permeable, (d) critically reflective, and (e) integrative of experience (Mezirow, 1991).
 7. A belief is a habit that guides action. Beliefs become crystallized in concepts. Any action guided by a belief is also a test of that belief. When the actions dictated by belief (and the interpretations articulating them) fail in practice or become problematic through changing circumstances, our frames of reference may be transformed through critical reflection on their assumptions. Seeking agreement on our interpretations and beliefs and the possibility and potential of critical reflection are cardinal concepts in adult learning processes.
 8. Learning occurs by elaborating existing meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes, or transforming meaning perspectives. Transformation may be epochal or incremental. Deconstructing a text or redefining a task-oriented problem involves "objective reframing". Transforming one's own dysfunctional frame of reference and recognizing the reasons why one acquired it in the first place is "subjective reframing." The most personally significant transformation involves a critique of premises regarding one's self.
 9. There are two distinctive domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, and modes of validating beliefs: *instrumental learning*-learning to control or

manipulate the environment or other people, and *communicative learning* – learning what others mean when they communicate with you (Habermas, 1984).

10. We establish the validity of our problematic beliefs in instrumental learning by empirically testing to determine the *truth* – that an assertion is as it is purported to be. In communicative learning, we determine the *justification* of a problematic belief through appeal of tradition, authority or force, or rational discourse. Discourse involves an informed, objective, rational and intuitive assessment of reason, evidence and arguments and leads toward a tentative, consensual, best judgment. Consensus building is an on-going process and always subject to review by a broader group of participants. The nature of human communication implies the ideal conditions for discourse (and, by implication, for adult learning and education as well).
11. Taking action on reflective insights often involves situational, emotional, and informational constraints that may also require new learning experiences. A transformative learning experience requires that the learner makes an informed and reflective decision to act. This decision may result in immediate action, delayed action caused by situational constraints or lack of information on how to act, or result in a reasoned reaffirmation of an existing pattern of action.
12. Development in adulthood is understood as a learning process. Instrumental competence in coping with the external world involves attainment of task-oriented performance skills that may involve reflective problem-solving and sometimes problem posing. Communicative competence refers to the ability of the learner to negotiate his or her own purposes, values, and meanings rather than to simply accept those of others. A learner may acquire communicative competence by becoming more aware and critically reflective of assumptions, more able to freely and fully participate in discourse, and to overcome constraints to taking reflective action. (Mezirow, 1996b, pp. 162 – 165).

Mezirow (1996b) asserted, “Meaning, interpretation, and understanding are functions of the rational assessment of the validity claims made by those communicating with each other” (p. 165). Discourse enables the assessment or the testing of the validity of beliefs and interpretations. It is a process of validation among others within community.

Mezirow’s transformational learning theory has critics who have attempted to offer clarity to his theoretical claims. Pietrykowski’s (as cited in Mezirow, 1996a) criticized that “there can be no particular set of learnings that leads to emancipation because such learning ‘privileges a particular emancipatory logic and does not tolerate differences in the social

construction of diverse communities of knowledge and educational practices” (Mezirow, 1996a, p. 237). Mezirow responded that his theory allows for the transformation of frames of reference through the “critical reflection on one’s assumptions and the resulting interpretations validated through discourse” (p. 237). Learning, to Mezirow, is shaped by individual and corporate purpose and leads to a point that might be teleological in nature, which means that differing opinions might be drawn from the same data. Mezirow was clear that a source of meaning is the help of others – a point consistent with Gergen’s (2009) pedagogical views.

Kitchenham (2008) and Kroth and Boverie (2009) criticized Mezirow’s theory for being complex and despite its regard as a leading adult learning theory, students, practitioners, and faculty find it difficult to use. Earlier, Kroth and Boverie (2000) proposed how adult educators can improve their learning processes by having students understand their life mission and how it relates to their learning. Their study “suggests that emancipatory learning must also include awareness building and purpose seeking” (Kroth & Boverie, 2000, p. 134). Using Mezirow’s theory, Kroth and Boverie (2009) proposed an adult discovery model which helps one discover their passion noting that the process of personal discovery can involve “danger, excitement, fear, risks, and learning” (p. 45). Their model incorporates aspects of evolutionary (disturbances to belief systems) and revolutionary (shock, trauma) discovery that occur as a consequence of one’s actions. It is a model that might be applied to coaching, facilitating and theory building. The model takes Mezirow’s meaning structures into account. Adding to the criticism of Mezirow’s theory is Gunnlaugson (2007) who summarized the theory’s limitations as (a) acontextual in its emphasis on critical reflection that might overemphasize rationality, (b) the theory’s disregard for other ways of knowing, and (c) its emphasis over individual change as opposed to an environment where the social aspects of change are taken into account.

Taylor (2008) proposed that Mezirow's theory is leading edge because the instinctive drive among humans is making meaning of their lives. He saw the theory as enabling a comprehensive interpretation of the meaning of an experience by using the past to construct new meaning: a paradigmatic shift for a person. He cited important teaching components of transformation learning that include (a) critical reflection, (b) a problem for which a community can dialogue, and (c) a horizontal professor/student relationship that focuses on the transactional nature of the professor/student relationship as co-constructive learners with different roles. In the context of this research, Taylor (2008) called for a need to understand the students' role in fostering transformational learning in relation to their faculty and the need to understand the peripheral consequences of transformational learning, that is its effect on peers, the professor, and the institution as well as others who play a significant role in a student's transformation.

From Mezirow's (1997) perspective, the adult educator should recognize the learner's objectives so that they can be of service in helping students reach them in an "autonomous [and] socially responsible" way (p. 8). Autonomy refers to one gaining an understanding of how to become critically "reflective on one's own assumptions" (p. 9) so that one can engage in conversations that would validate beliefs and values.

Mezirow (1997) proposed that educators develop the following skills to facilitate transformational learning: (a) an ability of a professor to have a critical awareness of his or her own assumptions in helping others, (b) an ability to aid students in effective discourse, (c) an ability to establish learning environments that are free of coercion, (d) a capability to enable autonomous thinking and reflexivity in understanding experience, and (e) an ability to foster engagement experiences like learning contracts, case studies and simulations. The main idea within transformative learning is to "help learners actively engage the concepts presented in the

context of their own lives and collectively critically assess the justification of new knowledge” (p. 10). The educator becomes the facilitator and provocateur rather than an expert in subject matter. Ideal conditions for adult education would necessarily depend upon various cultural factors in the mix. Wilber’s (2000a) “Big Three” (p. 111) might help in the organization of these factors into various aspects of classroom learning.

Mezirow’s theory centers on making meaning from one’s experiences through aspects of critical self-reflection and discourse. Like Freire, he focuses on emancipatory qualities of transformational learning where the learner has an active voice in the process of making meaning. Aspects of Mezirow’s theory have been applied in the practice of human resource management with Brooks (2004) reporting that researchers have focused mostly on leader development. The rationale for such deployment rests in “how transformative learning should be evaluated” (p. 213). Such evaluation should trace differences in meaning perspectives that should include:

1. changes in meaning structures;
2. progressive growth of differentiation, complexity, critical reflectivity. Openness to alternative perspectives and action;
3. the ability to participate freely and fully in rational discourse (ideal discourse); and
4. willingness to accept consensual validation as a mode of problem-solving in communicative learning. (Mezirow, 1991 as cited in Brooks, 2004, p. 213)

According to Brooks (2004), a growing body of researchers see Mezirow’s theory as an approach that offers new ways of looking at the world and “a possible educational means of securing the health and well-being of the world’s people” (p. 222). These researchers include “adult educators, HRD professionals, management professionals, and developmental psychologists” (p. 221).

Another transformational theory is offered by William Torbert, developmental psychologist and Professor Emeritus of Leadership at the Carroll School of Management at

Boston College. Torbert's theory of "action inquiry" (Fisher et al., 2003) considered power and leadership dynamics that have been applied in higher education, businesses, and organizations. His theory is grounded by the work of Chris Argyris, which is briefly reviewed to establish context for action inquiry. It is also grounded in the work of Jane Loevinger known for developing a theory of ego development. Since Torbert's action logics precede his work with liberating organization structures, Loevinger is presented first.

Jane Loevinger (1908 – 2008), developmental psychologist, is known for developing a theory of personality involving states of ego development (Loevinger, 1976). Her research identified nine stages of a maturing ego that ranged from infant to a fully developed adult. Descriptors associated with three of these stages, also known as stems, include (a) gratification of immediate need for the infant, (b) self-aware in the period of early adulthood, and (c) a fully integrated, fully mature ego, in later adulthood, a stage which few attain. Torbert collaborated with Loevinger and applied her work in his adult development and organization research by using her Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT) with modification in his research on action logics (Torbert, 2014). This involved replacing some of her psychologically sensitive developmental stems with work related stems. Loevinger's work blended with Torbert's who developed action logics, a theory of adult development, which is discussed below.

Chris Argyris (1923 – 2013) is an American business theorist with a background in organizational psychology who became a distinguished professor of education and organization behavior at Harvard University. His research identified the incongruent relationship between mature individuals, characterized by an awareness of self and an ability to initiate, and organizational leaders who create a logically oriented world that includes tight chains of command, task specialization, and limited spans of control (Argyris, 1957). Though logically

designed for productivity, these formal organizations were stifling to the human condition by exerting pressures for dependency, passivity, and subordination to command. Under these conditions, individuals have “little control over their working environment” (p. 13). Argyris stated propositions drawn from his research on the bureaucratic, mechanistic organizations common at the time and perhaps less so today.

Proposition I. *There Is a Lack of Congruency between the Needs of Healthy Individuals and the Demands of the Formal Organization* (p. 20).

Proposition II. *The Results of This Disturbance Are Frustration, Failure, Short-term Perspective, and Conflict* (p. 21).

Proposition III. *The Nature of the Formal Principles of Organization Cause the Subordinate, at Any Given Level, to Experience Competition, Rivalry, Intersubordinate Hostility, and to Develop a Focus toward the Parts Rather than the Whole* [original emphasis] (p. 22).

Argyris (1957) believed that the kind of “dependency, subordination, [and] submissiveness” (p. 23) evident in his research could be mitigated by “democratic or participative” (p. 23) styles of leadership which would alter the power dynamic by dispersing it through the organization. These thoughts and those of Loevinger were precursors to the work of Torbert, whose theories dealt with adult development and the dispersion of power in organizations.

Substantial research supports Torbert’s action inquiry theory and frameworks used in its application. The theory is helping people in the latter part of life as they organize supporting relationships and changes in their environment. It has also been used to develop strategic leaders who transform organizations in ways that enhance human agency and productivity. Within the social sciences, Torbert’s theory has informed the use of participative action research in studies that embrace “not just empirical positivist research ... but also 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person research and action with co-participants in live settings” (Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009, p. 133). The

review of his work focuses on how his theory is applied in organizational leadership and education.

Torbert's (Fisher et al., 2003) transformational theory, which is also considered a development theory rests upon "action logic" (Rooke & Torbert, 2005, p. 67) as opposed to personality and management style theory. Action logic considers how leaders "interpret their surroundings and react when power of safety is challenged" (Rooke & Torbert, 2005, p. 67). A central implication within the theory's constructs is that a person understands his or her action logic in working toward a higher order of effectiveness by using logics that requires more breadth and depth in their use; for example, developing from a management to leadership role. Torbert's action logics are summarized in the following table, which illustrates how different leaders might interpret their level of effectiveness and what they might strive to achieve in the context of their development. The data within Table 1 is based upon 25 years of survey-based research among thousands of leaders. It summarizes the percent of the research sample that fell into each of the logics. The action logics summarized in Table 1 depict the kinds of leaders who might be found in organizations. One might find validity by examining the logics based upon their own experiences in organizations. A diagnostic process is available on Torbert's website (see <http://www.williamtorbert.com>) for anyone who wishes to determine his or her position in the listing of logics.

The characteristics and strengths that are summarized in Table 1 show the generative nature of the logics. A person advances in the logics through their own control and one knowing his or her "own action logic can be the first step toward developing a more effective leadership style" (Rooke & Torbert, 2005, p. 69). The tool for such progression is action inquiry.

Table 1

Seven Ways of Leading

| Action logic | Characteristics | Strengths | Percent of sample profiling at this action logic |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| Opportunist | <i>Wins any way possible. Self-oriented; manipulative, “might makes right.”</i> | Good in emergencies and in sales opportunities. | 5% |
| Diplomat | <i>Avoids overt conflict. Wants to belong; obeys group norms; rarely rocks the boat.</i> | Good as supportive glue within an office; helps bring people together. | 12% |
| Expert | <i>Rules by logic and expertise. Seeks rational efficiency.</i> | Good as an individual contributor. | 38% |
| Achiever | <i>Meets strategic goals. Effectively achieves goals through teams; juggles managerial duties and market demands.</i> | Well suited to managerial roles; action and goal orientation. | 30% |
| Individualist | <i>Interweaves competing personal and company action logics. Creates unique structures to resolve gaps between strategy and performance.</i> | Effective in venture and consulting roles. | 10% |
| Strategist | <i>Generates organizational and personal transformations. Exercises the power of mutual inquiry, vigilance, and vulnerability for both the short and long term.</i> | Effective as a transformational leader. | 4% |
| Alchemist | <i>Generates social transformations. Integrates material, spiritual, and societal transformation.</i> | Good at leading society-wide transformations. | 1% |

Note. From “7 Transformations of Leadership,” by D. Rooke and W. R. Torbert, 2005, *Harvard Business Review*, 83, p. 69. Copyright 2005 by Harvard Business Review. Reprinted with permission.

Torbert (2011b) encouraged his students and clients “to experiment toward more effective action (a process [he] calls *action inquiry*)” (p. 1). Action inquiry is a “kind of behavior that is simultaneously inquiring and productive” (Fisher et al., 2003, p. 1). For

example, one could adopt a posture of action inquiry on the job or within a classroom, or in coaching a baseball team and even in spiritually-based encounters. It requires a person engaged in the process to be keenly aware of his or her power and how it might be applied in situations.

Action inquiry rests on three propositions (Fisher et al., 2003): (a) the integration of inquiry with action that is real world requiring reflexive, real time, responsive actions in here and now situations, (b) an exercise of “transforming power ... which is a rare, little understood type of power that invites mutuality, seeks contradiction, and requires heightened awareness of the present” (p. iv), and (c) a time intensive transformation of assumptions in which the person “will very likely need to work through several personal developmental transformations” (p. iv). Rooke and Torbert (2005) noted that organizations using action inquiry as a developmental process experience the learning steps between logics as being long term in nature. Action inquiry requires a person to “value one particular dynamic [which is] self-questioning-in-action” (Fisher, et al., 2003, p. 149). Torbert (2010) described a power dynamic within his theory that supports “personal human fulfillment, [the generation of] reliable organizational productivity under changing conditions, [the cultivation of] social justice, and ... responsible social science” (p. 209). Torbert’s (2010) use of power is liberating and the “person exercising *transforming power invites mutuality* [in a continued] *“humble effort – not just to be rational – but to be aware of the present moment in all its fullness”* (p. 224). A person would use transforming power in relation to self (the “I”), others (the “We), and the systems and culture surrounding the circumstance (the “It;” (Wilber, 2000a). Questioning, asking questions and inviting questions, is one way in which transforming power is used. According to Fisher et al. (2003):

The vast majority of all managers (the large proportion at the Achiever stage or earlier) must somehow, paradoxically, be open to a level of questioning that more than once leads them through upending developmental transformation that recast their assumptions about

the aims of life and work before they become fully open to moment-to-moment questioning that can improve performance. (p. 149)

Questioning in action requires commitment (Fisher et al., 2003). One avenue for applying action inquiry in education is by asking students to reconstruct a dilemma, a place where they are stuck, and then provide an opportunity for sharing the logic with others. The dialogue provokes questions and provides avenues for open discussion on the different action logics that might apply in this circumstance. As the process moves, the challenge of understanding one's action logic and that of others becomes apparent. According to Torbert (2011b), thinking backward in the logics from one's level of experience is easier than looking forward.

Participants in the action inquiry process form helping relationships to further their development. A study of 479 managers in different industries showed that 80% of Diplomats were in junior level positions in contrast to Strategists who were in more senior level positions. The findings suggest how senior level managers might use their knowledge of action logics to help junior level managers grow. The individual junior manager in a developmental mode controls the action inquiry process. Therefore, he or she forms relationships that are helpful to the developmental interpretation of meaning within the logics and actions required for personal and professional growth (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

Torbert's theory offers a structure for individual development in the context of one's own being (the "I"), his or her relationships with others (the "We"), and the cultural and system boundaries (the "It") that are either supporting or restraining development. The theory appears to call for using one's power and self-questioning as developmental drivers to overcome restraining forces (Torbert, 2010), an idea, perhaps, from Lewin's field theory. The use of power has relational implications in the movement through logics and it is almost obvious that one becomes more relationally oriented through movements from the lower level logics of

Opportunist, Diplomat, and Expert to the higher levels of Achiever, Individualist, Strategist and Alchemist.

According to Fisher et al. (2003), action inquiry is best enacted within liberating organizational structures which might be created in stable institutions like the military, hospitals, and banks and organizations where creativity is a strategic requirement. Examples might include industry, sports, arts, governments, and universities. In each of these organizations, whether stable or creative, people are assumed to trust the wide dispersion of authority. In this respect, the organization that promotes action inquiry which might otherwise be known as transforming inquiry considers specific organizational design principles that are summarized in the following “...eight essential qualities of liberating structure” (Torbert, 2010, p. 227).

“[The first] *quality of liberating structure is deliberate irony*” (Torbert, 2010); an irony that is practiced by the organization’s leadership. It involves a language of exploration that is encouraged among organizational members that enables a view of one’s “self-restricting reality” (p. 227) that might be understood through an examination of one’s own assumptions. In practice, leaders help members see contradiction in worldviews and provoke dialogue on the irony of subordinate interpretations of reality that differs from their leadership. Leaders and subordinates come to acknowledge such differences and work toward closing gaps in diverse views.

Torbert (2010) described the second quality:

A second quality of liberating structure is the definition of tasks that are incomprehensible and undoable without reference to accompanying processes and purposes.... Ordinarily employees or students treat tasks as meaningful in themselves or as meaningless except in terms of external rewards, masking the operation of their own interpretive scheme. (p. 227)

This requires participants to challenge their usual ways of doing things without a specifically defined purpose or process. There is a certain similarity in this tact to that which is embodied in “T” group training (Lewin, 1948), which enables an examination of one’s approach to ambiguity.

Torbert (2010) continued to describe the remaining qualities:

A third quality of liberating structure is premeditated and precommunicated structural evolution over time. Such evolution reflects the movement by organizational members as they move toward conscious appropriation of the process and purpose territories of reality and thus toward the possibility of collaboration in the search for shared purpose, self-direction, and quality work. (Torbert, 2010, p. 228)

A fourth quality of liberating structure is that its tasks are so structured and its leadership so functions as to provide a constant cycle of experiential and empirical research and feedback on participants’ different ways of constructing reality, on their changing relation to one another, and on the quality of their work. (Torbert, 2010, p. 228)

A fifth quality of liberating structure is the use of all available forms of power by the leadership to support the first four projects. (Torbert, 2010, p. 228).

Power is used in this manner to “create increasingly collaborative conditions” (Torbert, 2010, p. 228).

A sixth quality of liberating structure is that the structure at any given time is open, in principle, to inspection and challenge by organization member. (Torbert, 2010, p. 228)

This aspect of structure enables member challenges to ambiguity of purpose in which leaders respond by turning problems into opportunities while promoting inquiry to further the structure.

A seventh quality of liberating structure is that the leadership becomes vulnerable, in practice, to attack and public failure as soon as it behaves inauthentically when its tasks, processes, and purposes become incongruent and it refuses to acknowledge and correct such incongruities. (Torbert, 2010, p. 228)

A final quality of liberating structure, implicit throughout the foregoing discussion, is a leadership committed to, and practiced in, seeking, recognizing, and righting personal and organizational incongruities. The leadership leads other organizational members in learning while improving quality and in creating social settings [and relationships] that encourage simultaneous learning and quality work (Torbert, 2010, p. 229)

These qualities call for a leadership that is appropriately vulnerable and available to members. It is these behaviors that allow members to progress toward latter stages of the action logics (Fisher et al., 2003).

Action inquiry provides a developmental structure (the action logics) and organizational principles that facilitate one's progression within the ordered logics. Leaders and members of organizations have, within Torbert's theory, ways of moving toward higher levels of development with the aid of a leadership that is attuned to the process and supporting of organizational power constructs that support action inquiry. Action inquiry is existential – grounded in the experience itself, and is inclusive of relationships that establish a community of inquiry, liberty that grants equal rights in the context of relationships and quality that requires commitment, presence, and skill within aspects of inquiry (Torbert, 2010). The transformational aspects of the theory lay in (a) its logics, (b) the action inquiry, and (c) the liberating organization structure that supports the developmental sequence among individuals empowered by its use.

In summary, the adult learning theory, inclusive of transformational theory, presented in this section helps to inform a methodology that seeks to understand how relationships among highly mature and career seasoned professional doctoral students and their professors find meaning that might be transformative in nature. Mezirow has built upon Freire by shedding light on the psychological and cognitive aspects of the core process that requires a rational and critical reflection on one's core beliefs and assumptions in making meaning (Dirkx, 1998). How deep the reflection might go is unclear. Might it border the work of Delbecq (2003) who saw spiritual aspects within deeply reflective and meditative processes as part of a transformation process? This dissertation research might offer some insight. Mezirow and Torbert's transformational

learning theories lead one to a deeper sense of self and how one might contribute to groups and organizations. In this respect it acknowledges the guiding nature of interpreting the high authority of one's experience (Hart, Conklin, & Allen, 2008). These transformational learning theories invite conversations about how they might be expanded perhaps through the context of appreciative inquiry which offers a paradigm for how futures, individual and organizational, might be shaped (Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

The aforementioned philosophers, educators, and theorists provide investigatory themes for this research. Themes within the literature like freedom, democratic processes, cross-disciplinary dialogue, co-construction, social construction, and adult learning are being identified. An additional theme that seemingly fits within a context of adult learning theory is helping (Schein, 2009); a relational process opportunity for the task of learning that according to Schein is appropriate in many contexts.

Helping in learning. Distinguished MIT professor, organizational consultant, and cultural scholar Edgar Schein (1985; 1999; 2009) offered a helpful way to look at the helping relationship. His ideas apply to any community where its members seek to be in union. Schein's (2009) most recent work delves into the helping relationship and is reviewed within learning theory as a point of consciousness for student/professor relationships.

Lambrechts and colleagues (Lambrechts, Bouwen, Grieten, Huybrechts, & Schein, 2011) interviewed Schein for the purpose of understanding his views on helping relationships. They believed his ideas on helping have the potential for "becoming building blocks for a more ... impactful management research and education field" (p. 144). Helping is a process that might be taken as deceptively simple but is requiring of depth in terms of always trying but perhaps never reaching the level of understanding of the other person. Schein's helping relies on helpers being

responsive to whatever a situation might bring with an inclusion and awareness of the emotional make-up of the parties involved (Goleman, 1997; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). In an educational context it is the professor, student, and peers helping one another to the best of their ability. Lambrechts and his colleagues called for research that captures the “complexities, subtleties, and boundary conditions” (p. 145) of Schein’s concepts. This research examines such phenomenon in an environment that assumes a prevailing hierarchy among an interpersonal group of learners: students, their peers, and professors. Schein’s work represents an opportunity to be open to new possibilities on how helping relationships might contribute to learning and the finding of meaning.

Schein’s book (2009) entitled *Helping: How to Offer, Give, and Receive Help* provides insight into the psychological and social dynamics of helping relationships. He offered techniques and examples that aid in determining the help that is needed in a given situation and how the helper might make helping interventions. He dealt with how identities might be developed in a relationship, the ambiguity of the situation and the various roles played by participants. He incorporated aspects of process consultation that he developed (Schein, 1969, 1999) and the Johari Window put forth by Luft and Ingram, which is a practical framework for relational development through interpersonal communications (Armstrong, 2006). The assumption within this research is that the kind of relationship addressed herein is at least in part a helping one and one that it is reciprocal in nature.

Helping relationships as described by Schein (Lambrechts et al., 2011) might lead to a more active learning environment. Schein noted that authority, cross status communication, and intimacy are critical issues to be solved in helping relationships and he introduces a concept of “humble inquiry” (Lambrechts et al., 2011, p. 132), which is a key process activity in building

and maintaining a helping relationship. It requires observation, empathetic questioning, active and careful listening, self-inquiry, and the ability to suspend judgments toward others engaged in the process; themes that are consistent with Mezirow and Torbert's transformational theories. It is a process where the helper (i.e., professor/student/peer group) gets into what the helpee (i.e., professor/student/peer group) needs. According to Schein (Lambrechts et al., 2011), one cannot be helpful until one gives to another what one needs within the context of his or her assumptions. In the relationship there is a *need* and a *want*, and parties within the relationship honor each. It is essential that the relationship is mutual in this regard so there is clarity on the helping opportunity. The essence is a trusting relationship (Reina & Reina, 2006) in which the parties help each other express what is really on their mind. A puzzle in relationships is understanding what does and does not work as perceptions of needs can be misleading and in these instances dialogue might be a remedy. What one student or professor prefers, another does not. Luft (1984) wrote, "if there is a classroom atmosphere that suggests that students have the freedom to find their own way that what they think and feel and do is important ... then learning will be successful even if formal teaching is inadequate" (p. 188). Schein raised consciousness to what might be possible in mutually helping relationships.

Emotional intelligence. A final theme to briefly include within this section on adult learning theory is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been shown to be a principle leadership factor in organizational performance, which is inclusive of any organizational form. Research by Goleman et al. (2001) clearly shows that "a leader's emotional intelligence, defined as "*Knowing one's emotion. Self-awareness – recognizing a feeling as it happens*" (Goleman, 1997, p. 43), creates a certain culture or work environment. Their research showed that "High levels of emotional intelligence ... create climates in which information

sharing, trust, healthy risk-taking, and learning flourish” (Goleman, 1997, p. 44). Therefore, leaders, applied broadly in this research, who pay close attention to emotional intelligence, can dramatically affect relationships and organizational performance. Emotional intelligence provides clarity on the important dimension of self as one who is capable of forming meaningful relationships. Consequently, the self requires focus in its development and deployment as an instrument of growth and change.

Self as an Instrument of Change

The Self as Instrument of Change (SAI) aspect of the Pepperdine EDOC program encourages doctoral students to develop an in-depth understanding of who they are – the authentic self, and how they relate to others in professional and/or personal relationships. SAI is highly developmental in nature as it provides students an opportunity to understand how they can help and serve themselves and others. To build upon what Schein (2009) has explained in *Helping*, the term as used in this section on SAI refers to a behavior of spontaneity and generosity that has many forms. It is a caring, helping behavior that integrates and acts upon one’s own need and capability and those of others. Jamieson et al. (2010) wrote that use of self is important in relationships and the phrase, self as instrument has been used in conjunction with many different professions like nursing, therapy, organizational leadership as these are venues where leading, healing, and learning are appropriate. A developed SAI would include self-awareness, a clear identity allowing one to be intentional and impactful in taking action. It is helping within a role in a way that recognizes processes and outcomes while making sense of existent reality (Weick, 1995). It is seeing one’s development as a life-long process involving multiple dimensions: the cognitive, emotional and interpersonal, and spiritual contexts (Jamieson et al., 2010). It is a process that builds conscious awareness of self to a level of

mastery such as described by Senge (1990) in the context of a discipline that allows one to integrate “reason and intuition” (p. 167), “connectedness to the world” (p. 169), “compassion and empathy” (p. 171), “... sincere desire to serve the world” (p. 171), and “fostering personal mastery” (p. 172).

The concept of understanding oneself as an instrument of change is prominent in literature. Its stems can be traced to Carl Rogers (1980), cited earlier, who brought clarity to a way of personal being. Robert Tannenbaum built upon Rogers’ work and is noted in a memorial before the Faculty Senate of the University of California as a person whose influence in the work of organization development “were made profound by [the example] of his personal being” (Culbert, n.d., p. 1). Tannenbaum is credited by Jamieson et.al. (2010) as being “an early advocate of the whole-self concept and of personhood” (p. 8) that is instrumental in leading the work of change. Much of Tannenbaum’s thinking can be simply noted in a few words delivered to colleagues in the context of the need to know “ourselves before dealing with others” (Tannenbaum, 1996, p. 86). That is much of what this section on self as an instrument of change is about.

Others have moved thoughts on the use of self forward. For example, Quinn (2004) wrote about leadership and the need to become more aware and authentic noting that to help others, one must help self. Kostenbaum’s (2002) emphasized the connection of a leader’s knowledge of and enactment of vision, courage, ethics, and reality as components of leader effectiveness. Self-directed work teams rely upon members who are self-reliant and capable of operating effectively with others (Cummings & Worley, 2001) without the presence of direct supervision. It is the idea that being effective with others is born through inner growth and change.

SAI incorporates multiple concepts which include presence, authenticity, self-awareness, and personal change (Na'Desh, McCollum, & Holler, 2010). Being present allows one to give one's attention to the moment, the person being helped, and the problem or opportunity being addressed. Having clarity and acting out of the base of one's values is an aspect of the authentic self. Self-awareness requires one to continually examine oneself and to narrow the disparities between the imagined self and the real self. It also involves revealing one's conscious beliefs as well as acknowledging the less developed aspects of self (Segal, 1997). Presence, authenticity, self-awareness, and personal change involve heightened levels of consciousness. For example, consciousness awareness is an aspect of presence (Goleman, 1997) and mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way to purpose in the present moment (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Mindfulness is facilitated by clear and active reflection, a self-centering process of stepping out of the experience and objectively observing one's feelings, actions, and reactions. Reflective inquiry is questioning the foundations of one's actions, feelings, and reactions (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001). Using self has often been an ambiguous topic that is difficult to put into action (Jamieson et al., 2010); however, there is an abundance of literature that suggests that as one's self-awareness mounts, the more effective one is to groups and communities. The study of use of self is foundational to fields of practice in change and to each person as a human being (Jamieson et al., 2010). It has potential for its use in education particularly when combined with the relational consciousness espoused by Gergen (2009).

“Use of Self is the conscious use of one's whole being in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is presenting” (Jamieson et al., 2010). Using self requires that one is able to see within one's self, and with it, an ability to see others and the context of the encounter. It requires knowing in a way that connects things like

the rational, the irrational, presence of self and others, objective and subjective domains, and the social construction of environments. Knowing self in relationship to others is developmental work.

SAI is an important part of the EDOC program because it promotes self-dialogue. Neimeyer (2006), a counseling psychologist, proposes that the dialogical self is one who is stable and integrated into the surrounding social world with an ability to understand and interpret currents of the environment to a point where personal constructs form. The view is taken from counseling psychology, dialogical processes, biographical construction, and narrative therapy. In a quantitative sense, the outcome might be a “matrix of meaning that promises to disclose ... the structure and content of [an] individual’s worldview” (p. 107). Qualitatively, it is a phenomenon that might be explored within the context of the “We” the “I” and the “It” (Wilber, 2000a, p. 111). A goal within the psychological community would be for clients to deconstruct, affirm, or create a new narrative. In other communities like a doctoral learning environment, it might be for one to understand the construction of their narrative from multi-perspective points of view that when integrated form meaning perspectives. Within the context of Pepperdine SAI, a student is free to find new meaning through paths they might identify. Jamieson et al. (2010) wrote that doing something with self-knowledge is what really counts and because SAI enables the continued development of one’s narrative, the literature review considers the use of narrative stories, narrative therapy, and sensemaking as building blocks to the development of meaningful narrative.

Narrative Stories, Narrative Therapy, and Sensemaking

Narrative stories (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006) and sensemaking (Weick, 1969, 1995) are two constructs that help bring meaning to people’s lives. Narrative therapy

incorporates story in a client, therapist relationship that re-authors lives in a way that resolves problems of living (Carr, 1998; A. Morgan, 2000; White, 2011). Sensemaking as developed in Weick's (1969) social psychology provides a disciplined yet often spontaneous means (Weick, 1998) by which a person can understand and interpret meaning from the past and the present, in ways that are useful in the future. Narrative story, narrative therapy, and sensemaking are included in the literature review because stories and what we do with them bring forth meaning in a life narrative. Meaning is conveyed through stories and they reveal how it was found (McAdams, 2006). Stories help to understand a person, a culture; the "I," "We," and "It's" (Wilbur, 2000a, p. 111) of one's experience. Story is a part of the methodology as it is a vehicle for understanding lived experiences sought in this study. Texture is brought forth in story as sense is made of the past and integrated into the present. Sensemaking has been applied in organizational contexts in ways that have helped systems reach peak performance (Weick, 1995; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). Stories will be important to the methodology of this research. It is, therefore, important to understand them.

Narrative stories. According to Chaitin (2003), "people are storytellers – they tell narratives about their experiences and meanings" (p. 1). One's narrative deals with the "dynamics of human intentions" (p. 2) and stories within a narrative seek to explain events, people, relationships, and culture that are experienced over time and the lesson and meaning taken from them. Gergen (2009) illustrated a narrative through a developing story of one's bout with cancer. In the beginning the disease is an uncomfortable interruption in routines, a wish to clear it up and get on with life. It might then progress into a period of chaos, a "state of futility or helplessness" (p. 129), and then it might conclude in a "quest" (p. 129) in which a person

finds meaning within the illness as illuminated through caring relationships, physical and emotional trauma, spirituality, and so on.

Chaitin (2003) explained the power within story and from it one might draw inferences to Wilber's "Big Three" (2000a, p. 111):

Stories, narratives, and storytelling are central aspects of all cultures. They play key roles both in the escalation and potentially the de-escalation of intergroup conflict. In order for the storytelling to be effective, it must engage self and other, and provide a narrative that is both cognitively and emotionally compelling. While denigrating myths of the other and self-aggrandizing myths of self can refuel the winds of hate, the open and honest recounting of one's life story, and the willingness to be an emphatic listener for the other, even if this other has caused ... suffering and pain in the past, can open the door for peacebuilding and coexistence. (p. 4)

Taking a whole life into narrative account, themes might be expressed in terms a person's worldview, that is, I am optimistic or pessimistic. I am trusting. My glass is half empty or my glass is half full.

McAdams, psychologist, professor, theorist, and social scientist at Northwestern University, identified a redemptive quality within narrative stories from research into Western story-telling that he wrote of in his award winning book entitled the *Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By* (McAdams, 2006). He discussed identity as a product of story and from his words; inferences can be drawn as to meaning:

When people talk about their lives they tell stories. It is through stories that we often learn the greatest lessons for our lives – lessons about success and failure, what makes a life worth living, and what makes a society good. It is through stories, furthermore, that we define who we are. Stories provide us with our identities. (p. 13)

The redeeming quality of story might capture how people have found meaning by loving or being loved through love of others, rendering significance, and overcoming difficult challenges; the deep meaning defined for this research. This research assumed on the basis of McAdam's, Chaitin's, and Gergen's description of narrative that narrative stories capture

Wilber's "Big Three" (2000a, p.111) That is, aspects of life that incorporate the "I," the "We," and the "It."

McAdams (2006) focused his research on the narrative study of lives. "People create stories to make sense of their lives. These evolving stories – or *narrative identities* – provide our lives with some semblance or meaning, unity, and purpose" (p. 14). Crediting Tomkins for the development of script theory, McAdams wrote:

... human beings are fundamentally like playwrights who create scripts in which they play the leading roles. From the earliest weeks of life onward, Tomkins contended, people unconsciously fashion scripts to organize and make sense and to set the stage for future action. Scripts comprise individual *scenes* in life, and at the center of every important scene are one or two basic *emotions*. Basic emotions are either positive or negative. The basic positive emotions are joy and excitement. The basic negative emotions include fear, sadness, anger, guilt, shame, and disgust. Emotions are the great motivators in life, Tomkins argued. We act in order to experience positive emotions or to avoid experiencing negative ones. But emotions are great *organizers*, for it is around basic emotional experiences that life scenes and scripts are ultimately constructed. (McAdams, 2006, p. 222)

McAdams' (2006) research into the stories of people's lives has led to the development of a process to capture the scripts of the most important moments in one's past. Applied as an interview the process begins with (a) a reflection of life as though it were divided into chapters of a book with each chapter having a name and brief summary of its contents, (b) identifying key scenes within each chapter by reflecting on the positive emotions of high points (peak experiences) and negative emotions of low points (nadir experiences), turning points in life and beginning points that include earliest memories, significant childhood, adolescent and adult scenes and at least one other scene, (c) challenges experienced in life perhaps where one undergoes a major change, (d) positive and negative characters perhaps involving love, suffering, or reaching for significance, (f) projected future scripts such as what one would like to happen as

part of their story, (g) personal beliefs and values, and (h) how one would describe a central theme for life. A narrative emerges through this process that reveals meaning.

For a study of meaning that emerges through relationships, one might look closely at stories; the writer, the “I,” and the participants, audience, readers, collaborators, the “We,” and also the “It” which would capture the story’s contexts perhaps in the way that McAdams et al. (1996) identify “agency ... and communion” (p. 341) as the ability to get ahead in life in terms of its meaning (agency) and the ability to form relationships with others (communion).

A term often associated with stories is sensemaking and it seems that treating stories and sensemaking together provides a view for how meaning might be formed through their use. For example, in the wake of September 11, there is a sense that some good would come from the disaster. There will be redemption (McAdams, 2006). And as time has progressed, threads of a story have come together for a nation, its communities, and its people. Osama Bin Laden is dead. Monuments and towers have been built at Ground Zero and many people have dealt with the trauma, some with closure and some without. The stories that have been made will be passed on to future generations. McAdams cites Erickson who has noted that as people work through psychological dilemmas of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood and “who have committed themselves to patterns of love and work [aim] at leaving a positive legacy for the future” (p. 4).

Gergen (2009) viewed McAdams as having illuminated “the world of middle-aged Americans whose lives have been enriched by [their] redemptive narratives” (p. 237). The stories often show how something negative has been transformed into the positive, which leads one to a greater understanding of life while perhaps altering a worldview. It also leaves one with a sense that part of life can be left for others. Gergen suggested that the development of

redemptive stories might be mimicked. In other words, there is value in constructing such stories for self and for others as stories are parts of relationships.

McAdams' (2006) research on the redemptive qualities of stories in western culture identified six kinds of redemption with descriptive language borrowed from source domains. The types of redemption include (a) atonement taken from the religion domain, (b) emancipation from political systems, (c) upward mobility from the economy, (d) recovery from medicine, (e) enlightenment from education, and (f) development from parenting and psychology. In each type of redemptive domain there is redemptive movement; for example, sin to salvation, poverty to social standing, slavery to freedom, ignorance to knowledge, and immaturity to actualization. McAdams did not use meaning per se as a term within his work. However, deep meaning as in love for another, meeting challenges, and rendering significance seems strongly implied within the redemptive domains. He offered a helpful construct, however, in saying that: "Identity in adulthood is an inner story of the self that integrated the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future to provide a life with unity, purpose, and meaning" (McAdams, 1995, p. 365). Stories are therefore important to understanding life and living life. Using the above steps of creating a life narrative, McAdams (2006) showed that "the way in which a person narrates the most important events in his or her life is related to psychological health and well-being" (p. 43). "[T]he more redemptive [a] story, the better a [person's] psychological well-being" (p. 44). Likewise, another interesting finding in McAdams' research is the generative quality in stories. "Generative is fundamentally about passing it on" (p. 45) from one generation to the next. It is about sharing one's self and these generative people also have higher psychological well being. To McAdams, the opposite of redemption is contamination, "a fall from grace" (p. 213) and a

slip into psychological negative dissonance. People who are in circumstances such as these have difficulty generating a narrative and might seek therapy as a way of altering their lives.

Narrative therapy. Narrative therapy offers an avenue for people seeking greater clarity in troubled stories like traumatic events that have diminished a capability to function normally (Merscham, 2000). Effective therapy in these circumstances provides “affirmation, reality suspension, and reality replacement” (Gergen, 2009, p. 282). Narrative therapy is a type of therapy that is sensitive to relational processes and the creation of meaning through the use of story. Therapy using narrative is a restorying of one’s life that puts the trouble outside of one’s identity thus enabling a person to see oneself and their associated relationships in a different light. Gergen (2009) spoke to a path to new meaning through a narrative therapeutic process:

The therapeutic process is outstanding in its sensitivity to the way in which meaning is molded in relationship. Therapists understand that life narratives are born within relationship, and that such relationships may be lodged within institutions and the mass media. Ultimately, however, the significant question is that of *carry-over* ... the capacity of exchange within therapy to enter effectively into relationships outside. (p. 300)

Gergen (2009) offered a “shortcoming of most narrative research” (p. 237):

the subjects don’t fully speak for themselves. Rather, the researcher is placed between the [therapist] and the narrating individual. In this sense, the narrative is ‘managed’ by the researcher, at times for academically instrumental purposes (e.g. to demonstrate my point). (p. 237)

This study is by no means narrative research but Gergen made an important point to the researcher’s conduct in a study of this kind. It is that the researcher must allow subjects to speak for themselves. He suggested that a way of dealing with this is to give a portion of the research over to those who are participating for the purpose of discerning meaning. The aim of any kind of therapy is relationships that bring meaning outside of the therapy room. Researchers and therapist need to be mindful of their actions. The issues that are described here are dealt with in chapter III.

Michael White along and with David Epston are credited with developing the use of narrative in mental health practices (Carr, 1998). The narrative therapy construct incorporates themes discussed in this review. For example, a close examination alludes to Lewin's life-space and the use of power discussed by the French philosophers, and the oppression addressed by Freire. All are imbued in Carr's statement: "Developing therapeutic solutions to problems, within the narrative frame, involves opening space for the authoring of alternative stories, the possibilities of which have previously been marginalized by the dominant oppressive narrative which maintains the problem" (p. 486). Referring to Bruner, Carr goes on to say that "narratives constitute identities, lives, and problems [and the] reauthoring of personal narratives changes [these conditions] because personal narratives are constitutive of identities" (p. 486). Freedman and Combs (1996) described therapists as having a relationship to "privileged authors" (p. 88) of life narratives. They shared assumptions developed by Griffith and Griffith that they value for use in narrative therapy, which illustrated how close a therapist is to his or her client. Writing as therapists in the first person Griffith and Griffith (as cited in Freedom & Combs, 1996) said:

These family members and I share more similarities than differences as human beings.

Family members are ordinary people leading everyday lives who unfortunately have encountered unusual and difficult life experiences.

When a person or a family with a problem request psychotherapy, it is because they are struggling with a dilemma for which the kind of conversation needed for its resolution cannot occur.

Persons and families always possess more lived experience as a resource than can be contained by the available narrative about the problem.

Persons and family members in their deepest desire do not wish to harm self or others.

I cannot understand the meaning of the language a person uses until we talk about it together.

Change is always possible.

A person or a family with a problem wishes to be free of the problem.

I cannot know for sure what actions family members need to take for the problem to be resolved. (Freedman & Combs, 1996, pp. 272-273)

The statements made by Griffith and Griffith spoke to qualities in relationship that seem appropriate for finding the kind of meaning addressed in this study.

Sensemaking. Sensemaking is a term that is also used in narrative therapy and it provides a useful construct through which meaning might be found. The work of social psychologist Karl Weick (1969) reinforces the argument that structured, rational, organized frameworks within social contexts are valuable but limited. Weick (1998) advocated for thinking in ways that are fluid, spontaneous and natural to the human condition. He used mindfulness in the context of sensemaking as a term for psychological presence stressing it as a way of improving performance and managing complex situations and ambiguous and unexpected consequences (Weick, 2001; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Sensemaking is guided through actions of sizing up situations, discovering while simultaneously acting, establishing consciousness in developing situations, and focusing on a limited set of essential clues for use as guides for sorting out meaning (Weick, 1969, 1995, 2001). The process calls for heightened levels of consciousness of the kind described by Jamieson (2008) as including “strengths, limitations, feelings, blocks, triggers, use of senses, fears, anxieties, etc.” (p. 1) and addresses the interpretation of multiple realities as a way of making sense and finding meaning.

As one makes sense, Weick (1969, 2001) proposed the active use of personal history and this is where story applies for Weick considered each person a historian who expresses experience through narrative and proposes seven properties in his process of sensemaking; (a)

conversation and dialogue with others within the socially adjacent context (b) a personal identity within one's sense of self, (c) the ability to reflect retrospectively through one's history and narrative, (d) the ability to see and interpret visible clues, (e) the active engagement in sensemaking as an ongoing project with resilience in the wake of interruptions, (f) examination of the plausibility of contexts that are forming, and (g) enactment or taking specific action with the emerging sense in a way that is the on-going, intentional, conscious and deliberate with either encouraged movement or prudent hesitancy. A person engaged in a sensemaking process is aware of relationships and the meaning within them and strives to understand a person's identity (Seiling & Stavos, 2009). For example, for establishing personal identity, one might choose to go to a level of consciousness where values, mission, and worldview are clear and understood in dialogue with others verses hesitancy for such engagement. The work of understanding oneself as an instrument of change helps to get to this depth and level of rigor. Its use might be appropriate to finding meaning within the context of this research. Sensemaking is also significant as a useful tool to organizations (Weick, 2001) and might also be accomplished in a unified and spontaneous spirit (Weick, 1998).

Chapter II Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature of philosophers, scholars, and practitioners to discern what is known about how meaning might be found in the Doctor of Education in Organization Change program. The review encompassed social construction and dialogue, foundations of relationship in knowing: philosophical roots, adult learning theory, self as instrument of change, and narrative stories, narrative therapy, and sensemaking. Considering the literature in this way has grounded the research into its developmental nature. This summary highlights each section by sharing the predominant themes expressed in the literature.

The review began with social construction and dialogue predicated on Gergen's assertion that meaning is born of use through relationships; people actively engaging to learn from each other's core experiences and the subjectivity of life's many dimensions. The literature shows that social constructionists value a pedagogy that rests on dialogue, group problem solving, interdependency in relationships, and student participation in learning activities. Gergen (2009) highlighted a shift in society from the saturated selves, that of doing as opposed to being, to relational beings; those whose awareness raises consciousness about how people go on together in the world. Social construction stemming from the work of Polanyi is a passion for Gergen and others who value community and relationships therein. Social construction offers insight into the way people come together to fulfill a purpose and how they might engage others through dialogue to reach levels of shared meaning. Bohm (1996) informed that dialogue, a discipline of collective thinking and inquiry, has transformative potentials in exchanges of thoughts and feelings. In practice it requires a suspension of assumptions and judgment in order to engage at personal and emotional levels.

Foundations of relationship in knowing: philosophical roots were explored through Polanyi, Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida. These scholarly philosophers called for multidisciplinary engagement in scientific inquiry. They sought to expand the horizon of rational empiricism, which, they believed, fixated ways of knowing. They argued persuasively for scholarly discourses among positivistic researchers, sociologists, psychologists, and other thought leaders who might bring about meaning by sharing "tacit" knowledge that can only be understood through conversation. Polanyi (1962) believed this knowledge was largely ignored by the scientific community. Their collective thinking expressed a preference for researchers and learners of all kinds to engage in lively inquiry and paved a way for knowing to arise

through social interaction. They were united in calling for freedom in knowing through the elimination of boundaries.

Philosophical and scholarly thought was further enriched by Lewin, Rogers, and Dewey who provided a context for relational learning. Lewin (1935) recognized the congruent or incongruent nature of psychological presence; a consciousness toward one's liberating or binding environment. His psychologically based concept of "life-space" provides objectivity in constraint situations and gives rise to interdependent relationships and ownership of decisions and meaning. Rogers (1969), a humanist and social scientist, articulated a basis for strengthening interpersonal relationships through authentic unconditional positive personal regard for others. Freire (1970), a world renowned educator, released people from the boundary of oppression by helping students be the origin of their own learning. Dewey (1938a, 1938b), the philosopher and teacher, embraced uncertainty in the process of education and helped educators appreciate the value of their full presence among students.

Leveraging life experience is a theme in the section on adult learning theory. Kolb, a translator of Dewey, along with Fry, provided ways in which meaning might be drawn from experience through experiential learning (Kolb & Fry, 1975). Lindeman (as noted by Knowles, 1989) believed the interpretation and critical evaluation of experience was a source of meaning and from his influential ideas, Knowles (1980, 1989) provided principles for adult learning followed by Gibb who identified actionable learning steps in an adult learning environment.

Two transformational learning theories were reviewed in this chapter. Jack Mezirow's (1994, 1997) theory targeted meaning making as a social process of appropriating knowledge from experience. The literature described it as a highly communicative process that holds promise for those who are making meaning of their lives. William Torbert's (2011b) theory of

action inquiry was grounded in Argyris's (1957) behavioral conceptualization of participatory organizations that distributed power among its members. It was a focal point for his theoretical action logics and liberating organization structures. Both theories take experience into account and lead one to a deeper sense of self. Schein's (2009) work, *Helping*, and Goleman's (1997) work, *Emotional Intelligence*, provided insight for those who seek to be in union others on a learning journey.

The literature reviewed on self as an instrument of change, as introduced by Tannenbaum and developed by Jamieson (2008), incorporated concepts for presence and authenticity with others, self-awareness, and personal change. It is a subject that focuses on how one might relate to others in personal and professional ways. The proposition of self-as-instrument posits that the mounting of awareness in self enables relational effectiveness toward others. This contributes enormously to relational being articulated by Gergen because it prepares those who study it for successful and authentic engagements with others.

The literature of McAdams' (2006) narrative stories; Carr (1998), A. Morgan (2000), and White's (2011) narrative therapy; and Weick's (2001) sensemaking were reviewed with the premise that (a) everyone has a story, (b) people seek out others in its interpretation, and (c) sense is made through the engagement of self and others. Stories are a human activity that conveys rich meaning found in one's life. They are the vehicles in this research for understanding the lived experience of its participants. Looking for meaning within stories is part of a sensemaking process. The literature shows that stories are often emotionally compelling and redemptive in nature. They give one identity from which inferences can be drawn for meaning. Stories focus on meaning found, a key theme in this research. They reveal how it came about. Stories make sense of people's lives. Stories, narrative therapy, and sensemaking are all

sensitive to the relational processes in people's lives. That was the rationale for their inclusion in this review. The literature within chapter II encompasses the depth and breadth of this research. The subject of the next chapter is the method that was employed to determine how graduates found meaning through studies in the Doctor of Education in Organization Change program.

Chapter III. Method

Introduction

This research study explored the phenomenon for finding meaning through the developmental nature of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program at Pepperdine University. The phenomenon was described by EDOC graduates who found meaning through their learning experience. Giorgi's (2009) descriptive existential-phenomenological approach was used to understand the structural essence for how it was lived. The primary goal of the research has been to make qualitative sense of the experience for finding meaning that occurred in this higher education learning environment.

As noted in chapter I, the meaning that this study addressed is a kind that is deeply felt, visceral, emotional, and life changing as accounted by actions that might emerge from its very discovery. It is meaning described by Frankl (1984) as finding or understanding love for self and others, successfully meeting a seemingly difficult and insurmountable challenge, or doing something of deep personal significance. It is meaning that might affirm or alter one's worldview and change the very course of one's life. It is meaning that might add to or even define life's purpose more completely and fully. Implicit in this kind of meaning is change that could redirect life's course and even the lives of others.

Gergen (1997) has asserted that "meaning is born of use through relationships" (p. 195). In the context of this research, relationship is stated as encompassing a breadth and depth of relational contexts such as those within self, between fellow students and professors, and those relationships encountered in the course of learning that might or might not be a direct part of the doctoral learning community. As the research proceeded, I referred to meaning and how it is found through self and others in the context of the EDOC program as a relationship/meaning

phenomenon. The study qualitatively explored how students found this meaning in the natural setting of their educational experience of which I was part as a participant in the very program being researched. I make my presence known where appropriate by inserting a first person perspective based on my program experience.

To be sure, I believe I have experienced this very phenomenon, which presented certain opportunities and challenges in the research. My proximity enabled the contextual nature of the phenomenon, such as culture, language, and shared meaning to be clear and visible to me and that was an opportunity leveraged through my student participation toward an understanding of the phenomenon. It brought my personal knowledge to the forefront of the discussion in a disciplined and faithful way that honored the requirements of Giorgi's phenomenology. I recognized the challenge in this research since I believe others have experienced this same phenomenon that my assertions might be biased. With attention to this challenge I took Wilber's (as cited in Saiter, 2009) "myth of the given" (Saiter, 2009, p. 311) into account as a propensity of one to ignore the intersubjective nature of lived experience by merely accepting that it is true. My consciousness of this myth worked to manage the opportunities and challenges in this research. To be explicit about this notion of the given, Saiter (2009) asserted "most forms of meaning-making (especially empirical endeavors) have not understood or taken into account the fundamental notion of postmodernism, which is that all truths are not only context-dependent but intersubjective, constructive, and aperspectival" (p. 311). He expanded on this topic when writing, "In short, most of us are beset with the mistaken belief that reality is simply given" (p. 311). To broaden, Wilber (as cited in Saiter, 2009) stated:

The myth of the given is essentially another name for phenomenology and the mere empiricism in any of a hundred guises – whether regular empiricism, radical empiricism, interior empiricism, transpersonal empiricism, empirical phenomenology, transcendental

phenomenology, radical phenomenology, and so forth. As important as they might be, what all of them have in common is the myth of the given, which includes [paraphrased]:

- the belief that reality is simply given to me ...
- the belief that the consciousness of an individual will deliver truth.
- a failure to understand that the truth that [one] delivers is constructed in part by intersubjective cultural networks.
- the belief that the mirror of nature, or the reflection paradigm, is an adequate methodology. (pp. 311-312)

I believed throughout this study that truth is not merely given, but is there for discernment and understanding in its totality, and even then, what we believe to be true is always subject to challenge and open to further thought, consideration, description, and interpretation. I recognized the need to keep this methodology pure. I also recognized my desire to help others discern the broader implications that come from the study of the phenomenon in question. To these ends, I stated propositions about the relationship/meaning phenomenon toward the end of chapter V when all work with understanding the phenomenon has been completed. This kept me faithful to methodology's requirements to stick to the given while providing an opportunity to reflect upon the findings of this research and its meaning in broader intersubjective contexts. Gergen (2009), like Wilber (2001), expressed the view that truth is socially constructed and these constructions often vary broadly from culture to culture. Therefore, truth accepted in one context does not always fit in others. The goal of this chapter is to show how this research was conducted in a way that mitigated the assumptions of the myth of the given to reveal the structure and essence of the phenomenon within the context and culture of Pepperdine's EDOC program, as much as the methodology allowed.

Chapter III proceeds from this introduction to a brief description of the research strategy. My strategy included the method employed, and the number, characteristics and selection of co-inquirers, a term for participants taken from Conklin's (2001) dissertation study of finding one's

calling. The context is then broadened by describing data collection and storage procedures, the questions that guided the study and the consent procedures and other mechanics of the process. With the process in place, I return to a discussion of phenomenology to show the trustworthiness of its requirements and my tactics in their employment. In the discussion, I demonstrated how I used phenomenology to analyze data given to me. Also in this chapter, I discuss how I accomplished the tasks that were required for this research to proceed to include managing the requirements of Pepperdine University's Institution Review Board as it concerns the use of human subjects, conducting a pilot study, and communicating with co-inquirers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study's limitations.

The Research Strategy

The general framework for the research strategy. The method applied in this study was the descriptive existential-phenomenology of Giorgi (2009) that meets scientific criteria in psychology through modifications of the philosophical phenomenological approach developed by Husserl (Zahavi, 2003). Giorgi's methodology and phenomenology, in general, is about understanding the essence and structure of a phenomenon. His phenomenological method provided a process for discovering the phenomenon's structure within this research. Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) cautioned that a researcher's treatment of a phenomenon's subjectivity is a potential vulnerability to the efficacy of the research process. By keeping that in mind, I remained faithful to each step of the process he proscribed and the attitudes I had to possess in order for this research to have scientific integrity. I later describe how I enacted these principles.

A key aspect of the research strategy was the participation of co-inquirers who were able to relate their experience with the phenomenon. Describing the characteristics of this group, the skills that they bring, and the process for their selection illuminate the study's context. The next

sections deal with the selection of co-inquirers, the collection of data through interviews, and the stewardship of documents that were generated in the study.

Characteristics, skills, and selection procedures for co-inquirers. Co-inquirers were drawn from graduates of the Pepperdine EDOC program from the period of its inception in 1998 to 2011. Within this time-frame, there were 72 who had graduated from the program. Those who graduated after 2011 were not part of the study. It is important then to note that the data collected is representative of a discrete time of program experience. Since the data were collected by identifying 10 of 72 graduates available to me, approximately 25 or more have earned their degree.

My goal in the selection of co-inquirers was to identify and “select exemplars of the experience of study” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140) making “[t]he unit of analysis ... experience, not individuals or groups. Therefore, the interest is about the experience ... and not its distribution in the population” (p. 139). Those graduates who asserted that they could testify to the experience of the phenomenon were considered exemplars for the purposes of this study. Co-inquirer selection was a “purposive” process (from Merriam as quoted by Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140) designed to ensure that the setting from which participants were drawn engaged co-inquirers from whom the most could be learned of the phenomenon.

I made the following assumptions about the characteristics of co-inquirers. The literature in chapter II informed these assumptions as well as my own experience with them as a fellow student. They included (a) the presentation of a group that was unbounded (Wilber, 2001) by any administrative aspect of the program because they had graduated; (b) a group that had no further ties to the program other than that of alumni and a socially constructed “circle ... of participation” (Gergen, 2009, p. 245) giving the group an identity inclusive of a capacity for

professional and collegial co-action; (c) a group in which each member had an opportunity to reflect (Delbecq, 2003) on what they experienced, their story, and how they had experienced it (McAdams et al., 1996); (d) a group who individually had the time and life-space (Lewin, 1935) to participate, (e) a group who were already in a relationship with faculty, fellow graduates, and students, and those who have participated in some way with other co-inquirers on their journey (f) a group that might have viewed the research as an opportunity to help the university in design and administration of their doctoral programs; and (g) a group who believed their experience could contribute to graduate learning programs in general.

Broadening these assumptions, I took Conklin's (2001) report of Van Kaam who proposed that participants in this kind of research "have six important skills:" (p. 41)

1) the ability to express themselves in language with relative ease, 2) the ability to sense and express inner feeling without inhibition, 3) the ability to sense and express the organic sensations that accompany these feeling, 4) the [ability to recall their ... experience] ..., 5) [the ability to convey] a natural spontaneous interest in their own experience ..., and 6) the ability to report or write what was going on within themselves. (p. 41)

Given the breadth and depth of the EDOC program, I assumed that graduated doctoral co-inquirers possessed all of these skills.

I prepared invitations for the 72 graduates of the EDOC program and planned to reach them through the social media of LinkedIn in which a specific network had been established for the community. The invitation for participation is shown in Appendix B. My goal was to find those graduates who were exemplars of the experience and this was believed to be the clearest route to achieving that end. It quickly became apparent, however, that LinkedIn was an inadequate networking mechanism. I had difficulty locating graduates because some had not joined the network. I then began contacting graduates asking for email addresses of those known to them. This process was time consuming yet very effective. I was able to reach 43 of the 72

graduates by email. Of the 53 mailed invitations, I received 10 notices of undelivered email due to incorrect addresses. I did not have email addresses for the remaining 19 graduates. Of the 43 who received my invitation, 42 graduates responded.

Ten co-inquirer exemplars were identified for the study. As responses to the invitation came in, I listed prospective co-inquirers by their program cohort and then the selection began by providing each prospect a preview of the research which included a discussion of goals, definition of terms, and an understanding that their participation included the telling of the story of their lived experience in an interview environment which is discussed in the section on Interviewing, Data Collection and Stewardship of Documents. A prospective co-inquirer who asserted that he or she was an exemplar of the experience was then considered an exemplar for this research. It was a matter of trust that I had properly and sufficiently explained the context of the research and that the person with whom I was speaking was able to make the best judgment as to their ability to participate.

More co-inquirers came forward than were needed for the study. I managed the size of the group by (a) establishing a goal of one co-inquirer from each cohort, (b) identifying an equal number of those that I knew and those I did not know, (b) establishing a mix of men and women, and (c) determining the logistics of interviewing with a first preference to those I could interview face to face and all others being treated equally with final decisions predicated on time, logistics, and costs associated with interviewing. This process gave me one exemplar co-inquirer from each cohort except for the Sita cohort where I accepted two. The group was diverse in nature and most importantly; each person was an exemplar of the experience.

Co-inquirers were called upon to share the memory of their experience with the phenomenon through storied narratives (McAdams et al., 1996; McAdams et al., 2006) that

provided rich descriptions of what occurred. It was presumed that it was to the advantage of this study that the emergent group was representative of the program as a whole. However, it is stressed that this was not the primary criterion. A co-inquirer's exemplary experience was the most important criteria given the nature of the study was that of human experience (Giorgi, 2009; Polkinghorne, 2005). Thus, the process for selection was criterion based (Creswell, 2007). As noted by Creswell (2007): "It is essential that all participants have the experience of the phenomenon being studied. Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon" (p. 128) as demonstrated in this case by the storied accounts of co-inquirers.

Data collection, interviewing, and stewardship of documents. Each selected co-inquirer was interviewed as the means for gathering data. Seidman (2006) discussed the nature of interviewing in qualitative research as being a "We" (p.96) relationship in the ideal that keeps "the focus of attention on [the co-inquirer's] experience" (p. 96). Seidman cautioned that interviews could be fraught with problems like issues of power; control of the interview agenda, gender biases, proper preparation and so forth. These factors were not an issue because of the trusting collegial culture of co-inquirers who themselves have conducted doctoral research. However, I kept in mind "Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy [that] pervades [interview work] [I had to] allow considerable tolerance for uncertainty" (Seidman, 2006, p. 130) through the interview process and in so [doing I allowed it to flow] to the point in which meaning formed. When that happened, it felt like I had "walked a mile in [a co-inquirer's] shoes" (Padgett, 2008, p. 36). In this vein the interview relationship was marked by "respect [and] attention" (Seidman, 2006, p. 97) and unconditional positive regard for each other (Rogers, 1980). It was done professionally. Each co-inquirer received a copy of his or her interview with

a request to review (Seidman, 2006) to insure it was properly transcribed by the independent transcription service that I had retained.

I obtained rich, textural descriptions of the experienced phenomenon. Two co-inquirers were interviewed in person for approximately 60 to 90 minutes (Seidman, 2006). Face-to-face interviewing was considered ideal as it allowed for the transformation of the interviewing relationship into a “We” relationship (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 96). However, it was necessary to interview seven co-inquirers by phone and one by Skype with real time computer imagery. Each interview was recorded using an LS-7 PCM recorder that offered excellent record clarity for the three recording venues. The device was paired as necessary with a phone adapter to record. The recorded interviews were transcribed by MD-IT Transcription Services, a neutral third party, within one month of each interview. The service provided an unabridged typed transcript that included each word that was exchanged along with inflection, laughter, etc. The contract with the transcription service included a confidentiality agreement. Consent procedures were not necessary because the research was exempted by Pepperdine University’s Institutional Review Board. The letter of exemption that I received is shown in Appendix C. Data were kept on a pass-word protected personal computer and in a locked file cabinet at my home.

Moustakas (1994) pointed out that precursors to gathering data include the formulation of the research question and the definition of terms used within the study. Questioning took a focused non-directed, open-ended approach with a goal of understanding what it was like to experience the phenomenon (Seidman, 2006). Follow-up questions were also non-directive and open-ended so to remain faithful to the primary question (Fazio, 2011). My strategy for questioning in interviews is presented in Appendix D. I kept a journal that reflected my experience within each interview event so that I could more easily recall my reactions to a co-

inquirer's thinking and feeling behavior. Details for the employment of phenomenology are now presented to establish a sense of its trustworthiness (Fazio, 2011).

Descriptive existential phenomenology. According to Giorgi (2006), the scientific nature of his phenomenology requires the adoption of a disciplinary and phenomenological attitude to carefully determine and describe the structures of a phenomenon. The disciplinary attitudes that I adopted were that of a progressive educator (PE) and organization development (OD) professional meaning that I performed this research from within these orientations as I observed, gathered, and analyzed data. These attitudes were appropriate for me given my years of experience in business organizations and education. A discussion of OD and PE and their congruency with phenomenology is presented in Appendix E.

A Giorgi (2009) made the intent of the phenomenological attitude clear by asserting that a researcher in

[a] descriptive study ... does not try to go beyond the given. The point to be established ... is that a descriptive analysis attempts to understand the meaning of the description based solely upon what is presented in the data. It does not try to resolve ambiguities unless there is direct evidence for the resolution in the description itself. Otherwise, one simply tries to describe the ambiguity such as it presents itself. Thus, the attitude of description is one that only responds to what can be accounted for in the description itself. (p. 127)

My objective while operating within these attitudes was "to systematically ... analyze the phenomenon from the standpoint and consciousness of [co-inquirers who had] lived the experience in ... [their] 'everyday [lives]'" (Fazio, 2011, p. 50) as a Pepperdine EDOC student. In so doing I strived to work with what was before me with conscious awareness of everything that was impacting and influencing me. The awareness that was before me inclusive of my reactions to excitement, wonder, and empathy was recorded in my journal. In this way I was

able to direct my intentionality, which is discussed below, toward co-inquirers and the stories they were sharing with me.

Procedures for enacting the phenomenological attitude are discussed later. For now the point to be made is that by adopting the above attitudes, I operated at a scientific level of analysis in which I was “psychologically sensitive [and] ... not philosophically so” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 94). Giorgi’s (2009) phenomenology clearly sets forth “the procedures for conducting sound scientific research on psychological phenomena” (p. 95); therefore, this research did not attempt analytic interpretations that would require the testing of assumptions. His methodology has a series of aspects that required rigorous and disciplined actions within the research process while I humbly inquired with conscious awareness of the presented data and the steps employed in their analysis. My goal in implementing these steps was to build trust through transparency and that goal was achieved.

Briefly, the steps followed within Giorgi’s (2009) phenomenology included :

1. Directing intentionality toward objects of consciousness and enlarging their appearances through a conscious perception of them in different orientations until they became “[perfectly] self-evident” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 30).
2. Assuming a phenomenological attitude in which my goal was to set aside as much as possible my natural world so that each co-inquirer’s storied narrative of his or her lived experience was individually captured and recorded in full unabridged appreciation of the phenomenon they described.
3. Applying the phenomenological reduction once data were fully assembled through a process that included bracketing or setting aside my experiences and assumptions

about the phenomenon with the goal of having it available for unbiased in-depth analysis based on the data itself.

4. Performing Giorgi's (2009) four-step, descriptive, analytic process that included:
 - a. Gaining a sense of the whole of each co-inquirer's experience
 - b. Determining the meaning units of each storied narrative so that the data were ready for analysis.
 - c. Transforming a co-inquirer's "natural attitude expressions [that were expressed in the meaning units] into phenomenologically psychologically sensitive expressions" (p. 200) with the aid of imaginative variation.
 - d. Bringing all analytic descriptions together with the aid again of imagined variation to eidetically describe the general psychological structure of the phenomenon.

The intent in this last step was to use language that is understood within a larger community. In other words, there is utility in the descriptions. They can be clearly understood. Giorgi's process yielded the general psychological structure of the phenomenon as the analysis was independently performed for each of the co-inquirers. My enactment of each step is briefly discussed.

Directing intentionality is explained by Giorgi (2009) and Merleau-Ponty (2002) as focusing consciousness toward objects of the phenomenon outside of oneself and even within oneself if it is an act of reflection. Perception engages a researcher's mind and body toward the phenomenon inclusive of the mental, physical, and emotional aspects of the experience. A vivid picture of the object of consciousness emerges when an object of perception is recognized through the aid of "... memory, judgment, thinking and feeling" (Conklin, 2001, p. 26 quoting

Husserl). I accounted for observations of this kind from an OD and PE perspective, inclusive of personal reflection, thoughts, and feelings in a manner similar to Schein's (1969) process observation and kept a record of them in my journal, noted above, as the research proceeded. Directing intentionality generates movement toward the goal of understanding and discerning objects of consciousness (Giorgi, 2009).

The phenomenological attitude mentioned earlier was employed throughout the research process (Giorgi, 2009). It facilitated my focus toward the data and only the data as noted above. I set "aside prejudgments [in a way that opened] the research interview [and the analysis of them] with an unbiased receptive presence" (p. 180). That meant, "refraining from judgment [and staying] away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things" (p. 33). Life-space (Lewin, 1935, 1948) was opened in the attitude that frees one from boundaries (Wilber, 2001) that might cloud judgment. Conklin (2007) suggested, and I found it to be true, that in the attitude, "[m]eaning making takes place at the intersection of the physical world in which experience transpires the mental and emotional world of the participant. This person-world intersect is where phenomenology seems to best lend itself to discovery" (p. 277). I was again in this attitude when engaged in the phenomenological reduction that eidetically reduced the phenomenon into its structures.

The phenomenological reduction was a process that facilitated an understanding and description of the phenomenon's structures (Giorgi, 2009). Its employment began once data from co-inquirers in the form of storied narratives of their experiences had been assembled in a manner that included the "textural qualities of the phenomenon" (Conklin, 2001, p. 34). The reduction enabled studying the data in depth and facilitated the development of language to describe "... objects of experience ... without the help of some non-given factor, such as an

assumption, hypothesis, theory, or the like” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 89). Factors beyond the immediate phenomenon that might reach consciousness were bracketed (Giorgi, 2009) or put aside to allow the analysis to proceed as much as possible without interference. Giorgi (2009) summarized two primary attitudinal meanings that must envelop the researcher in the phenomenological reduction:

The first primary meaning ... is that the object presented to consciousness [is] something that is present to consciousness exactly as it is experienced. (p. 90)

The second attitudinal shift that the phenomenological reduction induces is the bracketing of past knowledge or nonpresented presuppositions about the given object. What is required is a shift in attitude so that one can be fully attentively present to an ongoing experience rather than habitually present to it – or, perhaps better – be present to it as [though one is] ... in the natural attitude. (p. 92)

Bracketing put aside my boundaries of assumptions and mental models (Senge, 1990; Wilber, 2001) and opened the here and now presence of the phenomenon in a way that its meaning was discerned.

My bracketing was trustworthy. I have revealed significant meaning experiences in the course of my doctoral studies and have written about some of them in various papers. Since they are internalized, specific assumptions about how meaning came about can escape my consciousness and accrete to the research. It was therefore imperative to bracket such assumptions so as not to overly influence the research process. I chose to deal with this in a straightforward manner by listing assumptions that I held toward this research. Their principle source was my experience and the literature that informed the study. For example, it was easy for me to assume that meaning is found through relationships. Gergen has written of it and I believe it is so when I think like a social constructionist. I have listed my assumptions about the EDOC program in Appendix F. I put them aside and by doing so I was attempting to be more open to the experience of another as opposed to myself. Giorgi (2006) noted that listing

assumptions as I have done is of “dubious value” (§ 13) but the main point is that “the biases must be recognized in the very process of analysis. [However], [r]eflecting upon potential biases before the actual analysis [was] no guarantee that a bias ... [might] not still be operating during the analysis” (§ 13). My purpose in bracketing assumptions was to strengthen my check on them in a way that kept me more focused on the data. Nevertheless, I kept in mind Merleau-Ponty’s statement as shared by Giorgi (2009): “The most important lesson which the [phenomenological] reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction” (p. 92). I recognized that bracketing should be as sound as it can be. It helped me establish the environment for the final challenge: describing the structures of the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) paved the way for my complete understanding of A Giorgi’s four-step process for revealing the phenomenon’s structure by saying:

The final challenge of Phenomenological Reduction is the construction of a complete textural description of the experience. Such a description [goes through] ... the process of returning to the phenomenon itself, in a state of openness and freedom, facilitates clear seeing, makes possible identity, and encourages the looking again and again that leads to deeper layers of meaning. Throughout, there is an interweaving person conscious experience, and phenomenon. In the process of explicating the phenomenon, qualities are recognized and described; every perception is granted equal value, nonrepetitive constituents of the experience are linked thematically, and a full description is derived. The prereflective and reflective components of Phenomenological Reduction enable an uncovering of the nature and meaning of experience, bringing the experiencing person to a self-knowledge and knowledge of the phenomenon. (p. 96)

Giorgi’s (2009) four-step, descriptive, analytic process included (a) reading each narrative description of the phenomenon for context in its entirety, (b) constituting each phenomenological description into meaning units, and (c) transforming the descriptions into explicit experiential contexts so that (d) its structures can be described. The process was performed within the phenomenological attitude while staying faithful to the description itself.

In the course of the work, I used a workbook (Fazio, 2011; Giorgi, 2009) to organize and transform the storied narrative of each co-inquirer as required in the first three steps. In beginning of this work I had the story, the phenomenological experience, of each co-inquirer in writing, completely unabridged. I expressed my behavior within these steps in the form of a reflection as I reflectively placed myself in the reduction process:

In the phenomenological attitude, I directed intentionality toward the phenomenon. As I read a description in its entirety without any precept toward analysis my life-space opened toward the co-inquirer's story. My mindset was the engagement with the lifeworld of the co-inquirer. I wanted to experience his or her experience as though I was in my own natural attitude without the distractions of my assumptions or biases. These were bracketed. Each storied narrative was completely open to me so that I could envelope its meaning through my mind and body senses with attention to my thoughts and feelings. This is an engagement in which I was fully present to the story and person before me. (The researcher's reflection)

I reflected further in proceeding to the second step of the process in which each co-inquirers description of the phenomenon, one at a time, was constituted into "meaning unit[s]" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 145). In this step, the data was coded. The stories had been labeled C1, for Co-inquirer 1, to C10, for Co-inquirer 10. I did this as the stories came to me, which meant that it was the story and not the cohort identity that was important. Meaning units, in each story, were separated with a slash mark (/) with each unit carrying a number. The first meaning unit in a story was numbered 1 and each successive unit was numbered accordingly 2, 3, 4, and so forth. The number of units per story ranged widely, the lowest being 48 and the highest being 168. Following is my reflection on this step within the phenomenological attitude.

I formed meaning units through the perspective of a progressive educator and OD professional. It was a process of identifying how the co-inquirer's description shifts from one aspect of the phenomenon to another. From these units, separate and related descriptive meanings were discerned (refer to Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008, p. 34). Discerning the units was a subjective process and in performing the task I understood that another researcher might perceive the data differently. I did not worry about that. If necessary, a co-inquirer was contacted for clarification on his or her description of the experience with the phenomenon. Since the initial interview had taken place, a relationship was

established that made this possible (refer to Seidman, 2006, p. for details). I did that with only one co-inquirer for all of the 10 stories. (The researcher's reflection)

The third step in the process was the transformation of the data into experiential contexts. I used a workbook that encompassed the stories of each co-inquirer. This facilitated the analysis of data and it kept everything organized.

I continued my reflection.

The lifeworld of the co-inquirer was acknowledged as I thoroughly examined each meaning unit within a story. Recalling Giorgi, I am "picking up contextual and referential issues as they appear important to the [co-inquirer]" (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008, p. 35). I observed how the different dimensions of the lived experience related one to another as a transformation took place from the implicit to the explicit in the revelation of lived meanings. It was a process of making meaning units descriptively articulate and in a way that generalizes meaning for the transformed and modified data. This, too, was accomplished from an OD and PE perspective and I anticipated that work would be time intensive and exacting. (The researcher's reflection)

The fourth step of the reduction involved the synthesis of the transformed meaning units into a description of the structure of the phenomenon. I reflected on this step:

A structure constituted or accounted for the specific experience that had been reported (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008, p. 46). Their number depended upon the nature of the experience and the relationship between them. Through the OD and PE perspective, a description of the psychological structures of the experience was made. In this process I imagined different variations of them to identify what should be left in or left out of the description. Recalling Sokolowski (2000) my goal was "not to concoct fantastic scenarios, but to use these projections to bring about the inexorable necessity of certain things" (p. 181). (The researcher's reflection)

The following figure (see Figure 1) illustrates the workbook that what was used to analyze the data using the four-step process and to organize the descriptive data within the story of each individual co-inquirer into structural contexts. There were 10 workbooks in all, one for each co-inquirer.

| Steps 1 & 2 Reading the story & identifying MU's where they begin and end by marking them with a slash / | Step 2 cont'd Changing MU's from 1 st to 3 rd person expressions | Step 3 1 st Transform of MU's into psychologically expressive statements | Step 3 2 nd transform, if needed, of MU's into psychologically expressive statements (additional columns are added for Step 3 depending upon the number of transforms required using a Word spread sheet) | Step 4 Key constituents of the phenomenon (precise eidetic expressions of psychological meaning) | Personal Reflection |
|---|---|--|--|---|---------------------|
|---|---|--|--|---|---------------------|

MU's are Meaning Units. Step 3 of the analysis allows for transformations of storied meaning units into psychologically expressive statements of the co-inquirer's meaning as described in psychological terms through the consciousness of the researcher. The analysis of the story in finding the essence/s of the co-inquirer's experience is neither linear nor logical. In Step 4, the structure of the phenomenon begins to be identified. Additional transforms beyond Step 3 might be necessary.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| The entire story of a co-inquirer was placed underneath the heading in this column. After reading a story in its entirety, I went through a process of separating the text into meaning units. | I copied the story from the first column and placed it into this column. I then changed the 1 st person voice of the co-inquirer into 3 rd person text. This helped me focus on the given as opposed to the person who had presented the story. | In this column, I transformed meaning units into clear psychological expressions. Additional columns were used as needed because the transforms sometimes take several attempts to reach clarity. | This column was used as needed for additional transforms of meaning units. Columns were added as needed for additional transforms of individual meaning units. | In this column, I made precise eidetic statements of what I had been given. I might make a statement such as "This is co-constructed learning." In this analytic process, I am also using imaginative variation, which helps me to discern possibilities other than what I had stated. | I used this column to record my judgments, thinking, and feelings relating to some of what I was seeing and remembering. In some cases, this helped me to be more precise in my eidetic statements that were recorded in the preceding column. |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|

Figure 1. An example of the four-step story analysis co-inquirer workbook.

Imaginative variation, an important aspect of this last step, is described by Giorgi (2009) as a process that reaches the eidetic or extraordinarily accurate forms of expression for the structure and “for psychological purposes it cannot be at the highest level of abstraction (or universal) because such a high level of abstraction transcends psychological interests Basically, what is called for here is a generalization” (p. 196). An important point is that in this descriptive form of phenomenological methodology the “boundaries are set by [the] type of the phenomenon and not its universal characteristics” (p. 197). Conkin (2007) expressed it well:

Perspectives of the phenomenon are considered from different vantage points and meanings in an effort to discern the structural elements, or dynamics that have given rise to the textural qualities. This includes varying the frames of reference employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. ... The [goal] is to arrive at the structural elements that have given rise to the experience being what it is. (p. 279)

The psychological structures of the phenomenon were described specifically or generally through a synthesis of the common patterns from each experience. Fazio (2011) noted, “[O]ne structure for all the research data is the most desirable outcome, [and that] sometimes the data do not conform to a single structure and different structures have to be written” (p.73). In the case of this research, one structure emerged for the phenomenon.

This concludes the discussion of the methodology. It seems important to highlight some concerns about the methodology employed before proceeding to a discussion of the remaining tasks. These concerns are addressed more completely from the knowledge gained in conducting the study.

Validity. It is never entirely clear that a study of a phenomenon is truly complete and scientific; challenges to validity can always be made. For example, Merleau-Ponty (2002) has acknowledged the futility of abandoning one’s natural world and Gergen (2009) posited that “there are no stand-alone performances; actions gain their meaning through co-action” (p. 106).

So it seems then that this research gains some validity when the parties involved can say with assurance that the expressions, actions, and meaning taken in this research are authentic. In other words, it has face validity. The performance of the research was dependent upon the relationship among all parties involved with each person mindful of the discipline and attitudes required. Truly, things that were unnecessary to the study were brushed away to make the research process as pure as possible. It worked particularly well because the people who participated in this study were trained in the research processes and were clear as to the specific requirements of this study.

Concerning validity, what assurances were there that the phenomenon is not something other than reported? What was the process for checking it out? The first point to be made is that the object of phenomenological reality was lived experience. It is therefore incumbent on the method in use to be as pure as possible so the experience appears in its own light. But still, the question can be asked, is this really the reality. In this regard, existential psychology reduces “consciousness to its personal structures and modes of intentionality” (Wilber, 2000b, p. 1) which are elements within Giorgi’s phenomenology. Therefore, “categories, themes, and patterns come from the [phenomenological] data [that emerged from interviews]” (Larson, 2010, p. 23 in quoting Janesick 2000). The likelihood of the study’s face validity is increased with inductive rigor in analysis (Giorgi, 2009) and consciousness toward the given. Having reviewed the elements within the methodology, we turn to tasks that were performed for its implementation followed by a discussion of study limitations inclusive of a conclusion.

Tasks of the Methodology

This section discusses the tasks that were performed in implementing the methodology. It includes a commentary on informed consent and the Pepperdine Institutional Review Board

(IRB). It also highlights a pilot study that was incorporated to test certain procedures of the methodology, and communication with co-inquirers.

Informed Consent and IRB (Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board).

The goal of informed consent procedures and review of research protocol with human subjects was to insure that no harm is done to participants as a consequence of the research. As has been shown, each co-inquirer in this study was a highly educated and seasoned person with vast personal and professional experience. As Pepperdine doctoral graduates, they understood and possessed a working knowledge of research procedures. They knew the EDOC program and had experienced the culture of the institution. Their participation was by invitation and therefore voluntary. These characteristics mitigated risk. However, it was possible that experience of a private, public, and personal nature might be highly sensitive and of such significance as to merit keeping it hidden from the outside world. Therefore, all procedures governing this research, such as informed consent, specified the voluntary nature of participation and security of data was rigorously followed. Offers of confidentiality were made and fully kept. Co-inquirers remained anonymous. The EDOC's program director was asked to determine the level of review that might be appropriate for this research: exempt, expedited, or full by the University's Institutional Review Board. This research received the classification of exempt. Appendix C, as previously mentioned, shows the exempt classification that was granted.

Pilot study. The pilot study planned for this research was informal in the sense that friends and colleagues who were not a part of the Pepperdine community were asked if they would assist in an interview over the technology used in the research. Two people were asked in an appreciative way to share a story from any venue in which they found meaning of the kind sought in this study. The stories were recorded as a test of my sensitivity and skills in

interviewing, collecting, recording, analyzing, and integrating data. The pilot study also included a rehearsal of the procedures I used in the phenomenological procedures of the study such as performing a phenomenological reduction on given data. Piloting showed that the technology used such as data recording devices and interview transcription procedures worked as planned.

Communication with co-inquirers. As noted earlier, the initial communication with prospective EDOC graduate co-inquirers was through the EDOC LinkedIn network (refer to Appendix B) and then by email. Conversations took place with those who expressed interest in sharing the intent of the research to ensure clarity on the phenomenon such as its definitional dimensions and whether it was believed to have been part of the prospective co-inquirer's EDOC experience. In determining that a co-inquirer had the experience, the co-inquirer was asked if he or she was willing to participate in the research. It was made clear that participation involved a 60 to 90 minute interview with the possibility of a follow-up interview sometime within one or two months following the initial interview. In the course of the conversation, I stated that I expected my research findings to help students and educational professionals advance their understanding of developmental possibilities within higher educational environments. I also shared my assumptions toward them as EDOC graduates and asked them to confirm that they possess the skills needed for their participation as discussed earlier in this chapter. In closing, I asked them to consider my invitation and invited them to get back to me by email within 3 to 5 days so that their participation could be acknowledged and engagement planned. Other graduates, beside those selected to give a story of their experience, who wanted to participate were acknowledged and given the opportunity to provide anecdotal data. They did so in an email response to questions concerning the meaning found within the program, the relational

context, and vivid program experiences. The input of 15 additional graduate co-inquirers provided an added dimension to the study, which was considered only after the phenomenological analysis was completed. In other words, while I was working with co-inquirer stories, anecdotal data was bracketed. I bring this chapter to a close by stating what I perceive to be the limitations to the study that includes a conclusion to my work with the methodology used in this study.

Limitations

Limitations consider the potential weaknesses within this research. I look at them as either factors that were mostly beyond my control or things that represented particular challenges to the work at hand. Considered here are two elements that might have adversely affected the results. One has to do with my use of the descriptive phenomenological methodology (Giorgi, 2009). The other has to do with the long-life of data, which might be considered a threat to internal validity.

The first limitation concerns my use of the methodology; the part that requires a setting aside of my ego so that I am fully present to the rich array of storied data that was given to me. That task required an attitude, a phenomenological attitude (Giorgi, 2009, pp. 87-88), within the phenomenological reduction that was spoken of earlier. This is where I bracket my biases and assumptions by putting them aside so as not to corrode my consciousness toward those things revealed to me by co-inquirers. Giorgi wrote about it as going away from one's "natural attitude" (p. 87), or my "I am" with all my fixed and rigged biases. My need was to focus on what I had been given; to enter the space of a co-inquirer and become one with their story. I do not believe that this can be totally accomplished and the literature is clear on that point (Conklin, 2001; Giorgi, 2006, 2009; Merleau-Ponty, 2002; Moustakas, 1994). The point comes with the

unmitigated necessity for the phenomenological attitude; an attitude that requires a capability that I developed through my years of experience in organizations, education, and life in general.

In my professional roles, I often had to be acutely mindful of the reality with which I was dealing, whether that was helping someone with a problem or making important organizational decisions. It meant being one who listens without prejudice or prejudgment toward the thoughts of others. I had to learn how to set aside my assumptions in order to discern the given of particular situations, some that were quite sensitive in nature. I knew I was learning to be more effective in dealing with a given when I saw myself in a way that precluded quick conclusions that might have rushed me to judgments. I came to recognize that these judgments sometimes brought harsh lessons when they precipitated avoidable adverse and regrettable consequences. Learning from mistakes sensitized my objectivity and ability to discern. As I reflect upon the lessons, I realize that I came to appreciate differences and I was able to join others in dealing with the given at hand. Some might call that empathy. I believe it to be a deeper level of consciousness that takes one to a depth of understanding in relationship. There were many times that my discernment of the given differed from others but I became fully confident in my ability to understand what was there while realizing there were always other ways of knowing.

Literature, as noted several times above, makes a big point of the need to bracket. My point here is that though this is a potential vulnerability in any phenomenological study, I believe I have done it as accurately and as faithfully as I can, even within my first attempt at this level of research. Thirty or 40 years ago, I doubt that I could have made such a claim. Do I consider myself to be fully capable at 72 years of age to set things aside in full and complete openness to others? Certainly not, for to believe that attitude would be a matter of pure ego. I am still prone to short-sightedness and am reminded of such when my professor, spouse, or others close to me

say, "... oh, so you really think you have that figured out" when he or she knew it not to be so. I am confident that what I have accomplished in this research is an accurate reflection of the experience brought to me.

The second risk or limitation within the study has to do with the long-life of the data (Creswell, 2003, 2007). I will discuss this in two ways. First from the standpoint of the data that I gathered with respect to the way in which it encompassed the program. Secondly, I will discuss the nature of story in humans (McAdams, 2006), and why they are such reliable sources of data in descriptive phenomenological studies.

The data encompassed program experiences from 1998, when the program began, to 2012 when the last person from whom I gathered data had graduated; a span of 14 years of collective experience. I had chosen one co-inquirer from each of the nine cohorts with the exception of Sita, which was the sixth cohort in a series of nine. I chose two Sitas because I was particularly intrigued by their experiences. My other reason was to insure that I had enough exemplars of program experience. The decision was made early in the data gathering stage when my means of contacting graduates proved challenging. LinkedIn, as noted earlier, was ineffective. Turning to email and gathering addresses for EDOC graduates was both a necessary and time-consuming process. In the end, it worked well. I had rich data that happened to extend in time.

An important point to be made with the long data life within this study is that educational programs evolve over time through changes in faculty and university administration. Over the years, the EDOC program remained one devoted to the study of organization development and change as course content evolved and new professors came on board to enrich the program and/or replace faculty who had left. The point here is, so what! These kinds of things happen

with learning programs but the significance of it is that it did not become a factor in identifying exemplars for the study. As I gathered stories, it became apparent to me that I had achieved my goal of a rich array of data knowing that I had 10 exemplars of program experience, each of whom self-selected into the study. It did not matter that data spanned years, as the most important criterion was to identify exemplars for the research. This was the primary and critical factor for the efficacy of this phenomenological case study. I found a group of graduates who had a story to tell about finding meaning. Stories are enduring, even for those who had graduated years ago. They are the foundation of life's narrative and represent the way in which experiences are remembered.

My second point to long data life is according to McAdams (2006), an academic, scholar, and researcher; who tells us that stories give us identity and telling them is a way in which we make sense of our lives. My life narrative comes from my experiences. My stories tell others who I am and they inform me as well. "To have a story, [a person] needs a motivated character whose efforts to achieve some end are blocked in some way" (p. 78). My operative definition of meaning as being deep, visceral, and even life-changing fits McAdam's statement perfectly because meaning is often elusive and hard to find. It is something searched for in life. Finding it, as my co-inquirers did in the context of program experiences, are the kinds of things that are remembered. It is what McAdams identified as "*episodic memory*" (his emphasis) ... [as being] the ability to recall specific events (episodes) from the past" (p. 78). It differs from "semantic memory" (p. 78), which helps us remember such things as birthdays, names, holidays, and so forth. Scientists have found that the area of the brain that gives us episodic memory is the hippocampus (McAdams, 2006). McAdams noted:

... humans are ... able to travel back in time to recall particular sense or episodes that have happened in their lives. Our brains are hardwired to recall past events and connect

them to imagined future scenarios. Episodic memory, then, provides us with the feeling that our lives are set in time – the remembered past, the experienced present, and the anticipated future. This temporal sense is likewise essential for storytelling, for we relate in narratives the thought and actions of motivated characters as they move from episode to episode, from beginning to middle to end. Episodic memory provides the foundation for ... identity ... our narrative sense of self-in-time. (pp. 80-81)

The stories I received reflect episodes in the lives of co-inquirers; stories about how they found meaning for their lives through studies in the Doctor of Education in Organization Change program. This research is a case study centered on their experienced phenomenon. This risk of long data life is mitigated because of our ability to remember.

The methodology presented in this chapter outlined the clear and comprehensive strategy used for understanding the essence and structure of the phenomenon. Giorgi's phenomenology provided the philosophy and steps within his descriptive procedure. The methodology was encompassing, inclusive, and embracing of the goals in this research. It rested on the foundations and integrity of the descriptive phenomenological process.

Chapter IV. Results: The General Structure for Finding Meaning

Overview

This chapter presents the general structure for how deeply felt, visceral, emotional, and life-changing meaning was found by 10 graduates of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program. The key constituents of the general structure are presented with the empirical variations within which their individual experiences were lived. Meaning found by these graduates, each of whom is identified as co-inquirer, included finding and/or understanding love for self and others, successfully meeting seemingly difficult and insurmountable challenges, or doing something of deep personal significance. Finding meaning is related anecdotally by 11 additional graduates, also co-inquirers, who were invited to participate and chose to do so. Four additional co-inquirers provided perspectives apart from the meaning found by the first 21, which are, nevertheless, useful to this study. A further perspective is presented by me, the researcher, who as an EDOC doctoral candidate conducted the research as a phenomenologist and a person with direct program experience.

I would like to be clear about my use of phenomenology and my participation in the research at the outset of this chapter. I have been challenged from the beginning, as a person who is in the very program under study, to make sense of my surroundings and the implications of the qualitative data that I have gathered. Understanding the program as a path toward meaning within the higher education classroom of the EDOC program is the aim of this study. The observations that I made over the years of my doctoral studies compliment that understanding. As a participant, I came to know the program's culture, its structure, and many of its participants: fellow students, core and guest faculty, administrators, and graduates. Given my

status, it was never an option to be an onlooker or observer from the outside. My program experience helped enormously toward understanding the experience of my co-inquirers.

Those who participated in this study, my co-inquirers, knew my research role and that I was gathering stories to understand how their meaning evolved. I was overt and giving of the full purpose and explanation of research intent to everyone. In most cases, obtaining a co-inquirer story was a single event of limited duration; about an hour and one-half in time, but there were, of course, the preliminaries to gathering a story which consisted of emails and phone calls. In some of the cases of story gathering, I observed the emotional significance of the event of reliving aspects of the EDOC program.

Spending weeks on each story, I looked for insight as I sought to understand what I had been given. Giorgi, author of my phenomenological methodology, responded to a question of mine about the story transformation process, which gets a phenomenologist to the essence. He wrote that the transformation process, which is a process of getting into the depth of a story is neither linear nor logical. Understanding a story requires insight of the given and there is no formula or time frame for getting to it (personal email communication, March 19, 2013).

The presentation of descriptive data from co-inquirer stories begins with an empirical overview of the meaning found by the 10 co-inquirers who shared the story of their journey in finding meaning. This sets a context and is followed by the general structure of the experience and the empirically derived key constituents of the phenomenon that were taken from the stories. A series of tables summarize the data by providing an overview of the key constituents of the general structure. Following this overview, I discuss how the constituents relate to each other. These constituents, resulting from an analysis of co-inquirer stories, are then supplemented by a summary of anecdotal data provided by 11 additional graduates. The members of this group

responded either by email or phone to questions that revealed additional insight for the research. Some of my experience is shared from the vantage point of being a student in the program. The chapter ends with an illustration of the relationship among constituents showing the essence of the experience of students finding meaning in this particular program of higher education.

Some co-inquirers used terms to describe their experience that might be unfamiliar to the reader. They are defined here to bring clarity to the presentation of constituents. The definition of these terms is drawn from the descriptive stories where the term was used by a co-inquirer or co-inquirers within a particular observed context. They are stated from their perspective and my experience as a student in the program. Where appropriate, I use personal pronouns to illuminate my presence along with theirs.

Terms Used by Co-Inquirers in the Description of Their Experience

Self as instrument of change (SAI). Self as instrument of change mentioned by a number of co-inquirers is a course within the EDOC program that encourages students to develop an in-depth understanding of their authentic self and how they relate to others in professional and/or personal relationships. It provides students an opportunity to understand how they can help and serve themselves and others. A more developed self as an instrument of change is an aim of the course, which challenges students to become self-aware in developing a clear identity allowing one to be intentional and impactful in taking action. SAI is an in-depth course experience for the duration of the program and possibly beyond. It provides an opportunity to focus on self as a practitioner, steward, and researcher in the disciplines of organization development and change (OD&C) by facilitating a process of sensemaking within self; a rising of consciousness toward the known and unknown of the “I am.” It is a course that challenged us to closely examine self so that we might be effective as scholars, researchers,

practitioners, consultants, and coaches in the practice of OD&C. I have credited SAI with life changing experiences and I am joined by co-inquirers who have had similar experiences.

Qualifying exam. The qualifying exam, mentioned by 1 of the 10 co-inquirers who provided a story, is taken by students after the first year of course work. It gave us an opportunity to integrate learning and demonstrate progress within the program. The exam process reflects a student's readiness to advance to year two of the program thus providing a portal for the continuation of advanced doctoral studies.

Comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam experience noted by 1 co-inquirer is taken at the end of course work as an opportunity to integrate all learning over a 3-year span. It is a capstone experience to the rigors of the program that includes courses, writings of academic and personal perspectives, and experiences with self and others. It provides an indication to faculty of a student's readiness for the 768 and 769 experiences defined below. It also serves as a readiness indicator and precursor to the rigors of the dissertation process.

768 experience. The 768 experience is described by 1 co-inquirer as a learning that takes one outside of their comfort zone. My experience is consistent with this description. I, myself, have used those very words. Students are coached by faculty to ground the experience in some aspect of life like fulfilling a dream, finding self, making connections, or resolving conflict. It affords an opportunity to craft a meaningful experience surrounding a need, interest, or desire. In fulfilling the requirement, a student's focus is on identifying an experience based upon his or her perceived need or search for discovery of one's self and worldview. The experience that one creates is transitory but can bring about lasting personal change. Although the experience itself is of short duration, like a week or more, countless hours might be spent in planning, preparation, reflection, and dialogue among fellow students and faculty. The experience culminates in a

presentation to the EDOC community and possibly wider audiences. One co-inquirer said insight from the experience can be very instructive in working with those who are dealing with change because it places a student within their own ambiguity and meaning; unfamiliar cultural settings, a context similar to what a consultant's client might experience when on a journey of change.

769 experience. The 769 experience is defined by a co-inquirer as a final project involving an in-depth “consulting engagement in which the student, in the role of consultant, advised a client on a change project” (Co-inquirer 4). It is a rigorous assignment that includes an expectation of incorporating program learning into comprehensive fieldwork. Students were expected to include organization development and change processes in their work with freedom to create processes of their own. One story shows that as the program evolved, students were expected to include an action research component into their consulting engagement. A comprehensive paper and presentation demonstrates the learning for both the student and client.

EDOC learning community. The EDOC learning community mentioned by a co-inquirer includes faculty, students, administrators, and others with whom they interact in formal and semiformal ways over the course of their learning and beyond as EDOC graduates.

Progressive education. The final definition to share is progressive education. As used by me in this research it is education that strives *to help* (my emphasis) students make the most of their learning experience. The term progressive in the context of this research is limited to the educational environment of the EDOC program of Pepperdine University.

Meaning Found by the 10 Co-inquirers

For each of the 10 co-inquirers who shared their story, I observed that the meaning found was unique to each person. Common to all, however, was a greater sense of self. For 2 co-

inquirers, it brought forth understandings of love that enabled deeper relationships. Finding meaning led to a personal transformation for 3 other co-inquirers; in the case of 1, a pleasing nature to a confident independent voice, for another, arrogance to humility that was described as a spiritual transcendence, and for the third, a transformation to greater humanness. With a greater sense of self among all, meaning brought forth capabilities carrying themes of an emergent capability for self-reflection, a deepened human presence toward others, an ability to accept reality through a suspension of ego, an enduring sense of calm and peace, confidence in the walk through life, the ability to render significance, feelings of balance in life, and a broadened worldview. Meaning observed that is specific to each co-inquirer follows:

Co-inquirer 1 found the nature of loving relationships that included loving and caring for others. She described her enactment of this meaning as becoming a more humble, confident, and fully present person in relationships with others.

Co-inquirer 2 deepened her appreciation of people: who they are and what they do. Finding her reflective self was a key learning and she uses this insight as she moves through life. She gained a clear perspective, the “I am,” and with this clarity she is able to suspend her ego identity by being able to let things go. She also found meaning through the knowledge gained in the program that gave her a broader perspective and worldview.

Co-inquirer 3 found her true nature and described the experience as spiritual. In her quest for significance by engaging in an experience far beyond her comfort zone, she found peace and the ability to simply be.

Co-inquirer 4’s highest level of meaning was discovering his “self,” which he described as a primal and deep understanding of himself. Now, nothing obscures his view. His confidence and clarity, gained through what he describes as the “birthing” process of the program enabled

him to find his voice, which made him a contributor in his field. As a graduate, he has published a book on leadership and expects to contribute more.

Co-inquirer 5 found an ability to confront his blind and hidden side. As he shared his story, I observed the emotion, the very deep feelings of the significance gained from his EDOC experience. Learning about self and altering personal assumptions was viscerally significant; described as being above the academic aspects of the program.

Co-inquirer 6 transformed from a self described “subject matter expert” to one who humbly focuses on the true nature of inquiry, which to him is life-long learning. Having found this within his identity, he adds value to his clients through a voice that reflects an unvarnished authentic sense of self.

Co-inquirer 7 found aspects of his life that enriched his perspective, his behavior, and his attitude toward his life. Transforming from an ego centered self, he learned to be a more balanced, honest, and humble person. He described the change as a transcendence, which went beyond his life into his spiritual core.

Co-inquirer 8 described his meaning as transforming in ways that helped him experience feelings of peace and calm within his inner being as opposed to a confrontational presence that sometimes came about. His transformation made him a better listener and responder; one who is now capable of focusing on questions in a way that helps his clients find answers to their questions. This transform enables him to put others ahead of his self-interest.

Co-inquirer 9 was biased toward the exclusive goal of task accomplishment. She found meaning that enables her to focus on both process and task, recognizing the importance of both. In addition, she learned to be in control as opposed to being the controlled. She shed boundaries, opened herself to others, and found value in the qualitative research paradigm to which she had

previously been close-minded due, in part, to the controlling influence of others. She now sees herself as being more human.

Co-inquirer 10 found meaning centered on love for others. Rather than judging, she learned to recognize, accept, and celebrate differences in people. This learning came together by moving far out of her comfort zone. Some of her core assumptions changed as a consequence of her experience. She also found her appreciative self through Appreciative Inquiry that changed the way in which she goes about her personal and professional life. In these two experiences she came to know and appreciate the world family.

General Structure of the Lived Experience for Finding Meaning

It is important to note that the structure of the experience derived through phenomenological methodology is not based solely on empirical facts alone but on imaginative variations as well as insights. The concrete descriptions and meanings derived from the stories of co-inquirers are considered holistically from my perspective as a progressive educator and OD professional. This phenomenological research reaches for the essence of the experience without which the experience would not have been present for the co-inquirer. In the discussion of the constituents of the phenomenon, the uniqueness of each co-inquirer and their experience is seen.

Key Constituents, Including Empirical Variations, and Contexts

The general structure for the 10 co-inquirers who lived the experience for finding meaning included the key constituents that follow. After the constituent listing, each one is depicted with representative examples from each co-inquirer's experience. To be clear, these eight constituents are what constitute the structure of the phenomenon. The structure, therefore, is composed of its constituents.

1. Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning its nature.

2. A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement.
3. Dialogic relationships among participants within the EDOC learning community.
4. Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students.
5. Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth.
6. A helping and caring environment.
7. Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences.
8. Validation of progress toward goals.

1. Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning its nature. Co-inquirers described their purpose for choosing the EDOC program as they shared how meaning evolved for them over the course of their studies. Some expressed specific needs for a particular learning environment, while others focused on goals to accomplish in the course of their doctoral studies. Descriptions of purpose varied as being either process or task focused with process being the nature of the learning environment as described by 4 co-inquirers while six co-inquirers focused on specific goals that they wished to achieve.

Co-inquirers 1, 2, 3, and 5 described an attitude toward the process dimensions of the learning environment by expressing a need for (a) an environment that was intimate and rich in one-on-one interaction among faculty and students; one that was reciprocal and thus a leverage for their development. Process elements also included needs for (b) depth and rigor in the learning, (c) accommodations for learners such as one who possesses a curious and adventurous nature, (d) espoused values that were consistent with one's personal values, and (e) pragmatism for the needs and realities of a fluid adult learning environment.

The task aspects described by Co-inquirers 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were focused on personal goals that they wished to achieve. In general, they included (a) the goal of developing a professional practice to better serve clients, (b) the acquisition of professional skills to meet business and organizational needs, and (c) the development of skills to bring one's capabilities to a higher level. Fulfillment of the process or task need expresses the expectation co-inquirers had in joining the program.

2. A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement. All co-inquirers told of relationships that developed within the program experience and how these relationships brought about engagement among the learning community. Relational sets formed through learning tasks assigned by faculty or natural processes based upon the needs and interests of co-inquirers. In both cases, sets emerged consisting of two or more students, groups of students, faculty and students, student and faculty. In each case, assigned task or natural process, students were free to form relationships with others and each co-inquirer took the opportunity to do so.

Co-inquirer 5 and 8 developed some of their relationships through what the literature describes as being a norm for group development; forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965). Co-inquirers 1, 2, and 4 are exemplars of relationships that came about serendipitously, or in other words, through natural inclinations; feelings of mutual support, and genuine regard for others. These relationships possess the character of enduring, authentic friendship, which leaves space for free-flowing behavior, that is, space free of impeding boundaries (Wilber, 2001).

Mentoring relationships were common. Co-inquirer 9's study group became mentors to fellow students and Co-inquirers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 found mentors within their relationships with

faculty and others like guest faculty, special presenters at informal fireside chats that typically followed a day of learning. Co-inquirers described contexts associated with relationships that brought people together within the learning community. Their stories also described the visceral depth of relationships such as those that came about as a consequence of experience in a foreign country as exemplified by Co-inquirers 5 and 10, the closeness of the members within Co-inquirer 5's cohort, the supportive relationship that Co-inquirer 8 had with his dissertation chair and two friends, scholars, and authors, who followed his progress throughout the program, Co-inquirer 3's guardian in the Vision Quest experience in her 768 experience, and the close relationships that Co-inquirer 1 and 4 developed with faculty.

Relationships emerged out of various contexts as the following examples show. Co-inquirer 1 and 2 described how a deep relationship formed through their respective decision to share a room with a fellow student when their cohort was in a formal session. Co-inquirer 2 strengthened relationships by taking risks in the performance of assigned tasks. Co-inquirer 5 and 9 described how students came together in helping each other prepare for the preliminary and comprehensive exam, and the challenge of the dissertation. Co-inquirer 3, 5, 9, and 10 described how relationships formed in instances like joint cohort learning opportunities and learning opportunities in foreign countries.

All co-inquirers described how working closely with others within the EDOC community facilitated the formation of close, mutual, and personal relationships among fellow students, faculty and program administrations. Following are behavioral descriptions of engaging relationships:

1. Formal when the cohort was in session to learn and otherwise foolish, fun, and on point toward purpose and study tasks

2. Having freedom in the expression of thoughts, feeling, and ideas
3. Being open toward self and each other's whole life
4. Close in developing life-long friendships
5. Being fully present one to another
6. Active professors and students in providing space for each other to learn
7. Sharing mutually interesting thoughts and ideas
8. Relating to each other as peers regardless of background and program position (faculty, student and administrators)
9. Working together in promoting trust
10. Exposing feelings and emotions in self and others
11. Interacting with humility
12. Acknowledging friction when it arose as being part of the learning experience
13. Establishing boundaries for how the community might self govern

3. Dialogic relationships among participants within the EDOC learning community.

Co-inquirers found dialogue among students, faculty, and others associated with their learning to be an enriching experience. Co-inquirer 5 described it as built on trust with respect shown for one's knowledge and position. For Co-inquirer 4 it was the quiet times in the evening or over a meal that provided space for discussion and sharing the challenges of presented and authored subject matter and professional ideas. Co-inquirer 5 spoke of his admiration for professors who he describes as quality human beings and humble people. Dialogic interactions were described by Co-inquirer 4 as being engaged in discussions on critical points of view that revealed thought processes, assumptions, and filters. These were warm conversations, as described by Co-inquirer 7, in which the parties reached out to each other.

Co-inquirers reached for outcomes through dialogue in their own particular ways. Co-inquirer 1 found strength in her ability to confront difficult relationships through the honest woman-to-woman feedback that she received from two faculty members. The dialogic interaction was so enriching that she has adopted patterns observed in them as her own. Co-inquirer 2 learned how to open effective dialogue with others through the use of reflective questions. She described it as time where no one pushes so it reaches the point of a working dialogue with those who are unfamiliar with dialogic processes. Those with whom she worked in the course of her dissertation felt comfortable with her approach and learned to engage her in a similar manner. Co-inquirer 4 found that dialogue with others helped him dialogue with self. The caring nature of the dialogue experience found by Co-inquirer 5 who came to the program from a foreign country enabled him to overcome his language barrier through the help of fellow students. Co-inquirer 6's dialogue helped him develop a greater ability to apply the knowledge he gained from the study of theory and in the experience of Co-inquirer 8, it helped define how he might make contributions to the field of organization development and change. Co-inquirer 6 and 7's dialogic interaction helped them reach out to others who were involved with their learning which manifested in closer, enriched relationships.

4. Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students.

Co-constructed learning, that is learning developed through collaboration between students and faculty, emerged through the fulfillment of specific course requirements, relationships, and circumstances that led to confrontation with self and others, i.e., students and faculty. Co-inquirer 3 believed that several courses, particularly the 768, 769, and dissertation experiences are co-constructed by nature in giving students the opportunity to fulfill the assignment through paths of their own choosing while being tasked to develop comprehensive papers and

presentations. The dissertation is an example of co-construction. Co-inquirer 6, for example, put forth a proposal to integrate his vast overseas experiences into his research design. His dissertation chair and committee saw the logic and agreed with his approach.

The descriptions given by co-inquirers show how their ability to co-construct individual or cohort learning helped them make the most of their learning experience. Co-inquirer 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10 specifically mentioned the 768 experience as giving them the freedom to create an experience that carried personal significance. Co-inquirer 10 credits the lead faculty member in 768 for having opened her to new possibilities and experiences precipitated by a suggestion for getting the most from her experience, which she created, in a foreign country. My own experience was similar. Co-inquirer 3 was grateful for the freedom to explore within her dissertation experience. In like manner, Co-inquirer 6 who had substantial experiences in other cultures was grateful for being able to apply it to his research.

Co-inquirers 4 and 5 describe instances where learning was co-constructed as a consequence of faculty/student conflict. One instance occurred within the context of the comprehensive exam where Co-inquirer 4 was offended by feedback given by a visiting faculty member. He shared his concerns with the program director believing it might have led to changes in the manner in which the exam is conducted. Co-inquirer 5 described the positive response of faculty who responded to the needs of his cohort after they threatened to petition another university to provide a similar program if their needs for exposure to contemporary thought were not met. A postmodernist was found and a shift was made from what was described as conservative learning to one that exposed students to contemporary worldviews. Thinking he might have made a poor decision in joining the EDOC program, Co-inquirer 7 shared feelings with faculty. By co-constructing elements of the program with faculty he was

able to leverage his experience to fully contribute to his own learning and the learning of his peers. He was completely satisfied with his outcomes and was grateful for a faculty that helped him meet his needs.

5. Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth. All Co-inquirers related how faculty members provided free-space by helping them remove boundaries that might have inhibited their learning. Co-inquirer 9 described how freedom to learn let her deal with the boundaries of an overly structured and disciplined nature. Co-inquirer 10 described how the Self as Instrument (SAI) portion of the program which raises student consciousness toward self and self-development provided space for her to openly share with others in ways that helped her discover goals that were important to her life. Co-inquirer 3 described the nature of the 768 experience as taking her out of the boundaries of her comfort zone. She placed herself in a serene setting that revealed her humanness as opposed to being bounded by the “things” of daily life. The experience in a natural environment gave her the freedom to focus entirely on herself. Co-inquirer 4, describing himself as a pleaser by nature, found through the freedom within the 769 experience, a sense of self and a voice to deal with unpopular and critical points of view. Co-inquirer 6 opened avenues to growth through an encounter with a renowned scholar and author, which led him to recognizing his “subject matter expert” boundaries. Within the freedom of the relationship, he opened his consciousness to life-long learning. The freedom of student and scholar engagement enabled his transcendence. The informal free-space of fireside chats described by Co-inquirer 5 provided the opportunity for meaningful dialogue among students and faculty that opened paths to learning. Co-inquirer 7 described how freedom to learn allowed him to pursue a wish for balance in life so he began a spiritual journey that took him to a Buddhist retreat, which helped him find that identity. He was

grateful to his faculty for giving him the space to act upon an experience that he himself created. Freedom was at play as student groups worked together. Co-inquirer 8 related how the learning community helped him define how he might make a contribution to the field of OD & C and the clients and students he would serve in his consulting and teaching career. Co-inquirer 9 described the freedom she had within her dissertation experience that led her to networks and tapped her desire to be a person who was good for the world. Co-inquirer 10 believed in the wisdom she had received from her professor. She described how she took risks and stretched her learning by living with a family in a foreign country. She described how the space gave her the freedom to take advantage of this life changing experience that strengthened her personally and professionally.

6. A helping and caring environment. The stories of co-inquirers showed that helping and caring within the EDOC community occurred within relational sets of faculty, students, and those in roles that facilitated the learning experience like administrators, visiting faculty, and others who supported independent work such as the 768, 769, and dissertation experiences. Co-inquirers provided descriptions of (a) the helping relationship among faculty and students, (b) students helping each other, and (c) helping and caring interactions from others who had a stake in their success.

In the helping and caring interaction of faculty and students, Co-inquirer 1 described the closeness she felt in engagements with female faculty who honored and acknowledged her as a fellow woman as opposed to working within the structured, formal relationship of professor and student. In the dissertation experience, she described her chair as a man who was filled with care, grace, consideration, and affirmation in all of her work. Co-inquirer 2 described the program director as a person whom students could talk to about any issue in the program and

who at times would ask a helping question, which led her to find answers to her own questions. Co-inquirer 4 found students at the center of the learning equation as opposed to the subject matter in the field which surprised him for he had not expected that level of thoughtfulness, helping, and caring. For him, it was an unexpected outcome; a much deeper approach to education than that which he previously experienced. He believed it opened his eyes to a new way of learning. Co-inquirer 5 honored faculty with admiration for marshaling resources to help students overcome fear and build self-esteem in an atmosphere based upon friendship and trust. This made his learning easier. He described it as learning that was without the fear of losing face. Co-inquirer 6 described feedback he received unexpectedly during the comprehensive exam that challenged his tendency for managing his behavior and persona. He knew from the feedback that his faculty valued his authenticity. A blind side was revealed to him through the interaction, which opened space for his authenticity. Co-inquirer 7 described how his dissertation committee was available whenever he needed them. They established a relationship in which his committee interacted with him in a mutually collaborative manner. His dissertation chair was an example of a helper who expected nothing in return. Co-inquirer 8 described a similar experience with a chair who was available at all times. All co-inquirers described richness in faculty behavior in which they were fully present to students as colleagues and friends in ways that enriched their experience. For example, Co-inquirer 9, discouraged by family and friends that her dissertation research was infeasible, informed the faculty that she would not research her chosen topic. Nevertheless, she was encouraged by a dissertation committee who recognized her interest and passion. Through the continual reinforcement of her faculty she succeeded and the experience changed her life by releasing her from a need to focus mostly on structure and high achievement.

Students helped, cared, and mentored each other throughout the program in relationships that were mutually reinforcing. Co-inquirer 1, for example, described the relationships within her learning group of four independently minded people as mutually caring and helping. In developing a paper on leadership, Co-inquirer 2 described how a fellow student opened a contact for her in the Philippines that led to a very enriching experience with a woman who was seen as a leader in her country. She further described how a fellow student in her cohort helped her find a job, which became the setting for her dissertation. Co-inquirer 5 described how fellow students empathetically reached out to him by offering help that enabled him to fully participate within the program after noticing his difficulties with language. He reciprocated by helping his peers fulfill the requirements of their 769 experience by opening consulting opportunities for them in his native land.

Helping and caring extended beyond the immediate classroom to those who had a stake in a co-inquirer's learning. For example, Co-inquirer 3 described her venture into a Vision Quest experience for 768. She felt protected by a caring Vision Quest staff as she searched for and fulfilled her goals for self-enrichment. She described how her protectors prepared her for an experience in the forest in a way that taught her how to eat, sleep, and be safe so that despite the risks of a new and perhaps hostile environment, she could be fully present in her enlightening surroundings. She described her safety net as extending to her reentry into the world. Co-inquirer 8 described his gratefulness for having been in a program that helped him establish relationships that continue as collaborators and friends. Co-inquirer 10 described her respect and admiration for her professor as one who helped her connect with others in a foreign land. The help she received was one of constant encouragement from a fully present, interested, and engaged advisor.

Each co-inquirer was helped and cared for by people within their learning community that represented their genuine and unconditional regard for the uniqueness of each person. Students mentored each other. Faculty encouraged and came to students as helpers and friends. This being the norm, it opened dialogue not just about subject material but life as well.

7. Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences. Exposure to unique experiences within the EDOC program impacted the worldview of each co-inquirer. The experience was different for each person in bringing about changes in core assumptions and beliefs. It is described for each individual co-inquirer. The following examples are not all inclusive of a co-inquirer's story. Each experience that follows was uniquely special to the co-inquirer as witnessed through my observation of their story.

Co-inquirer 1's description of the close, intimate relationship with her roommate caused her to deepen her appreciation of each person in her life in a way that helped her be open to anyone with whom she comes in contact. It brought her to a higher level of knowing; a level that broadened her view of love, learning, understanding, and caring.

Co-inquirer 2 described her fascination with the authenticity of her professor's family who expressed their Jewish faith and shared it in very simple and unobtrusive ways. She observed it closely when she and students from her cohort, along with those from another cohort, visited her professor's daughter's apartment for a party one evening following a day of learning. She described it as a human experience that significantly broadened her cultural view.

The Vision Quest experience of Co-inquirer 3 is described as being outside of her comfort zone because she was out of doors, away from technology, work, family, and all the comforts of everyday life; the things with which she was accustomed. That experience enabled her to transcend her boundaries through her willingness to be vulnerable to her own identity. As

she described the experience it was, in part, spiritual in nature. Her spirit was tapped by being in the space of complete self-awareness of thoughts and feelings; an experience she described as enduring.

Co-inquirer 4 described his relationship with faculty as safe, which let him challenge his beliefs and sense of self. With that in stride he became more transparent and authentic to others. The negative incident with a visiting faculty member described earlier was his turning point in finding a voice for speaking publicly about something disturbing knowing the expression of his thoughts might be unpopular.

Co-inquirer 5's experience in a community development event when his cohort initially came together is vivid. The experience included an outdoor gathering in the mountains with fellow students who, like him, held assumptions of the challenging nature of doctoral education. Being from another country, he realized his cultural assumptions were different from his peers. He describes how these differences became apparent when women in the group challenged his gender assumptions. He is grateful for opportunities that altered his cultural assumptions toward women.

Co-inquirer 6 described his experience with Warren Bennis, a world-renowned author, lecturer, teacher, and consultant. He was profoundly struck by seeing a man evolve his learning by changing his mind and broadening his thinking. Experiencing this authentic person helped him reach an understanding that education is a journey and not just a destination and that earning a doctorate is just one more step in a process of life-long learning. Through this experience, Co-inquirer 6 became aware of the responsibilities of a person leading change. He was able to identify his blind spots and limitations, which was pivotal for him.

Co-inquirer 7 described the learning he experienced in SAI as confrontational not only to his mind but to his heart. He credits his professor for opening him to that experience and giving him a metaphor for the experience of SAI, 768, and travels throughout the world. He concluded that the opportunity within these aspects of the program was for him to learn about himself by crossing his own boundaries. The metaphor of crossing his own boundaries was very powerful to him because “even his visa [which gives him passage to other countries] hasn’t let him do that.”

Following a confrontational exchange with a person serving as guest faculty, Co-inquirer 8 described how he reflected on his own behavior. A walk on a beach with a fellow student prompted a processing of his behavior by bringing to mind a situation, similar to the behavior that he saw in the professor. He realized that he too might have to make ethical choices in circumstances that are in conflict with his beliefs and values. His encounter with self led him to examine how his ethics and reality might play out in real life. It was one of several turning points to a greater sense of self-awareness that prompted an enduring change in his behavior.

One of Co-inquirer 9’s core assumptions that she found erroneous in the course of her 768 experience was that all of the women she was with on an art retreat would want to do everything together. She found, however, that much of the activity, by preference, was done independently. Confronting her structured, task driven nature, she became aware that the process one encounters in life is as important as the tasks toward the end product. This learning broadened her worldview.

Co-inquirer 10’s experience in a foreign country transcended her judgmental tendency in coming to appreciate alternative worldviews concluding that the most precious gift one can give is authenticity in community. She described how she embraced Appreciative Inquiry through its

introduction in the EDOC program, which led her to change her approach to helping others work with change.

8. Validation of progress toward goals. Through the course of the program, students were validated by self and/or others in ways that helped them see that they mattered, that they were relevant, and that they were making progress toward personal and program goals. Validation informed by working in different ways to reinforce progress toward goals. It was part of a learning process unique to the experience of each student as the following examples of empirical variation show.

Within the context of small group work, Co-inquirer 1 described how she was validated by a fellow student who recognized her performance within the group. The interaction emotionally moved her when told by her partner that there would be no need for Affirmative Action (a US federal law designed to increase representation of women and minorities in the workplace) if others performed like her. The relationship with two members of the faculty previously described validated and shaped her female identity. A relationship like father/daughter with a third faculty member provided her affirming support, critical assessment, and advice that made her stronger.

Validation differed for Co-inquirer 2 who, in finding her reflective self, began to see in others what she wanted to see in herself. She had opportunities to examine and test her worldview and confront realities important to her. She related that sensemaking, the integration of self-knowledge and action was critical to her development. She described how her learning was validated during her 768 debrief that included a comprehensive in-depth paper and presentation to an incoming doctoral cohort in which she experienced the joy and rigor of the presentation coupled with positive feedback from her audience.

Co-inquirer 3 described how her identity was tested through the accomplishment of her Vision Quest experience, which let her delve deeply into self. Her perspective changed from concern about what others thought of her to confidence in who she was and who she was becoming; a person that appreciated and valued her own identity more so than what others thought of her or whom others thought she should be. Some program experiences were deeply personal to her, like the experience of her cohort's trip to Chile, which caused her to examine her assumptions and worldview by deeply reflecting on past experiences in that country. She was able to share the richness of the experiences with her daughter who had accompanied her on the Chilean trip. Growing closer was validation, a consequence of their mutually reinforcing presence.

Co-inquirers 4's close relationship with faculty who treated him as a peer validated his persona and expertise. The interaction helped him find his voice.

Co-inquirer 5 confronted his assumptions through study with fellow students in their cultural setting not only in homes but also by meeting their family and neighbors. These experiences caused him to question his beliefs about others and the way they lived while making comparisons between his native culture and other cultures in the world. He, with others in his cohort, looked for opportunities to study together in preparation for such things as preliminary and comprehensive exams, and dissertation. They shared perceptions of each other's work, gave feedback, and learned together in this small group process thus validating each other's progress.

One way in which Co-inquirer 6 was validated occurred through the relationship he developed with Dr. Warren Bennis, the experience of which was described previously. Dr. Bennis validated him by accepting him as a peer and one who could contribute to his learning.

Co-inquirer 7 understood how he crossed his own boundaries through his 768 experience. He lived with his wife in a house of poor people on a floating island at Lago Titicaca. From there, he went alone to a 10-day silent retreat. The experience validated his developmental goals: his search for deeper meaning and balance in life. His wife was with him, in spirit if not in person. She encouraged and continually validated his progress in meeting goals.

Co-inquirer 8 reconciled conflicting thoughts and feelings toward the abridgement of ethics and values through the work of Peter Koestenbaum who wrote about the conflict between ethics and reality and the importance of vision and courage in leadership. This visiting professor's work validated his emerging thoughts, feelings, and willingness to change. He was also validated through the friendship of the late Edie and Charles Seashore who were authors and consultants with whom he kept in touch throughout the course of his studies and beyond. He described their close bonds as being always by his side.

Co-inquirer 9 engaged her fellow students in her 768 presentation by incorporating her newly found creativity; a change from a self-described persona of a cold analytic; a norm within her usual mode of operation. She described her change as being validated by fellow students and professors in their positive and spontaneous reaction to her 768 presentation. She also validated self through the joy of her venture in the unknown and sharing her experience at an art camp. As a precursor to this experience she was validated through her self-reflection in an SAI assignment in which she found her "awfulizing" tendency. During her dissertation process, she was profoundly validated by a faculty committee who valued her work when she felt that no one else did. Her developmental progress allowed her to lighten up by being more open, by accepting herself, and by letting her enjoy herself as a whole person instead of focusing on the end product of everyday work.

Co-inquirer 10 opened herself to new worldviews through her 768 experience in Bali. In addition to her professor, she was validated by people in another land and culture who accepted her into their home. It was and still is an emotional, enduring, and rewarding connection for her many years after the event.

These eight constituents are presented as the structure for how co-inquirers found meaning. It is a structure that is real to me because I have experienced each of the constituents that these stories have exposed. The insight given by co-inquirers provides clarity for each of the constituents. The key constituents shown in Tables 2 - 9 are drawn from the workbook used for the research (See chapter III). I provide examples of transformed meaning units from the stories of each co-inquirer to illustrate how I arrived at the constituents for finding meaning. I close this section by discussing the relationship among the constituents.

Table 2

Constituent 1: Self-Aware Learners Who Joined the Program With Assumptions Concerning its Nature

| Constituent 1 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning its nature | C1 | C2` | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| | She needed an intimate learning environment with one-on-one interaction with professors. | She expected content rigor in course studies and requirements. | The program had to satisfy her curious and adventurous nature. | He was looking for depth in learning that could be applied to his consulting practice. | He needed an environment in which values were consistent with his own. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | He recognized a need to develop his human skills in order to be effective in organizations. | He wanted to review his consulting practice that had an embedded 20 year history. | He needed a learning environment that was pragmatic in its approach. | Her goal was to find ways to improve the quality of human systems where she worked. | Her purpose was to expand her skill base for a job she already had. |

Table 3

Constituent 2: A Social Construction That Facilitates the Formation of Relational Sets and Community Engagement

| Constituent 2 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| | By sharing a room, she formed a deep an enduring relationship with a fellow student. Mentoring relationships came about through interaction in a student study group. | She was put in a situation that was contrary to her personal identity and relationships formed as a consequence of an unnatural experience. | Having shared experiences extending beyond her immediate cohort members facilitated the formation of community wide relationships. | Relationships with faculty made the biggest difference in his learning as it felt mostly like peer relationships stemming from his age and experience. | A common thread was found in the feelings and emotions that people observed in others and themselves. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | In the beginning of his program, his professor did an experiment with members of his cohort as they were in the forming and storming phase of their group that caused him to alter his assumptions about the members of his group. | He interacted with some members of his cohort more than others based upon a self-interest need and his judgment of how he wanted to invest his time. | He found a welcoming environment that was collegial and intellectually stimulating from the standpoint of faculty members and interaction with the cohort that preceded them. | She learned about the differences in people through the closeness that she experienced with other students in quarterly cohort meetings. | She acknowledged that friction in the group, when it arose, was taken as part of the learning experience. |

Table 4

Constituent 3: Dialogic Relationships Among Participants Within the EDOC Learning Community

| Constituent 3 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| Dialogic relationships among participants within the EDOC learning community | She asserts that the faculty actively listened and the quality of responses was excellent so much so that she adopted their behavior as her own. | In her dissertation work she opened a dialogue with her task focused reactive manager by asking reflective questions of him. | The freedom in learning that she experienced opened a dialogue to self and others that led her to deeper personal meaning. | He joined faculty for dinner events and they dialogued in the quiet times of an evening. There were exchanges of subject matter, which were discussed and challenged. | He experienced a humble faculty who has influenced his style of professorship. He replicates their intimate behavior by being close and trusting toward his students. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | He has learned to dialogue in the way he interacts with others; movements from a critical look to one of understanding. | He was enriched by the collaborative process that he engaged in with the dialogue he had with professors. The interaction was very meaningful to him. | The community helped him define how he might make contributions to OD and change and how he might best serve his clients. | Her relationship with others helped her ameliorate a distressing situation by reflecting on the negative behavior she experienced in conversation with others. | A relationship formed in the course of a warm conversation with a person in a foreign country in which they mutually reached out to each other. The interaction led her into a profound cultural experience. |

Table 5

Constituent 4: Co-Constructed Learning Through Collaboration With Faculty and Fellow Students

| Constituent 4 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| | She developed a close personal relationship with her dissertation chair which enabled authenticity one-to-the other throughout the learning process. | She had the freedom to lead her dissertation project that involved cultural change. | In meeting program requirements she had the opportunity to co-design her learning. Two classic examples for her were the 768 and 769 courses. | He believes the program's qualifying exam might have changed as a consequence of feedback he had offered on the examination process. | As a unified community they approached faculty with their needs, concerns, and demands for exposure to more contemporary worldviews. Faculty responded by engaging a postmodernist. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | His cultural awareness learning moved him to incorporate it into his dissertation research with the support of his dissertation chair. | Faculty challenged him to determine how he could use his background and experience to benefit all. He collaborated and co-constructed his learning with his professors. | As a consequence of surfacing a felt need, students were given an opportunity to tailor the Use of Self segment of the program with help from the professor who was leading that aspect of the program. | - | To fulfill the requirements of an assignment she thought about going to Bali. Her professor reinforced her interest through his enthusiasm of her envisioned experience. |

Table 6

Constituent 5: Free-Space in Learning Enabling the Transcendence of Boundaries to Personal Growth

| Constituent 5 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth | A member of the faculty helped her remove her self-imposed structure allowing her to think outside of her norm. | The Self as Instrument portion of the program provided opportunities to feely and openly share about self. | Vision Quest was a profound emotional experience where she could be in her humanness as opposed to being bounded by doing. | It was a primal feeling for him like walking up a ladder and he was now on the top step looking out to the world and there was nothing obscuring his view to the rest of life. It was that fundamental to him. | He participated with others in informal fireside chats in which unclear boundaries within the community were identified and removed. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | He identified boundaries to his learning through an encounter with Warren Bennis who modeled the value of life-long learning. It led to a major change in his life. | He found his spiritual side through a journey to a silent Buddhist retreat and it was there that he encountered his authenticity. | He found ways to contribute to his field during time in which he informally engaged with fellow students and faculty in his learning community. | The freedom to pursue a topic in her dissertation tapped her passion and her desire to contribute to the world. | Her involvement in another country was an emersion experience that opened paths toward greater personal effectiveness. |

Table 7

Constituent 6: A Helping and Caring Environment

| Constituent 6 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| A helping and caring environment | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| | She believes her professors were talking to her as a woman as opposed to two professors. Her work with her dissertation chair was filled with care, grace, consideration, and affirmation. | A fellow student from the Philippines helped her make a connection with a female leader in the country. It was indicative of the kind of support that students got from each other. | She was protected in a way that kept her in her own filament and they helped her to go out alone in the forest. | They as students were at the center of learning equation, not the people they were studying and that was totally unexpected. | A person in the cohort questioned how supportive they were of him and he challenged the group to give him the space to ask questions and make his points known. It was an atmosphere of friendship and trust. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | He received unexpected feedback from a faculty member who sat for his comprehensive exam. It involved his propensity to manage his persona. | His dissertation committee was available whenever he needed them. They established a mutually collaborative relationship. | The helping relationships established in the program remain part of his life as collaborators and friends. | She informed the faculty that she would not do her dissertation research on the topic she had chosen but she was encouraged by faculty to pursue the topic for that was the subject of her interest. | She found in the experience that the faculty encourages, encourages, and encourages making sure she succeeded. |

Table 8

Constituent 7: *Opportunities to Challenge and Broaden Worldviews Through Program Experiences*

| Constituent 7 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences | She saw the faculty for who they were; one professor, a woman, another a father figure, a third a free spirit who wants everything right in the world. They help you become more of a whole person. | The cultural encounters that she experienced made the meaning of what they were studying real, deep, and phenomenal. In learning about cultures she learned about herself. | Her Vision Quest experience took her away from her natural world, which let her go deeply into self thereby exposing her true identity. | The program extended beyond the physicality of the school environment to places such as Chile and Vancouver. In these places students depended upon each other for the learning that came about in studying and experiencing other cultures. | He confronted his assumptions by studying with fellow students within the setting of their culture. These experiences caused him to question his beliefs about other cultures. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | His attitude shifted in the debrief of a program exercise and he recognized the experience exposed him to thought that was completely different than his. He valued the experience. | He crossed his own boundaries by living with his wife in a house of poor people at Lago Titicaca and from there he went by himself on a ten day silent retreat. | He reconciled conflicting thoughts and feelings toward a negative incident with a professor. He did this through a study of the conflicting nature of ethics and reality. | Presenting her 768 experience in class, she engaged fellow students in a way that they could have fun during her presentation. This was far different than her cold, analytic manner. | The natives ate on the floor and took their shoes off to keep mud out of their home. She participated in the culture by doing the things she observed in others. She is less judgmental for having lived with a family. |

Table 9

Constituent 8: Validation of Progress Toward Goals

| Constituent 8 | Co-Inquirers | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| Validation of progress toward goals | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 |
| | An unforgettable moment for her was when a person in her cohort who never had an African American friend said to her that if there were others like her, there would be no need for Affirmative Action. | Her 768 experience was satisfying by its inclusion of a comprehensive in-depth paper that solidified the learning. A presentation to an incoming cohort validated her deep experience. | She described the relationship that she and I have as being one in which the two of us can enjoy each other's presence and share mutually interesting thoughts and ideas. | He described his relationship with faculty as safe, which made him willing to challenge his beliefs and sense of self and to be more able to be transparent toward others. | He found unconditional positive regard among faculty and the cohort community and honors them with admiration. They helped to build up one's self esteem in an atmosphere based upon friendship. |
| | C6 | C7 | C8 | C9 | C10 |
| | He received unexpected feedback from a faculty member as he sat for his comprehensive exam. It involved his persona that reflected a propensity to manage his image. He was told not to expend energy on that; that what they wanted to see was the real authentic person. | Taking a progressive stance, faculty challenged him to determine how he could use his background and experience for the benefit of all; one in which he and all others win. | The late Charles and Edie Seashore took an interest in his doctoral studies and continued their support of him even though he did not go to the Fielding Institute for his doctoral studies. | Were it not for her professors' encouragement and belief in the worthiness of the project she might have capitulated to advise given by others that the research was infeasible, but, she was continually reinforced in the pursuit of the project. | She is less judgmental toward people for having lived with a family in Bali. She is accepting of differing worldviews. She felt accepted in her Bali experience through a family that opened their home and their hearts to her. |

Relationship Among the Constituents

It is critically important to note “that the structure of an experience is not based on empirical facts alone, but on imaginative variations and insights as well” (Fazio, 2011, p. 86). Giorgi’s (2009) phenomenology made it clear to me that the storied descriptions gathered through interviews and their associated meaning units must be considered holistically from the progressive education (PE) and organizational development (OD) stances that I adopted for this research. From these stances, I can see implicit meaning that is not explicitly delivered and I can push my statement of a constituent “to a level of generality that is appropriate for revealing [its] psychological characteristics” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 132).

As stated in chapter I, phenomenology is research “in which the researcher identifies the ‘essence’ or ‘essences’ of human experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by participants in a study” (Creswell, 2003). Kupers (2008) defined it as “the study of phenomena as it appears in human experience; particularly the experientially realized meanings that things have” (p. 390). The essence is structural in nature meaning that the constituent parts must come together in a way that makes the reality of the experience clearly evident (see chapter III). My goal, therefore, in determining the structure, was to identify the absolute invariant constituents without which the experience would not been available to participants (Giorgi, 2009).

With respect to the constituents of this study, finding meaning was experienced from a basis of the identity of co-inquirers; their self awareness and experience that set up their goals for joining the program (Constituent 1). Program delivery made it possible for them to come together in relationship (Constituent 2) in order to have the ability to leverage the experience of others in their own learning through dialogue (Constituent 3). Co-constructed learning (Constituent 4) provided a means for satisfying learning needs and accomplishing goals. This was accomplished

through relationships that had been formed through fellow students and faculty. Having free-space in learning (Constituent 5) made it all the more fruitful because it allowed for interests to flow through experimentation and the taking of risks. Progress was made as faculty and students helped and cared for each other (Constituent 6) and a wider world came into view through program experiences in other countries and many environments that were much closer to home (Constituent 7). Co-inquirers were consistently validated by others, which created energy in the learning process (Constituent 8). This is how co-inquirers found meaning. Take any one of the eight constituents away and the experience of finding meaning might not have happened. The constituents, therefore, are highly interdependent showing that the essence of the phenomenon is the relationship among the key constituents of the general structure. The chapter ends with an illustration showing the relationship among constituents that form the essence of the experience of students finding meaning in this particular program of higher education.

The next section presents anecdotal data that was obtained for the study. As previously noted, these data were examined after the phenomenological work was done. That was done to keep the rigor of the methodology pure.

Anecdotal Data

Anecdotal data were obtained by communicating to those EDOC graduates for whom email addresses were available or located. In some few cases, connections were made through LinkedIn. I asked this group to respond to questions that (a) revealed the nature of meaning found within the EDOC program, (b) relational contexts that they experienced, and (c) events that were most vivid in their experience. Responses from these graduates, identified as Co-inquirers 11 to 21, are summarized in the table below. In keeping with the phenomenological methodology, the anecdotes offered to me were examined after I completed the identification of

the constituents derived from the stories of the first ten co-inquirers. I wanted to make certain these anecdotes did not interfere in any way with the work I was doing to gain insight into the stories given to me. Like the first 10 co-inquirers, I know some of these co-inquirers personally and as the anecdotal data were gathered, I was moved by the enthusiasm of this group for having the opportunity to participate in the study. Their willingness to respond delighted me and reinforced my appreciation of the EDOC community. Their responses are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of Anecdotal Co-inquirer Data with Variations

| Co-inquirer | Nature of Meaning | Relational Contexts | Vivid Experiences |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 11 | Finding the introspective self and gaining the ability to see self and others differently through a broader worldview. | Appreciation for the diversity of people within the EDOC community. | – |
| 12 | Coming to a greater understanding of change within self through a reexamination of values and determination of things important in life. | The relational depth and unexpected sharing credited to the diverse nature of the group. Friends who pushed and challenged. Life-long friendships among fellow students and faculty who challenged thoughts and ways of being. | SAI that re-shaped a worldview; the intensity of the experience forced a focus on doctoral studies; the need for life-space that forced a career change; the 768 and 769, which opened enriching avenues for life-changes. |
| 13 | Experiencing radical change in self encompassing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Becoming a more complete person. | Experiencing relational depth among fellow students and professors, visiting professors, and administrators that are to be emulated; bonds of true friendships; professors and visiting professors who were role models; a supportive staff. | The 768 experience that helped to refocus the manner in which life is traveled; the dissertation experience that helped to open the “dark side” of self that when dealt with, opened avenues for growth. |

(continued)

| Co-inquirer | Nature of Meaning | Relational Contexts | Vivid Experiences |
|-------------|---|---|--|
| 14 | Seeing self as transformed with contentment in becoming a giver as opposed to receiver. | Not any one person but a set of experiences and relationships leading to a transition; Confronting self in a way that revealed a deeper side. | Stepping down from an executive position; travel, personal discovery, messages received from others, reading documents, writing papers, the process of research and dissertation, graduation ceremonies that forged a new personal vision. |
| 15 | Did not experience the level of meaning defined for the research. | Friends that helped each other to be successful. | In general, program experiences helped to develop a broad range of skills and knowledge. |
| 16 | Gaining self-satisfaction for having accomplished a very significant goal. Having the capacity to shed boundaries though the help of others, which opened an expanded universe. | Students and professors who helped remove barriers to development. | Cherished the moments of introspection; staying in those moments and being fully present; The profoundness of the dissertation experience. |
| 17 | Experiencing the power of a close, supportive, and enduring relationship with a member of the faculty. | Lasting friendships. | Opportunities to discern and evaluate information; critical thinking. |
| 18 | Having substantial feelings of personal achievement in completing the program. | – | Completing the dissertation, an experience like completing a marathon; the significance of it all. |
| 19 | Gaining satisfaction through a decision to complete the dissertation in the wake of many opposing factors in life. | The lonely experience of the dissertation and support of wife and friends. | Appreciation of the diversity as a broadening of worldview; cannot isolate the specific events. |
| 20 | Learning to appreciate other perspectives; to look deeply within; and finding the passion for learning within self. | Relational diversity in the context of personality and experiences; the help and support of a spouse. | Being accepted; completing the program through the patience and support of colleagues and cohort friends. |

Anecdotal data were consistent with the kinds of meaning, relationships, and vivid events offered within the storied accounts and are, therefore, supportive of the constituents identified. The meaning themes of self realization, that is, a deeper sense of self and reaching significance for having completed a difficult and challenging task expressed within the anecdotes reflect this consistency.

The relational context shows an appreciation for the diversity among people within the program. It is described, in the context of the EDOC community, inclusive of fellow students, faculty, guest faculty, and spousal support; consistent again with storied accounts, which told of personal relationships that supported learning. Relationships are described as being deep, lasting, enduring, and giving of help and caring. These are the kind of relationships that for some led to lasting friendships. Also evident in the anecdotes shared is the loneliness of the dissertation experience; how it became a test for self in order to bring the process to conclusion.

Vivid experiences shared by anecdotal co-inquirers have a varied context ranging from specific program experiences to an all-encompassing array of experiences. In other words, one co-inquirer seemed to be touched by it all while others point to specifics in the experience. Co-inquirer 14 shared a career change as being a vivid program experience, which I see as an enactment of meaning from the sense made toward self through the program experience.

In addition to these 11 co-inquirers, 4 more chose to accept my offer to give answers to my questions by phone. These phone conversations were broad in context compared to email replies. One of these conversations was helpful to this research through a discussion of the contrasts between training, education, and development. Two of the calls were rich in terms of meaning found, relational contexts, and vivid experiences that parallel previous data. My conversation with the first person among these four evolved into a rich conversation about the

nature of the EDOC program. This person, like the one noted in the previous table, did not find meaning of the kind called for in the research. She, and another one of these 4 co-inquirers, found the kind of meaning called for in this research in their graduate work within Pepperdine's Master of Science in Organization Development program. As we talked, I was struck by her critical conviction concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the program as we engaged in a dialogue about the nature of organization development and change and how the program delivered practical knowledge to students. I wish to emphasize that these conversations, though influential, were not a part of the storied data. As instructed by my methodology, they were bracketed, set aside, so that they would not interfere with my observations toward emerging constituents. Like the storied accounts, phone conversations were recorded and transcribed with the knowledge and consent of the co-inquirer.

Taking the time to gather anecdotal data served a very important purpose and that purpose, in addition to validating findings, was the engagement of the EDOC community. I knew in gathering stories that some graduates were unable to participate in this manner because of time or my need to pare down the story gathering process. Given other circumstances, I would have welcomed their detailed stories. Opening an avenue for participation through opportunities to provide anecdotal data filled the void. It engaged the community and that was important to me and I believed, important to all of our graduates.

Concluding this chapter is Figure 2 that illustrates the structure for finding meaning. It pictorially summarized the research, which shows that co-inquirers who found meaning were surrounded by each of the eight constituents revealed through the detailed stories of their experience.

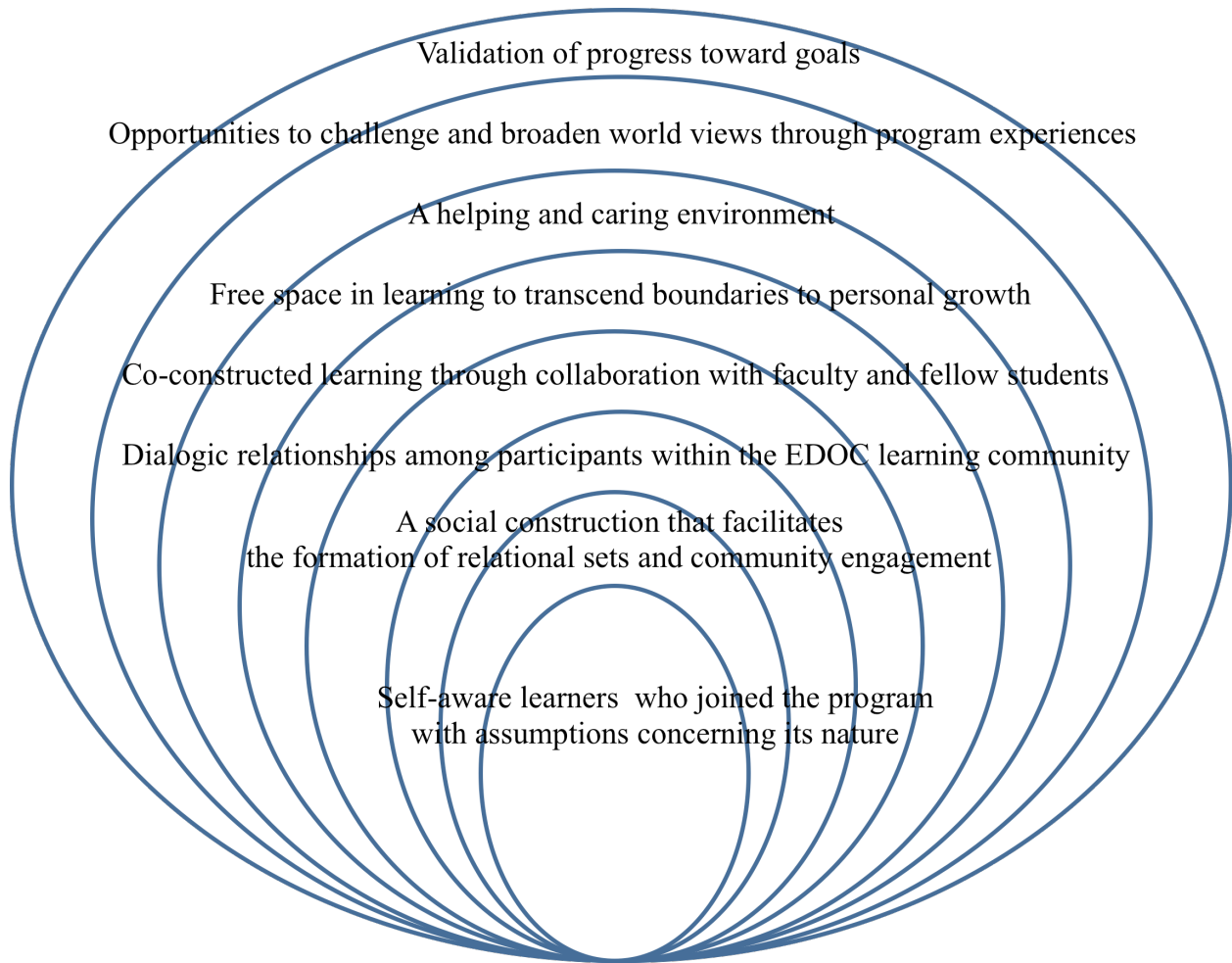


Figure 2. The structure for finding meaning within Pepperdine University’s Doctor of Education in Organization Change program. Self-aware learners who were students within the program found meaning when surrounded by the constituents.

Chapter V. Discussion, Reflection, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the accomplishments of this research that explored the phenomenon for finding meaning through the developmental nature of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program. The work has been done with the help of graduates who shared detailed stories and anecdotes of their experience. As a student in the program under study, I too have a story to share. This unique vantage point gave me a better capacity to understand and appreciate what had been given to me. Although we found meaning in different ways, it was a deep and visceral experience for each of us. Finding meaning was an unexpected outcome and that was the leverage for conceptualizing the study. I approached it by wondering how something so profound could come about. I had never before experienced a learning environment that was this enriching and I wanted to understand it more fully. I employed Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenology as my method of exploration. His methodology helped me understand what I had been given and what I was thinking, seeing and feeling.

To understand what has been accomplished, I will elaborate on the eight empirically derived constituents that surfaced through the stories of co-inquirers (my term for graduates). They constitute the structure for finding meaning identified in chapter IV. Following the discussion of the constituents, I use Wilber's Four Quadrant Framework to state propositions in a way that helps others make use of my findings. This is followed by a reflection on the implications of this research for progressive educators in higher education and for the field of Organization Development (OD). Thoughts are offered for additional research based upon this

study. Finally, conclusions are drawn regarding the meaning of the research for the advancement of knowledge and possibilities for human development, achievement, and life-long fulfillment.

Finding meaning has been influential in my every-day life. It has made me a more effective and whole person at home, in the community, and in my vocations and avocations. It has enriched my 32 years of work in major industrial corporations and 18 years of service in academia, first as an adjunct instructor and then as an associate professor leading a Master of Science in Management program. I have held roles on leadership teams in high performance organizations and have contributed to the university I served by being with students in the classroom and working with fellow faculty to deliver a broad range of program offerings. This research complimented my interest in human development and I have been enlightened by graduates of the EDOC program who were generous in sharing their experiences. Twenty-five co-inquirers directly participated in the research. Some of them and a number of others helped me locate people among the 72 graduates who might have been a part of the study. This felt like a community effort and indeed it was. There was great interest in the study. Each one of us willingly shared experiences that we individually and collectively owned.

My focus in this study has been on finding meaning as opposed to making meaning. Both constructs are found in literature, a summary of which is presented in chapter II. Meaning found by co-inquirers was the kind that was deeply felt, visceral, emotional, and life changing. Lives were changed as a consequence of the find. Many other lives were changed through the touch of our individual experiences.

My discussion of the eight interrelated constituents, which encompass the structure for finding meaning includes my insight and the literature that particularly supports them. Selected quotations taken from the in-depth stories of co-inquirers 1 through 10 are included making them

an active part of the discussion. Anecdotes from co-inquirers 11 through 25 are selectively inserted to illuminate the discussion. I intersperse my experience and insight into finding meaning while remaining mindful of the observations I have made as a progressive educator, defined as one who helps students make the most of their learning experience. I also make my observations as an OD professional. Once I fully discuss the constituents, state propositions, reflect on the study's implications, and offer conclusions, I close with a statement of what this research has meant to me.

Elaboration of the Key Constituents

The following is an elaboration of the eight constituents for the structure of finding meaning. The general structure shows that co-inquirer experiences within each constituent were uniquely lived. As stated in chapter IV, the constituents are interdependent and are best thought of as working together like a growing tree constituted through oxygen, sunlight, nutrients from the soil, wind for pruning, and water to thrive on. Together, the constituents form the essence from which meaning was found. The eight constituents are keys to the developmental nature of the EDOC program. They include:

1. Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning the nature of the learning experience.
2. A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement.
3. Dialogic relationships among participants within the EDOC learning community.
4. Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students.
5. Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth.
6. A helping and caring environment.

7. Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences.
8. Validation of progress toward goals.

One fundamental question was asked in the process of gathering stories from 10 co-inquirers: Describe in as much detail as possible how meaning was found through studies in the EDOC program. Quotations cited in this section are verbatim descriptions provided by co-inquirers unless explicitly noted. Anecdotes were gathered by email communications to graduates asking them to respond to three questions encompassing (a) the nature of the meaning found, (b) the relational context in which it was found, and (c) vivid program experiences. A summary of their responses is found in chapter IV. A discussion of each constituent follows.

1. Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning the nature of the learning experience. This first of eight constituents is about the nature of the student coming into the EDOC program; their motives for applying and the need expectancy of each co-inquirer. Each person's individuality, unique background, and experience are reflective of what he or she was looking for in joining one of the program's nine cohorts. Several examples show this diversity. Co-inquirer 1 was looking for a "one-on-one personal attention type of learning." Co-inquirer 3 needed a program satisfying to her "high levels of curiosity and sense of adventure" Co-inquirer 4 joined for the purpose of bringing depth and breadth to his consulting practice that he had owned and managed for years. In like manner, Co-inquirer 5, who had a successful consulting practice, joined to learn more about organization change. He was looking for an environment that was congruent with his value system and he knew from experience in another program that Pepperdine would satisfy that need. Co-inquirer 9 joined the program in order to "... learn ways in which one could improve the quality of human systems within an organization."

Self-awareness is about purpose, goals, and expectations grounded by the experience of each person. Students held a conviction that the EDOC program would meet their needs. They were firm in their expectancy and held fast to their goals. Co-inquirer 10 expressed the attitude of firmness by saying,

[My professor] had the focus of [students] being a consultant to companies or other institutions so that we would have an experience of moving into [a] culture and out of it. I never quite had that focus when I was in the program. My purpose [for joining] was to expand my skill base for a job I already had....

Each person admitted into the EDOC program was highly accomplished with depth and breadth in their personal experiences. No one, according to the stories, came into the program to find meaning; but I believe each one of us came with a latent readiness for such an outcome. It was Lindeman (as quoted by Knowles, 1989) who said:

In what areas do most people appear to find life's meaning? We have only one pragmatic guide: meaning must reside in the things for which people strive, the goals which they set for themselves, their wants, needs, desires, and wishes. (pp. 73-74)

Co-inquirers had goals and were prepared to achieve them.

2. A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement. The EDOC program was socially constructed for the purpose of building a learning community that was capable of performing to the highest of doctoral standards. Students in each of the nine cohorts came together, formed relationships, and began a journey on a common ground of anticipation with the help of a complex and caring group of many faculty members, each complimentary to the program design. There was an expectation within every new cohort and the community as a whole that all persons, faculty and students, would be fully engaged. Relationships came about through learning tasks and the natural process of people getting to know one another. Each person participated with others in the community and for some that presented a “huge risk” (Co-inquirer 2). Students appreciated that

“comfortable” (Co-inquirer 2) and enduring relationships develop when risks are taken in unfamiliar surroundings.

In constructing the community, behavioral and emotional issues were talked about by highlighting comfort or discomfort and reaching understandings of its nature or circumstance. Learning activities often brought out emotion and served to build relationships as people got to know one another. Co-inquirer 6 for example, shared how one person responded during a group exercise by saying she was “not comfortable” with a second round of activity which offered nothing but criticism to another person. Feelings were validated when the professor made adjustments to the exercise. Learning took place as everyone discussed the outcome and relationships strengthened as the group processed the exercise. Co-inquirer 6 appreciated the engagement for honoring and respecting participants and for giving him an opportunity to know his group at a deeper level. The facilitator showed respectful sensitivity toward the objectives and needs of all. These engagements facilitated the formation of norms while enlarging the meaning of being together in community.

Students and faculty came together in any number of contexts such as discussing the challenging nature of assignments, asking for advice and help, and the simple interest in another person’s life. Co-inquirer 1 described it as mentoring “to each other on certain levels ... some were younger, some were older ... and we were able to share ... our experience” Students and faculty built depth in relationships through a discourse on the lived cohort experience and the lives of its members. Relationships extended to the community as a whole, which Co-inquirer 3 emotionally described as an “incredible blessing.” She said the richness in all of our “different experiences” gets everyone to a place where we “don’t have to explain things” to each other.

The social construction emerged, refined, and adjusted continually prompted by opportunities to experience cultural differences within (a) the world at large and (b) the life-space (Lewin, 1948) of the program. Co-inquirer 4 spoke of coming together by being together during a weeklong cohort session. We did not go home and that put us in places of mutuality be it a classroom, sharing meals, or occasionally joining together in places such as the Hollywood Bowl for relaxation and entertainment. There were always opportunities to experience the culture of our surroundings.

Cohorts met for learning sessions in places other than the Pepperdine campus. Co-inquirer 4 saw these as cross-cultural experiences facilitating enriching, interconnected relationships where each of us was on a “very personal level” encouraging “closeness” among everyone in our community. These social engagements were respectful, collegial, and friendly in nature. Co-inquirer 12 provided a descriptive anecdote for community. He said: “... I found the closest friends I have ever gained. We shared thoughts and experiences on a level that would not have been possible without this program.” Co-inquirer 5 followed by saying “we had something in common ... feelings, emotions ... that we were afraid, that it was okay to cry and to ask for help and things like that.” It was “incredible” to him. Further amplifying the closeness of relationships as well as the extended nature of the community Co-inquirer 7 offered that his wife “has been an important ... key part” in his program experience by the support given to him. The anecdote of Co-inquirer 19 described the nature of the EDOC community as inclusive of family members and friends particularly within his dissertation experience. They were “very helpful” to him and enhanced his experience while missing the close physical presence of a tightly knit community.

The social construction had no boundaries and it extended far. We were free to reach out to anyone and valued how he or she might contribute to our learning. These encounters strengthened the community because so often they unfolded in the moment; the reality of life as it was being experienced. As I engaged graduates to join this research, the person who became Co-inquirer 7 said, “It was a gift to be able ... to have [a] dialogue about [this] dissertation” and as we talked, “images and memories” of the program experience were coming back to him.

The social construction, encompassing the entire learning community, extended beyond individual cohorts to multiply relationships and engagement opportunities. Co-inquirer 8 found it to be a

collegial ..., welcoming ... and ... stimulating environment ... both from the faculty members who were teaching in the program ... as well as the interaction with [a previous] cohort ... [where they] did sessions [together] ... there was a sense ... of community, which [he] hadn't experienced in any other kind of program, and [he] really like[d] that.

The community was diverse in terms of peoples' life experiences and that contributed to the socialization of its members. Co-inquirer 9 who would “usually ... socialize ... with people from the same faith or work” found the community to be a “great way of blending” people who were so “different” from herself.

Co-inquirer 10 described the way in which she values the EDOC community. Having been out of the program for many years, she comments upon its enduring nature. Her journey did not end at graduation and her sentiments toward the community have much in common with the thoughts and feelings of others. She described its sustaining nature as being one of “connections;” people who she could reach out to “renew a connection” in the “shared experience” of the program. She knows, as others do, that faculty would be “delighted to have a student contact them for anything.”

A picture has been provided of the EDOC community's social engagements. This discussion has revealed its nature and some of the ways the community came about. Gergen (2009) noted that a challenge of social construction is to reduce boundaries within a community in order to "enrich the free-flow of meaning" (p. 214). This discussion has shown how some of those barriers fell as members of the community engaged. The research shows that dialogue within the community is another way in which boundaries fade and relationships mature. This was a community that came together for the purpose of going on together through the work of all toward a common purpose of creating an enriching learning environment. I wish to note that what has been presented in this section is less than complete in terms of what was created in the shared engagement of these learners and those others involved as teachers and fellow learners. Additional elements of the social construction can be identified within the other constituents such as free space in learning. I believe they will be apparent as they come up.

3. Dialogic relationships among participants in the EDOC learning community.

Dialogic relationships are those in which dialogue among participants is a norm. It is a mature relationship that requires less and less effort to suspend judgments toward another. Dialogic relationships are those that give and receive freely and unconditionally. Dialogue among members of the community enriched relationships when listening was active and assumptions were suspended. Even in conflict, it helped co-inquirers find meaning by facilitating collaboration, trust, understanding, and genuine regard for others. This is the nature of dialogic relationships.

Dialogue is socially oriented in practice; a practice that is respecting and validating for those engaged knowing that each party is equally important to a matter at hand. Some of the best dialogic conversations I have experienced are those in which I felt confident and humble with the

other person as we trusted and shared innermost thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions. Dialogue is an enactment of a vibrant, dynamic social process that brought forward shared meaning among those engaged. It strengthened all through an unconditional regard for others. It was a tool for helping the community move forward.

Co-inquirer stories reflected the nature of dialogic relationships among those within the community. For example, Co-inquirer 5 admired the knowledge, skill, humility, and confidence of professors in a way that influenced his own professorial style. So touched by the example, he replicated the model of confidence and closeness to his college students “in such a way that [they] can have meaningful conversations.” In closing his story with me he quietly reflected upon the outcome of interactions with professors over the course of his EDOC experience. His warm personal regard for them was very obvious. He was choked with emotion.

Dialogue within the community was to understand others; their assumptions and points of view in reciprocal and respectful exchanges. Co-inquirer 6 described its genuine nature “as a totally different way to approach [a] conversation.” It puts no one on the “defensive.” Instead the other person (referring here to faculty) is “explaining to you their thought process, their filters, [and] their assumptions which then provides ... a way to come together....” Dialogue within the EDOC community engaged others with a caring questioning attitude free of the boundaries of one’s own assumptions. People were “active listeners” (Co-inquirer 1). Co-inquirer 2 found that others are likely to engage in it when they are witnesses to its power.

Co-inquirer 8 described the nature of dialogue within the EDOC community as something new to his experience within other programs of higher education. He valued it for giving him the opportunity to think about how he might apply his learning to his work in the fields of OD, change and education. He grounded his thoughts through dialogue with students

and faculty which caused him to begin to “think about the things ... [he] might do with the learning.” The word “transformation” came to mind as he thought of the power of dialogic encounters with those in the community.

Dialogue greased the skids of personal growth. Everyone gained as it was practiced in a way that set assumptions aside in confident and respectful exchanges. Dialogue, a human communication that goes far beyond conversation, is a gateway to action in the task of learning as the next constituent for the structure of finding meaning shows.

4. Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students.

Student goals, community engagement, and dialogue enabled co-constructed learning. It was achieved through collaboration among faculty and students. For Co-inquirer 3, it brought “meaning” to assignments.

In co-constructing learning, many things are considered such as a student’s interest, goals, and learning plan. It is a sensemaking process (Weick, 1995) between faculty and student in which the parties look for clues of expectation and possibilities for achieving meaningful outcomes. From there, they move to action in a way that reflects a mutual focus toward agreed upon learning goals. Within the literature of adult learning, one can find the basis for co-constructed learning. Lindeman, as noted by Knowles (1980) saw adult learning as a non-authoritarian cooperative venture the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience. Knowles (1975) provided a template in which a professor and student enter a contract for learning that defines a particular path and expected outcomes. My experience with co-constructed learning in the EDOC program was less formal in the way it came about. I was always conscious of program standards and I took advantage of a learning environment that gave me the freedom to consider my needs with consciousness toward the requirements and rigors of

doctoral education. I looked for opportunities that would enrich my experience. I recognized a need to dialogue often with fellow students and with faculty. In so doing, I came away with a sense of ownership toward my learning plan and was energized for a learning event that I helped to create. My experience was common among my peers.

I believe co-constructed learning is consistent with a progressive educator's goal of helping students make the most of their learning experience. I believe it is also consistent with an OD principal that opportunities and challenges are best surmounted through engagement with others. These were enacted as learning was co-constructed through collaboration and dialogue as shown through the experience of co-inquirers.

Co-inquirer 3 observed that co-construction was required by the very nature of the 768 and 769 experiences. These courses respectively involved experiences that (a) would develop a student's self-understanding and worldview and (b) apply course learning through an active consulting engagement within a client system. Both courses necessitated a close dialogue with lead professors. Students actively sought to understand the nature of the assignments while formulating a plan with the help of the learning community. Professors made arrangements for student presentations of their 768 and 769 experiences (see chapter IV for definitions) often to members of different cohorts. Presentations were enriching to all and helped to bring clarity to one's learning goals and action plans for these forthcoming course events. Co-construction was in some ways a community activity focused through the shared experience of all. The complex nature of the two assignments mentioned above required that kind of engagement so students could bear witness to the special and deep meaning that might come from them. Understanding the experience of others provoked thoughts about how one might fulfill the requirements of these assignments.

Co-constructed learning has a personal side. Co-inquirer 7, a person of vast organizational experience, might have left the program were it not for the opportunity to co-construct learning. He engaged his professors by sharing the path he wished to follow and was able to “link ... different assignments” to teaching opportunities made available to him within the program. In this way he learned while leveraging his knowledge and experience. Moreover, he helped others learn. His whole experience was “more meaningful” because it centered on his goals, wishes, and desires; a notion fundamentally important to finding meaning.

Our faculty of progressive educators was open to the learning needs of students and recognized that co-construction came about both from conflict and harmony. Co-inquirer 5 spoke of a time when their cohort was discontent with program content. They approached their professors with a belief that their program orientation was “quite conservative” and light on contemporary theory. Seeking additional challenges, they requested a postmodernist, and feeling so strongly about it, they threatened to “have it with you or without you.” Members of the cohort perceived Pepperdine as being a “very religious, traditional university” and knew that securing a contemporary thought leader might bring long held “assumptions” of the university into question. Faculty responded by inviting David Boje from the University of New Mexico to a cohort learning session. They had an engaging experience with him. I know personally that some were touched by his message. It is a marvelous example of co-constructed learning involving the community as a whole. Students collectively engaging a responsive faculty produced a meaningful outcome.

5. Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth. The operational definition of free-space in learning is the ability to be; to be free of one’s boundaries, real or imagined; to be free to experience and to explore without limitations; it

is freedom that might lead to spiritual ascendency. Frankl (1984) attributed his concentration camp survival to his ability to keep his mind free. His goal was to find meaning from the experience and it became his way of surviving the daily terror. His Nazi captors could not imprison his thought or the power of his will. It is a bold example for introducing this constituent. Frankl believed that no one could abridge a determined and free mind. He gave himself the space to focus on a future beyond the camp. It let him transcend the enslavement of his torturous surroundings. Similarly, but in an arguably less extreme context, Freire (1970) opened boundaries to learning for students caught up in a world of oppression. They learned because he gave them the gift of freedom to be regardless of circumstance. This constituent to the structure for finding meaning is about freedom in learning that was so prevalent in the EDOC program. It was a freedom that liberated one of boundaries real or imagined that opened experiences to a wider world.

Literature is replete with references to freedom. Freedom in the context of learning is a theme in many of the scholarly works cited in chapter II. For example, Mourad's (1997b) higher education critique cited philosophers and scholars who eloquently wrote of a need for freedom in the pursuit of knowledge. Gergen (2000) exposed boundaries by raising consciousness of the saturated lives lived in today's contemporary society. Torbert's (2010) principles for liberating organization structures is grounded in the idea of boundary reduction. Freedom and flexibility are important to development. Our faculty was flexible toward our needs, interests, and goals. An entire community, fellow students and faculty, was generous in support of each other's learning.

Free-space was indeed a bridge for those who found meaning; meaning stemming from freedom to form (a) meaningful relationships, freedom to (b) simply be, (c) explore, (d) learn, (e)

search, and (f) find. There is a great deal of power in this kind of student/professor mutuality (Torbert, 2010). It is a power that transcends boundaries to personal growth.

One quiet evening during a program session when I was in the final stages of planning my 768 experience in Vietnam, my professor suggested I go there and “just be.” The giving of free-space empowered me to make the most of my experience. I owned it and was free to think, to feel, and to act. I felt unbounded (Wilber, 2001) in my mission. I was honored by my professor who believed in my commitment and capability to bring my experience to meaningful fruition. It was a wonderful, enriching, and liberating feeling knowing that no one could do this but me, and no one could give me the meaning that might come from the experience. It was mine to find and I did just that. There are many parallels to my experience of free-space in learning, as it was co-created like mine, within the space of the learning community. This kind of freedom suggests a need for understanding the liberating structures defined by Torbert (Fisher et al., 2003) who posited that liberating communities are understood mostly by having experienced them. In my experience these structures are co-created and sustained through the leadership and influence of all. For example, a professor considers the need for structure verses a student’s readiness for free-space. Students must be ready to act responsibly and accept accountability in a classroom democracy that is open to thoughts, needs, and expressions of others. This makes possible purposeful dialogue centered on the needs and aspirations of learners. The artful management of this dynamic engages all in helping each person make the most of his or her learning experience.

My use of the term free-space is grounded in what Lewin (1935) referred to as life-space. Having space is influential to behavior. Watch children and even adults make the most of it. They might use it wisely or work their way into difficulty. Lewin, like professors in the EDOC

program, gave space to students to empower their learning and with it they frequently exceeded expectations. I have chosen the words free-space for this constituent because I readily identify with the term and I thought of it as I experienced the stories of co-inquirers. I also reflected on freedom as being the central theme in the literature that I reviewed. I use the experience of all 10 co-inquirers to illuminate the nature of free-space for student learning. Change is evident within the brief vignettes spurred by an array of delicate developmental factors such as the artful coaching of professors and relaxed informal dialogue enjoyed by members of the community.

Co-inquirer 1 appreciated a liberating relationship with a professor who let her “be not so disciplined and structured ... [allowing her] to be creative” in “mind” and “thoughts, to kind of think outside of what [she had] always done.” Free-space, opened by a professor who understood its nature was influential to her development. Similarly, Co-inquirer 2 credited the role of a particular professor for opening her to “reflective” space. Her teaching was “critical to the program in terms of ... giving [students] the opportunity to open up and to share a lot about themselves.” In the process of open sharing we sought to understand ourselves as instruments of change exposing boundaries that served to raise possibilities for self-development. Co-inquirer 2 remembered them as being “very personal in nature” and so do I. Open sharing helped us transcend the boundaries of the saturated self. For Co-inquirer 2, it opened space for the fulfillment of “personal goals.”

The transcendent nature of free-space evoked the spiritual side of Co-inquirer 3. She reflected on an aspect of her 768 Vision Quest experience that placed her alone in a forest for several days. Feeling the transcendences of peace found in the environment has become part of her very being. She said; “... the ... spiritual part of it was realizing that I was just me and that *I could be a human being and not a human doing and I could sit and I didn't need my Blackberry*”

(emphasis added to acknowledge her deep emotion). The serenity of space given to her in the 768 experience united her spiritually and physically. They were “the same” and no longer mutually exclusive entities.

Free-space for Co-inquirer 4 came about with the help of a caring faculty who listened to his concerns during a time of conflict. He was able to dispel long held assumptions about the self-described pleasing nature of his persona. He shares this important milestone as feeling “freer about offering ideas and thoughts, feeling less encumbered by worrying about what the faculty were [going to] think about [expressing] unpopular views [that he] would typically have shied away from in public.”

Co-inquirer 5 related the joy he found in the free-space created by members of his cohort community in relaxed, informal surroundings of conversation and fellowship that was satisfying to those involved. His story reflects a light, airy free-space in fellowship with others. Members of his cohort looked forward to being together in the quiet of evenings for good “communication ... with or without professors.” They formed what was known as the “Cigar Smokers' Organization because ... several of [them] ... liked to smoke cigars.”

Cohorts did this kind of thing. It was the relaxed conversation in the free-space of “community” that helped Co-inquirer 8’s understanding of the contributions he “could make to the field of organizational development and change.” They also helped him improve his “teaching” effectiveness. This was all very “satisfying” to him. The word “transformational” came to his mind in terms of the “impact” of the environment on his thought processes.

Free-space experienced by Co-inquirer 6 involved his interaction with Warren Bennis; world-renowned author and scholar. The engaging nature of the interaction opened consciousness, a transcendence, and an awareness to a limiting, inhibiting boundary. He was

empowered to cast aside a long-held belief in a “surreal” moment with Bennis, who showed his “humility” went “beyond lip service.” Exemplifying him as a life-long learner caused him to depreciate his need to be a subject matter expert. With that he came to realize that “the whole doctoral program was all about a journey ... not a destination.” He realized some of his own “limitations ... biases [and] filters ... that [all of us] ... need to become aware of when we interject ourselves into an organization”

Co-inquirer 7, searching for balance in life, found it in whole or in part within the free-space given him by faculty. His story reveals that spiritual side of his life was a key to the balance he was seeking. Knowing it was not properly attended, he examined options to “cross [his] boundaries” by spending time with his wife living with poor people on an island followed by a secluded 10 day silent retreat that he alone would attend. In finding the retreat experience, his faculty coached him to “get what you need from whatever you experience.” He described those who gave that advice as “a humble faculty” who helped him with the identification of his developmental needs. He found his spiritual side by shedding his boundaries.

Co-inquirer 9, bounded by advice from others that her dissertation was infeasible, described a faculty who understood her need for space in deciding what to pursue. Her professors encouraged her interests believing she possessed a “great topic” and was “passionate about it.” She found the freedom to pursue her interests by letting go of imprisoning advice that she had taken too much to heart.

Providing free-space to learn is an art. Giving space to others is an extraordinary gift that opens one to a wider world in ways that transcend long held boundaries. Co-inquirer 10 had always wanted to go to Bali as that place had a particular lure. She decided to go there to experience the culture and share it within the parameters of her 768 assignment. Her professor

believed “she ought to go ... [because] they have a great way” of being and within 10 days of making the decision, she had a flight booked and a place to stay. It was a transcendent developmental experience; transcendence aided by the authenticating presence of a professor who believed in the developmental power of being okay to be.

6. A helping and caring environment. Helping and caring relationships were the norm within the EDOC community. It was a norm that helped everyone in his or her developmental journey. Stories told by co-inquirers and all of the anecdotal contributions describe the nature of this constituent by telling how faculty and fellow students helped each other make the most of their learning experience.

The stories shared by Co-inquirers 1 through 10 described how helping and caring manifested in the community; how it transcended classroom authority. Helping interactions were valued among community members, faculty and students, who cared for each other regardless of, but never ignoring status, role and position. Friendships formed among all. I have often reflected upon the kinds of conversations I have had with faculty and fellow students. Many were focused on learning goals, assignments, the contribution of theorists, a scholarly guest faculty presentation and just as many involved conversations about the experience of life: joy, sadness, and the challenges and opportunities within both good and difficult times. These are the kinds of conversations shared by friends. The kind of friendship experienced within the EDOC community necessitates clarity in terms of what I mean by its use. I like what Torbert and his colleagues (Fisher et al., 2003) said about friendship. I see it in my experience and the stories of co-inquirers. It is descriptive of the nurturing nature of our community.

Good friends ... are persons who wish to meet and celebrate their differences ... they are growing and seeking to promote one another's growth ... they actively develop trust by disclosing their own efforts to grow, by supporting the other's efforts, and by ... struggling together over what each means by [a] good life and by confronting one another

when possible contradictions appear between a person's espoused principles and actual practices. (p. 156)

I will discuss this constituent through segments of co-inquirer stories to show the nature of our helping and caring community. These were acts of giving and receiving and of caring for each other in deep and personal ways. These selections are by no means inclusive of the breadth and the depth of helping and caring reflected in stories and anecdotes of co-inquirers. Two sub-headings are used to bring additional clarity to the discussion.

Faculty helping and caring for students. Co-inquirer 1 introduced the nature of faculty interest in students that was significant and deep. They engaged her as a woman from the very beginning of her program experience. Position power within the faculty/student relationship was transparent. It reinforced a belief that she was where she needed to be. She formed an enduring relationship with a Professor who, like a father, would “not allow” failure; one who would be “strong,” “forceful,” and “hard” in telling her things she perhaps “didn’t want to hear.” She trusted and believed he would be clear about the success or failure of her doctoral work. She knew he wanted her to succeed.

Co-inquirer 2 told of a faculty member who would “listen” and ... ask the “right questions” until “you kind of got over it.” She saw this person as being always “very supportive.”

Co-inquirer 4 experienced a faculty that placed students at “the center of the equation” which was “unexpected” ... because “it was a much deeper learning, a much deeper learning approach” than he “ever had before and it really opened [his] eyes to [him]self ...,” his self-development, and his fulfillment.

Helping and caring for Co-inquirer 6 was “humanistic in nature, much more concerned about the individuals rather than ... the bottom line of getting stuff done.” He had a “pinnacle”

experience in his comprehensive exam when a professor who was with him spotted a contradiction between his persona and authentic self. She called him on it in a helping and caring way. Imagine the free-space that this encounter gave to Co-inquirer 6. I quote what he said to me about the experience almost in its entirety:

... in the course of the conversation [about the comprehensive exam] she made a comment about how I was enjoying the program, what I was getting out of it, how I changed, things like that, and she said, ‘you know now don't take this the wrong way, but I see you spending an inordinate amount of energy doing image management ...’ ... what, what do you mean? She says, ‘well you have this desire to fit in and as a result you're expending an incredible amount of energy trying to fit in, trying to manage our image of you. Don't do that. Let us get to know you, let us get to know you, the authentic you without this facade that you're putting up because that's who you think we want you to be. We don't want you to be anybody other than who you are so be present. Don't manage your image with us as much.’ And it just, it was kind of the pinnacle ...

Co-inquirer 7's story included a segment on the helping nature of his dissertation committee chair who worked 2 days with him at his home in Cuernavaca. He described this professor as “an example of the willingness to help colleagues without expecting anything in return.” Between the three members of his committee there “was a lot of collaboration.” In the Mexican culture, collaborators are helpers.

I certainly share the sentiments of Co-inquirer 10 who said professors “encourage and encourage and encourage you. They don't say okay well you blew that you're out of the program” She has a scientific background where it is apparently “tough to get a doctorate degree.” She believed that our EDOC faculty “did not make it tough ... they did everything in their power to make sure [we] succeeded.”

Students helping and caring for each other. Helping and caring was a community norm. Students groomed and assisted each other by reviewing work, offering advice, and caring for what was going on in another person's life. These mentoring relationships among students were affirming while providing the candor that offers clues for adjustments.

Students offered help to one another in unconditional ways. For example, one wondered “how supportive we are as a community” to Co-inquirer 5 who struggled with the English language. He wondered if the members of his cohort were giving him “enough space ... to ask questions or to make his points.” He asked his community to slow down and avoid the use of “jargon” and they all joined in providing for that need. Co-inquirer 5 shared this as one of the most poignant moments in his program experience. Altering the environment for him turned out to be a win for all.

Co-inquirer 8 is grateful for those who remain “a part of [his] life now as colleagues and friends and collaborators.” Fellow students helped him appreciate his “own life” and where he was in his “own journey.” These relationships have made him “very comfortable” with his growth and personal development.

Co-inquirer 9 described the enduring nature of a community in which its members remain committed to each other long after graduation. I have included a comment that I made while I was getting her story because it is playful and reflective of community relationships. She said,

... next weekend I'm having 4 other EDOC students over to a writing retreat ... 3 of them are going to work on their dissertations and this other woman and I are going to start writing articles from our dissertations

This event came together in a serendipitous way because the cohort had “become close” in a way that “support [for] each other” was a norm. They agreed to convene at Co-inquirer 9’s home. I told Co-inquirer 9 that it “sounds like fun.” and I playfully asked if I could join them. She knew that was impossible and with laughter told me: “It’s only women.”

Empowering us to succeed was intensifying to the program’s rigor. Helping and caring strengthened its developmental nature by diminishing restraining forces and strengthening driving forces. This research was made possible by a community who stepped forward to help.

It was important to them and I certainly felt their support. I also received help from a caring dissertation committee who were with me throughout the process and especially when difficult personal circumstances prevailed. Helping and caring helps us find meaning because it provides the support so often necessary to meeting goals.

Schein (2009) wrote that helping is a responsive act, one that considers the emotional content in the helping relationship. As the stories of co-inquirers show, helping and caring served co-inquirers and it really went both ways in the context of students and faculty. I remember celebrating birthdays, helping a faculty member who lost almost everything in a hurricane that made landfall close to his home, offering congratulations to a faculty member whose daughter married, and the list could go on and on. I believe we became stronger for having reached out to each other in many different ways. It was the kind of interaction, grounded in Torbert's description of friendships and the genuine humanness of the community that enriched everyone.

7. Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences. The stories of co-inquirers describe how finding meaning meant having experiences that were over the horizon in nature; going beyond what one might perceive to be a typical classroom experience of lecture and presentation. It involved an array of experiences inclusive of literature, guest faculty, and travel. Travel was an expectation and we were advised as we joined the program to have our Passports ready. We heard of cohort experiences in settings far from Pepperdine's campus in West Los Angeles. It meant going places and doing activities that had not necessarily been part of our past. Cohorts traveled to countries such as Mexico, Canada, Czechoslovakia, China, and Costa Rica experiencing the culture as part of the learning. The exposure broadened worldviews. I recall coming home from a learning session

with my cohort in the beautiful Mexican city of Monterrey and saying to my family that I wished we had more of what I experienced there. Mexicans are a warm, friendly, gracious and generous people who appreciate others while genuinely sharing their culture. These travels opened boundaries (Wilber, 2001) and gave us a greater sense of the wider world, even for those who had extensive international experience.

When I went to Vietnam, I was grateful for these kinds of experiences as they prepared me for that journey. I also appreciated the close friendship of a fellow student from the Philippines who would acculturate me to Southeast Asia before going on to Ho Chi Minh City. My worldview was clear by then and being in Vietnam affirmed its power over my thoughts and actions in a foreign land. I recognized in this research that experiences broadening one's worldview go beyond foreign travel. This point is important because there are few, or so it seems, that can be so blessed to see many parts of the world up close and personal. One's view might be shaped in other ways such as experiencing something unique in someone's home and by otherwise creating or encountering opportunities that take one beyond his or her current boundaries. What matters is how an experience touches a person to the soul. The selected statements by co-inquirers illuminate these points and bring forth others. Before sharing the statements, a point to be made is that this constituent speaks to the breadth and depth of the program, which touched students in their own unique way. As told by co-inquirers, an opportunity to broaden a worldview was a gift given and gratefully received in many different ways. I have separated this constituent under two headings the first involving the impact of travel on worldview and second having to do with other kinds of experiences that impact it as well.

Travel as impacting worldview. Travel experiences with fellow students were “meaningful” for Co-inquirer 2. Although she was internationally experienced, the program

raised her world consciousness by experiencing a culture with professors and fellow students. Going through customs, being with native people, speaking with business people, political leaders, and distinguished faculty from the host university “added so much to the richness and it made the meaning of what we were studying ... so much deeper.”

Travel sensitized Co-inquirer 3 to the way in which the United States enacts its role in the world. Her story shows how deeply personal these experiences can be. For Co-inquirer 3, it strengthened a conviction that “Americans don't always wear white hats” and what people had told her may be “partly a crock.” She told of her experience in a hotel where her cohort was staying during the Chilean presidential election; an experience that strengthened her sensitivity to the lives of others. Memories surfaced “when President Michelle Bachelet was elected.” Bachelet called the hotel her “command center” and there they were with “many heads of state ... worrying” about how Bachelet “had suffered and was literally tortured.” These were “horrible stories” and Co-inquirer 3 “was speechless.” It caused her to recall her college roommate who suffered horrible flashbacks and nightmares from her father’s political imprisonment. It was a compelling experience; even for me, as I sensed the deep emotion in her story.

Reflecting on the breadth of the program Co-inquirer 4 shared the impact of having sessions in some “exotic locale.” I agree “we were as a community really dependent upon each other for our experience when we'd go to ... Montreal, ... Vancouver, or wherever we went.” These experiences opened us to a wider world, which intensified consciousness as we shared thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that surrounded the experience.

Co-inquirer 5 related to experiences outside of his native country as being particularly expansive when one is with a family unit. It is here that cross-cultural learning experiences

manifest. By staying at a classmate's home he began to see a "different dimension of the culture ... of the United States." Once again, he was in a place to "confront [personal] assumptions between these 2 different cultures" He had been in the United States many times but he gained a greater appreciation of its culture by being with a family. It brought closure to aspects of his worldview.

Co-inquirer 6 recognized that the design of the program would broaden his worldview, an element important to his development. He thought that was a key in "moving forward in any business" and saw the Pepperdine program as being "the only one that had a significant emphasis on that to the degree of doing [at least] one session every year in a cross cultural environment."

Co-inquirer 10, despite having traveled internationally was touched by her 768 experience in Bali; an experience that strengthened, affirmed, and broadened her during time spent with a native family. Stated beautifully and with emotion, she said, "people have the same hearts everywhere, they just have different customs about how they raise their kids or make a living or worship." A family "opened their hearts [and home] to a complete stranger ... and that's the most precious gift people can give each other is just being together."

Experiences other than travel. Co-inquirer 1 began to view the world differently through her experience with a fellow student with whom she shared a room during cohort learning sessions. She saw this person as one who cared deeply about her friends and even those with whom she had difficult relationships. She helped Co-inquirer 1 by opening her to a deeper sense of "knowing, loving, learning, understanding, [and] caring on a different level...." which made her believe deeply that anyone "you come in contact with is important." Their close relationship demonstrates its influential nature toward one's worldview and affirms Gergen's (1997) assertion that "meaning is born of use through relationships" (p. 195).

Co-inquirer 6 illuminates a point made earlier that one need not go abroad to broaden a worldview. It can happen by being on Pepperdine's campus with fellow students through experiences that cause one to self-examine. Co-inquirer 6 told of an experiential exercise that made him question his assumptions; a necessity for broadening a view. It was his "first real exposure to folks who believed something entirely different" forcing him to take seriously "thoughts or opinions that [he] had never been exposed to." The encounter was "the seed" of development for his next two or three years that "broadened [his] ... awareness and understanding."

We were challenged to formulate a worldview. I believe it is an exercise that one does mostly alone in the sense of reflection on experiences and grappling with the notion of who am I in this world? Articulating a worldview was one of my most challenging assignments. Like me, Co-inquirer 7 received the kind of help that might be needed. Faculty coached him to define his view through his experience. That "key point" helped him to bring clarity to his worldview.

Co-inquirer 8's story reveals how a worldview might be shaped through literature. Speaking in his story of an uncomfortable situation with a visiting faculty person he comments upon a book that has had a lasting influence on how he thinks about ethics and reality. He was introduced to the work of Peter Koestenbaum (2002) who wrote *Leadership the Inner Side of Greatness* that "describes the challenges ... between ethics and reality, vision and courage" (cited by Co-inquirer 8; see also Koestenbaum, 2002, p. 17). The book intrigued him because he experienced an ethical collision causing him to act in a way contrary to his core beliefs. He reconciled the circumstance realizing that "we all face those ... situations from time to time ... when it comes you have to think about what are you [are going to] do." He made it a point to share his insight with his graduate students.

Co-inquirer 9 put her experience of being at an art retreat on display for her cohort. The retreat opened her to a wider world. She “lightened up” through the experience by being more accepting of herself.” It let others know her “as a whole person instead of just the end products that [she creates] at the end of the day.” This is authenticity emerging from a clearer view of who she is in the world.

The stories of co-inquirers showed that experiences, foreign or close to home, broaden worldview. They were unique in the developmental journey of each co-inquirer: a book on ethics, a cohort trip to Chili, an experience at an art camp and an experiential exercise with fellow students. Identifying a worldview is of value so long as one does something with it. Each experience caused an examination of assumptions that contributed to personal development. It affirmed, altered, or broadened the way in which we live and the way in which we relate. My worldview came about with clarity as I prepared for Vietnam. I knew I needed to understand how I saw the world and if I was to strengthen or affirm that view, I could not go there with a rigid mindset. The experience affirmed my beliefs and strengthened my assumptions toward a magnificent, friendly, and vibrant culture torn by many wars. Telling the story of my life changing experience before many groups of people outside of the EDOC community was affirming. It was one of the ways I was validated for having accomplished something very significant in life. I vividly experienced Vietnam by being at the place where my brother-in-law died when North Vietnamese Army forces ambushed his convoy. The year was 1968 during the Tet offensive. In getting there I experienced the warmth and generosity of the Vietnamese people who reached out to me in many beautiful ways 35 years after the war came to a close.

8. Validation of progress toward goals. According to the experience of co-inquirers, those with whom they engaged were a continuing source of validation. Their stories revealed the

nature of validation. For each co-inquirer, it was personal in nature. Validation meant that they were important, they mattered, and what they had to offer, were doing, or thought they might do was relevant and meaningful to others. The validation constituent is a superb example of the interdependent nature of the constituents for finding meaning. Validation can happen within oneself by accomplishing some “big and mighty task,” as Co-inquirer 4 said about the completion of his dissertation. Excerpts from the stories of co-inquirers illuminated the nature of the validation constituent as coming from many varied interactions among people. The nature of close and meaningful relationships is evident in these vignettes.

Validation from professors. Co-inquirer 1 felt validated by a faculty who recognized that she has “a life that [they were] interested in” beyond Pepperdine. The value “permeated” the program and was enacted in one way by investing time at the beginning of each cohort meeting so that everyone could “check in.” This was an opportunity to share deeply about triumphs and tragedy, joy or sadness, stressful work or light-hearted fun. It set the stage for a week of intense learning and fellowship. We had a similar process on the way out, which concerned the work and learning and the accomplishments and feelings surrounding the week. Attending to the lives of each other was one of the ways that kept the community alive and growing.

Co-inquirer 3 was validated through feedback from professors on assignments done between formal learning sessions. Her story showed that its clarity and depth took her to a “much deeper level.” We did our best to produce quality doctoral level work and our faculty helped us make it even better. Comments on papers were comprehensive. Feedback often prompted dialogue.

Co-inquirer 5 described friendships between faculty and students. I chose to place this quotation in the discussion of the validation constituent because friendships within the community were a source of validation. He described these friendships as a bridge over “intercultural differences.” He saw professors joining in friendship of the kind discussed above that abridged the “very hierarchical, very rigid structure” found in his native land where “the professor is the professor and the student is a student.” That was how he experienced professors who today are his friends and colleagues. These friendships strengthened his performance because he was “not concerned about losing face” when asking questions or seeking help. There was “a very high trust level, an admiration ... and friendship” for professors.

A common theme within the stories of co-inquirers was the empowering nature of validation. The story of Co-inquirer 6 who received feedback during his comprehensive exam brings the point home. Recall from the discussion of the helping and caring constituent that his professor wanted to see his authenticity rather than a false persona. By accepting feedback he was free to be. The validating behavior of his professor meant that he mattered.

I had discussed earlier that Co-inquirer 7 had the opportunity to co-construct his learning program. In the process he was validated for his knowledge and experience. His story vividly described his encounter with faculty in the cohort’s initial learning session. It makes the point, similar to Co-inquirer 6, that validation, given in uncomfortable circumstances, enables an encounter with one’s assumptions. He recalls an authentic and caring faculty saying to him:

... instead of complaining about the program or what you are not getting from us ... why don't you challenge us, why don't you challenge the group, ... why don't you bring questions ... and why don't you try to get the most out of what is here in a more active way because if you go back to your seat and get in an angry passive attitude ... we are missing your input and you are missing what you are looking for.

It was a “tough confrontation” but recognizing his vast experience and wanting to work with him was validating. Validation in the sense of his experience need not be neat and tidy. It can be confrontational and it can create some tension as it did in this case. It was evident in the experience of Co-inquirer 7 that validation was most helpful to him in meeting and exceeded his program expectations.

Co-inquirer 7’s story revealed an important dimension of progressive education. Faculty helping students make the most of their learning experience was not one-sided. It came with expectations for students as revealed in the words of the faculty to Co-inquirer 7 when they said, “you have a lot of experience, ask yourself how you can get what you need from whatever you experience. ...” and “... why don't you try to get the most out of what is here....” Progressive education, grounded in an environment where voices are intended to be heard, requires the active participation of all. This worked to benefit Co-inquirer 7. He saw the opportunity before him and grabbed it.

Validation moves one to action. Here again, the experience described by Co-inquirer 9 showed that she found another side of self as she pursued doctoral research that others had discouraged. Her story described how faculty respected and encouraged her interests when others important to her were discouraging. She said of the faculty: “... they stood by me” and recognized the passion within. Validated, she was impassioned to pursue her goal.

Validation for Co-inquirer 10 brought her to action as her story reveals. She always wanted to go Bali and an engaging discussion got her there. Her professor was “very enthusiastic” for her, knowing that it would open a wonderful experience of culture. Validation encourages. She found a home in Bali where she could experience the rich culture. Through the simple gift of a bracelet offered to a child in that home, she endeared herself to the family. She

sent pictures to her Bali family saying: "... that was a huge impact on me to being in Made's family. ... I now know a family and I carry them in my heart" I had similar feelings after my time with a family in Vietnam.

Validation from within the community. Co-inquirer 2 told of being validated by sharing her 768 experience with another cohort. It was "beneficial" to her and "the response [she] got ... knowing that they didn't live it ... was very supportive." Co-inquirer 2 also described an experience at a graduation a party for a close friend who had graduated with her. She was recognized by her classmate among all the guests even though they were there for her friend. I asked Co-inquirer 2 during our story time to provide details about the experience. She replied: "I felt held and supported and I feel like I have a friend for life." To validate another person in this way is an act of agape love. Her feelings are so human.

Co-inquirer 5 was recognized by the EDOC community and the president of Pepperdine University for having exposed fellow students to his Mexican culture by arranging consulting opportunities for them. Nine of the 13 students in his cohort were able to travel to Mexico where they helped his clients in the work of organization development and change. He was humbled by the recognition he received and described it "like a ceremony ... in one of the classes" and he "was quite surprised that it was for him." I note in this part of his story that the consulting work he provided validated members of his cohort through a conviction that his fellow students were perfectly capable of helping his client organizations. He was validated not only by the recognition he received but also by the success of all involved in this learning venture.

Co-inquirer 8 described how he was validated through the depth and "sense of ... community, which [he had not] experienced in any other kind of program" He liked it because it helped him think about what he might do with the learning and how he would make

further contributions to the field of organizational development and change. He also thought about how he might be more effective with clients and how it might help him be more effective in teaching. He shared that it was very satisfying to him.

I am concluding the discussion of this constituent by sharing a segment of Co-inquirer 4's story that expressed the depth and the breadth of the validation constituent. He used the word "justification" in a way that fully supported the constituent. His words clearly described its encompassing nature. His story showed how validation integrates with the other constituents to form the essence of a developmental experience through which meaning was found:

... the most important lesson and gift out of [the] EDOC [program] ... was the assistance and the encouragement, the nurturing of my own worldview and voice allowing ... my story and my voice to be spoken, be discovered and be spoken so that what came out ... was not an intellectual gain, was not solely an intellectual gain, but it was much more ... primal and deep for me, ... I found my voice as a change agent, ... as a speaker, and a lecturer on all themes related to leadership ... so much so that within a year of completion of my dissertation I had also [published] my first book I would never have done that if I didn't have this kind of new found sense of self, new found sense of confidence related to my EDOC work....

... the constant encouragement of development of one's worldview, the reinforcement of nascent thoughts through papers and conversations with faculty grew a comfort with formulating my own frames and getting peer feedback on those frames and revising and listening to others and comfort challenging their frames made a huge-huge difference in how I thought about myself, how I thought about myself as a practitioner, and therefore how much, how willing I was to ... put out to the world my thoughts and beliefs about a subject in which I realized I had been playing very safe in for many years. Um, so you know it really for me again, I don't mean to be redundant, but it really is about self-worth, that something had held me back from ... taking a stand about what I believed and even controversial or non-controversial stand the EDOC program really turned a page in my life for me.

It was from the very beginning submitting papers, receiving feedback, reading other student's papers, receiving feedback, being expected to be willing to share opinions on other's papers, in class, that sort of thing, and the academic requirement to be able to at doctoral level do that in a way where you justified. You could back up what it is that you said. You move from an opinion to kind of thoughtful position because you had some ... data to bring forth or ideas from others as well as yourself. It's ... kind of the whole justification of your opinion that really started from the very beginning that really started that difference.

This concludes the discussion of the eight constituents that comprise the structure for finding meaning within the EDOC program. They represent the essence of the meaning experience. The voices of co-inquirers have shown their interdependent nature. They work together and when students are surrounded by them through the work of a skilled, artful, and caring faculty, meaning is likely to be found. Research of this kind does not answer all of the questions. In fact, it begs more. I am pleased to share my reflection on what might be possible beyond this research. Before sharing that, however, I summarize what has been offered by using Wilber's Four Quadrant Framework to state propositions from what has been learned. This is done exclusive of Giorgi's phenomenology, which has served the central purpose of the research; to identify the structure for finding meaning in the educational environment of the EDOC program.

Applying Wilber's Four Quadrant Framework to State Propositions for Progressive Educators and Organization Development Professions

Wilber's (1995, 2000a) all inclusive Four Quadrant Framework is known by the acronym AQAL standing for All Quadrants and All Levels. It can be applied to understand the intersubjective nature of a phenomenological structure involving human experience. Once I had identified the structure for finding meaning, I used it to direct my focus toward the propositions that each constituent proposes to progressive educators and organization development professionals. Before presenting the propositions, a brief description of AQAL is offered within the context of this research.

Each of the four quadrants in AQAL applies to the constituents because the framework is all-inclusive. The "I" quadrant of intentionality raises awareness of the human experience drivers such as the goals and expectations of those who joined the EDOC program. The "We"

quadrant focus is on the cultural worldspace of the lived experience such as that of the program's cohorts, the faculty and their style of teaching, the supporting administration, the physical surroundings of learning environments, and the nature of Pepperdine University. The "It" which is behavioral includes what one does or what one feels within an experience such as making a presentation and feeling joy or apprehension in the activity. The "It" was apparent in some of the segments of the stories but was usually an unknown factor unless expressly stated or visible to me while gathering them. The "It" also includes physiological changes one might experience within a phenomenon. These did not surface in this research. The quadrant labeled "Its" accounts for the whole of a social system. Taking the whole system into account is extensive and mostly beyond this study. By thinking in a whole system frame, however, one can be mindful of propositions that might be helpful to those who might consider a program of this kind.

Wilber (1995) incorporated levels and lines within each quadrant of the Framework on which elements of a constituent could be placed. I have not done this because my focus here is on propositions that come from the study. Wilber developed AQAL as an integral framework that is highly inclusive and served to bring my propositions into alignment with the findings of this study.

Wilber (1995), as quoted in chapter III, took the position that phenomenology is mostly a matter of the "I" quadrant. I believe in the accuracy of his statement from my story gathering experience. A person tells their story from the "I" because he or she is the only one to have experienced it from the "I" and the only one who can best and most accurately describe the experience. I concentrated on the "I" of each co-inquirer when I was in the phenomenological attitude discussed in chapter III. It was my job in analyzing stories to get to know each person's

experience without any of my own filters. The methodology required that I set my “I” aside by bracketing my experiences as much as possible in order that my assumptions would not interfere with what I had been given. I offered my experience within the research when I thought it brought value to the discussion and I did that as a fellow co-inquirer who made observations of what was happening to me throughout my years of study in the EDOC program. I wish to note at this time that none of the four quadrants; the “I,” “We,” “It,” and “Its,” of the framework, is mutually exclusive. To enrich the understanding of the phenomenon for finding meaning is to understand the totality of each co-inquirer’s experience. Table 11 frames propositions coming from this study. They are not intended to be all-inclusive. I offer them to generate thinking and conversations about how one might establish a program such as the one represented in this phenomenological study.

Table 11

Constituent Propositions for Progressive Educators and Organization Development Professionals in the Phenomenon for Finding Meaning Using Wilber’s Four Quadrant Framework.

| Constituent | Primary AQAL Quadrant | Propositions |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Self-aware learners who joined the program with assumptions concerning the nature of the learning experience. | The “I” quadrant of AQAL is primary because it is mostly about whom the co-inquirers are; the whole of the persons; what each one needs and brings to the program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program transparency enables prospective students to make informed decisions about joining a program. • Engagement of persons within a system (faculty, students, and staff) gives voice to a program brand making a recruitment and selection process transparent. • A humanistic approach in student selection requires trust that a well-designed and engaging process will yield good results. |

(continued)

| Constituent | Primary AQAL Quadrant | Propositions |
|--|--|---|
| 2. A social construction that facilitates the formation of relational sets and community engagement. | The “We” quadrant of AQAL is primary because the social construction expresses mostly aspects of relationships and the emergent nature of the community’s culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A social construction has a profound effect on relationships within a community of learners when participants (faculty, students, and administrators) see themselves as fellow learners within their roles. • Achieving the aims of a social construction requires a skilled faculty highly trained and sensitive to the needs and aims of the social system participants. • A social construction, like culture, is continually emerging and can be continually and purposely developed. |
| 3. Dialogic relationships among participants within the EDOC learning community | The “We” quadrant of AQAL is primary because it too expresses a cultural dimension of the community in which dialogue was a norm. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue builds mutuality in relationship. • Dialogic relationships bring about shared meaning among those engaged through awareness and respectfulness, and willingness to make one’s own assumptions vulnerable. |
| 4. Co-constructed learning through collaboration with faculty and fellow students. | The “We” quadrant of AQAL is primary because of its relational, collaborative, dialogic and cultural nature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-constructed learning promotes ownership of learning and learning processes. • Co-constructed learning requires a skillful and artful faculty that is not bounded by a need to control. • Students and faculty mutually gauge their readiness for co-constructed learning through dialogue. • Co-constructed learning requires experience, will, and skill. |
| 5. Free-space in learning enabling the transcendence of boundaries to personal growth. | The “We” quadrant of AQAL is primary because the giving and receiving of free-space is reflective of the trust and worthiness found in the mutuality of community relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free-space is an empowering factor to students and faculty within a learning environment. • A liberating learning community structure is one in which free-space would be a norm. • Free-space implies the presence of a liberating community structure. |

(continued)

| Constituent | Primary AQAL Quadrant | Propositions |
|---|---|---|
| | The gift of free-space was grounded in the helping and caring environment and all of the other constituents that surrounded co-inquirers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A faculty must be inclined toward and attuned to the nature of free-space in learning. • Readiness for free-space in decision making within learning must be determined. |
| 6. A helping and caring environment. | The “We” quadrant of AQAL is primary because of the way in which everyone helpfully and caringly engaged others. It was part of the community’s culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping and caring within a community is an expression of the nature of relationships among its members. • Helping and caring is reflective of bonds of friendship in which differences are valued, honored, and transparent. |
| 7. Opportunities to challenge and broaden worldviews through program experiences. | The “I” quadrant of AQAL is primary because worldview is so deeply personal. This constituent represents an activity that is most often done with the help of others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding worldview is important because of how one views the world is how one approaches the world. • When a worldview is consistent with the “I” am, one’s enactment is consistent with his or her beliefs, values, and assumptions. • To see how others live their world is to broaden one’s horizon and receptivity toward other ways of being. |
| 8. Validation of progress toward goals. | The “We” quadrant of Wilber’s framework is primary because validation occurred through relationships that had become established within the EDOC community’s culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation, characterized as either affirming or adjusting, empowers and opens avenues for learning and experimentation. • Validation diminishes boundaries to personal growth. |

Reflections on the Study with Thoughts for Further Research

I am pleased with what I have learned from this research about the developmental nature of the EDOC program. It has been a wonderful experience to have identified a structure for

finding meaning with the help of so many who joined me in this work. I look forward to seeing where this research might make its contribution to the way we train, educate, and develop those who come to an educational environment with high expectations. I am also looking forward to seeing its reception in the organization development community because I believe this structure can be applied in the context of organizations of all kinds. As I reflect on the outcome of my work I think of Wilber's AQAL framework, which makes clear that this research, like any research, does not offer complete answers to the questions posed. It provokes thoughts for how research of this kind might go further toward understanding possibilities for progressive educators and OD professionals.

It is necessary to remain cognizant of the nature of the participation in this research. Participants, who were the co-inquirers to this study, self-selected into the research. That means they all had a story to tell about how they found meaning. It also means that their experience was very positive in nature and that fact was certainly reflected in the stories they told. Not everyone whom I spoke to found meaning. There were two who found the meaning called for in this study within Pepperdine's Master of Science in Organizations Development program. I do not know the details surrounding their experience but I do know that they valued the EDOC program. Another graduate beside these two was critical of the program's delivery believing that it should have included a "T" Group experience, which has been a foundational block in the practice of organization development. "T" Groups, known more formally as Training Groups, come from the work of Kurt Lewin, Rensis Likert, and Douglas McGregor who opened the dynamics of groups in a way that was visible to all participants so they would learn about self. My view is that "T" groups were part of our foundational studies and while there were no direct experiential exercises per se, there were abundant and ample substitutes that let us go deeply into

ourselves and deeply into those who surrounded us. Feedback, about who I am or who we were, was a norm. We had the freedom to incorporate such experience where those among us were so motivated. A fourth graduate simply did not have a program experience congruent with her needs and therefore removed herself from participant consideration. Recognizing her reality, she believed they could not add value to the questions posed but in each case, help was offered to me in other ways such as locating graduates and offering suggestions for the literature I had reviewed. Given these inputs to the research process, I offer the possibility of knowing more from those who did not find meaning. What was it about them and/or what was it about the environment that caused this to happen? My experience tells me that it is unreasonable to expect a universal approval or universality in an outcome, particularly one that was not predicted. That being said, it would be worthwhile to understand the factors surrounding the qualitative variance.

Another thought that I have in going further is to take a faculty perspective into account about how students found meaning. I believe they would have much to add. They saw us grow throughout the entire program experience. I know what it means for an educator to see the lights of students shine. I know it was a gratifying experience for our professors. The focus of research was toward a phenomenon experienced by those graduates who found meaning. From the stories of those who found meaning we now know more about how that evolved. We know from the many descriptions offered through co-inquirer stories and anecdotes that faculty was highly supportive of students. Knowing more completely how they were in step with us and how we were in step with them would help educators understand the capabilities required for relationally based learning. It would be beneficial for others to know and understand faculty core beliefs and assumptions that contributed to learning and finding meaning. Classroom power in the mutuality and shared influence of relationships might be one of the elements to explore.

This would be important as we reach toward an understanding of how faculty creates power within a community of learners so that everyone is empowered. Coupled with this, or perhaps to be studied separately, is to understand how the cohort model supports what happened in the experience of co-inquirers. I do not believe our faculty ever thought they had all the answers. They are professionals and as such they are interested in learning more about the kind of program they created so that the knowledge could be passed on to others.

In addition to a focus solely on student experience in finding meaning, the study was confined to the classroom very broadly defined as anyplace where program learning took place. No attempt was made to explore the culture of Pepperdine University or the educational systems in place to support a program of this kind. The cultural factor, inclusive of the Pepperdine system, is ground for further study to illuminate and understand the nature of an integrated learning environment.

I have also reflected on what institutions of higher learning might need to consider in designing programs like EDOC. Our EDOC faculty and graduates have enormous depth and breadth in organization development and change as scholars, practitioners, researchers, and educators. They would have much to offer to those who strive to bring this capability into their classrooms. Work on OD competencies has been done by the Organization Development and Change Division (ODC) of the Academy of Management but further study might serve to bring additional clarity. One example of a competency that I offer would be for faculty to have a capacity to believe deeply in their soul that their students are capable of outcomes far beyond any program expectations. I believe this is an assumption crucial to the constituents. It is what I experienced from the EDOC faculty. By holding that assumption they were able to make us, as Co-inquirer 4 put it, the “center of the learning equation.”

Lastly, I reflect on the findings of this research as they might apply to business organizations that seek to bring meaning to the workplace. I believe that each of the eight constituents can apply. For example, (a) seek employees who are self-aware: people who know themselves and join an organization believing and trusting that their needs will be met; (b) help develop trust and engagement through a relationally oriented social construction that brings all employees together; (c) dialogue with employees, whenever possible, on matters coming before the organization; (d) co-construct work processes so there is a high degree of employee involvement and ownership; (e) provide free-space to make decisions based upon capability and creativity; (f) genuinely help and care for the people of the organization and the market they serve; (g) offer opportunities for expanding a worldview to meet the global focus of today's organization; and (h) validate the efforts of employees by listening to them, removing barriers to productivity and offering praise, authentic critique, and other incentives for performance. Surrounding employees by the eight constituents appropriately framed as organizing principles might make enormous and significant contributions to helping them see their workplace as a center for an enriching life. The constituents identified in my research worked in the EDOC program and I believe they can work elsewhere provided the right people are in place. I believe the findings of this research could be useful in many kinds of institutions and organizations. With that, I offer my conclusions to this study.

Conclusions

There are five that I wish to share. First, each of the 10 graduates who provided detailed stories of their experience found meaning when surrounded by the eight empirically derived interdependent constituents that were presented in chapter IV and discussed in chapter V. It was a valued developmental experience for these co-inquirers and others who provided stories,

anecdotes or perspectives for this research. Meaning found led to life changes such as improved personal and professional effectiveness, a deeper sense of self and self worth, a clearer view of the world, and an ability to enact what they had taken from the experience. This is a very significant educational outcome in addition to cognitive competencies, field knowledge and application. Those who have experienced the program in the manner described in this research came away with a deeper sense of purpose and far reaching capabilities to serve.

Second, each co-inquirer changed as a consequence of finding meaning through a purposeful developmental process. The insight and meaning that each of us gained from the exposure came early, in the middle, or late in our respective journeys. There was a sequence of steps in the developmental process such as community building that occurred as each new cohort came together coupled with a course sequence that was foundational to various segments of the program. None of it, however, can be classified as being linear because each segment was a human experience involving all members of the community. Our mutual engagement in the learning was grounded by a dedicated, unique set of educators that guided us in our journeys; educators who understood the complexities of development and valued the power of community in learning.

Third, no one constituent identified in this research is more important than any other. They work together and each one touches individuals in different ways. To learn in this kind of environment, faculty and students must be attuned to their own authenticity, confident and humble in their capability, willing to assume risk, and ready to accept ideas and perspectives from others. The kind of learning reflected in this research is a product of the community. Everyone was influential in the process of learning. There was no top down mechanistic approach. It was more organic because each person was a stakeholder in every other person's

success. We helped each other grow. Role differences were apparent but also transparent in a diverse community that was empowering to all.

Fourth, the EDOC program is arguably a benchmark for progressive educators who seek to help students reach a level of development that is beyond but inclusive of the intellectual and cognitive depth of doctoral education. I know of no other program like EDOC and no other research that is comparable to this study. The program that led to meaning was rigorous in every way. It was rigorous not only in the exposure to thought and theory, but also in opening avenues so each person could test their life experience and approach to the world. We all came from different backgrounds and experiences and we came with assumptions about how things were done. Understanding, accepting, or challenging those assumptions was part of the learning. Making the most of an educational experience means that we are forthright in helping ourselves and helping others discover latent growth potentials. Multiple and varied exposures were a treasure trove in a developmental experience that was consequential for all.

Fifth, I take away from the experience that “meaning [is indeed] born of use through relationship” (Gergen 1997; p. 195). Relationships were a part of every program experience. Each one was a most worthy investment in finding meaning. As graduates, we are uniquely equipped to offer ourselves to others. We do not seek to help others change for the sake of change, that is, just to be different. We seek to add value in creating change that brings about new and enriching meaning in our lives and the lives of others.

Closing statement

Having the opportunity to do this research has been a gift to me. I leave it to continue to lead a rich and full life. I was reminded as I got to this point in my dissertation of a mission statement that I wrote some years ago while in a master’s program at the University of West

Florida. My mission statement has been: *To help people and organizations be more enriched, powerful, complete, balanced, and secure in a world that is ever growing, changing and challenged.* Within the context of enacting this statement, I would like to help others find meaning for now I know more about the developmental environment in which it might be found. I have been enriched by insight gained through this work. The experience and all those associated with it have been a huge blessing to me. I challenge others to take the structure for finding meaning, learn from it and dream about where it might be applied. Imagine the possibilities!

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APPENDIX A

Overview of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) Program

This overview of the Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) program begins with information about Doctor of Education programs offered at Pepperdine University. It is drawn from the electronic program catalogue for 2007 and 2008, which is representative of the program in which this study is based. Additional academic catalogues are located at <http://gsep.pepperdine.edu/education/catalog/>. This is a synthesis of key material presented on the site. Incorporated within the synthesis are factors about EDOC program specifics so that its delivery system is made clear.

Doctor of Education

The field of education needs professionals capable of providing a rapidly changing world with innovative and creative leadership. The call from the professional is for a multidisciplinary doctoral program that will provide forward-looking educational managers with the skills needed to organize people effectively, while still offering the kind of instructional leadership required to meet the need of a population for which personalized education will be commonplace.

The school's mission through the doctoral program is to prepare practitioners with relevant skills, knowledge, and values to assume leadership roles and effect change in organizations. The high level of individual interaction between students and faculty allows Pepperdine to model strategies for students to immediately apply in the workplace. Students enroll in one of four programs:

- Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy
- Educational Technology
- Organization Change
- Organizational Leadership

Classes in the Organizational Leadership program are offered on weeknights and occasional weekends while classes in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy; Educational Technology; and Organization Change programs are offered in nontraditional delivery modes. Specific objectives of the programs include:

- To prepare students to use human relations skills that will enable them to function effectively as problem solvers and leaders of people.
- To prepare students to analyze and, if need be, synthesize institutional arrangements using the latest administrative and organizational development theories.
- To prepare students to use education research as a problem-solving tool and be able to evaluate, interpret, and apply the research findings of others to improve existing programs in an educational or professional setting.
- To foster in students an understanding of the complexities of educating and/or managing a multicultural population of diverse age and socioeconomic status.
- To prepare students to diagnose the curricular and/or professional needs of various student groups and to guide human beings toward innovative and valid goals.

Doctor of Education in Organization Change

The Organization Change concentration emphasizes the theory, research, and practice of change within, between, and across organizations. This course of study uses an integrated framework to develop knowledge and skills for the designing and managing continuous organizational change. Key competency areas include organizational development and change; applied research; Organization Change practice; and interpersonal awareness of self as an instrument of change. Integrating strands include leadership, ethics, and global perspectives.

Students follow a curriculum during seminar-style sessions held at national and international facilities. Sessions are scheduled quarterly over a three-year period. The experience is shared by cohorts of students over a defined period of time. The first two years include comprehensive course and field work.

In the third year of study, students participate in an international experience and a change project guided by faculty. Students begin their dissertation research in the third year and complete all degree requirements during the fourth and fifth year of doctoral study.

Following all course work, passage of the comprehensive examinations, and acceptance of a satisfactory dissertation proposal by the dissertation committee, students are advanced to the status of Degree Candidate.

Comprehensive Examination Seminar

The purpose of the seminar is to test the student's ability to integrate the concepts studied and to relate them to management and administrative issues. Students failing a comprehensive exam are allowed to retake it once.

Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation is envisioned as an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to bridge theory and practice through research. Students are encouraged throughout course work to identify salient issues and relevant educational concerns upon which to base their dissertations. Dissertation proposal preparation is completed under the direction of a faculty chairperson together with the assistance of a Doctoral Dissertation Committee. Upon completion of the dissertation, a final oral examination by the Dissertation Committee must be scheduled through the doctoral program administrator. Use of the doctoral title is appropriate only after degree posting.

Course Requirements

The following core courses, comprehensive examination seminar, and dissertation are required:

Core Courses

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| EDOC 700A,B | Leadership Theory and Practice | (2,2) |
| EDOC 714A,B | Organization Behavior | (2,1) |
| EDOC 724 | Ethics and Social Justice | (3) |

| | | |
|-------------|--|-------|
| EDOC 729 | Communication and Information Technology | (4) |
| EDOC 734 | Data Analysis and Interpretation | (4) |
| EDOC 762 | Organization Development | (3) |
| EDOC 730A,B | Philosophical Foundations & Methods of Inquiry | (2,2) |

Specific course titles and descriptions subject to change

The following 34 units of specialized course work is required in addition to the 24 units of core courses, the comprehensive examination seminar, and the dissertation:

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| EDOC 721 | Global Contexts for Policy..... | (3) |
| EDOC 762A-F | Self as Instrument of Leadership and Change | (6) |
| EDOC 764 | Strategic Management and Change | (4) |
| EDOC 765 | Designing Future Organizations..... | (4) |
| EDOC 766 | Cultural Dimensions for Change Agents..... | (4) |
| EDOC 767 | Transformational Organizations in a Global Community..... | (4) |
| EDOC 768 | Learning Outside Your Culture..... | (3) |
| EDOC 769A-D | The Practice of Organization Change..... | (1,1,1,1) |
| EDOC 785 | Contemporary Topics: Community Development and Self as Instrument..... | (8) |

Course Descriptions

EDOC 700 A, B Leadership Theory and Practice (2, 2)

Students deepen their understanding of traditional and contemporary leadership theories and practices. These understandings are applied to local and global organizational issues and opportunities through clarification and advocacy of their individual preferences regarding the appropriateness of various leadership practices in a variety of circumstances. Students practice leadership by conducting a collaborative change and research effort in an organization, community or other social system.

EDOC 714A, B Organization Behavior (2, 1)

This course addresses organizations: their structures, intended outcomes, how they deal with culture, employee behavior and values. Students will examine strategies designed to create and evaluate knowledge, including the psychological basis for human action, individual and organizational learning, communicating across cultures, and intellectual capital. The course also examines such topics as communication, motivation, work teams, organizational change, stress, power, influence and trust.

EDOC 721 Global Contexts for Policy (3)

This course is focused on expanding and enriching the student's view of the world with particular attention to the development of policy positions that allow for the more effective use of the theories and concepts in the field of organization change and development. The intention is to expand their view and enable a deeper understanding of the global dynamics that affect us

all. Ethical issues as well as practical problems will be addressed with the goal of preparing the student to function more effectively in a complex and changing global context.

EDOC 724 Ethics and Social Justice (3)

This course is designed to assist the student in forming their own carefully crafted set of ethical guidelines for implementing change. The course will provide a historical as well as contemporary review of the work of scholars and practitioners in the areas of ethics and human development. Cross-cultural concerns and social justice issues will be addressed with the intention of increasing sensitivity to the many differing ethical assumptions existing in dynamic environments where their work is being done.

EDOC 729 Communication and Information Technology (3)

Prepares students for graduate-level oral and written communication using today's technological tools. Emphasis is given to developing skills for scholarly writing and enhancing information literacy.

EDOC 730 A, B Philosophical Foundations & Methods for Inquiry (2,2)

This course focuses on the theory and practice of designing and conducting research to meet the needs of today's complex organizations. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are explored, considering issues regarding design, sources of data, data collection strategies and instrumentation. Planning for analysis and interpretation of data is also addressed.

EDOC 734 Data Analysis and Interpretation (4)

Provides skills in the use of principles and methods for both descriptive and inferential statistics. It includes a study of measures of central tendency, variability, position, and relationship. Basic distributions, such as the binomial and normal, are introduced. The course focuses on an introduction to such inferential techniques as chi-square, the analysis of variance and covariance, and multivariate analysis. Both parametric and nonparametric procedures are included. The course will also emphasize how descriptive and inferential approaches can be applied to the interpretation of data. Students will be expected to utilize appropriate statistical software.

EDOC 762 Organizational Development (3)

This course addresses the early development of the field of organizational development with particular attention to how this area of study has expanded to encompass non-profit and profit-oriented entities. Various theoretical models frame the discussion of the field of applied behavior science. The scholar-practitioner model serves as the focus of this course.

EDOC 763 A–F Self as Instrument of Leadership and Change (6)

This course focuses on the combination of life experience, natural abilities, acquired knowledge, and personal psychology that impact a student's work as a practitioner in organization change and leadership. Each student examines him or herself as a unique instrument of change. Personal reflection and understanding form a central focus of these six, single-unit courses that span 3 academic years.

EDOC 764 Strategic Management and Change (4)

Exposes students to strategic management and the methods for applying it in a strategic change context. The conceptual and theoretical precursors to a resource-based view; the traditional, policy-based approach; and the competitive strategy model provide the necessary exposure to organizational and industrial economics as well as classic administrative theory. Students learn about the elements that comprise sustainable competitive advantage; the processes and techniques necessary to bring about an advantage; and the relationships among strategy, organization development, and change.

EDOC 765 Designing Future Organizations (4)

A study of the theoretical underpinnings and current forces shaping organizations and organization design choices. Economic, political, technological, ecological, and social evolution are among the more predominant of these forces that are pushing organizations into new global organizational forms and strategic orientations. The implications of these trends on organizations attempting to operate in a worldwide context are explored.

EDOC 766 A, B Cultural Dimensions for Change Agents (2,2)

In response to a rapidly changing world, we must learn to deal with very different cultural assumptions both within and external to our work organizations. The course helps prepare the scholar-practitioner to operate globally, enhancing the appreciation of diversity in organizations. Cross-cultural models and frameworks will be used to both enhance understanding and build more collaborative change models.

EDOC 767 Transformational Organizations in a Global Community (4)

Change work involves the examination of transformational practices and phenomena that are built into many change models. These organizational transformations are often considered to be transorganizational, as organizations are increasingly linking with other organizations both domestically and internationally. Human and organization development theories will be addressed which examine ways to prepare for future challenges in an increasingly interdependent world.

EDOC 768 Learning Outside Your Culture (3)

This course is highly individualized and requires a learning contract proposed by the student and guided by faculty. Through a period of deep immersion in an unfamiliar culture, the student intensely examines their own reactions to being away from their environment. The learning experienced in this new culture as well as the nature of the transitions into and out of that new milieu will be shared in both written and oral presentations. This prepares students for change work by helping them understand how they react to the pressures and challenges of moving in and out of different cultural settings.

EDOC 769A, B, C, D The Practice of Organization Change (1, 1, 1, 1)

In this course, students lead and/or facilitate a change "project" in an organization in which they do not normally work. The purpose of this course is to enable students to develop skills needed to lead and/or facilitate complex organizational change.

EDOC 785 Contemporary Topics: Community and Self as Instrument

In this course, students examine several of a broad range of contemporary topics. Examples of possible topics are strategic management, institutional advancement, societal factors affecting education, board-administration relationships, advanced product development, networking, legal aspects of development, and consultancies.

APPENDIX B

Communication to Potential Co-Inquirers

Dear Pepperdine Graduates:

I am very pleased to extend an invitation to each of you to participate in my doctoral dissertation research of the Pepperdine EDOC program, the very one from which you graduated. I am a Lima. Some of you I know personally and some I do not. I am conducting a phenomenological research study that explores the developmental nature of our program through the lived experiences of graduates who have found deep meaning in the course of their studies through relationships with others in the program. I identify this as a relationship/meaning phenomenon. These relationships include those you have had with fellow students, professors, administrators, and others that might not have been directly associated with the EDOC program but were nevertheless part of your learning like an executive or coworker, family members, and person or persons with whom you engaged as part of the 768, 769, dissertation and other experiences in the program. The research setting is the EDOC classroom which is broadly defined as engaged in studies so whether you were in one of our formal sessions or working on a paper at home or doing field work, you were still in the classroom.

The definition of meaning is important in the study and is of a kind that is deeply felt, visceral, emotional, and life changing as accounted by actions that might emerge from its very discovery. It is meaning such as described by Frankl in his book entitled *Man's Search for Meaning* as finding and/or understanding love for self and others, successfully meeting a seemingly difficult and insurmountable challenge, or doing something of deep personal significance. Meaning of this kind might affirm or alter one's worldview and change the very course of one's life. It is meaning that might add to or even define life's purpose more completely and fully. I chose this topic for my dissertation because of my experience in the program and within graduate education. My work experiences, encompassing over 30 years in

industry and almost 20 years in education, were also influential. I believe this research presents an opportunity to learn about the developmental nature of programs like ours and how meaning develops through the experience.

Should you be willing, your voluntary participation would require an interview either face-to-face, by phone or through other electronic means. The interview would be approximately 60-90 minutes with the possibility of a follow-up interview sometime in the following two months. All of the requirements for conducting research of this kind with respect to confidentiality would be fulfilled. A criterion for participating in this study is that you believe you have experienced the kind of meaning referred to above and that you are able to describe in detail how it evolved.

Please notify me within one week of your having received this LinkedIn message if you are interested in participating in this study. In order to effectively manage the process of selecting participants, I would ask that you respond to my invitation by email or phone. My email address is xxxxxxxx@comcast.net. my phone number is xxx-xxx-xxx or xxx-xxx-xxx (cell). Please include a telephone number where you can be reached and also days and times that are convenient for you. If at the end of our conversation we agree that you meet the requirements of this study and are still interested in participating, I will inform you of the next steps including procedures regarding informed consent detailing your rights as a participant in this study.

Thanks so much for your interest and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joe Holler
Lima Cohort

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 13, 2012

Joseph Holler

Protocol #: E0512D10

Project Title: *An Exploration of the Development nature of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) Program through the Lived Experience of its Graduates*

Dear Mr. Holler:

Thank you for submitting your application, *An Exploration of the Development nature of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change (EDOC) Program through the Lived Experience of its Graduates*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Kenneth Murrell, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045 ■ 310-568-5600

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,



Jean Kang, CIP
Manager, GPS IRB & Dissertation Support
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Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
Dr. Kenneth Murrell
Ms. Christie Dailo

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions Guide

The co-inquirer interviews are intended to be open-ended. Each co-inquirer will be asked to describe his or her experience with the relationship/meaning phenomenon in full detail with the intent of eliciting as complete and faithful description of his or her lived experience as possible. Additional questions or comments from the researcher are confined to requests for clarification, confirmation, or amplification. The primary interview question will be: As you think back to being a doctoral student in the EDOC program, would you describe, in as much detail as possible, an occasion when you found meaning of a deep, personal and visceral nature through relationships with others. These include fellow students and professors in the EDOC program and others whom you might have encountered over the course of the program that might have changed your life and worldview.

Questions used to clarify, or qualify, might include:

1. When did this occur?
2. How far along in the program were you?
3. What was ... like?
4. In what way ...?
5. Would you provide an example?
6. Can you provide some details about that?
7. What did (he, she, they) do about it?

APPENDIX E

The Disciplinary Orientation of Organization Development and Progressive Education

Organization Development (OD) has a rich history of scholarship, theory, and practice devoted to social systems that include organizations throughout society, educational and healthcare institutions, and communities both local and global that are working to improve their effectiveness. Kurt Lewin (1935), social psychologist and educator, is credited with founding OD. Progressive Education (PE) involves a philosophy and practice that is dedicated to improving educational effectiveness. John Dewey (1938b), philosopher, social activist, and educator, is credited with initiating the progressive education movement in which learning from experience within a framework of democracy is a primary principle. OD is process oriented and in its association with change, it is a primary enabler. PE provides a way of thinking about educational environments and how the product of education can be continuously improved in its delivery to consumers. Given that this dissertation research is about the developmental nature of a learning environment, it is appropriate to assume a disciplinary stance within the research as required by Giorgi's Phenomenological research methodology that incorporates OD for its orientation to change and development and PE with its orientation to progressive educational methods and processes.

Cummings and Worley (2001) defined OD as a process oriented field that applies behavioral science knowledge and practice to help organizations achieve greater effectiveness including increased financial performance and improved quality of work life. OD differs from strategic planned change efforts such as technological innovation or new product development because the focus is on building capability to assess current functioning to achieve short and longterm goals. OD is oriented to improving the total system, the organization and its parts in the context of the larger external environment that surrounds and affects them. It is a field that embodies both "social action ... and scientific inquiry" (Cummings & Worley, 2001, p. 2) based

on democratic and humanistic values (Patton, 1981) as a principle ethic in the accomplishment of its work.

There are organizations devoted to the practice of OD and the development of the discipline like the Organizational Development Network (ODN), the newly formed International Society for Organizational Development (ISOD), and the Organization Development and Change Division (ODC) of the Academy of Management (AoM). Each of these organizations strives to define and develop the field and establish competencies for people who work as scholars, researchers, and practitioners. The ODC Division of the Academy of Management lists the work of this initiative on their website by showing areas of competencies. To illuminate the relevance of competencies to the work of OD, a portion of a report by Varney, Worley, Darrow Neubert, Cady, and Guner (2008) to ODC division members is quoted here:

Through an extensive literature review, Varney (1980) identified nineteen requisite skills grouped into three general categories. The first category of Self-Awareness and Personal Impact Awareness includes skills such as self-awareness, personality theory, and organizational theory. The second category, Conceptual, Analytical and Research skills involves, among others, theory building, theoretical mapping, concept model building, and data processing. Finally, skills such as Change Strategy Design, Intervention Design, and Teaching and Educative skills, make up the third category of organizational change and influence skills.

Another salient study by Shepard and Raia (1981) used a delphi approach, similar to the present study, to establish essential OD skills. Their panel identified 83 skills grouped into 10 categories: general consultation skills; intra-personal skills; organization behavior/ organization development knowledge and intervention skills; inter-personal skills; research/evaluation knowledge and research design skills; data collection and data analysis; presentation skills; experience as a line manager; major management knowledge areas; and collateral knowledge areas.

In the third study, Warrick and Donovan (1979) surveyed a variety of practicing consultants (including academics and nonacademics). The results of their study serve as a base for the current study. Warrick and Donovan identified forty skills, grouped into four categories. The first category, knowledge skills, includes topics in OD, OB, and General Business. Proposal writing, synthesizing data, and problem solving are among the 14 competencies

that are grouped into consulting skills. The third category, conceptual, involves, five different skills including sound philosophical base, and systems view of organizations and environments. There are 14 competencies in the final category, human, consisting of abilities such as positive attitude, self-awareness, and sensitivity to organizational needs. (p. 5)

These competency categories lend credence to the OD disciplinary attitude adopted for this work. To summarize, OD researchers, scholars, and practitioners assume a whole system perspective (Hanna, 1988) with self-awareness and personal impact awareness as they seek to understand the explicit and espoused values of the organization, its operating system, strategic initiatives, organization talent, and more. The list can be almost endless, but the point is that an OD professional examines the whole and works with leaders in planning interventions based on the behavior sciences and humanistic values. This is the practice of OD, a profession that is concerned with the welfare of organizations and their people. It stresses a balanced, humanistic approach in which concerns for people equate to an equivalent concern for the organization and its productivity (Blake & Mouton, 1969).

Scholars, practitioners, and researchers of progressive education (PE) seek meaningful direction for the future of education. They strive to go beyond a root metaphor of bureaucratic education by setting “broad standards, crafted by practitioners, of what students should know and be able to do – while simultaneously promoting ... innovation and flexibility in order to achieve them” (D. French, 1998, p. 18). Democracy and experience are key values to the progressive educator and organizational development scholars and practitioners as well. Lewin (1935, 1948) and John Dewey (1938a, 1938b) anchored their work in the context of these values. Hence, OD and PE rest their values on humanistic and democratic principles.

The progressive educator according to Shapiro (Jan/Feb 2008) imagines possibilities for education through the encouragement of critical thinking, curiosity, and imagination. He noted that a student’s whole life is taken into account by a progressive educator including his or her

emotional wisdom, intellectual curiosity, intuitive capacities, ethical development, and spiritual core. Progressive educators value the intrinsic elements of “joy, ... stimulation, ... and illumination” (p. 6) in the learning process. They encourage relationships in the learning process that are empathetic and compassionate, an ethic consistent with Rogers (1980) as a fundamental way of being. Progressive educators encourage participants in learning environments to seek knowledge and wisdom that is worthwhile and meaningful to them and others. They challenge some of the deeply held assumptions that education is merely a rational and analytic process with very pragmatic goals toward economic security. They, therefore, focus their efforts in learning how to engage themselves and their students into society.

A disciplinary approach toward progressive education adds an additional dimension to the research inquiry by directing an analytic focus toward that which is nontraditional in the education process. Like OD, PE is humanistic in its respect for diversity in which each individual is recognized as a person with interests, ideas, values, and socially engaged intelligence, which enables collaboration for the common good. PE in concert with OD keeps the perspective toward this research to that of the whole system. Moreover, the adaption of the disciplinary attitude of the progressive educator reaches out to those who are seeking insights into ways in which learning processes can be helpful to the individual and his or her role in society.

Gergen (2009) has pointed out that within a democratic society people learn through participation with others. Progressive educators engage learners in collaborative co-action to achieve educational goals. The OD professional does likewise in process engagement with leaders and members of organizational systems. As disciplines, OD and PE value experience (Dewey, 1938b; Lewin, 1948). Their practitioners strive to enable and prepare people to live in

an ever changing world (Neill, 2005). Dewey (1938a) in his book entitled *Experience and Education* advanced a philosophy that educators are responsible for providing students with experiences that will be helpful to themselves and their engagement with society. He encouraged us to seek a better understanding of human experience and its relationship to education (Dewey, 1938a), which is consistent with the aims of this research in the exploration of the relationship/meaning phenomenon in higher education. The values inherent in PE and OD serve this work well. Each is concerned with relationships and each is concerned with development, OD certainly from a process and humanistic perspective and PE from a philosophical and strategic perspective. In this way, they provide a disciplinary orientation for understanding how relationships in learning and education might help one find meaning that is important to his or her growth and development.

APPENDIX F

Assumptions About the Pepperdine EDOC Program

The following assumptions about the Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organization Change program are drawn from two principle sources. The first source is my experience as a student within the program and the second source is the literature that is presented in chapter II. These assumptions are bracketed for purposes of enacting the phenomenological portion of this research.

1. The character of the social process within the Pepperdine EDOC program is unique in its relational aspects.
2. "Meaning [for students and faculty] is born of use through relationships" (Gergen, 1997, p. 195).
3. The social construction of the Pepperdine program gives rise to forms of inquiry that enable relationality and alternative ways of knowing (Gergen, 2009).
4. Given the social construction of the program, dialogue is encouraged as students, professors and guests to the program exchange knowledge, and meaning through stories of their realities to establish joint understanding and meaning (Bohm, 1996).
5. Professors and students honor all learning traditions and see pedagogical potentials through the social constructional lens of relationships (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2011; Gergen, 2009; Mourad, 1997b; Wilber, 2000a, 2000b).
6. By appreciating relationships, invitations are extended by professors and students for collaboration, dialogue, and action (Gergen & Gergen, 2008).
7. The Pepperdine EDOC program's has a social process, which shifts a pedagogy toward dialogue, group problem solving, participant interdependency, and encourages a role of process manager among professors.

8. The doctoral education process is grounded in social and intercultural participation that enables student development and transformation.
9. Students become teachers and faculty assume the role of learner (Knowles, 1975, 1989).
10. Much of the learning and meaning that is found is a product of relationship and co-constructed achievement.
11. The program's emphasis on dialogue opens boundaries for the sharing of meaning, creates common understandings, enlightens consciousness and removes boundaries to knowing (Bohm, 1996; Wilber, 2001).
12. Freedom and ways of knowing have typically been bounded in higher education. The Pepperdine program opens boundaries as called for by Rorty, Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida (Mourad, 1997b).
13. The program encourages "intellectual activity and experience over the discovery and production of knowledge" Mourad (1997, p. 6).
14. The EDOC program in the tradition of Rorty (1979) expresses a preference for spontaneously creative students, professors, scholars, practitioners, and researchers moving about in lively inquiry (Gergen, 2008).
15. The Pepperdine program values freedom for all faculty and students as a means for relieving impediments to knowing (Mourad, 1997b).
16. The program expands the horizon of learning from knowledge to meaning, which extends the reach of disciplines.
17. In the tradition of Lewin there is a focus on process and task behaviors in the context of his change and field theory (Lewin, 1935, 1948).

18. The program provides students and faculty life-space for learning the “reality of the stratum in which the center of gravity of a particular individual lies” (Lewin, 1935, p. 175).
19. There is a respect for democratic processes that embody originality, group-mindedness and friendliness.
20. In the tradition of Carl Rogers there is “unconditional positive regard” (Segal, 1997, p. 186) and empathetic understanding (Goleman, 1997).
21. The program empowers participants to critically and creatively discover how to transform their world (Freire, 2003).
22. The program empowers participants to critically and creatively discover how to transform their lives (Freire, 2003).
23. Students become the subjects of their own learning (Freire, 2003, from Shaull's introduction).
24. The EDOC program embodies the beliefs and principles of adult learning as set forth by Lindeman and Knowles and the embodiment of co-constructed learning (Knowles, 1989).
25. The EDOC program has visible and concrete components of experiential learning built into the learning process (M. K. Smith, 2001).
26. The EDOC program is transformative in nature (Fisher et al., 2003).
27. Students engage often in a critical assessment of their assumptions (see Mezirow, 1997) by engaging concepts in the context of their own lives and by collectively and critically assessing new knowledge that comes to them.
28. The EDOC program embodies the developmental nature of Torbert’s action logics inclusive of action inquiry and has a liberating structure that rests on the eight qualities that he has defined and a professorial leadership that is vulnerable and available to students (Fisher et al., 2003; Torbert, 2010).

29. Helping relationships exists within the program that are reciprocal in nature; student to student, student to professor, professor to student, professor to professor (Schein, 2009).
30. The EDOC program is progressive in nature by the way it honors a student's experience and by the way it encourages freedom of expression (Dewey, 1938a, 1938b).

APPENDIX G

A Soft Walk Through Vietnam

A Soft Walk Through



An EDOC 768 Report

Joseph C. Holler

Pepperdine University

April 2006

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acknowledgements | 3 |
| Introduction and Goals | 7 |
| Preparation | 10 |
| Vietnam..... | 18 |
| The Beginning Context—Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong..... | 20 |
| A Knee-to-Knee Experience | 25 |
| Little Bomb and Family | 28 |
| Walking Softly, Very Softly | 32 |
| Lasting Impressions, Learning, and Transformation | 37 |
| An Afterword | 43 |
| Annotated References | 44 |
| Appendices | |
| Travel Detail Itinerary and Contacts: A | 49 |
| Letter to US Embassy in Hanoi: B | 51 |
| Dissertation Direction: C..... | 53 |

Acknowledgements

Just as no person lives in a vacuum, so no book, article, paper, or experience is created in a space empty of others. People who made my Soft Walk through Vietnam possible enriched my experience. I wish to thank them through these acknowledgements.

Planning my trip to Vietnam took more than a year, and much of the process was grounded through reflection on my experiences during the period of the Vietnam War and feelings that I have had in its aftermath. As goals for the trip came together, relationships were formed that inspired and guided me in making my experience a life-changing reality. I am grateful to so many people who enabled my journey and for new friends who have become a significant part of my life as they helped me craft this deeply personal, enriching, and life-changing experience.

I deeply appreciate the faculty of Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Change program (EDOC) for envisioning a requirement for a significant world experience that would take me half way around the planet. My vision of something beyond international gave me the freedom to feel and listen to the range of emotions from conception to the fulfillment of experiencing today's Vietnam. I am particular grateful to Dr. Ken Murrell who inspired me through unfamiliar territory and guided me through the experience by holding a lantern over its many possibilities. I am also grateful to Dr. Susan Nero who has gently helped me understand myself as an instrument of change. Susan and Ken gave me the tools I needed to focus clearly my worldview and understand the assumptions that surround it.

I am thankful for my doctoral cohort, fellow Limas who encouraged my venture and for my friends in the Quatro community who inspired me by sharing their world experiences. Among my fellow students, I am particularly grateful to Ramon Taniola for having wisdom beyond his years and for helping me see and appreciate the depth and spirit of the Asian soul.

People beyond the Pepperdine community were helpful to me in many ways. As I spoke of my dream to go to Vietnam, doors opened with greetings of encouragement, advice, suggestions and contacts—many of which surfaced when they were most needed. Each person validated my intentions and made this vast world seem small and intimate. People reached out to me with generosity and understanding. Walter Malcolm, a friend from my church, put me in contact with Chris Lawson who is with the U.S. State Department in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. Chris's e-mail messages during the year preceding my travel evoked feeling and anticipation of what I would experience in Vietnam. One particularly memorable e-mail message was his description of riding his motor bike through Saigon—a surreal experience, as he described it.

Josie Smith, a graduate student at the college where I work touched me with her interest in my travels and put me in contact with Chris and Charlie Buck, two Canadians who live in Ho Chi Minh City. Chris and Charlie work at a hospital where they help to provide medical care for the Vietnamese people. The Bucks were a significant part of my experience in Ho Chi Minh City. Through them I got a glimpse of the reality of foreigners in Vietnam, such as the Germans, Australians, Japanese, Koreans, and Americans who work beside the Vietnamese people.

In my hometown of Dover, Delaware, there is a small Vietnamese restaurant called the Viet Kieu. Following a hunch, I visited the restaurant about a year before I planned to travel. It occurred to me that I might get some advice from the owner on how best to travel to Southeast Asia. After enjoying the first of many wonderful Vietnamese meals in the quiet hours of midafternoon, I met the owner, Hoa Hubbard, who warmly and graciously offered advice. On my third visit to the restaurant, Hoa suggested that I visit her family in Hue, and that was the start of

a relationship with her family that I deeply treasure. I am most grateful to Hoa and her husband Ray who served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. The story of their life makes a powerful chapter of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Today, Hoa's sister, Tran Thi Lé, lives with her family in Hue. For three wonderful days, I stayed with Lé, her husband Phu, and their four children, experiencing aspects of everyday life in Vietnam. Sharing in their love, generosity, hope, and anticipation for the future affirmed my worldview. I admire and respect them deeply. They are my friends.

I am deeply thankful for Colonel Dale Sindt, an active reservist, who served in Vietnam beside my closest friend and brother-in-law, David Wilson. David was killed during the Tet Offensive in 1968 while leading a convoy across the Central Highlands to Pleiku. My wife and I met Dale several years ago at a combined force reserve center in Orlando, Florida that was being dedicated in David's honor. We learned of the dedication when Dale called to invite us to the ceremony, and over time we realized how Dale's initiative made it possible. Meeting Dale for



the first time on the day of the ceremony was emotional for us all. Through him I feel the compassion, mercy, tenderness, strength, and character of brothers and sisters in arms. Dale gave me a write-up of the North Vietnamese attack on David's convoy and a map so I could reach the site where David died.

There are many others who I could acknowledge for having made my experience more than exceed expectations. Mostly though, I am grateful for the love and support of my wife who understood my motives for going to Vietnam and realized that it was best for me to do it alone. But, as you will see in this report of my soft walk through Vietnam, I was never alone. Ellen and David were always by my side, as were my son, David and his wife Jeania, my daughter, Cynthia, and her husband Wayne, and my grandchildren Katie and Jeremy. Also beside me were the Vietnamese people who always extended the hand of friendship. This report, written informally and from the heart, relates the story of my soft walk and how I changed as a consequence of the experience. Visits to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., known to many who lived through the Vietnam era as The Wall, will never be the same for me. I hope this paper reveals why that is so.

Introduction and Goals

I walked softly through Vietnam in the summer of 2005, and the experience changed me. It deepened me spiritually and opened my mind. It enriched my world and strengthened my capacity to see more deeply into my soul. It was a soft walk even though cars, motor bikes, trains, and planes helped me reach my destinations. As I walked, I observed, encountered, reflected, rested, and learned that to walk softly is to think, and it is to *feel*; to *feel deeply*. It is finding meaning and context within those deep thoughts and feelings that are grounded in memory; to wonder and make sense of the unfamiliar; and to trust in the sanctuary of self. It is to have softness within self to just be.

To just be in Vietnam required a soft walk—very soft, by myself, but never alone. I felt the company of family, friends, and those who walked in Vietnam at a different time under circumstances much different than mine. My experience during the war will never be like those who served in Vietnam, and as I wonder about them, I wonder, too, about the experience and suffering of the Vietnamese people, the supporters of the war in the United States, and its critics and detractors. War does change everyone, and this war was so different than any other in our country's history. Those in my generation who lived and died during the era of the Vietnam War witnessed a hardening of our nation and a loss of innocence. I believe that events of the sixties changed the way in which many of us viewed the world.

My need to go to Vietnam is rooted in the sixties; a turbulent time when our nation was sucking itself into a war that many thought a noble cause. It was a time of extraordinary unrest over civil rights, the assassination of our beloved President, John Kennedy, the murder of his brother Bobby, and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the most distinguished civil rights leader of our time. The widening war in Vietnam and the inability of leaders to make sense

of social realities led to the discrediting of Lyndon Johnson, whose greatness could have been defined by the Great Society.

For some of these years, I was a young lieutenant in the U.S. Army. In 1965, I completed officer's training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and a subsequent assignment took Ellen and me to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. As the momentum for the Vietnam War grew, I knew it was merely a matter of time before I received orders to Vietnam. In January 1966, I received orders for duty with the First Infantry Division that was already in Vietnam. But, because of recurrent injuries in training that left me unable to serve in a combat capacity, I never assumed command of a fighting platoon. I spent my remaining tour of active service at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, training special-need troops, many of whom would serve in Vietnam. I was honored to serve, and upon completing active duty, I received the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service. As I reflect on my service experience, my most treasured memories are of the officers and enlisted personnel with whom I served. I understand from my experience that those who serve express deep, emotional, visceral feelings about the camaraderie among brothers and sisters in arms. The camaraderie of the armed forces gave me a desire to continue my service, but because of physical limitations, I decided to end my tour of active duty.

As the war wore on, I watched as many of my friends went to Vietnam. I grieved for those who did not come back and among them was David, my close friend and brother-in-law. He died in 1968 during the Tet Offensive while leading his men to safety at an ambush site in central Vietnam between the An Khe and the Miang Giang Passes. At the time of his death, I had already moved on to a career in industry and was building a good life that included solid career prospects and the expectation of parenthood. David's death was a crushing blow to our family. I will never forget the feeling I had when the closed casket bearing David's body arrived home. Nor will I ever

forget the emotional trauma of the antiwar movement that gained momentum following the Tet Offensive. I vividly remember how intolerable it became for our government and the men and women who served in Vietnam as they returned home to antiwar demonstrations that darkened their service to our country. Scars from that era remain on our national psych, and there are those among us, perhaps me to some extent, who have had or are still having difficulty getting beyond the experience. I believe we tend to live these experiences in our own way and, in part, my travels to Vietnam gave me an opportunity to find closure and a new beginning.

In preparing for Vietnam, I spent time understanding my motives. I read books, talked to people, and reflected. I recalled an event at Widener University, my Alma Mater, formerly Pennsylvania Military College, when Ellen spoke at the dedication of a war memorial honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our county. To a crowded auditorium and many dignitaries, she honored those who served—those alive, those left wounded—and she remembered the suffering of our allies and adversaries. She honored all! Her speech and my vivid memories of her presentation provided the foundation for my goals in traveling to Vietnam. They were:

- To honor our country's men and women who served in Vietnam.
- To honor the people of Vietnam who have suffered through many wars over the centuries.
- To understand how Vietnam is developing in the 21st century.
- To deepen my worldview and test its congruency with my core beliefs and values.

I believe that every life given in Vietnam on both sides of the conflict has meaning if sense is made from the experience and learning comes from its history. In the context of this

belief my goals became real, as I thought of how I would enact them. To enact these goals, I knew that I must have personal contact with people. Contact with people meant experiencing them in close and personal ways so that I would connect with the stories of their lives. I also realized that I must immerse myself in the culture of this ancient country, take some risks, follow my instincts, be myself, and trust my worldview. My values were to appreciate people rather than judge, and to share and participate in their Vietnam experience by understanding the Vietnam of today. By appreciating, sharing, and looking retrospectively on my Vietnam experience, I was able to find new meaning in the experience. What I experienced in Vietnam was beautiful, compelling, transforming, and enriching. It changed my life in powerful ways. I will share how that happened through my preparation for Vietnam, my experiences in the country, followed by my learning and transformation.

Preparation

My preparation began from the moment I decided to go to Vietnam. In deconstructing my planning process, five distinct parts emerge that focused energy toward my purpose. The first part was clearly defining my aforementioned goals. Second was the development of a clear worldview that I could trust authentically as my own. The third part was to understand how I would make sense of what I was experiencing, and here I went to the literature and adopted a sensemaking process. The fourth component called for the formation of relationships in a spontaneous and serendipitous way. The fifth part was taking advantage of the opportunity to visit my friend Ramon, who would acculturate me to Southeast Asia before going to Vietnam. Throughout the course of time, I read books, met people, formed relationships, and affirmed my goals. Moreover, I spent a good deal of time with my thoughts and feelings. In this process, I became embedded in my purpose and articulated it at every opportunity. I trusted that the experience could make an

impact on my life and that some of the relationships I formed could last a lifetime. The following paragraphs reveal how my plan came together.

Preparing for Vietnam gave me the opportunity to make my worldview more concrete. Written for one of my papers in our doctoral program, this statement reveals how I approach the world. I have developed a deep appreciation of the need for a worldview, knowing its role in my successful navigation through this experience. This worldview is I. It is reflective of the way in which I create my reality and opens a window to my behavior:

I believe the world is good because its people are good. Problems of the world are the difficult pieces in the assembly of a large puzzle. My world exists within me, among the groups with which I relate, and the organizations and cultures that I experience. In each of these environments, I strive to appreciate better context to enact an optimistic and hopeful view for our planet even when the human capacity for evil explodes from the human psych (Peck, 1985). The human spirit is, fundamentally, an expression of what is or can be good. I believe the good of the world is more plentiful and powerful than any of its evil.

Making sense of the experience is another part of my preparation. I studied a sensemaking framework developed by Karl Weick (Weick, 1995) and applied it to my goals. I decided that during my travels, I would look retrospectively on my experience while honoring the past and present of the Vietnamese society. I would immerse myself in the culture, its history, and social context by experiencing people in their contemporary lives. I would look for cues that reinforce or challenge my assumptions of the world. I would wonder how I could stay involved with a culture that I respect and honor through ongoing projects. In adopting Weick's model to my needs, I decided that the journal I would keep would be rich in thinking and feeling so that I could look back and see the context and depth of the experience. In this report, I will share some entries from my journal that reveal the thoughts and feelings of the moments. Journaling helped my learning and was one of the ways that I relaxed my mind.

Relationships had a most positive bearing on the outcomes of my experience. I approached new relationships in a spontaneous and genuine way. People reached out to me as I informed them of my story and my purpose for going to Vietnam. Going public with my goals was, in retrospect, a deliberate decision because I realized that the articulation of intention meant certainty of the event.

Expressing my goals to others sparked interest that led to dialogue. Reaching out in this way helped me form a helpful network while enabling me to stay focused on all I had to do for my journey. Thus, relationships that emerged through my preparation formed a support system, which provided an avenue for ideas, travel tips, contacts, connections, and emotional support. There were many times when I wondered if it all would come together. As I wrestled with all that needed to be accomplished, I was able to turn to the reassuring relationships of my family and old and new friends who wanted my journey to succeed.

One way of getting ready for Vietnam was through Ramon's gracious invitation to visit him in the Philippines. We had exchanged e-mails about the possibility long before I left the states and it came to be a wonderful precursor to my experiences in Vietnam. Ramon promised me before my arrival that he would not let me get jet lag and that he would acculturate me to Southeast Asia. Several days before my departure, I received e-mail from him concerning the itinerary, which called for speaking engagements with two of his clients and a seminar at De La Salle Lipa University where he teaches. He had also planned some downtime and asked if I would prefer to experience a country fair or the island of Coreggidor. In wanting to understand more of our involvement with the Philippines during WWII, I suggested we go to Coreggidor. I wanted to see how the people of the Philippines expressed their feelings toward the United States in the aftermath of WWII and the decades that have followed. I anticipated how different that would

be in Vietnam. Once our agenda was settled, I scrambled to prepare for my presentations on readiness and change and then I was on my way.

I arrived in the Philippines after sitting in airports in Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Hong Kong and experiencing Cathay Pacific Airlines across the Pacific and to Manila. It took 32 hours. The Trans-Pacific flight was long, but the service and comforts provided by the airline staff were superior in every way. It was a hint of what I would experience throughout all of Southeast Asia. I knew that I would be busy once I arrived in Manila, as Ramon had developed a full agenda. I decided to relax and enjoy the flow of the journey even though I do not sleep well on planes, mostly from the discomfort of seats and my need to move about. On the glide path into Manila, I was intrigued by the skyline and disturbed by the scene of rows of shanties that covered the ground on our landing approach. Later in my stay, I would understand their significance. As the plane taxied toward the gate, I wondered how I would connect with Ramon.

Once in the airport terminal I started hearing my name over the paging system. There was no way to respond, but I realized it was Ramon making sure we would connect sooner rather than later. That's Ramon. This was, in retrospect, a precursor to a frenetic three days. I was impressed by the native musicians and signs announcing there was "No 'Bird Flu' in the Philippines." Ramon arranged for a person to meet me so I could easily proceed through customs. I realized this person was a customs agent when I saw her uniform. I never had my own customs agent before. Talk about being connected.

Journal Entry

When we met, Ramon took a look at me after nearly two days of being on planes and sitting in airports and asked what clothes I brought. I was traveling light and interpreted his reaction as *this will never do!* In the space of four hours prior to my first speaking engagement, we visited WWII monuments and cemeteries in Manila, squeezed in lunch, bought some shirts and shoes at a nearby department store (his gifts to me), and found a motel owned by a friend where I could take a shower and shave. I got back in his SUV (sport utility vehicle) ringing wet because

there was no time to dry and very little air-conditioning in the room. We got back on the road and made it to my first speaking engagement at D&L Industries.

We were on time for our meeting but what a ride! Streets, even in the country, are incredibly congested and nothing moves fast or with much order. Ramon's skill in driving brings new meaning to trust.

The people at D&L were warm and interested in what I had to offer. Judging from the dialogue I learned that their management is concerned with many of the same issues faced by firms in the USA; leadership, empowerment. As I think of ... the conditions at D&L, it is clear that they do not have the investment capital to improve technology and [production] processes, so their choice is to work toward the effectiveness of people in order to be competitive. This picture is reinforced through tours of the country and seeing the condition of buildings, roads, and the transportation system that relies in large measure on independent Jeepney drivers and tricycle motorbikes. The Philippines is economically constrained, but my impression of the social core is different. It is a society of strong men and women who are working hard to improve their lives.

Journal entry

After leaving D&L, we went south to De La Salle Lipa University where we received a warm reception from Corazon Abansi, Dean of the College of Business, Economics, and Accountancy & Management. After a wonderful dinner hosted by faculty members, I got my first real sleep in two and a half days. I felt relaxed, refreshed and among friends in a guest room at the university that I shared with Ramon.

The next morning, after a wonderful privately catered breakfast, we walked across the street to the building where I was to speak. I was overwhelmed by the reception we received from the students and faculty. As I climbed the stairs toward the auditorium with my student escorts and flowers around my neck, I felt a lump in my throat for how educators are revered in the Philippines and some anxiety that my delivery would meet such high expectations. The warmth that I was experiencing from the student body and faculty overshadowed my anxious feelings. I felt comfortable on the flower-laden stage looking out into the full auditorium for my presentation on Organizational Transformation and Readiness. The presentation went well and I was thankful for the interjection of Ramon's wisdom at appropriate times in a way that helped the audience

receive the message. It is an understatement to say we make a good team. That afternoon, I made a similar presentation to managers at Cindy's Bakery, a business owned by a person from China named Joe Chua.

On the way to the bakery, I got a glimpse of business and commerce in a small town outside of Manila. It happened to be where Ramon's wife, Boots, has her rice export business. The town was filled with small sidewalk shops, very modest and somewhat similar to what could be found in some of our country's larger cities. As I mingled with people, I was impressed that most are bilingual. With few exceptions, it was easy to communicate. Later that evening Ramon and I met Boots and children at a wonderful restaurant. I was eager to get there, having heard so much about Ramon's wife and beautiful children. We were quite late for dinner, yet like all Asians I was encountering, they were gracious in their warm welcome toward me. I would love to see them again, as our time was brief in this delightful evening setting. Ramon and I left, driving a distance to a small motel with the bare essentials for an evening's rest. I was pleased with the day and very comfortable in my surroundings. I was beginning to understand how people living in this country find peace and comfort in their surroundings, which are so different from the United States. It was another night of Asian comfort. I wondered as I went to sleep how I was going to handle all of the gifts that I had received. There was no way that I could take them to Vietnam.

On my third day in the Philippines we went to Coreggidor. Before we got to the ferry, we enjoyed breakfast at Jollibees, which I thought of as the McDonalds of the Philippines. I was already finding how much I appreciate the Asian diet. Everything I ate in Manila was wonderful, healthy, and nutritious, consisting mostly of rice, fish, and vegetables. There were few breads or processed foods.

There is a great deal of beauty in the Philippines that is shadowed by grayness of pollution over the city skyline and debris on Manila Bay. Parts of the city are run down and most of it needs a good power wash. While it is easy to make assumptions on these conditions, I am reminded of the conditions in some of our cities. Many cities have problems like Manila that might be associated mostly with the economic market and political structure. The question is: What can be done to help them?

On Coreggidor I saw many beautiful monuments and some of the leftover remains of great battles for the Philippines in WWII that reflected the good relationship between our countries and the mutual sacrifice of our peoples. The island was immaculate. I met a young Vietnamese man and woman on Coreggidor steered to me by Ramon. They were studying at De La Salle University where I spoke the previous day. I was touched by their friendliness and willingness to talk to me about today's Vietnam. I learned of two values taught to them by their parents who stress to people of their generation to *protect* and *develop* the native country. It was a memorable ferry ride to Manila in which I was offered connections to Vietnam and the places I would visit.

I asked Ramon when we got back to our landing if I could see something that was disturbing to me. A journal entry notes my concern about the terrible conditions in which some people live. I wrote:

The difficulties of the people in the Philippines were evident to me on the runway approach into Manila and throughout my travels in the city. From the air there are many sheet-metal, cinder-block shanties that shadow the city skyline. These shanties sit on government land, and there is no evidence of running water or sanitation. I am told that people come from the southern and northern islands for a better life and the natives complain that their government does not do enough to address the problem. Ramon thinks this is a breeding ground for terrorism.

Journal Entry

This hopeful migration for a better future and the reality of despair is a terrible social problem that requires aggressive attention by the Philippine people. Ramon's notion of how this might breed terrorism is validated by the occasional car bombing, usually without the loss of life, intended only to intimidate the government. I wondered if maybe these actions dampen the will of an already fragile government.

Ramon asked me as we toured the city if I would like to see Romy Yap, recently retired Commanding General of the Philippine Armed Forces. General Yap served beside our troops in Vietnam. His troops were garrisoned behind the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division, Air Mobile. It was a wonderful opportunity to speak to a person who served close to another good friend of mine who lost his life in one of the first battles of war.

We met Romy late in the day at his home as he was preparing to leave for evening church services that included a wedding rehearsal for one of his grandchildren. A very engaging person and history buff, Romy told of how the 1st Cavalry Division was shelled daily by North Vietnamese forces. He lost six soldiers over the time of his Army's engagement because of rocket and mortar fire that strayed off target into his garrison area. He said the Vietnamese people understood that the Philippine people needed to be there because of the U.S. role in liberating the Philippines during WWII. For that reason, and because Romy's troops were fellow Asians, the Vietnamese army had no interest in engaging his troops.

That evening, my last in the Philippines, we had dinner with Joe Chua, President of Cindy's Bakery. We talked about his success in the Philippines and how he plans to expand his business into China. We ate at a Chinese restaurant and I was treated to blackened eggs that had been fermenting in the ground for several years. I cannot say that I liked the flavor, but I did appreciate how Joe enjoyed this delicacy and for that, I happily joined in. Travel experts warn

westerners to be cautious of the foods they eat. I appreciated the advice but ate everything, knowing that food is a wonderful way to experience a culture. The next morning Ramon and I went to a Federal Express office so that I could mail my gifts home. We bid each other farewell and I flew back to Hong Kong, acculturated, confident, and prepared for Vietnam.

Vietnam

I am minutes away from boarding my plane to Ho Chi Minh City. The gate is quiet, with some people who look western and others, Asians, who might be going home. I notice a person carrying an architect's pouch who appears Western, and I am thinking of asking why she is going to Vietnam.

Now that I am in the air, my mind is wild with thoughts of my countrymen and women who might have flown this route more than thirty years ago. What were they thinking? What were they feeling? I am feeling sadness for this country that has suffered so much. I am also feeling sadness for our soldiers and thinking about the counterculture that emerged from our involvement in this land. They certainly had feelings too and should be respected for their point of view. I am wondering about passing through customs and how I would handle the language should that be a problem. It feels right to be here.

Journal Entry

From several thousand feet in the air on the approach into Tong Sun Nut Airport, one would know they are in a different part of the world. The landscape was bland in color and there were very few trees. I did not recognize that the objects moving along the road were motorbikes until I got close to the ground. There was no comparing this to anything in the states. As I waited in the terminal for my customs inspection, I learned that the person with the pouch was here to help educate children whose parents were victims of chemical defoliant—Agent Orange. She is from the UK and planned to be in Vietnam for three weeks of work and a week of holiday at the popular resort of Da Lat. I got through customs and boarded a cab to my hotel. After checking in and having dinner, I took a walk around the hotel, deciding not to risk crossing the busy streets that were congested with fast moving motorbikes. When I returned to my room, I found my backpack was missing. It contained an expensive camera and other important things that I would

need in Vietnam. I informed the hotel staff that I had probably left it in the cab. They promised that they would try to track it and, though somewhat stressed over the circumstance, I decided not to worry about the problem. I was too tired and concluded that life is difficult at times, no one is going to rescue me, and there was not much I could do about it anyway. I would just wait until morning and deal with it then.

I got up early the next morning to enjoy a wonderful breakfast of rice, vegetables, fish, and Pho, a favored Vietnamese soup. The restaurant staff reached out, making sure I was comfortable and enjoying the meal while I thought about and hoped for the retrieval of my backpack. Earlier, I had called Chris Lawson at our embassy office, made plans to meet him for dinner that evening, and told him of the problem with my backpack. He expressed pessimism for its return. At about nine, I got a call from the desk informing me that a cab driver was coming with my pack. “I was impressed and quite relieved with the retrieval. ... I was certain it was gone—so much for my ability to trust” (Journal Entry). To express my appreciation, I gave the cab driver 100,000 dong, big money for a Vietnamese person, but the equivalent of about \$16. Everything was in the pack, just as I had left it. Once again, I was experiencing the gracious behavior of Asian people. My stress was replaced by grateful, happy, and secure feelings. This was the first of many wonderful events that I would experience with the people of Vietnam.

As I relate my experiences in Vietnam to others, events separate naturally into four main contexts that include (a) my time in Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong River Delta; (b) my experience in a sleeper compartment shared Knee to Knee with three Vietnamese men on a train headed to the city of Hue, located near the coast in central Vietnam; (c) Little Bomb and his family with whom I spent three wonderful days enjoying the hospitality of their home and the city and countryside of Hue, considered by some to be the cultural center of Vietnam; and (d) my

very Soft Walk on the hallowed ground where David lost his earthly life thirty-seven years ago. As I consider all contexts of my journey, I have realized that whether on foot, train, plane, automobile, or motorbike, I walked softly, because to walk softly is to be present to appreciate the grandeur of the country, the warmth and strength of its people, and to interpret meaning from each of the contexts formed through my experiences.

Throughout my travels, I often saw the flag of Vietnam displayed on buildings and along the streets of cities. The flag has a large yellow star over a red background. The star represents each Vietnamese person. The red background is the blood spilled by Vietnamese over centuries of war. My experiences in the above contexts cause me to reflect on the flag as a symbol of unity, sacrifice, hope, and optimism. That is a shift from seeing it during the war as a symbol of communist tyranny.

The Beginning Context—Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong

In truth, I was more than relieved to have my travel pack back. After reflecting on the fact that its contents might have provided well for a family for over a year, I called Chris Lawson at our U.S. Embassy and told him what had happened. He was surprised and told me I was lucky. I believe the concierge in the hotel lobby had similar sentiments. But yet, I wondered if it really was luck. After all, I believe in the goodness of people in this world. With this event behind me, I began to plan my day.

My itinerary for these three days in the Southern part of Vietnam left me the flexibility to do what moved me. I decided to spend my first day getting acquainted with Ho Chi Minh City. I had purposely decided not to make arrangements through tourist companies in order to experience the city in more personal ways. A guide that I hired took me around to the market area, several government buildings, a furniture factory, the American War Museum, a Buddhist Temple,

and the Unification Palace. From the palace, I would find my own way back to the hotel in time to meet Chris Lawson for dinner that evening.

Anyone unaccustomed to the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Hanoi would give pause to crossing them. They are filled with motorbikes traveling at speeds that give the appearance of danger. I had to cross streets eventually and learned from natives that appearances can be deceiving. I watched as they stepped off the curb and walked slowly to the other side, aware of the traffic, but confident in the ability of drivers to steer clear of them. Once I risked this behavior it became easy. As I experienced the city, I found it busy and comfortable. People went about their business, mindful of the environment and purposeful in direction. There is certainly little infrastructure by western standards. Traffic lights usually do not work and there are few crossing signals and police officers. So people self-organize within their environment and in this way they make the city work. It was a wonderful day in which I was able to experience the city by being close to its people. Again, I found them warm and friendly and that night, Chris, his friend Kim, and I enjoyed dinner at a restaurant close to the Unification Palace.

I respect people like Chris Lawson who make a career in the Foreign Service. He and Kim, who is Chinese by nationality, appreciate the context of their environment, respect the culture in a way that enables understanding and participation, are humble in service, and wonder about the assumptions that they bring to their work. We had a wonderful conversation about the city and the Vietnamese people in general. Over the course of the evening we went from the general to the specific. Chris maintains that the government of Vietnam still relies on propaganda to some extent, pointing as evidence to materials on display at the War Museum. At the same time, he allows that everyone should form their own opinion of the message sent by displays of American atrocities during the war. I was in the museum that morning and found the presentation

balanced, realistic, and consistent with my recollection of the reporting during the War. In truth, there were atrocities and the Mi Lai massacre is an example. It is, of course, the duty of the U.S. State Department to question their authenticity, and Chris does that diplomatically. It was a quiet, peaceful evening. After dinner we walked the streets stopping for beer at sidewalk café, talked, and watched as other people enjoyed the evening.

In the morning, a driver from my hotel took me to the Mekong Delta where I arranged for a guide to take me through the region. My hope was to experience the reality of life in that part of the country. On the Mekong River, boats serve as places to live and work. Structures built of corrugated aluminum on floatation perform the same function. These structures had television antennas identifying them as homes. On average, people earn an annual income of about 8,784,000 dong—equivalent to approximately \$600 U.S. It is earned mostly through farming and fishing. The Mekong Delta is one of the most fertile deltas in world. It provides seafood of many varieties and rich farm land for the cultivation of crops.

Beside food production, there is an emerging tourist industry. I had the opportunity to visit a café where tourist goods were sold along with fine food. I had an opportunity to eat a fresh cobra live from the cage, skinned and carefully prepared. Declining the offer graciously, I opted instead for fresh fish that was delicately prepared. After seeing a Buddhist temple in the delta, I proceeded with my guide along the narrow canals that parallel the delta. My journal records my reaction to what I was experiencing in the backwater of the delta region.

I am struck by the simplicity and beauty of Vietnam and its people even though I have been here for only a short period of time. They seem so determined and so full of purpose. They are able to enjoy some of the simple things in life like a good swim and leisurely boat ride down a canal.

Later I thought that the tranquility I witnessed might be related to Buddhism, the predominant religion of the region. Buddhism's goal is enlightenment, to see beauty, and to live in a mindful

and intentional way so that good communion can be made with the environment. This picture is my National Geographic moment, capturing what I was experiencing in the Mekong Delta. The young woman's countenance expresses what I was feeling: warmth, closeness, and attachment to my surroundings. It was a Buddhist moment. That evening, as I thought of the next day, I wondered how we might create more of this in our country. The tranquil beauty of the Mekong and its people were very real to me.



There is an international zone in southern part of Ho Chi Minh City that looks Western, like parts of Tampa, Florida. It has been built largely using investments from other countries. There are automobiles, a few motorbikes, high-rise condominiums, and places to eat that serve Western-style food. Australians, Germans, Japanese, Americans, and Canadians live there. I met Chris and Charlie Buck, both Canadians, through a student at Wilmington College. They are in Vietnam to provide medical care to the Vietnamese people. Their hospital caters to the higher end of society. Chris's responsibility is bioengineering, which means that he maintains technology and the building structure. He and his wife Charlie found opportunity in Vietnam when none was in Canada. Charlie works with Chris, an unpaid volunteer. They are delightful and engaging people who feel isolated in this part of the city. It is difficult for them to enjoy the surroundings because of the limited transit system and language barrier. Visiting Chris and Charlie gave me a sense of the limitations on foreigners who are accustomed to the accoutrements of a more economically

advanced society. Because they feel socially isolated, they would welcome the opportunity to work in the West. I can understand their sentiments. After bidding farewell, I relaxed in the city, visited some Western-style stores that are near the Rex Hotel, and looked forward to another evening with my friends from the U.S. State Department.

During dinner at a Chinese restaurant, I related my experience with Chris and Charlie and my previous day in the Mekong. Throughout the evening, I got more of an appreciation for the way Foreign Service people operate. I am genuinely impressed with the way they give and in the way they represent our government to the Vietnamese people. I thought of how I might enjoy such a role and mentally counted my assets for that kind of work. After dinner, we stopped for a drink at a sidewalk café very close to the famous Rex Hotel where foreign correspondents reported on the war. As we enjoyed the evening, and each other's company, a souped-up motorbike crashed into an old man riding a three-wheel bicycle. The driver of the motorbike was thrown over the handlebars, landing on his back; he was obviously hurt badly. The old man had fallen to the ground and was able to walk away, leaving his wrecked bicycle and probably his livelihood in ruins. After some time had passed a police officer came over and hailed a cab. Several men picked up the injured biker, placed him in the cab, and off it went, presumably to a hospital. No first aid was administered to either man. People went back to their evening activity.

I wondered with such treatment if the man would ever walk again, and as I thought of the incident two things came to mind. I wondered if anyone really cared about the injured men. I rejected that proposition because the crowd was surely engaged in the incident even though no one was offering assistance. I thought how that might happen in our country and concluded that not much else could be expected when infrastructure is so lacking. In the West, such incidents

might not attract anyone's attention or people might move on for fear of becoming involved. As I thought of city life, I concluded that this was another example of how society self-organizes. The three of us ended our evening hoping that our paths might cross again. I caught a cab to my hotel and went from there to the station to catch my train to Hue. It was close to 11 p.m. when I got on board.

A Knee-to-Knee Experience

The car that the conductor pointed me to was a sleeper. I did not know that from the ticket because I could not read it. I walked up the narrow corridor peering into the compartments wondering if I was assigned to a particular one. I decided to take my chances and selected a compartment that looked like all the rest. Sitting down on the lower bunk next to the window, I decided to write in my journal. My comments reflect my reaction to the quarters I had selected.

I am on the way by train to Hue. Here I am in this small compartment wondering if I am in the right place. My compartment has four bunks, and I hate to think of what it will smell like by morning if there are more occupants. We are not scheduled to get in until 5:00 tomorrow, so this trip will be long. ...

No sooner had I written these words than three men joined me. We greeted each other in a friendly way, as each of them looked at their ticket. Before long they summoned a conductor. As they spoke with the conductor it became obvious that they were speaking of me. I thought there must be some kind of problem because people do not speak in such excited tones unless there is one. The conductor left and returned a few minutes later. The conversation resumed and I observed all four nodding in agreement. Each of the men then selected a bunk, climbed in it and after a few minutes, the train started to move.

After some minutes had passed, one of the men spoke to me in halting English as I thought how lucky I was to be able to communicate. It was a level of conversation that we had to work at, relying not only on the use of a few words but body language as well. Over the next

hour we got know each other and I perceived them as being partners of some kind who were in Ho Chi Minh City to conduct business. My perception was telling me that they were gentlemen. We instinctively knew when it was time to turn out the lights out and get into our bunks for the ride through the night.

The train was worn from years of service but clean. It makes round trips from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi over a span of two days. There are no lines running east to west. At daybreak I realized I would not have my hoped-for view because the window in our compartment was clouded from its exposure to the elements. At about seven thirty, attendants brought a meal of rice soup and noodles, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The soup was fresh and softened the dry noodles. We ate and one of the men offered me an additional serving of soup, which I eagerly accepted. As the four of us sat knee to knee in our compartment following the meal, we opened conversation. I learned the person who could speak English was Tuong. The other men were Ntram and Cuong and we all stuck up a conversation. After some time had passed:

Tuong wanted to know why I was traveling alone, and when I shared my story, he wanted to know more. I gave him a Department of Defense write-up that I received concerning David's death near An Khe. He read it very carefully and was silent for a long time. When he was done, he looked at me and said in a quiet voice, "I understand." My emotions connected with the compassion he expressed for our family. I will always remember and cherish how he reached out to me.

Journal Entry

The train made its first stop at 9:30. I had no idea where we were. I had been told that these stops are usually an event for the town because merchants line the station to sell their goods. One of the men from our compartment got off the train and returned about 15 minutes later with a large plastic grocery sack that he hung off his bunk. I did not get off because I wanted to be certain I would not be left behind. I was curious as to the contents of the sack but did not ask so as not to be presumptuous. We traveled on taking a nap to pass time. I strained to see out the window

and regretted it was so dirty because I wanted to see the countryside. Soon it was time for the noon meal. There is something wonderful about eating a meal among strangers because food can facilitate sharing, appreciation, and friendship. The noon meal of rice, noodles, beef, and vegetables, served again by the train staff, was substantial, well prepared, and tasty. As we settled in, my friend grabbed for the bag that he had brought aboard. I was so surprised to see that it was a fully cooked whole chicken cut into its parts. I was offered some of the meat, which I accepted with enthusiasm. We all laughed as we ate and gestured to each other over the good taste of sweet chicken. Truthfully, the chicken was *very, very* good, but it was as tough as the heavy rubber bands that hold the claws of lobsters together. I had a second piece of chicken and thought:



Here I am in the middle of Vietnam with three guys who do not know my language, nor I theirs, and we are able to enjoy a meal together. I am having fun! Tuong joked that we were eating “40-year-old chicken.” This seems unreal.

After enjoying our meal together, I wanted to reciprocate and at a train stop close to Da Nang I found some nice peanut candy. I could not understand how much to pay for the candy and I felt totally awkward when a young Vietnamese lady said to me in perfect English, “Can I help you with the Dong?” I gave her my wallet and she paid the vendor. I asked where she learned English and in the conversation I learned that she was from Hanoi, on vacation with her family, and that she was a student at a university in Ohio studying international relations. Her graciousness and that of my compartment friends is what I am experiencing in this country. It is awesome. I am beginning to wonder how I am going to handle my farewells. I do not like to say goodbye. This is where the world gets big again and I would like to keep it small. Simple acts of kindness and smiles have such incredible power.

Journal Entry



My new friend's American name is Caroline and as the train rolled on, I learned that my ticket called for me to share a compartment with her mother and sister, thus providing a reason for conversation upon boarding the train. It was a pleasure meeting them and through Caroline's translation, I was able to express my appreciation to everyone of my new friends. I thought of the significance of this meeting and recalling my two young Vietnamese friends on Coreggidor, I appreciated how Vietnam is reaching out to the world through its youth. We talked for a long time in the hallway of the train with a window open wide so we could see the lush green mountains that bordered the coast of the South China Sea. As the train reached my destination, we exchanged e-mail addresses. Caroline and I remain in contact and I hope some day to see her as a college graduate.

Little Bomb and Family



People like me who are engaged in organizational development work are fond of saying “trust the process” and by this time in Vietnam, I was very comfortable with my process, my surroundings, and the people that enveloped it. Good process is very human, and my process had connected with the people I experienced. It was spontaneous, fluid, patient, and genuine. In Hue, I was to meet a family with whom I would stay over the weekend. They do not speak English. The concierge at my hotel in Ho Chi Minh City had called to tell them I was coming. And, I was sure there had been conversations by phone with Hoa and Ray Hubbard from my hometown of Dover. The train ride was longer than anticipated and I left it feeling fulfilled from being with friends. I followed the crowd trusting that I would find my family. When I got the parking lot that was filled with motorbikes, I saw a large sign held overhead by a man and woman that read, JOSEPH C HOLLER and I knew it was them. We were all smiles and I delighted in meeting my hosts, Tran Thi Lé (known as Lé) and Phu, and three of their children. As we exchanged our greetings my thoughts went back to Dover, Delaware and Hoa and Ray who made this possible.

Phu grabbed my bag and placed it over the fuel tank of his bike. He pointed to the back end of the bike’s seat and I got on for the ride to their home. The wind felt good as we rode, and I quickly became very comfortable riding with Phu. He knew what he was doing and had clearly mastered the skillful art of biking. When we arrived, I met Phu and Lé’s oldest son, who had arranged for a friend to be our interpreter. The Vietnamese people know the importance of speaking an international language, and consequently, many young people are learning English. It was explained that I would be staying at a hotel within two minutes of their home because there was no room or hot water for me. Everyone escorted me to the hotel, and I noticed that Bomb (also called Khnah), their 8-year-old son, was especially attentive to me. When I was first introduced to Bomb at the train station, I turned to Le’ and in a questioning tone, asked, “Bomb?”

She looked at me and raised her arms to the sky to drop them in unison as she loudly said with a wide smile, “*American Bomb*” (the emphasis is appropriately added). It was good natured and humorous and it made our first encounter very human. How time heals, I thought, as we sped away from the station.

After checking in, I enjoyed Pho prepared by Lé at her sidewalk restaurant. During the day the restaurant is wheeled from their home, set up on the sidewalk, and taken down when business closes in the evening. Their business is somewhat comparable to the mobile hot dog stands with the big umbrella that one sees on the streets of our cities, except that Lé provides tables, small plastic chairs, and cold drinks. Beer is served iced down—a preferred practice in Vietnam. From that first evening, I knew that I was among friends and that this was going to be a wonderful weekend.

The next morning at about seven, I heard a very faint knock at my door. Hearing it again I decided to see who was there. When I opened the door, there was Bomb to welcome me into the new day. He did this every day and as I saw his youthful enthusiasm and the love of family around him, I again saw the consistency among young people and the desire of their families to see them grow into productive adulthood. Their daughters Meme (Hoang–Oanh), and Lele (Hoang–Anh) are delightful. Thang, their oldest son, is studying at a government university near Da Nang with hopes and dreams for the future. Whenever I spoke in the presence of Thang, I observed him listening intently. I learned when I got home that he understands English, but cannot get out his first word. I would have encouraged him had I known that.

During my days in Hue, we enjoyed the culture of the Ancient City, which has been rebuilt after its destruction during the war; saw farmers in the country carrying fully grown pigs to market on the back end of motorbikes; and enjoyed a day at a water park near a volcano that fed

hot water to pools from its springs. It was a joy to be around my new family doing simple things like sliding down a water slide with Bomb and joining a group of young partiers who were celebrating a birthday. Recognizing me as American, I was invited to join them only if I agreed to sing happy birthday. When I complied, they all joined me and did it in perfect English. Up to that point all I had heard was Vietnamese. It was relaxing just to be enjoying each other's company.

As I reflect on my time in Hue, I understand why it might be considered the cultural center of Vietnam. It has the Ancient City, Buddhist monasteries, karate schools, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, temples, a warm countryside, and the beautiful tranquil Perfume River. It is a lot while at the same time little, by Western standards. The environment should not be judged by any other standards than Vietnamese. The picture below shows how people like Phu and Le's family can enjoy life while having what might be considered little. At this point, I feel I know better. Their home is concrete with a corrugated tin roof. A single light bulb, the size we put on Christmas trees, lights their kitchen. They have Buddhas in their courtyard where they park motorbikes, store the restaurant, keep the animals, and crack ice for beer when their friends come around. I am reinforcing my belief that people of the world are good and that we can learn a lot from those whose culture and traditions are different from our own, particularly when we are willing to suspend our assumptions and honor their surroundings. We are then open to learn.



I write these words with no illusions that Phu and Lé would like more for their family. I believe we all want the best for our children and we desire lives for them that are better than ours. But, the serenity I see here was in the Mekong and on the train. It is a connection of a high order; happiness and peace suspended by human spirit rather than material possessions.

My hope is that someday Phu, Lé, and family can come to the United States. Visitation visas are difficult to obtain, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. I hope to help Ray and Hoa secure a visa for Lé'. Once she has a visa, others family members are likely to follow.

I told Bomb on the morning I was leaving that I will see him again, and I do hope that becomes a reality. I envision a wonderful future for young people like Bomb. Vietnam's educational infrastructure is limited. College's like mine could make a significant difference by establishing some kind of exchange so that people from each country could learn from each other. Maybe Bomb and his siblings could be participants. It would be good for the United States and good for Vietnam.

Walking Softly, Very Softly

Chinh met me at the hotel where I was staying in Hue to take me South to Qui Nhon. He is an experienced guide who has helped many people find places of meaning in Vietnam; places where people had died, where battles were fought, and where those missing in action might be found. After saying goodbyes to Lé, Phu, and Bomb, I got in the car with Chinh and our driver, choosing to sit in the front seat where I would have the vantage point of a better view for our drive south. The seat would also make it more possible for me to experience them more fully, as their backs would not be to me. It took a day to reach Qui Nhon and as we left Hue, I explained to Chinh the importance of this leg of my journey. Now it was time to reach the place where David had lost his earthly life. We immediately understood each other, and whatever anxieties I had over

the success of this part of my trip were fully eased. Chinh was a wonderful guide and a kind, sensitive, gentle human being. Our licensed driver, whom Chinh knew well, was professional. He got us safely to our destinations over Highway 1 that runs along the coast. It is mostly well paved and very congested. He was on the horn constantly to avoid motor bikers, trucks, cycles, and pedestrians. There was commerce, rich farming, or beautiful vistas over every mile of road.

On the way we stopped at many places of interest. When we reached Da Nang, we passed by the American Marine garrison. All that remained were a few Quonset huts behind a chain-link fence. Though there was little to see, my mind imagined images of those who served within the fences.

At dusk, we arrived at the Life Resort Hotel where I was staying. It was by far the most luxurious accommodation of my travels. The hotel was situated on the South China Sea with a small fishing village off to my left as I faced the water. Under the moon light the beach sand was golden in color. It was built by Australians and is now run by Germans. Vietnamese provide all of the services, which are exquisite in every respect. My room was comfortable with all the trappings of a fine hotel. The lobby of the hotel and its restaurant let in the breeze from the sea. It was very peaceful, and as I walked the beach that evening feeling the soft sand under my feet, I had the kind of quiet I needed for contemplating events of the next day.

Chinh and I decided to meet early the following morning to review maps and make final plans for the day. As we sat in the hotel lobby over a cup of coffee, I took in every detail of the route we were to follow. As we got in the car to begin our ride North to Qui Nohn and West toward Pleiku, my mind was filled with images of David's convoy leaving this area to go West on dirt roads over mountains and through valleys and passes. I was totally absorbed as the images kept coming. I am sure Chinh and our driver noticed what I was experiencing. This is something I

I had imagined for some time and now that I was here, I was filled with deep emotional feeling as I anticipated the events of the day. As we traveled, Chinh pointed out landmarks. Our westerly road had much more open country and the mountains were absolutely beautiful. Remarkably, the road was in very good condition with wide shoulders over the mountains. I was pleased to see the development for I expected something much more rugged. I appreciated nature's distinctive architecture as we passed over mountains and looked down into valleys. In this peaceful setting, I imagined war's bitterness as I thought of warplanes overhead dropping bombs on enemy positions. We eventually passed the road sign for the An Khe Pass. As planned, we continued toward the Miang Giang Pass as the site we were looking for would be somewhere between. As we rode, I looked at the mountains and wondered about the events that happened in this area so long ago. We stopped in a small town that had an impressive monument to a Vietnamese victory to a battle with the French in 1954. I interpreted its meaning to my journey as indicating we were in an area that had strategic significance during the American war. In reaching the Miang Giang marker, we turned east to find the approximate site of the ambush.

Chinh understood that finding the right spot of the ambush was not as important to me as just being there. He respected my emotions and appreciated my needs. I appreciated that what I was experiencing was emotional for us all. I selected a place that seemed about right given the help of our maps and my own recollection of tactics from my infantry training. When we got to a place that seemed about right, I quietly said so to Chinh. He nodded his agreement as we surveyed the site.

It is difficult to find the words to describe my feelings. I felt such sadness for a friend and for a life that could have been. There was no anger toward those that fired the mortal round, or for those who might have saved him. That is the last thing David would want. It is the last thing I

would want. There was just sadness over the loss and for families that experience losses of this do it with the help of my Vietnamese friends. These kinds of feelings can be overwhelming and indeed they were as I placed a small wooden plaque on the ground to honor our service men and women and the Vietnamese people and to tell them that they will never be forgotten. Later that evening, back at the hotel, I went to the beach to reflect on the day and write in my journal.

An Khe and Miang Giang Passes

As this day closes, I am sitting on a beach overlooking a quiet lagoon on the South China Sea. I can reach up and touch the sky, feel the warmth of the golden sand, and enjoy the blue water, which is very calm. It is a perfect setting to reflect on the day and wonder about its meaning.

My guide Chinh, driver Tong, and I left the hotel this morning around 10 to travel to the ambush site where David died during the Tet Offensive in January of '68. Before leaving we went over maps and laid out a route. As final preparations were made, I reflected on how much I had looked forward to this day; thinking of it as a way of remembering David while finding a deeper understanding of the sacrifices Americans made while fighting what many of us believed to be a just cause. I thought too of the Vietnamese and my new friends back home who had lost a son to a grenade well after the war had ended. The enormity of loss on both sides is something that cannot be calculated.

As we left Quin Yon this morning, I thought of the years of expectation for this day and how much it meant to me to do a remembrance that honors people who served their country alongside my friend and brother David. I thought too of David's letters that he sent home. I cannot recall one unkind word said about the Vietnamese people. He was the kind of person who honored and respected all.

From the moment we left, I had images of the convoy heading toward Pleiku toward the Cambodian border over the mountains. As we traveled, I was impressed by the condition of today's roads, which were well paved in blacktop and fairly wide. Highway 19, which headed west, had less commerce than Highway 1. The towns were neat and spread apart. Many were nestled in the mountains.

As we continued our journey, we rode by the An Khe Pass. Our plan was to go on to the Miang Giang Pass as we knew the site of the ambush was between the two and close to a mountain ridge where the road curved. We came to a beautiful war memorial that was close to the site. Chin said it was erected in commemoration of battles fought against the French in 1954. This was a sign of the strategic importance that the North Vietnamese army placed on the area.

Knowing the precise location of the Tet ambush was not important. My intention was to select a site that was about right according to how I could interpret the record. I selected a site that seemed reasonable, recalling my own tactical training. I decided to lay our family memento beside a brook that went under the road. I was a quiet place and I liked the wild flowers that were around the site. I thought of how these acts are done to bring some kind of closure so that new meaning can be added to the tapestry of life. After

placing the memento I told Chinh and Tong that I needed to take a walk. I did it, shedding many tears along the way and started back when I thought my emotions had settled. I don't know how long I was gone, and while I walked, slowly and quietly, I felt my feet gently touching the ground as I walked softly along the road. My mind was busy with thoughts of the price of this war and the many people I knew who served in Vietnam. When I got back to Chinh and Tong, the three of us had moments of silence for this part of Vietnamese and American history. We did not ask for silence. It was there in the moment. I shed some more tears as we drove from the site, and I was thankful they were with me. The site of the ambush is quiet today, quite rural, and settled by Vietnamese and some fringes of Monteyard tribesmen who were sympathetic to Americans but later supported the NVA. It is an area of mixed blood.

As I think of the significance of this event in my life, I recall how David gave to others throughout his life. He had a will to give, which came from his family and from his heart. There are many Davids on both sides of the conflict because that is human nature. He would never want to be singled out for his actions—he simply did what he thought was right and what he thought was his duty. And that is why he and others will be remembered.

I understand more for having been on sacred ground and some of what I understand is felt simply in my heart. I believe there is a universal need to reach out to others and that can be done if we do not get seduced by the need for war or the complexities of our time. It is easy to say that if we had only understood more about Vietnam, we might have been there for a peaceful purpose. We thought we were. It is a hard lesson, but one that needs to be learned and remembered. How easy it is to show our human fallibility. I believe we should not have been in Vietnam for the purpose defined by our government. We did not know nor did we seek to understand. Assumptions have such power and they can be so misleading.

I appreciate the desire and the will of the people of today's Vietnam to move forward. We too should move forward while putting the past prospectively behind. There is so much that we can learn from each other. The U.S. legacy in the 30-year aftermath of the war is that we can reach out to each other. It is a fitting legacy that can be left to those on both sides of the conflict and to the generations that are to come. We can give thanks to those who were there, American and Vietnamese, for sharpening our wits. It is a way of honoring and remembering.



Events are revealed through experiences like mine that show how connected we really are. There is a story within each person who experienced the war and these stories account for collective memory. One story was revealed in a picture in the Viet Kieu restaurant in Dover, where I became friends with the Hubbards. It is a picture of Hoa's son, Chu, killed in 1989 by a grenade that was left over from the war. He was 18 years old. The picture rests in a place of honor surrounded by art work of Vietnam. Its significance is known mostly to people like me and Ellen who know the story, understand the loss, and can grieve with them because we are friends. I honor Hoa's son who must have been a lot like Bomb, Meme, Lele, and the friends that I made in Vietnam. Lives that are given in the manner that I have described can teach us so much by helping us make sense where sense is needed. There is now a beautiful memorial in Hue that was built by Phu, Lé, and family to the honor and memory of Hoa's son.



Lasting Impressions, Learning, and Transformation

There are two questions most frequently asked of my travels. Vietnamese people wanted to know why I was traveling alone. Americans wondered if I felt safe. When first asked why I was traveling alone, my answer was awkward. Until then I had not given it much thought, but the discomfort of the question made me wonder. I concluded that I had never been alone and my feelings on this were part of my transformation. I began speaking of David in the present tense—

that he is rather than was. I was strengthened as I thought of him by my side. He made my walk softer. Surely, we walked with Ellen, our family, and our friends. I can say with certainty that we walked with the people of Vietnam. They made it so easy for us to be there.

My answer to Americans is that I felt safe and I felt welcome. There was never a word or expression of anger over the war. Moreover, people were grateful for the progress our countries have made. President Clinton's visit to Vietnam in 2000 was appreciated. People are looking forward to President Bush's visit in the summer of 2006. The United States is now Vietnam's largest trading partner and its government is looking forward to becoming a member of the World Trade Organization. This is an opportunity to extend bridges across this new reality by opening a new chapter in American and Vietnamese history.

A psychological presence between the Vietnamese people and me helped bridge language and cultural differences. It was easy to understand and to be understood. Someone was usually nearby who could speak English, but even when that was not the case, people made themselves present. A person would stop by my table when I was eating alone. With simple gestures and smiles, they sat down offering friendship through simple familiar words. The connections were authentic, deep, and genuine.

Our country went to war in Vietnam to stop the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia. The Domino Theory justified our interventions. It was an easily understood tool of diplomacy that was also used during Reagan's presidency to fight the Contras in Central America. Today, Cambodia is democratic and Vietnam has free markets and private ownership of land. Lé and Phu's home in Hue is mortgage free. They own it free and clear. I think these developments in the aftermath of the war demonstrate how human spirit can guide people in determining their own best interests. Were he alive today, Ho Chi Minh would probably support these reforms while

working to provide better educational opportunities so the people of Vietnam could participate effectively in the world community.

The cities of Vietnam were alive with commerce and creativity. Markets were robust and the movement of the populace was constant in this mostly motorbike society. Vietnamese art is an extraordinary expression of culture. As I looked about the cities and observed the activity, I noticed that most traffic lights did not work, just an occasional police officer, women using handmade brooms to sweep the streets, and building practices that would have been totally unacceptable in more-developed countries. Missing were things like fire companies and ambulance services. Surely some mechanisms are in place and perhaps they work fine. It is such a contrast compared to the more-developed countries. This seemed to indicate a lack of service and infrastructure, but I am careful with the assumption. The city streets seem chaotic, and indeed my first experience in crossing them made me wonder how safe I would be. But, I learned how to cope with the chaos and eventually felt quite comfortable navigating my way through it. I became part of the creative organization that works well in Vietnam. Like the ability of people to be fully present, people have the remarkable capacity to organize within the context of their environment.

Enjoying simple pleasures is another wonderful way of the Vietnamese people. When I compare this aspect of the Vietnamese culture to our society, I find I could argue that they perhaps know better than we how to be. Their lifestyle is simple compared to ours. Seeing how people in Vietnam can enjoy one another makes me want to slow down. The evidence of simple pleasures takes me to the roadside where farmers are happily bringing in a crop of rice; laughing, eating, and relaxing as they let it dry on the side of the road. At roadside cafés, bikers sit together to enjoy tea with each other before resuming their journey. Lé and Phu enjoyed the simple pleasures of their home. In our country, we read books on how to be organized, how to find a path, while attendance

at churches declines because people need Sundays to rest or to prepare for their next stressful week. Hoa and Ray Hubbard are planning to return to Vietnam and live in retirement. Hoa says, “Life is simpler over there.”

Education is important to the Vietnamese people as elders teach the younger generations to protect and develop the country. Protecting and developing are not mutually exclusive values because protection requires more than an armed force. Knowledge and skill will become increasingly important to compete with the emerging economic capability of China, India, and other neighboring countries. I think Vietnam is disadvantaged in the world community, as more attention is given to China and India. Where the playing field is uneven, resources will be deployed mostly to these more-developed nations. However, Vietnam is making tremendous strides. For my part, I would like see colleges like mine explore the possibility of providing educational opportunities for the people of Vietnam. China and India are seductive, but countries like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines are markets of opportunity. Much can be gained by reaching out to these countries.

I was curious in my travels to understand how people view their government. My impression is that their feelings are mostly positive. My evidence is anecdotal, and I am left with the impression that if a Gallup poll were taken, the results would look somewhat like the split between Republicans and Democrats. I met a Vietnamese tour guide who made it a point to talk to me for the purpose of complaining about his government. According to him, he was denied a teaching job because of the number of children in his family. I asked my guide Chinh about the circumstances of this man and he defended the system, noting that this man probably was not performing to expectation. Chinh gave a perfectly plausible explanation and the conversation ended with a discussion of their representative system of government. This system provides for

elections, meaning that people can run for some offices in provinces throughout Vietnam. I do not know if this is an accurate representation of reality, but coupled with private property and free markets, this communism has a democratic face.

There is a remarkable consistency across Vietnam and it is wonderful. What I mean by consistency is the way in which people speak of their values and what is important to the future of their country. I have also heard how people are reaching back to recapture a culture that suffered through the war. I am told that ancient traditions like burials are reemerging and that traditional funeral processions can again be seen across the countryside.

On the less positive side, the need for infrastructure is apparent everywhere. Fires burn in the mountains because there is no way to put them out, and some of the needs within the cities have been pointed out. People told me to expect Hanoi to be very different from Ho Chi Minh City and I did see similarities as well as differences. Both cities seem equally engaged in an economic and social sense. The big difference was in the architecture of Hanoi, which had considerable more French influence. The other big difference was language, which was not that apparent to me because I do not know how to speak in Vietnamese. My Vietnamese friends made this point. The language relies heavily on intonation for meaning. A person from Hue can expect to have difficulty with language when visiting Hanoi. I was in Hanoi toward the end of my journey. I felt comfortable roaming the streets, watching people play on game boards, visiting Ho Chi Minh's tomb, and buying luggage to bring home some things that I had accumulated.

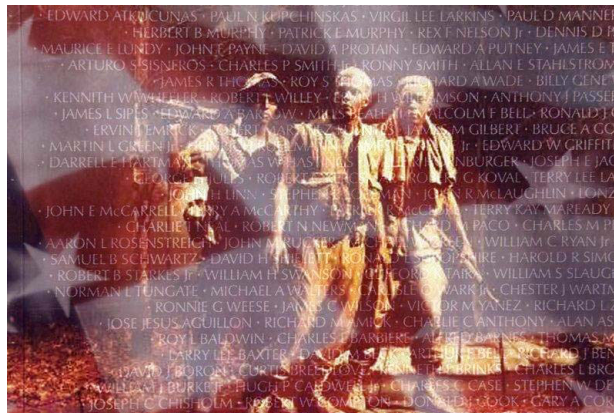
These are my final thoughts as I bring closure to this wonderful experience and prepare to open a new chapter. I have wondered what it was about me and what it was about the Vietnamese people that made my experience so transformational. I went there with a purpose, not fully knowing what to expect but being clear on my goals and worldview. I learned through the

experience the enormous power of a worldview when it is real, authentic, and enacted with an open heart. Believing it, let me just be me. I left the country the way I came, with an optimistic and hopeful view and a deeper appreciation of the contexts of Vietnam. I got close to the people, and I believe they got close to me. It was an honor to be with them.

The people of Vietnam reached out to me. They offered themselves with kindness and extended the hand of friendship. Their trust got us well beyond the boundaries of curiosity. We were on equal terms as human beings. Their generosity, warmth, and sensitivity reinforced my assumption that the world is good because its people are good.

While in the country, I often thought of the war, but I did not chose to visit battle zones, tunnels, and parallels except for the War Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. I wanted to experience as much of the country as I could without the filters of the past, and I thought that to honor the Vietnamese people, I needed to be with them, experiencing a part of their lives. I believe I came away with a clear sense of life in today's Vietnam and by honoring, I feel I was honored.

Many people have either seen the picture of the Vietnam War memorial in Washington, D.C. or have visited the Wall. There are more than 58,000 names inscribed there, each a person, and each a hero. I honor all of them and others who experienced or are experiencing some aspect of that period in our history. We all have stories to share.



Whenever I went to Washington, I visited the Wall and looked for names, reflected, wondered about the other visitors, and sorted through my feelings. I walked softly away, deep in thought and feeling. Seeing the names and staring into the dark granite is always heavy and always very sad. I will go to the Wall again. And, I will walk softly, just like I did in Vietnam, remembering, wondering, and honoring. I know that my experience will be different because I can now look over the Wall and see the bright light of possibility in a future that can be beautiful. It is a way of continuing to honor the sacrifices of David and others who served, Hoa's son Chu, and the people of Vietnam. There is a lot of reason for optimism and hope for the young Bomb's of the world.

An Afterword

Vietnam and the opportunities that I have had to visit Mexico, Costa Rica, the Philippines, and Canada throughout the course of my studies at Pepperdine University have opened doors to possibilities for further engagement across the globe. It is because of what I bring back from these experiences that my college has asked me to develop an international elective that would be open to graduate students. This course, currently under development within the Business Division, is envisioned as an overseas or foreign learning experience and as a joint venture or exchange with an institution in another country. Certainly, South East Asia is one of the possibilities for creating a meaningful global experience for our students and faculty.

One unique aspect of the Vietnam experience is that soldiers, for the first time, and I hope for the only time in our nation's history, became the focus of much of the criticism for our government's action. I realize through my experience as a Vietnam Era Veteran and from my direct experience in Vietnam how inextricably connected I am to veterans in general and of that era in particular. This personal connection is taking me into my dissertation. More broadly, I

sincerely believe that there are lessons to be learned from the way our generation was so deeply affected by the war and how we coped in its aftermath. I believe these lessons might be applied in veterans' groups and in leadership venues. We should continue to learn how they and others who experienced this period of history dealt with the circumstance. Those lessons could be useful in the future. My experience in Vietnam has given me a unique perspective that helps me to understand the context in ways that heretofore would not have been possible.

I hope to have the opportunity to travel to Vietnam again and I want that to happen with others. These could be people with knowledge to share that would continue to bring our countries together and people who might want the opportunity to bring closure to their own previous experiences.

Toward the beginning of this report I mentioned that I had read several books that helped me to become more fully connected to the Vietnam experience. I am presenting these as an annotated bibliography along with several other sources that have been particularly helpful to me. This plus the detail of my travels (Appendix A) and my letter of sponsorship (Appendix B) for the travel visa for Hoa Hubbard's sister, Lé, brings this report to its conclusion. I am very happy that this chapter is ending and a new one is beginning.

Annotated References

Colet, J. (2004). *Vietnam* (4th ed.). Bath, United Kingdom: Footprint Books.

There are many good books available to help one travel to another country. I used Footprint Vietnam as I prepared for my journey and carried it with me through the entire trip. For each city or region, it gave me a good overview of the local area that included areas of interest, ethnic groups, food, architecture, and language. The book presented an excellent overview of local and national history, which helped me to understand what I might look for and experience in a particular area.

Fitzgerald, F. (2002). *Fire in the lake: The Vietnamese and Americans in Vietnam*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

This book does exceptional justice to putting into context the American involvement in Vietnam. The history is treated in depth and is penetrating in its description of the dynamics of the war from all sides. One gets a strong sense of the culture of Vietnam from Fitzgerald's treatment of the political environment, the role of Buddhists during the war, the guerrillas and how they won the trust of villagers throughout the country. Particularly compelling is the author's description of the roles played by American commanders and politicians. The book sends a powerful message of the sophistication of the Vietnamese society and the real aims of Vietnam's leader, Ho Chi Minh, that were not clearly evident to Americans who thought they were there to help the country from coming under communist domination.

McNamara, R. S. (1995). *In retrospect: The tragedy and lessons of Vietnam*. New York: Times Books.

Robert McNamara wrote this book in order that future generations of Americans might understand the lessons of Vietnam and how it went wrong. The book describes the deep division among leaders on the basis for and conduct of the war. Most telling is the extraordinary leadership vacuum and total lack of synergy among American policy makers. Some people have told me that the book was written as cover for McNamara who served as Secretary of Defense during the buildup to war. I thought the narrative was a fair portrayal of the reality he saw in the closing years and aftermath of the war. Time has given his work credence. McNamara has the unique vantage point of his participation in history that he describes in a fair, balanced, and forthright manner.

Morris, E. (Writer) (2004). "The fog of war" with Robert S. McNamara. USA: Sony Pictures.

This film is a spellbinding account of how the United States has dealt with wars from the Cuban missile crisis to the effects of the Vietnam. Like McNamara's book, *In Retrospect: The tragedy and lesson of Vietnam*, it shows how war is so illusive and how there are usually 10 reasons not to go headlong into it.

Peck, M. S. (1993). *The road less traveled: The unending journey toward spiritual growth*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

I referenced Scott Peck in my worldview statement that appears on page 11 of this report. Peck's book made an impression on me when I read it many years ago. He helped me clearly understand the difference between good and evil and how these opposite forces manifest in this world. Moreover, he helped me begin to see how I might be an instrument for good through his inspirational works.

Rinpoche, S. (2002). *The Tibetan book of living and dying*. San Francisco: Harper.

Rinpoche is a master of Eastern philosophy and Buddhist wisdom. He shares how his masters have helped him understand and develop the tools for living a rich and full life as preparation for the inescapable reality of death. The book provides an understanding of culture unfamiliar to many Westerners while offering practices to enrich every living day through spiritual patience, cleansing, and meditation. This book helped me to appreciate the many expressions of Buddhism that I saw throughout Vietnam. The understanding of Buddhism gave me the ability to understand why so much of the culture seems to be at peace with itself.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

I needed a way of making sense of my Vietnam experience and Karl Weick's work helped to provide it. Weick helps to make sense out of the inherent complexities and ambiguity of situations even when they go back decades. My sense-making process provided some structure for the reality I was experiencing in Vietnam in relation to my history. Having a process for sense making that I could easily keep in mind helped me to organize my thoughts and keep my mind focused when it was needed.

Zander, R., S., & Zander, B. (2000). *The art of possibility: Transforming professional and personal life*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Written for approaching life in a way that truly makes a half empty glass full, Zander and Zander's book is full of ways to create possibility, heal relationships, and accept responsibility. It is a joyful journey with lots of testimony and a book that cannot be put down. The Zanders inspire my belief that the human spirit is, fundamentally, an expression of what is or can be good. Their work gives ways to enact a positive, hopeful, and optimistic view of the planet.

Appendix A

Travel Detail Itinerary and Contacts
Philippines and Vietnam 07/27/05 – 08/13/05

| Date | Activity – Arranged by Me |
|----------|---|
| 07/27/05 | 10:30 a.m.—Leave Baltimore on America West Flt 196 with connection in Phoenix on FLT 29 (VCCG41) arriving LA at 2:40 p.m. |
| 07/28/05 | 01:55 a.m.—Leave Los Angeles on Cathay Pacific Flt 881M arriving Hong Kong at 07:40 a.m. |
| 07/29/05 | 09:10 a.m.—Leave Hong Kong on Cathay Pacific Flt 901M arriving Manila at 11:10 a.m. |
| 07/29/05 | Philippines—Ramon and Family |
| 07/30/05 | Philippines—Ramon and Family |
| 07/31/05 | Philippines—Ramon and Family |
| 08/01/05 | 03:50 p.m.—leave Manila on NG Neptune Flt 595Y arriving Ho Chi Minh City at 05:20 p.m. |
| 08/01/05 | Equatorial Hotel—Ho Chi Minh City Get acquainted with city and hotel |
| 08/02/05 | Equatorial Hotel—Ho Chi Minh City Cholon market place—“Big Market” and war remnants museum—Reunification Palace—Dinner with Chris Lawson—U.S. State Department |
| 08/03/05 | Equatorial Hotel—Ho Chi Minh City—Mekong River trip |
| 08/04/05 | Meet with Chris and Charlie Buck; C/O Biomedical Department; Franco—Vietnamese Hospital; District 7; Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 84-8-411-3379— Leave Ho Chi Minh City by train to Hue in evening—before leaving, contact Tran Thi Lé in Hue through interpreter |
| 08/05/05 | Hue Meet up with Tran Thi Lé, 31/7 Cu Ya, Dong Da, 011-8454-825-792 |
| 08/06/05 | Hue |
| 08/07/05 | Hue |
| 08/08/05 | Leave Hue by car to Qui Nhon—Journey south along HWY 1 past the Hai Van Pass across mountainous stretch of highway |
| 08/08/05 | Life Resort—Qui Nhon |

| | |
|----------|---|
| 08/09/05 | Visit ambush site of 124 th Transportation Battalion during the Vietnam War via Mang Giang and An Khe Passes—Life Resort—Qui Nhon |
| 08/10/05 | Leave Qui Nhon for Hanoi by plane—Enroute visit seaside town of Sa Huynh |
| 08/10/05 | Sunway Hotel—Hanoi |
| 08/11/05 | Sunway Hotel—Hanoi—Breakfast in Hanoi with morning of leisure. Afternoon visit to tomb of Ho Chi Minh. See the one pillar pagoda of Emperor Ly Thai Tong who ruled from 1028 to 1054. Visit temple of literature founded in 1070 by Confucius |
| 08/12/05 | Sunway Hotel—Hanoi—Halong Bay with visit to island caves |
| 08/13/05 | 11:05 a.m.—Leave Hanoi on Cathay Pacific Flt 790M arriving Hong Kong at 01:55 p.m. |
| 08/13/05 | 04:15 p.m.—Leave Hong Kong on Cathay Pacific Flt 882M arriving Los Angeles at 02:30 p.m. |
| 08/13/05 | Leave Los Angeles for Philadelphia on America West Flt 399 to Las Vegas connecting there to flight 778 and arriving Baltimore at 6:23 a.m. |

Notes:

Country code to U.S. from Vietnam 01

Country code from U.S. to Philippines 01163

Country code from U.S. to Vietnam 01184

General Tours 800-221-2216; Booking Number 385405; Local Contact Miss Nuygn 09-37-03-933

Appendix B

November 7, 2005

Office of Visa Issuance
United States Embassy
Hanoi, Vietnam

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Tran Thi Le, a Vietnamese citizen who lives at 31/7 Cu Xa, Dong Da, Hue. Le is applying for a visa to visit family members who reside in Dover, Delaware, USA. I am advocating the approval of Tran Thi Le's visa as I am confident she would abide by all the rules and regulations pertaining thereto. I know Le, her husband Phu, and their children, sons Thang age 18 and Khnah age 8 and daughters Hoang-Oanh age 15 and Hoang-Anh age 13. I met them this summer in my travels through Vietnam and stayed with them in Hue from August 5 to 8. It was a wonderful visit and I would like to tell you how I came to know them.

I am a Vietnam era veteran having actively served in the United States Army, Infantry, from 1965 to 1967. I received my commission through the ROTC program of Pennsylvania Military College before going on active duty. After my tour of duty, I went into industry where I worked for 32 years. In 2000 I started a second career in education. I am now a professor at Wilmington College in Delaware and am working on my doctorate degree at Pepperdine University in California.

My doctoral program at Pepperdine requires each student to undertake a significant independent international experience. For a number of very personal reasons, I decided that my experience would be in Vietnam. In preparing for my journey, I met Ray and Hoa Hubbard who live in Dover. Hoa Hubbard is Le's sister. The Hubbards helped me plan my trip which took me from the Mekong Delta to Hanoi. During the weeks that I spent in Vietnam, I visited the place where my brother-in-law died during the Tet offensive of '68, traveled by train from Saigon to Hue and spent a wonderful weekend with Hoa's family in Hue. During this time I got to know the family and I would like to share my observations and strong feelings.

Le and Phu are first very devoted and loving parents. Their household is one of happiness and each member of the family enjoys a very close relationship. Parents and siblings are dedicated to each other. They have a small restaurant business which is very successful and they enjoy many friends within their community. Recently, Le and Phu built a tomb for Hoa Hubbard's son who was killed in 1989 by a grenade left over from the war. His remains were brought from Pleiku to Hue so they could be properly enshrined according to Vietnam customs and religious traditions. Because of these deep ties to family, I could never imagine Le abrogating the conditions of her visa. Her family is in Vietnam and they would want to be together. I strongly encourage the approval of her visa. I believe her travel will be good for her, for Vietnam and for the United States.

I would be very happy to provide any additional information that might be required and would certainly be willing to act as a co-sponsor of Le's visitation along with Hoa and her husband Ray Hubbard.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Holler
Assistant Professor