

Traversing Creative Space, Transforming Higher Education:
A Contemporary Curricular Vision of Teaching and Learning

By

Meagan Alexandra Carson Troop

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ABSTRACT

The promotion of creative culture in the higher education classroom holds the potential to prepare students for their contemporary roles in an increasingly diverse and demanding modern world. A premise of this work is that education should strive to encourage creativity with process-oriented curricula that actively engage students in (a) tasks that are collaborative and novel, (b) the interpretation of new and meaningful experiences, and (c) the synthesis and critical evaluation of ideas at individual, collective, and global levels. This dissertation study identifies aspects of pedagogical design and teaching practice that enable the building of students' creative capacities. These enhanced capacities, in turn, can lead to transformative experiences that inspire and shape participants' personal and professional lives.

I adopted a dual role as researcher and student to conduct an exploratory study in the context of a PhD level Education course, Contemporary Curriculum Theory. Findings from this exploratory study informed a multiple-case study that involved the observation of two graduate level courses, Professionals in Rural Practice and The Lived Experience of Disability, which together form the unit of analysis for the study. Data sources included: (a) a Learning Activities Survey, modified from King's (2009) original work; (b) a Creativity Checklist, modified from Munro's (n.d.) instrument; (c) field observations and field notes; and (d) individual interviews with students and instructors from each course.

Data were analyzed by three creative drivers that enabled transformation: (a) multiple ways of knowing, (b) adult conversation, and (c) the storied self. Through this examination of university-level courses of varied disciplines, this research study addresses creativity as a catalyst for transforming the ways in which teachers and students experience knowledge-making in post-secondary education.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2007, I was enrolled to take the final course of my master's degree in education. I looked forward to fully immersing myself in the graduate experience with this course, suitably titled *The Art of Teaching*. It turned out that this particular experience sustained me with a series of transformative moments and lessons that would be forever embedded in the person that I am and strive to be.

A visit to the university art gallery, space at the beginning of class to relish in the juiciness of selected quotes, the gradual growth of our collective genealogical teaching tree, and of course the rituals and routines of dance, drama, visual arts, and music all brought back a sense of wonder, joy, and exploration that had not been unearthed in an academic setting. The instructor, Dr. Katharine Smithrim was, and remains, the embodiment of what I aspire to in teaching and learning. Her gracious spirit, her intuitive sense for what was needed, her listening ears and open heart, her kind crafting of complex material into a mold that was flexible, open, and tangible—these were qualities that I had not witnessed in graduate-level teaching to that point. The course afforded me the time and opportunities to experience the most splendid, vivid recollections, which still linger as the essence of inspiration.

There was space for all of these aspects of life in learning in Katharine's course. It made clear that similar experiences that could be deemed transformative in nature in either my master's or PhD courses were very few. When I was assigned the task of writing funding proposals prior to the third year of my PhD program, I mindfully reflected on the courses that shaped and influenced my passionate path and played a role in changing my perspective(s). In this process of painstakingly uncovering the topic I would spend the next several years engrossed

in, a wise instructor gave me advice on finding a topic that would keep me awake at night (as if the two babies that I had during the PhD didn't have that covered!#\$@). After taking these words into consideration, I began to sketch out my transformative journey of experiences as a graduate student in order to find my way. What came to mind were the courses and the instructors that had created the conditions necessary to foster an engaging, creative, challenging, and ultimately life-altering experience. Finally, a course in transformative learning with Dr. Susan Wilcox confirmed for me that what I really cared about was making sense and meaning out of the pedagogical elements that supported these significant lessons. And that's when I set out to find some shining examples of graduate course work that promoted and supported transformative learning.

A Conceptual Reorientation of Curriculum

Creativity is a key component of the Conceptual Age of the 21st century—an era characterized by the generation of novel ideas rather than by the acquisition of information (Pink, 2006). The introduction of creativity as a classroom practice promotes opportunities for individual agency and for the development of skills necessary to respond to changes and issues relevant to a modern world (Apple, 2004; Banaji, Burn, & Buckingham, 2010; Pinar, 2004; Pink, 2006). Unfortunately, in an educational era saturated with increasingly regulated and moderated curricula, fewer opportunities for creative work exist.

But universities and colleges are poised to reverse this trend. They have the potential to design courses that facilitate an emergence of individuals apt for a Conceptual Age. A reorientation of curriculum is called for—one that makes room for the interpersonal with the intrapersonal, traverses boundaries of discipline, age, and life experience, and honours reflective practice. Classroom creativity often emerges in unconventional, unexpected, and unknown ways;

the teaching and learning space that makes room for these self-in-the-making moments, thus, holds promise for transforming higher education (Greene, 1995; Moore, 2005; O’Sullivan, 1999; Pink, 2006). A primary goal of my research is to explore exemplary cases of transformative teaching and learning within the academy, using a rhetoric that builds on pragmatic accounts of the “creative craft of the classroom” (Banaji et al., 2010, p. 58).

With student enrolments in graduate studies on the rise, both nationally and internationally, it is more important than ever to facilitate challenging and meaningful educational opportunities guided by sound pedagogical practice (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2010; Taylor, 2008). Prevailing ideologies of curriculum and pedagogy in higher education greatly influence the landscape of contemporary education, informing educational practice and directing reform at all levels (Cropley, 2001; McNeil, 2006; Robinson, 2001). In a report outlining economic and social development opportunities in Ontario, Martin and Florida (2009) stated, “there is no greater resource than the creativity, innovativeness, and productive talents of our people” (p. 1). Many contemporary paradigms emphasize information generation through economic and efficiency models of education; in contrast, the Conceptual Age affords opportunities for individual fulfillment, agency, growth and promotes the integration of innovators (Apple, 2004; Pinar, 2004; Pink, 2006). If universities and colleges change their curricular orientation to focus on designing pedagogical events that invite and support creative acts they can catalyze transformation in higher education (Greene, 1995; Moore, 2005; O’Sullivan, 1999). Moreover, it is critical that teachers in higher education consider how to foster creative capacities and to prepare students for their contributing roles in contemporary society (Greene, 2001).

The purpose of my research is to investigate graduate students’ experiences of creative

curricula as a condition for transformative learning. It is my hope that this research will contribute to the scholarly literature and propel professional pragmatism in a direction to improve the quality, nature, and scope of graduate teaching and learning experiences. Framing the post-secondary educational experience using substantive theory offers insight into the value of developing creative capacities: It underscores creativity's powerful potential as a means for changing the ways in which we learn and acquire knowledge. At present, there is a paucity of scholarly literature in the areas of adult education practice and theory related specifically to creative pedagogy and practice; scarcer still is literature that examines the role of creativity directly related to transformative learning (Hoggan, Simpson, & Stuckey, 2009). Experiences that connect creativity with transformation in practice are not often documented. Therefore, this research will provide insights into the links between creativity and transformative learning whilst examining pedagogy that promotes their interactive application in a post-secondary context. Citing the need to harmonize creativity with transformative learning, Hoggan, et al. (2009) offer this sentiment: "By using creativity to tap into the spiritual, the imagination, and the somatic, people can reconstruct their belief structures and begin to make new meaning through transformation of perspective" (p. 19). My research aims to contribute to the scholarly literature by empirically examining student and teacher experiences that provide opportunities for creativity and transformation to intersect. I am intrigued by the complex pedagogical conditions that support and shape transformative experiences, as there is potential to illuminate the multiple ways that creative activity drives transformation and shapes the future direction of post-secondary curricula.

Creativity is largely driven by divergent ways of thinking, through which rational and extra-rational ways of knowing are interrelated, simultaneous, and made manifest in our lives,

study, and work in higher education. There are multiple ways that creative capacities drive transformation on individual, collective, and global levels. To begin, the personally purposeful and fulfilling dimensions of creative work reside in one's potential for individuality, self-expression, and openness (Beghetto & Kaufmann, 2007; Pink, 2006). Each and every potentially creative moment in teaching and learning centres on a process of meaning-making, which inherently involves a change in perspective. Revised perspectives may be fundamentally broadened and solidified by building creative capacities that link emotions, senses, and the knowledge involved in meaning-making to the interactions, dialogue, and activities in the classroom environment.

Human creativity is a transformative force that enables students to engage in complex problem solving and provokes a fluency and flexibility of knowledge necessary for the fast-paced, ever-changing, modern world (Cropley, 2001). The development of creative capacities may, ultimately, prepare students to make significant societal contributions, as creative thinking enables students to work across boundaries of discipline and domain to establish connections, develop relationships, and synthesize disparate constructs (Pink, 2006). A pedagogical process that promotes a dynamic interplay of interpersonal and intrapersonal relations could allow people to access the world in creative ways (Ellsworth, 2006). In this responsive relation among self, other, and the world, there is an intention of constantly shifting from known to unknown: Creativity becomes characterized by constant change that exists at the deepest reaches of experience.

Students' transformative learning experiences build on similar cognitive structures to creative thinking. These, in turn, enlarge the scope and range of interactive connections between theories for the design and development of curricula (Cropley, 2001). Drawing on this link, the

incorporation of teaching and learning approaches that stimulate creativity offers an effective means for fostering holistic, balanced educational experiences that facilitate transformative learning in a post-secondary classroom. In particular, creative activity and transformative learning collectively enable a process of discovery and promote alternative, often unconventional, modes of thinking. I argue that curriculum should heighten students' conscious awareness of the factors that influence and shape their deep, shifting experiences of living and learning. As part of a process of transformation, it is essential that graduate students be attuned to social, political, environmental, aesthetic, and economic issues that influence a creative, constructive process of building new, influential, and possibly even revolutionary ideas (Gardner & Kelly, 2008). Higher education curricula should provoke students to challenge the status quo and to question their assumptions, placing learners in engaging acts of creative expression that activate transformation (Cranton, 2006).

Definition of Key Terms

The *Conceptual Age* provides a contemporary context for an era characterized by the generation of novel ideas, the building of connections between disparate elements, and the fostering of relationships—all of which bring meaning, fulfillment, and purpose to our lives.

Creativity is defined as a complex, multi-dimensional construct that involves the dynamic interaction of ideas, experiences, and interests to provoke new embodiments of knowledge. *Mini-c creativity*, which is the conception of creativity that is most closely examined in this dissertation, highlights new and personally meaningful interpretations of experience. *Creative learning* can be characterized as any learning that is specifically aimed at stimulating learner creativity. *Creative teaching* involves “using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective” (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004, p. 1), whereas *teaching for creativity* is

distinguished, and should avoid being dichotomized by the values that underpin creative practices—namely innovation, control, ownership, and relevance (Woods, 1990). More importantly, teaching for creativity focuses on the relationships that exist in and amongst the creative teaching of the teacher and the creative learning of the learner (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Transformative learning makes meaning out of lived experiences. Through an on-going process of critically and creatively questioning the norms of their perception and thinking, learners become acutely aware of their habitual expectations (Cranton, 2006).

Perspective transformation occurs when a disorienting issue or event leads the learner to critically question unexamined preconceptions and, in doing so, to broaden, deepen, and revise original assumptions. In many cases, these revised perspectives are integrated into a new course of action.

Epistemic habits of mind are fundamentally concerned with the ways that we learn and with the perspectives (based on factors such as experience, background, culture, and personality) that people bring to a teaching and learning situation. Transforming epistemic habits of mind involves a process that holds the potential to question, challenge, and revise the ways that we acquire and use knowledge and, ideally, to initiate different approaches to learning.

Research Questions

I am committed to exploring how curriculum choices manifest in the edification of graduate students through an examination of contemporary dimensions of transformative learning. Developing a broad understanding of the role that creativity plays in transformative learning has the potential to affect the pedagogical design, implementation, and delivery of future curricula in higher education. The diverse perspectives presented in this study facilitate a

shared conceptual framework for studying creativity and transformative learning. To this end, I seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between creative activity and transformative learning and in what ways are they connected through lived experience?
2. What pedagogical processes support the building of creative capacities as a transformative outcome?
3. In what ways do the teaching and learning events in two graduate courses contribute to changing the ways that students acquired and used knowledge (the transformation of epistemic habits of mind)?

The present study examined several important questions in the field of transformative learning as it related to instructors cultivating students' creative capacities in post-secondary coursework. Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the research study as it framed the dissertation within a broader global context and in a more specific domain of adult education and development. Chapter 2 provides a thorough review of the literature on creativity theory and transformative learning theory, which served as a conceptual lens for my research investigations in the two classrooms. An exploratory study conducted on one of the three courses in the study—a PhD level course titled Contemporary Curriculum Theory—is described in Chapter 3. The methodology, including the multi-method strategies and the process of data analysis is outlined in Chapter 4, in an overall effort to enhance trustworthiness and credibility. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are themed results chapters. They characterize student and teacher experiences in the two courses featured in the research study: Professionals in Rural Practice and The Lived Experience of Disability. Chapter 8, which provides an overview of how the pedagogical events affected student and teacher experiences, demonstrates the transformative nature of these teaching and

learning contexts by means of creative activity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Connecting Creativity and Transformative Learning Through the Literature

The literature surveyed has been selected to highlight creativity as a dynamic process that underpins a transformative experience of learning. At present, there is a lack of scholarly literature that directly connects creativity with transformative learning. This review aims to bridge that gap by presenting contemporary views of creativity that are related to adult-learning contexts wherein transformative learning is both widely theorized and practiced. Building on the research in the fields of creativity, contemporary curriculum theory, and adult education, I review transformative experiences that, as part of a social and solitary process, foster creativity as a means for transforming ways of knowing. This review provides a basis for future research in post-secondary teaching and learning contexts. In the following section of the literature review, I consider conceptions of creativity (including correlates, theoretical models, and theoretical orientations of creativity) to provide an operational definition of the construct. Next, I outline creative learning and conceptions of creativity in a higher education context. In the third section of the review, I introduce principles of transformative learning and perspective transformation, and provide a holistic view of transformative learning that ties to the development of creative capacities. I then discuss the pedagogical conditions necessary for transformative learning, and review studies that consider the relationship between transformative learning and creativity in a post-secondary classroom context. This discussion leads to an exploration of the convergence of creativity and transformation and provides a foundational basis for the examination of students' experiences.

Conceptions of creativity.

A recent increase in the volume of empirical research has led to greater clarity in defining creativity as a multi-dimensional construct (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Craft, 2003). A series of definitions proposed by various authors reflects existing conceptual variations and underscores the need to develop a broader conceptual framework—one that encompasses both the theoretical and practical aspects of creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Cropley, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). While there is some difficulty in establishing precision in the terms often linked to creativity, an attempt to clarify the threads of imagination, originality, and innovation will help define the limits of creativity: what it is and what it is not (Craft, 2003; Runco, 2007).

In this chapter, creativity is described as an elusive, ethereal, and in some cases, hypothetical construction that encompasses a wide range of personal characteristics, mental processes, and phenomena (Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999; Saebo, McCammon, & O'Farrell, 2007). Knight (2002) offers a definition from an educational perspective: “Creativity constructs new tools and new outcomes—new embodiments of knowledge. It constructs new relationships, rules, communities of practice and new connections—new social practices” (p. 1). When psychological and educational constructions are emphasized, a common language for characterizations of creativity emerges (Cropley, 2001; Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999). According to Kleiman (2008), despite the non-existence of a singular catch-all definition of creativity, “there seems to be a general coalescing of agreement amongst creativity researchers that creativity involves notions of novelty and originality combined with notions of utility and value” (p. 210). Creativity typically demands an ability to produce work that is considered original and

unexpected, whilst maintaining a high level of quality and appropriateness for the task (Amabile, 1989; Robinson, 2001; Smith & Smith, 2010).

Contemporary views of creativity in education endeavour to address differences across age, development, domains, and cultures and to expand current conceptions of creativity to include diverse perspectives (Amabile, 1989; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Kleiman, 2009; Runco, 2007). Pope's contemporary view of creativity is evidenced by his broad and inclusive definition: "Creativity is extra/ordinary, original and fitting, full-filling, in(ter)ventive, co-operative, un/conscious, fe<>male, re...creation" (Pope, 2005, p. 52).

Broadening and diversifying perspectives can lead to more integrated and sensitive approaches to creativity. Amabile (1989) speaks to the creative potential of all human beings when she asserts that creativity should be part of everyone's daily existence, not just for those who are "gifted" or "talented" (preface, ix). In the classroom context, modelling creativity holds the potential for inviting creative acts of expression into the patterns of our daily lives. Creativity can traverse boundaries:

Creativity is a state of mind in which all of our intelligences are working together. It involves seeing, thinking, and innovating. Although it is often found in the creative arts, creativity can be demonstrated in any subject at school or in any aspect of life. (Lucas, 2001, p. 38)

Correlates of creativity.

To further untangle the concept of creativity, Runco (2007) systematically discusses the "correlates of creativity" (p. 377): imagination, innovation, and originality. In the literature, the term *imagination* is often used interchangeably with notions of creativity. An important distinction, however, exists between imagination, which lives in the mind's eye, and embodied acts of creativity, which are actively produced in some deliberate way. According to Robinson (2001), "being creative involves doing something" (p. 115), whereas creative possibilities rest in

the internal mental acts of imagination. Craft (2005) points out that some aspects of imagination are implicit in the process of creativity and can be regarded as encompassing creativity. Through our imaginations, we can draw disparate elements together and create order and understanding of our worlds (Greene, 1995). Imagining possibilities is an important and necessary part of conceptualizing creativity, wherein our inner thoughts interface with the external environment (Robinson, 2001).

Another concept that overlaps with creativity and requires definition is *innovation*. Regarded as requiring creativity and imagination, innovation can be described as applied creativity: One cannot innovate without being creative as part of the process (Runco, 2007; Craft, 2005). Innovation implies making something new or developing improved approaches to what already exists, which emerges through an application of fresh perspectives and revolutionary ideas. According to Craft (2005), innovation occurs when ideas are implanted and adopted in a public domain. While commonalities exist between the concepts of innovation and creativity, it becomes clear that creativity sets itself apart in instances where originality, novelty, and self-expression are more important than innovations that enhance public effectiveness and success in the marketplace (Runco, 2007). In such cases, there is an emphasis on creating something that holds personal, social, and historic originality (Robinson, 2001).

Originality is intimately linked to creativity. It is considered to be more intrinsic to creativity than to innovation and imagination, since there are different levels and stages of originality in creative development (Robinson, 2001; Runco, 2007). In a classroom context, original work tends to be learner-centred; this differs from a wider world context. While still highly dependent on our personal interpretations of what is unique, unusual, or unconventional, originality in a wider context must also offer an element of functional utility if it is to meet the

criteria of creative work (Cropley, 2001; Runco; 2007). Therein lies the important distinction: “An idea that is original, but bizarre and worthless,” would not be deemed creative as it fails to “satisfy the need for which it was created” (Runco, 2007, p. 380).

A careful examination of these terms enables a more sophisticated and nuanced conception of creativity. Notions of imagination, innovation, and originality play a significant role in the restructuring of new ideas and in the shifting of habits of mind—cognitive processes shared in acts of creativity and transformation. As will be discussed later, transformative learning theory is indelibly linked to the correlates of creativity. These connections are revealed in the development of fresh perspectives, the engagement in imaginative processes, and the revised interpretation of an experience that facilitates moving from the known to the unknown (Cropley, 2001). The theoretical models introduced in the next section of the review have been designed for the systematic application and study of creativity in formal teaching and learning contexts (Smith & Smith, 2010).

Theoretical Models of Creativity

The following perspectives on creativity provide an overview of interactive elements pertinent to the study of creativity as a means for transformation. Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) introduced the “magnitudes of creativity” (p. 73), which highlight the range of creative possibilities that reside in student development and change. The deep, structural changes involved in a transformative experience initiate new possibilities as one is challenged to think and act in alternative ways (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). According to O’Sullivan, Morrell, and O’Connor (2002), “processes of transformative learning are counted as the creative function of cognitive crisis” (p. 4). They go on to explain that one’s viewpoints shift in a process of replacing outdated paradigms with new, functional modes of interpretation (O’Sullivan et al.,

2002). Creative engagement is integral to education, deemed as the highest level of learning, and arises out of transformative moments that enable the construction of personally meaningful knowledge and new critical understandings (Cranton, 2006; O’Sullivan et al., 2002; Pink, 2006; Taylor, 2008). Components and conditions for creativity are introduced in the following models as a guiding framework for the examination of the dynamic interplay that brings change—a unifying force between seemingly disparate ideas—to the classroom context.

Magnitudes of creativity.

Citing the need to harmonize conceptual and methodological frameworks in creativity, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) have directed the broadening of a continuum of creativity by putting forward the notion of “mini-c creativity” (p. 2). Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) propose a conception of creativity that reflects a continuum from mini-c to little-c to Big-C. Concepts of Big-C and little-c have been traditionally and extensively considered in the field of creativity, whereas mini-c creativity has only recently been introduced to advance and address the role that creativity plays in new and personally meaningful knowledge (Beghetto & Plucker, 2006). Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) further define mini-c creativity as one’s individual impression of events, experiences, and actions. In contrast, “Big-C creativity represents monumental and everlasting creativity—the Beethovens, the Monets, the Edisons. Everything else gets lumped under little-c” (Beghetto & Kaufman, p. 75). Little-c creativity involves contributions that are considered to be useful and perhaps important, but not earth shattering (Smith & Smith, 2010). Everyday creativity has often been linked to little-c creativity—creative acts that reside in our active ways of life, such as cooking, blogging, and photography, rather than in more formalized educational endeavours, such as college or university coursework (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). In this way, mini-c becomes a sub-category of little-c.

The product-oriented Big-C and little-c conceptions of creativity primarily focus on externally judged creative outcomes and, as a result, have the potential to “minimize and obscure the dynamic process of creativity-in-the-making” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). Distinguished in this regard, mini-c creativity highlights personal development in both creative and transformational ways (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). A focus on finalized creative products has reinforced a parallel move towards product-oriented methodological approaches for the study of creativity. Although these methodologies remain predominant in the field, Beghetto and Kaufman suggest that microgenetic methods are a viable and promising approach for studies of mini-c creativity. Microgenetic methods typically pair observations with participants’ immediate accounts of their behaviours and thoughts, in order to gather evidence of “the process of discovery and subsequent microlevel changes in thinking, reasoning, and problem solving” (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007, p. 75). In particular, the microgenetic methodological approach holds promise in learning how students’ worldviews can change, and how these changes can manifest in little-c and possibly even Big-C creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007).

The four Ps.

Another theoretical model that is commonly applied in the field of creativity research is known as the four (or six) Ps of creativity. This model is composed of four parts or strands (person, process, product, and press) but has more recently been extended to include two more Ps, persuasion and potential (Runco, 2007; Smith & Smith, 2010). The six major strands identified in this latter model represent a viable framework for studying and understanding creativity, and translate effectively to the rhythms of teaching and learning in the classroom (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010; Runco, 2007).

The strands within this theoretical approach to creativity may be applied interactively. They operate within a dynamic, complex whole influenced by each of the individual components: (a) *person*, the characteristics and attributes of a creative person; (b) *process*, the phases or stages of thinking and acting involved in the creative process; (c) *product*, the outcomes and qualities of creative products; and (d) *press*, the situations or contexts, such as the environment, within the creative process (Richards, 1999; Runco, 2003, 2007). The active engagement of people in this complex process is central to the generation of a product of creative thought and activity. The two Ps added to the theory are (e) *persuasion*, the idea that creative people influence the way others think (Simonton, 1990); and (f) *potential*, the yet-to-be-fulfilled possibilities for creativity (Runco, 2003). Dynamic interactions in and among human acts of creativity hold the potential for persuasion, which will redirect and influence the direction of research and educational experiences involving creativity. These aforementioned components form the modern strands of creativity in a tightly organized, alliterative fashion. According to Smith and Smith (2010), prominent researchers in the field of creativity, this model is deemed as most interesting to, and appropriate for, the study of education.

These two theoretical models are of particular relevance to my research as they reflect the complex dynamic that characterizes the fabric of classroom activity at the graduate level of education (Cropley, 2001; Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008; Robinson, 2001). Both theoretical and practical perspectives on the topic of creativity in education are embedded in and align with a systems perspective of creativity wherein all of these elements interact to generate creative change through an iterative process that leads toward personal and social transformation. Complexity thinking in education similarly depicts the processes involved in teaching, learning, and knowing as indeterminate and interrelated (Davis et al., 2008). These learning systems

reflect a solid conceptual base in a transformative quest to challenge the mindsets, attitudes, and experiences that surround creative praxis in the graduate classroom.

A systems theoretical orientation.

There is general agreement among established researchers that creativity can be described as a process rather than an event; more specifically, it can be characterized as a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional process that incorporates individual, social, and organizational elements (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Florida, 2002; Robinson, 2001). From a systems perspective on creativity, Csikszentmihalyi (1999) suggests that “creativity is a process that can be observed only at the intersection where individuals, domains, and fields interact” (p. 314). At the intersection of these elements, creativity occurs at the point at which (a) a set of rules and practices are transmitted from domain to individual, (b) the individual produces a novel variation in a domain, (c) the contribution in a domain is selected to be included into the field, and (d) the creative change transmits through time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Smith & Smith, 2010).

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1999) work shares similar components to the iterative model proposed by Puccio, Murdock, and Mance (2007), as Csikszentmihalyi’s theoretical framework utilizes a systems approach to describe the variables that lead to creative change. This iterative model describes the interaction of person, process, and environment, which leads to a product in the form of theories, solutions to problems, ideas, or inventions. Products of the efforts of creative thinking are then adopted as creative changes, which take the forms of personal change, social change, and innovation (Smith & Smith, 2010). The model is highly regarded among creativity scholars as it provides a useful framework for the systematic study of creative thinking in organizational contexts, such as in institutions of higher learning (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010).

Building on principles similar to those of an iterative model of creativity is Urban's (2002) componential model of creativity, which offers a holistic approach to measuring human activity that produces creative outcomes (Cropley, 2001; Munro, n.d.). This interactive model maps a systems conceptualization of creativity with consideration of individual, collective, and global dimensions in a dynamic classroom environment (Cropley, 2001; Csikzentmihalyi, 1999). The identification of several components of human activity necessary for creativity are grouped into two main areas: cognitive or knowledge thinking components, and personality or motivational emotional components. Subcomponents of the model include the following elements: (a) divergent thinking and acting, (b) general knowledge and thinking base, (c) specific knowledge base and area specific skills, (d) openness and tolerance of ambiguity, (e) motives and motivation, and (f) focus and task commitment (Munro, n.d.). The components and conditions for creativity outlined in this model have been further developed into a series of instruments by Munro (n.d.), which use the conceptual basis of the componential model as a guide for design. Components of process (people, process, environment) and notions of product (theories, solutions to problems, ideas, inventions) form a conceptual framework that is appropriate for studying the relationship between the different creative processes involved in enabling transformative learning experiences (Smith & Smith, 2010).

Creative Learning and Teaching

While notions of learning (and teaching) aimed at enhancing creativity continue to evolve, there is some consensus as to the main aspects of the concept (Craft, 2005). My research seeks to gain further conceptual understanding of the relationship and impact that creative teaching—both *teaching for creativity* and *teaching creatively*—has on student learning (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). This study examines the effectiveness that creative

conditions established by teachers have in building creative capacities and explores the ways in which students are encouraged to develop by being part of a creative classroom context.

According to Craft, Cremin, Burnard, and Chappell (2007), enabling “possibility thinking” and facilitating the “evolution, expression, and application of the student’s ideas are central to fostering creative learning” (p. 2). Further, creative learning promotes student agency by focusing on the generative student experience, rather than centering solely on the teachers’ practice and perspectives, which are often formed in elementary and secondary level classroom contexts. Craft (2005) reviews five areas of evidence of learner creativity proposed by the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These components include: “(a) questioning and challenging; (b) making connections, seeing relationships; (c) envisaging what might be; (d) exploring ideas, keeping options open; and (e) reflecting critically on ideas, actions, outcomes” (p. 55). A pilot project, titled *Creative Learning and Student’s Perspectives (CLASP)*, featured schools from 10 European countries, spanning student aged 3–25. This project documented students’ reactions to their experiences of creativity in the classroom and the ways in which their creative acts enhanced learning. Findings from the pilot study suggest that creative learning involves students using imagination and experience, strategically collaborating over tasks, contributing to pedagogy and curriculum, and critically evaluating their own practices and teachers’ performance (Craft, 2005).

Craft’s project illustrates how a range of concepts can inform student and teacher perspectives alike and characterizes the processes involved in creative learning, and by extension, creative teaching (Craft, 2005). Many of the theories and policies of creativity identified and promoted by the QCA are operational in classroom contexts, specifically with pupils who range from 5–16 years of age. Themes of collaboration, questioning and challenging,

critical examination of experience, making connections, understanding of relationships, and the use of imaginative processes in a pragmatic context are all relevant and reflect theorized components of the students' learning experience (Craft, 2005). In creative teaching, the classroom ethos encourages dynamic interactions that learners consider to be innovative and relevant, leading students to ownership of the curriculum and, ultimately, to creative engagement (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Robinson's (2001) work on creativity in educational settings has also paved the way for the examination of the phases involved in a creative learning process. He suggests that creative activity, an intimate interaction between concept and material, often facilitates the emergence of one's idea(s). Robinson describes the combinatory components of control and freedom, conscious and unconscious thought, and intuition and rational analysis as integral to a dynamic understanding of creativity and learning as an embodied, multi-dimensional, multi-modal experience. Further, he explains that relationships between components and phases in the creative process are worthy of note in an examination of the processes involved in creative learning. Robinson stresses three essential phases to the creative process: (a) the significance of finding a strong creative medium, (b) the importance of possessing the means and skills to be creative, and (c) the freedom to explore, express, and take risks. According to Robinson, "facilitating creative development is a sophisticated process that must balance learning skills with stimulating the imagination to explore new ideas" (p. 132).

Recent empirical studies conducted by the QCA and the rigour of discourse provided by university-based researchers contribute much to an emergent understanding of the role that creative learning and teaching plays in development and transformation (Craft, 2005; Robinson; 2001). My research will examine and put into practice functioning, contemporary theories from

this growing field. For example, the levels, themes, and phases of creative learning and development outlined above will guide my classroom observations. The work from the QCA is at elementary and secondary levels. My aim is to characterize creativity in adult education, post-secondary contexts and to enhance an understanding of the complex characteristics of creativity that facilitate transformative learning. My dissertation study will examine teachers and students at the graduate level whose understanding, skills, and vision within their field(s) are highly specialized.

Crossing paths: Where creativity and transformative learning intersect.

Changes in patterns of thinking are inherent both to theories of creative learning and to transformative learning. Within each realm, there is a mutually agreed upon perspective of learning as intuitive, contextualized, and holistic (Craft, 2005; Daloz, 1986; Dirkx, 1998), and of the educational journey as connected, fluid, and recursive in nature (Baumgartner, 2001; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007). Creative and interpretive acts of expression tap into a transformative experience, unleashing possibility by providing a means through which the subtleties of our underlying thinking can be provoked and realized (Hoggan et al., 2009).

The views of creativity presented in this dissertation represent the conceptual complexities of a process that involves shifting perspectives. Novel transformations require a flexibility of thinking, an openness regarding the new and improved, and an ability to adapt to the unexpected (Cromptley, 2001). In a transformation-focused experience of creativity, students construct and create new knowledge in a manner that shifts the learning paradigm from traditionally passive to conceptually active (Pink, 2006). In addition to these characteristics of creativity, research has also examined correlational constructs to further delineate creativity as a multi-dimensional construct.

Conceptions of creativity in higher education.

Powerful accounts of experiences focused on developing creative capacities are captured in a study conducted by Kleiman (2008). Findings from the study point to the inherent complexities of creative teaching and learning constructs in higher education. Multiple representations of creativity are presented to emphasize the interactive, interrelated components, which both form a complex system and lead students to pathways for creating new or revised interpretations of experience (Ellsworth, 2006; Mezirow, 2000). These revisions of experience—part of a process of meaning-making deemed fundamental to creative activity—are considered an essential part of transforming higher education to include conceptually engaging and relevant pedagogies (Pink, 2006).

Kleiman (2008) introduced the problem of defining creativity in an examination of the different conceptual perspectives that exist in academic circles. After completing a meta-analysis of studies in this area, he summarized the ideas that academics most commonly associated with creativity. Kleiman compiled research results from a study conducted by Jackson and Shaw in 2005, which included a series of conversations, interviews, and email surveys. Kleiman condensed the most prominent conceptions of creativity into a list for his own study:

Originality; being imaginative; exploring for the purpose of discovery; doing and producing new things (invention); doing and producing new things no one has ever done before (innovation); doing and producing things that have been done before but differently; and communication. (p. 211)

For the most part, the academic conceptions of creativity align with those from the scholarly literature. However, a few of the definitions are debatable. In the case of innovation, for instance, the description excludes an important aspect of the construct, which is that the improved item or process is then taken to market or widely adopted (Robinson, 2001; Runco, 2007).

Kleiman (2008) embarked on a phenomenographic study to further understand the qualitatively different ways that 12 academics, from a range of discipline areas, conceptualized creativity. Conceptions of the experiences of creativity in a post-secondary learning and teaching context were gathered in a “pool of meaning” (p. 211) and, from a list of an initial 30 possible variations, Kleiman subsequently undertook an “intensive, iterative analytic process in which those categories were distilled and reduced” (p. 212). Five main categories of description emerged and were expressed in a conceptual map to capture the relational, fluid, and complex nature of the source material. These five key ways of understanding creativity in the context of teaching and learning were a “(a) constraint-focused experience; (b) process-focused experience; (c) product-focused experience; (d) transformation-focused experience; and (e) fulfillment-focused experience” (p. 212). My research project investigates creativity as a transformation-focused experience and considers Kleiman’s five main categories as they provide relevant descriptions for creativity at the tertiary level.

Kleiman (2008) derived these themes from transcriptions of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the individuals from academia. The constraint-focused experience is described as “a form of resistance to compliance and orthodoxy” (p. 213). Kleiman further explains that participants felt held back by the institutional environment, the overlying expectations, and the pressure to be creative. In terms of a process-focused experience, the participants acknowledged that the focus of the education system is to ensure a tangible outcome. Despite this, participants perceived that there was value in the creative process for its own sake. Data also revealed a product-focused experience. In this case, participants concluded that the outcome or product of creativity must hold some utility or value. Participants understood the product experience along a creativity continuum that stretched from mini-c creativity to Big-C creativity (Kaufman &

Beghetto, 2009). In his examples of transformation-focused experiences, Kleiman (2008) noted that, “the process is transformation either in itself, or is undertaken with intention of being transformative” (p. 215). Risk-taking and confidence form a central part of the narrative for the participants who characterize their transformative experiences. Referring to the patterns in the data on conceptions of creativity as transformative, Kleiman remarked:

Change is necessarily unsettling. The same is also true of creativity as a transformative process. It is perhaps this particular aspect of creativity—as a positive yet disruptive, disorienting force—that has the potential to disturb and even threaten educational and pedagogic structures, systems, and processes.
(p. 217)

The study’s descriptions of creativity as a fulfillment-focused experience align closely with concepts of mini-c creativity; that is, encounters with creativity deemed as personal acts that were meaningful and satisfactory.

Overall, Kleiman (2008) provides important insights into the complexity of the experience of creativity as it relates to teaching and learning in higher education. Kleiman recognizes that his research outcomes hold particular significance in the development of pedagogical practices that support personal transformation and professional fulfillment. He warns that teachers should facilitate students’ own creativity rather than function as “deliverers of a particular ‘creativity agenda’” (p. 217). In post-secondary education, one of the biggest challenges resides in the existing institutional and curricular frameworks that disable personally and professionally meaningful creative activity for the sake of productive and profitable ends (Kleiman). Kleiman’s research reveals a desire to transform higher education through broadened conceptions of creativity in an attempt to meet the pedagogical, personal, and professional demands of students in the 21st century.

When provided with the frameworks to develop critical understanding in creative ways, students are often empowered rather than constrained. Kleiman's (2008) study, however, reveals systemic structures as disabling for students engaged in a process of creativity. Findings also reflect the inherent value that students attributed to process- and product-oriented experiences of creativity. Students experienced moments of fulfillment and transformation, described as both satisfying and disorienting, with an engagement in creative endeavours that challenged and even disturbed the status quo. Process- and product-oriented experiences are all-important aspects of transformative learning and will be important considerations in my research. As well, these will facilitate an understanding of the complexity of creative drivers in graduate classroom contexts. In the context of higher education, the conceptions of creativity presented in Kleiman's study emphasize the power of developing learners' creative capacities in significant and personalized ways. A transformation in higher education will require creative pedagogies that accept alternative suggestions and expressions of ideas and stimulate the production of creative thinking to include new possibilities (Craft, 2005; Cropley, 2001). Classrooms that integrate creative capacities will be part of a radical change in the current education climate, as curricular focus shifts towards facilitating an experience that is actively engaging, holistically embodied, and ripe with transformative potential.

Principles of Transformative Learning

Basic principles of transformative learning have been widely theorized in the fields of adult development and adult learning. Most of the research on transformative learning practices has taken place in higher education settings (Mezirow, 2009). Despite this fact, the published writing and research on transformative learning has rarely offered insights into practical classroom applications (Cranton, 2006; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller, & Schapiro, 2009; Moore, 2005)

or presented perspectives in clearly articulated pedagogical frameworks for practitioner use (Dirkx, 1998). With its focus on adult teaching and learning, transformative learning as a reconstructive theory offers “a general, abstract, and idealized model that explains the general structure, dimensions, and dynamics of the learning process” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 21). This model attempts to provide constructs, language, categories, and dynamics of transformative learning to enable application in a variety of contexts, including various cultural settings (Mezirow, 2000, 2009).

A central feature of transformative learning is that it requires an understanding of the change involved in how we know, rather than what we know (Baumgartner, 2001). Instead of a mere unloading of information on students, transformative learning demands that students revise their underlying assumptions, adopt new paradigms of understanding, and apply these new paradigms (Cranton, 2002; McConigal, 2005). Such paradigm shifts require the consideration of multiple viewpoints rather than just one’s own (Mezirow, 2000). Greene (1988) extends this idea with her assertion that “imagining how things could be otherwise” (p. 3) is central to initiating transformation. King (2009) defines transformative learning as experiences that adult learners have as they make sense of ideas and opinions they had not previously considered. The process involved in transformative learning is not linear but may be considered spiral-like in its progression, as learners experience disruption in the balance and measures of their lives (Cranton).

Transformative learning attempts to capture “what the learner does, feels, [and] experiences” (Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009, p. 7) in a variety of settings and educational contexts, including “life experiences, formal and informal education, human resources and training, faculty development programs, distance education, co-operative extension, workplace,

professional development, and community settings” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 4). In the classroom and beyond, learners have numerous experiences that can synergistically lead to transformative learning (King, 2009), providing students with opportunities to explore new answers and perspectives. Ultimately, transformative learning is about changing students’ fundamental perspectives: “Transformative learning shapes people. They are different afterward, in ways both they and others recognize” (Clark, 1993, p. 47).

Transformational activity is, essentially, a process of making; making can be defined as one way of thinking and knowing (Ellsworth, 2006). May (1975) connects creativity to the particular mode of expression that resides in the making, noting that “creativity is basically the process of making: of bringing into being” (p. 40). Contemporary themes and theories of creativity reveal the inherent complexities of a synergistic expression of experience that presupposes the transformation of one’s understanding. Creative activity manifests in the changes made to relational and active ways of being in the world. We come to understand creativity as part of a continual process of extending consciousness in ways that enable us to receive openness towards ourselves and others in engaged acts of making; therein lies the power for transformation (Ellsworth, 2006; Gardner & Kelly, 2008).

Perspective transformation.

This research study aims to examine the conditions under which creative capacities can be developed at the graduate level of education. In particular, this study sets out to identify the ways in which university professors teach for “perspective transformation” by way of establishing opportunities for their students to engage in creative acts (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Perspective transformation involves a shift in perspective wherein current webs of knowledge are expanded through a process of critical self-reflection and discourse, leading the

learner towards a reconstruction of prevailing ideologies (Cranton, 2006; King, 2009; Wilcox, 2009). Students develop the ability to transform problematic frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets) by reframing their experiences with themselves and others to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2009; Moon, 2004). According to Mezirow (2000), transformations in frames or habits of mind may be “*epochal*, a sudden, dramatic, reorienting insight, or *incremental*, involving a progressive series of transformations in related points of view that culminate in a transformation in habit of mind” (p. 21). In either case, knowledge becomes increasingly sophisticated and informs subsequent actions and choices, which serve as indicators that a transformative learning experience has indeed occurred (Mezirow, 2009; Wilcox, 2009). In this process, learners concurrently develop the ability to modify their experiences with enhanced facility (Moon, 2004).

The development of creative capacities complements the basic premises and principles of transformative learning theory, such that a more inclusive, integrated, and holistic perspective is a fundamental part of a process of change. The pedagogical conditions necessary to support transformative learning can be facilitated through a holistic learning context that enables expressive, multi-modal ways of knowing. Creativity serves as a vehicle for accelerating the stages of transformation, as students engage in a series of changes that bring the imaginative, affective, and intuitive into consciousness with the rational (Taylor, 2006). Thus, it is important for teachers to allow learners to develop and transform through creative processes that encapsulate a complex range of experiences and ideas. A series of lived experiences of creativity initiate the embodiment of fresh perspectives that can be realized in the process of a whole-person transformation.

Toward a Holistic Approach to Transformative Learning

Building on his original set of theoretical perspectives, Mezirow's research on transformative learning continues to evolve (Kitchenham, 2008). Over the last two decades, several modifications to his theory of transformative learning have been made to acknowledge the value of extra-rational processes—namely intuitive, affective, imaginative, and artistic ways of knowing (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2009). In fact it was Mezirow who repeatedly reminded his colleagues of the need to bring various perspectives together to build and elaborate on transformative learning theory (Cranton & Taylor, 2003; Mezirow, 2000). Cranton (2006) asserts that moving beyond the cognitive way of processing holds the most promise for expanding the theory of transformative learning.

My research aims to be part of this evolution of transformative learning theory in a higher education context. The emergence of creative capacities demands multiple modes of intelligence to work in an integrated manner, and as such, my research will model itself on a holistic approach to transformative learning (Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; Pink, 2006; Robinson, 2001). In the last decade, an increasing number of scholars have advocated for initiating changes towards a more holistically-based curriculum in post-secondary education (Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003; Moore, 2005). This research study will attempt to show that pairing creativity with transformative learning has the capacity to transform the post-secondary course experience, by including teaching and learning perspectives that bring dynamic, complex, holistic approaches into practice.

Widely criticized by proponents for his overtly cognitive-rational approach, Mezirow (2009) acknowledges that many distinct elements act in concert to effect an individual transformation. Part of this recognition includes “an understanding that the arts are different

languages (or other ways of knowing) and intuition, imagination, and dreams are other ways of meaning-making” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 12) as compared to a logical, reason-based understanding. Further, Mezirow (2009) recognizes that intuition could be suitably substituted for critical self-reflection and admits that many transformative experiences occur outside of conscious awareness (Mezirow).

Mezirow (1995) suggests that imagination and creativity play key roles in transformation, but nonetheless points out that, “the core of the learning process itself is mediated largely through a process of reflecting rationally and critically on one’s assumptions and beliefs” (Dirkx, 1998, p. 4). While Mezirow mentions the role of imagination in the process, Dirkx (2000) notes that Mezirow’s treatment stops short of a definitive link between imagination and transformative learning. Mezirow’s work is vastly different from the contributions made by leading scholars devoted to work that emphasizes extra-rational, whole-person learning, such as in the work Boyd, Dirkx, Myers, and others (Cranton, 2006; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009). For this reason, the literature focused on the role of imaginative, intuitive, affective, and artistic dimensions will also be explored to create a balanced, holistic perspective on transformative learning theory (Cranton & Roy, 2003).

In studies of small group learning, Boyd and Myers (1988) use Jungian theory to describe the movement between the inner and outer, unconscious and subconscious parts of self. The participants involved in the study were part of an experiential component of a university course focused on the dynamics of small group instruction. The experiences of the participants revealed that moments of transformation were characterized as being intimately tied to “critical insights, develop[ed] fundamental understandings, and acts with integrity” (Boyd & Myers, 1988, p. 262). From their initial observations, Boyd and Myers conceptually analyzed their findings using

principles of depth psychology, thereby taking the unconscious into account; they were thus able to discern that through creative means, one's personality can change. These processes are founded on the idea that our everyday behaviour is strongly influenced by our unconscious selves (Dirkx, 2000). Boyd and Myers (1988) describe transformation as a personality change that is elicited by both the resolution of a personal dilemma and an expansion of conscious awareness. Similarly, in Gardner and Kelly's (2008) study, participants found that the education process unlocked the key to inner knowledge, and their sense of what it is to be human was shaped and crafted by the interactions with self and other. Facilitated by the use of symbols, images, and archetypes, the work of Boyd and Myers and Gardner and Kelly, establishes the intuitive and emotional processes through which transformations are realized and self-knowledge increased.

Hoggan et al. (2009) propose that the concept of multiple ways of knowing is closely connected to transformative learning. The authors explain that multiple ways of knowing should be invited into the learning experience in interactive ways, in order to supplement cognitive, rational thought with the affective, spiritual, imaginal, somatic, and artistic (Hoggan et al., 2009). Moving toward a holistic perspective of transformative learning is part of a theory of progress, wherein "the rational and extra-rational, the cognitive and emotional, the reflective and imaginative, and the individual and collective can and may co-exist" (Cranton & Roy, 2003, p. 95). An inclusive recognition of expressive, artistic ways of knowing in transformative learning theory emphasizes the significant role that these particular modes of thinking and being play in a creative, transformative learning experience. Student experiences that thread creativity and transformation in a collaborative manner resonate holistically as potential pathways to a deeply engaged process of revelation and renewal. The reconstruction of student experiences in higher

education will require contemporary perspectives of teaching and learning and an open-mindedness regarding new teaching practices and approaches (Cropley, 2001; Moore, 2005). Detailed development of a balanced, holistic approach may help to facilitate and foster creativity-driven transformations in the classroom context. Educational moments that inspire these creative transformations will demand a more sophisticated pedagogical practice and self-reflexivity on the part of both student and teacher (Gardner & Kelly, 2008).

Pedagogical Conditions for Transformative Learning

A critical dimension of transformative learning pedagogy focuses on relational ways of knowing. *Relationality* can be understood as a complex web of interconnections, made in the classroom, that transcend cognitive tasks involved in transformative learning (Gardner & Kelly, 2008; Taylor, 1998). Holistic, whole-person transformation can be initiated by creative capacities, as dispositions and attitudes shift in shared, subtle human interactions (Pink, 2006). Gardner and Kelly (2008) and Pink (2006) argue that these relationships are primarily developed and nurtured in our daily social practices, wherein we connect our ideas in dialogic-relational ways. A significant implication of these theoretical perspectives is the need to support a creative and transformation-focused experience by incorporating opportunities for students to interact through dialogue and activity (Cranton, 2002; Moore, 2005).

According to Ellsworth (2006), our relationship with the outer world is mutually transforming. It is through relationships that we can create and innovate. Relational thinking is fundamental to our embodied existence; that is, “to inhabit a body is to be continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them” (Ellsworth, 2006, p. 4). Collaboration is one type of relationality. When we collaborate, we are making

something in relation to others. Mezirow (2000) describes the importance of collaborative inquiry in the process of transformation. He states:

They [adult educators] make every effort to transfer their authority over the learning group to the group itself as soon as this is feasible, and they become collaborative learners. They model and share their commitment and act on their convictions by encouraging and assisting learners to critically assess the validity of norms from alternative perspectives, arrive at best tentative judgments through discourse, and effectively act on them. (p. 31)

In a study of improvisation training at DePaul University's School for New Learning, it became clear to researchers that "the social, relational, and intersubjective dimensions of learning improvisation were central to the experiences of transformation" (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 148). The shared relational space provided a forum for holding the creative tension; a process of collaborative inquiry heightened the students' awareness and attunement with and through one another.

Relationality is part of a connected approach to transformative learning, wherein learning is situated in and amongst the building of relationships with others (Cranton, 2006). In a relational pedagogy, our relationships can be described as experiential and experimentalist as we explore the learning self in a series of significant, affective ties that teach and transform (Ellsworth, 2006); teaching and learning events that put students in relation take place in a complex, dynamic web and often compel students to transition towards integrative and holistic ways of seeing the world (Davis et al., 2008). Building constructive, healthy human relationships requires empathic listening, caring, and nurturing on the part of each individual within a group (Cranton, 2006). In a shared classroom practice, the opportunity to engage diverse perspectives in a democratic fashion holistically honours the learner's voice and strengthens the relationships that enable us to create in mutually transforming ways (Thayer-Bacon, 2004; Ellsworth, 2006).

Davis et al. (2008) affirm that “teaching and learning are not about convergence onto a pre-existent truth, but about divergence—about broadening what is knowable, doable, and beable” (p. 184). It is this act of broadening that provides an environment of challenge for students and teachers alike. A classroom dynamic that expands the space of what is possible presupposes that, in the process of helping students transform, the teacher develops an authentic practice and a willingness to transform (Cranton, 2006; Davis et al., 2008; Taylor, 2006). Cranton (2006) suggests that providing a safe, inclusive, and open learning environment is fundamental to fostering transformative learning. Moreover, an ideal transformative classroom is built on the notion of reciprocity (Taylor, 2006). In the teacher’s role, reciprocity involves modelling critical reflection and challenging oneself. As a result of this modelling, students themselves are likely to demonstrate a willingness to “evoke the interdependency that makes the process of transformation and teaching transparent and synergistic” (Taylor, 2006, p. 94).

In order for the type of deep, significant learning that typifies transformation to occur, Cranton (2002, 2006) and McConigal (2005) provide a list of strategies that should be considered and incorporated into the rituals of classroom practice. In the process of incorporating these conditions and processes, educators should be prepared to strike a delicate balance between challenge and support (McConigal, 2005). These teaching and learning strategies include: (a) creating an activating event, (b) articulating assumptions, (c) making time and space for critical self-reflection, (d) being open to alternatives, (e) engaging in critical discourse, revision of assumptions and perspectives, and (f) acting on revisions (Cranton, 2002; McConigal, 2005). Implementing these strategies to foster intellectual openness and transformative learning necessitates a shift “from self-serving debate to empathetic listening and informed constructive discourse” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 12). Boyd and Myers (1988) suggest that facilitating a process of

transformative learning requires instructors who practice seasoned guidance and compassionate criticism. As Taylor (2006) aptly puts it, “fostering transformative learning is about teaching for change” (p. 1).

The pedagogical conditions that support transformation overlay with the aspects of teaching and learning that foster creative development and ways of thinking. Both recognize the need to provide a challenging environment that strikes a balance between openness and safety to encourage risk-taking. Other overlapping similarities reside in key ideas of relationality, collaboration, and making. New connections with others and changes in discourse contribute to crafting an experience that inspires the type of deep learning often associated with creative and transformative endeavours.

Consequently, a primary goal of my research is to examine the construction of a thoughtful pedagogy—that is, a pedagogical philosophy and practice that strives for educational relevance through acts of self-awareness and social knowledge (Gardner & Kelly, 2008). Complex layers of self and social knowledge form a pedagogical link between transformative learning and creativity, as students stretch themselves in pursuit of purpose and meaning in a wider community context that extends beyond the boundaries of higher education (Gardner & Kelly, 2008; Pink, 2006).

Transforming Higher Education

Several scholarly studies provide a basis for considering transformative learning in higher education, specifically in drawing upon experiential and collaborative pedagogies as primary means for facilitating students’ experiences of transformation. The results of the following two studies of transformative learning indicate a desire and interest to pursue further research in these

areas that, as of late, have been deemed to be valuable, necessary, and potentially life-altering opportunities for students in a post-secondary education setting.

In her accounts of graduate school education, Moore (2005) identified models of interdisciplinary education that incorporate elements of transformative, experiential, and collaborative learning into the curricula. Through a review of the pertinent literature and a series of reflections on her own experiences of teaching and learning in academia, Moore examined the merits of adjusting the focus of university education to foster transformative learning. With outdated structures saturating the majority of theory and practice in academia, Moore points out that “universities are not living up to their potential as leaders in questioning the status quo, challenging paradigms, and openly practicing new ways of living, thinking, teaching, and learning” (p. 78). In her role as a graduate student, Moore recognized the need for a change in practices in the classroom, but noticed few professors engaging in alternative pedagogies to make a theory of transformation a reality.

Moore (2005) distinguishes three models for learning: cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and transformative learning. These models encourage movement away from the common lecture format, towards approaches that engage the learner through group interaction. Based on her experiences, Moore concludes that to facilitate transformative learning, educators must be experienced and have the proper support mechanisms in place. Further, to assist students and teachers in a process of transformation, she recommends that more time be provided in class for reflection and support. With an extensive overview of the literature on transformative learning and her experiences as both student and teacher, Moore’s study clearly demonstrates that current models of teaching and the institutional structures in place often inhibit rather than invite students to transform.

Duerr, Zajonc, and Dana (2003) examine the strategies necessary to support a transformative learning movement in higher education. They claim that the time is ripe for such improvements, given that individual efforts to incorporate transformative learning are spreading from classrooms into growing networks of program development.

Duerr et al.'s (2003) survey of a wide range of secular and religious-based North American universities and colleges documented academic programs that incorporate transformative elements of learning. Their survey employed three methods for data collection: (a) a questionnaire with multiple choice and open-ended items; (b) in-depth interviews with key leaders of transformative education movements; and (c) shorter, qualitative phone interviews to follow up with selected questionnaire respondents (Duerr et al., 2003). Findings from the questionnaire captured responses from a wide variety of positions in academia, including professors, deans, chaplains, students, and directors of various campus programs.

In Duerr et al.'s (2003) study, collaborative learning and experiential pedagogies are named as the most commonly used teaching methodologies to facilitate transformative learning, followed by the use of contemplative practices, autobiographical techniques, service learning, and creative or artistic experiences. The questionnaire findings suggest an emphasis on whole-person education—a balanced approach to transformative learning that encompasses mind, body, and soul. According to Jack Miller, a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, “holistic education is education that deals with the whole person, the wholeness of experience, and the interconnection of experience” (as cited in Duerr et al., 2003, p. 187). A prominent theme emerging from the interview data shows that the inclusion of transformative learning is widely credited with bringing a dimension of wholeness to the educational experience.

Duerr et al. (2003) also completed four case studies as part of their examination of higher education. Two of the case studies examined transformative learning pedagogy in classroom settings, while the other two cases focused on program and curricular development. Overall, findings revealed that transformative classroom learning was characterized as being value-full, as it situated important world issues as central to challenging and questioning taken-for-granted assumptions. In the transformative classrooms, journaling techniques were explored to heighten the personal dimension of the experience. In terms of content, instructors often led students to discover hidden assumptions, fears, and prejudices through the use of provocative material. In general, there was much time for deep reflection on the activities in an attempt to form deeper expressions and impressions of the learning experience. The dialectical and close relationship shaped between teacher and student in classrooms of transformative learning spoke to the high degree of compassion and challenge that was fostered in each case (Duerr et al., 2003).

At the program and department level, the case studies demonstrated the obstacles and challenges of incorporating transformative learning. Barriers to inclusion of these principles across the full curriculum included issues of funding, time, and teacher training (Duerr et al., 2003). Once these issues had been dealt with, the responses suggested that more thought had gone into the overarching theoretical framing of the program than into a consideration of the practical implications of incorporating these pedagogical ideas program-wide. The results from the post-secondary programs demonstrated a great deal of interest in expanding the possibilities for transformative learning within departments and across disciplines in post-secondary classrooms.

Findings from the studies by Moore (2005) and Duerr et al., (2003) in higher education settings confirm that contemporary theories of creativity and transformative learning can be

effectively applied in interdisciplinary classroom contexts. Creative acts of expression and artistic ways of knowing emerge as one of the main methodological approaches for facilitating transformation (Duerr et al., 2003). In both studies, experiential and collaborative approaches to learning are found to facilitate student transformation, and to be directly tied to the novel approaches employed to foster creative capacities in the classroom (Cropley, 2001; Duerr et al., 2003; Moore, 2005).

Future course design and development in higher education will require a flexible, open approach to learning if it is to invite similar moments of creativity and transformation into the classroom. My dissertation research offers insight into the pedagogical design and the creative drivers that enable transformative learning. Additionally, my study highlights teaching and learning moments that nurture student transformation by employing creativity-promoting pedagogies that enable students to discover and construct their own meaning (Cranton, 2002; Cropley, 2001). According to the literature, a transformation in higher education can be facilitated by moving the pedagogical site away from traditionally based methods of lectures and labs, and towards project-based learning, collaborative teams, reflective journals, learning portfolios, and problem-based learning (Cropley, 2001; Duerr et al., 2003; Moore, 2005). In my dissertation, I explore the various teaching and learning strategies applied to encourage creative capacities and elicit a transformation-focused experience.

Summary

The literature considered in this chapter provides an overview of contemporary theories relevant to the study of creativity as an enabling condition for transformative learning. In an effort to innovate curriculum and practice in higher education, inevitable tensions and dilemmas surround creative change (Craft, 2005; Davis et al., 2008; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Robinson,

2001). Despite these ongoing challenges, my research asserts the value in providing opportunities to personally express and critically reflect, to engage multiple ways of knowing, and to encourage team-based inquiry and collaboration as transformative forces at individual, group, and societal levels. In support of leading meaningful, fulfilled lives that extend out into the world, I put forward creative engagement as a primary, enabling condition for transforming higher education.

The next chapter explores and describes teaching and learning experiences from the first of three cases explored in this dissertation. Using self-study, narrative, and auto-ethnography approaches, I chronicle my experiences as a graduate student in a PhD course, Contemporary Curriculum Theory, at the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. This exploratory study frames my perspectives on adult education in a university setting and helps me to articulate my own transformation-focused experience of creativity.

CHAPTER THREE

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Methodology

As a graduate student enrolled in Dr. Rebecca Luce-Kapler's Contemporary Curriculum Theory (EDUC 911), I undertook an exploratory study as part of my dissertation work. I completed EDUC 911—a required course in the curriculum studies stream at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University—in my second year of the PhD program. In my position as participant researcher in this PhD seminar course, I critically examined my own experiences as a learner through a lens of transformative learning theory and served as the main “measurement device” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7). After the course was completed, I held discussions with my instructor and my classmates to glean insights into their teaching and learning experiences. For the exploratory study, I made a reputational case selection based on the recommendation of three professors with expertise in the fields of creativity and transformative learning. Their collective recommendation, along with my suggestion to examine my own experience in an education course, provided an ideal intensity sample for exploration—an information-rich case that manifested the phenomenon of study intensely (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The phenomenological orientation developed by Moustakas (1994) is reflected in this exploratory study. I wrote descriptions of my own experiences in relation to the phenomenon of study. I conducted the first and second stages of analysis for a phenomenological study with a conceptual analysis that informed subsequent stages of analysis in the later multiple-case study. The exploratory study informed my subsequent choices in terms of data collection instruments, research questions, participant sampling strategies, and the overall conceptual framework for the

dissertation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In particular, the exploratory findings: (a) informed links and relationships made between creativity and transformative learning in the research questions for the multiple-case study; (b) shaped my interview questions away from educational jargon (e.g., the word *change* replaced *transformation* in several cases); (c) underscored the necessity of parameters for the main constructs of creativity and transformative learning, which precipitated the addition of short surveys; and (d) delineated my own lived experiences as a graduate student to enhance my own descriptions and understandings of creativity as a driver for transformative learning in advance of the multiple-case study.

Ethics clearance and participants.

In April of 2012, I gained ethics clearance to conduct discussions with one course instructor and five female students once the course was completed (see GREB letter in Appendix A). Discussions were completed by the end of May. For the exploratory study, I purposefully recruited participants from amongst my classmates in the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course during the winter term of 2011. Purposeful sampling was applied because I expected that each informant would be a rich source of both insight regarding the phenomenon and information on the topic of study (Patton, 2002). Selecting classmates as participants meant that I described my individual experience of what it was to be a participant-observer in the socially situated context of the course. The instructor was selected to provide insights regarding her pedagogical practice. As participating members in an open group context, both students and teacher were asked to share their perspectives on a variety of topics related to creativity and transformative learning experiences.

Data collection.

Over a period of 12 weeks, I collected field notes based on classroom activities, conversations, and interactions. In addition, I generated a series of reflections, narratives, and artistic representations (paintings, collages, and photographs) throughout the term as an alternative expression of my changing and developing ideas, which enhanced my understanding of the conscious and subconscious activity. These acts of creative expression make sense of some of the underlying thinking and the development of ways of thinking that were new, exciting, and transformative. Specifically, in this phase of the research I sought to answer the following research questions: (a) Which of the instructor-created pedagogical conditions invited creativity? (b) How did creative acts enable a change in perspective? (c) How did the experiences gained in this course context inform a conceptual framework for a later, multiple-case study?

Discussions with instructor and classmates.

I conducted informal discussions with the instructor on June 14, 2011 and with my colleagues on June 23, 2011 and recorded these sessions using Garage Band. The discussion with Dr. Rebecca Luce-Kapler lasted 45 minutes, while the discussion with the group of four students was 2.5 hours in duration. Discussion questions were prepared in advance (see Appendix B). During the discussions, I asked participants to share their perspectives on a range of topics that included transformative learning, creativity, pedagogical conditions, and relational dynamics in the context of their course experiences. Dr. Rebecca Luce-Kapler's identity as the instructor of the course was revealed in the reporting of the data and pseudonyms were used for the student participants.

The discussions allowed the participants to share their stories on a continuum that

extended from open, exploratory conversations to pre-determined, structured, single-answer formats. Moreover, there was much opportunity to gain insight into the feelings, experiences, opinions, and knowledge of the participant, based on the questions being asked. The semi-structured, open-ended discussion format proved to be an effective way of accessing the participants' perspectives in regards to their individual and collective experiences of creativity and transformative learning. The questions began broadly and then transitioned into "local perceptions and categorizations of experience" (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 497); this approach afforded the participants the opportunity to gain more confidence and become comfortable with the discussion at hand before delving into the more detailed and challenging questions.

The data gathered allowed me to corroborate the findings with my own experiences, and the variety of dimensions that participants focused on during their accounts allowed me to broaden my perspective of transformative learning. Insights from Rebecca and her students helped identify the types of classroom-based activities and interactions associated with the building of creative capacities. Additionally, detailed descriptions of participant experiences harboured moments of transformative learning and illuminated the pedagogical circumstances attributed to enabling them. Lastly, the insights gained from this phase of the study helped to establish detailed criteria for some standardized instrumentation for the later, multiple-case study. As a result of the exploratory study, I decided to include: (a) classroom observation measures, for creativity; (b) transformative learning and creativity surveys, as a comprehensive exploratory tool and a means for probing during interviews; and (c) refined interview questions that avoided educational jargon that might limit discovery of the essence of the participants' lived experience.

Purpose and Intent

This exploratory study tells a story—and it's mine, it's yours, it's theirs, and it's ours. To tell this story is to bring to life a series of events, of poignant nodal moments of my academic journey as a learner and teacher—that is, to weave the intricate, multiple identities of the personal with the professional, to explore with a critical lens the life lived, hoped, imagined, considered. Combinations of paradoxically poignant ingredients create unexpected, flavored narratives. Veiled in vulnerability, I share, expose, entertain, and perhaps ascertain the post-modern sentiments of *Am I?* and *How am I?* I stretch beyond what I know to the experiences that have shaped how I have come to know and act in the world, which is at the heart of transformative learning (Baumgartner, 2001). Breathing life into a text involves assembling a collection of memories, personal histories, and anecdotal accounts that are endlessly complex and that, perhaps, can only ever be partial. I am reminded of the idea that transformation is more powerful than change and is etched in a holistic perspective that integrates knowing, doing, and being as one (Cranton, 2006; Davis et al., 2008; Pink, 2006).

Shifts that are all at once gradual and dramatic have the potential to alter ideas in radical, perhaps controversial, and certainly surprising ways. These shifts require one to question habits of mind in an engaged process that critically challenges the taken-for granted-assumptions in both our words and our actions. After taking in as much as I possibly can in one academic term, I am finally able to find space to reflect as I write about the moments that move beyond words. By capturing moving stills of thinking and feeling, I honour a portfolio of arts-informed experiences with authenticity rather than with the performativity that often stems from pressure to fabricate professional roles and identities in the university setting (Wilcox, 2009). In the context of classroom interactions, creative conceptualizations unravel the conscious layers of these

experiences. Embodied knowing is imprinted on these educational events with tacit intuitive imaginings. Vivid images, symbols, and momentary snapshots provide a commentary to “invoke the corporeal, sensuous, and political nature of experience” (Jones, 2005, p. 767).

The exploratory study drew on elements of auto-ethnography, self-study, and narrative, in order to showcase the range of experiences in which creativity served as a catalyst for change (Hamilton, Smith, & Worthington, 2008). Often all three methodologies were at work, enhancing the critical representation of my experiences as a graduate student. Throughout the winter term of 2011, I made conscious choices about the ways in which each of these methodological approaches enabled a deeper, more sophisticated examination of my own encounters with creativity as a driving force for transformative learning. In many cases, the commonplaces of the curriculum (Schwab, 1973) centred on a cultural context research design (auto-ethnography), saturated with stories (narrative), which aimed to highlight the practiced improvement of individual and collective educational experiences (self-study).

Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) describe self-study as the study of “one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the ‘not self’” (p. 32). The authors further point out that self-study “draws on one’s life, but is more than that—it involves a thoughtful look, art texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered—aspects that are investigated for their connections with and relationships to practice” (p. 32). For Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), Hamilton et al. (2008), and Wilcox (2009), self-study maintains clearly defined characteristics that help to establish its position as a legitimate form of research among the traditions of qualitative work. In this type of research, one must be self-initiated and focused to convincingly play the role of self as instrument. The acknowledgment of this positionality will allow me to frame my biases as a researcher in situated inquiry that attends to the context of a course in

guiding framework to organize my ideas and experiences. Using these conceptual aptitudes in relation to my contextualized classroom experiences, I conducted an analysis of my experience as a graduate student in the Contemporary Curriculum Theory Course. Pink proposes non-linear, intuitive, holistic approaches to learning as the key to professional achievement and personal satisfaction in adulthood. He dedicates a chapter for each of the aptitudes he describes as “high concept” and “high touch” abilities necessary for the Conceptual Age, as each aptitude relates to the components and processes involved in creative learning. Pink uses the term high concept to describe one’s ability to “create artistic and emotional beauty, to detect patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into a novel invention” (p. 51). According to Pink, high touch involves the ability “to empathize, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joys in one’s self and to elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian, in pursuit of purpose and meaning” (p. 52). Pink’s ideas ring true with the conceptual ideas brought forth by my experiences in EDUC 911 and, as such, provide an exemplary micro and macro structure that aligns aspects of the aptitudes with the essence of the course dynamic.

The exploratory study examines the extent to which this learning experience provided opportunities for me to develop and display these aptitudes. The vignettes, based on the six aptitudes named by Pink (2006), highlight data collected in my dual role as a graduate student and researcher with a situated context of the collective classroom. Pink posits that Western society has been dominated by a particular way of thinking and a way of life for the last century, which he describes as being “narrowly reductive and deeply analytical” (p. 2). Further, he makes the claim that we are shifting towards an era known as “The Conceptual Age” (p. 3). According to Pink, this is an era propelled by modern forces that include globalization, consumerism, and

technology, and is led by the re-emergence of individual and societal valuing of conceptual thinking that is driven by creative endeavour. In the next section of this chapter, I explore Pink's six aptitudes—play, story, design, empathy, symphony, and meaning—and use his framework to thematically organize the data from my exploratory study. In the context of the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course, I endeavour to investigate the nature of teaching and learning experiences and their intersections with the PhD program and with my adult life.

Play.

Pink's (2006) first aptitude, which he aptly names play, embraces laughter, lightheartedness, games, and humour as integral components for quality living and learning. As part of a portfolio of expressive ways of knowing, Pink argues that making room for spirited, frolicsome activity will generate a sense of inner peace, centredness, and joyfulness. Experiencing a range of these components in the class has awakened a playfulness in me—a part of me which has been buried for a long time in my role as an academic. In this classroom setting, these playful qualities emerged in many forms, which can be primarily attributed to the tone of the teaching and the creative interactions. Active participation, collaboration, and relationality were key themes in my experience and in my endeavour to intuit the emotional experiences therein (Baumgartner, 2001; Ellsworth, 2006; Pink, 2006).

The tone of teaching played a vital role in setting up the space for pedagogical thoughtfulness and playfulness. The instructor, Rebecca, began discussions, which she labelled “mini lessons,” with enthusiasm, continued with an improvisational preparedness, and followed through with a sensitivity and attunement to the students and the situations that ensued (van Manen, 2002). These mini lessons were developed around the idea of “enabling constraints” (Davis et al., 2008, p. 193). Rebecca mindfully planned the context and conditions for each

session so that “all of the possibilities in this particular situation might come forward or could come forward potentially” (RLK, EDUC911, D). She sensed the significance of those moments of teaching and learning that were evoked through the carefully selected questions and activities. In Rebecca’s attempt to “create connections among people,” she would find ways to “get people working together to learn something, do something.” It was in these acts of making and doing where the “group [became] more powerful than the individual” (RLK, EDUC911, D). Additionally, a playfully light attitude supported an air of creativity and encouraged a sensibility regarding the challenging rigour of graduate work. Rebecca’s warmth, gentle smile, and witty spirit invited the students to openly engage in artful and fun-loving ways that encouraged a true rendering of each individual’s nature and a “genuine engagement and transformation for other people and their pieces” (RLK, EDUC911, D).

Humour became a common way to release the anxiety and stress related to some of the demanding course work. Often, our capacity to reflect on the seriousness of our work with lightheartedness brought us back into balance and added a dimension of shared understanding within the group. According to Taylor (2000), placing students “at the centre of their learning in a critically reflective and social group setting contribute[s] to transformation” (p. 155). Through classroom activities such as our reading and reflections on *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne, we were able to explore the whimsical and playful pairing of poetic text and illustrations and to explore different ways of thinking about text, such as finding meaning in the ways that we make sense of images, bodies, and our imaginings of the world. Encouraged to read “with, through, and beyond the text” (Luce-Kapler, 2004), this exercise was able to “capitalize on the interrelationship between critical reflection and affective learning” (Saavedra, 1995, p. 156) in such a way that the lively activity of literary analysis became transformative in nature.

This process took on the life of a game—“a most elevated form of investigation” (Einstein, as cited in Pink, 2006, p. 191)—as we were asked to find places in the text where the theory was enacted in certain ways.

My perspectives were broadened: I became attuned to the theories that facilitated a more sophisticated understanding of the layers of my experience. Taking notice of the many layers of reality, challenging my taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations, and making room for the affective responses to these positions was so unsettling, and thought-provoking that it has forever changed the way that I perceive literary works. Part of the process of perspective transformation was imagining things as being different (Brookfield, 2002; Mezirow, 1990): “In many subtle ways, literature conveys values because—or to the extent that—it allows students to re-imagine and then to live and experience the images of the text” (O’Reilly, 1993, p. 26). As I entered into the literary world, my transformation of consciousness was central to acknowledging the context that “develops the habits of mind that develop curriculum theorizing” (RLK, EDUC911, CO). According to Rebecca, suggesting, shaping, and changing the curricular conversation, requires “us to be the theorists, rather than for others to do that for you. Citing allows for that conversation to take place, but the idea is to find your own scholarly voice among the conversation—finding your way in” (RLK, EDUC911, CO).

We were guided to use theoretical perspectives and to begin to connect them to voices. Being given the permission to explore Browne’s (1999) artistic work in *Voices in the Park* through an open analysis of text and imagery in ways that might be considered alternative to rational thinking provided an outlet for playfulness in an academic context. Imaginative, intuitive, and affective ways of knowing were considered legitimate in this classroom context, which ultimately opened the doors to a full-bodied experience of transformation:

Pedagogy is approached as an unsettling and always unsettled question of design: the design of learning experiences that set teachers and students in relation to the future as open and to teaching and learning as always in the making, never guaranteed and never achieved. This undecidability creates the opportunity for a pedagogy in which we come to know the world by acting in it, making something of it, and doing the never-ending work and play of responding to what our actions make occur—both inside and outside. (Ellsworth, 2006, p. 56)

Story.

Story can be described as moving beyond argument. Pink (2006) uses the idea of story to represent the essence of communication and self-understanding in the form of a compelling narrative. During Rebecca's course, I experienced this aptitude through generative narratives that evolved from an intense, at times painful, and often-uncomfortable exploration of self. As I probed further and delved deeper, there was a "willingness to let go of where [I] was at and move on" (RLK, EDUC911, D).

The process pedagogy at work in this class afforded me an opportunity to delineate the transformational nature of my learning through a variety of keyword writing exercises, performed both during and after my reflections of the course. Keyword exercises were completed once a week for the first six weeks. All students in the class were expected to complete the course readings, and from these readings select a keyword or phrase that would inspire a written piece, which would be read out loud to one another each week. Keywords were not graded. Instead, after being read aloud, they were discussed, deconstructed at times, examined through particular theoretical lenses, and put back together following student and instructor constructive feedback, both verbal and written in nature.

During the first class, we were asked to prepare our first keywords and to share them with one another. Still new to the concepts and people in the class, the nervous, unsure, and uneasy feeling stirring inside of me was heightened. As we each went around the table and read our

prepared papers aloud, the shakiness in my voice was carried out on the surface of shallow gasps. I read my passage and made it through the assigned task, barely though, and I instinctually knew that there needed to be more of something; I just had to figure out what that something would be (minor detail!!). Afterwards my professor gently nudged me to rewrite for the following week. I took on the challenge, preparing two keyword exercises for the second week of class. Without a doubt, this was one of the most significant academic challenges that I faced in the course, and perhaps in my PhD program. Exploring the gamut of emotions humanly possible that week at my writing desk provided me with a backdrop for what would emerge from these new works—something exciting, meaningful, and deeply personal—one could even consider these emergent writings to have been exemplars of mini-c-creativity.

Intuitive, imaginative, and affective processes in recognizing, naming, and noticing details from our classroom experiences became a central part of the process of writing, reading, and telling stories (Dirkx, 2000). Every week, we read and reflected on poignant literary texts that purposefully threaded the themes and theories of contemporary curriculum. And we shared our stories, read aloud for all to hear. We provided constructive feedback for one another: an analysis that married theory with praxis spun in a web of complex educational issues, questions, and dilemmas. In this case, it was the power of communal participation and the interaction with transformative text that helped to facilitate and contribute to my perspective transformation (Taylor, 2006). One of my classmates spoke to the embedded complexity of change that lived in the classroom space in her suggestion that, “we were learning to build theory from within rather than reiterate theory from without . . . and that was huge and there was transformation” (Lucia, EDUC911, CO). A safe, open, and trusting classroom environment that allowed for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback supported a tone of perspective

transformation and enabled me to write from the deepest reaches of my experience (Baumgartner, 2001). These pedagogical conditions were all in place and played an integral role in fostering transformative learning as story in the classroom.

A significant part of the challenge of keyword writing was navigating the balance between the freedom to create and the accompanying limitations to satisfy explicit and implicit expectations. Several other students in the class described the act of shared writing as the “most transformative activity” (Clara, EDUC911, CO) and at times “extremely personal” (Bonnie, EDUC911, CO). One student noted that these writing exercises changed the dynamic of the class, which was created by “a vagueness in the environment . . . so not only did the group become trusting of one another but I think that the idea that came across was that you needed to trust yourself” (Clara, EDUC911, CO). Another student noted the changing dynamic, stating “It’s shifting responsibility from the instructor to the learner, where it’s being guided but it’s so organic and it’s so dependent on what you do with that” (Lucia, EDUC911, CO).

At times, this vagueness and responsibility created moments that were described by the group as “highly emotional like a rawness that always felt quite vulnerable . . . from a place that we have to dig deeper into ourselves rather than into our brains” (Rhiannon, EDUC911, CO) and in many cases as “frustrating, confusing, complicated, awkward, overwhelming, enraging” as well as “eye-opening, new, sincere, surprising, and thrilling” (EDUC911, CO). These acts of keyword writing transformed perspectives about the potential possibilities for academic work through the gracious sharing of a finessed piece of writing.

The instructor and the students espoused the view that this particular classroom dynamic, which at times “felt like a women's writing group,” (Rhiannon, EDUC911, CO), maintained “a wonderful synergy in the way that things moved, it almost had it's own waves” (Lucia,

EDUC911, D). All were in consensus, including the instructor, that the experience “might not have been the same had you planted one other person” (Lucia, EDUC911, D). Keyword writing contributed to the dynamic movement towards a transformative experience for most of the students, highlighted by the following captivating image:

For me, the process [of keyword writing] was very sensory. I don't even have a lot of language around that but it was just a feeling of being surrounded, of being comforted, of being exposed all of the gamut of emotions and feeling as though you were being pulled, although gently, towards the same place. (Lucia, EDUC911, D)

Keywords were connected to the course readings and were selectively grounded in topics of interest, personal choice, and preference: multitudinous questions of teaching and learning that I cared deeply about were explored through inspired written response. The instructor's expectation for the keyword exercise was that it would “create balance among the voices rather than having one or two voices dominate . . . you push people and watch what happens, you push them both quietly and individually with your response to keywords” (RLK, EDUC911, D). One student described the generative process involved in developing a keyword. She explained:

The act of individual reading that we then shared and that it could be highly interpretive in terms of its structure, form, or connection to what we had been doing was a “wow” factor every time that we met because of the ways in which we had all interpreted...we had all made webbed connections that came to a centrepont. You could not have planned the connections that came up in our discussions or in or writing. (Lucia, EDUC911, D)

Rebecca also spoke about this deep-seated connection that arose, which she described as “a group response rather than an individual response.” Once the keyword-writing portion was complete (about halfway through the course), Rebecca pointed out the influence that this group process had in setting the tone and dynamic for the remainder of the term. She noted:

When it starts to extend beyond just talking about the writing and the ideas and people start to become personally invested in each other that says to me that they're paying attention to the bodily presence and the life experience of the

people not just what their minds are doing. . . . I noticed this physical connection in that room and that was very palpable. (RLK, EDUC911, D)

The process pedagogy of keyword writing led to many moments of critical self-reflection, wherein nuanced transformations were evidenced in the shift of an expression of ideas on the printed page. Keyword writing exercises provided me with a forum in which to revise perspectives through daily musings, an ongoing ritual of dialogue within the collective context, and an opportunity to act on these revisions, all of which are considered central tenets for inviting transformative learning to occur (Cranton, 2006). Cranton notes that an environment of challenge enables students to articulate assumptions and to become more open to alternatives, which are key pedagogical conditions necessary for fostering transformative learning. Developing an ability to transmit self-understanding to others and to discover ways to mediate experience with “a language that takes our emotions seriously and gives them real weight in our lives encourages us to think and be and act differently” (O’Reilly, 1993, p, 59).

Much of the writing in this course was an attempt to represent the experience of consciousness and to share it with people. In the first 6 weeks of keyword writing, we were constantly engaged in the creation of a vicarious experience that could aptly be described as a sensory-oriented “remembered present” (RLK, EDUC911, FN), drawn to witness the phenomenon in our mind’s eye. The profound influences of this process are revealed in the following stream of consciousness piece, which I wrote just a few weeks into the keyword writing sessions, in response to my experiences of the course:

Writing creatively is a struggle at times. When I think too concretely about infusing a creative spirit through metaphor, poetic, and lyric line, it becomes debilitating at times. There have been several periods of writer’s block that I have experienced since the beginning of this course. When this happens, I continue to look at the questions that interest me, always coming back to what my passion is and how I can represent that understanding. As Rebecca says, it’s about finding my *centre of gravity*. (MT, EDUC911, J)

Finding a centre of gravity was a term that Rebecca often used to convey the pursuit of grounded and focused writing. As I became more conscious about finding my centre of gravity in a process of curriculum theorizing, aspects of creativity as a classroom condition emerged. The conditions and methods that invited creativity in the keyword exercises included: (a) free exploration of ideas, (b) experimentation in making connections between theoretical concepts, as I drew associations and disparate relationships together in prose, and (c) honouring of the holistic self in balance with the collective spirit. Another excerpt from the journal, written as I reflected on the classroom activity, revealed these insights:

Don't overthink your ideas. Be present to absorb your feelings, the essence of the lived experience. There is a different type of sharing here. It is supportive and encouraging, but it is also constructive and critical. We explore the writing in a variety of ways that allow for everyone to be part of the feedback process, which has enabled an exposure and variety of ideas on one very specific topic or idea. It generates a personal and a collective feel all at once, which has forced me to think about ways to develop my writing and my ideas with clarity, direction, a centre of gravity in a showing, not telling; a representation rather than a report. (MT, EDUC911, J)

The next section of this chapter features two short examples of keyword writings. The first one is from the first class. After reading it aloud, it was suggested that I make a second attempt at coming up with a writing piece that had a centre of gravity. Still a little unsure, but slightly more informed, having listened to the instructor's ideas and suggestions about keyword writing, I opted to rewrite the first keyword while writing the second keyword in the same week. It was an intense couple of days, but well worth it. I gradually began to reveal my centre of gravity with creative conceptualizations of the theoretical and practical ideas that were bouncing around in my brain and in my body. The example below is an excerpt from the first keyword that I wrote, based on a phrase from the reading: "Curriculum theory must begin at home but it must work on behalf of everyone" (Chambers, 1999, p. 148).

The development of an identity that is uniquely Canadian necessitates the understanding of a distinction from both our European and American counterparts and begs the question, “What does Canadian curriculum look like?” Canada’s pluralistic society foregrounds the players, places, and practices necessary for the cultivation and intentional direction of the values and ideals that are situated in a context intended for change. Curricular change resonates by way of including the voices of past, present, and future and is transformed through means of a generative, creative process that fuses, mixes, juxtaposes, interprets, blurs, and explores emerging, eclectic, embodied cultural acts. Moreover, an understanding of our diversity will lead us to ways of actively sharing and honouring one another’s histories whilst prompting us collectively to pass on conceptions of Canadian heritage with integrity. (MT, EDUC911, SW)

When I read this first excerpt now I think to myself—dull and undeniably uninspired. I am much more cognizant about the audience when creating work. I also make a very conscious attempt to draw upon an array of emotive and expressive qualities from my writing palette.

A second piece of writing is excerpted from the keyword exercises portion of my mid-term paper. In this excerpt, I write about expanding the space of what is possible, a notion central to complexity thinking that involves an openness to possibility as a teacher and as a learner. In this case, my writing had become less general, distanced, and clinical than in previous exercises. The excerpt below reveals a shift, a transformation in the ways and the extent to which I expressed myself creatively through a process of writing. My perception of my self as a writer has been changed in the process and has played an integral role in the shaping of my identity as an artist.

On the worn rug, there are brightly crafted boxes laid out in various parts of the room. I have laid them there for them. Awaiting their arrival, I pace about taking deep breaths in an attempt to avoid passing out from a mixed feeling of sporadic surges of adrenalin and nerves, that trickle down into the deep, bottomless pit that has dug its way into my stomach on account of another missed breakfast on yet another rushed morning before school. Still, after years of teaching this material and feeling a groove with so many students in my classes, I once again come face to face with the exhilarating thrill of the unknown, and consider the *as-yet unimagined* possibilities for creative work in the classroom. I do believe that this learning and teaching experience will be different than any other I’ve had before, a new group of students, with diverse backgrounds, interests, issues, questions, ideas, and insights; their own learning selves. And I recognize that I am different than before, informed and molded by past, present, and future

possibilities that swirl and twirl in relation to my inspired utopia of creative space courtesy of the aleatoric works of Cage, Schafer, Ives, and Riley, reminding me that no two performances are the same. (MT, EDUC911, CO)

Design.

Design is an aptitude that emphasizes the value of creating meaningful experiences, which move beyond functionality into a realm that is “beautiful, whimsical, and emotionally engaging” (Pink, 2006, p. 65). This study is primarily concerned with Pink’s ideas of design as they apply to the notion that developing a creative idea requires artistic sensibilities that draw on a combination of utility and significance. Certainly these criteria were met in our classroom, where creativity was intimately linked with notions of originality, novelty, and value. In a journal entry, I explored these concepts of creativity through an expression of design denoting the conditions that had been created to generate creativity:

Creativity surprises me in [EDUC] 911 through an unexpected opening up of self through the process of writing. Writing in a narrative style mostly, within the enabling constraints of any given exercise, I feel as though I have pushed my writing across boundaries never explored before. These untouched, unvisited places in the recesses of my mind are being sparked out of a necessity to perform as an academic, but also for larger truth seeking reasons that involve finding about more about what has brought me to this place of learning and what that means for the critical questions of Am I? and How am I? that give a postmodernist spin to the examination of one’s inner life. (MT, EDUC911, J)

These questions of methods and conditions that support creative acts continued to reverberate throughout my exploratory study; I found the most effective means for exploration was through writing. I revisited one of my research questions: In what ways is the pedagogical design of this graduate class facilitating a transformation of my perspectives? The following excerpt from my journal describes my impressions of the transformative learning that was driven by opportunities to be creative in the course:

Certainly I was aware that writing can and is, for many, a creative endeavour, but I think what has surprised and challenged my taken-for-granted assumptions the

most thus far, is the idea that this type of writing can be valued and ‘heard’ in an academic context. The mere notion of that is thrilling for me who has often experienced writing as a task best characterized as distanced, calculated, cold, clinical, and lacking in personhood. In the process of preparing writings on a weekly basis, I am gradually redefining for myself what it means to be an academic and increasing my understanding for the expressive medium that is writing. (MT, EDUC911, J)

The critical features that contributed to my changing perspective of academic writing are revealed in the aesthetics of the pedagogy. Ellsworth (2006) opined that creative teaching is at least as important as the ideas to be taught. By laying the foundation of general and specific knowledge base and skills, Rebecca was able to facilitate opportunities to explore the unknown and unexpected; in doing so, she exemplified the merit of Ellsworth’s argument:

Taking notice of details of the writing through literary theory, we carefully and closely read for rhythm, tone, word choice, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, alliteration, assonance, and many other characteristics and tools for evoking a connection to the reader. Our teacher has provided us an opportunity to develop the technical skills (close reading/ critical analysis) needed to understand how literature is structured. This is an exciting, in-depth, and highly detailed process that has challenged me to develop a more sophisticated view of curriculum by applying the concepts in multiple contexts that all at once seem extremely familiar and yet all together new. (MT, EDUC911, J)

The creative conditions designed for engaging in keyword exercises included: (a) trans-disciplinary extensions across the work; (b) a collaborative process in the writing and sharing of work; and (c) a place to develop the skills necessary to leap off to somewhere that brings together ideas, images, and visions that lead to seeing the world in a new and unexpected ways.

My conceptions of creativity in a higher education setting were challenged constantly through a design vernacular that involved “orchestrations of space, time, duration, movement, sensation, sound, text, image, interaction, juxtaposition, and invitation to surprise” (Ellsworth, 2006, p. 10). I created several artistic representations using mediums of collage, felting, acrylic painting, poetic representation, and photography—to explore aspects of theory in practice. One

evening, while enrolled in EDUC 911, I participated in a visual arts workshop outside of class that was led by one of the other students in the class. The premise of the workshop would be emergent in nature, and was centred on the notion of making room and space for multitudinous expressions. We were asked to find objects and materials that resonated with us and to find an emotional, intuitive place to do so. Continual encouragement was provided to avoid having the participants “over-think” their creative process. Initially we developed individual portraits that reflected a way of being, guided by the energy of the space, the materials, and the desire to express in beautiful, unique, and imaginative ways.

In the midst of our creative process, the instructor unexpectedly asked us to stop what we were doing at our individual stations and move on to another work of art in the studio. A sea of emotions spilled over me in waves of confusion, worry, and frenzy; caught up in currents of an exposed act, I felt pulled down by the undertow of the unknown. As I reluctantly moved away from the work that I felt was intimately linked and connected to me as a person, I began to open up to the idea that moving from the known to the unknown was integral to having a creative experience. Making my way through the pseudo-exhibit, I became a collector of moments and took note of the conditions of playfulness, freedom, and liveliness that established an opportunity for exploring and supporting ideas. A collaborative spirit gradually began to develop, as we were drawn to others’ work and the need to express and reflect on the emergent process. Eventually, we were asked to return to our original work and make any finishing touches.

When I revisited my original work, following the collective experience of working with the canvases, I realized that a new aesthetic tone had been created. When the workshop came to an end, the final product from each work station no longer seemed as important as the artistic moments that had led up to that point. The usefulness and novelty of the creative product was

represented in the dynamic nature of collective art-making and the moments that contributed to building a creative climate. I carried this valuable creative sentiment forward with me.

Colouring outside of the lines...

Graduate work is not just what goes on in the classroom. We are influenced by many other factors in our adult lives that occur beyond the university. The ways in which various aspects of my life collided and intersected at that evening workshop compelled me to sit with my classmate afterwards and debrief the struggle, the letting go, that had to happen for me to participate in that forum. It was painful, tearful, a little embarrassing—and a whole lot of release. The experience made me hyper-aware of my need to hold on to external things and to carry a false sense of control. It also allowed me to reevaluate and change my perspective on the value of product over process in a way that I had not previously considered. The painting that came out of the workshop experience seemed simple and devoid of skills and mastery of the visual art form. But, for me, it comprised layers of meaning from an experience that enabled me to live more congruently with my ideals, values, and beliefs—a transformation that would directly and indirectly shape the trajectory of my thoughts.

A variety of visual and tactile experiences, guided by nonlinguistic phenomena, were experimental in nature and integral to my self and my process of knowledge-making. As I engaged in the aesthetic qualities of art making, an acute awareness for noticing, perceiving, and responding revealed itself. By being fully present in the moments of arts-based activities completed in and out of class throughout this term, I shifted my mindset and attitudes regarding acts of creative expression. Established and modelled through the art of teaching, my perspectives of pedagogy were enhanced through the deconstruction process of the artistic

elements that moved me as I took the time to fully engage by seeing, feeling, and experiencing the work.

In these experiences with artistic forms, a depth of self-understanding was demonstrated through critical reflection responses that were linked to holistic articulations of transformation. Creative expression played a significant role in tapping into my imagination and revealing a more open view of my self in the world, as I became intimately linked to the thoughts, emotions, and values (Hoggan et al., 2009). My participation in many of the potentially transformative, arts-based activities enabled the surfacing of my underlying thinking about learning experiences. Greene (2001) speaks to the nature of the creative process and the representation of complex ideas through artistic media:

I would affirm the value of making, shaping, expressing—of releasing as many persons as we can into the adventure and discipline of working with materials of paint, sound, language, body movement, clay, voice, film. There is no human being, no matter what age, who cannot be energized and enlarged when provided opportunities to sing, to say, to inscribe, to render, to show—to bring, through his or her devising something new into the world. (p. 202)

The connections that I made while felting (see Figure 2) emerged as an important phase of theorizing about creativity. Many of the ideas that I elicited from the creative act itself were later reinforced through a careful survey of the literature. My exploration with the concrete act of crafting helped me connect more deeply with the abstract concepts of creativity, as evidenced by this revelation in my journal:

I fancy that the colourful strings that I used in the felting are symbolic of neural networks that are multi-dimensional and that there is a sense of pattern, almost like a concept map, where there is a nexus, a core of an idea, from which many nodes branch out and relate. Unintentionally some of the string shifted on my work and ended up creating what looks like an image of a woman. I'd like to think that it is my personhood reflected in the brightly coloured patterns, that which capture the affective dimensions of excitement, joy, engagement, and ultimately a sense of flow that was at the heart of this experience. (MT, EDUC911, J)



Figure 2. A felted depiction of the creative process.

Empathy.

What role did empathy play in this classroom context of Contemporary Curriculum Theory? When I think of empathy, what comes to my mind is a vision of six intriguing women who come together on a weekly basis, each of them at different points in their lives, to gather in a shared experience that opens, extends, improves, transforms oneself and one another. While gender could have potentially played a role here, Rebecca pointed out that a similar dynamic occurred with men in previous iterations of the course. For Rebecca and the students in this particular version of the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course, the dynamic centred on the

communal experience, which involved bringing private lives into the public by creating a safe performance space, sharing personal topics and experiences of grief, relationships, childhood, identity, and much more. For participants in the exploratory study, this intimate vibe enabled the forging of relationships and nurtured a genuine desire to care for and understand one another. The dynamic that served as the foundation for trust and mutual respect in the class allowed us to push each other beyond our comfort zones, to challenge, to question, and to celebrate each other's successes.

What seems to support personal and relational ways of knowing, in an embedded, embodied, situated manner, is an infusion of the learning experience with neighbouring interactions that link the knower with the known and the unknown. These human interactions enable the building of relationships that offer both diversity and commonality. In the case of my classroom experience, the range of personality dynamics, interests, and backgrounds was far-reaching: Everyone brought their unique qualities to the table. Commonalities amongst the group came in the form of shared research interests, similar life experiences, and a common desire for self-improvement. Palmer (2007) develops this idea further, when he states that, “knowing is a human way to seek relationship and in the process, to have encounters and exchanges that will inevitably alter us. At its deepest reaches, knowing is always communal” (p. 54). According to Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, and Kasl (2006), the empathic field is an important dimension of learning environments in which transformation takes place. In this way, the connectedness with oneself and with others is celebrated and acknowledged as a primary means for understanding our selves and our place in the world.

Teaching and learning that invites transformation can best be characterized as a collaborative experience—an act enhanced by cooperative inquiry. According to Davis et al.

(2008), “learning is an ongoing, recursive, elaborative process, not an accumulative one” (p. 130). Engagement in conversation and active participation should permeate any higher education practice, as it holds the potential to liberate the deep, dialectical relationship between teacher and learner that is often attributed as a catalyst for transformative learning (Duerr et al., 2003). Cranton (2006) emphasizes the importance and value of dialogue in fostering not only student development, but also the development of selfhood. Creating opportunities for students to critically reflect in conversation is the type of intentional learning experience crucial for making possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective (McConigal, 2005; Mezirow, 1991).

In the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course, transformative moments of empathy resided in workshops in which we discussed our papers. At one point in this process, a classmate leaned over to me; in a confidential but candid tone, she gave me valuable feedback on my written work. She compared my writing to over-accessorizing in fashion, noting that it distracts by trying to say way too much all at once, often in run-on sentences, with an overload of complex ideas. I was truly relieved to hear this commentary, which came as a surprise to me. If this had been the same experience earlier on in my academic career I would have received this news very differently. But with increased self-confidence and a sense of purpose that had been renewed in the “expressive ways of knowing that provided entry to an empathic field for learning-within-relationship” (Davis-Manigaulte et al., 2006, p. 31), my response was dramatically transformed.

This time, I was truly grateful and understood that I was among peers who were incredibly sensitive, thoughtful, respectful, insightful, and supportive. Plus, I knew that they were looking out for me. This was a feeling that was pure and true. They wanted to help, not

harm. That's why it mattered and that's why I cared just as much when it came to their work. These people were my passion and it was the power of relationality that transformed my perspective of the potential of process pedagogy. Ellsworth (2006) points out that our relationship with each other and the outer world is "mutually transforming" (p. 7) and it is through these relationships that we have the potential to create and innovate. Therein lies the essence of the transformational empathic field experienced in this classroom context.

All members of the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course were exquisite writers in their own right and had developed personal styles that resonated with the topics that they cared deeply about in curriculum. One of my most significant transformations came in the form of my first trimester of pregnancy. Throughout the latter part of the course, the physical manifestations of this transformation were, at times, debilitating. The nausea overwhelmed my system and, at times impaired my ability to participate as fully as I would have liked at times. During these sessions, the women came together with care and concern for my general well-being. These relationships proved to be authentically personal and poignant, because our bonds of womanhood formed an important part of the classroom dynamic that far surpassed our more obvious connection of academic pursuit. Looking out for one another in many instances helped us to forge long-lasting relationships that now extend outside of the classroom context.

Symphony.

Symphony is the ability to put together disparate pieces or elements. According to Pink (2006), "it is the capacity to synthesize rather than analyze; to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields; to detect broad patterns rather than to deliver specific answers; and to invent something new by combining elements nobody else thought to pair" (p. 130). These creative acts are the signature of a holistic type of thinking that required seeing the bigger

picture. In each and every class, we were given ample opportunities to develop this aptitude through interactions involving critical reflection, consciousness-raising, and experiential, arts-based experiences that can best be characterized as transformative (Cranton, 2006). The reflection below reveals the barriers that kept me from realizing my capabilities. I wrote in a frenzied state:

Yesterday in class I felt really anxious. Well, that seems like an understatement of sorts, since I recognize that mere text will not be able to catch the complexity, depth, and sophisticated range of emotions that I have experienced as I am challenged to my limits. I know that there is an internal piece of me that is plagued with self-doubt and that part of me has persisted. Uncertainty about the value of what I believe and think is at the root of this confidence issue. . . . I feel like an imposter in the academic world, as though I have fooled everyone and been lucky to get as far as I have without people finding out that I am not worthy of participating or contributing to the “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 1994). (MT, EDUC911, J)

This journal excerpt revealed transformation in action in the context of a class presentation. This assignment cultivated my creative capacities, as it afforded me both a measure of artistic freedom and an opportunity to put some of the ideas from the complicated conversations into pedagogical practice. I reflected in my journal on the creatively driven challenge that transformed my impressions of myself as a contributing academic:

I decided to rise to the challenge of overcoming my academic imposter syndrome by not letting my inner dialogue, at least the disparaging chatter, get in the way. This required overcoming my anxiety and insecurities regarding my self-descriptions as an inadequate academic. I drew from Elizabeth Ellsworth’s book *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, and Pedagogy*. These presentations were based on books that we chose and we were given much freedom to convey the sound bytes of the literary work. I presented on a chosen literary work and creatively pulled together key ideas and examples from several artistic domains, which allowed me to flourish. (MT, EDUC911, J)

This experience of presenting for the class demanded that I act on my thinking in a way that was congruent with my transformed assumptions and perspectives on “expanding the space of what is possible”—a notion inspired by readings, discourse, and modelled instruction in the

classroom context (Cranton, 2002; Davis et al., 2008, p. 21). According to Pink (2006), creativity generally involves crossing the boundaries of domains. This activity fit Pink's criterion as it centred on making connections and seeing relationships across boundaries. For me, finding ways to expand the space of what was possible was, by far, the most transformational episode in this course context. There was an opportunity to be pragmatic, to enact my changed perspectives in the building of competence and self-confidence, which led to "making choices and acting on these new understandings" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167). The engagement with activities that were interesting, the unscripted moments that evolved, and the space for those interactions to take place, were all part of an intentional, flexible, and complex pedagogy that engendered this ethereal experience.

After completing the presentations, we shared written feedback regarding our work. The comments that I received from my instructor and my classmates confirmed my transformational experience and affirmed that, "educators must invite and support unintentional, involuntary experiences" (Ellsworth, 2006, p. 26). Feedback provided helps to bring the created experience to life. My instructor, Rebecca, noted:

I very much enjoyed your presentation and your use of activities as a way of examining the key ideas in Ellsworth's book. You gave us a good overview of her main thesis at the start and an illustration of the kinds of places she discusses in her book. Your notes about the book are also helpful. The activities were so well chosen and I think that everyone learned important things through that work. At the very least, it was deeply satisfying. I did not realize that you usually script your lessons so fully, so I appreciate the level of risk you have taken in choosing to present the material in this way. I so appreciate your thoughtful approach to the ideas, your willingness to try hard things, and your intelligent responses to the challenges before. (RLK, EDUC911, CN)

These comments validated the attempt I made to have the creative activities embody the salient themes of the book. Thoughtful pedagogy came about because I knew the topic inside and out, and was ready to free myself from my detailed notes and be fully present in the moments of

possibility. It was comfortable and uncomfortable; it stretched and molded. I was pulled apart and put back together again, and I think that my classmates and instructor were as well. I tried to make space for all the things that I wanted the class to take from the book, and I was able to lead them through it with confidence and ease. There were hands-on activities that embodied the learning, and much exposure to other ways of looking and experiencing. I felt as curious and as interested as they all seemed in their engagement with arts-based activities. One of my classmates noted, “I can feel it, like we are all exploring together . . . You are doing what the instructor does . . . bringing us into something so we *feel* the learning (Lucia, EDUC911, CN). Teaching is making; a creative activity. This creative process is at least as important as the ideas to be learned (Ellsworth, 2006). The transformation that took place in me is wrapped up in the symphonic sentiment of synthesizing creative elements into a cohesive whole in action and thought (Cranton, 2002).

Meaning.

*The poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings
still exist*
—T.S. Eliot

This attribute is based on the desire for, and pursuit of, meaning, as signified by purpose, transcendence, and spiritual fulfillment. Pink (2006) argues that these components are central to creating a meaningful experience that will help to restore a balance in personhood through a thoughtful pursuit of philosophically charged, existential questions. In the context of the transformative classroom, my cumulative and group experiences can be deemed as meaningful, as they contributed to a greater degree of self-awareness. Circular iterations of action and reflection in this course brought to the surface underlying, deep-seated topics that carry meaning connected to the core of who I am and what I care about; these topics extend beyond goal-

making to encompass purposeful pursuits in every facet of the lyric and narrative content of my life. Meaning as an attribute is exemplified in the following vignette, which details the events from the third class of this course.

Based on the assigned reading, van Manen's (1994) "Pedagogy, Virtue, and Narrative Identity in Teaching," Rebecca began her mini-lesson with a question: How do you understand the pedagogical relationship? Rebecca discussed using poetry and literature as a way to elucidate meaning about the pedagogical relation and to clarify the intent of keyword writing. She explained that van Manen used poetry and literature in his teaching and extended this to encompass examples of deeply understood phenomenon. In a plea to make connections explicit, Rebecca suggested that the literature should not just stand on its own. Instead she challenged us to consider the following: "What does van Manen's work mean for teaching and learning? What do we understand?"

We responded with concerns regarding how to find the language to explain these types of moments and how to "show instead of tell." Rebecca explicated the process a little further: "Take some aspects of those works that you've read, like novellas, and thread them through your work." Additionally, she talked about capturing the "qualia of consciousness" which generated further conversation about the ways in which we effectively convey our subjective experience of being conscious by using perceptual shapings and experiences to "bring us there." Drawing on the week's reading of works by Britzman, Dissanayake, Hemingway, and Zwicky, we considered specific ideas and examples of how this artistic form brought us as close as possible to the quality of consciousness.

In developing our keyword writing, Rebecca provided a way for our thinking to take shape in the broader context of academic research and writing. She noted that, "phenomenology

brings the lyric and the narrative together in a powerful pairing that forms a hermeneutic phenomenology framework.” Based on this argument, she developed nuanced exercises to heighten our awareness of the literary devices employed in the various works that we examined. She pointed out that, “the narrative is the telling (and then and then and then) and the lyric is being (and this and this and this)” (EDUC 911, Class 3, CO). Further to that, Rebecca explained, this lyrical work demands that we “be here, feel this,” opening us up to that experience as a way of paying attention to the affectiveness of something, which is like phenomenology, and is what makes it special in reference to Dissanyake’s work. To experience the narrative and lyric in tandem, the instructor had us examine a transcript from one of her research projects. Topics that came up as a way to extend and expand our conceptions of scholarly work included the following ideas: (a) realizing the importance of body language and context so that readers feel that it’s real and like they’re in the scene, (b) creating layers of feelings through affective dimensions in the writing, and (c) developing a rhythm of the language through the pairing of transcript with poems and short stories.

The overarching message that Rebecca left with me shifted my way of thinking: knowledge was no longer merely something to be reported, it was something to be represented. Her words from this class reverberate in my mind: “Where is that voice? . . . the voice of confidence that’s changing your thinking. . . there is a sense of transformation that comes out of that voice.” What I think Rebecca accomplished so exquisitely here, pedagogically speaking, was to create a lived experience of the qualia of pedagogical relation.

In the final class collectively we reviewed our term papers. We were each given 20 minutes to present ideas to the group, using a prepared document that reflected our thinking to date. This shared group process helped us to think-aloud and address the main constructs and

ideas to be applied in our work. In our hermeneutic circle, we spent time facilitating a process of writing that started with a story, a phenomenon, or an art-piece, then journeyed through a process of interpretation and cycled back through a theoretical orientation, in order to prepare for eventual spirals that would venture down into the depths of iteration. Rebecca discussed this deliberate method of incorporating different elements into the process of interpretation. She noted that, by juxtaposing the personal with theories and data, we layer on sophisticated meaning, resulting in a different interpretation each time. During this process, transformations amongst the students were incremental and consciously chosen. We received repeated invitations to know and to respond—in slow, reflective, and rhythmic ways—to small moments through compassionate communication; we were also gently reminded of our collective responsibility to find the centre of gravity.

The outline I created for my final paper in this course was more thoughtful and involved than any I'd created before. In the past, I had much difficulty organizing my thoughts in an outline, possibly feeling that it would, to some degree, hamper the emergence of my ideas. After some encouragement from Rebecca and fellow students to represent my thoughts in a format and structure that best reflected my experience, I felt free to branch out from the restrictive nature of a systematically written, text-based outline. I began the outline process by weaving course elements and ideas together in a concept map. From there, I decided to use Pink's framework to organize my ideas in a thematic fashion (see Figure 3).

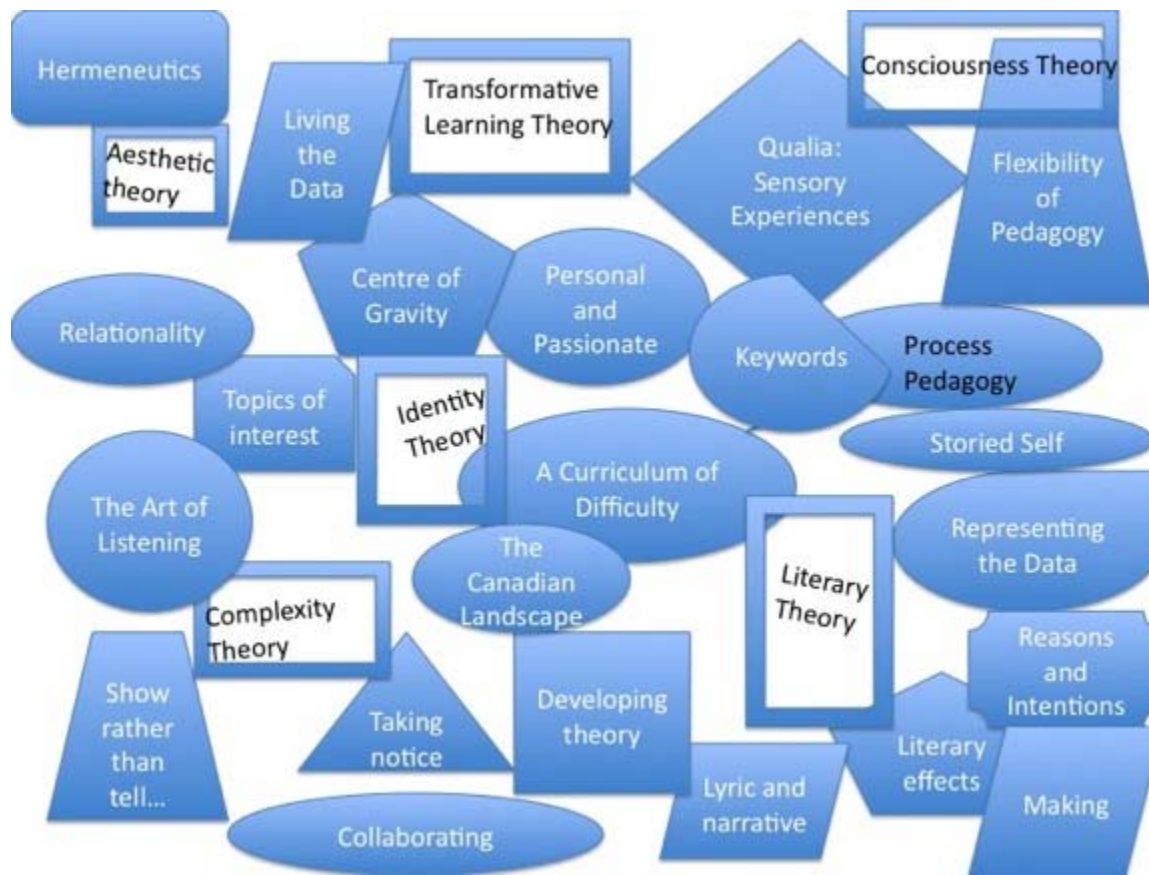


Figure 3. A conceptual mapping of topical ideas explored creatively in EDUC 911

My transformation in writing in this course emerged through both reading lines and reading in between the lines of keyword writing. The writing piece featured below marked a turning point for me: a distinct shift that moved from writing product about theory and theorists to an encapsulating process of curriculum theorizing. I experienced an actualization of theoretical ideas married to an integrated experience of revised assumptions and perspectives about what it meant to express from a place of purpose and passion (Cranton, 2006). The writing process led me to find my centre of gravity and enabled transformative learning: By opening my mind and freeing pieces that had been previously withheld, I was able to intuit what would ultimately resonate as my truth on emotive and spiritual levels. The writing example below reveals an

impassioned, authentic narrative that threaded the lyric to bring meaning, purpose, and interest to the topics that I carried with me:

Meandering melodies linger, linger, linger from stanza to stanza, and eventually settle or unsettle in reverberated dissonance in the openness of the room. Silence ensues at the emboldened fermata and we wait, engrossed in the pull of the pause. Eyes upon eyes, mesmerized by the cue of the baton, we inhale and transfer our subjective truths into the atmosphere, only to be caught up in a momentary reverie of mental images, a vibrant visceral portrait conjured up by the symphony of sound. Herein is shared understanding, a synergy exists amongst the singers that moves beyond text into the experience of art-making, which is essential to the development of deep understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment. The combination of these artistic elements serve as the basis for providing an ethereal experience, one in which the participants of the activity are acutely aware of their interconnectedness with the world. This perceptive awareness is revealed through the unspoken of the singing, the interrupted phrases of text that become clouded in the drifts between word and urge, affect and idea, consciousness and unconscious, only to emerge in the relation, the tension, and the understanding of the sight embedded “insight.”

In a time of rapid technological advancement and global communication, people are turning to the primal activity of singing to connect, to collaborate, to engage in beauty, meaning, and truth making. Twenty-first century society is far removed from an organic, natural existence, which satisfies these communal needs. Seeking out these shared experiences of singing derives from an innate human desire to participate in a ritual connected to the physicality and humanness of the natural world. Involvement in an artistic ritual, such as singing, enables a densely textured range of emotions and happenings of “special” life events to be realized through behaviour and experience. Actions and interactions embedded in human experiences bring the individual into their connective capacity to cultivate and nourish common bonds; bonds that transcend us to a state of “flow.” If we sing together, we contribute to a community, imprinting a purposeful pattern onto our lives whereby more is achieved collectively than individually.

There is a powerful force that exists in the act of singing, a process that brings one closer to listening to one’s own thought processes. Becoming fully present and knowing oneself requires an attendance to the deeply seeded connection in and among others, the perceptive psyche of energy centering the internal with the external experienced through a breath in and a breath out and a heightened mind and body awareness in the clustered collective of spirited life. Sustainment of the human spirit and a renewal of the vitality of life arises out of a sense of the greater whole, “a resonant whole,” which carries meaning through the experiences that transform, that empower, that implore. Vocalizing sounds can communicate emotional meaning without words and carries the contemplation of awe, mystery, and wonder of the universe. The subtle interactions of singing these musical

sounds holds the potential to break down barriers of language, culture, and religion and becomes the catalyst for a unifying human experience.

The connection between the emotional world of the artist and their experience of singing in an ensemble involves a process that appeals not only through verbal language, but “speaks” also with tones of voice, postures, gestures, body movement, looks, and facial expressions that carry meaning. The reciprocity of musical dialogue between conductor and choristers supports a projective paradigm for expressive and interpretive occurrences wherein the pedagogical imagination is set free. Composite vulnerabilities and visions rise to the surface in choral singing and channel through intuitive reflections that open one’s self up to possible pathways that lead to new creative directions and regenerate past experiences yet to be explored.

When I sing, images flow freely into ideas in a complex interplay. Beyond the vocal mechanism itself, I have a voice. My voice is inextricably connected to who I am and is “a synecdoche for the expressive confidence that comes from recognizing that what one thinks and believes is worthy of attention” (Luce-Kapler, in press). The communally valued and validated activity of singing has led me to the understanding that I hear my own voice when I listen attentively to my own thought processes in a relational and personal dynamic. My desire to carry community within myself, to originate rather than conform, to create rather than comply by “carrying a host of great people and great thoughts” (Colazer, 1999) becomes equally important to my natural inclination to aggregate with others. The true meaning of my words exist in nuanced bodily knowing, such as in the act of singing, and are intimately tied to the unspoken meaning of my life. It is in the art of communal experience that I uncover my intention for creating shared understandings from lived and imagined experiences that I care deeply about. These experiences develop from ideals of community, compassion, love, joy, and justice and build on a human capacity for creating abundant lives with a sense of belongingness to something larger than ourselves. (MT, EDUC911, KW)

Potential: The “Breeching” Self

Finally free from the shackles of my own self-doubt, I fly freely and joyfully with a new perspective that allows me to uncover and explore pathways to unknown life events, no longer held back by my hyper-analytical mantra. Taking risks, letting go, and trusting myself are all part of this metamorphosis. “Personal, qualitative change is the essential nature of transformative learning” (King, 2009). As I consider this sentiment, I am vividly reminded of Eric Carle’s story of *The Hungry Caterpillar*. This was one of my son’s favourite stories, and mine too, at the time

that I conducted the exploratory study. We read this picture book several times a day. What came to mind when I thought of my personal, qualitative changes is the image of the beautiful butterfly. If I were to draw myself today, it would be in a similar image to the picture book: full of energy, colour-full smudges of interest, complex in dimension and relation. In fact, the artistic representation featured below (Figure 4) was created in affective response to the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course experience and was part of the collective art-making workshop that I explore in the design section of this chapter.

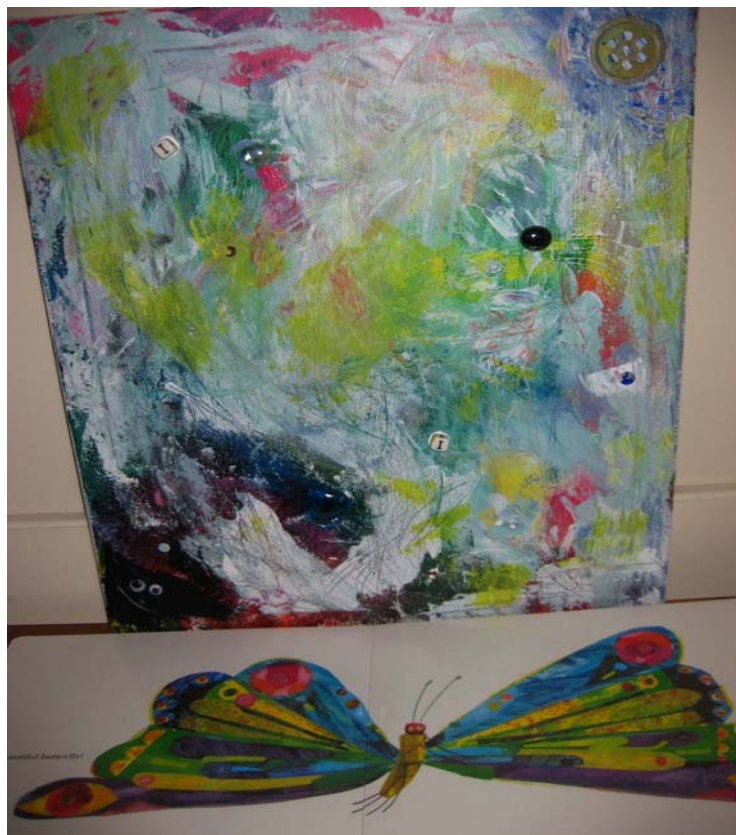


Figure 4. The Chrysalis

My course experience in EDUC911 has inspired me to seek out something different, better, holistic, balanced, and rewarding for myself and for others. Through insights gleaned through lessons in and out of the classroom, I am closer to who I am and who I want to be. Prior

to this course, I teetered back and forth about my place in school as an academic. I constantly questioned whether this set of experiences could offer me what I truly wanted and needed—an outlet for creative expression and a way of transforming myself into the person I always knew I could be. After decades spent in school, this classroom experience provided me with the essence of what I had been searching for and what I had been missing. I have been brought into something significant that lies beyond words, wherein I feel and live teaching and learning for change. These moments that have altered my perspectives: They serve as gentle reminders that meaning is made when the value in oneself is realized through the lived experience. As I progress through the remainder of my program, I will aim to create teaching and learning moments that matter, and that honour the complexities inherent to education. I wrote reveries that revealed a generative process of creativity and transformation. The following narrative piece comprised my final keyword response of the course:

“To embrace narrative is to live into an image of self, a construct of who we wish, or fear, to be. There can be nostalgia associated with such images, too: the point of the story after all, is to comfort us, to help us make sense of what we think we were or imagine we have become” (Zwicky, 2006).

Swarms of graduation gowns line up outside of the hall, where rays of sunlight beat down onto the chosen path that we tread. Uniformly we gather to process towards the towering entranceway that opens and leads to our future selves, each changed by the passing present. The air is crisp. A faint breeze whispers the sound of our names. The dew lingers on tall blades of grass that are met with the falling leaves of maple, oak, and elm. I shift my weight from side to side as we move with the influx of people, all with stories of their own. Just like me. *Darn high heels. I should have worn flats. Uneasy. Queasy. Who am I trying to impress anyway? Next time I'll know better, hopefully. Now focus, don't allow yourself get distracted on the task at hand. Gosh, you are your own worst enemy. Pull it together. Move ahead, and don't look back. Only to be blinded by flashes of red, black, blue, and glints of yellow that bombard from ahead. Regaining my balance, I decide to forge on. Beads of sweat drip from my brow. I wipe the sweat clean with the draping sleeves of my gown. I can hear mother saying, “You must look presentable, today of all days.” Really though, I am my own mother. It's that looped voice in my head, again. And with that, I run my hands over the top of my head to smooth out my hair. Throbbing with an anxious excitedness, palms*

clammy, on bated breath, I manage to paint on a big smile. Marking our entry, sporadic blasts of the organ lay thick in the air as the timbral stops colour a canvas of celebration: the pomp and circumstance courses through my veins and I gingerly march on. Drawn into the magical majesty of the moments that flash in photographic episodes of waves, smiles, and gestures of gaiety from the hoards of bodies that await those known and unknown in the crowd, I step back to recapture the impressionistic portrait before me.

“Understanding self-study involves becoming your work” (Gamelin, 2005).

Blurred images emerge from the moments that lead up to now and then, and focus in on everywhere and nowhere. There is a clearing through the fog of excited activity that cuts sharply to the figure of my father. Through my clouded vision of the remembered present, he appears directly in my line of sight, and like a lighthouse carrying me home, he beams through the chaotic, collective consciousness with a brilliance that draws me in. I long to run to him, to be held up by the strength of his support, but there is no time left. I turn the corner to find my seat and follow in the footsteps of those who come before me, compliant as always to the rules and regulations that are in place. Although my questions remain many, I settle for what is expected of me: nothing more, and certainly nothing less. These unanswered questions from playing and living school probe with my deeply intensified desire to understand the methods behind the madness of systemic silencing. Acts that aim to repress, dominate, control, cover, and impose that have strangled the joy, love, comfort and creativity out of my learning life up until now. Remember: *children should be seen and not heard, do this and this and this and this* and this tune plays like a skipping record over and over and over in my mind. I find myself fixated on the façade of this constructed ceremony of occasion: my passion has been schooled out of me and yet here I remain in school, degree after degree. Strangely compelled to the challenge, I graduate to become the agent of my own learning; an active participant in the transformation of my potential self. The potential promise that I will never again idly accept status quo, without questioning assumptions and revising perspectives affirmed in the air of something much larger than myself. Re-writing my imagined utopia of learning, I revisit school memories, however painful or trying, with a refreshingly integrated awareness of what is possible. I posit with a post-modern sentiment once again: *Am I? How am I?*

“Transformation rests upon an awareness of how our personal, institutional, and cultural stories influence and shape our ‘lived stories’ and experiences” (Clandinin, Davis, Hoggan, & Kennard, 1983, p. 18).

I take a seat. Packed in like sardines, one by one, we are called in rows to have our ten seconds of fame. My mind wanders as they begin to spout off the names for the first group of graduates. *How did I get here, again, anyway? Well, I know how to play the game, jump the hoops with strategy and skill. And plus or minus, practice makes perfect. And yet I am not interested in a direct and logical path the*

next time around. My experiential path will be risky, and I'm unsure about where it will lead. Just what the doctorate ordered. Now it's my turn to approach the stage and collect my degree. Perhaps I should make a collage out of it, just like my graduate supervisor. Paste, putty, paint, cut and craft my hard-earned degrees into a collage. No I wouldn't do that. I simply couldn't do that. It's novel idea, but to me not appropriate. The degrees will hang side by side on the wall of my home office. Gosh, I must be uptight or something. This is serious business. Mother would tell me to "Loosen up and relax. Enjoy yourself. Just go for it." She's creative and carefree; an artist through and through, day and night. But I am my own person with my own ideas. Conceptualizing creativity is part of my work and there is certainly a mixed spirit of purpose and play in my pursuit of it. Unmasked, exposed, and vulnerable openings will lead me to an innovative narrative that synthesizes the expression of my work in the domains of art and of education. There is much room to grow in all parts of my life; a process that heightens my localized truth, enabling creative expression as a means for transformation. I will carve out my own design, imprint it in unexpected ways onto the blueprint of the subjective, and draw from the raw, visceral materials of awakened mindfulness.

"Beyond nostalgia: I write to move beyond sentiment to get to the heart of the issue, whether it is pleasant or not, to examine it with openness, intelligence, imagination, and courage" (Weber & Mitchell, 1999).

My mother says (or perhaps its only my subconscious mind chattering away in attempt to convince, once again I'm overwhelmed...), "You have a lot to offer. Perhaps you should think about doing something else other than school for a change." I remind her that she doesn't know about academia and can't possibly understand. She is protective; I'm argumentative. I'm still wondering, searching, straining to understand myself. This is the path that I've chosen, at least for now. *What could anyone else know about the type of learning experiences that I've had and how I've emerged into a deepened version of my former self? Is it playing out in my action or is it all a figment of my imagination? Am I truly convinced that academia is where I belong and the most probable place for personal growth and transformation to occur? I think it's happening and I think I can...two steps forward, one step back.*

It certainly could be based on this classroom experience in my PhD work: an embodied portfolio that includes *play, story, design, empathy, symphony, and meaning*. It's the company that I keep that has shaped and oriented the experience of uncovering and understanding my self in compelling and captivating transformative ways. Here there are listening ears, opening minds, and hospitable hearts that have bridged the troubling, and at times, traumatic gaps that have arisen from the memoirs of myself in school. This experience has helped me to recognize that I have an opportunity to create the life that I want for myself and has liberated me to know that I can actualize these aspirations into reality moving forward. I've already begun this process through the series of experiences in this

graduate course. I no longer need convincing, there is a sense of peace and contentment that resides and resonates from within: life as a work in progress.

“Self-study does not determine who we become. Nevertheless, it can be an instrument that helps us to understand and embrace the transformational process by allowing us to get inside it” (Mitchell, Weber, & O’Reilly-Scanlon, 2005).
(MT, EDUC 911, KW)

Summary

What does my transformative experience look, sound, and feel like? The classroom learning is unmasked, exposed, vulnerable, yet it feels safe. The glow from all around me supports me to take risks, to enhance my work without judgment but with gestures of caring and kindness for self-improvement. Above all, there is community. A community of women and of scholars, sharing their most interesting lives with one another. These acts compelled us to move forward, to make better, to challenge the status quo of our lives. Divergent thinking is guided by pedagogical conditions that underpin a move from disorientation to discovery and, finally, to the defining of self, all of which are etched in my memory space. I have a new view through a refined lens of knowing that crystallizes the understanding of experience through an enlightened eye. I am moved by critical reflection and action, and grateful for being provided the space, place, and time to do so. I am grateful, too, for the authentic interactions that have nurtured and fostered the possibilities for personal growth and development through deeply shifting ideas and understandings.

There is room for the inner life in this school space. My life in school can be traced back to a series of episodes that play out in self-doubt, uncertainty, conformity, rote memorization. In the bounded and yet open spaces in graduate work lined with passionate involvement, collaboration, critical thinking and creative engagement my conceptions of learning begin to shift and expand. Here is where the real learning is. Through the process of writing and in

creative activity, I recognize what I think and know about why I am doing this work, my work in academia. Here, I can attempt to recapture the lost fragments of my education, to reinvent my self, my own children, and my students in a process that will honour their stories with meaning and purpose in acts of relationality, collaboration, and a potential for the emerging self of the learner (Ellsworth, 2006). Moreover, this exploratory study has provided me with a leaping-off point: It allows me to access other classroom vignettes with a fresh perspective that is informed by my experienced insights of play, story, design, meaning, symphony, and empathy. The story does not end here. A tale of transformation has only just begun.

To conclude this chapter, I will restate that the exploratory study provided me with essential insights prior to beginning the second phase of my research study. My experience of being a student in EDUC 911 was essential to my enhanced understanding of what graduate-level coursework could be—that is, rigorous, challenging, imaginative, and inspiring. It is with these positive and critical intentions that I move forward to examine two graduate courses that were held at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario.

The following chapter outlines the qualitative methodology used to examine two graduate courses, *Professionals in Rural Practice* and *The Lived Experience of Disability*. In the methodology, I outline a multiple-case study approach with details of data collection and analysis that connect to the philosophical underpinnings and pragmatic objectives outlined in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an examination of the nature of qualitative research and its appropriateness for this study, and continues with an exploration of multiple-case study approach as an appropriate method of inquiry for this study. Subsequently, a qualitative design is delineated, along with a research plan that details the approach and issues surrounding the collection and analysis of data. The significance and limitations of the study are outlined in the concluding section, along with the intended purpose of methodologically framing the scope and implications of the research.

A Qualitative Approach

The goal of qualitative research is to capture holistically, over a sustained period of time, the multiple realities and worlds of a set of participants, striving for a depth of understanding that is embedded in a rich and locally grounded context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Bresler and Stake (1992), qualitative researchers aim “to diminish subjectivity that interferes with comprehension and to exploit subjectivity for deeper interpretation” (p. 86). In a quest for answers regarding the human experience and its meaning, qualitative researchers take note of and reveal the value-laden inquiry that is inherently involved in their work, using a process of “deep attentiveness, of empathic understanding, and of suspending or ‘bracketing’ preconceptions” (Miles & Huberman, p. 6).

Unique to successful qualitative research are the inherently subjective perspectives that attempt to locate and understand the meanings people attribute to places, events, processes, and relational structures (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). These perspectives draw connections between participants and the social world around them; these connections inform

accurate and compelling interpretations that are internally consistent within specific situational constraints that enhance the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the work (Bresler & Stake, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As Patton (2002) points out, qualitative study is similar to a documentary film in the sense that it captures a “fluid sense of development, movement, and change” (p. 54). A natural, expected, and inevitable part of the human experience is change, and “documenting this change is a natural, expected, and intrinsic part of fieldwork” (Patton 2002, p. 54). In an educational context, the careful tracking, dialogue, and observation completed by the researcher are of the utmost importance in describing and understanding the essence of the participant experience (Creswell, 1998). To achieve these objectives, Bresler and Stake (1992) point out that, “the aim [of qualitative research] is to construct a clearer experiential memory and to help people obtain a more sophisticated account of things” (p. 76). Giving voice to a study’s participants in a way that honours contextual epistemology allows the researcher to discover participant experiences authentically, though vicariously. It is this kind of research, rooted in human construction, that reminds us of the transcendental nature of qualitative work and of the reason why, as researchers, we chose to travel this path.

Multiple-case study design.

In a multiple-case study design, the data focuses on “one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 316). Stake (2006) states that in order to generate a clear picture of the case through the examination of how it functions in its activities, “a qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situations” (p. 2). A holistic approach—one that is sensitive to context—will enable me to arrive at a conceptual

understanding of the participant experience in a systemic, integrated, and encompassing manner (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In my dissertation study, the unit of analysis is the two courses, namely (a) Professionals in Rural Practice and (b) The Lived Experience of Disability. Each course, as a unit of analysis, aggregates the experiences of participants within the complex layers of their classroom activity, and further contextualizes their graduate program of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Weinstein and Weinstein (1991) compare a qualitative design to a bricolage, that is, “a pieced-together, finely-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation. This solution is an emergent construction” (p. 161). The design of a multiple-case study is emergent and spiral in nature as the “process of purposeful sampling, data collection, and partial data analysis is simultaneous and intertwined rather than discrete sequential steps” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 317). This interactive engagement supports the notion that the researcher must become immersed throughout the process of studying the case situation in order to be “living the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). In this way, the researcher can flesh out the significant details of participant stories of those “living the case” (Stake, 2000, p. 445).

In the multiple-case study reported in this dissertation, comprehending the nuances and subtleties of graduate-level teaching and learning requires a high degree of researcher immersion in the classroom contexts in which data will be collected. Presenting the cases of the participants collectively is the most effective way of representing each individual’s case, as it allows the researcher both to consider redundancies and variations of the individual cases and to theorize about the larger collection of cases (Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994). In this study, the analysis of the case involved theorizing about creativity as a course condition for enabling transformative learning in graduate-level education. Case studies intimately study particular human endeavours

in order to paint a unique portrait for each case of study. The multiple-case study approach centres itself around the researcher's pursuit of the participants' experiential knowledge and the interactivity that exists with these experiences (Stake, 2006; Yin, 1994).

According to Stake (2000), "boundedness and activity patterns are useful concepts for specifying the case" (p. 444). To illustrate activity within the bounded context, I attend to several dimensions of the case, including (a) the *physical* location of the classrooms and the associated field experiences (b) the educators and students of three university graduate classes as the *social size* (c) the *conceptual* nature of creativity as a condition for transformative learning, and (d) classroom activity and interactions as a *temporal* event amongst educators and students. (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Phenomenological orientation.

A phenomenological view informed the research design. I used a phenomenological approach to elicit the meaning graduate students ascribed to their lived experiences (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2000; van Manen, 1997; Yin, 1994). This methodological orientation uses specific, visceral, thick descriptions with importance placed on the human perception of the way things appear in experience or consciousness. Phenomenology presupposes that participants focus on the internal experience with an aim to recreate the particular qualities of a sensory-based, holistic perspective of the educational event (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997). Making meaning of lived experience forms the basis of content in experiential descriptions (van Manen, 1997). This dissertation study focuses on understanding experience and features comprehensive human stories, which are elucidated by both "vivid, alive, accurate, and meaningful language" and "personal documents and creations" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 19). As such, the students' and teachers' recollections of experience will serve as thematic representations and composite

depictions of the phenomenon of study.

Phenomenology offers an appropriate means for capturing the inherent complexities of a transformative learning experience driven by creative dimensions. To enhance a vivid contextualization of the phenomenon of study, I conducted an investigation of the participant experience that encouraged reflective responses focused on bringing these learning moments to life (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997). When presenting participant perspectives in a variety of learning contexts, it was essential that I, as the researcher, demonstrated “empathic neutrality” (Patton, 2002, p. 55) to establish a true sense of the nature of the participants’ experience. Following Patton’s advice, I conducted in-depth interviews with people who had first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest. I also incorporated participant observation and in-depth interviewing techniques into the study. By using these techniques, I gained a greater understanding of, and deeper accessibility to, the essence of the composite learning experience, which resonated with the philosophical underpinnings of heuristic inquiry as a phenomenological approach to research (Moustakas, 1994).

Method

Purposeful participant sampling.

Developing an understanding of the critical phenomena is highly dependent on choosing the cases well (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2006; Yin, 1994). Selecting cases that are likely to provide substantive knowledge on the phenomena is key to successfully gaining an understanding of the topic of study. It is also important to select participant cases that present a diversification within the complexities of the situations studied, while still maintaining a sense of unification through a concept or experience to bind the multi-case phenomena together (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2006). The sampling strategies that I employed for selecting the courses

of study involved snowball sampling of two opportunistic cases. These cases comprised two among several graduate-level courses that were discussed as possibilities among the members of my committee, my supervisor, and myself.

Recruitment.

In the Professionals in Rural Practice course, the instructor group, which included nine professors, was recruited two weeks in advance of the course. The instructor recruitment involved e-mail correspondence with the Office of Inter-Professional Education and Practice (OIPEP) administrative assistant, Kiley Rider, and Dr. Margo Paterson, one of the faculty leads. Since I was heavily involved with teaching responsibilities at the time when the group had their meeting, I made a request that Dr. Julia Brook, a colleague from the Faculty of Education and new instructor of the Professionals in Rural Practice course, present my prepared letters of information and consent forms for the group of instructors. In my absence, the group was able to openly converse and come to mutual agreement about their participation. All of those involved in the course development agreed to be a part of the study and agreed to be named.

Students were recruited by the researcher on the first day of classes and were asked to return consent forms at the beginning of class the following day. All students were invited to participate in the study and received letters of information. Eleven out of 14 students returned signed consent forms agreeing to participate. Three male students participated in the study and the remaining eight were female.

For The Lived Experience of Disability course, the recruitment process was quite informal. Following the end of the Professionals in Rural Practice course, I interviewed Anne O’Riordan, who was one of the instructors for both courses featured in the multiple-case study. She and I discussed the possibility of including The Lived Experience of Disability course,

which she had developed for the School of Rehabilitation Therapy. Anne sent me detailed information about the course and responded to my questions in advance of the course start in September 2012. Anne and I agreed that, given a course history of significant lessons learned based on University Student Assessment's of Teaching (USAT) and anecdotal feedback, The Lived Experience of Disability course would likely yield a transformative learning experience based on the program overview that detailed transformative learning as a guiding framework. During the orientation session, students and mentors were informed about the research study and were handed letters of information and consent forms. At the first tutorial class for one of the three sections that were being conducted, consent forms were collected from participating students and mentors. All participants were assured at the time of recruitment that both the data collected and the results of the study would remain confidential to the extent possible, and would be reported using pseudonyms for participant and site names.

The courses.

As noted above, each of the two courses featured in this multiple-case study, Professionals in Rural Practice and The Lived Experience of Disability, form the unit of analysis. The descriptions below provide a summary of (a) the instructors and course designers, (b) the contents of the course syllabi, and (c) and student demographic findings gathered from the Learning Activities Survey.

Professionals in Rural Practice.

A group of nine faculty from the health sciences, theology, education, law, and business departments designed and facilitated the Professionals in Rural Practice course at Queen's University in Kingston, ON, Canada. Faculty leads for the course included Dr. John Young (JY) from the School of Religion, Dr. Margo Paterson (MP) from the School of Rehabilitation

Therapy and the Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice (OIPEP), and Dr. Jennifer Medves (JM) from the School of Nursing. Course coordinators were Professors Jane Johnston (JJ) and Denise Neumann-Fuhr (JNF), both from the School of Nursing. Course instructors who participated in the study included Dr. Julia Brook (JB) from Education, Dr. Neil Hobbs (NH) from Medicine, Professor Michele Leering (ML) from Law, and Professor Anne O’Riordan (AOR) from OIPEP and Rehabilitation Therapy. The syllabus from the Professionals in Rural Practice course provided the following course description: “An examination of the issues related to integrating into rural practice as a professional will be explored. This includes understanding the history and geography of rural communities, as well as important issues affecting life in rural settings.” Course requirements included (a) a reflective journal, (b) a major research paper, (c) interprofessional interviews, (d) final presentations in interdisciplinary teams, and (e) a retreat weekend in a rural community.

The Professionals in Rural Practice course has been offered since 2005; in 2006 and 2007 it was offered as an elective course and, in its 2012 iteration, it was reconceived as an “intensive model” (JY, RHBS830, I). For the first time, The Professionals in Rural Practice course was offered as two concentrated weeks rather than for a full academic term. Many of the faculty leads from early iterations of the course, including Margo, Jennifer, and John, and instructors Neil and Anne, were involved in the revival of the course. They were joined by new team members, Michele and Julia, and the course coordinators, Denise and Jane.

Student participants came from faculties of nursing, education, and theology/divinity at Queen's University. Participants ranged in age from 20–60 years. Females represented most of the total student sample (82.6%). From the Professionals in Rural Practice course, all of the students were Caucasian, with one student who additionally identified as Chinese. The majority

were either from nursing or theology faculties. The age range from 21–24 was well represented, and there were also a few students in each of the <21, 25–29, and 30–39 categories, and one in the 50–59 category. This intergenerational population included students in their final year of undergraduate programming, those who had experienced professional careers and had returned for graduate degrees, and those who had continued study directly from their undergraduate experiences into a master’s level program. Eleven out of 14 students in the class participated in the multiple-case study. Pseudonyms were used for the eleven student participants from the Professionals in Rural Practice course.

The Lived Experience of Disability.

The Lived Experience of Disability course matches occupational-therapy students with mentors—individuals living with health challenges—for a series of community visits. First introduced in 1999 as an experiential learning activity, it developed into a master’s level course, and is now a compulsory first-year requirement for students enrolled at the School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen’s University in Kingston, ON, Canada. According to Anne O’Riordan (2012), the course coordinator, instructor, and developer:

The primary course outcome from this learning relationship is to facilitate students’ understanding of disability and philosophy of client-centered practice. Mentors share expertise of their lived experience, while students consider personal attitudes, assumptions, and knowledge of disability and their future client-therapist relationships.

In 2012, the course components included mentor visits, tutorials, first-person resources, and reflective journals, with curricular decisions overseen by an advisory committee of mentors and instructors. The course divided the larger group of 75 students into small-group tutorial sections. This multiple-case study examined one such tutorial group, comprised of 12 graduate students (all of whom consented to participate in the study), the educator and coordinator of the

course, Anne O’Riordan, and four of the mentors, who were paired with students from the tutorial group. There were two males students and 10 female student participants. In The Lived Experience of Disability course, a quarter of the students identified their origin as Asian or Pacific Islander, while the remaining students identified as Caucasian. Most of the students had entered directly into this program upon graduating from a diverse range of bachelor degrees in the arts and sciences. The ages of the students ranged from 21–39 years. Pseudonyms were used for the twelve student participants and the four mentors in the Lived Experience of Disability course.

Ethics clearance.

The ethics clearance that I received in December 2010 from Queen’s University’s General Research Ethics Board (GREB) was limited to the exploratory study, which featured the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course (EDUC 911). I received ethics clearance for the multiple-case study from GREB in April 2012 to include the Professionals in Rural Practice course and The Lived Experience of Disability course (Appendix A for Queen’s ethics clearance, letters of information, and consent forms). Once this clearance was received, I recruited the instructors and sought ethics clearance from the students. Additional ethics clearance was sought from GREB in February 2013: I requested that the University, the course, and the instructor(s) be named in the study. All participating faculty leads, course coordinators, and instructors featured in this study signed consent forms authorizing the release of the aforementioned identifying indicators. The identity of the students and the mentors remained confidential to the extent possible.

Once the proposed research study was cleared by the GREB in late April (Appendix A), I embarked on the primary round of data collection for the multiple-case study. Letters of

information and consent forms were distributed immediately after I received a formal letter of ethics clearance.

Data collection.

To respond to the research questions, data were collected using four methods: (a) classroom observations, (b) individual interviews, (c) a Learning Activities Survey, (d) a Creativity Checklist, and (e) document analysis. Data collection for the Professionals in Rural Practice course began on May 1, 2012, and took place over a two-week intensive period lasting until May 11, 2012. The Lived Experience of Disability course ran for six weeks from September 18, 2012 until October 16, 2012. Both courses met the 36-hour credit requirement for a 0.5 course credit.

Classroom observations.

Observation has often been characterized as “the fundamental base of all research methods” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389). The notion of naturalistic observation in fieldwork is considered to be “part of a methodological spectrum” that will serve as “the most powerful source of validation” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 389). In order to gather authentic and accurate data, careful preparation is required on the part of the researcher before entering into the field. According to Patton (2002), this kind of preparation has “mental, physical, intellectual, and psychological dimensions” (p. 261) for the observer. Systematic observation and note taking require the establishment of specific goals and a clear framework from which to focus observation. With a clear vision and methodology regarding the parameters of the study, the researcher has the opportunity to open his or her mind’s eye to notice and describe events that vary from a pre-established paradigm. It is essential to keep in mind, however, that field observers have “selective perception” (Patton, 2002, p. 264) in performing the art of observation

and that, by including and identifying interpretations, a more comprehensive view can be achieved.

In the study reported in this dissertation I acted as a participant-observer and made detailed observations of two graduate-level courses. In the context of classroom activities, conversations, and interactions, I characterized perspective transformation using field notes, student work, instructors' lesson materials, assignments, and a componential model of creativity for observation protocol. Further, I investigated connections between students' transformative learning experiences and creative engagement to enhance an understanding of the relationship between them. These investigations facilitated the overall intent of this research, which was to contribute a more holistic view of teaching and learning by examining enabling pedagogies that contribute to building creative capacities as a primary means for transforming perspectives.

A clear set of established characteristics of creativity and an operative definition of transformative learning theory facilitated a formalized, systematic process of observation. Classroom observations were guided partially by the componential model (components and sub-components of creativity) originally outlined by Urban (2002). Additionally, various creativity-measurement instruments devised by Munro (n.d.) were conceived of based on Urban's interactive, holistic model that integrates affective and cognitive dimensions of creativity. Munro's model provides a systems approach to creativity, as well as a theoretical model of the four Ps of creativity—person, process, product, and press. The series of observation instruments included in Appendix B assisted in the description of creative characteristics and course conditions present in the studied teaching and learning contexts. In addition, these data collection measures confirmed that the methodological framework had been developed from a sound, theoretical basis.

Document analysis.

Hodder (2000) states that material evidence or artifacts from participants may provide “deeper insights into the internal meanings according to which people lived their lives” (p. 710). Various documents that represent different facets of the teaching and learning experience—including reflective journals kept by students and Dr. Neil Hobbs from the Professionals in Rural Practice course, course assignments, and PowerPoint slides—were incorporated into the study as another strategy to generate rich and informative data. Journals developed by each student and by Dr. Hobbs were collected for further analysis following the course’s end. Students’ journals were part of the required coursework in both courses, and were used to reveal the personal, creative insights that had been made by each of the participants. In addition to the journals, descriptive teaching notes, course assignment outlines, course syllabi, course readings, and PowerPoint slides provided further detail about the course design and implementation. These documents assisted in the verification of the instructors’ course design and pedagogical intent.

Learning Activities Survey.

I utilized the Learning Activities Survey (LAS) developed by King (2009) to capture broad descriptions of students’ transformative experiences and to identify participants for in-depth formal interviews. Every consenting graduate student in each of the observed classes was asked to complete the Learning Activities Survey at the final class (Appendix C).

The LAS instrument was originally developed in 1996 and since has been evaluated by a panel of expert researchers of transformative learning in the field of adult learning (King, 2009). This data collection instrument has been applied extensively in classroom contexts and in curriculum development by King and by other researchers in the field of adult education and development, to delineate the circumstances that align with and enable transformative learning

experiences. The Learning Activities Survey took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete.

King (2009) designed the instrument with careful consideration of the phases of perspective transformation (PT), as proposed by Mezirow (2009). The survey aimed to implement principles of perspective transformation into practice through an examination of the strategies and practices associated with this type of significant learning. In her design of the survey, King was guided by the following research question: “What learning activities have you participated in during your education as an adult that have contributed to a perspective transformation?” (p. 33). For the purposes of my study, I made modifications to King’s (2009) instrument. For example, for the Professionals in Rural Practice course, the learning activities included reflective journal, inter-professional interviews, working in inter-professional teams, and a weekend retreat. In the case of The Lived Experience of Disability course, learning activities included reflective journals, learning dyads, and visits between students and their mentors. According to King (2009), sections of the original assessment tool designated as “adaptive” include the following items: the learning activities (Items 4 and 7) and demographic questions (Items 10–14). To maintain internal validity and preserve the theoretical integrity of the Perspective Transformation index, King also advises against modifications to Items 1, 2, 3, and 5. Once the appropriate modifications were made in the designated adaptive sections, I distributed surveys to every graduate student during the final class of the term.

Creativity Checklist.

Munro’s (n.d.) Creativity Checklist (Appendix F and G) was modified and applied for the purpose of investigating complexities that surround being creative in the context of classroom activity. Students and teachers shared their perceptions of the affective-cognitive dimensions of

creativity, as experienced in the teaching and learning contexts of their coursework. Originally referred to as “the self-improvement teacher checklist” (Munro, n.d.), this tool provides educators with an opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice and to heighten their awareness of the conditions most likely to foster creativity. More specifically, the checklist enables teachers to evaluate the extent to which their teaching fosters the components of creativity outlined by the scholarly work of Amabile (1996) and Urban (2002).

There are six components of human activity necessary for creativity: (a) divergent thinking, (b) general knowledge and thinking base, (c) specific knowledge and thinking base, (d) focus and task commitment, (e) motives and motivation, and (f) openness and tolerance of ambiguity. Ultimately, these components add up to an integrated cognitive-affective system for thinking and being creative (Munro, n.d.).

For each course, study participants completed the Creativity Checklist on the final day of class. Instructors reported the extent to which they thought the teaching encouraged various components of creativity, while students evaluated the extent to which their instructors’ teaching (both individual and collaborative work) fostered these same components. Some of the terminology from the original checklist was amended to accommodate learner knowledge by avoiding unnecessary educational jargon. For example, “encourage students to question ideas at a number of levels and generate their own problems” was amended to “encourage students to question ideas and generate their own problems.”

Following their completion of these surveys, a few of the student participants commented informally that they were uncertain with the terminology used in the instrument. Based on the student feedback, I made the decision to also use the Creativity Checklist in interviews so as to provide participants with an opportunity to elaborate on and confirm their perceptions of

experienced creativity in the courses. Therefore, I used items in the instrument as probes to generate conversation. This was accomplished by having students and instructors choose one item in each of the six sections of the survey that they found particularly relevant and expand on those survey items.

Interviews.

The interview provides an outlet for the expression of multiple perceptions, opinions, and ideas in regards to the phenomenon of the study. According to Fontana and Frey (2000), an individual interview between participant and researcher can serve as an “active interaction between two people leading to negotiated, contextually-based results” (p. 646). Kvale (1996) appropriately named this data collection strategy “InterViews” (p. 2), to highlight the interchange that takes place in an interview setting and the sense of interdependence that is thus created. The underlying notion of process is essential in the interview format, with the idea that communication is interconnected and flowing continuously between researcher and participant (Patton, 2002).

The interview as a means of collecting data is regarded as being most effective for obtaining observations that the researcher could not make directly and for assisting in interpretation of the studied situation (Bresler & Stake, 1992). Interviews provide an opportunity for me, as the researcher, to highlight the exemplary cases of transformative learning enabled by creative classroom conditions. By using the participants’ voices, trustworthiness will be enhanced through the confirmation and verification of data collected through observation. Depending on the degree to which the prepared text of questions is structured, the interview has great potential to evolve in a dialogic fashion between researcher and participant, resulting in rich verbatim accounts and a heightened sense of understanding of the participant experience

(Fontana & Frey, 2000).

The purpose of the interview in the study reported in this dissertation was to gain an understanding of students' learning experience, as well as identify ways transformative learning was fostered for these graduate students and educators in the context of their coursework. I used a series of interview questions proposed by King (2009) to follow-up the Learning Activities Survey. For example, a sequence of questions asked post-survey required the participants to think back to when they initially realized that their views or perspectives had changed. King provided clear examples of interview questions, including:

(a) "When did you first realize this change had happened?" (b) "Was it while it was happening, mid-change, or once it had entirely happened?" (c) "What made you aware that this change had happened?" (d) "What did your being in school have to do with it?" and (e) "What did you do about it?" (p. 25)

King's (2009) instrument was originally used by adult educators and developers as a practical tool to study individual, classroom, and programmatic settings in higher education contexts. The tool embeds phases of perspective transformation in the instrument design (King, 2009; Mezirow, 2009). The broader questions related to transformative learning from King's interview design provided a starting point; from it, many interview questions emerged that accurately reflected the situated learning within the classroom locale (Appendix H and I). I conducted semi-structured interviews with six graduate-student participants from each course to gain in-depth, sophisticated narrative accounts. These six students from each of the two courses for a total of 12 were selected based on their PT-index (Perspective Transformation Index) scores from the Learning Activities Survey; the top six scores indicated the most considerable transformative learning experiences and, therefore, held the greatest potential for eliciting further detail and elaboration in the interviews. Each interview was approximately one hour in length.

Interviews with instructors provided an opportunity for them to share their insights

regarding a range of topics relevant to the locus of activity in the classroom. An interview with each of the instructors from the observed classes took place at the end of the course. Each interview was approximately one hour in length. Instructors were questioned about topics that included, but were not limited to, the following: (a) the course dynamics of the learner, teacher, and the processes of creative learning and teaching; (b) their pedagogical practices (both intentional and otherwise); (c) their perception of the creative climate in their classroom; and (d) the mechanisms that were in place to support creative activity and transformative learning. In addition, their teaching notes, course outline, and assignments were examined to provide a better understanding of the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological underpinnings of the courses of study.

Data analyses

Qualitative data analysis.

Once I had collected the data, I carried out a systematic, iterative process of content analysis. I imported text files into ATLAS.ti (v6.2, 2011) and derived thematic codes to increase clarity and focus prior to beginning the analytic work. The systematic organization of the data permitted the identification of significant themes; these were discovered through a cyclic and on-going reflective process undertaken by me, as the researcher (King, 2009). Ultimately, this iterative, preliminary phase of the research process involved “searching, marking up, linking, reorganizing, representing and storing reflections, ideas, and theorizing” (Weitzman, 2000, p. 806).

I typed notes in the field, which were recorded both in a field notes journal and on a computer to increase legibility. This also provided an opportunity to highlight data with clearly marked indicators, thus safeguarding against bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman,

1994). Text was stored on a computer database, which made searching and retrieving data a straightforward task. I used the qualitative computer software, ATLAS.ti to facilitate a more precise and expedient approach to the coding and categorization of data. My data linking, which is defined as the act of connecting relevant data segments with each other in the formation of categories or networks of information (Miles & Huberman, 1994), was facilitated by the use of ATLAS.ti. I then mapped out a visual network display of the significant patterns from the component codes that led to themes. This helped in extracting concepts and gaining different perspectives on the relationships between them.

For each studied case, I created a table including etic (drawing from theories and literature) and emic (based on the perspectives and words of the participants) codes. A process of open coding involved both inductive and deductive analysis, in order to generate data-driven and theory-driven (a priori) codes. This hybrid approach to thematic analysis used words in various semiotic segments to facilitate an organizational structure to “contrast, compare, analyze, and bestow patterns upon them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7).

I applied three types of codes— descriptive, interpretive, and pattern—in a three-pass process. These codes were identified (mostly in that order) as meanings became layered with complexity and as explanations emerged from local events and relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The original list of 90 descriptive codes became smaller as interpretations and meanings became possible; it was culled to 54 and, eventually, to 37. Codes were grouped to form categories for analysis under which recurring themes and sub-themes developed (Table 1). I applied pattern coding in preparation for final analysis, which offered interrelated summarizers across two courses of study: themes, explanations, relationships among people, and more theoretical constructs (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

I completed three passes of the data—at descriptive, interpretive, and conceptual levels of coding—with ATLAS.ti. This yielded a substantial amount of data to be analyzed, so I exported the organized and categorized data by code and by full transcript. In preparation for writing, I arranged significant themes by hand and identified co-occurrences with an intensified focus on identifying connective thematic threads of transformative learning and creativity. As I engaged in this stage of theorizing, I generated an interconnected network of unique and common themes. Undergoing this selective, tactile, and creative process guided my final stage of conceptual analysis and helped me understand creativity as an enabling condition for transformative learning.

Table 1. Table of Code Families (Primary Themes) and Corresponding Codes

	PRIMARY THEMES	CORRESPONDING CODES
MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING	Experiential	“You can read about disability...but it doesn’t sink in unless you spend a day in their shoes.”
	Relational	“We were told to go in and feel our way through that relationship that you have with your mentor.”
	Emotional	“I know I had tears in my eyes when I talk about that, and I probably could have restrained myself more, but I try and show a personal side, not just a professional side.”
	Physical-Sensory	“They were smelling the smells, they were feeling they were a part of that neighbourhood. I think they felt they were part of that family.”
	Intuitive	“There is a code of ethics...but different situations create the grey areas that most of the time we live in.”
ADULT CONVERSATION	Critical Questioning	“The fact that ideas and situations were looked at by all of the different professionals. In hearing people’s thoughts I could agree or disagree, even challenge, which meant I was always learning something new.”
	Engagement	“...people listened and everyone could speak and everyone could say what they wanted to say and they did.”
	Team-Based Learning	“I think IP team work brought down some of the barriers of role differentiation. I knew what my role was, but I felt as though I could interconnect more.”
	Atmospheric Tone	“My feeling is it had to be tutorial-based, discussion-oriented, and within an atmosphere of trust and respect.”
THE STORIED SELF	Creating Context	“I think that having his stories and seeing his life, [these] snapshots that we got made me realize that it would be really sad when it would all be gone [because of dementia].”
	Sharing Stories	“The open discussion in the classroom [allowed] you to hear a lot about other people’s experiences outside of a textbook, it was life lessons that people had.”
	Openness	“A student ‘came out’ in conversation...I think that we had that level of comfort.”
	Relevancy	“I think this course does two things for those who are unfamiliar. It gives exposure to what the realities of rural are [and] to those who have had exposure, it gives them the reassurance that it’s a valid part of their experience.”

	PRIMARY THEMES	CORRESPONDING CODES
(PERSPECTIVE) TRANSFORMATION	Transformative Learning Experience	“I realized my beliefs had changed when I spoke with my mentor and realized how ‘old rehab’ had helped him get to the level of functioning he is at today. I always assumed that old rehab was a bit archaic and not as informed, making it a lesser practice to new rehab. Through my meetings, I realized the potential benefits to old rehab.”
	Challenging Assumptions	“I feel like today’s tutorial really allowed me to explore my reaction of Bob’s statement that, ‘getting hit by a car was the best thing that ever happened to him,’ more... ‘What is wrong with being in a wheelchair and having a disability? [His experiences] have led him to a lovely wife, house, and beautiful kids’ ... This experience challenged that notion, and made me realize that my focus will be on helping [my clients] live as best as they can.”
	Building Awareness	“I think they’re all kinds of assumptions that I didn’t know that I had.”
	(Critical) Reflection	“This course allowed for comfortable discussion and a safe environment to say honest opinions. By doing so and getting multiple perspectives I was able to think about my original assumptions and beliefs and look at an opposing thought or opinion at a deeper level and it take it home with me to think about it more and let it absorb.”
	Reframing	“I had to change my way of thinking around mentors from pity to empathy.”
	Change in Action	“Equal accessibility [is] a part of policy that we are really fighting for. I want to be an advocate for that.”
CREATIVITY	New Knowledge	“Being part of an interdisciplinary team was really a steep learning curve for me” “I was open to new ideas and experiences.”
	Personally Meaningful Knowledge	“Talking and sharing of personal experiences and opinions was a useful tool in helping me change and develop my views on what it means to be disabled within our society.”
	Exploring ideas	“The flow was not teacher to student, it was roundtable, so we got to hear any one story that was told, so many different opinions and ideas, and pose other questions.”
	Collaboration	“It’s more rewarding and there’s better learning I think for the students.”
	Community of Purpose	“You know that you’re going to have to come and talk about the issues, you’re going to have to share something.... You’re invested in everybody’s situation so you try to open up and see things from a different perspective.”

	PRIMARY THEMES	CORRESPONDING CODES
CREATIVITY (CONTINUED)	Interdisciplinary	“I realized I had not really considered ministry in an interdisciplinary light, seeing other non-ministry professionals (e.g. doctor) as intersecting with my role. Being in the course and being channelled into inter-professional thinking helped to broaden my understanding.”
	Synthesis: Making connections	“The case studies were a good way of pinpointing interdisciplinary connections because we all had to chime in on what our perspective would be. There were multiple perspectives coming at one another and I think that pushes you out of any role box because someone can say something that sparks your imagination and you say, ‘I didn’t think of that, I could go in this direction.’”
	Self-directed learning	“We got to choose where we went with the journaling and what kind of journaling you wanted to do.”
LEARNING ACTIVITIES	Case Studies	“I think the case study work got people thinking.”
	Inter-professional Interviews	“The interviews are pretty creative. The way that they do their interviews, the way that they debrief, the way that they have to figure out their interview guide. That’s a pretty unusual learning opportunity.”
	Mentor Visits	“Looking at disability from an OT perspective, this course allowed me to see some meaningful differences that I could make. It also exposed me to an environment where I could start to understand the challenges from the client’s perspective.”
	Retreat	“I think the opportunity to immerse them in a rural environment challenged and influenced a change in students’ perspectives.”
	Tutorials	“Tutorials are important in sharing the story.”
	Reflective Journal	“The journals were much more than diaries.”
PEDAGOGY	“Pointing to”	“[Anne] has great ways of probing for more information and really questioning herself and making you [the students] reflect deeper.”
	Pedagogical emergence	“It would be great to have the students come back and meet the mentor again in the second year of the program and have something similar but with much more experience.”
	Professional Practice	“Everyone has an inter-professional piece, and they make that quite explicit. And I think that piece is part of the comfort that people feel. It’s a very mature instructor group.”
	Course Design	“I think that something that leads to divergent thinking is a divergent way of laying out a course.”

Phenomenological approach.

To organize and analyze the qualitative data from both the exploratory study and the multiple-case study, I used a methodology that followed from Moustakas's (1994) four-step approach, which itself modified the methods developed by Stevick, Colaizzi, and Keen. The first two steps of this analytic approach were represented in the first phase of the research study. As the researcher, I developed a detailed description of my own experiences relating to the phenomenon being studied. This initial step provided me with an opportunity to uncover the phenomenon as a lived experience, rather than merely as a theoretical abstraction. Particular attentiveness and thoughtfulness were given to my own personal conceptions of post-secondary teaching and learning in the exploratory study. I reflected on and chronicled several events as a graduate student at both the master's and doctoral levels, which prepared me to direct my focus towards the participants' unique meanings and significant experiences of particular phenomenon in the multiple case study.

The second step involved the use of the verbatim transcripts of my own experiences applying the following seven distinct sub-tasks: (a) assess the significance of each statement from the verbatim transcript; (b) record all relevant statements found to be significant; (c) review recorded statements and remove duplicates, to obtain a list of unique statements known as "invariant horizons" or "meaning units" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122); (d) group the invariant horizons by theme; (e) compare and compose these theme-based groups into a "description of the textures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122); (f) consider the textural description when developing a list of the structures of the experience; and (g) combine the textures and structural elements to obtain a description of the meanings of the experience. The first two steps of this analytic approach were represented in the exploratory study, where I conceptually analyzed

aspects of my experience in the Contemporary Curriculum Theory course (EDUC 911). Several pedagogical moments captured the essence of transformative learning and characterized the creative thought and activity associated with a process of meaning-making.

The third stage of the data analysis approach involved iteration of the second stage for each of the participants involved in the multiple-case study. The fourth stage allowed for a combination of the individual “textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) to arrive at a composite description that reflected the shared experiences and meanings of the phenomenon of study. Steps three and four of this phenomenological approach were completed for the Professionals in Rural Practice course and The Lived Experience of Disability course; this was followed by a consideration and extension of textural-structural descriptions of the phenomena across the three classrooms.

In my analysis of the two courses, I wrote *textural descriptions* of the participant experience from each of the two courses. I used verbatim accounts to generate descriptions of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon of creativity as a classroom condition for transformative learning. Following the coding of data, I re-read the transcripts and reviewed field notes to compile a description of each course, based on verbatim participant accounts; these will be presented in the following three results chapters. The textural descriptions were integrated with *structural descriptions* that formed the basis of interpretative claims made in the themed results in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. To develop the richly situated structural pieces, I wrote descriptions of how the experiences occurred, while reflecting on the setting and the context in which the phenomenon was experienced. In a final stage of analysis, I wrote a composite description of the phenomenon that incorporated both the textural and structural descriptions across the three classroom contexts. The culminating aspect of this

phenomenological study is represented with the *essence* of the experienced phenomenon, which is described in the final chapter.

Qualitative summaries from the Learning Activities Survey.

Sample characteristics.

I entered data with the use of King's (2009) Data Summary Table (Appendix J) to tabulate the data into appropriate fields. Initially, I conducted data analysis to identify characteristics of student demographics, including age, university affiliation, university major, and term of enrolment (King, 2009). These descriptive statistics assisted in assessing whether a perspective transformation was more or less common within the demographic divisions, based on descriptors such as age or stage of enrolment in their University program (King, 2009).

Corroborating primary data sources.

For reporting purposes, I used a table indicating the incidence of perspective transformation in relation to (a) personal support activities, (b) specific class assignments, and (c) life events. Based on the scholarly literature, experiences of transformative learning can be fostered in at least three discrete ways: by other people, by classroom activities, and by life events themselves. These formed the categorical divisions of the survey design. Operationally, each of the three categories was defined by the closed-end responses. The answer choice was restricted to "yes" or "no" for each of the categories. Incidences of transformative learning are reported qualitatively in the themed results chapters to highlight the relationships and individual-specific effects for each of the three categories. Additionally, a table that includes the entire data set from the Learning Activities Survey can be found in Appendix C.

Following the gathering of qualitative summaries from the survey, themes were identified and interpreted from the short answer data and students were selected for interviews based on

their Perspective Transformation Index scores. Recurring themes provided in the short answer sections guided the follow-up interviews, wherein participants were given the opportunity to confirm, elaborate on, and extend their initial survey responses. I used the Learning Activities Survey primarily as a way of corroborating the findings from the observation and interview data.

Analyzing the Creativity Checklist data.

Creativity Checklist data were gathered from completed instructor and student surveys and entered into a data summary table. A complete data set from the Creativity Checklists from both courses can be found in Appendix J. I used the Creativity Checklist data to corroborate the primary data sources for the study and to illuminate student and instructor perceptions of creative components in the context of the studied courses. This process was similar to that used for the Learning Activities Survey, which offered insights into participants' perspectives about their course experiences in relation to transformative learning.

The Creativity Checklist required that instructors and students use a 5-point Likert scale to indicate to what extent the teaching and learning in the course enabled creativity. In addition to the *never-rarely-sometimes-often-always* rating options of the Likert scale, a sixth option, *don't know*, was added to accommodate terminology that was not familiar to the respondent or not applicable to the classroom case. Analysis of this Creativity Checklist data involved an examination of the significant relationships and frequency of patterns within and across instructor and student responses. Additionally, I noted any negative or discrepant data at the both the individual and aggregate item level.

Approaches to enhance trustworthiness.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) methodological framework for judging qualitative research provides criteria for trustworthiness, triangulation, and reflexivity, upon which credibility is

increased and interpretative arguments are judged. In qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness and triangulation involve the design of research (i.e., multiple evidence sources); notions of reflexivity manifest in the convergence of data to support claims of transformative learning. The legitimization of qualitative research resides in (a) the internal consistency and congruence that exists in and amongst the researcher's own transparency of perspective(s) and worldviews, (b) the reviewer's developed constructs of the participant experience, and (c) the descriptive portrayals of the multiple realities that represent the essence of the lived experience of those being studied.

Enhancing trustworthiness.

Triangulation is the routine act in quality-driven research that attempts to confirm the findings by mean of "checking [the] data against multiple sources and methods" (Bresler & Stake, 1992, p. 79). To enhance trustworthiness of the data, I employed three types of triangulation. First, methodological triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple data collection strategies, including observations, interviews, and surveys (Patton, 2002). While the students' perceptions of their experience in the graduate classes was the focus, data triangulation supported these perceptions by gaining the perspectives of the instructors, including the mentors and, in some cases, guest speakers (Patton, 2002). Second, investigator triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple researchers when analyzing data (Patton, 2002). Another doctoral student, who was familiar with the literature on transformative learning, read portions of analyzed data and confirmed the coding of the interview transcripts. Third, inter-rater agreement was employed: Coders highlighted any anomalies between the codes and then reached a consensus through discussion. Each of these approaches increased the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

Inter-rater agreement.

According to Krippendorff (1980), to achieve a high level of inter-rater agreement, coders should be in agreement at least 70% of the time. When consensus is reached at a high-level, external validity is increased, providing evidence that thematic interpretation was not a result of the investigator's personal bias (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Table 2 displays the high level of inter-rater reliability achieved in this study. To ensure this reliability, a second reader analyzed sections of data from four participants: two interview transcripts (one student and one instructor) from the Professionals in Rural Practice course and two interview transcripts from The Lived Experience of Disability. Once I had calculated the inter-rater reliability for the coding of the first four transcripts, I then compared the five different codes for each participant with a second reader, another PhD student in curriculum studies, to determine the extent to which we agreed on the coding of the content. For each code our agreement resulted in scores that were 80% or higher, so together we determined that she did not need to code any additional transcripts. Upon completion of the coding we resolved together, through discussion, any differences that arose in the coding or in the interpretation of the data.

Table 2. Inter-Rater Reliability

Code	Researcher's Codes	Second Reader's Codes	Calculated ^a Inter-rater Reliability $CR = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$	Percentage
Relational	12	10	20/22	90.9%
Emotional	9	9	18/18	100%
Intuitive	6	4	6/7	85.7%
Physical-Sensory	3	4	8/10	80%

^aM = # times the two coders agree; N1 and N2 = # of coding decisions each coder made.

Reflexivity.

In a qualitative study, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002). This concept of “self as instrument” (Eisner, 1991, p. 33) refers to the researcher’s abilities to make sense of the subtleties of the situated context under study. According to Patton (2002), prior to entering the field, the researcher should carefully consider the degree of participation and the tension that exists between the researcher’s insider and outsider perspectives. Continual reflection-in-action on the part of the researcher is essential in their engagement in the field (Schön, 1987). Patton (2002) suggests that a reflective stance “inside and outside the phenomenon of interest” is critical as it “crowns fieldwork with reflexivity and makes the observer the observed—even if only by oneself” (p. 329).

As noted at the outset of this chapter, any study involving humans as participants is inherently subjective. It is recognized that my role as the researcher is closely connected to the field of study to the degree that descriptions and interpretations were constrained and enabled by my experiences. These experiences, both conscious and subconscious, provided a particular lens through which I examined and responded to the lived experiences of the participants in the

various educational settings. In order to enhance voice and reflexivity, I applied several strategies throughout the data collection and analysis process, including (a) transcribing verbatim quotations of participant language, (b) using thick descriptions, (c) incorporating multi-method strategies, (d) completing member checking with instructors and students, (e) using mechanically recorded data, (f) and reporting negative or discrepant data (Geertz, 1973; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002).

For the two cases, I reported data with verbatim participant accounts using thick descriptions—narrative documentation of the phenomena, using direct quotations from the coded transcripts that incorporated participant language and low-inference descriptors (Geertz, 1973). In the cases examined in this dissertation, thick descriptions led to thick interpretations. Additionally, by intentionally incorporating my particular individual stance and perspectives on the topic of study, the overall context for the research became further clarified through a process of posing reflexive questions. I engaged in a rigorous process of reflexive questioning of self, of the participants, and of the situation being studied, which minimized predispositions and researcher bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Patton, 2002). I completed member checking through a series of email correspondences with participants. I provided the participants with verbatim interview transcripts and requested that they amend their responses as they saw fit. I also used a researcher field log to obtain valid data and enhance reflexivity. In my field notes journal, I captured descriptive details during the classes and events related to the course, and took time each day to reflect on and record my interpretations, based on my observations of informal and formal course activity.

Authenticity in context.

As the researcher, I had an especially difficult task in negotiating multiple roles and

responsibilities. A reflexive process was particularly relevant in the exploratory study: I took on the dual role of graduate student and qualitative researcher to gain a sophisticated awareness of the importance of particularity in nuanced classroom pedagogy. This awareness was often achieved through personal and contextual features.

I examined the Professionals in Rural Practice and The Lived Experience of Disability courses with a heightened awareness of the role that subjectivities and bias played in reporting descriptions and interpretations. In the two cases, I had pre-established relationships with some of the instructors and, during the coursework, developed relationships with students and instructors.

As a result of my collegial relationships with instructors in the two cases, I was able to capture further detail about pedagogical intentions and make explicit connections between each instructor's thought process and teaching practice. According to Peshkin (1988), "rapport is good" (p. 17) and is an important part of a process of actively seeking out one's own reflexivity. My reflexive stance involved being acutely aware of my rapport with participants. For example, prior to my examination of The Lived Experience of Disability course, I had formed a collegial relationship with the instructor, Anne O'Riordan, through our interactions during the Professionals in Rural Practice course. In the case of The Lived Experience of Disability, being conscious of my pre-established relationship with Anne led me to document my feelings and reactions to classroom events as an important step to uncovering subjectivities, explicating any desire to avoid reporting negative or discrepant data gathered from the study. Additionally, Anne's pedagogical choices were influenced by our established rapport. For example, one such pedagogical moment emerged when one of the students shared a first-person account on the topic of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). After he spoke, I read Anne's body language and

intuited that she encouraged me to share my own experiences with ALS. Without having had the opportunity to spend time with Anne O’Riordan in the first course, and without personal and professional conversations that we’d had prior to data collection, I do not think that my immersive role as participant observer would have developed in the same way.

In the two cases, I had several informal conversations with the instructors, before and after class, which allowed me to make interpretative claims about the pedagogical conditions that were intentionally conceived of by the instructors. My heightened level of conscious awareness as researcher, in relation to my participants, enhanced the quality of data and provided glimpses into the experience that I may not have had otherwise. With a clear philosophical and methodological framework established from the exploratory study as participant observer, I was able to minimize my subjectivities and biases to the extent possible by explicitly stating the multiplicity in my researcher identity in the multiple-case study. Throughout this reflexive inquiry process, it was essential to find my own voice as researcher and to authentically communicate my experiential awareness and understanding of self at every stage of the research (Patton, 2002). My primary goal was to provide trustworthy and credible research that enhances an understanding of the emergent relationship between classroom acts of creativity and transformative learning.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the methods, strategies, and limitations of the study used to examine the courses. The next chapter presents findings from the Learning Activities Survey and the Creativity Checklist to frame the student and teacher perceptions of the two primary, theoretical constructs of the study. With a phenomenological orientation, descriptive participant accounts highlight significant thematic results from the primary data

sources of observations and interviews, which are subsequently shared in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, titled *Multiple Ways of Knowing*, *Adult Conversation*, and *The Storied Self*, respectively.

In Chapter 5, *Multiple Ways of Knowing*, I explore aspects of the two courses that moved beyond the rational-cognitive ways of knowing to encompass relational, emotional, intuitive, and sensory understandings. From a series of novel tasks, students access creative channels not often developed and explored in academia, leading them to generative and transformative moments. In the sixth chapter, *Adult Conversation*, I characterize creativity in the context of conversations that generate vision and collective understanding towards the making of something new and personally meaningful. Additionally, I provide detailed descriptions of the learning activities, classroom dynamic, physical set-up, and pedagogic frameworks related to the transformative dialogue that occurred in the two courses. Chapter 7, *The Storied Self*, is the final themed chapter of results for my dissertation study. In this chapter, I document the value of creating a rich context, through crafted lessons that weave metaphor, storytelling, and image, as a creative condition for transformative learning. In particular, the theme of the storied self is made evident in the transformative tales captured in student and teacher journals that depict reflective, evaluative, and imaginative sense-making.

CHAPTER FIVE

MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING

The purpose of this chapter is to provide rich contextualized portraits of creative activity, enabled through multiple ways of knowing, that functions as a primary driver for transformative learning. An understanding of the nature of teaching and learning experiences offered in the two courses of study provides an enhanced perspective from which to examine the impact these components had on transforming how graduate students and instructors come to know and learn. This chapter begins with a summary of findings from the Creativity Checklist and the Learning Activities Survey and weaves additional survey data throughout. These relevant summaries of data are followed by a theoretical overview of the experiential-based, course-design components from both examined courses. Subsequently, student and instructor narrative accounts of the dynamics and pedagogical events from each course are outlined thematically to highlight various learning activities. This process underscores the strong link between certain learning activities and transformative learning: Two-thirds of the students from the Professionals in Rural Practice course indicated that the immersion retreat weekend was transformative; similarly, 59% of students from The Lived Experience of Disability course indicated that mentor visits were transformative (LAS).

From the Creativity Checklists, the majority of students and instructors from both courses noted that the teaching and learning *often* or *always* “show[ed] a valuing of multiple ways of solving problems.” A view inside the formal and informal learning contexts of the two courses presents students as beings whose multiple ways of knowing are crucial to their understanding

and their creative emergence. Instructors recognized that not everything could be known through cognition. Accordingly, students and instructors engaged, through relational, emotional, and intuitive channels, to develop new and personally meaningful ways of knowledge making in academia. Instructors accounted for a curricular design space that would teach and transform by “putting students in relation” with an “instability and a fluidity of pedagogy [that held] the potential for an unknowable and unforeseeable ‘more’” (Ellsworth, 2006, p 55).

Perspective transformation is one of the two main theoretical constructs that conceptually framed this study. King’s (2009) Learning Activities Survey incorporates the principles and phases of perspective transformation, while facilitating a practical examination of higher-education contexts. Student data reported from the Learning Activities Survey in the multiple-case study indicated that personal support activities and class assignments contributed to “influencing a change” (LAS) in both examined courses. Overall, 82% of students in the Professionals in Rural Practice course and 92% of students in The Lived Experience of Disability course claimed to have questioned and ultimately changed their “values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations” as part of a perspective transformation in the two courses. Most of the students reported that their transformative experiences were linked to course learning activities, as opposed to life events that occurred outside of the classroom context. Only one student in The Lived Experience of Disability course indicated that a life event, which was a change in job, influenced a transformative learning experience at the time of the course.

Curriculum as Lived Experience

In this study, students and teachers acknowledged the experiential “hands-on” component (Jessica, OT825, I) that involved direct experience and practical activities in a real-world environment. Students and instructors participated in an interactive dynamic that mimicked the

collaborative efforts of those engaged in authentic practice. Experiential-based learning activities, which emerged from professional models of practice in various discipline areas, exhibited the values and norms of the culture of professional practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Engagement in experiential learning allowed the students, as aspiring and seasoned professionals, to continuously derive and test knowledge through a process that was grounded in the experiences of the self as learner (Kolb, 1984).

According to Hansman (2001), experiential learning is shaped by “the nature of interactions among learners, the tools they use within these interactions, the activity itself, and the social context in which the activity takes place” (p. 45). According to Ellsworth (2006), relational thinking is fundamental to our embodied existence: “To inhabit a body is to be continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them” (p. 4). One’s relationship with the outer world is “mutually transforming” as it is through relationships that we create and innovate (Ellsworth, p. 41). According to Ellsworth, to learn is to be in relation with things outside of ourselves. In the two courses, the relationship among the participants was experiential. Instructors designed course structures and methods to invite experiential moments of relation to creativity and transformative learning. One student pointed to:

The way that the course is laid out, having it very much student-centred and not “this is what we’re going to learn.” Sometimes I think you learn so much more from experiential learning and from the experiences of others through that sharing. I think that something that leads to divergent thinking is a divergent way of laying out a course. (Jessica, OT825, I)

A theory of experiential learning was central to understanding the process of active interactions between teacher and student in what is described by Jacobson (1996) as “the context of practice . . . characterized by the modelling of both mastery of practice and the process of

gaining mastery” (p. 24). According to Beard and Wilson (2006), “experience is a meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge (itself built from experience) to bring new meaning to an interaction” (p. 21). In this study, the inner world of the learners and their socio-cultural environment dynamically combined to create richly contextualized interactions that were transformative (Beard & Wilson, 2006). A context-based learning process involved “doing the task in order to learn it” (Hansman, 2001, p. 46) and was enabled by creative acts of interpreting new and personally meaningful experiences.

There was a great deal of value placed on life experiences in the two courses. Transformative learning is premised on the notion that adult learners bring many experiences with them to any new learning situation. This experiential baggage, which packs particular attitudes, mindsets, and conceptual ideas, was opened and unpacked by those individuals. Through a process of listening to others’ perspectives, challenging one’s own assumptions and norms, and incorporating others viewpoints, students and instructors were stretched in unexpected ways, which led to heightened awareness and broadened perspectives of learning. Students “access[ed] the world” and “us[ed] it creatively” (Ellsworth, 2006, p. 59) in an integrated manner that encompassed rational, relational, emotional, physical, and intuitive ways of knowing.

Integrated Team-Based Learning

The interdisciplinary nature of team-based learning integrated multiple ways of knowing. Student and instructor responses from the Creativity Checklist confirm that the teaching “encouraged interdisciplinary learning” and “positively valued ideas from all perspectives”; this was certainly the case for the interprofessional (IP) teams in the Professionals in Rural Practice course. The small group synergy allowed students to develop a common language and a unity of

knowledge that transcended discipline boundaries, yet acknowledged particular modes of thinking from each and every professional involved. In the midst of interprofessional team interactions, students cultivated creative capacities as they (a) grasped the complexity of problems and phenomena explored in topics related to rural life and professional practice, (b) connected theoretical knowledge with real-world situations, and (c) communicated and collaborated to solve complex, multi-dimensional cases. An interprofessional approach that embodied multiple ways of knowing became a continuous creative thread; it ran throughout the fabric of the course and, at times, extended outside of the small-group context, to the class at large. One student related interprofessionalism to a connected way of knowing and noted that, in the course context, this was embodied in the multiplicity of spiritual, logical, relational, intuitive, and imaginative patterns of thinking. She commented:

I think it was the ethos of the course, rather than any one specific activity. It was the whole framework of how we were supposed to think throughout the course about how the different disciplines connect. I think it was that framework that we were working under that we were to think in an interdisciplinary manner all the time, having that hold through the different activities was significant to the learning. (Sarah, RHBS830, I)

Students and teachers regarded interprofessional interactions as a primary relational means for broadening, sensitizing, and challenging their perspectives. The dynamic interactions occurred primarily in the second week of the course, once a level of comfort and confidence had been established through the retreat experience and the clearly laid out expectations and objectives from Week 1. For example, role clarification was particularly important in the IP competencies (which, in addition to role clarification, include collaborative leadership, team functioning, and interprofessional conflict resolution), so as to avoid assumptions made about backgrounds in the discipline areas. One student expressed what many experienced in the team settings regarding role differentiation: “I think IP team work brought down some of the barriers

of role differentiation. I knew what my role was, but I felt as though I could interconnect more” (Sarah, RHBS830, I). Another student took note of the important role that personal and professional roles played in the teams:

Since the interdisciplinary group that I was a part of included myself as a nursing student, a post-RN student and a theology student, we were able to draw from two very distinct professions. In addition, we were able to draw from our non-professional roles as parent, spouse, teacher and so on to help broaden our interdisciplinary knowledge and connection. (Andrea, RHBS830, LAS)

The instructor, Anne, took notice of the holistic approach that emerged in the teams as they renamed their experience in a process of meaning-making. She articulated the dynamics that she noticed within the IP teams work:

It was definitely reciprocal, that feeling that they could come together and work well and be better for their congregations, for their clients, for their patients. The [students] talked about a holistic approach, not just interdisciplinary, and I hadn’t heard that term used all that much since the late seventies, early eighties. I think to hear that students are coming back to that [expression] is very important when they’re working. “I’m going to call on the minister, that person has a lot to offer.” And conversely, the ministers-to-be are saying, “I have a voice at the interprofessional table. I know I can collaborate with these people.” (AOR, RHBS830, I)

Another student regarded the dynamic within the teams as friendly and open. She attributed her shifting perspective to a series of relational experiences stemming from the interprofessional group work:

The experiences in this course that triggered changes in my perspective occurred during classroom activities and interactions that promoted interprofessional discussion and problem solving. We were able to debate in a friendly manner and voice our personal perspectives and opinions. I can’t say that there was a specific experience that triggered a change in perspective but rather just every single class offered me the opportunity to view a problem from an angle that I would never have explored before. (Andrea, RHBS830, I)

There were also inherent, relational challenges for the students in working within their assigned IP teams. While the students were cognizant of these challenges, many focused on

finding creative ways to overcome barriers to communication or progress within their teams. One student noted that, “it is challenging to work in teams, especially when your other team members may have varying personalities, opinions, and values. You learn to cooperate and respect your peers” (Andrea, RHBS830, I). Another student shared the learning challenges he experienced in the context of IP group work: “What I have realized . . . working with other professionals, is that there is a give and take process, and I have to find better ways to communicate with them and ensure that they understand where I’m coming from” (Brian, RHBS830, I). Lastly, another student shared: “Thanks to all of the teamwork that was completed in this course. It has helped me become a much more involved and patient person” (Andrea, RHBS830, I). The group work demanded a great deal of communicative and interpersonal skills, and provided an opportunity to improve in those areas through a new experience of working collaboratively in an interprofessional manner; intuitive and relational modes of thinking were called upon in a process of cultivating creative capacities. Regardless of their diverse approaches and styles, and levels of concentration, steadfastness, and persistence (all of which are essential components of creative acts), most of the students were committed to the tasks assigned to their groups.

“IP team work played a very significant role in looking at things differently” (Rebecca, RHBS830, I). This participant account reflects the experience of many in the class and signifies the interconnectedness that was uncovered among individuals and between, among, and beyond the disciplines represented in the IP groups. Interconnected relation between students and teachers within the classroom community is confirmed by the following instructor account:

It was great to see how some of the groups had truly become a team in their final presentations, relying on one another and being responsible to each other. Two of these groups, in particular, had become a complex system where the whole was greater than the sum of each individual member. In addition, you started to see how students were able to situate themselves professionally and personally in a

rural community and how this context would change the way they lived and practiced their profession. (JB, RHBS830, I)

In the Learning Activities Survey, students explicitly confirmed the observation and interview data, naming interprofessional teamwork as one of the learning activities that contributed to a perspective transformation. Undoubtedly, the interprofessional framework designed by instructors, which was embodied in the inner workings of small teams, enabled multiple ways of knowing in an integrated, holistic manner that challenged students' points of view, and moreover, accommodated entirely new perspectives.

Rural Retreat as a Mini-Case for Multiple Ways of Knowing

Picture this: A quilted rural landscape, miles and miles of open, clean air, and the vibrancy of spring, seen in the blues of the sky and the green of the trees. An artistic hub nestled in the heart of wine country, the town of Picton is populated with heritage homes, one more impressive than the next. It opens into the centre, where boutiques line the main street, and visitors to the village are all abuzz as they wine and dine on patios. Then, take a detour to the backstreets and alleys, blocks away from the shiny, happy exterior of the tourist town, to experience the sights and sounds of the underbelly of rural life. These glimpses of local life create a rich context that authenticates a portrait of rural life and practice.

On the two-day retreat that was organized for the Professionals in Rural Practice course, students experienced a mix of the lived realities of rurality and the utopian conception of ruralism that Neil dubbed "rural nirvana" (Neil Hobbs, RHBS830, CO). In the process of being immersed in this setting, students challenged their notion of what it was to be rural and questioned assumptions that they had made previously about the inherent challenges, advantages, and dynamics of being part of a small community. The opportunity to participate in a series of panel discussions, hands-on activities, and informal conversations over meals, while enjoying the

rural backdrop, enhanced the teaching and learning experience for teachers and students alike. The retreat served as a case for multiple ways of knowing. Throughout this immersion experience, multiple ways of knowing emerged as students were transformed (in terms of broadening, expanding, and extending their perspectives) while exploring their rational, intuitive, physical, relational, sensory, and emotional selves. Developing new and personally meaningful knowledge moved beyond cognition, towards an experiential-based curriculum that engaged participants' minds, bodies, and spirits.

Enroute relationality.

The students and teachers climbed onto a bus bound for the Isaiah Tubbs Resort, situated on the sandbanks of Picton, Ontario. On the bus, they began the informal conversations that would prove to serve as a thread for transformative learning. In these engaging conversations, the boundaries between instructor and students “began to fade away” (AOR, RHBS 830, I) and what was left was an open, free-flowing space for dialogue. One instructor noted, “it’s like we are all on an equal playing field” (JJ, RHBS830, I). A student noticed that one of the instructors, Dr. Julia Brook, was talking to everyone on the bus—instructors and students of all ages and backgrounds—with confidence and ease, and this inspired the student to open up those possibilities for herself. Getting to know one another on a deeper level, following only one week of classes together, was crucial in establishing an “intensity of connection” (Rebecca, RHBS, I). The conversation throughout the bus ride and into the weekend consisted of a range of topics that webbed the personal with the professional and enabled their storied selves to emerge; interdisciplinary connections became more meaningful as they had time to experiment, explore, and play with the ideas that characterize creative activity.

Panel politics.

The panel discussions at the retreat provided an opportunity to situate the course content in a rich context. The students and teachers reaction to the variety of guest speakers—from domains such as politics, farming, arts, law, and nursing—demonstrated a valuing of life experience. Student and instructor responses from the Creativity Checklist confirmed this creative aspect of the course when students rated “value expertise of guest speakers and professionals” as occurring *often* or *always* in the course context. The importance of establishing engaging parameters for interpretative acts emerged as a central theme of pedagogical practice. In these panel discussions, students experienced opportunities that broadened, deepened, and sensitized their original assumptions and ideas about rural life and professional practice. A process of meaning-making formed the basis of creative activity for this portion of the retreat; it generated a language and a nature of questioning that supported participants in their search for the expressed and unexpressed intentions of the contexts being provided.

Student and instructor experiences of transformative learning manifested through multiple ways of knowing. Participants reconciled and synthesized sociological, historical, geographical, environmental, and political perspectives on rural issues in the context of the panel discussions. These discussions facilitated focused listening, generation of critical questions, and conversations, both informal and formal, that were reflective in nature. Observations and field note data confirm my characterizations of the classroom interactions as creative in nature. The observation protocol I used was based on the integrated affective-cognitive dimensions of creative thinking highlighted in Urban’s (2002) componential model. At the retreat, creativity resonated in the expressive acts of relational and rational ways of knowing. In my field notes, I characterized the “buzz and energy of the teaching and learning space created at the retreat as

creative” as students and instructors engaged in “focusing and task commitment, general and specific knowledge base, and divergent thinking and doing” (Urban, 2002). I attempted to characterize creativity as a classroom condition in my field note entries. My initial impression was, “it’s difficult to put in static words that which is dynamic and alive.” I also observed:

There is a great deal of expertise exhibited by panelists. There are purposeful interactions, overlapping roles among teachers, students, and guest speakers that traverse age and discipline, and a concerted effort by all to participate and communicate one’s experience with others in relation. (MT, RHBS830, FN)

“The Politics of Rural Living” panel explored the challenges and controversies facing rural communities in Ontario in the 21st century. The panel discussion featured the municipal representative for Prince Edward County. Born and raised in “the county,” the MP spoke about the great tie to the land; she provided an environmental and agricultural perspective that was propelled by the notion of change and its impact on small communities. One example of an interdisciplinary theme that she spoke about involved local controversies surrounding industrial wind turbines, rural water supply, and sewage treatment processes. Recent changes to standards in the environmental industry presented challenges; integrated and multiple perspectives were required to permeate the issues and search for creative solutions.

The format of the presentation was a typical lecture followed by a question and answer period. Despite this traditional framework, a creative energy developed from the context and the dynamic interactions. Creative activity was generated as a result of the foundations that were built in this panel discussion in an interdisciplinary fashion, which offered moments for students to develop and express rational, relational, emotional, and intuitive patterns of knowing. For example, my field notes indicate that the speaker described these unsettling issues as having negatively impacted dynamics and relationships among the locals. She pointed out that “an

eagerness to build relationships between the newcomer and the local relationships could and would often be destroyed because of differing perspectives” (RHBS 830, CO).

This relational way of knowing mirrored the challenges that several of the students working in interdisciplinary teams faced: Two students revealed that communication issues among the members had developed “as a result of crossing disciplines” (Charlie, RHBS830, I) and by “not being heard by the group” (Brian, RHBS830, I). The challenges that the MP described were similar to the IP teams relational experience and required outside-the-box thinking and empathic understanding to improve relational dynamics. Students commented during the second week that, as a result of the relational connections made during the retreat and in Week 2 of the course, they learned the importance of “compromise” (Brian, RHBS830, I) and were able to “gain an appreciation for individual roles” and “differentiated roles” (Sarah, Naomi, RHBS830, I). These transformative lessons learned became a central part of the developing relational ways of knowing, as students worked through their own microcosmic group issues.

For the panel discussion, the room was set up in a way that allowed interaction amongst all participants in the room, Students sat at circular tables that looked out at the panel of discussants, while instructors formed their own panel at a rectangular table at the back of the room. Students and teachers came to life in a discussion period where they were able to ask the representatives any “burning” questions that they might have (RHBS830, CO). Based on the componential model of creativity used in classroom observations, the process of building these questions was a creative endeavour—an activity that involved reflection and revision of one’s thoughts to create questions that were new, personally meaningful, relevant to the discussion, and valuable at individual, group, and societal levels. Some of these burning questions, from both instructors and students, included the following:

In your opinion and experience, what are the complaints from locals for those entering into the rural community?
Do you have any issues surrounding issues of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation—is it a problem in local communities?
Is there a point when you overstep boundaries or go too far in a rural context?
What’s the attracting factor for new families?
With an influx of tourism, do people who run seasonal businesses stay during the low season or go back and forth to the city?
What are the particular health care sector needs on a local level?
With the changing agricultural scene and the emerging environmental issues, has there been overlap?
When it comes to developing new or replacing infrastructure, would you rely on the local market to retain professional services?
What mechanisms generate innovation? (RHBS830, CO)

The critical questions demonstrated a synthesis of ideas (on a range of topics that considered social, economic, and political factors), a pursuit of topics of particular passion and interest, and an application and extension of the conceptual ideas explored in the course context.

Panelists’ responses to these questions demonstrated a strong ability to reflect in relation, and to make connections between what was being asked and the statistical data, the qualitative data gathered from community members, and their own experiences. In doing so, they modelled creative thinking and provided an impetus for discussion as they presented many contemporary issues. Some of these issues were controversial in nature, and in some cases the panelists themselves created controversy through the manner in which they chose to respond. One student’s journal response clearly indicated her reaction to the complex range of issues that emerged from the discussion on the retreat. In response to some of the controversial topics, she wrote in a relational manner to create (rural) context among self, other, and the world:

As was discussed in our class reflection on the weekend, the federal politician’s talk included mention of an Asian family who ran a restaurant in one of the local towns. He proudly pointed out the scholarship the family still donates and the success of their sons. I believe he sees their integration into a rural community as a success and it may well have been. In his depiction, however, the politician made a potentially offensive comment imitating the accent of the Asian businessman. (S, RHBS830, J)

In this writing piece, the student critically questioned her own assumptions about what it is to be an immigrant, drawing on her personal experience in an attempt to comprehend the dynamics of a rural community.

I have underlying questions as to what the success story of this family really entails. In some ways it's symbolic of rural life, or life anywhere, that there are distinct highs and lows and I suspect they can be found in this family's story too. The beauty of Picton can hide dark corners where drug activity takes place. The local farms can offer work and care to overseas workers but also exploitation. I suspect an Asian family in Prince Edward County found both welcome and ignorance. (S, RHBS830, J)

Shared stories from the retreat shaped her perspective of diversity in a rural context through a process of critical reflection and close interpretation of events. The student related on a personal level with the immigrant experience:

I immigrated to a country where I look like the locals and speak the language fluently and yet there are times when being an immigrant has been troubling so I connect emotionally with the immigrant experience. I'm an experienced and qualified special education teacher (certified by the Ontario College of Teachers) but my qualifications do not transfer to the US context. Things I took for granted in Canada such as universal healthcare and paid maternity leave are not a reality for me here [in the United States]. What I face, though, when I come up against certification issues, cultural difference or political issues is so little compared to what an Asian family would have faced in rural Ontario with a new language to learn and likely no understanding of their educational background or qualifications. (S, RHBS830, J)

The student artistically summarized her impressions and interpretations of the immigrant experience in a poem:

Chicken Fried Rice

Of course they were happy,
And why not?
Our town embraced them
like water
around an island
treasured them
as beached sea glass



a touch of the exotic
in the long stretch of ordinary.
And they fit in so well
with their English names
their tidy house
their boys
too studious to date our daughters,
boys
who'd someday join that endless stream of
our sons
to the city.
Sometimes over the counter,
fingering tattered menus
we'd remember
how far they'd come from
that like this town,
with its ghosts of mills and factories,
they had known some vibrant wondrous place
now out of reach.
(S, RHBS830, J)

The student's poem explored some of the issues around the family's acceptance into a small rural community. According to the student, in the poem she "hints that the family is both connected to the town and set apart from it" (S, RHBS830, J). The student discovered the importance of healthy skepticism and following her instincts in a professional role. Her ability to question and challenge the panelist's perspective revealed the impact that this part of the retreat experience had on her. She explained the role that intuition and sense-making played in her reflection. For another student, creativity came in the form of drawing on one's multiple ways of knowing, in order to enhance self-awareness in a manner that embraced the learning holistically. She noted, "I've come to realize after the course that suspicion or a willingness to question the accepted order or community version of events might be a very important part of being an effective rural professional" (Sally, RHBS830, J).

Rural and relational stewards.

The afternoon session titled "Farming in a changing rural landscape: The impact of

organics and big industry on rural life” focused on illustrating the web of connections between rural life and practice. The session featured three panelists. Two were farmers, one from the County Cider Company and Estate Winery and another from The Blueberry Patch, and a third panelist was a local artisan. The farmers spoke to living and leaving a legacy: The realities of fewer farmers, fewer farms, and the negative impact that increased costs and lost expertise have on fieldwork were discussed. An economic perspective on their businesses was presented, with topics including local and international competition, sustainable practices, and product marketability. Additionally, as stewards of the land, they covered topics of health (water quality, cancer), food safety (high standards for spraying; worker safety; soil quality), and employment (off-shore worker programs) and integrated these issues in an interdisciplinary fashion throughout their talk. Students were encouraged by instructors to challenge pre-conceived notions of farmers, to question the dynamics of off-shore worker programs and the impacts of global warming on farming, and to examine their taken-for-granted assumptions about regulations for food production, distribution, and consumption. One instructor’s comment summarized the multiple ways of knowing, specifically physical, intuitive, and spiritual, captured in the lived experience of the farmers on the panel:

A physical way of knowing comes across as being valid when we listen to the farmers talk when they talk about being connected to the land. I think that’s a very spiritual and physical connection. It’s not even an economic decision, this way of knowing is them and it’s very much the underlying pretense of a lot of our conversations that it is not an option to leave. (JB, RHBS830, I)

The panel discussions, along with the question and answer periods, became a starting point for the transformative dialogue that would follow. Snacks and drinks provided students and teachers with an opportunity to interact more directly with the speakers and with one another. These were unique educational opportunities that afforded students and instructors an

opportunity to interact more directly with the speakers and with one another in a comfortable and inspiring atmosphere. All of the participating students and teachers referred to the wonderful meal experience as transformative. My field notes captured the following details of the meal experiences attended at the retreat: “menus made up of locally prepared food and drink,” “crisp white linens adorning the far-reaching table,” “a wall of windows overlooking the lake,” and “the sounds of laughter and playfulness filling the room.” Physical ways of knowing were engaged as participants sampled locally grown food and drink, including organic produce, meats, and cider, whilst relational, emotional, and rational ways of knowing were carried in the conversations. Students and teachers reported that the informal conversations over the meals were particularly transformative as the “complexities of the topics were explored at a deeper level” and there were opportunities to ask “specific questions relevant to their professional areas of practice” (JJ & JY, RHBS830, I). During those informal conversations over meals, there was time for “truly getting to know one another” and for “getting at the heart of the rural experience” (JB, RHBS830, I). Students and instructors soaked in the rural surroundings that enlivened multiple ways of knowing, and spent time reflecting on the day’s events, and the journey that they’d travelled thus far.

Dr. Neil Hobbs vividly described the ethereal moments caught up in multiple ways of knowing experienced at the retreat before they vanished “just like bubbles in champagne” (NH, RHBS830, I). In moments of quiet reflection in his journal, Neil premised his entry on a creative synthesis of remote associations that highlighted the dialectic relation among teachers, students, and guest speakers. Neil began his entry with a vivid depiction of fired sensory pathways and highlighted the multiple patterns of knowledge that were brought to bear in his poetic understanding of the retreat experience:

Any firework we bought in our childhood always had the rather old-fashioned warning: “light the blue touch paper [the fuse] and retire [stand well back]”. . . . I feel this weekend that I have felt myself close to a pyrotechnic display of exciting new possibilities through the work we all—teachers and learners—did together. I could write screeds about this but I am going to take a leaf out of one of my teacher’s books, and write a poem. (NH, RHBS830, J)

Neil framed his poem with the concept of synesthesia. He elaborated on this concept in his journal:

[Synesthesia] is a curious sensory neurological phenomenon where nervous sensations are mixed up: musical notes are “seen” as different colours. Smells are “heard” as “notes”—an expression still used by winetasters to describe wine, etc. A number of writers and artists—Liszt, Nabokov, Kandinsky, Scriabin to name a few—are described as having been synesthetes. A more grim version of this is known in the peripheral nervous system in chronic pain syndromes, where non-pain sensations are sent to the brain by pain nerve fibres and received in the brain as pain. The condition of *allodynia* in some chronic pain syndromes where touch is painful is a truly dreadful thing to witness. I guess we have had a more pleasurable “synesthetic” weekend where so much information has been shared by different pathways that I felt it would be a reasonable metaphor to use. (NH, RHBS830, J)

Using this metaphor, Neil creatively characterizes the dynamic of multiplicity that lived in the possibilities of sacred and secular, relational and emotional, teacher and learner. He writes of this paradoxical transformation, wherein creative tensions reside:

The Sky is Ablaze—smell the joy of light.

O, I am adrift in the heart-red joy
Of sharing and being shared:
[Pray that it be for good and not for ill...]

I hear golden arrows, hisssss
Nocked from taut bowstrings and released.
They soar, sparkling, into the future.

Ploughing the field, we scatter,
Hoping for an hundredfold increase
Of warm grain in great handfuls, sifting
Into the silver barrel of life’s
Plenitude, long after our molecules
Have fed the miracle of our resurrection

Rejoice, friends! Join hands!
Taste and see, hear and touch
Yellow suns and moonlit nights, and stars.

They are shields against the dark,
Against dank cynical moisture and the smell of sulphur,
Against secular death-by-a-thousand-paper-cuts.

Rejoice and be blessed!

Contemplating the experiences of the weekend, Dr. Julia Brook reflected on conversations with her students and her reading of student feedback forms and student journals, and summarized what was most significant about the retreat:

The weekend in Picton was a rich experience for everyone and pivotal for many of the students. I think this solidified the cohesion among the students and enriched the faculty-student relationships. By sharing meals and spending time touring various parts of Picton, students became more comfortable with one another. Rural issues became more concrete after this weekend and meeting rural people (e.g., farmer). That, coupled with the extended time with one another, took this class to another level. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Julia's account, confirmed by student responses in the Learning Activity Survey, points to the retreat as a transformative learning experience. For Anne, the developed relationships were a cohesive thread not only for the retreat, but for the entire conceptual framework of the course, as well. Anne remarked:

I think the bonding was a surprise for [students]. The fact that boundaries between students and instructors melted away, that was how one student described it, the boundaries melted away. I could see some administrators or professors looking at that with raised eyebrows when we talk about boundaries, and we had that session in the course about it, but to me this was in a very positive way that it was all about the learning and I didn't feel a sense of worrying so much about the marks as about the learning. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

The most significant pattern of knowing in the retreat was relational in nature. Within the relational dynamic lived moments of emotional, intuitive, spiritual, and physical ways of knowing, which emerged to create a holistic portrait of the teaching and learning experience.

This holistically-oriented retreat context was creative by its very synthesized nature, and transformative for the students and teachers because it called upon an integrated type of sense-making that was considered new for some, and personally meaningful for many.

Mentoring as a Relational Way of Knowing

In examining disease, we gain wisdom about anatomy and physiology and biology. In examining the person with disease, we gain wisdom about life.

—Oliver Sacks (1985), *The Man Who mistook His Wife for a Hat*

Mentoring was the single most important aspect of building relations in The Lived Experience of Disability course. In their individual interviews, interactions in tutorial sessions, and journaling entries, students reported that mentoring was transformative in nature. These findings were corroborated in the Learning Activities Survey, where students indicated a positive correlation between perspective transformation and the personal support and learning activities. Data from the LAS revealed that 64% of students in the course considered mentor support and mentor visits to be a contributing factor for transformative learning. Whether they met for an in-home visit, a stroll through the park, a tour of a local theatre building, or a visit to the public library, time spent with mentors provided students with a heightened understanding of the realities of living with a disability and the challenges that these individuals face in their everyday activities and in their environments. These visits with the mentors led students on a storied journey, which called upon their life histories, their everyday routines, and their hopes for the future in their search for meaning.

In The Lived Experience of Disability course, students were paired up with mentors in the Kingston community. Two students were assigned to a mentor with a disability type that was not part of the students' previous experience profile. Students in their dyads were expected to schedule a minimum of six hours with their mentor to complete the course requirements. There

was a diverse range of congenital and acquired disabilities represented, on a continuum from mental to physical disabilities. Students met with their mentors in a series of visits. Over the course of these visits, students developed close, personal relationships that enhanced their conceptions of disability and challenged their associated perceptions, assumptions, and stereotypes. In a process of getting to know one another, students became more attuned to the lives of their mentors and in doing so, were better able to think creatively to glean the most from these deeply significant learning opportunities.

The relationships between the mentors and students were emergent in structure. Anything but prescriptive in nature, these developing relationships heightened students' awareness of the complexities that surrounded building relations. Students and instructors indicated in the Creativity Checklist that they were "required to take a broad focus on the topics they were taught." Anne spoke to the inherent course challenges that prompted students to recognize individual intricacies within a broader context of health care:

I think the students come into the program with very altruistic goals in mind that they're in it to work with people and to make a difference in people's lives, but I don't think they necessarily come in with an understanding of what the problems are. And so through the course and the mentors and the readings, they start to realize how complicated and complex health care is. And it's not just a series of diagnoses and a textbook that says okay this is present therefore you must do this. They start to realize that they can't rely on assessments and equipment and prescriptive kinds of interactions with people. It is about people and the relationship is part of the therapeutic medium and if you don't have that, I don't think you're going to have optimal results. So I think it makes students aware of how many challenges people might face, also the fact that challenge can be support they have in family and friends and it just snowballs into something much larger than a simple equation. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

The nature, content, and level of personal investment in the sessions were mutually determined on the basis of the relationship that developed between the mentor and mentee. A creative thread emerged as students were "allowed to complete tasks in a variety of ways" with "opportunities

for self-determined discovery” (CC). Anne pointed out the differentiated and relational nature of the learning experience and its potential to generate creative activity:

The students were surprised at how frank people are as mentors. One mentor in particular discussed personal issues and prefaced “I don’t always share this with students, but I’m sharing this with you because we’ve developed a relationship and a level of trust.” So I think that, for the students, was a huge compliment and something they will value forever. It also helps them to realize that what you learn from a future client very much depends on the relationship that you have with them. (AOR, OT825, I)

One of the mentors confirmed this sentiment by stating, “I can be really forthcoming with information, but it depends on the relationship” (Bob, OT825, I).

Several students regarded the mentoring sessions as a process of relational sense-making.

One student depicted the creative process as offering flexibility and opportunity to explore intuitively:

We were told to go in and feel our way through that relationship that you have with your mentor. We weren’t verbally instructed to go in with a certain occupational therapy frame of reference. It was more, “go in, see how it feels, ask questions, and get to know them.” I think that was certainly driven by intuition. (Maren, OT825, I)

Another student’s experience of mentoring allowed her to strike a fine balance between a personal and professional dynamic: “It’s exciting for me to be able to ask about topics outside of the theoretical; to focus on the patient as an occupational being. I feel more like a potential friend and confidant than a clinician.” She went on to note, “I can be more casual, while still maintaining professional communication” (Katie, OT825, J). The mentoring relationships, in many cases, left lasting impressions on the students. One student said, “My mentor has put a real face to the word “dementia” that I can take with me” (Jessica, OT825, J). This theme of lived lessons was evident in many student accounts, as they oriented their attention to the unique and transformative nature of these relationships. One student remarked:

It surprised me how sick some of them actually were, one of the mentors actually passed away. It surprised me that many of the mentors are really along a broad spectrum of illness right to very, very severely ill, which I guess, is real life. They are not textbook cases, perfect cookie cut-outs—it's real life. (Maren, OT825, I)

Maren's comment encompassed the notion that mentoring "is participating in the transformation of what is" (Davis, 2004, p. 184). She acknowledged the value of self in relation to other (her mentor) and broadened to touch the personal and interpersonal with the planetary (Davis, 2004).

She noted:

I realize now that my mentor really wanted to share his story with someone and just have people to talk to. He wanted us to take his story and be inspired to help him and others with dementia. He expects the younger generation to do something about the loneliness and uncertainty that dementia carries. There is no cure, but maybe by spreading his message, we'll be able to find our way to one, or at least be aware. (Katie, OT825, J)

Mentoring, as a creative course activity, "supported [students'] natural curiosity and strive [sic] for knowledge" and demonstrated a valuing of "the uniqueness and each person" (CC). For the students, the basis for these mentoring relations was a deep regard for the individual, and in a broader context, humanity as a whole.

The following two vignettes from The Lived Experience of Disability course serve as cases for multiple ways of knowing. The relational, emotional, intuitive, and sensory aspects of Alexandra's and George's stories represent the creative drivers for the transformative interactions between the mentors and the students.

Alexandra's hope.

Alexandra is a woman in her 70s. She is a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a trained psychiatric social worker, and a former employee at the University, where she worked to provide accommodations for students with disabilities. She spent most of her life as an active member of the community, engaged in much-loved activities that included quilting, writing poetry, and

playing the double bass. Alexandra suffered from a major stroke three years ago that has left her with hemiplegia. She is confined to a wheelchair and has had to relearn how to talk, chew, and swallow. Alexandra is a breast cancer survivor, although the cancer has recently recurred. During the time of the meetings, she was in the midst of chemotherapy treatments.

Maren, one of the students paired with Alexandra, wrote a letter to her prior to their first meeting, explicating previous experiences with cancer as she entered into this new experience:

I've realized that I have a once in a lifetime chance to speak with you. My experiences with cancer so far are restricted to childhood cancers. When kids have cancer, they often don't have a full concept of what that means. Sure, there is chemo, ports, drugs, and days off from school. They feel sad, scared, sick, and alone. But I often believe that the brunt of the emotional pain is taken on by their parents. The adults who really can grasp what it means to have a life threatening illness in which the treatment is almost as bad as the disease. (Maren, OT825, J)

At a tutorial session later on in the term, Maren recalled how these assumptions did not accurately reflect the reality of the situation. All she had to base her impressions of Alexandra on was the slip of paper from Anne, which indicated her health issues and the “slow, breathless voice” that she spoke to on the telephone. Based on her preconceived notions, Maren experienced a disorienting dilemma from the first meeting. She explained: “I was expecting to see someone who LOOKED really sick. What I actually saw was quite different. My biases, expectations, and assumptions were all wrong!” (Maren, OT825, J). In her journal, she recalled the scene of their first meeting and detailed her initial reactions to her mentor's position:

We went into a beautiful condo filled with photos of family, artwork, and music playing in the background. Immediately we could see a loving partner who helped her with most ADL's [activities of daily living], including dressing, moving, and toileting. Even though she still has family that visits frequently and friends coming by constantly; a loving husband and an enriching and adapted environment, she still wants to be normal. Her change in physical ability over the past three years has made her very sad. (Maren, OT825, J)

Clearly in tune with her mentor's emotional journey, Maren recognized that there was still a life to be lived out. Despite her mentor's sadness and longing for the days of health, Maren noticed her mentor's ability to focus on making the best out of a less than ideal situation and her perseverance in continuing to find meaning from the everyday. Her heightened awareness of the mentor's stance is exhibited in the following passage from her journal. She stated: "Being able to see from her perspective let me see the realities of living with a disability. It's not ideal, but life goes on" (Maren, OT825, J).

Despite being told that there was nothing more her doctors could do to treat her medical condition, Alexandra was determined to not give up on regaining greater quality of life. Her student spoke to her mentor's tenacity and her persistence in finding a cure. Maren recalled:

I realized that one of the ways in which she maintained hope and optimism was through her constant pursuit of knowledge. She was reading books, online, and through health facilities. She was learning as much as she could about her stroke, and the newest treatments available outside of the city (and country!). (Maren, OT825, J)

Even though her mentor seemed quite discouraged at times about her diagnosis and the limits caused by her condition, with each visit the student discovered an increased fervor for life. As they engaged with one another, there was a renewed hope that emerged from the relational interactions of compassion that provided space for both student and mentor to explore their ideas and feelings. Alexandra's optimism in the face of scientific skepticism and the range of emotional challenges associated with her disability became primary themes in these meetings. In their final visit together, Maren noted that her mentor was able to constructively reflect on the aspects of her disability experience with a greater degree of acceptance than when they first met:

Her attitude was different [at this meeting]. I was quietly upset when I saw that her hair was falling out on this visit (from her chemotherapy). [My mentor] remarked, "I was terrified the first time my hair fell out. I couldn't stop crying. But I focus on the fact that now I see that the chemo is working." It was

perspectives like these that showed me more about who my mentor was as a person. (Maren, OT825, J)

Alexandra's admission clearly struck an emotional chord for Maren during this final session together. As their relationship had progressed, the level of comfort and investment with one another increased. Alexandra reflected on their relational connection: "They were interested in me as a person, not just in how my disability affected my life" (Alexandra, OT825, I).

Additionally, Maren remarked how the level of trust between them built over time. Prior to the first visit, Maren listed the critical questions that she hoped to cover in their sessions together.

She wrote:

How have your hopes and dreams changed?
How do you plan for the future, now?
What do family and friends do to make it better?
What can we do to help?
Who is most important to you now?
What are you most afraid of?
Do you fear death?

I may not have the courage to ask you these questions today. But I've always wanted to know. (Maren, OT825, J)

By the final meeting with her mentor, Maren had indeed found the courage to explore the conceptual ideas behind her original questions. She recalled this shift towards openness: "We were getting to know them better so the questions felt more personal by the end. We could be closer without feeling bad and worrying about whether we were going to upset them when asking them something" (Maren, OT825, I).

Alexandra expressed the relational value that this experience of mentoring had for her.

She explained:

This experience has provided me with an outlet to express myself to people who were prepared to hear my truth and they weren't patronizing about it. The students would acknowledge that, yes there were going to be days that were very difficult, but there was always a new day tomorrow that would be different. It could be

worse, but on the other hand, it could have a bright spot that could last for another three or four weeks . . . there is hope. (Alexandra, OT825, I)

This relational experience transformed Maren's understanding of her mentor's experience of disability. Maren pinpointed what specifically changed for her in terms of how she conceptualized the lived experience: "I had to change my way of thinking around mentors from pity to empathy" (Maren, OT825, LAS) and confirmed this sentiment in her journal: "The most important thing I learned with my mentor was empathy." She expanded on this (meaning) perspective in the following passage excerpted from her journal: "By the end of our sessions I was excited and hopeful for the things she looked forward to. She adapted to her new abilities and reframed what was important to her" (Maren, OT825, J).

George's dinner.

George is a middle-aged man who worked for many years as a residential counselor with the mentally ill and the developmentally handicapped. George said his claim to fame is that he was accepted into university for business management and accounting—an aspect of his life in which he seems to take pride. He enjoys bowling, cooking, and frequenting a local coffee shop where there is a bohemian vibe. George suffers from manic depression and various anxiety disorders. He has attempted suicide 18 times in total, and has been treated with shock therapy for several years now. He was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Charlotte and Norman had a very close, intense relationship with their mentor, George. This dynamic was founded on mutual respect and care. Debriefing in tutorials revealed that, initially, it was challenging to move past the small talk in some of the sessions. The students made an effort to really listen to their mentor's story. They were constantly cognizant of the impact and influence of their interpersonal interactions and were nuanced in their questioning and in action: They were careful not to impart unsolicited advice and were aware of their

heightened sensitivity to their mentor's reactions, specifically regarding some of the unknown dimensions of his anxiety. The students described their experience of meeting with their mentor as "valuable, eye-opening, emotional, and internalizing" (Norman and Charlotte, OT825, J). Further, Norman explained the important distinction between a professional relationship and the type of relationship that they had with their mentor. He expressed: "It was very casual and so it was more empathetic and more understanding so that we can [eventually] be better at our profession" (Norman, OT825, I). George confirmed the casual and friendly dynamic of their relationship, stating that "it was very easy to talk with them. They took me as an equal" (George, OT825, I).

After a meeting with their mentor in a public place, Charlotte and Norman intuited that their mentor's anxiety, caused by the public environment, was impeding their communication. Therefore, the student pair came up with some creative solutions to engage George in more meaningful conversation and to accommodate the range of needs that he had exhibited. Norman recalled this particular stage of their learning experience:

One of our greatest challenges with our mentor was planning our next meeting. I started reflecting on what our mentor had shared with us and remembered his passion for food and cooking, and an idea came to me. While the idea of cooking and cleaning at his house would most likely cause him anxiety in preparing and during this meeting, having a meal brought by us to his house where he is most comfortable, seemed to be the best environment to make the best of our meeting. (Norman, OT825, J)

Charlotte recalled considering alternatives with Norman before arriving at a creative solution that connected their mentor visits to the atmospheric tone experienced in their tutorials:

On my third mentor visit, this was after our conversation with the class, they had challenged us about how his anxiety limited him from doing some of the things that he knew would make him get better or help his depression, and so we had decided to bring him dinner because we wanted to visit him in his home and we wanted it to be a casual conversation and for him to open up and we know that we do that in class, we have snacks and we feel comfortable. (Charlotte, OT825, I)

Norman reflected on their novel solution to the communication problem that they were experiencing, and described the engaging outcome that ensued:

Our mentor was quite happy to see us, especially because we brought him food for a meal “better and healthier than [he has] had for weeks.” Whether it was because it was the third meeting, or because of the great food, our conversation seemed to flow naturally, and filled with in-depth conversation about our mentor. He opened up to us more than before, and appeared extremely calm compared to our other visits, exclaiming he had minimal to no anxiety at this visit (which was extremely comforting to hear). (Norman, OT825, J)

The students critically reflected on the aspects of their visit that enabled a deeper level of conversation. Student acts of creativity demanded an ability to draw connections from disparate parts of their experience, to think divergently and holistically about the complex dimensions of their mentor’s needs, and to integrate those aspects into a scenario that was personally meaningful for all involved.

Details of the dinner were discussed in tutorials, debriefed between the student dyad, and reflected on in their journals. The role of the relationship between mentor and mentees is highlighted in the following passage from Norman’s journal, in which he chronicled the emotive and personal aspects of their conversational connection. He wrote:

Throughout the dinner, we continued to discuss our mentor’s challenges, learning more about the exact feelings of anxiety. He shared with us the step-by-step process of an anxiety attack when in a situation that is particularly stressful for him (usually in crowded areas where he feels not in control). Moments like these, and others where our mentor truly opened up to us, were emotionally charged and moving. It was so different seeing him so relaxed in his home, happy to share more, and share a great meal with us. It honestly felt as if we were just friends out for dinner at one of our places. While I don’t feel the other meetings with my mentor were ineffective or poor learning experiences, I felt this one was the most productive in the sense we really got to see into the life of our mentor. He shared with us things that he had not thus far, we reached a new level of comfort in the conversation and I believe he feels more trusting in us than before. (Norman, OT825, J)

As Norman and Charlotte shared their learning experiences with their tutorial group, several students commented that their creative process helped generate a meaningful experience for students and mentors. The relational understanding between the mentees and George demonstrated aspects of creativity through (a) individual and group dimensions of divergent thinking and doing, (b) the application of their general and specific knowledge base, and (c) their openness and tolerance of ambiguity (Urban, 2002). The following comment echoes the sentiments expressed in a tutorial session, where students reflected on how relational ways of knowing were enhanced by an other's lived experience of mentoring.

I was really impressed in listening to my two peers who have been having difficulty connecting to their mentor. They shared that their most recent visit had been the most effective in gaining information and insight into their mentor, and his lived experience; I think they felt they were actually "getting somewhere." What I thought was really interesting about their experience was how attuned they were to their needs, as well as the needs of their mentor. They were able to articulate that their need of getting insight wasn't being met, and were able to observe and postulate that their mentor's needs weren't being met/respected by the activities they were doing. I really think they did an amazing job at meeting the mentor where he was, mentally and emotionally, when they could tell that he was not comfortable. In bringing the meeting back to a place he felt safe, and addressing some of his issues, they were able to meet his needs, therefore facilitating the meeting of their needs. I felt like I had a lot to gain from these two peers sharing their experience. Their honesty in stating their unmet needs, and the creativity used to meet these needs as well as the needs of the mentor spoke loudly to me. As much as OT is about fulfilling the needs of the client, it is important to acknowledge and meet your own needs. I think this is something important for myself in the future; taking a step by and really understanding what the client needs, and how I can address this, where they are currently. (Jessica, THBS830, J)

Anne also spoke about this particular dyad in her interview and commented on the decisional level (change in action) outlined in the Observation-Reflection-Interpretation-Decisional (ORID) framework for journaling in the course. Once students reached the decisional level, it pointed not only to their professionalism, but also to a transformative learning experience. Anne explained in the following account:

A transformative moment was when the students matched with an individual who has a significant depressive illness were able to organize and structure their last meeting according to the needs they perceived this mentor had. And to me, that's a quality that I would expect of a practicing clinician, not necessarily of students in their first semester of their program. Sharing that experience with other students meant that everybody got to learn from that moment when all of a sudden, they realized they got it, what his life was like. And while they didn't experience it personally, they were able to understand, empathize, and adapt their own interactions so that he could participate fully and continue to teach them. I thought that was a really excellent example of what the course can do for students. Students who are engaged and take that opportunity and jump-in, not all students do, but these two students clearly did. (AOR, OT825, I)

Collegial Collaboration

During the interviews, the instructors of the Professionals in Rural Practice course were asked what it was like to be part of an interdisciplinary team. A significant theme emerged in their responses: a relational experience of professional collaboration in the planning, design, and teaching. Descriptors for this collaborative dynamic included: “energizing, confidence building, fun, cohesive, team, terrific, truly interdisciplinary, positive, passionate, and flexible” (RHBS830, I). This collaborative effort brought together “different people, different personalities, different perspectives” (JJ, RHBS830, I) who “functioned well together” (JY, RHBS830, I) wherein the “work was better and the load was less” (AOR, RHBS830, I). Overall, the team teaching was “a bonding experience” (JY, RHBS830, I).

In addition to their many skills, attributes, and ideas that provided enriching content, the instructors offered an amalgam of diverse perspectives and professional experience. When guest speakers were added into the mix, the design and teaching became more complex and required further collaboration. Dr. Margo Paterson, one of the faculty leads, who has been part of this course since its inception, spoke to the importance of coordinating all of the moving pieces of this course, and the necessity of clarifying organizational roles to facilitate collaboration. She explained, “part of what [was] successful is that we have designated people, Jane and Denise,

who between them attended every session and that glue is huge” (MP, RHBS830, I). These designated instructors focused primarily on scheduling the various speakers and instructors in a complementary and interdisciplinary manner.

Each instructor filled a distinct and important role in the course. One of the instructors, Anne, spoke to the value of uncovering her role within the collective group. She remarked on the nature of collaborative work: “This was a real joy for me because I could offer something that I felt I was good at or that I had something to say about, but it didn’t fall on me to take care of everything” (AOR, RHBS830, I). Several instructors commented on their individual roles as contributing factors to the collective whole. On this note, Anne further remarked, “I love being part of an interdisciplinary team. I feel most comfortable offering service when it’s in combination with other people, to ensure that it’s the best possible thing it can be” (AOR, RHBS830, I). Another instructor, Denise, reinforced the value of contributing in relation to others. She said, “Understanding the topic from more than just my perspective was really interesting, to see how my very unique perspective of working in remote areas translated to their vision of what rural means” (DNF, RHBS830, I). Margo revealed what was especially key in collaboration and unique to this instructional group dynamic: “It’s a great group. They’re passionate about the topic, but they’re also passionate about working together, and they’re extremely respectful. The opportunities for arguments in the sandbox are huge and they don’t happen” (MP, RHBS830, I).

Collaborative teaching is rare in academia, where “most faculties operate in silos” (JY, RHBS830, I). The interdisciplinary connection and co-ordination amongst the professionals offering this learning experience was refreshing and particularly relevant in the framing of an interdisciplinary course. Margo emphasized this notion: “Everyone has an interprofessional

piece, and they make that quite explicit. And I think that piece is part of the comfort that people feel. It's a very mature instructor group" (MP, RHBS830, I).

Collaboration did not evolve without challenge or compromise among the instructor group. In the planning of the course, Jane recalled the challenge of the creative process of making sound decisions that were representative of the collective vision. In particular, she mentioned issues of accommodation and auditing as requiring a compromise among the group. Jane explained: "You want to incorporate all of the ideas, the ways of doing things, and the suggestions. Keeping everyone in the loop and making decisions sometimes took a while and you had to sift out the best decision" (JJ, RHBS830, I). Other challenges came on an individual level for the most junior instructor in the course, Julia Brook. She described her new experience of academic collaboration:

Being part of an interdisciplinary team was really a steep learning curve for me. Part of it for me was that I was the newbie, so you have to figure out how everything works and the dynamics [which were] pretty well established. So coming in and finding my place, they were very welcoming of me, which was good. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Ultimately, Julia's transformative experience came in the form of an enhanced perspective, acquired through creative acts that were interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature. Julia stated: "[This course] provided a concrete experience of my ideal description of the type of learning environments and professional working relationships that I want to be part of as I develop my career" (JB, RHBS830, I).

Overall, collaboration carried a collegial spirit that "was supportive and energizing for the instructor, but [which] also transferred to the students, as well" (JJ, RHBS830, I). This sentiment was confirmed by student accounts of their own interdisciplinary experiences in their teams. Julia further affirmed the aims that evolved in collaborative conceptualization:

I think that developing this course was certainly a team experience. The content of the courses and the tenor of the sessions were a result of a combined effort from all involved. Certainly we were aiming to have inclusive and engaging discussions and tried to create content that was representative of contemporary rural issues and present it within a structure that would allow students to engage and interact with the content and each other to consolidate and personalize their understanding. That was the goal for my session, which was also similar to the other sessions that I attended. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Dr. Neil Hobbs captured the sentiment of transformation as a way of opening up and reframing experience in new and personally meaningful ways. In his journal entry, he pointed to collaboration as a source of inspiration. He described creative acts of sharing among students and teachers as invisible threads of possibility that reside in the lived experience, and in the paradox of the present and in what lies ahead. Neil wrote:

[The course] was one of the best things that I've had the pleasure being associated with. Like many "best things" in life it has been an experience that has stepped into my life modestly from the wings, as it were, but the expansion of mind that takes place is hugely centre-stage. I think that this is because we've brought to this little course a love of collaboration, joy of sharing, open-mouthed admiration of students who bring so much to the course and will be launched as Kahlil Gibran says, "like arrows into the future." We may not see where they land but there has been joy in the launching. (NH, RHBS830, J)

Instructors, modelling acts of interprofessional collaboration, transformed students' perspective of rural life and practice. Several students—who had not considered working in rural areas prior to taking the course and who had little or no experience interacting interprofessionally—found that their participation in the course had dramatically altered their professional trajectory. The following student transformation named collaboration as a relational way of knowing that inspired creative professionalization:

[This course] has given me confidence in interprofessional collaboration, clarifying my role to other professionals, and creative problem solving. More than that confidence, it has given me a workplace to desire, one in which inter-professional is not only relished but desired. I'm dreaming rural! (Sally, RHBS830, J)

Another student considered how the interdisciplinary nature of the learning experience would inform her practice of ministry. In this particular case, she noted how her perspective of practice had been enhanced and discussed specific instances where her values aligned with a collaborative approach with other (rural) professionals. Her journal entry reveals her relational and intuitive ways of knowing as the creative impetus to extend beyond the rigid boundaries of her original professional conception:

This class has helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the need for interconnection amongst practitioners in a rural setting. It has broadened my sense of whom I should see as a colleague or ally and has intrigued me with possibilities for interdisciplinary work. (Sarah, RHBS830, J)

Emotional Layers

In both courses, there were many opportunities to explore and expand emotional ways of knowing. Emotions added an essential dimension to the lived experience curricula in both courses. As students engaged in classroom activities that had many layers of personally meaningful moments, their feelings and perceptions were both acknowledged and valued by instructors.

This was evident in the Professionals in Rural Practice course, where an integrated cognitive-affective system for thinking creatively was at play in the classroom activity, especially in the “case studies and partnered discussions” (LAS, RHBS830). One student recalled the emotional openness that she experienced: “You could be honest about what you feel and say things that you feel” (Sally, RHBS830, I). Another student drew on specific learning activities that provided opportunities to emote. She recalled, “I think we were always encouraged to explore our own feelings whether it be through the journal or any of the case studies or responses to readings. We were encouraged to talk and explore our perceptions in class”

(Rebecca, RHBS830, I). Many students and teachers of the rural course acknowledged that “the content in general had an emotional tone to it” (Sarah, RHBS830, I).

The sharing of stories and the thread of personal lived experience contributed to the emotional quality of the course content: “Drawing from personal examples has an emotional component. You’re drawing up those emotions to an experience that you’ve had” (Sarah, RHBS830, I). Adults bring a diverse range of life experience into the formal course experience. In the rural course, integrating life experience emerged, for both students and teachers, as a celebrated practice and approach to understanding and enriching the course content. Denise spoke to the valuable professional and personal contributions that were fostered through shared lived experiences:

I think sometimes some of the questions they were asking or the reflections they were making in any of the sessions really spoke of their lived experience. Some of the more experienced RNs, in particular, came to the table with a deep understanding of what it means to be a nurse or to be rural and you could hear that in their lived experience, which speaks to some of the emotion of the learning. (DNF, RHBS830, I)

Several instructors recounted the intense emotions that they experienced as a result of their participation in the rural course. Once they had time to step back and reflect at course end, they expressed aspects of realization and recognition that emerged from their new and personally meaningful experiences. For example, one instructor recounted his rekindled passion for teaching: “This year [the course] just sort of came at me en-masse. It was a very emotional experience teaching this year. And I think partly because I no longer teach, I may now discover that I still love doing it” (NH, RHBS830, I). Another instructor engaged deeply in a process of reflection that mingled the conscious with the subconscious, and resonated with emotion. She explicated her lasting (emotional) impressions of the rural course:

I think much happens after the fact. And I think since the courses ended, I've been thinking about it and reviewing it and going over it, remembering, and having flashbacks, and pictures in my head, and I just get that really warm feeling, partly of accomplishment. That "wow we put that together" and partly the feeling that I just feel like a better person coming through it and hopefully the students did too. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

One of the most poignant and transformative aspects of The Lived Experience of Disability course was the emotional thread that was intricately woven into the fabric of the course. Students acknowledged journaling, visits with their mentors, and tutorial sessions as being charged with a range of emotions. The following student passage delineates conceptual aspects of the course that conjured up emotions on individual and collective levels.

I think that topics were dealt with on an emotional level in every tutorial. We would talk about how certain mentors would feel and talked about their emotions as well as discussing how we felt because of it and touched on our own stereotypes. I felt as a group we were fairly emotional. (Jessica, OT825, I)

Another student delved even deeper into the specific aspects of the learning activities that were emotional in nature and the significance of addressing those feelings rather than shying away from them. He explained:

I think that emotion is a huge part of this because it is people who are struggling and there are a lot of emotions that go with that, a lot of pain, and why questions. I think that the course dealt with that and we had some emotional outbursts and there was a tutorial that was very emotional. I felt emotional. We all dealt with it in a very mature way and we didn't just shove the emotions aside; we acknowledged that those feelings were there. (Phil, OT825, I)

Exploring ideas and experiences that were deeply connected to emotions was a challenge that prepared students personally and professionally, as they moved beyond mere acknowledgement toward sense making. The following passage illustrates the way that Anne prodded the students further to a place that was vulnerable, exposed, and unknown. By doing so, students were opened up to new possibilities and understandings as they took the risk to share

their emotion-laden stories. One student recounted in detail what many students regarded as a transformative moment:

There was one point during one of our classes where one of our classmates started crying and that was an emotion that was linked to her previous experience with a family member. Instead of comforting and sympathizing with her, our instructor really pushed it further, which I thought was really interesting. It made her go beyond that point and really learn to deal with it, so that it wasn't something that was buried underneath. (Katie, OT825, I)

Anne developed students' emotional ways of knowing through the divergent and unexpected facilitation of an academic experience. Creativity resided in the novel expression and interpretation of life events as they related to the classroom context and extended to professional practice in a way that challenged students move beyond their comfort zone:

Our instructor said that this is something that you have to deal with and was facilitating her to keep talking about it as opposed to holding it in. Our instructor encouraged others to share their stories, so I think that was really unique. We could have just brushed it off and comforted our classmate, but instead we really encouraged true emotions to come out as opposed to being clinical. (Katie, OT825, I)

For several of the students, this particular tutorial experience was disorienting—and a teaching and learning moment unlike anything they had experienced before in academia. In the process of opening up to one another, students' views were expanded in unexpected ways that encompassed powerful humanistic connections. The emotional power of personal story as a transformative force is elaborated on further in the following student account:

Certain topics were more emotional than others. Topics to which someone in tutorial could relate to personally were much more emotional than topics just from the text. Having that personal connection and story contributed by one of the tutorial members made us understand things from a different vantage point. (Vanessa, OT825, I)

In several cases, the students' emotional response to their learning was channelled into a desire for social change. Anne suggested the triggering effect that their emotional investment would have in their professional roles. She pointed out:

Remember the mentor who had cancer and a stroke and the doctors said there was nothing we can do for you and the students were appalled. I love it when the students are outraged and appalled because that will stick with them and that might be the impetus for them to get involved in something in their future careers that might make a difference there. (AOR, OT825, I)

The depth of the students' empathy with their mentors is evident in the following account, which illustrated an emotional reaction to perceived or observed injustice and inequality:

Being taken in as part of their family and seeing the effects that their disability has on their life or how societal funding or the physical environment is not accessible to them, all of those kinds of things, seeing how much impact that has on them made us so angered that we can't fix them right there and then. It built and fueled a fire inside of us. (Norman, OT825, I)

The realities of life had great emotional impact in this course. Anne expressed her emotions openly to the students, conveying a message of dignity and legacy in announcing the death of one of the mentors to the class. While the students had not met this particular mentor, who was assigned to another tutorial section, the room was filled with a deep sadness and with a reverence for life lived and lost.

I think also, in this iteration [of the course], one of the mentors passed away and the students didn't actually meet her, but just announcing that to the students when I did that, I think that brings back a lot of issues home as well. Not only that they might lose clients, but their own reaction might be a struggle in coping with that. I know I had tears in my eyes when I talked about that, and I probably could have restrained myself more, but I try and also show a personal side, not just a professional side. And [the death of mentors] has happened many times. It's not the first time and it won't be the last time and I think that kind of silence that happened afterwards can be powerful. Not saying anything after that. (AOR, OT825, I)

Anne later shared with me that her pregnant pause was intentional: She wanted to give students time to critically reflect and to get in touch with their emotions (FN, OT825, AOR). Time seemed to stand still while students connected to the meaning that her message carried, to this gentle reminder of our mortality as human beings. For the students, as occupational therapists and in their personal lives, it became obvious that they would have to (if they hadn't already) deal with the gamut of emotions tied to the lived experience of death. One student extended this concept to incorporate how this moment would influence her mindset. She remarked: "Everyone dies, what matters is how we live" (Phil, OT825, I). This relevant theme of living and working meaningfully would resonate as students moved forward in a way that paid homage to their emotional selves.

Summary

In the Professionals in Rural Practice and The Lived Experience of Disability courses, student and instructor perspectives were enriched by lived experiences that called on multiple ways of knowing. Students primarily engaged in logical, relational, and emotional modes of thinking, but also exhibited patterns of understanding through intuitive and physical ways of knowing. Students and teachers creatively expressed themselves through multiple ways of knowing, which enabled them to get at the heart of the teaching and learning in a manner that was personally meaningful. In particular, participants at the Professionals in Rural Practice course's immersion retreat cultivated creative capacities with novel interpretations and sensory exploration guided by relational, physical, and logical approaches. During their visits with their mentors, students in The Lived Experience of Disability course expanded their relational and intuitive modes of thinking through an emergent process of creative professionalization. For students and instructors from both courses, alternative ways of meaning-making demanded

multiple intelligences that worked in an integrated manner. Students and instructors both acknowledged and valued multiple ways of knowing—namely relational, emotional, intuitive, and sensory—which resulted in a more holistic, whole-person transformative learning experience.

CHAPTER SIX

ADULT CONVERSATION

For adults, the best education is intelligent conversation.
(NH, RHBS830, CO)

This chapter explores the dynamic complexities of classroom creativity that abounded in adult conversation. A primary thematic finding of this study is that adult conversation functions as an enabler of perspective transformation. This finding is highlighted in the context of learning activities that engaged students and teachers in interactive conversations, such as interprofessional interactions, team-based learning, case studies, and tutorial debriefs. Data collected from the Learning Activities Survey indicates that 82% of participants from the Professionals in Rural Practice course and 92% of participants from The Lived Experience of Disability course experienced some degree of perspective transformation as a result of associated learning activities. More specifically, students from these two courses identified “verbally discussing their concerns” as one of the primary course enablers for perspective transformation.

In this study, adult conversation provided students and teachers with a creative outlet for voicing their concerns, solving dilemmas or problems, and synthesizing their ideas. In many cases, students and instructors identified informal and formal conversation as contributing factors to seeing things differently—often in a broader or more sensitized way. Interviews and classroom observations confirmed the LAS findings that students and instructors engaged in purposeful adult conversation. This dynamic aligned with Mezirow’s (1991) notion of ideal conditions for transformative learning in the context of rational discourse:

In order to be free we must be able to “name” our reality, to know it divorced from what has been taken for granted, to speak with our own voice. Thus it becomes crucial that the individual learn to negotiate meanings, purposes, and values critically, reflectively, and rationally instead of passively accepting the

social realities defined by others. Transformation theory provides a description of the dynamics of the ways adults learn to do this. (p. 3)

The tone of teaching in both courses offered an open, inviting, and safe space within which adult conversation consistently occurred. For instructors and students, the value of critical dialogue was centred on the premise that every person possesses a unique perspective that contributes to the interest and diversity of the collective. Key aspects of dialogue that connected with creativity included (a) compassionate and active listening, (b) a developing ability to consider multiple perspectives and alternative solutions, and (c) a valued sensitivity for problems and questions posed by students (Urban, 2002).

Instructors provided opportunities to shift understandings and consider alternatives. These crucial phases of perspective transformation were creatively and concretely contextualized in adult conversation as students and teachers alike “voiced their concerns” (LAS). Students creatively engaged in conversation in a critical course context that framed and enriched discussion: They generated links between disparate topics from various domains and fields and developed relationships that connected ideas with experience. Students in the Professionals in Rural Practice course noted that the creative moments that shaped transformative experiences were those in which they were able to (a) engage in critical dialogue in diverse teams, (b) collaborate and improvise in interprofessional interviews, and (c) explore controversial issues collectively. In The Lived Experience of Disability course, participants’ transformative learning experiences were attributed to moments that enabled them to develop new, critical understandings. Students and instructors engaged in creative activity involving moments of self-expression and interpretive inquiry in a generative process of meaning-making, most often in collective construction. Within this collective circle of interpretation, constructed in and through

adult conversation, students' developed creative connections and insights that transformed their view of the course topics at individual, collective, and global levels.

The Interprofessional Conversation Dynamic

The Professionals in Rural Practice course structure utilized an interprofessional (IP) framework, which facilitated an engaging conversation dynamic among students in different disciplines, with different life experiences, and of different ages. Instructors strategically formed the IP groups to ensure that students would have opportunities to interact in a richly diversified manner. These interdisciplinary teams would dictate much of the small-group interaction for the remaining course activity.

Many students commented in their first journal entry that they were disappointed with the lack of discipline diversity in the class, as most students were from the theology and nursing disciplines. The class population for the Professionals in Rural Practice course, in fact, had nursing students, theology and divinity students, and one student in education, as indicated from the demographic data collected in the Learning Activities Survey. In the students' last journal entry, however, when they were asked to reflect on the course as a whole, they often spoke of how diverse the class was. The differences in age, world-view, and life experience contributed a plethora of ideas to the discussion. Julia, who evaluated the journals noted, "for many of the 'younger' students, whose life experience was limited to formal schooling, the opportunity to work with more mature students and to be considered peers was new to them and was particularly meaningful" (JB, RHBS830, I). One student's remarks embodied this sentiment:

Something that really surprised me about this class was how appreciative and kind the older members of the class were towards those (including me) who were younger. Many of them were already professionals with vast amounts of experience but they were still very attentive to us who were not quite as experienced. They seemed to truly appreciate what we had to share and bring to the discussion table. (Sally, RHBS830, I)

Many younger students acknowledged how their confidence in themselves and their ideas had improved as a result of taking this course and engaging in interprofessional conversations with peers, instructors, and various guests.

In the Professionals in Rural Practice course, short-lecture formats were often used to (a) create context, (b) gain a consensus about a pattern language for engaging in conversation-based activities, and (c) pose problems with an interdisciplinary framework that would enable sensitizing, broadening, and expanding of mindsets. Equipped with a solid foundation of theory and facts gained from these lectures, students then joined their interprofessional groups to engage in case studies or discussion. These mini lessons helped establish the skill set and ways of thinking that would support creative activity and, ultimately, provoke a shift in how the students know, rather than merely a change in what they know (Baumgartner, 2001).

Case Studies as Learning Activities

One significant thread that unified the Professionals in Rural Practice course was the use of case studies to actively engage students in the complexity of real-world scenarios to be tackled in their interprofessional teams. Students and teachers regarded case studies as a creative and a transformative learning activity, which was confirmed by nearly half of the students in the Learning Activities Survey. Students and instructors generally provided a response of *often* or *always* when describing their experiences under the category of “divergent thinking base” and “general knowledge” in the Creativity Checklist, which related to creative components generated through case studies. Aspects of the case studies that were deemed creative included (a) examining topics from different perspectives, (b) using real-world problems for learning, (c) valuing multiple ways of solving problems, (d) encouraging students to explore problems from

different perspectives, and (e) providing students with opportunities to explore ideas and learn collaboratively.

Instructors generated case studies to elicit students' individual and collective interpretations. These cases were created based on the personal experiences of the instructors and were designed to present students with the complex layers of real-life situations. A creative pedagogical process emerged from instructors who shared where they'd come from and what they'd experienced. Instructors used real-world as material to develop case studies that would enable students to experiment, explore, and test out ideas; this creative pedagogy was significant and transformative for several of the instructors and students. Instructors pointed out that case study activities encouraged "creative thought, discussion, and challenge" (AOR, RHBS830, I) and enabled students to "learn collaboratively [as they] explored ideas" (ML, RHBS830, I). Another instructor pointed to the creativity-in-the-making that resided in the students' interpretation of her case study:

They interpreted [the case] differently than I had expected. Aspects that were meaningful to me, in creating the case study, were often not perceived in the same way by the students. Something was touched in them based on their particular experience and background that was not an emotional trigger or issue for me. That's one piece I've reflected upon. (DNF, RHBS830, I)

Case studies clearly enabled creative interactions among the participants and afforded opportunities for teachers and students to discuss issues from perspectives not previously considered.

Several students identified the integration of conversation about personally meaningful knowledge as a way of creatively solving problems and seeing things differently. The following student passage illustrates this point:

We were continuously given opportunities to think outside of the box. Every class had at least one group discussion period where we were encouraged to draw from

our past experiences and personal opinions to respond to a case study. Many of these case studies were situations that may have been unfamiliar to group members but by working as a team we were able to pool our thoughts together and solve the problem. (Sally, RHBS830, I)

The law instructor, Michele, found this to be a novel approach to case studies—one that demanded students evaluate and challenge their thinking in an inclusive manner. She commented:

They seemed to take the case study approach really well and had lots of discussion and didn't seem to be intimidated by it at all. My goal was to ensure that the law did not intimidate them. I think I achieved that. It was interesting because there were clearly people in the course who had life experience that was relevant, so that's helpful because I think that makes them feel included. I couldn't have planned for that, it's just one of those things that happens. (ML, RHBS830, I)

In the interpretation section of my field notes from Michele's session, I observed that, “there were many complexities that evolved around this process, being shaped by both interpersonal and intrapersonal relations. As they talked through their rationale for perspective or solution, they contributed a part of their self in doing so” (MT, RHBS830, FN).

Typically, the group members would read the case individually; the group would then meet to ask each other a series of questions to generate discussion. There was much reflection and sharing, through which the students dealt with initial impressions of the situation and called out their taken-for-granted assumptions. Time was made for each voice to be heard within the small-group context. As the group prepared solutions and strategies for dealing with the problem, they took notice of (a) missing pieces, (b) possible weighted or skewed perspectives, and (c) confirmation and elaboration on the path moving forward. Their answers were then shared with and responded to by the whole class.

Several students agreed that the case studies, as a dynamic activity, facilitated an interdisciplinary connectedness, an affinity for the unknown, and a synthesis of conceptual ideas from disparate course topics:

The case studies were a good way of pinpointing interdisciplinary connections because we all had to chime in on what our perspective would be. There were multiple perspectives coming at one another and I think that pushes you out of any role box because someone can say something that sparks your imagination and you say, “I didn’t think of that, I could go in this direction.” (Sarah, RHBS830, I)

The instructors also indicated that the case studies held the potential for creative connectivity.

One instructor explained her perspective:

I think that whenever you work with case studies, that creative piece comes in. We had very diverse kinds of scenarios for the students to explore. I like that interactive piece where they actually get to work together in diverse groups exploring these scenarios and questioning things. (DNF, RHBS830, I)

Another instructor’s comment reinforced the idea of connectivity in and among disciplines: “In the case studies, they were really applying what they knew from other areas” (DNF, RHBS830, I). This idea was confirmed by the following student account: “We were all given case study scenarios to think about then figure out how we could get each professional involved in it in order to solve it or make the best of the situation” (Sally, RHBS830, I). Overall, “the case studies provided a real opportunity to think creatively: however, in many cases they weren’t as fully embraced as they could have been” (AOR, RHBS830, I). According to several instructors and students, the lack of time to explore their ideas fully in their small groups and, as an extension of that work, in the larger group context was the one significant challenge of the course. One instructor elaborated:

The students, I think, really liked them and all the instructors clearly liked them because most of us had developed them. . . . some in quite a lot of detail. There wasn’t enough time to use them as effectively as they could have been used. By the time the sessions presentations ended and the students broke out to talk about

case studies, the time was too short, even though it had been allotted a good enough amount of time, it evaporated too quickly, and then coming back to report or to share or to compare different ideas got lost. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

Interviews as a Microcosm of Rural Community

In the Professionals in Rural Practice course, students were organized into pairs and assigned to interview a professional from a rural area. Professions included a local grocer, a lawyer, a parishioner, a shopkeeper, and a retired police officer and stay-at-home dad—all from locales north of Kingston, in southeastern Ontario. Students were given very basic biographical details of the individual that they would be interviewing. Some questions were prepared in advance, based on the preliminary information. However, students discovered that, as they reflected-in-action while conversing with the interviewee, they gained further insight into contextual factors that informed the directions for dialogue. Varied perspectives and experiences of interviewing were brought to bear in these preparations. For example, nursing students noted their experiences of interviewing as being clinical in nature, whereas education students' experiences were much more research-based. In the case of theologians, interviewing had been much more informal and premised on the idea of visiting the individual to exchange stories.

Each pair of students and their rural representative met in a private room originally intended for clinical practice. These rooms allowed for a quiet, intimate space to discuss the details of rural life and practice without distraction. At the intersection of these spaces was a glassed-in listening centre, complete with headphones for listening in on the interviews. This is where the instructors tuned in to the sessions without imposing on the interactions between interviewers and interviewee. Direct exposure to the people of a rural community provided insights and brought various course topics to life: mentorship, resiliency, support, diversity, and

community-building. In this sense, the content itself mapped on to the experience of interviewing and, in doing so, represented a microcosm of rural life and practice.

Collaboration in action.

“The interviews are pretty creative,” remarked Dr. Margo Patterson, the instructor in charge of coordinating these interviews (MP, RHBS830, I). She continued with an explanation of the aspects that made the interview a creative act: “The way they do their interviews, the way that they debrief, the way they have to figure out their interview guide. That’s an unusual learning opportunity” (MP, RHBS830, I). Another instructor noted the nuances of the evaluative thinking and reasoning that came into play in a collaborative manner:

Putting two students from [two different] professions together, they had different styles of conducting an interview and different notions about what questions should be asked or how they should be asked. The interviews allowed for students to take on a different point of view, but to use their own style and creativity in thinking “How do I want this to unfold in the process?” but also, “What am I interested in hearing?” (AOR, RHBS830, I)

This collaborative effort was further confirmed by a third instructor’s observation from the interview sessions. She explained: “With their partner they decided what the content would be and how they were going to present it. I think there was a synthesis of ideas and collaboration in doing so” (JB, RHBS830, I). Lastly, there was a general openness to their interviewees’ experiences and to experimenting with the direction of questioning. Students adapted their interview style in order to yield the most relevant themes of rural life and practice, which contributed to generating a creative result. The students’ curiosity and drive for knowledge was apparent in the series of dynamic interviews observed through the looking glass of the clinical rooms. Experimentation, exploration, and reflection-in-relation were aspects of creativity generated through adult conversation, as confirmed through the student and instructor responses in the Creativity Checklist.

Many students remarked that, during the interviews with the rural representatives, they had to think on their feet and respond in the moment to the unknown or unexpected content and direction of adult conversation. Their focused listening and concentration throughout allowed them to confront their assumptions and to find alternative solutions, as necessary; these are integral to a transformative learning experience. For one set of interviewees, the interview defied the students' role expectations for the interviewee. The following passage depicts the unexpectedness of the situation:

My interviewing partner and I were told that he was a police officer, but it turned out he was a retired urban cop and had moved to a rural community since that time. So we based our original questions on a particular assumption and had to go in a different direction. It turned out he was a stay-at-home dad and played a significant role in doing charitable work in his community. There was still so much relevant stuff to talk about. (Charlie, RHBS830, I)

One of the instructors commented further about the important role that the unknown played in providing an opportunity for the emergence of many possibilities:

The interviews challenged the idea that if it's a shopkeeper, these are the questions you ask. You might equally ask about spirituality or something else, so it didn't limit them, it left it wide open so they could find more maybe what they were interested in and shape it more. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

Students probed in a variety of directions, making remote associations and links between disparate topics (Urban, 2002). This connected knowing facilitated making sense of the bigger picture: how the individual lived and worked in the context of the rural community at large. Overall, students were extremely interested in the dynamics of the relationships and roles that people had in these settings and the interviews provided an excellent medium through which students could actively and creatively engage with the ideas that surrounded the conversations generated by lived experiences.

Based on the information revealed through conversation in another interview, a student was able to frame and then reframe her perspective. She described her expanded conception of rural health care:

For our interprofessional interview we were paired with a nurse practitioner. I already had what I thought was a fairly good understanding of her role as a professional. However, after speaking with her I came to realize that her role is much more extensive and covered an extremely broad range of care. When she discussed the challenges of access to services that gave me a fresh perspective on the challenges that rural professionals face. For example, she told us that the pharmacy in her rural community is only open for short business hours during the week and then is not open at all on the weekends. This gave me new perspective into how the rural professionals must collaborate with their patients or clients to find solutions to work around the limitations of services in order for the patient or client to receive adequate health care. (Andrea, RHBS830, I)

In their conversations with the shopkeeper and the nurse practitioner, students were challenged to consider alternative or unexpected aspects of interviewing technique. Based on the observations recorded in my data, students were able to identify their preconceived notions; they learned a great deal from the new meanings gleaned from the experience of bringing “real-world” interactions to life. Another student had an opportunity to expand her original perspectives regarding the legal profession. Prior to the interview, she had stereotyped lawyers as being only interested in arguing and taking people’s money. Following a conversation with a professional lawyer, her original perceptions were challenged and her understanding of legal practice shifted, as she contrasted the difference between urban-based and rural-based lawyers:

I interviewed a lawyer from Sharbot Lake, so she served quite a large area around her in Frontenac County. I had a preconceived idea of lawyers that was negative because I thought that lawyers just went in the courtroom with a judge to fight. Before [the interview] I thought they were just money-grabbers. But after speaking to this lawyer, I realized that she did a lot of work with her community. She worked with the church to set up affordable housing for seniors in her area. It was important to see that her work as a lawyer was inspired by the idea to better the rural community. (Rebecca, RHBS830, I)

As seen in the student accounts above, phases of perspective transformation emerged from the interview conversations. This transformation was echoed by student responses in the Learning Activities Survey. Students' shifting points of view were an evident result of new experiences, gained by participating in adult conversation in the interprofessional interviews, that challenged the status quo and role expectations.

Portrait of a rural man.

One of the students reflected in one of her journal entries on the experience of her interview. The clear description and depiction of her interviewee, the value of this particular activity in the context of the course, and the impact of his shared perspective on her own path as a professional are represented in her full passage. To begin, she wrote:

This activity was so beneficial, to be given the opportunity to talk to a professional who is certainly a prominent member in the community but not in the typical way we have been talking about during this class. While we have focused on educators, doctors, nurses, clergy members, lawyers, politicians and so on I really felt that this man brought a different side of being a small town professional into the light. (Sally, RHBS830, J)

The student and her partner were assigned to interview a business man, who ran a sixth-generation hardware store and also owned the town's grocery store. Her shift in perception of rural life came in the unexpected responses provided in the interview and her ability to make insightful meaning in her own life and professional context:

This man is what I consider an "insider" within his community. It was very interesting to hear this man speak about his community, highlighting how rural life seems to really be about the people. Something I found intriguing was that when I asked whether he could name a few things about rural life that would draw people in he didn't have an answer. He thought that certain people will come, love it and stay, or they will leave. I tend to agree with that statement, that the country life is either for you, or it's not. It makes me think of the idea that people that live in rural areas are fundamentally "country." It is a way of living and being, more than a just geographical location. This challenges professionals that function within these communities to understand how to tweak how they perform their

services as well as their approach to these clients, with every rural area being unique. (Sally, RHBS830, J)

The theme of relational dynamics of the rural community emerged in the two students' interview and in Sally's journal reflections on their conversation. She explored ideas from the course about how people define *rural*, and tied these concepts into the perspective shared by her interviewee; this led her to interpret rural as a context that required redefinition and restructuring in relation to each unique set of variables. Based on the criteria of Urban's (2002) componential model of creativity, these acts would be deemed creative in nature. Sally pointed out the moments during the interview that were personally meaningful and relevant to her growing understanding of rural life and practice. Embedded within the text was the notion that stereotypes fade as the realities of the person's character and daily life activity emerge. She cohesively and creatively interpreted threads from their conversation, which she compiled in her journal:

In rural areas, professionals often wear more than just one hat in the community and this man was a prime example. He is a family man and clearly cares for the people in his community, demonstrated in one way by his participation in many boards and committees. While he enjoys being involved, often involvement finds him. He said he does not mind when people come to him for help or advice. He feels strongly that the community does so much for him that when the chance presents itself he does what he can to give back. This creates a good visual image of how a rural town functions, in very much a circular manner with everyone taking a turn to do their part, but also receiving that helping hand when they need it. There is a harmony that is created when everyone works together and does their part. This simple balance, I think, is what this man was trying to portray. (Sally, RHBS830, J)

In her extensive interpretations of the interviewing experience, the student not only described the individual, but also detailed the locale of the rural community. In her depiction of the rural man, she elaborated with great detail and expressed a fluency of ideas, both of which were characteristically creative in nature. She revealed further:

He mentioned a couple times that people always were able to locate him because he spent his days at the store. While this did not bother him, one thing he mentioned it held him back from doing was politics. He told us a story about a customer, who happened to be a local politician, get yelled at by another customer about potholes on their roads. This was an interesting perspective, from a man who knew the issues within his community, and cared about them, yet was hesitant to put himself in a political role when he already is such a well-known member of the community. This makes me look at getting involved in rural politics a little differently if I am going to also be practicing nursing within this area. I would not want any patient interactions to be tainted by issues that were not health related. (Sally, RHBS830, J)

After the interviews were complete, students, instructors, and the interviewees gathered around to enjoy an abundance of food and drink and informal conversation. Following a period of time, a more structured session was organized for the group. One instructor described the events that took place:

We set up in a circle, which was brilliant, and we essentially went around the circle. So whether it was student or instructor or interviewee, people commented on what had happened. You could see then that I think the students had really learned a lot from their interviewees. It had broadened and maybe challenged some of their assumptions, and, also, it was part of increasing their confidence, too, that they could do this kind of thing. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Another instructor discussed the nuanced dynamics of the group:

You can go around [the circle] and see all of those dynamics. [Afterwards] when we debrief, students and volunteers are asked their opinion and the students see that bonding: This is my volunteer and that [student] ownership. So all of those [moments] are quite transformative. (MP, RHBS830, I)

The interviews evolved as an exercise that broadened perspectives, for all involved, through a combination of powerful observation and direct experience. There were opportunities for students to flex their creativity muscles and there were moments that were deemed transformative as students. The informal, connected ways of conversing that developed through the framework of an interview structure achieved a number of transformative outcomes: It (a)

broadened students' concepts of rural life and practice; (b) enhanced their meaning of what it was to be an integral and integrated part of a community; and (c) contributed to a sensitized way of understanding values and beliefs, as students became acutely aware of their own in dynamic relation with others.

Expanding the Space of the Possible

The last of the teacher-led sessions was one that I [Julia] led and it was during this time that I started to see students disagree with one another. I realized that we had moved past being polite and biting our tongue and were starting to question others' assumptions and really talk through differences. This was not to say that the discussions prior to this session were not rich, that was not the case. But the quality of the discussion went to a new level during this session. It was a really amazing experience and one that I had not had before as an instructor. (JB, RHBS830, I)

On the second last day of the course, Dr. Julia Brook assigned two readings on the topic of diversity. In this session, Julia posted controversially charged quotations to elicit student response. These contentious quotations served as a catalyst for generating and framing challenging and open adult conversation. For example, Julia selected unexpected passages from the text. During our interview, she explained her pedagogical intent in selecting the quotation:

There was a quote about people being afraid about coming out to their health care professionals, and those are your educated people in the community. They were afraid to come out to people who were supposed to have a confidential practice and who were supposed to be well educated. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Given that this was the penultimate day of the course, students had already developed strong relationships from the weekend retreat and were prepared to debate the issues that resonated with them. The open classroom dynamic was further encouraged by the physical set-up of the space. Instead of the rows that had been used throughout the week, Julia decided that the desks would be moved into a roundtable formation.

The discussion began with Julia providing a brief synopsis of the overall themes of the scholarly articles, which drew from the under-researched field of “rural.” She provided the students with time to revisit these thematic ideas, and to express and explore their thoughts with a combination of inner and outer dialogue. The education student explained that the article “sometimes didn’t define the terms that I wanted it to, but still provided perspective about something that is not usually talked about, which is ‘internalized homophobia’” (Brian, RHBS830, CO). Another student built on this concept of internalized homophobia, which refers to the negative stereotypes, beliefs, stigmas, and prejudice about homosexuality and how they relate to one’s personal journey towards acceptance and building a positive self-concept. From her experience as a minister, she was concerned about breaches of confidentiality in rural communities, where everybody knows everybody and pointed out that “it is potentially dangerous should the information fall into the wrong hands” (Sarah, RHBS830, CO). Another student added that isolation and marginalization was part of this complex issue, and noted that, “in urban [areas] it’s easier to find enclaves of people you identify with” (Naomi, RHBS830, CO). Julia responded to this concern by stating that: “In rural you have to find commonalities amongst your differences” she went onto explain that “in rural, norms are incessant, and the concept of being different, being an ‘outsider,’ and the implications of that on the quality of the person’s life are important to consider” (JB, RHBS830, CO).

Relating issues of diversity to rural schooling, Julia asked the students: “What happens if your child is being bullied in school, maybe over issues such as sexual orientation, or for just ‘being different’?” (JB, RHBS830, CO). One student, originally from an urban centre, suggested that, “the parents of the student should intervene and if nothing is being done to help the student, they should send their child to another school if there’s conflict or challenges that can’t be

resolved” (Abby, RHBS830, CO). Another student challenged this suggestion, and remarked: “Does that really solve the problem or simply teach the child to run from their problems?” (Charlie, RHBS830, CO).

A few of the parents in the group explained the delicate nature of children when in dire situations of intense stress. In these types of situations, parents noted a tendency for children to develop feelings of deep sadness and depression, particularly when their safety is being threatened. Students’ personal perspectives that integrated life experience were showcased when one student commented: “When you’ve tried everything to solve the problem, even putting [them] in another school, and nothing seems to work, that’s when you take them out of the school system and home school them” (Sarah, RHBS830, CO). Julia followed up with:

Well sending them to another school—that will only work in an urban setting, but it doesn’t work in a rural context, where you only have one school to choose from and the next closest school is more than an hour away. . . . You either move, or you home school, or you find interdisciplinary solutions to make it work in the school they’re in—whatever is in the best interest of the child, of course. (JB, RHBS830, CO)

After the course had ended, Julia reflected further on the dilemma that was intertwined and challenged in conversation. She recalled:

In an urban area you can just side-step the issue and go somewhere else to get the same type of service in a different setting. What happens in an urban area is nobody has to confront difficulty because everyone can go to where there is other like people. And I said in a rural place, you have to confront the difficulty because you have to find the commonality underneath that to remain vibrant and sustain, and that’s where it’s harder. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Students and teachers also spent a good deal of time discussing the idea of being considered as, and feeling like, an imposter or outsider. Discussion was sparked by the content of the selected quotation, which told the story of someone who decided to come out to their doctor in their rural community and their overwhelming sense that they had compromised their own

safety and position within the community in doing so. During this session two students revealed, for the first time ever in a public group setting, that they were homosexuals. Up until that point, they explained that they had not felt comfortable to share this personal information in a group setting for fear of discrimination.

When they initially revealed their sexual orientation to the group and detailed some of their personal challenges with the stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding their identity, there was a general acceptance about what was being shared. As one student aptly put it:

When [they] came out and revealed that [they] were gay in front of everybody, there was no “oh my god, I need to leave.” Instead it was “okay, let’s talk about it” and “let’s relate this to the overarching ideas. Please say what you’ve got to say and we’ll continue to talk about it.” (Rebecca, RHBS830, I)

Julia’s description of the conversation depicts the sentiment of many students and instructors who were present for that final session:

When we had that conversation, when she was telling us these things, I was thinking, “We have come a long way in your comfort that this isn’t necessarily a coming out, well it is on a lot of levels, but really this is just you sharing insights into this experience.” And I think the fact that we had that level of comfort was pretty exciting and I hope for her that she has other opportunities that she feels that safe. (JB, RHBS830, I)

Another instructor present during the session described its atmospheric tone: “It was like an aura around us that was holding us up in a very positive way” (AOR, RHBS830, I). The candid sharing of students’ personal perspectives of their lived experience enabled students to engage with diversity in a manner that deepened the meaning of the concept.

One of the students who came out in the session reflected critically on aspects of the session. She wrote:

One issue I had with [the diversity] case study we looked at with a gay man returning to his hometown and it was described as his “lifestyle.” A classmate turned to me and asked me how I felt about the use of that word and in taking a few moments I realized I did not like it very much. It made me think about a rock-

and-roll lifestyle. The same classmate said, “It’s not really a lifestyle is it? It’s just a life.” This is such a true statement and it will be something I carry with me when I leave this class. (Sally, RHBS830, J)

For this student, semantics played a key role in her understanding of self and of society’s labelled perception of homosexuality. As she unpacked the language for herself, she was sensitized to her own range of experiences and to the values that were connected to that label. In response to this student’s journal entry, Julia provided the following feedback: “Thank you for your comment about the word ‘lifestyle.’ I remember writing that case study and knew I wasn’t using the correct word, so I thank you for sharing your insights” (JB, RHBS830, J).

There were many factors that contributed to expanding the space of what was possible during this penultimate class. The timing of the session (near the end of the course), the length of the session (twice as long as other sessions), the physical set up of the classroom, the particular individuals, the particular quotations selected by the instructor, and the personal sharing of the collective—these formed the interdependent, interrelated aspects of the class dynamic that contributed to fascinating, stimulating adult conversation. Davis’s (2004) conception of teaching as conversing accurately depicts the creative classroom activity in the Professionals In Rural Practice course. He stated that “when engaged in conversations, our working memories are vastly larger than they are on our own. We are able to recall more detail, juggle more issues, represent more complex ideas, and maintain better focus than when alone” (p. 177).

Fostering a Community of Purpose and Practice

“There is a bond—we understand it and we shared something that no other group did” (Norman, OT825, I). One of the creative conditions that enabled transformative learning in The Lived Experience of Disability course was the emergence, in conversational contexts, of a community of purpose and practice. This notion is corroborated by the student and instructor

ratings from the Creativity Checklist, which, with the exception of one response of *often*, indicated that “a community of purpose in the classroom” was *always* fostered (CC). Creative conditions emerged in a transitional learning space, where students experimented with ideas in relation (Ellsworth, 2006). One student elaborated on the transformation of the ways that students came to know and understand in conversation in this class: “Talking and sharing of personal experiences and opinions was a useful tool in helping me change and develop my views on what it means to be disabled within our society” (Katie, OT825, I). Anne modelled for the students the openness, vulnerability, and reflective mindset necessary to become a contributing member of this potentially life-altering community of purpose and practice; students followed suit by engaging in adult conversation. Anne intentionally designed the tutorial experience as a way to foster dynamics for transformative dialogue:

My decision was that it would be an informal setting. It would be in very small groups in order for students to have a voice in that setting and the expectation was everyone must participate and they’re provided feedback on that. As far as pedagogy, my feeling is that it had to be tutorial-based, discussion-oriented, and within an atmosphere of trust and respect. Otherwise, the students would not reveal what was probably critical in their learning, and that was their own attitudes, their own understanding and values about living with a disability.
(Anne, OT825, I)

The following student account captured the intimate dynamic of the classroom and demonstrated Anne’s thoughtful pedagogy in play: “We definitely got very comfortable with each other. It was shocking how quickly we were able to open up and share” (Norman, OT825, I). Another participant account elaborated on the role of storied self in creating a connected classroom experience on a personal level: “So many of us shared personal stories so we definitely had a strong community” (Jessica, OT825, I).

Several students pointed out the marked differences between the small-group tutorial sessions and the typical lectures they attended in their program: “In the lectures, I don’t put up

my hand a lot, because I worry about what I say, but I felt that in this group it was very open and everyone was really involved and sharing their opinions” (Phil, OT825, I). Another student confirmed the willingness and desire to contribute to the conversation in a small-group setting. He explained: “It was the tutorial meetings where we got to discuss things in a very casual setting and opened up in ways that we may not have been able to if it had been in the lecture hall with everyone” (Norman, OT825, I). Another student outlined the ways in which she challenged her perspectives in an attempt to develop different ways of thinking, and described the role that the close connection within a community of purpose had in her transformative process:

I like that it was a small group because you’re a little more invested in it. You know that you’re going to have to come and talk about the issues, you’re going to have to share something. . . . You’re invested in everybody’s situation so you try to open up and see things from a different perspective. I felt very invested in trying to develop my viewpoints. The purpose was clear that we were there to grow and so we all latched on to all the opportunities to do so. (Charlotte, OT825, I)

Ground rules were established to clarify course expectations and students’ role in the tutorial. Anne encouraged students to make suggestions to add to the chalkboard. The following is the list that educator and students collectively created:

GROUND RULES:

Come prepared with readings and journals and mindset;
Punctuality;
Ready to share your opinion: everyone speaks during the tutorial;
Open-mind: constructive criticism;
Respect;
Don’t interrupt;
Honesty;
Confidentiality: be very mindful of the relationship—Kingston is a tiny town!!;
Be sensitive: be in tune with the pulse of the group.
(OT825, CO)

These “rules” were central to creating a teaching and learning dynamic that supported a collegial spirit, wherein each student felt a sense of ownership in the classroom community. The pedagogical conditions that Anne established fostered a sense of community:

I call the students colleagues when I’m referring to all of them and indicate that this is a flattened hierarchy here. Yes, I’m evaluating, but I’m part of your team and I reinforce the idea of working together as a team. I think it’s a nice surprise that students embrace that. They welcome that, and I think that for the most part, they rise to the challenge of being team members, supportive and respectful of one another. And partly that comes from the ground rules that we work out together in the first session. (AOR, OT825, I)

Anne posed the following question to the tutorial group: “How should we deal with it if someone is not following the rules?” (AOR, OT825, CO). Students agreed that with an occasional monitoring of rules and self-reflection that heightened awareness would lead to following the rules with consistency.

Anne related this process of generating ground rules to an exemplary international course that was pedagogically centred on collaboration. She explained that the course worked with virtual teams, and they set their own ground rules with this idea in mind: “Seek first to understand, then to be understood” (AOR, OT825, CO). A theme of collaboration was an important one in building relations and in fostering creative interactions in tutorials. According to Anne, a key aspect to supporting a creative dynamic was nudging students to “say what you’re thinking, especially if it’s on your mind.” This became important in setting up an open, honest atmosphere, where students felt comfortable taking risks and exploring and challenging ideas. At the other end of this conversational spectrum, Anne pointed out that, through the act of selective decision-making about the content they shared from mentor visits, students engaged in an essential component of the creative process. She explained her unorthodox point of view of collaborative decision-making:

A collaborative approach comes in what the students choose not to share in tutorial. I think a few people may have alluded to the fact around discussions with the mentor with the spinal cord injury, some of the details they shared with him, and also the woman who is being treated for cancer right now, they hinted at a very detailed discussion and the mentor with Alzheimer's, even more powerful, there were a lot of emotions there, but they were careful to protect their privacy, even though they have permission to do that and everyone has consents. I think that's a really important judgment call to not share just for the purpose of being able to, but to filter and decide how they want to present information to their colleagues. (AOR, OT825, I)

Anne's perspective on collaborative acts in the tutorials draws attention to how this process of sharing the personal contributes to the professionalization of students. Students exercised professional judgment in a creative act of interpreting novel events, which ultimately shaped their meaning perspectives.

Anne's personal and professional experiences were greatly influential in the pedagogical design of the course tutorials. The following instructor account highlights Anne's commitment and her value as an instructor, through her ability to guide students and facilitate a supportive structure for transforming perspectives. Anne pointed to the specific enablers that provided students with opportunities to feel safe enough to step out of their comfort zone and to stretch themselves in new directions.

I try to ensure that in the tutorial anybody can ask anything, as long as it is appropriate and relevant and done in a respectful way. . . . I think this environment allows them to put their hands up, make a comment, without fear of being judged. If you can do that as a student and learn that it's not the end of the world if you don't know or if you make a mistake, then I think you're more apt to try to do that clinically, and too many opportunities are missed when people on a team or a public forum are afraid to offer their ideas because they think they're just a student, nobody is going to listen to them. (AOR, OT825, I)

She also explained the potential for creative activity to emerge in this type of classroom dynamic: "Sometimes it's moments like that out of naïveté, when really creative, important decisions can be made" (AOR, OT825, I). Lastly, Anne explored her own personal experiences

as a professional, which provided inspiration for the teaching and learning opportunities that she created in the tutorials. She admitted:

I have been there, done that. As a student I would be very reluctant to offer my opinions. I can remember in the case of conferences feeling like “Who is going to listen to me?” I really try to make that impression on the students that this is their learning, and even if they don’t know, there are professionals who don’t know either. (AOR, OT825, I)

Resonating with Relevancy

Dialogue stimulated in tutorial sessions in The Lived Experience of Disability course resonated in personally relevant ways for students as they discussed, sensitized, expanded, and broadened their conceptions of the realities of life. Several students regarded the “open discussion in the classroom” as an enabler for divergent ways of expressing their knowledge in an academic setting (CC). A creative pedagogical thread was identified by one student, then reiterated by many in the class: “You’d hear a lot about other people’s experiences outside of a textbook; it was life lessons that people had” (Maren, OT825, I). Another student noted the exploration of emotions in the uncharted academic territory of the lived experience content: “It surprised me how much we dove into some really taboo issues. It brought out a lot of emotions” (Phil, OT825, I). Another student spoke about the poignant, emotional experiences with mentors that were conveyed through talking:

I really wanted to share. I had a passion for what was going on. The emotions that came out of those [mentor] visits were really powerful and you wanted to let your classmates know. They brought forth new issues that I questioned myself on, too. (Norman, OT825, I)

Examining issues from multiple perspectives was another creative condition of adult conversation that contributed to the possibility of transformative learning experiences. In many cases, students were provided opportunities to explore personally meaningful content, based on

real-life events from alternative points of view, in a conversational group context. As one student articulated:

I think this course encouraged us to explore ideas from different perspectives. Anne was a really good facilitator in making sure that other people chimed in to one person's statement. The flow was also not teacher to student, it was really roundtable, you'd hear so many different opinions and ideas about it and people would pose other questions. We definitely had more of an opportunity to explore than we would in a typical lecture classroom. (Maren, OT825, I)

Another student discussed the value of voicing previously unexplored ideas through conversation. She noted, "Tutorials encouraged me to reflect on ideas, thoughts, and feelings that didn't seem to fit with me and my occupation. I got to work with those. That is an experience I will always hold with me" (Jessica, OT825, I). Vanessa also contemplated the transformative power of generating new knowledge via adult conversation: "The group played a significant role in looking at things in unexpected and unorthodox ways because it was an open forum in which everyone felt comfortable sharing their emerging ideas and opinions" (Vanessa, OT825, I). Data gathered from the Creativity Checklist corroborate the participant accounts that "individuality in understanding" and "exploring ideas from different perspectives" were encouraged and central to a creative course experience that resonated with relevancy.

Students were encouraged to contribute novel and relevant ideas to the discussion. This generative process came about, in large part, due to a classroom atmosphere that afforded "an openness for our creative interpretations" (Phil, OT825, I). The instructor steered the conversations to draw students' attention to particular pieces of the personal and professional puzzle:

I would say in our class conversations that Anne was good about questioning why we thought certain things. Some of my classmates did this too, although Anne's guidance was particularly helpful to me. It may have been because she knew or she could recognize certain beliefs and challenge our ideas and pull out the

nuance in our conversation and look more deeply at that. That is something that we as students are developing as a result. (Charlotte, OT825, I)

The pedagogical conditions that Anne set up enabled a high level of interpretation and decision making in the context of adult conversation; in this regard, the conditions were reminiscent of the Observation-Reflection-Interpretation-Decisional (ORID) framework guiding the journaling process. According to the Creativity Checklist data, Anne used “good questioning skills to develop new topics” and “took into account and built on student interest in what they learn[ed]” (CC). Her expertise and nuanced teaching facilitated a creative process of meaning-making. One of the students noted that “having Anne there was really beneficial. She asked a lot of really good questions that made you think deeper about what you actually experienced” (Katie, OT825, I). Another student’s account confirmed Anne’s contemporary and creative instructional approach:

I really enjoyed being able to be in the class with Anne because she was obviously very passionate and involved. She’s so well read on the topic. She seemed to always be bringing new material, things from the newspaper that she found. It always felt like she knew what she was doing, but she really didn’t have to say that much in the classroom. She would just make sure that the direction of the conversation went in a direction that she ultimately wanted it to go in without actually overtly stating that, which is the sign of a really good teacher. (Phil, OT825, I)

Students made sense of the issues and topics being discussed by considering their influence and their relevance in personal and professional realms. The classroom dynamics and seasoned instruction fostered creative traits, including, but not limited to, (a) a readiness to take risks, (b) an openness to experiences, (c) a willingness to communicate, and (d) a drive for exploration and knowledge (Urban, 2002).

Challenging Assumptions

In The Lived Experience of Disability course, students considered one mentor, who will be referred to as Bob, to be full of surprises. Through details they initially found shocking, students were provided with ultimate opportunities to challenge their assumptions via conversation. Many threads of their conversation dealt with the specifics of Bob's story, which they connected to the larger context of occupational therapy. When asked in tutorial, "What meant the most to you?" one student responded with an aspect of their conversations that she had been grappling with for six weeks, since her first visit with her mentor. She shared Bob's surprising admission that "getting hit by a car was the best thing that ever happened to me" (Jessica, OT825, I). He provided context, explaining to the student "that his family is a step up from the trailer trash start that he had" (Jessica, OT825, CO). She reflected that she recently realized that he is, in fact, living his best life with his family and that, by being raised in institutions, he has had a better life than he would have otherwise had. She explained, "that was a really huge take-home message" and then questioned, "What is wrong with being in a wheelchair and having a disability? [His experiences] have led him to a lovely wife, house, and beautiful kids" (Jessica, OT825, CO). The student's original notion of disabilities as being an undesirable burden was challenged. In an act of sense-making, she related this disorienting session to her potential role as an occupational therapist: "This experience challenged that notion, and made me realize that my focus will be on helping [my clients] live as best as they can" (Jessica, OT825, I).

After this conversational experience, Jessica wrote a passage in her journal about how sharing this facet of her mentoring experience raised her level of consciousness. This deepened learning experience was transformative for her, as it allowed her to recognize and challenge her own stereotypes and prejudices. She wrote:

I feel like today's tutorial really allowed me to explore my reaction of Bob's statement that "getting hit by a car was the best thing that ever happened to him." I'm not sure that I [previously] allowed myself to go as deep as I did today . . . Thoughts of "why would a person want their disability?," "why would this be the best thing that happened to them?," "wouldn't they want this gone if they could?" . . . made me second-guess myself. I know I'm a passionate, compassionate, [and] empathetic individual, and I was shocked that I could think these things. I never want to approach any individual, especially people I may work with, and have the mindset that I'm there to "fix" them. Who said they're broken?! I don't think my immediate reflections could make me less of the ideal OT I want to be; I think they will serve, along with Bob's comment, as a marker for future practice to reflect upon, and help shape me as an OT. (Jessica, OT825, J)

Jessica's realization, which she shared in adult conversation, precipitated a shift in thinking for Norman. He expanded on his transformed perspective in his journal:

Someone's disability may be part of who they are, and how they live their life everyday, or it can be part of the environment that they live in (truly dependent on whether the individual labels themselves with a person-first disability label or not). If the individual did not have their disability, they would not be who they are today—that means in the case of my classmate's mentor, he would not necessarily have his wife, kids, job, experiences, attitude, motivation and drive to live life to the fullest. (Norman, OT825, J)

Shocking Semantics

In The Lived Experience of Disability tutorials, students were encouraged to consider first-person language as opposed to becoming fixated on "textbook terminology" used to describe a person with a disability. As Anne pointed out, "the mentors' labels and ways of talking about their situation will often reveal what they are comfortable with and what's best to use" (Anne, OT825, CO). Students became hyper-aware of how they used language and of what was acceptable to the clients they worked with. The following account demonstrates a transformation in perspective as the student began to understand the significance of this experience on the euphemistic treadmill. She described an experience wherein her norms were challenged as she "got her head around" the semantic shock:

Bob frequently referred to himself as the “cripple,” or “crip.” This was something that initially made me uncomfortable; however, when I saw his comfort with the term, I became more comfortable as well. I can honestly say that this is a term I would never use with any other person with a disability, unless it was explicitly conveyed to me that this individual would like me to use this term in my discussions with them. Even in conversations with Bob, I could not use the term “cripple” because I feel like there’s almost a “right of passage” associated with using it. I feel like cripple was once a word that was used derogatorily, and now some people with disabilities are taking the term back, creating ownership for it, and turning it into something positive; I don’t want to intrude on that. I also don’t want to go into a situation with a different person with a disability, and assume that they are as comfortable with the term as Bob is. (Jessica, OT825, J)

Initially this term seemed outdated and politically incorrect to this student. Despite this, after critically reflecting in her journal and discussing her concerns in tutorial, the student arrived at the realization that being an occupational therapist required an expansion of mind and an openness to experiences in order to transform conceptions of connotation. She depicted her expanding lexicon as a learning process that required her to embrace this disorienting event and to adjust to a new way of thinking about vocabulary. The student’s perspective transformation was apparent during the adult conversation that transpired during the interview:

My mentor used the word cripple a lot and it took me aback right when I first heard it. Upon further reflection, that’s not a word that I would feel comfortable using. I would feel very ignorant and prejudiced. . . . But then reflecting on it, I thought this is a word he’s taking ownership for. He explained to us that he has gone through all the different words that have come about to be politically correct and that’s the word that he’s chosen to use whether it be that it was used negatively towards him and he’s reclaiming it. . . . Whatever it is, it speaks to him. It might not be [a term] that I would use, but I have to acknowledge that it’s something he uses. I don’t have to use that word, but just respect the fact that he uses that. (Jessica, OT825, I)

Students creatively incorporated mentor language in a debriefing of events, which were primarily chronicled in the journals and confirmed through classroom observations from tutorial sessions. In their adult conversation, students reported and dialogued in a manner that honoured the integrity of the individual mentors and the profession as a whole.

Meaning-Making as Transformative Dialogue

The final tutorial of The Lived Experience of Disability course was framed as the “so what” conversational debrief about the course (Anne, OT825, CO). Anne reminded students, “You can’t forget about the influence that this course has on mentors. There is a huge range on the spectrum as to how it impacts them positively or negatively and this is a huge responsibility” (AOR, OT825, CO). Anne related this sentiment to communication and professionalism, which were also threads for change highlighted in the course. Anne invited students to “reflect back on your transformative moments. How has your perception and definition of disability changed?” (Anne, OT825, CO). This creative task of tying together the disparate details became transformative in itself, as students fully grasped the impact that this course had—and would continue to have—on them as they move forward in their educational and professional roles.

Students detailed the ways that their beliefs, expectations, and opinions had changed as a result of this course. Several students’ concept of empathy evolved in relation to the lived experience of disability. One of the students shared her remarkable perspective transformation: “I had to change my way of thinking around mentors from pity to empathy” (Maren, OT825, LAS). Another student, paired with a mentor with Alzheimer’s, detailed how her transformation emerged as a result of realizing unrealized expectations:

I had expectations about my mentor’s disability that were not demonstrated. Therefore, I realized I had very limited knowledge and empathy for how families cope with loved ones who have this disability. After my meetings, that empathy has become enhanced. (Phil, OT825, CO)

One of the students paired with George, a mentor who had a mental illness, made meaning out of her changing perception of disability. She reminded everyone and herself of her limited view of disability at the outset of the course: “I wish that I had someone with a real disability” (Charlotte, OT825, CO). She went on to describe how, through a connected process of dyad debriefing,

collective conversation, and journaling, she became aware of her earlier thoughts. In an act of empathy she was now able to recognize her transformed viewpoint: “I now see the mental health issue as a real disability” (Charlotte, OT825, CO). The other student paired with George revealed his shift in understanding of mental illness. He described his transformative experience:

Speaking with my mentor about how anxiety limits his enjoyment in participation in activities made me understand why he did not do many of the things he knew would help him. Because I understood his situation better it changed my opinion of how someone with mental health issues should be expected to participate in the community, and where there needs to be more supports. (Norman, OT825, I)

Students paired with Bob noted that he challenged their original ideas surrounding occupational therapy. One of the students explained:

I realized my beliefs had changed when I spoke with my mentor and realized how “old rehab” had helped him get to the level of functioning he is at today. I always assumed that old rehab was a bit archaic and not as informed, making it lesser practice to new rehab. Through my meetings, I realized the potential benefits to old rehab. (Peggy, OT825, CO)

Both students paired with Bob acknowledged the significance of incorporating the client’s perspective; it allowed them to reframe their practice in a way that was meaningful and appropriate to the client as a unique individual. One of the students explained how this learning opportunity afforded the space to test out assumptions in practice: “This course presents a safe learning environment so I felt okay with realizing my view of ‘OT knows best’ isn’t actually the best. The course allowed me to work with this viewpoint.” She ultimately realized: “Listen to what the client says . . . listen and actually do what they want” (Jessica, OT825, CO & LAS).

The Smith family is comprised of two parents, their older son, and their two adolescent male twins who were born prematurely. One of the twins who will be referred to as Aiden, suffered from cerebral palsy as a result of the premature birth. For the students paired with the Smith family, their original beliefs and expectations of living with a disability were broadened

and enhanced during the course of the six weeks. One of the students in the dyad admitted to his original ignorance: “I uncovered some assumptions that I’d made as I didn’t think that Aiden would have much quality of life, if any.” This students’ experience with the Smiths, however, led him to a revelation: “He did have quality of life and [collectively] they found creative ways to manage and thrive as a family unit” (Phil, OT825, CO). His partner agreed and commented that “the family dynamic was surprising . . . the kids are just the same as others their age” (Kara, OT825, CO). While these students focused on an idea of sameness or similarity between Aiden and other children, another student shared her developing image of diversity as a representation of her increasingly sensitized concept of disability. At the beginning of the course, she conceived that “the image in [her] head was of a stereotypical disability: a picture of a teenager in a wheelchair” (Maren, OT825, CO). She challenged this image and now considers disability to have a much broader scope. This student’s transformed perspective of disability as diverse became “more a flash of a row of different people” (OT825, CO).

Students demonstrated a commitment to their training as occupational therapists, and there was an implicit understanding and a competent disposition among the group to develop professional expertise. Additionally, an engrained sensibility that collaboration was both a valued and shared practice existed in and amongst the group. A community of practice was evident in the collective pursuit of the students’ interests and in the active engagement of learning activities that enabled the building of intense relationships. The students learned from one another and established their repertory as future practitioners through their sharing of experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems (Wenger, 2006).

In a sense-making act, Anne drew students back to other aspects of the occupational therapy curriculum. Her subtle and nuanced prompts encouraged students to make connections

that will take them from the personal to the global implications of their experience. She posed the following questions for their consideration: “What will you carry forward in your clinical placements? What’s the point of this course? Why put this course in the curriculum?” (AOR, OT825, CO). These questions led to conversations that revealed the transformative nature of the course: Students and instructor discussed their ongoing journey to uncover an authentic practice and an authentic self and to honour the lived experience of disability.

Summary

Analysis of data collected from the two courses shows that creative activity was inherently linked to both informal and formal conversations and that these conversations were deemed to be transformative. Students and instructors engaged dynamically in adult conversation, and connected their life experience with professional practice. These interactions were central to the cultivation of creative capacities; participants negotiated meanings and articulated definition of concepts as their perspectives shifted critically, reflectively, and rationally. Instructors designed pedagogical events that facilitated transformative learning opportunities where students could “voice their concerns” (LAS) within an open, discriminating, permeable, and inclusive framework. In this creatively charged environment, students actively explored ideas, broadened their perspectives as they traversed boundaries of discipline, and extended beyond accepted norms and traditional views to challenge their individual and social realities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STORIED SELF

Students and instructors placed a great degree of value on storytelling in the two courses featured in this study. The thematic thread of the storied self emphasizes the importance of developing context as an integral pedagogical piece for enabling creativity and transformative learning. As Clark (2010) writes, “we make sense of all experience by narrating it” (p. 3). For the participants, building narrative networks enabled engagement with others’ storied perspectives as a part of a sense-making act. Instructors in both courses included stories of a personal and professional nature in their lessons with the intent of presenting topics in a rich, situated context (this meant that there was consideration made for social, cultural, political, ethical, and moral dimensions) and as a result, students followed suit.

Student and instructor responses from the Creativity Checklist confirm that creative threads, intertwined with the storied self *often or always*, offered moments for “students to draw on their individual interests and experiences when learning new topics” and enabled students “to pursue a passion in learning” as the instructors modelled “a great deal of passion for their subjects” (CC). As one of the instructors from the Professionals in Rural Practice course stated, “[instructors and students] have something to offer just from themselves” (JJ, RHBS830, I). The instructors’ dynamic and fluid stories were extended to students with the strategic and purposefully creative intention of enabling students to draw links between ideas and experience in a way that honoured personally meaningful knowledge. Overall, the course enabled a “balance of formal curriculum outcomes and personal interest knowledge” (RHBS830, CC). In terms of transformative learning experiences, 82% of students in the Professionals in Rural Practice course and 92% of students in The Lived Experience of Disability course indicated that they had

a perspective transformation. Additionally, students reported that these transformative experiences were connected to the learning activities and opportunities afforded them by the course context rather than by personal life events.

This chapter begins with student and instructor perceptions of building narrative networks as a creative strand in the Professionals in Rural Practice course. The creative connections made by instructors, through a myriad of image, metaphor, and narrative threads, are presented in a series of classroom vignettes. Data from The Lived Experience of Disability course demonstrates how “tutorials were important for sharing the story” as students discussed diversity, shared anecdotes from their mentor visits, and interpreted first-person resources (AOR, OT825, I). The various sections of this chapter explore creativity as a collaborative act of knowledge and consensus building in relation to the lived experiences of self, other, and the world. The chapter concludes with an overview of the art of journaling as a primary means for expressing the storied self.

Life History as Creative Context

One of the first sessions of the Professionals in Rural Practice course, titled “Practice Considerations for Rural Professionals,” was led by Anne O’Riordan and Denise Neumann-Fuhr. Anne framed the lesson with personally meaningful connections made to rural life and practice—a series of purposefully selected vignettes—to enrich the topic of study. She provided context for the small town of Madoc (approximately 1,300 people), where she was raised, sharing stories and photographs of her rural background that featured the O’Riordan family grocery, the local schools she attended, and the geographic locale. In her professional practice as an occupational therapist, Anne noted that she continued to place a high level of importance on developing meaningful relationships, which she attributed to a life history rooted in positive rural

relations. By sharing personal details and modelling her vulnerability, Anne underscored the value of story as a means for transformation.

Denise grew up in the St. Catherine's area in Ontario. She shared a range of life experiences that spanned from remote to rural. She told stories from her time spent in Alberta, and in Yellowknife, where she lived and practiced nursing in First Nations communities. To help students gain some perspective on the remoteness of these places, Denise explained, "I've worked in places that don't have Starbucks or Tim Horton's!" (DNF, RHBS830, CO). She also shared photos that depicted the contrast between rural and remote (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Rural and remote

With extensive training and experience in remote and rural settings as a professional nurse, she was eager to share her unique perspective on professional practice in remote areas with the students. These storied vignettes, nurtured by both instructors, established an openness to exploring and interpreting personally meaningful experiences characteristic of mini-c creativity.

Building narrative networks.

Students extended and broadened their thinking to engage in a discussion about how rural statistics and descriptions applied to remote destinations; this change in thinking can be

characterized as a creative task according to Urban's (2002) model of creativity, which was used during observations. The questions posed by Denise and Anne caused students to think deeply about professional and ethical boundaries, as well as burnout. Students were encouraged to generate responses based on their individual range of relevant and diverse experiences. This act of making connections collectively, through an amalgam of life experiences and new ideas, contributed to transforming perspectives. Additionally, students were afforded opportunities to actively and creatively participate in the construction of an original and operational definition of rural and remote and to discuss the notion of boundaries; these opportunities set the tone for a valuing of students' experiences and perspectives.

Once Denise and Anne had both established a rich context, they situated their personal experience along a continuum of rural life and practice, and then turned to the students for their responses and reactions to the concept of boundaries. Anne posed the question, "What do you think about when the term boundaries comes up?" and prompted students to think of one word or phrase that came to mind. Student responses included the following: "practicing within your scope, therapeutic patient relationship, disengage, power dynamics, confidentiality, and limitations" (RHBS, CO). Based on these responses, Anne established an enabling framework for defining boundaries in professional practice and for generating creative ideas, specifically in remote and rural contexts, using the scholarly literature in the students' fields of occupational therapy, nursing, and health care. Anne expressed her ideas with a series of carefully selected, poignant quotations and images that were intended to encourage students to think about the polarizing perspectives on boundaries, and all of the grey areas that existed in between.

Creativity resided in the opportunities to experiment and play around with these unconventional ideas and their implicit ethical and moral dimensions. A series of slides from this

session framed the concept of boundaries in a manner designed to elicit further discussion (Figure 6).

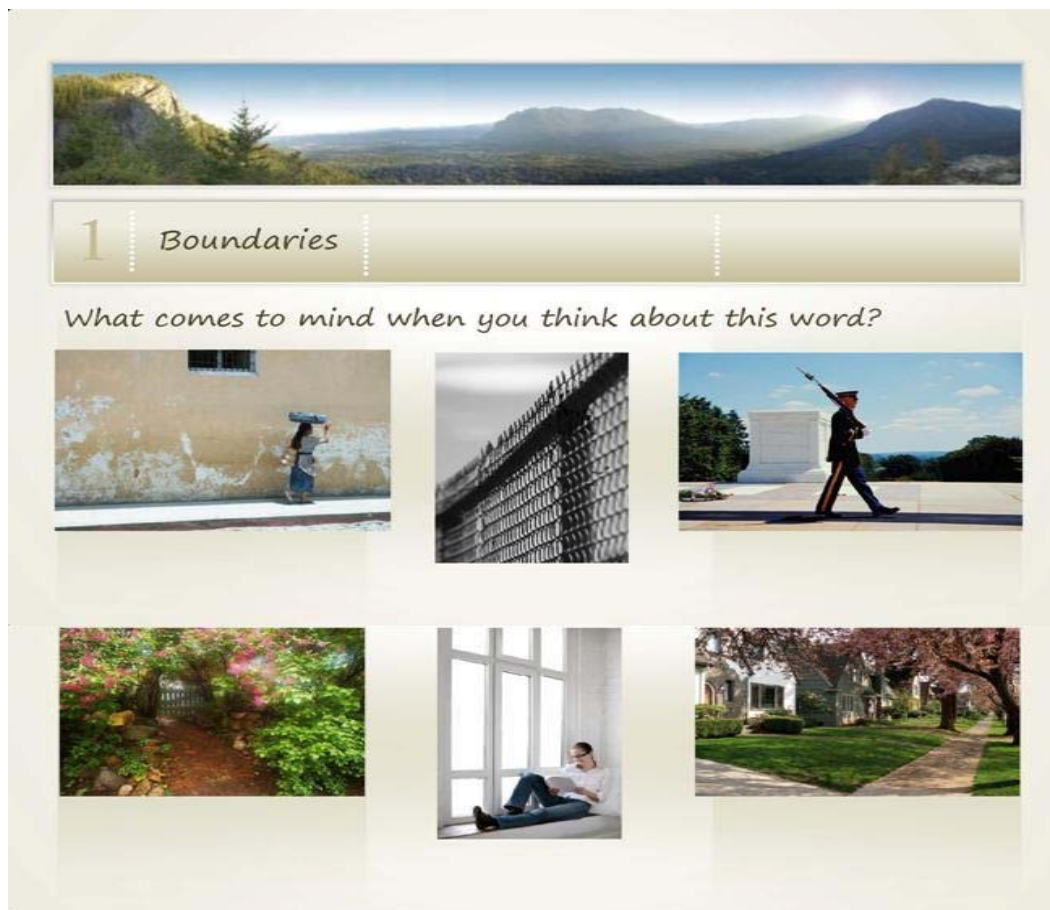


Figure 6. Boundaries

In this particular session, Denise and Anne crafted creative opportunities to develop meaning perspectives, as teachers and students exchanged contextualized and detail-oriented stories. Students participated in the building of narrative networks; this enabled the sharing of their own stories, which were grounded in novel acts of inquiry and interpretation.

Denise consistently encouraged the students to consider the individual and situational factors that might contribute to burnout. Additionally, students explored the role that demographics, attitude, and personality played in burnout and interpreted these issues at an individual and collective level, when asked, “Who experiences burnout?” Student responses

revealed the following ideas in regards to factors that might be attributed to burnout in a rural area: “fewer resources, less of a support network, over-worked, easy to point blame at one person professionally and socially, you have to be ‘ON’ all of the time, fewer amenities, you can’t just drive to wherever” (RHBS830, CO).

Denise responded to the thoughtfulness of these responses regarding the realities and challenges of rural settings by sharing some visual images of her time in the remote setting of Wekweti, NWT, where there’s a population of 150 people. She described the native people who live there, the topography of the land, the cultural practices of hunting and fishing, and pointed out that it was extremely remote: “There is only access by air to this community.” Once situated in this rich context, Denise asked: “How might being remote factor into [our] discussion?” (DNF, RHBS, 830) This prompted the students to elaborate on their earlier definition of “remote” and to generate ideas on which aspects of being remote might be important to consider in the context of burnout.

Denise and Anne raised other issues surrounding boundaries and burnout through a series of case studies. These case studies were based on their own personal experiences of working and living in rural and remote areas of Canada. Denise prepared a case study that highlighted her story as a nurse, using the pseudonym of Nicole. The case study provided a remote perspective and enabled the exploration of the wide range of associated issues, including managing isolation, finding balance, preventing burnout, and becoming part of a community. Denise describes the particular demands and dynamics of the profession and lifestyle in remote Canada. She writes:

There is much to be done here and the residents are very dependent on the system. Much is asked of the nurses and this leads to great turnover of staff. This is difficult for the residents for they have come to expect that nurses will not stay and so, they do not try to know them beyond what they encounter at the clinic. To combat this, Nicole creates opportunities to mingle with residents during various local celebrations. This helps to address this divide as such efforts create a deeper

connection with the people and the place. She has also made some friendly connections with the local residents who work at the health centre. Together, they have created a small walking club which they enjoy during their lunch break.

Students engaged and responded creatively to these stories as the primary themes brought rural and remote issues to life. Anne and Denise revealed later in the lesson that these were in fact their own stories of experience. Through this revelation, the instructors reinforced the realistic dimensions of their cases of lived experience, and their first-person stories resonated deeply with relevance for the students. (Denise's and Anne's case studies appear, in their entirety, in Appendix C.)

Synthesizing ideas from the session and tying together thematic ideas required creative engagement on the part of the students and pedagogical prowess on the part of the instructors. The structure of the lesson facilitated a degree of knowledge and skill necessary for the students to flourish creatively in developing critical understandings that linked theory to practice. Instructors enabled an extension of experience that encompassed creative activity in the form of humour in story, expertise from professional experience, selectivity of self-understanding shared, and restructuring and redefinition of theoretical definitions and constructs pertinent to the course (Urban, 2002). For students, a fluency and flexibility of ideas, along with a readiness to take risks in the sharing of their own personal experiences, emerged in the building of narrative networks.

Reflections on creating context.

In the process of preparing and collaborating for this session, Anne made the suggestion that they (Denise and Anne) establish context by talking about their own experiences of living and working in rural and remote locales. And Denise recalled, “when Anne suggested that idea, John's response to it was so enthusiastic and I took note of it. I didn't have a lot of time to

process why things like that were important in the moment, but I'm taking that away with me" (DNF, RHBS830, CO). The supportive dynamic and feedback became a significant component in fostering a collaborative spirit within the instructor group. Upon further reflection, Denise was able to pinpoint the aspects of the teaching that were powerful and worth replicating. She noted:

By placing ourselves in the position of being more than just textbook educators, we're bringing our lived experiences to the students in a more visceral way. It's not about creating expertise, it's about saying this is my lived experience. This is what I hope to share with you. This is the context from which I'm speaking and sharing. (DNF, RHBS830, I)

In our interview together, Anne spoke to the value and infectious nature of the storied self and its potential to transform and energize students and teachers with material that is relevant, current, and personally meaningful. Additionally, there was a clear sense that this type of teaching was poignant for all of the players involved. Anne shared her perspective of developing her storied self as an integral part of her session and as a unifying thread within the larger course context. She remarked:

I think that for me and for most of the instructors that sharing their personal stories and experiences and insights was key. The students commented on that, and it just felt like this is really important and it's a different way of teaching and mentoring than I normally see in a classroom setting. Sharing that story of where I came from, what my experiences are, and the case study that I developed, which was my own personal story, I think that was a significant contribution, and one that I really wanted to make. And I could see other people doing it in their own way and in their own style, and in the second week it happened even more. (AOR, RHBS830, I)

A Model of Creative Mentorship

In one of the sessions conducted at the end of the first week, Dr. Neil Hobbs established mentorship as a transformative relationship; this notion of mentorship evolved from a theoretical concept into a pragmatic possibility during the weekend retreat and into the second week of the course. Neil began his lesson on mentoring with "The (Ongoing) Tale of Johnny Town Mouse"

by author, artist, and naturalist Beatrix Potter. “I think she represents, in a non-medical way, the idea of mentorship,” (NH, RHBS830, CO) he explained at the outset of his session; he reasoned that he consciously chose a non-medical model of mentorship as a way to facilitate creative thinking. Neil’s intentional content choices for the lesson are outlined in the passage below:

I deliberately tried to use a non-medical model. I thought that if I did that it would polarize, so I used somebody from a different history, a different culture. I chose someone who themselves was creative in lots of different ways . . . Beatrix Potter was a good artist and a naturalist in true Victorian style. So I chose that because I thought she was creative in the way. Her art turned into children’s books. (NH, RHBS830, I)



Figure 7. Beatrix Potter inspired slides.

Another instructor commented on her impressions of this session, which confirmed some of Neil’s original pedagogical intent:

Neil Hobbs, a physician, is also a very creative person, and his presentation would not be what you would typically think of when you think about a physician doing a presentation on mentoring. It was very creative and brought in literature and history. He and others shared quite a bit of who they were personally. (JJ, RHBS830, I)

This session on mentorship was given in memory of Neil’s own mentor, Dr. Frank Asbury. Neil explained that when, during a very tumultuous time in his life, he joined Frank’s practice as a resident, Frank had taken the place of a father and he the place of a son for Frank. Neil’s stories were captured in a beautiful array of picture slides: “We often weave the material with the stories. This is an important part of mentorship” (NH, RHBS830, CO). These slides (Figure 7) depict the sequence of picture slides that helped bring some of Neil’s stories to life.

Frank also remained an important part of Neil’s life story: “The way you practice is often shaped and influenced by the way that your mentor practices” (NH, RHBS830, CO). Neil told the story of his own family to denote his own rural origins and interest. Additionally, with many of his slides (Figure 8), he encouraged students to take notice of the features of the photographs. In this process, students’ perceptions were heightened; they began to make connections by sharing their own storied experiences of rurality, and to make interpretations informed by the rich context provided.



Figure 8. Creating personal context.

Neil posed the question, “What are the rural magnets for Beatrix Potter and for all of you?” (NH, RHBS830, CO). Student responses included space, stronger sense of community, access to nature. For Potter, Neil suggested a broad education of natural science, holidays to places that inspired her imagination, and the development of skills that led to more active “specialization.” To extend this notion of rural magnets in context, Neil suggested:

There is a political investment in the rural environment—we become invested in the places that we live—this is a more general use of the word politics. We want to try and make things happen in the places that we live and our mentors try to persuade us to get involved in the life of our country. (NH, RHBS830, CO)

Neil pointed to the sources of his rural interests—he used a map to try and visually trace his path from his origins in Oxford (Figure 8) to his work as a physician in Labrador, Sydenham, Verona, New Zealand, and the Northwest Territories. With a display of scenes from his morning commute, a 42 kilometre drive from Sydenham to Tamworth, Ontario, he acknowledged that gaining an aesthetic sense and a connection to the natural world was a huge part of the appeal of rural practice.

Neil generated further conversation when he posed the following question: “How else do you define rural?” Students built on knowledge from previous sessions, wherein various examples and definitions of rural were traversed. In this process, students revisited, revised, and challenged their own conceptions of rurality. Several students perceived of rural as being “more related to a lifestyle than anything else,” and inherently resilient with a “strong, but mighty” attitude. Students brought a healthy skepticism to the notion of “rural nirvana” and probed deeply into the “not in my backyard mentality” as it applied to the idea of the poverty that lived (lingered) beyond the picture-perfect rural landscape. Other students focused on practical considerations, such as “What are the roads like in the winter?,” “How easy is it to get ‘high-speed’ Internet?” and “Where is the nearest library/ deli/ Tim Horton’s?” (RHBS,

830) These practical considerations created solid frames of reference from which Neil extended his lesson and creatively mentored the students to explore the contrasts and overlapping features that existed between rural and urban. Neil's model inspired instructors and students alike to interactively explore the contextualized nuances involved in conceptualizing rural. (RHBS830, CO)

At a Crossroads: Creativity Intersects Rural Roots

Dr. Julia Brook was yet another instructor who developed a storied self to frame her lesson. As a self-identified rural researcher and scholar, budding professor Julia's rural roots were apparent. She situated her story in the town where she was born and raised: Portage, Manitoba (Figure 9), with a population of almost 13,000 people, originally settled by the voyageurs.



Figure 9. Road signs to "Go West!"

Using Google Earth, she presented a wider view of Canada, Manitoba, and then honed in on her hometown. While displaying wide views of quilted fields, she shared stories about her father, a seasoned welder and farmer, to emphasize the personal pieces that lived in her rural

context. Julia provided a broader context that connected the individual with local and societal dimensions; as she zoomed in on the once quite fertile land, she talked about how the conservative politics governing Western Canada superseded the needs of the individual farmer and their land. She described her family’s personal experiences with farming, and noted their community connections that were forged by shared struggles with neighbours. Their local struggles with the devastation of crops year after year, the hoop and holler floods (pictured in Figure 10) that plagued the Portage area of Manitoba, and the impact of industry (mass production, factory farming) on the future of her family’s farms and her community’s livelihood were described in nuanced detail.



Figure 10. The hoop and holler floods in Portage, Manitoba.

Julia aptly pointed out from a place of personal investment and emotional connectedness that, “the thing about farming is that it’s part of who you are. It’s your way of life and your way of being” (JB, RHBS830, CO). Julia admitted that she “misses the gaze of being able to see

farther than what you could articulate” (Figure 11), but noted that, since moving to Kingston, she “enjoys looking out over Lake Ontario” to recreate that experience (JB, RHBS830, CO).



Figure 11. An image of the prairies, featuring a rape seed crop and a flax crop.

A theological student followed Julia’s storytelling with a question: “Are you still a prairie girl at heart?” Julia responded, “Yes, of course.” Later, in her interview, she reflected about the epistemological stance of being rural: “There is a pull there to be connected, there is this idea, this implicit understanding that who you are is about your heart and soul, it’s not about your head” (JB, RHBS830, I).

Most of the instructors took on the role of the storied self to enrich the context of their sessions. Denise noted, “it’s not about creating expertise, but about sharing one’s lived experience and building from there” and added, “I think the storytelling is a creative piece and I think Neil really brought storytelling into his work and use of some personal pictures, too. Again that makes it more of a lived experience” (DNF, RHBS830, I). There were instructors, in addition to Neil, who were able to effectively use story and image to creatively convey the

content. What was particularly engaging and transformative in this process was an honouring of self and a valuing of story as a means of creativity. As students made connections with the instructors through shared experiences, they incorporated their own stories into classroom activity and interactions in new and personally meaningful ways. In terms of building the lesson, Neil commented that “context is everything,” and emphasized the importance of “expanding one’s sensitivity and repertoire of culture” and the value of this pedagogical approach in “sensitiz[ing] students to issues of rural life and practice” (NH, RHBS830, I). These values and ideals were woven not only throughout his masterfully crafted and facilitated session on mentorship, but also in many of the sessions where personally meaningful contexts were situated and expertly integrated in an interdisciplinary manner. One student described the meaningful storied context in the rural course: “As adult learners what sticks with you are stories. The more opportunities to engage with real life experiences through story, the better. [Storied] moments were transformative when we bumped up against different ideas to broaden [our] thinking” (Sarah, RHBS830, I).

Personal Influence

Personal context influenced and enriched The Lived Experience of Disability course content. Creative engagement with personal story contributed to a transformative learning experience for students and the instructor. The first class began with the instructor, Anne O’Riordan, talking about her recent visit to an assisted living home to see her mom. She explained that there was a new physician who came in to help lift her mom’s spirits, as her mood had been particularly low as of late. Anne’s mother has Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s, and Anne’s mother was wrestling with why she was still alive. In sharing this short, personal vignette, Anne was able to convey the emotional underpinnings, the relational dynamic, and the

authentic place of the personal and the professional in uncovering meaning to life—the essence of the lived experience. The nuanced teaching exhibited by Anne demonstrates the transformative detail that resides in personal influence:

It's very important that I, as an individual and instructor, model and share some of my own thoughts and understanding so that the students can say "Okay, she is a person. I can disclose this, too" . . . not disclose personal information [per se], but their attitudes and perceptions. (Anne, OT825, I)

Anne used her concrete personal example to extend and frame some of the main objectives of the tutorial and to connect the aspiring occupational therapists with their professional aims.

At the outset of The Lived Experience of Disability course, there was time and space set aside to get to know one another over dinner and informal conversation. Whilst seated in a circular formation around the table, Anne pointed out that "what we bring to the table is equal" (AOR, OT825, CO), which underscored the team atmosphere. Students were given an opportunity to formally introduce themselves, providing details of their hometown, undergraduate degree, hopes for this course, previous clinical experience, and goals for the next five years. Several students pointed out the varied range of experiences that the students brought to the table. One student captured the essence of learning vicariously from the plethora of adult experience: "Tutorials where we got to speak about our personal experiences and learn from others was [sic] influential. I learned from my peers as everyone brought with them insight based on their personal experiences, varied volunteer work, and undergraduate degree" (Vanessa, OT825, I).

The sharing of personal stories and food during the tutorials put everyone at ease and revealed the diverse backgrounds and broad spectrum of lived experience that would inform and enrich the team's discussions. Students regarded tutorials as a "great way of bringing everything we have learned and will learn together" (Vanessa, OT825, J). Tutorials functioned as a medium

through which students could synthesize ideas and learn from others' varied personal life experiences. These tutorials helped students to creatively connect the dots, by exposing them to a range of life experiences of disability. One student explained:

It felt like I was learning about everything during our tutorials, which was interesting because clearly there would be no way for all of us to meet each of the mentors on such personal terms. Sharing the [tutorial] experience with each other allowed you to think about all of the issues involved with the various types of disabilities. (Katie, OT825, I)

Framing First Impressions with Mentors

In the second tutorial of The Lived Experience of Disability course, students shared stories from their first visits with mentors. These stories raised many topics related to both disability and, more broadly, the traditions and discipline of occupational therapy. Anne pointed out that, in any given tutorial session, a range of topics were explored from multiple perspectives:

Disability and related topics to disability were covered. Accessibility is huge for a topic of conversation, advocacy, boundary issues, professional boundaries, healthcare policy, and self-care. All of those can be touched on in terms of OT [occupational therapy], the profession, but also in terms of a person's own approach to work and to life. (AOR, OT825, I)

To initiate conversation, Anne provided the enabling constraints for debriefing the student dyads: "It's important to hear two perspectives when we hear these stories." This discussion of their experiences was framed with "a thumbnail sketch of who the person is," and students were encouraged to "focus on highlights from the visit and then ask the group some questions" (AOR, OT825, CO).

The first dyad that volunteered to share was paired up with Bob, a mentor who, at age five, had acquired a T4 spinal chord injury from a car accident. The two students reported that, when they first met him, Bob predicted what area of occupational therapy they would eventually

work in—a common practice that he had developed in the 15 years that he’d been a mentor for this course. Bob, when interviewed, admitted, “I’m not the medium that reads dead people, but I can read OTs” (Bob, OT825, I). One of the students paired with him told the group that she reflected on his ability to “read” her without even really knowing her for more than a few minutes, and after their first visit recognized from their conversation that “growing up in an institutional setting, he had developed a knack for different populations” (Jessica, OT825, CO).

Grey Areas

The other student in the dyad from The Lived Experience of Disability course changed direction during the debriefing and explained how they talked a great deal about the old ways versus the new ways of occupational therapy: “There were a lot of shocking things that happened in the institution. An OT would come and tip over your chair, so that you were forced to learn how to crawl around on the floor to get around” (Peggy, OT825, CO). She further described Bob’s perspective of this institutional experience, which was originally disorienting for her and her partner: “He thinks that he would have been limited if he hadn’t been trained in balance. He was much higher functioning [than others with spinal cord injuries] and attributed that to the old ways of being” (Peggy, OT825, CO).

This student’s comment sparked further discussion in the tutorial session about the differences between the experiences of people with congenital spinal cord injuries and those with acquired injuries and how those experiences potentially contribute to differing outlooks on life. Several students considered the new way of occupational therapy as possibly being “over-protective” or “coddling in nature” (Jessica & Maren, OT825, CO). Anne remarked that the old way was “tough love rehab.” The students paired with this mentor explained that Bob had survived beyond the doctor’s initial prognosis. One student remarked: “Bob attributed

[surpassing his life expectancy] partly to the old rehab,” while another student added: “He is the new baseline” (OT825, CO).

One of the students from the tutorial group spoke about a volunteer experience in California as part of a program that used a contemporary model premised on old ways of doing things. She posited: “There are some boot-camp rehabs that exist as an arm of OT. It really makes you question what is ethical or professional in the field. . . . This is a grey area” (Charlotte, OT825, CO). These so-called grey areas were a feature in many of the webbed connections of personal stories and professional practice. One student noted how these shades of grey traversed the tutorial discussions:

Often in tutorial we spoke about how an OT could help the many mentors we had and we discussed ways in which we would help out our clients in the future. These experiences were helpful, especially when we discussed cases, which were more in the grey area bringing to light many of the ethical and moral decisions we will struggle with in our practice. (Vanessa, OT825, I)

These scenarios presented unique challenges, as students learned about the role of intuition in their exploration of unknown and unconventional issues, foreshadowing the dilemmas they would face in professional practice. Anne also commented on the importance of openness and tolerance of ambiguity, noting that this creative thread was welcomed in the course context:

When you’re talking about people that’s what you get. There is nothing that’s clear-cut. Even when we talk about boundaries and appropriate professional interactions, they learn something and they almost take it as fact and are rigid about it and I think this way of learning allows them to have fuzzy borders and to me nothing is black and white. Everything is grey when you’re dealing with people. And yes there is a code of ethics and they can refer to our OT code of ethics, but different situations create the grey areas that most of the time we live in. So experiencing them as a student, I think, is a good way to begin their professionalization. (AOR, OT825, I)

Exposure to living in and among the grey areas challenged students to become more attuned to the complexities of humanity—a transformative lesson relevant to their present and future practice. Anne promoted creativity as a classroom condition for transformative learning by encouraging openness to experiences, tolerance of ambiguity, non-conformism, and autonomy (OT825, CO).

Open Minds

Another student dyad was assigned to a mentor who suffered from depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), anxiety, and suicidal ideation. One of the students from the dyad described the dynamic of their first session to the group: “He just started to spew out information and really opened up for questions right away” (Norman, OT825, CO). The student’s journal provided further details of their mentor’s disposition during this first meeting. She described, “He said he felt anxious, which wasn’t obvious except by the speed of his speech and the small beads of sweat dripping off of his chin every once and a while.” She later echoed her partner’s point: “He was very open and basically unloaded his story on us.” The two students pointed out that there was one part of his unloaded story that the students could not “shake off.” When their mentor visited a psychiatrist, he was told, “you can’t be fixed, there’s nothing that can be done.” The student confessed to the group: “I have been stuck in that thought ever since” (Norman, OT825, CO).

There were other aspects of their visit that were unexpected. She shared her first hand glimpse of his living conditions: “I was really shocked at the environment. It was the dirtiest place that you could have imagined. I tried to go in there without judgment” (Charlotte, OT825, CO). She attempted to keep an open mind and quickly became aware that she was experiencing a disorienting dilemma when she noticed, “When he talked about his condition he would explain

that he knew it wasn't a normal reaction or what he wanted, but he would do it anyway" (Charlotte, OT825, CO). The student's perspective about depression was transformed by this experience, as she went through a process of critical questioning and interpreting the specific aspects of his experience that challenged her thinking. She reflected on this aspect of her visit in her journal. "I struggle to understand how someone can know that a behaviour is abnormal but not be able to change it" (Charlotte, OT825, J). Her notion of disability was expanded to include mental illness, as she observed and realized the complexity of her mentor's life.

Debriefing Dyads

The dyadic interactions were not just part of the tutorial sessions; informal discussions, outside of class, provided an additional outlet for the exchange of perspectives. On the Learning Activities Survey, 75% of the students reported that their partners' support was a contributing factor in challenging and shifting their thinking. In their one-on-one debriefs in their dyads, many students participated in "deep conversation" (Phil, OT825, I). One student commented that she looked to her dyad partner for consensus following their visits. She recalled, "we would debrief on our way home, and I feel like sharing that experience with someone and being able to check with them if they were experiencing it in the same way was very helpful" (Katie, OT825, I). Another student pointed out the enabling differences between her and her partner: "He [the partner] would come out of our meetings with different viewpoints than I had . . . so we explored those ideas" (Charlotte, OT825, J). Her partner in this dyadic partnership conveyed the strong relation held between them, despite their differing viewpoints: "I think that we helped each other realize things that we didn't know. She opened up to me with personal stories. . . . We bonded, coped, and worked really well together. We were there for each other, to catch each other" (Norman, OT825, I). Despite the majority of students who experienced a dynamic dyad, there

was a student who had an alternative experience. She remarked: “I feel like we didn’t bond at all. Despite my best efforts to generate conversation, I didn’t want to pry” (Jessica, OT825, I).

Collaborative Inquiry

Students continually searched for a deeper understanding of the complex, multi-faceted issues that formed the basis for tutorial discussions. Tutorials provided a rich format in which students put together the different pieces of the puzzle as they gained greater contextual detail, and synthesized disparate pieces as they explored additional first-person resources to make sense of the cohesive whole. In the telling and retelling of stories and the sharing of repertoire (e.g., tools, ways of doing things, approaches, ideas) students interacted in a collaborative manner (Wenger, 2006).

Using a scenario shared from a mentor visit, students worked collaboratively in a sense-making act that involved challenging preconceived notions and assumptions about disability. The students who were paired up with the Smith family travelled in their handicapped accessible van to the public library for their second visit. Aiden, who had cerebral palsy, was in his power wheelchair and used his chin to work the keyboard on his computer to communicate with his family. While reading and playing with the family in the library setting, the two students couldn’t help but notice the stares and hushed whispers from others in the library. One of the students paired with this mentor family explored this experience in further detail:

The one big thing I noticed while we were out was how much people stared. It was apparent that whenever Aiden would make a noise people would look over and stare in a very obvious way. I understand that people fear things that they don’t understand and aren’t comfortable with disability but still the amount of staring was noticeable. It was a different experience to be on the other side of the stares when at an earlier time in my life it could have been myself staring and wondering what was wrong with a kid like Aiden. (Phil, OT825, J)

Anne probed further about the children staring at Aiden in the library. She extended these critical questions to the group: “How can that experience be interpreted? How can that be used to their advantage?” (OT825, CO). Discussion amongst the students elicited ideas about the importance of building an awareness of disability through education and exposure. One student referred to the course resources that students could explore, namely the children’s book *Zoom* by Robert Munsch, which conceives of disability as an opportunity rather than as a deficit. Many students remarked on their personal experiences of ignorance or their lack of experience with disability when they were younger, noting that they had not previously framed disability in a positive light.

Students worked together to develop a new outlook on disability; through transformative dialogue, they framed their perspectives in a manner that was more open and inclusive than it been previously. The collaboration was creative in nature, as students engaged in knowledge and consensus building. One of the students pointed out, “It’s important to develop a comfort level [with disability]” (Vanessa, OT825, CO). Another added, “Opening up communication is essential. Kids don’t tend to judge, they just need a lived experience of disability to relate to” (Kara, OT825, CO). A third student expressed an alternative to the norm in response to the public reaction to Aiden in the library. She suggested: “We often say ‘look away’ and perhaps we’d be better to encourage curiosity, observing, and questioning about disability to bring about an understanding” (Maren, OT825, CO). Anne reminded students that, in many cases, they would be required to reframe their perspective(s) as they considered how their mentors framed their own lived experience. She explained her position based on professional experience: “I always documented what the person’s strengths were [when I was working as an OT]. Some of those strengths came out of having a disability” (AOR, OT825, CO). With the occasional subtle

nudge from Anne, students tied ideological threads together in a meaningful web in a concerted effort to understand the client perspective. In their collaborative inquiry, students accessed their informed understanding and empathy to make important judgment calls about how to represent the mentor's experience with integrity. Anne's creative professionalization, in tandem with the students' storied insights, enabled students to see things differently than they had before.

The Art of Journaling

Reflective journals were “much more than diaries” (Phil, OT825, I) and provided students with freedom to express the deep, sophisticated complexities of their learning experiences. The learning journals facilitated creative ideation and critical reflection by offering students a central way of representing and processing events that elicited a deeper consideration and reconsideration of events and issues. In both courses, students became aware of their transforming perspectives as they revisited earlier entries, noting the taken-for-granted details of their previous encounters and consciously building on their new understandings.

On the Learning Activities Survey, students in both courses reported that the process of journaling was an activity that led to transformation. One third of students from the Professionals in Rural Practice and half of the students from The Lived Experience of Disability named “personal reflection” and “journaling” as influential to initiating a perspective transformation. Student and instructor responses from the Creativity Checklist corroborate primary data sources, noting that the teaching and learning “developed [their] ability to self-reflect” and “value[d] the individuality and uniqueness of each person.” The reflective practice of journaling assisted students in mapping out the following deepened outcomes: “(a) consideration of the process of their own learning; (b) critical review of an aspect(s) of their experiences, actions, or events; and

(c) decision making or resolving uncertainty, particularly in the case where an ill-structured matter required resolution” (Moon, 1999, p. 23).

In the introductory class of Professionals in Rural Practice, Julia and Neil spent some time describing their expectations for the journal assignment. The general purpose for journaling was to address particular course components (e.g., interprofessional teamwork) or sessions that resonated with the individual student. The instructors talked about using the journal as a way for students to “broaden their perspectives and extend [their] thinking” (Julia & Neil, RHBS830, CO). They reinforced the creative freedom that students would have in the entries, and encouraged students to explore the continuum of religious-to-secular-to-scientific perspectives that were relevant to the sessions. Dr. John Young recalled that students were encouraged to “think outside of the box” in their journal entries. He noted, “Julia and Neil in their description of the act of journaling made clear that you don’t have to simply sit down and write to reflect. They suggested that students use other media to express their ideas” (JY, RHBS830, I). One of the students commented about the importance of the journal as an outlet for interpreting the affective dimensions of her experiences: “It was great that we could be creative with the journal. It was an important opportunity to express because I wasn’t stressed about the technical parts of writing. I could get to how I felt about the experiences” (Sally, RHBS830, I).

Neil kept his own journal throughout the course and shared entries with students as possible exemplars for their own work. One of the instructors, Jane, took notice of the value of Neil’s journal in the context of the course. She remarked:

Neil decided to post some of his entries and they’re very creative in the sense that they’re a collection of poems, pictures, and stories, which hone personal reflection. The students were told that this is an example, and that “you don’t have to do it like this.” But it was a model if need be. (JJ, RHBS830, I)

In nuanced detail, Neil engaged deeply in the process of journaling and found ways to link his current knowledge with added meaning, which would become the creative product of a series of reflective interpretations based on his course experience. On the effectual nature of this process, Neil wrote, “one could go on—one’s heart is too full sometimes. It’s why it’s good to journal” (NH, RHBS830, J).

Journaling workshop.

“There was much freedom given as to what the journal could look like” (SW, OT825, I). This sentiment was established in the hour-long, Lived Experience of Disability workshop that was developed to get students started with their professionally oriented learning journals. During this Week 2 session, Dr. Susan Wilcox, a scholar of adult education and development, guided students to take notice of the taken-for-granted details of their day, and to capture the nuances of their lived experiences. Part of the process entailed helping students to find their voice, as a pathway to “new avenues of thinking” (Moon, 1999, p. 43). After a brief introduction, students engaged in several writing exercises, aimed to facilitate learning from experience, to develop a questioning attitude, and to foster creative and reflective interaction that would later be shared with the tutorial group (Moon, 1999). For example, one exercise required students to write in a stream-of-consciousness style to encourage the free writing of ideas and thoughts on a topic without taking time to edit or criticize.

In the journaling workshop, students were introduced to a writing framework that encompassed observational, reactive, interpretative, and decisional dimensions of text and, thus, provided students with a sequence of steps needed to make sense of their lived experiences. With the Observation-Reactive-Interpretive-Decisional (ORID) framework (O’Riordan, 2012), Susan encouraged students to get in tune with their senses and their emotions at the reaction stage; this

set up journaling as a process in preparing for the rational interpretation stage. At the next level, students prepared to engage more deeply in the group conversation by first “ha[ving] a conversation with their self” (SW, OT825, I). Certainly this was the case for the students in tutorials. As one student remarked, “I found that what I shared in class was basically sharing what I’d already thought and journaled about” (Jessica, OT825, I). The instructor acknowledged that some of the content from the journals was not to be made public. As she explained, “in the journal, students would reveal more deeper-level feelings or attitudes that they may not have offered in the tutorial” (AOR, OT825, I).

Anne summarized the invaluable contribution of this workshop, noting that it enabled creativity in the overarching context of the course:

The journaling workshop approaches creativity as a positive thing. They see that model when Susan gave the workshop, they have a handout that they can try different things, and when I review their journals, I’m very accepting of different styles, as long as they address key issues that are relevant to the course and don’t go off in a tangent. But I encourage them to think about organizing and documenting their understanding in their own style. (AOR, OT825, I)

Many students characterized the act of journaling as a process that was self-directed. For instance, one student commented that, “as much as you had to journal about certain things, you could really journal about anything you wanted” (Jessica, OT825, I). Another pointed out that journaling gave each student the freedom to explore ideas and concepts that had personal resonance: “Our journaling was something that was unique to each student and went in the direction that you wanted it to go in” (Maren, OT825, I). One of the participants spoke to his discovery of a journaling approach that worked most effectively and authentically in practice: “I will [continue to] journal when I’m a professional. Since the course began I have used different ways to express in the journal. . . . You can draw or approach expressing yourself in different ways” (Norman, OT825, I). Through a generative process of continually revising and

restructuring their work, the students were able to find ways that would not only express, but also explore creative ideation of the interwoven personal and professional topics.

For the assessment of the learning journals, the ORID framework was mapped onto a rubric. Susan encouraged students to review and reflect on their entries. She noted, “each entry does not have to encompass ORID, but there should be elements of each aspect within the entirety of the journal” (SW, OT825, I). Anne reinforced this integrated approach to the various dimensions of reflection: “I do look at the different levels of reflection and I make it very clear that I’m looking for the observed, the reactive, the interpretive, the decisional. The style in which they show that in is up to them” (AOR, OT825, I).

The ORID framework helped prepare students for the demands of their profession. Many students found their reflective practice to be relevant to them as aspiring professionals; the journal became a concrete representation of their internal processing and their conceptualization of experience. Anne reinforced the value of mastering the art of reflection in professional practice:

In occupational therapy, reflective practice and decision-making is an integral part of competency that we must master. We have to do that, otherwise clinical reasoning doesn’t exist in the same degree and depth if you’re working with people. So reflective practice is an important skill, competency, and this is the way they start using it. (AOR, OT825, I)

As revealed in the interviews and the journals themselves, many students found that the act of journaling shaped and transformed their learning experience in this course. By mapping their changing perspectives, students were able to make meaning from their experiences conducting fieldwork with their mentor and from the theory generated through conversation in tutorials. In doing so, they discovered their personal style and authentic voice, and captured these moments in their learning journals.

Raising consciousness.

Journaling provided students with an opportunity to consider the process of their own learning and also heightened their level of consciousness about their course experiences. Several students spoke about the building of creative capacities that would assist them in tying their ideas together conceptually. One student spoke specifically to his process: “I feel like I was more confused in my writing at first, all over the map. Now there is more of a connection between topics and a flow” (Norman, OT825, I). Another participant alluded to a process that included elaboration: “I’ll type the stuff I’m thinking and it’s rough and raw and then I’ll go back and categorize it and add things in” (Phil, OT825, I). Adding layered and nuanced detail to the journals was a common theme among participants in both courses. One student detailed the nature of this process, explaining, “Through writing I realized things, and became more aware, and I would pick out these aspects of the story and say ‘now I want to expand on this’” (Charlotte, OT825, I).

For many of the students, a heightened level of awareness became important in the journaling process. This increasing attunement became integral to their learning process, as it required students to critically question and to self-reflect. A participant revealed how these elements of the learning process were integrated in action: “I ask myself a lot of questions in the middle of my writing. So I’ll write something and I’m asking a question directly of myself” (Charlotte, OT825, I). She added:

Actually knowing that you’re going to have to write about [the experiences] makes you hyper aware of what you’re feeling in those situations. If I wasn’t asked to journal about it, and I wasn’t anticipating needing to articulate how I felt, then I wouldn’t have caught my reactions. (Charlotte, OT825, I)

Another student's account extends the theme of creatively raising consciousness : "Journaling helped me to crystallize . . . the things that I was thinking and to explore poetically from where that was going" (Sarah, RHBS830, I).

Critical reflection.

Students engaged in goal-oriented critical reflection, in which feelings and cognition were closely interrelated and interactive (Moon, 2004). An act of critical reflection is described by Moon as "an active process of exploration and discovery, which often leads to very unexpected outcomes" (p. 7). Reflection is not a singular concept; it's a construct that embodies multiple layers, activities, and ideas. Moon outlines three important stages involved in the process and act of reflection in learning, namely "preparation, engagement in an activity, and the processing of what's been experienced" (Moon, 2004, p. 9). For many of the students, preparation was embedded in conscious activity. The journals became an outlet for them, in which they reconstructed the meaning of their experience, created new frameworks for experience, and challenged their biases, attitudes, and beliefs:

I think the aspect of the course that was best served by the journal was clarifying our beliefs, thoughts, and values. In class we were encouraged to challenge these in discussion and it was very helpful to consider how these things changed from the beginning to the end, as well as just identifying how I did feel about certain topics. (Katie, OT825, I)

The student passage above acknowledges the learning journal as a tool for transformation. As students critically reviewed aspects of their experiences and actions and the events from the courses, their shifts in patterns or ways of thinking became evident.

Making decisions and resolving uncertainty.

"Getting to that decisional step was challenging," remarked a student from The Lived Experience of Disability course (Maren, OT825, I). This student defined the decisional level of

her work as “acknowledging what you’ve learned from your experiences and writing it down, which makes it easier to go back and say concretely what has changed” (Maren, OT825, I). It is there, in the act of making decisions, that transformative learning experiences were revealed. The journal became a way of chronicling the changes in thinking that occurred. For example, one of the students from the Professionals in Rural Practice course described how her web of preconceptions and expectations were challenged. With a healthy level of skepticism, the student noticed how her point of view (habit of mind) shifted to accommodate a new frame of reference. She imagined trying her role as a pastor in rural practice:

I’d like to think I have awareness of rural life having spent many summers on a lake outside of Lombardy, Ontario but the truth is that I just scratched the surface. I don’t know what it’s like to farm or live year round in a rural setting. The overseas workers are a common reality of which I had little to no awareness. While the blueberry farmer seemed to have a very positive relationship with her workers, I suspected and now know through reading and a further conversation with a different individual, that this is not the case with all overseas workers.
(Sarah, RHBS830, J)

The student wrote in more detail and on a broader level. Student and instructor responses from the Creativity Checklist data indicated that students were “required to take a broad focus on the topics that are taught.” The following elaboration on the original issue revealed an occurrence of creative activity:

When I asked [the blueberry farmer] about her workers’ spiritual care needs being met, [she] seemed startled. I don’t think she had really considered their possible need to access pastoral help. I’d like to hope that as someone with good intentions she might reflect on this and maybe reach out for some clergy contact for her workers. I’ve heard of tragedies with overseas workers recently (both a terrible truck crash and deaths at a mushroom farm). If I were in rural ministry I might be intentional about looking into the presence and needs of rural workers in my area. This is something I would not have realized I should do prior to the course.
(Sarah, RHBS830, J)

Further reflection on this experience proved to be somewhat disorienting for this student, who sought resolution by giving voice, in poetic form, to the migrant workers:

The poem plays with some of the tension around the Jamaican blueberry pickers in Prince Edward County. There are images of contrast (between their homeland and their work) and notes both of positivity (e.g., “shared hands,” “sweetness”) and of suspicion (“stains,” “closed eye,” etc.). I have been writing poetry since I was young and find it sometimes surprising what ends up being expressed in poetic form. (Sarah, RHBS830, J)

Her meaning perspective was transformed from an internal manifestation to an external representation of creative thought in the following poem:

The Blueberry Pickers

A different blue this
not like the lifting blue of the ocean
not like the island blue of warm sky.
This blue
pulses with the earth
purples palms
nestles deep in baskets
held by shared hands.



Blue
that stains mouths
and tugs lips.
This blue
round like a closed eye
sees
strain and sweetness
far from the blue of home.
(Sarah, RHBS830, J)

Journals were course artifacts that embodied the storied self. The act of journaling focused on a re-telling of the subjective experience, which at times was sensory-oriented, involved moments of metacognition, and intended to capture the “remembered present” (RLK, EDUC911, FN). Instructors of both courses encouraged creative interpretation through openness to style and structure in the exploration of ideas, elaborated synthesis of disparate topics and relationships, and critical reflection on personally and professionally significant aspects of the course experience. After reading and providing feedback on the students’ journals, Julia took a moment for conscious reflection. She leaves us with this sentiment: “At the least the journal was

an accurate, rich souvenir of the class and at the most it helped students consolidate their own feeling(s), understanding, and stance on an issue after a class discussion or experience” (JB, RHBS830, I).

Summary

In this chapter, I explored the contextualized facets of sharing stories. Instructors of the two courses in the study used storytelling as a creative approach for teaching the content and for connecting with their students. In doing so, they inspired students to engage creatively in their own narration of personal threads that were relevant and rooted in life experience. Students and instructors, in the context of classroom activities and in their journaling, considered the act of sharing stories as central to enhancing and broadening their perspectives on the course topics, as it bridged gaps between the personal and the planetary. For this reason, I felt that it was essential to devote a chapter to the transformative power of story: In the courses studied, pedagogical events were enabled through the creative conditions that arose from the sharing of stories. The next chapter features a discussion of the findings in a broader educational context. Research questions are revisited as a way to summarize the significant themes from the multiple-case study. Limitations and future areas of research are also discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

This chapter gathers together many facets of creativity and transformative learning as they were experienced, through acts of individual and shared meaning-making, by the participants in the study. Abstract constructs of creativity and transformative learning came to life through the vivid images, descriptions, and moments of interaction embedded in the complexities of the classroom experiences. The patterned language and creative ideation revealed in accounts of lived experience provided a sophisticated understanding of the ways in which the teaching and learning moments shaped and shifted perspectives.

The study I have undertaken has come full circle, as I revisit the initial research questions in a final summary and discussion of the results. The research questions are: (a) What is the nature of the relationship between creative activity and transformative learning, and in what ways are they connected through lived experience?; (b) What pedagogical design was in place to support the building of creative capacities as a transformative outcome?; and (c) In what ways did the teaching and learning events contribute to changing the ways that students acquire and use knowledge (the transformation of epistemic habits of mind)?

Findings and interpretations in each of the themed chapters illuminate the research questions with an informed perspective on the fundamental issues, patterns, and relationships that arose during the course of the study. In answering these research questions, it was essential to have an approach grounded in (a) creativity theory, (b) transformative learning theory, and (c) related classroom pedagogies. These theories collectively contributed to a conceptual framework to make sense of findings that surfaced regarding the phenomenon of building creative capacities as a condition for transformative learning in the cases of two enriching post-secondary classroom

contexts.

Next, I return to the primary aims of the study and explore some possibilities for future research. The chapter ends with a summation of the power and value of offering pedagogical support and structure for transformative learning experiences in graduate level education.

Connecting Creativity and Transformative Learning in the Classroom

The three research questions will now be revisited. Firstly, *What is the nature of the relationship between creative activity and transformative learning, and in what ways are they connected through lived experience?*

Creative acts and transformative learning embody strong cognitive and emotional dimensions (Mezirow, 2012; Urban, 2002). An experience of transformation, which involves subjective reframing, is in itself a creative act, one wherein “all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the person participates in the invention, discovery, interpretation, and transformation of meaning” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 75). In the two courses, the relationship between theoretical constructs of creativity and transformative learning was brought to life in a series of meaningful interactions that encompassed critical discourse and reflection, storytelling, empathic relations, immersion in informal contexts, and collaborative inquiry in action.

“Ideally, higher education offers an *invitation* to think, to be, and to act in new and enhanced ways” (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012, p. 389). This figurative invitation to engage in new and personally meaningful ways was the thematic thread that tied creative acts with transformative learning in this study. Classroom acts of creativity aligned with Kaufmann and Beghetto’s (2009) definition of mini-c creativity, which conceptually ties an experience of transformative learning to the development of “novel and personally meaningful interpretation(s) of experiences, actions, and events” (p. 3). As students and teachers expand and broaden their

meaning perspectives or frames of reference, creativity inherent in the learning process is explored.

Kaufmann and Beghetto (2009) describe the dynamic nature of the learning process involved in mini-c creativity. They state that, “the category of mini-c creativity helps to broaden current conceptions of creativity by recognizing that intrapersonal insights and interpretations, which often live only within the person who created them, are still considered creative acts” (p. 4). Extending this concept further, the graduate courses offered opportunities to develop new tools, new outcomes, new relationships, new rules, new social practices, and new connections, all of which were forged through interactions with self, other, and the world (Ellsworth, 2006; Kleiman, 2008). Indeed, the meanings that were generated from an individual’s germ of an idea and that blossomed into an interpersonal web of common and unique lived experiences provided a novel view into the dynamics of transformative learning in the 21st century classroom.

In particular, I sought to examine how epistemic habits of mind were transformed as students revised the ways that they use knowledge. Rather than an examination of change in behaviour repertoire or quantity of knowledge, the focus of the study was on understanding how students and teachers made meaning in creative learning processes in graduate course contexts. To revisit the definition from the introduction, *epistemic habits of mind* fundamentally refer to the ways that people learn and the frames of reference that they bring to a teaching and learning situation, based on contextual factors such as experience, background, culture, and personality.

Transforming epistemic habits of mind involves a process that holds the potential to question, challenge, and revise the ways that knowledge is acquired and applied. In the two courses examined, multiple ways of knowing were embraced to marry the abstract with the concrete, the rational with the extra-rational, and the individual with the relational, as students

journeyed towards an articulated awareness by calling out previously unstated expectations and taken-for-granted assumptions. Movement towards “better justified” (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 3) meaning perspectives demanded increasingly open frames of reference to inspire deeply shifted patterns of knowing.

Transformative learning in practice aligned with a vision of creativity that resonates with the contemporary ideals proposed by O’Sullivan (2012), who wrote, “we need to reengage whole areas of creativity to honour holism and to honour ourselves as whole persons in relation to a cosmos and a biosphere” (p. 174). Towards the end of the coursework, a connectedness to making change at a global level developed and served as a meaningful passageway into future life and practice. For example, students in The Lived Experience of Disability course became committed to advocacy issues and equity issues for the disabled. Many students spoke in their interviews about their action items both in the classroom, in other courses in the program, and beyond the classroom in their professional practice. Students from the Professionals in Rural Practice course came with a vision to better society as a whole; this vision became a plan for actualization by the course’s end, as students ventured out into rural communities to make a difference where needed in health care, education, and ministry. Students explored complex problems that often transcended boundaries of their disciplines, as they delved into a range of ethical and moral dilemmas, developed a desire to advocate for particular populations, and gained an appreciation for the value of promoting ongoing physical, psychological, and social well-being. The meaningful connections expanded the definition of perspective transformation, as students engaged in acts of creative sense-making for social action.

Mezirow (2012) assists us in highlighting the important distinction made through participants’ engagement with change. As he explains, “an experience of perspective

transformation moves beyond life being *seen* from a new perspective; rather, it is *lived* from that perspective” (p. 88). The graduate courses set the tone for transformative learning; many students indicated that they experienced an intellectual shift in perspective. For some of the instructors and students, however, the experience of learning developed “a deep sense of enrichment, of becoming somehow brighter and better, more potent and alive” (Willis, 2012, p. 213). Students and instructors—in instances of transformative learning that were marked by either an intellectual or a whole-person change—were collectively energized, as lifelong learners, to broaden, extend, and expand their life and practice in new and meaningful ways. This existential approach to transformative learning provides a greater understanding of the significance of creative curricula at the deepest reaches of experience and extends the boundaries of perspective transformation to encompass meaningful, holistic-oriented practice.

Paradox and Pedagogical Design

The second research question asks: *What pedagogical design was in place to support the building of creative capacities as a transformative outcome?* One purpose of the study was to generate rich portraits of the classroom experience by characterizing the relationships and intersections between creative activity and transformative learning. It just so happens that, in making my own remote associations in the organization of this discussion chapter, I made connections between the pedagogical findings that emerged from my research and Palmer’s (2007) theoretical framework of paradox and pedagogical design. In an act of mini-c creativity that was particularly meaningful for me, these theoretical frames resonated deeply; they emerged as an accurate way of characterizing the practical essence of how teachers brought the transformative learning experience to life. Palmer, an adult educator and practitioner, writes and lectures extensively on topics of community, leadership, social action, and spirituality in

education. The theoretical traditions that inform his work align with a developing knowledge of self and community and a celebration of meaning-making, wholeness, and transformation.

Results of the study point to a pedagogical design embedded with paradox. According to Palmer (2007), paradox is a way of labelling the creative tension that “potentially lives and breathes in teaching and learning moments that heighten our awareness” (p. 77). Inducing these creative tensions in the classroom requires a paradoxical practice wherein the space is “(a) open and bounded, (b) hospitable and ‘charged,’ (c) invites the voice of the individual and the voice of the group, (d) honours the ‘little stories’ of the individual and the big stories of the disciplines and traditions, (e) supports solitude and surrounds it with the space of the community, and (f) welcomes both silence and speech” (Palmer, 2007, p. 76). These six paradoxes provide a framework for adequately describing the teaching and learning “space,” which Palmer describes as a complex web, comprising “the physical set-up and atmospheric tone of the room, the conceptual framework around the topics explored, the emotional ethos facilitated, and the ground rules that guide inquiry” (p. 76). The emergence of this framework of six paradoxes presented as a significant piece of the pedagogical puzzle in a close analysis of the results and in a patterned interpretation of the two context-sensitive classrooms of study.

The space should be open and bounded.

The notion of enabling constraints—a dialectic combination of task-specificity and orientation, alongside an engagement with potentiality—supported space that was simultaneously open and bounded. Enabling constraints were established in each course as a way of framing the lesson itself, as a means for encouraging emergent possibilities during classroom activities, and as an approach to draw knowledge from selfhood and the complex dynamics of the collective. According to Palmer (2007), “teaching and learning space are created by using a

question, a text, or a body of data that keeps us focused on the task at hand” (p. 76). To varying degrees the two courses featured both “mini lesson[s]” (RLK, EDUC 911, CO) that called upon resources and readings, and series of questions that oriented students in relevant, interesting directions that were “always guided towards the topic” (Palmer, 2007, p. 77). Students acknowledged the open, atmospheric tone and the freedom to explore ideas and develop interpretations. In their novel emergence, students often encountered unexpected moments of learning as they broached the unknown, unresolved, and understated aspects of their experience. The instructors facilitated this learning with some nuanced coaxing and orienting: “Many paths of discovery may take us to the surprises that always come with real learning.” (Palmer, 2007, p. 77). It was the creative combination of openness and boundedness that enabled a pedagogical space for transformative learning.

The space should be hospitable and “charged.”

Hospitable space is defined by Palmer (2007) as “inviting, safe, and trustworthy” (p. 77), as it offers a sense of security to the learner. Palmer suggests, “as boundaries hold us to difficult topics, additional reassurance is required” (p. 78). In the two courses, issues and insecurities surrounding sexuality, academic imposter syndrome, death, and disease were explored; in these explorations, a hospitable dynamic was an integral condition for encouraging vulnerable openness and awkward exposure of self in relation. One of the aspects of the course experience that seemed to surprise students the most was the shared realization that they were all dealing with similar challenges and anxieties as graduate students—in many ways, knowledge became unified through the human experience of academia.

In taking risks, students were electrified with “charged” classroom space. Palmer (2007) points out that, “[students] need to feel the risks inherent in pursuing the deep things of the world

or of the soul” (p. 78). Students in the study had an opportunity for growth or change if, and only if, they stepped out of their comfort zones. For many of the students, an academic experience with such charge and hospitality was both foreign and unfamiliar to them. Accustomed to being just another number in a traditional lecture hall, students found that these courses offered something they deemed as exceptional and extraordinary in nature, as their impressions developed in ways that were saturated with personal and professional valuing. There were several instances where students compared the small-group learning to the lecture scenarios. In the courses of study, students spoke about the ability to voice their concerns freely and honestly, the inherent impetus to live up to collectively generated classroom expectations, and their deep desire to contribute to creativity-in-the-making in the form of adult conversation, interactive activities, and community-based endeavours. Compare this unique academic experience to the limitations that students reported when they spoke about oversized, impersonal, textbook-based teaching and learning situations, where they didn’t even feel comfortable to raise their hand to speak. In the presentation of the stark contrasts between these two spaces, the importance and distinguishing features of a transformative classroom emerge: “Educators need to create the conditions under which learners are pushed toward their learning edge, where they are challenged and encouraged toward critical reflection” (Gravett & Peterson, 2009, p. 107).

The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group.

Palmer (2007) notes that, “learning does not happen when students are unable to express their ideas, emotions, confusions, ignorance, and prejudices. In fact, only when people can speak their minds does education have a chance to happen” (p. 78). With plenty of opportunities in both courses to do just that, students regarded such moments as paramount to engaging creative minds and inducing a state of transformative being. These moments allowed students to draw

from a place of authenticity to develop their creative interpretations, in an attempt to “speak [their] truth more thoughtfully” (Palmer, 2007, p. 78). Supported to seek out their truth, students and instructors had a sounding board for their individual contributions, and were able to bounce ideas off one another. These moments of honest sharing of self and the participants’ brave attempts at collective, constructed webs of thought involved considering unorthodox or alternative points of view. In collaborative acts of conversation, students engaged with decision making and consensus building in a generative process of individual and shared meaning-making. This generative process, regarded as a creative classroom activity by participants, occurred in a space where “the group’s voice [was] gathered and amplified, so that the group [could] affirm, question, challenge and correct the voice of the individual” (Palmer, 2007, p. 78).

A hermeneutic circle iteratively and uniquely layered the individual voice with the collective. The instructors played a significant role in facilitating this circle of interpretive sense making. Palmer (2007) explains that in “listening for emergent collective wisdom,” the teacher’s role is to be in tune with “what the group voice is saying and to play that voice back from time to time so the group can hear and even change its own collective mind” (p. 78). This reflective playback, which was modelled with heightened perception by instructors, reinforced the value of taking notice, and oriented students’ attention to the critical pieces of their learning. Through a critical and creative lens, students reflected with raised consciousness, connecting learning loops that reverberated with a shift in perspective, and named the seeking and speaking of their truths as transformative.

The space should honour the “little” stories of the individual and the big stories of the disciplines and traditions.

The storied self came in many forms in the two courses: themes of story and storytelling compelled creative and transformative experiences for students and teachers alike. As Ettling (2012) notes, “a frequently used strategy to build the transformative learning environment is the disclosure of one’s personal story in either oral or written form” (p. 540). Whether participants adopted the role of writer, listener, or orator, by drawing on their first person perspectives, they enabled original stories to emerge within the larger context of the various discipline areas. Palmer (2007) suggests there is a great deal of learning value in sharing stories of personal experiences so that we are not left “bloated with abstractions” but instead with “room [remaining] for the small but soulful realities that grow in our students’ lives” (p. 79). Furthermore, finding the connective threads from life and practice were often facilitated through shared story. Palmer explains this creative extension that assists us in meaning-making. He says, “stories that are universal and archetypal in depth frame our personal tales and help us understand what they mean” (p. 79).

Participants considered storytelling to be a creative act that enabled new and multiple ways of knowing and offered a teaching and learning approach that was vastly different from their other academic experiences. The emotional, the artistic, and the intuitive were brought together through story with a holistic approach to storytelling, one which “[called] on the whole person, using emotion, visual imagery, imagination, and metaphor to access individual experience and allow for the possibility of integration into something unexpected” (Tyler & Swartz, 2012, p. 462). Stories were part of the rhythm of teaching and learning in the two courses of study, with lessons that began in a richly situated context of old stories and which

developed from there with the making of new stories—stories that carried a theme of collaboration, as ideas and experiences creatively collided. Tyler and Swartz describe the essence of collaborative story making as a phenomenon able to initiate change, as was the case in the two creative classrooms of study: “The storytelling that perhaps has the most potency to foster transformative learning juxtaposes tidy, crystallized narratives with emergent, unplanned, and unfinished stories that merge with other stories” (p. 456).

The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community.

Time played a significant factor in supporting a space of solitude. In the two courses, there were common experiences of mutual respect for one another and for one’s inner self, and of significant relationships that developed within a relatively short period of time. Palmer (2007) suggests that, “learning demands solitude—not only in the sense that students need time alone to reflect and absorb but also in the deeper sense that the integrity of the student’s inner self must be respected” (p. 79). Participants (both instructors and students) in the Professionals in Rural Practice course echoed Palmer’s sentiment, observing that additional time might have afforded a deeper level of reflection. Nonetheless, students and instructors concurred that the course did offer elements of solitude, both in the free time given to reflect and absorb during the weekend retreat and, more importantly, in the valuing of personhood throughout the intensive two-week course.

Paradoxically, “learning also demands community—a dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged, and our knowledge expanded” (Palmer, 2007, p. 79). In the two courses of study, a community of practice emerged as a common theme related to transformative learning. Students demonstrated a commitment to their learning; there was an implicit understanding and a competent disposition among the group to

develop professional expertise. Additionally, an engrained sensibility that collaboration was both a valued and shared practice existed in and among the group. A community of practice was evident in the collective pursuit of the students' interests and in the active engagement of learning activities that enabled the building of intense relationships. As Palmer (2007) notes, "a learning community can help us see both barriers and openings to the truth that lives within us" (p. 80). Wenger (2006) endorses the value of the learning community, observing that it enables future practitioners to establish their repertoire by sharing experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems in a community of purposeful practice.

The space should welcome both silence and speech.

Transformative experiences were forged through a matrix of trustworthy moments that enabled reflection in relation. Palmer (2007) describes the nature of the teaching and learning opportunities provided in a paradoxical space of silence and speech: "Silence gives us a chance to reflect on what we have said and heard, and silence itself can be a sort of speech, emerging from the deepest parts of ourselves, of others, of the world" (p. 80). There were several instances where silence was embraced and upheld with interpretive meaning in the seconds that passed. In The Lived Experience of Disability course, silence was particularly profound as highly emotive and personal topics were explored. In one tutorial session, when Anne, the instructor, shared the news that a mentor had died, the silence that followed Anne's elegant expression of a life lost moved her to tears, and moved the students into a sombre space of silence. This expression served as a gentle reminder that, "words are not the sole medium of exchange in teaching and learning" (Palmer, 2007, p. 80). Surrounding these moments of profound silence with speech generated a deeply responsive relation and an opportunity for students to voice their concerns, experiences, and issues. In the two courses, collective conversations involved a unique

combination of silence and speech, and exhibited emergent creative pedagogy infused with transformative potential.

It is important to note that, despite all of these pedagogical conditions at play, the same course could potentially elicit a different experience of teaching and learning in a subsequent iteration. The human condition throws a wrench into any attempt to create a neat and tidy model of pedagogical design that would replicate similar experiences of transformative learning. The study of each course requires that the pedagogue acknowledge and understand the unique dynamics of learner, teacher, subject matter, and educational milieu (Schwab, 1973). These four commonplaces of curriculum come into play in the context of subsequent iterations of the Professionals in Rural Practice. For example, when this course runs in the fall term of 2013, it will be scheduled over 12 weeks, as opposed to two intensive weeks. Course organizers are aiming for an enrolment of 50 students, as compared to the group of 14 students in the previous iteration. In addition, there will be new instructors, different guest speakers and panelists, a different retreat destination, and new topics. These changes are likely to have an impact on the nature and quality of the teaching and learning experience, which would make for an interesting follow-up study. Although, as the data from the exploratory study indicated, there are pedagogical conditions in Dr. Rebecca Luce-Kapler's practice that she suggested could extend to classrooms of 40 to 50 students, with similar effects. In particular, the following key creative conditions could enable transformative learning in larger classrooms: (a) structuring the work with enabling constraints and mini lessons, to provide background and information; (b) having smaller groupings in which to create collectives; (c) providing space for interactive making; and (d) allowing for non-academic response. The two courses in the multiple-case study highlighted

the potential of these conditions to facilitate a community of trust and purposeful practice, in which transformation is likely to occur.

Palmer (2007) suggests that the pedagogical framework is not intended as a how-to guide, nor is it to be interpreted in a prescriptive or exhaustive manner. In examining these two courses, it became very clear that it mattered who the teachers and who the students were; any variation in the classroom players will have an impact on the dynamic nature and quality of the experience offered. The instructors accommodated the indeterminate, interrelated, and dynamic nature of the creative and transformative classrooms studied by making space for the notion that, “intense experiences are not always initiated by design” (Ettling, 2012, p. 542). Palmer (2007) also notes that the “six paradoxes add up to sound pedagogy—in theory” (p. 80). What my study uniquely contributes to the field of adult education and development is a view of pedagogical design in practice, an elaboration of Palmer’s framework in two graduate classrooms, and a discussion of a pedagogy that holds the creative tensions as a gateway for transformative learning.

The Transformation of Epistemic Habits of Mind

The third and final research question is, *In what ways did the teaching and learning events contribute to changing the ways that students acquire and use knowledge (the transformation of epistemic habits of mind)?* In the Professionals in Rural Practice course, interdisciplinary activities and collaborative interactions both contributed to a transformation of epistemic habits of mind. An interdisciplinary framework for learning activities facilitated interprofessional and intergenerational engagement, which greatly influenced the ways that knowledge was acquired and used. The new participatory roles that students developed came in relation within their team structures and were built on a professional experience continuum that

ranged from aspiring to seasoned professionals. These interprofessional team combinations were diverse, not only in discipline and levels of experience, but also in age, which was the unexpected intergenerational piece for many students. Intergenerational work was modelled for the student teams by the collaborative teaching team, opening up new creative learning possibilities by way of the thematic creative drivers for transformative learning: multiple ways of knowing, adult conversation, and the storied self.

Collaboration, as a relational way of knowing, was a meaningful teaching and learning medium for participants involved in the Professionals in Rural Practice course. Cranton (2006) regards a collaborative approach as central to fostering a transformative learning experience. She explains that, “as the [teaching and learning] relationship develops, [it] help[s] the student move away from dependency into a collaborative role” (Cranton, 2006, p. 170). Students were provided with plenty of opportunities to develop confidence in their interprofessional roles and to branch out in a self-directed manner, guided by personal and professional choices. In acts of shared decision-making, instructors collaborated in the design and development of the course. This collaborative effort was modelled for students in a shared pedagogical practice that conveyed a collaborative spirit of collegiality, respect, integrity, and sensitivity. This course experience transformed student and teacher conceptions of working together and building knowledge in academia: It broke down traditional barriers created by subject silos to bring people together in diverse creative acts that were both interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature.

In The Lived Experience of Disability course, reflective practice was carried out through discourse and journaling, two learning activities that enabled a perspective transformation of epistemic proportion. Students engaged in a process of reflection that involved realizing their

unstated assumptions, critically assessing their taken-for-granted points of view, and challenging norms and stereotypes in their rationalization of new perspectives, and ultimately, in their changed courses of action. Undertaking these new ways of knowing required students to approach knowledge building by asking various types of questions—that is, open-ended questions, probing questions, reflective questions, and questions for more information (Cranton, 2006)—with their mentors and in their tutorial sessions. As students developed new approaches and styles to enhance their understanding of disability and other related issues, they redefined and restructured problems and synthesized disparate parts to make sense of the whole.

The empathic relationship between client (mentor) and therapist (student) was a crucial course component for transforming epistemic habits of mind. Empathy held transformative potential as it required “a self-authorizing capacity to be warm, inclusive, emotionally available” along with a cultivated capacity to “hold conflicting viewpoints with appreciation and respect” (Taylor & Elias, 2012, p. 157). Students acknowledged that, by the end of the course, they were able to empathize with their clients. Listening to the stories of how they initially interacted with their mentors and sharing relational developments with their classmates in tutorials was a transformative thread in direct and vicarious ways.

Anne and the students held creative and social tensions in the pedagogical emergence of tutorials, which aligned with potential generative aspects of empathy and compassion in the course. As Taylor and Cranton (2012) write, “it is the shared experience of teaching and learning, wherein both teachers and learners, in concert with each other, learn to develop greater awareness of and understanding about themselves and others” (p. 570). It was an empathetic relationship that was dialectical in nature, one wherein the instructor and mentors learned from

their students, while their students learned from them, that transformed epistemic habits of mind (Cranton, 2006).

Revisiting Aims

Moustakas (1994) defines phenomenology as the description of what humans have experienced and how they have experienced it. Rather than providing explanations, my research study describes the essence of the lived experiences of the students and teachers in an examination of unique and common thematic patterns. Van Manen (1997) depicts the role of qualitative researcher in a probing examination of people's lived experience. He writes:

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence—in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive reliving and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (p. 36)

In conducting this qualitative research study, I was acutely aware of the fact that this research, which captures the essences of lived experience, embraces multiple truths, is value-laden, and carries shared meaning and knowledge among study participants. Additionally, I acknowledge that my own values and assumptions influenced the interpretations of the case studies. My overall aim in completing this research study, however, was not to generalize or provide explanation or a model for replication. My aim was for my work to deepen an understanding of richly situated classroom contexts and the phenomenon of creativity as a potential enabling condition for transformative learning. Additionally, my aim was to contribute to the gaps that exist in the scholarly literature on transformative learning. My research contribution to the field of adult education demonstrates links between creativity and transformative learning and provides practical cases of creative and transformative learning experiences, which could eventually be applied to a larger set of cases.

Future Research

There are many exciting possibilities that exist for future areas of research. As mentioned earlier in the discussion, an examination of subsequent iterations of the same courses, with different variables involved, would make for an interesting follow-up study. For example, it would be interesting to study another iteration of the Professionals in Rural Practice course, held at a different time of year, with a larger student enrolment and a more varied representation of disciplines. Additionally, conversations with students and teachers from the course raised specific, intriguing questions that could be explored in future research: (a) What is the maintenance mechanism for assessing how the coursework influences students in their professional realms? and (b) In what ways would a greater representation of professions influence the Professionals in Rural Practice course experience (engineers, biologists, planners, accountants, business development, pharmacists, food science, animal science)?

Similarly, examining The Lived Experience of Disability course in the context of the two-year occupational therapy program would make for an interesting study on the cohesiveness of curriculum aims, with collaboration, interprofessional practice, creativity, and transformative learning as possible desired outcomes. Again, my study of this course inspired questions for future investigation: (a) What are the elements of follow-up that are valuable in terms of transformative learning? and (b) In what ways do students' transformed perspectives manifest in change in action over the long term?

There was residual interest from several instructors regarding the long-term impact of the course experience on the students' professional careers and their trajectory of lifelong learning. My particular research interests slant towards a longitudinal study that would examine the transformative learning thread with further consideration of details of these courses not

discussed, such as the role played by assessment and evaluation as a complex factor influencing creativity in the classroom. Also, a study that follows the students through their entire program experience would yield important insights beyond case-specific activity.

Lastly, despite a clear indication from all courses that teachers experienced moments of transformative learning, the study primarily reported on the students' transformative journeys. Thus, a study that pays closer attention to the phenomenon of teaching as transformation would be fascinating; this an area worthy of further investigation, as it would contribute greater detail to an understanding of the inner landscape of the educator involved in the process of generating a dynamic classroom practice in higher education (Palmer, 2007).

Conclusions

I had a negative post-secondary course experience in the beginning of my PhD program that still troubles me. The first course of my program was, educationally speaking, the most mind- and body-numbing experience that I've had to date and moved me to seriously consider whether I would continue with the degree. In particular, there was nothing more disturbing and perhaps even maddening for me as an adult learner than being part of a classroom that made no room for the people in it. My experience informed my perspective—my father had recently passed away, I was in the final trimester of my first pregnancy, I had recently completed a master's degree, and I had a great deal of classroom experience in the arts—and yet the course did not make room for the any of this inner self. The learning could be described as empty, unfulfilling, and frustrating. I was determined after that course experience to pinpoint the reasons why that was such a horrible learning experience for me and for many others in my graduate cohort.

So why does any of this matter for the future of curriculum, teaching, and learning in higher education? Adults bring life and career experiences to their formal, post-secondary education. When students make the decision to return to graduate school, they do so to seek out relevant, contemporary, and meaningful experiences. Along with many of the participants involved in this study, I was drawn towards multi-literate, multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary programming that placed value on bringing the theoretical to life. For the participants involved, moving beyond the subject matter was regarded as vital to creating a dynamic and enduring experience, and involved striking a balance in developing the interpersonal and the intrapersonal. Adults want to be able to integrate their experiences and ideas together in new and meaningful ways that value their inner self in relation to others and to the world. These are educational ideals and values that were relevant in practice in the courses examined for this research study. The two classrooms of study offered exemplary cases of participatory, engaging, and creatively conceptualized activities that enabled student and teacher experiences of transformative learning.

The results of this study indicate that students and teachers deemed the nature of the interactions, as experienced in these courses, as valuable, necessary, and potentially life-altering. At the heart of these curricular experiences were opportunities to engage in creative ways, as creative potential resided in learning activities that supported the emergence of new and personally meaningful knowledge. In this study creativity was fundamentally different from other theoretical constructs describing similar phenomena, such as Vygotsky's (social) constructivist theory or Carper's fundamental ways of knowing, in that it provided the philosophical underpinnings that guided its operationalization and contextualization in classroom practice. The construct of mini-c creativity tied opportunities for self-understanding in a collective context with moments of novel possibility that resided in the potential lifelong

learning and making of little-c or Big-C creative contributions. In the two courses of study, there was a valuing of the creative process over product and an explicit desire, realized through a series of transformative learning activities, to make ubiquitous contributions that would transform the participants' future study, professional practice, and personal lives, both in academia and beyond.

Students began to use knowledge in different ways, as their conceptual understandings were challenged and alternative ways of knowing were considered. Revised perspectives led many students to approach their learning with both a heightened awareness and newly developed frames of reference; this approach often initiated a shift from habitual thinking to more inclusive, open, and discriminating patterns of knowing and being. An individual and collective willingness to move beyond the status quo to a place of transformative teaching and learning demanded that the human condition be carefully considered. In the two courses, exposing one's vulnerabilities and exploring the inner landscape of experience enabled creative engagement in a series of interpretive acts that involved generating, experimenting, collaborating, reflecting, and acting on novel ideas. Thus, the significance of these course experiences for teaching and learning at the tertiary level rests not only in the cases of transformative learning that are showcased, but also in the unique and common pedagogical threads from participant accounts that detail the interrelated and indeterminate lived experiences of human creativity that make transformative learning possible.

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APPENDIX A

Clearance from Queen's University General Research Ethics Board, Letters
of Information and Consent Forms

Exploratory Study: Combined Letter of Information and Consent Form

My name is Meagan Troop, and I am a PhD candidate at Queen's University conducting a study titled *Transforming Higher Education: Developing Conceptual Age Thinkers for 21st Century Society*. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

This study aims to explore curriculum choices manifest in the edification of graduate students through an examination of the change in conceptual thinking brought about by transformative learning practices. The first phase of this two-part study involved an auto-ethnography and served as a pilot study. As a graduate student enrolled in Contemporary Curriculum Theory (EDUC 911), I captured the dynamics of the classroom experience through a series of reflections, course writings, and creative representations. My experiences were examined through a lens of transformative learning theory to better understand the self in a collective context. I am now interested in having discussions with my four classmates for no longer than 2 hours, and on a separate occasion, with my instructor one-on-one for a duration no longer than thirty minutes. The topic of discussion will focus on the pedagogical conditions identified and characterized as being transformative in nature. I am interested to discuss the transformative elements of the class as a whole in order to gain a deepened perspective on this topic and I invite you to take part in that discussion.

There are no known risks to participation. Participation is voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time. You are not obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or which make you feel uncomfortable. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you may request to remove any and or all of your data.

Recording devices will be used, specifically Garage Band on my personal computer. No identifying information will be collected. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcription process. Confidentiality will be protected. Reports of the study will aggregate data from the discussions. Discussion notes will be stored on a password-protected computer on my personal computer and in accordance with Queen's policy, data will be retained for a minimum of five years. Data will either be destroyed after five years or retained indefinitely. If data is used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information. Only the researcher and the supervisory committee will have access to the data.

Research results will be presented at conferences and/or in open access publication relevant to the digital library community.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Meagan Troop at <m.troop@queensu.ca> or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at 613-533-6212 or <rena.upitis@queensu.ca>. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Your signature below indicates that you understand these provisions around confidentiality, and that anonymity will be protected to the extent possible. Your signature also indicates that you have read this Letter of Information and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Please sign one copy of this LOI/ Consent Form and return to Meagan Troop. Retain the second copy for your records.

Participant's Name

Date

Participant's Signature

E-mail Contact

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS

Dear [Professor's Name],

The following course [course name and code] that you teach has been selected for a dissertation study, entitled *Creative Transformations: Developing Conceptual Thinkers for 21st Century Society*, which is being conducted by Meagan Troop at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. In your position as the professor of this class, you are invited to participate in a study that will highlight your course of study and your teaching. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

The aim of this letter is two-fold. First, it will describe the purpose and method of the research study. Second, it will request that you agree, in writing, to participate in the study. Please indicate your decision to participate in any or all aspects of the study on the Consent Form and return it to Meagan Troop before the course begins.

This study is investigating exemplary cases of classroom teaching and learning in higher education. More specifically, this research will examine student and teacher transformations that are initiated through creative processes. I will examine the dynamics and complexities at play in your graduate level course to determine the ways in which creativity and transformative learning are experienced in tandem.

Multiple forms of data will be collected. Teaching and learning events will be captured through a naturalistic observation approach, which will involve the researcher sitting in on half of the classes and taking notes. These researcher field notes will provide data that will help to characterize the students' creative processes and capture rich details of the interactions between students and between students and professors.

The research method employed in this study also requires that you complete a creativity checklist to determine components of creativity present in the classroom context. This checklist will be completed mid-way through the course and will take 15 minutes to complete. After the course is completed, an individual interview will be conducted at a location of your choice and will last a maximum of one hour. Professors will be requested to bring some of their teaching notes, course outline, and assignments to be used as prompts in the interview. These documents will provide a better understanding of the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological underpinnings of the courses of study. The interview will be audio recorded. The taped interview will be transcribed and then the recording will be destroyed. All electronic files will be password protected and data will be encrypted. None of the data will contain your name, or the identity of your place or work. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. A pseudonym will replace your name to protect your identity. You will not be identified in any way if the results are published, and nothing will connect you to your responses. All data will be stored in a secure computer file, accessible only to me and to my supervisory committee. In accordance with Queen's policy, data will be retained for a minimum of five years.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable or uncomfortable. You may withdraw at any time without negative consequences, and you may request the removal of part or all of your data from the study. If you decide to withdraw, your course will not be used as part of my dissertation study. The results of this study may be shared with academics and practitioners through the writing of reports, papers, and conference presentations. If the data are use for secondary analysis they will contain no identifying information.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Meagan Troop at <m.troop@queensu.ca> or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at 613-533-6212 or <rena.upitis@queensu.ca>. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Yours sincerely,

Meagan Troop
PhD. Candidate

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Dear Student,

The following course [course name and code] has been selected for a dissertation study, entitled *Creative Transformations: Developing Conceptual Thinkers for 21st Century Society*, which is being conducted by Meagan Troop at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. In your position as a graduate student in this class, you are invited to participate. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen's policies.

The aim of this letter is two-fold. First, it will describe the purpose and method of the research study. Second, it will request that you agree, in writing, to participate in the study. Please indicate your decision to participate in any or all aspects of the study on the Consent Form and return it to Meagan Troop.

This study is investigating exemplary cases of classroom teaching and learning in higher education. More specifically, this research will examine student and teacher transformations that are initiated through creative processes. I will examine the dynamics and complexities at play in your graduate level course to determine the ways in which creativity and transformative learning are experienced in tandem.

Multiple forms of data will be collected. Teaching and learning events will be captured through a naturalistic observation approach, which will involve the researcher sitting in on half of the classes and taking notes. These researcher field notes will provide data that will help to characterize the students' creative processes and capture rich details of the interactions between students and between students and professors.

The research method employed in this study also requires that you complete a creativity checklist to determine components of creativity present in the classroom context. This checklist will be completed mid-way through the course and will take 15 minutes to complete. Near the end of the course, you will be asked to complete a learning activities survey (LAS), which will require you to identify classroom activities and interactions that relate to experiences of transformative learning. The LAS will require 15 minutes to complete. Five students from your class will be invited to provide interviews to elaborate on the creative transformations named in the survey portion of the study.

The individual interview will be conducted at a location of your choice and will last a maximum of one hour. The interview will be audio recorded. Students will be asked to bring along work generated by classroom activities and assignments to be used as prompts to generate more detailed, descriptive participant responses.

The taped interview will be transcribed and then the recording will be destroyed. All electronic files will be password protected and data will be encrypted. None of the data will contain your name, or the identity of your place or work. Your confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. A pseudonym will replace your name to protect your identity. You will not be identified in any way if the results are published, and nothing will connect you to your responses.

All data will be stored in a secure computer file, accessible only to me and to my supervisory committee. In accordance with Queen's policy, data will be retained for a minimum of five years.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable or uncomfortable. You may withdraw at any time without negative consequences, and you may request the removal of part of your data from the study, namely the survey response and interview data. At no point will you or your fellow students be informed as to who is part of the study. The nature of the class or your interactions with one another will not change, nor will your grade in the course be impacted based on whether you participate in this study or not. The results of this study may be shared with academics and practitioners through the writing of reports, papers, and conference presentations. If the data are used for secondary analysis they will contain no identifying information.

Any questions about study participation may be directed to Meagan Troop at <m.troop@queensu.ca> or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at 613-533-6212 or <rena.upitis@queensu.ca>. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Please sign one copy of the *Consent Form* and return it to the class teacher. Retain the second copy of each for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Meagan Troop
PhD. Candidate

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

I agree to participate in the study entitled *Creative Transformations: Developing Conceptual Thinkers for 21st Century Society*, a dissertation study directed by Meagan Troop and conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Please initial all that you agree to:

- I have read and retained the *Letter of Information* and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I give my consent to complete the creativity checklist.
- I give my consent to complete the learning activities survey (LAS).
- I give my consent to participate in an audio-taped individual interview.
- I will not disclose the identities of other students and the instructor(s) participating in the course.
- I have read and signed one copy of the *Consent Form*. I have returned the signed copies and retained one copy of each for my records.
- I understand that only the research team will have access to data and that participants' names will be coded and data will be encrypted. The researcher will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Should I decide to withdraw from the study, I may request that all data associated with my participation be destroyed.
- I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of this study in a dissertation and in related academic papers.
- I understand that I may request a summary of the research. In such case, the research summary should be sent to: _____ (e-mail address of participant).
- I am aware that any questions about study participation may be directed to Meagan Troop at 613.531-0167 or m.troop@queensu.ca or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at (613) 533-6212 or rena.upitis@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS *CONSENT FORM* AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Meagan Troop. Retain the second copy for your records.

Student's name (Please Print): _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

CONSENT FORM FOR INSTRUCTORS

I agree to participate in the study entitled *Creative Transformations: Developing Conceptual Thinkers for 21st Century Society*, a dissertation study directed by Meagan Troop and conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Please initial all that you agree to:

- I have read and retained the *Letter of Information*, and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I agree to complete the creativity checklist.
- I agree to participate in an audio-taped individual interview.
- I will not disclose the identities of students participating in the study.
- I have read and signed one copy of the *Consent Form*. I have returned the signed copies and retained one copy of each for my records.
- I understand that only the research team will have access to data and that participants' names will be coded and data will be encrypted. The researcher will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Should I decide to withdraw from the study, I may request that all data associated with my participation be destroyed.
- I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of this study in a dissertation and in related academic papers.
- I understand that I may request a summary of the research. In such case, the research summary can be sent to: _____ (e-mail address of participant).
- I am aware that any questions about study participation may be directed to Meagan Troop at 613.531-0167 or m.troop@queensu.ca or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at (613) 533-6212 or rena.upitis@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS *CONSENT FORM* AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Meagan Troop. Retain the

second copy for your records.

Professor's name (Please Print): _____

Course Name: _____

Professor's
Signature: _____ Date:

AMENDED LETTER OF INFORMATION/CONSENT FORM FOR INSTRUCTORS

Dear Instructors,

As you will recall, I recently conducted a research study that examined the following course, “Professionals in Rural Practice” for my dissertation entitled Creative Transformations: Developing Conceptual Thinkers for 21st Century Society. In your position as a professor of this class, you consented to a series of classroom observations, a survey, and an interview with the aim of highlighting the course dynamics and your teaching. This research study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen’s policies.

I greatly value your significant contributions to my research study. My findings indicate that your course is exemplary as it reflects relevant, current, and reflective practices in adult education and development. Additionally, the student and teacher experiences highlight a community of practice centred on experiential and collaborative interactions, all of which served as enablers for building creative capacities and for transforming perspectives. **With this in mind, the purpose of this letter is to make an additional request that the University, the course, and your name and the associated findings be identified in my dissertation and in any other academic endeavours, such as published papers or conference presentations.**

If in agreement, the data will contain your name, the course name, and the University (three levels of consent). I do not foresee any risks in disclosing your identity. Research summaries will be provided prior to the public release of any findings. Students’ identities will remain protected and confidentiality maintained to the extent possible. The purpose of the additional release of identification is to: (1) highlight the nuanced abilities of the instructors involved, (2) feature the exceptional course experiences offered, and (3) identify a post-secondary institution offering exemplary curricular experiences that foster creative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary opportunities.

This amendment to my research study has been reviewed by GREB. Any questions about this additional request may be directed to Meagan Troop at <m.troop@queensu.ca> or to my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at 613-533-6212 or <rena.upitis@queensu.ca>. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

Please initial all that you agree to:

- I have read and retained the *Letter of Information/ Consent Form* and the purpose of the additional request is explained to my satisfaction.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that the identities of students participating in the study will not be disclosed.

- I understand that only the research team will have access to data.
- I agree to disclose my name for research purposes only.
- I agree to disclose the course name for research purposes only.
- I agree to disclose the name of the University for research purposes only.
- I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of this study in a dissertation, in related academic papers, and in conference proceedings.
- I have read and signed one copy of the combined *Letter of Information* and *Consent Form*. I have returned the signed copy and retained one copy for my records.
- I am aware that any questions about this amendment to the original study may be directed to Meagan Troop at 613.531-0167 or m.troop@queensu.ca or my supervisor Dr. Rena Upitis at (613) 533-6212 or rena.upitis@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS COMBINED *LETTER OF INFORMATION/CONSENT FORM* AND I AGREE TO THE ADDITIONAL REQUEST.

Please sign one copy of this Combined Letter of Information/ Consent Form and return to Meagan Troop. Retain the second copy for your records.

Professor's name (Please Print): _____

Course Name: _____

Professor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Exploratory Study: Questions for Discussions

Exploratory Study: Questions for Discussions

Transformation

- Now that the course is over, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you recall the course?
- Did your values change as a result of this course? How so
- Did your expectations change as a result of this course? How so?
- Did your beliefs (about curriculum, higher education, creative processes, academic writing etc.) change as a result of this course? How so?
 - a. In what ways did your beliefs manifest in the process of the course?
 - b. In what ways did they manifest in the products of the course?
- What specific experiences triggered changes in perspective? In what ways did these transformative moments present themselves (prompts: imaginative, creative, artistic, logical, embodied ways of knowing...)
- Were there opportunities for holistic transformation to occur? What did holistic transformation look like?

Pedagogical Considerations

- What pedagogical conditions invited transformative learning? prompts: supported, encouraged...describe how these transformative moments evolved from the teaching and learning space/dynamic.
- Describe how the pedagogical relation played a role in transformation. (tone of teaching, dialectic between student and teacher, collaborative spirit, challenging and moving beyond)

Creative Transformations-How do they define creativity? (Show them how I have defined creativity...concept map)

- Did creative acts lead to transformative learning? In what ways did this happen?
- How did creativity facilitate personal transformation?
- How did creativity facilitate group transformation?
- Tell me about a time when you experienced a transformative learning moment. Can it be attributed or connected to creativity?

Curricular Design and Development:

For Instructor Only:

- Did you intentionally frame the course with transformative learning theory in mind? Describe.
- Did you incorporate specific learning activities to encourage creativity? If so, could you please name and elaborate on these curricular decisions.
- Please name and describe a learning experience that initiated a process of transformation for you. What did that process look like? (prompts: stages of transformation)

- Would you do anything differently next time?

For Students Only:

- Describe how moments of transformation led to a reframing of experience. Describe the before and after.

In what ways do you expect these transformations to shape your future directions at University?

APPENDIX C

Learning Activities Survey

LEARNING ACTIVITIES SURVEY, Adapted from King (2009)

This survey will help me to learn more about your experiences as adult learners. Only with your help can I learn more about transformative learning in a classroom context. The survey only takes a short time to complete, and your responses will be anonymous and confidential. Thank you for being part of this project; your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

1. Thinking about your learning experiences in this course, check off any statements that may apply.

- a. I had an experience that caused me to question the way I normally act.
- b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles. (Examples of social roles include how a professional should act.)
- c. As I questioned my ideas, I realized I no longer agreed with my previous beliefs or role expectations.
- d. As I questioned my ideas, I realized I still agreed with my beliefs or role expectations.
- e. I realized that other people questioned their beliefs.
- f. I thought about acting in a different way from my usual beliefs and roles.
- g. As I questioned my ideas, I grew uncomfortable with conventional social expectations.
- h. I tried out new roles so that I would become more comfortable or confident in them.
- i. I tried to figure out a way to adopt new ways of acting.
- j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt new ways of acting.
- k. I anticipated how others might react to my new behaviours.
- l. I took action and adopted new ways of acting.
- m. I do not identify with any of the statements above.

2. Since you have been taking this course, do you believe you have experienced a time when you realized that your values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations had changed?

- Yes. *If "Yes," please go to question #3 and continue the survey.*
- No. *If "No," please go to question #6 to continue the survey.*

3. Briefly describe what happened.

4. Which of the following influenced the change? (Check all that apply).

Was it a person who influenced the change? Yes No

If "Yes," was it...(check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another student's support | <input type="checkbox"/> A challenge from your teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A challenge from another student | <input type="checkbox"/> Your teacher's support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A member of your IP team | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your entire IP team | |

Was it part of a class activity or assignment that influenced the change?

Yes No

If "Yes," what was it? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class/group projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbally discussing your concerns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing about your concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Term papers/essays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend Retreat to Picton |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nontraditional structure
of a course | <input type="checkbox"/> Class activity/exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep, concentrated thought | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal reflection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal learning assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Assigned readings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IP team work | <input type="checkbox"/> Interprofessional Interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Was it a significant change in your life that influenced the change?

Yes No

If "Yes," what was it? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth/adoption of a child | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death of a loved one | |

5. Thinking back to when you first realized that your views or perspective had changed, what did your being in this course have to do with the experience of change?

6. Would you characterize yourself as one who usually thinks back over previous decisions or past behaviour? Yes No

Would you say that you frequently reflect upon the meaning of your studies for yourself, personally? Yes No

7. Which of the following have been significant for you as a part of your learning experience in this course? (Please check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Another student's support | <input type="checkbox"/> A challenge from your teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your classmates' support (entire class) | <input type="checkbox"/> Your teacher's support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class/group projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbally discussing your concerns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing about your concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Term papers/essays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal journal | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-evaluation in a course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nontraditional structure of a course | <input type="checkbox"/> Class activity/exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deep concentrated thought | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal reflection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal learning assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Assigned readings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Team work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field trip | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Which of the following occurred while you have been taking this course?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of a job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth/adoption of a child | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation | <input type="checkbox"/> Death of a loved one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other significant life events: _____ | |

8. Gender: Male Female Other

9. Marital Status: Single Married Partner
 Separated Widowed

10. Race. White Aboriginal
 Black Chinese
 Filipino Japanese
 Korean Non-North American

Indigenous

<input type="checkbox"/> South Asian/East Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> South East Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Non White West Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Non White North African
<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Non White Latin American
<input type="checkbox"/> Person of Mixed Origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

11. Current major:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theology | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences (Education, Psychology,
Sociology) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities | |

12. Prior Education:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school education | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

13. How many semesters have you been enrolled at this institution?

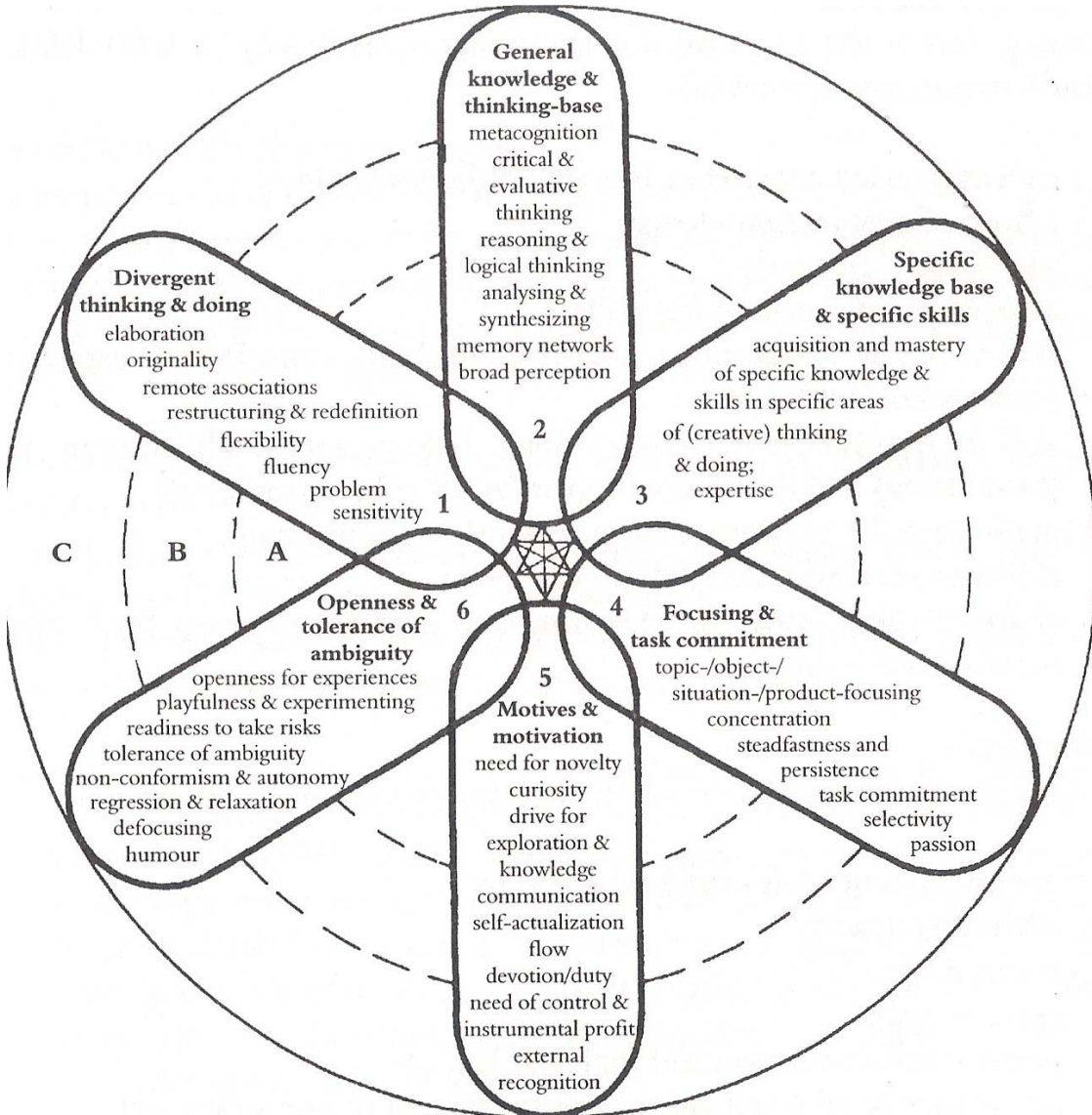
14. Age: Below 21 21-24 25-29 30-39
- 40-49 50-59 60-69 Over 70

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

APPENDIX D

Observation Instruments

Observation Instruments

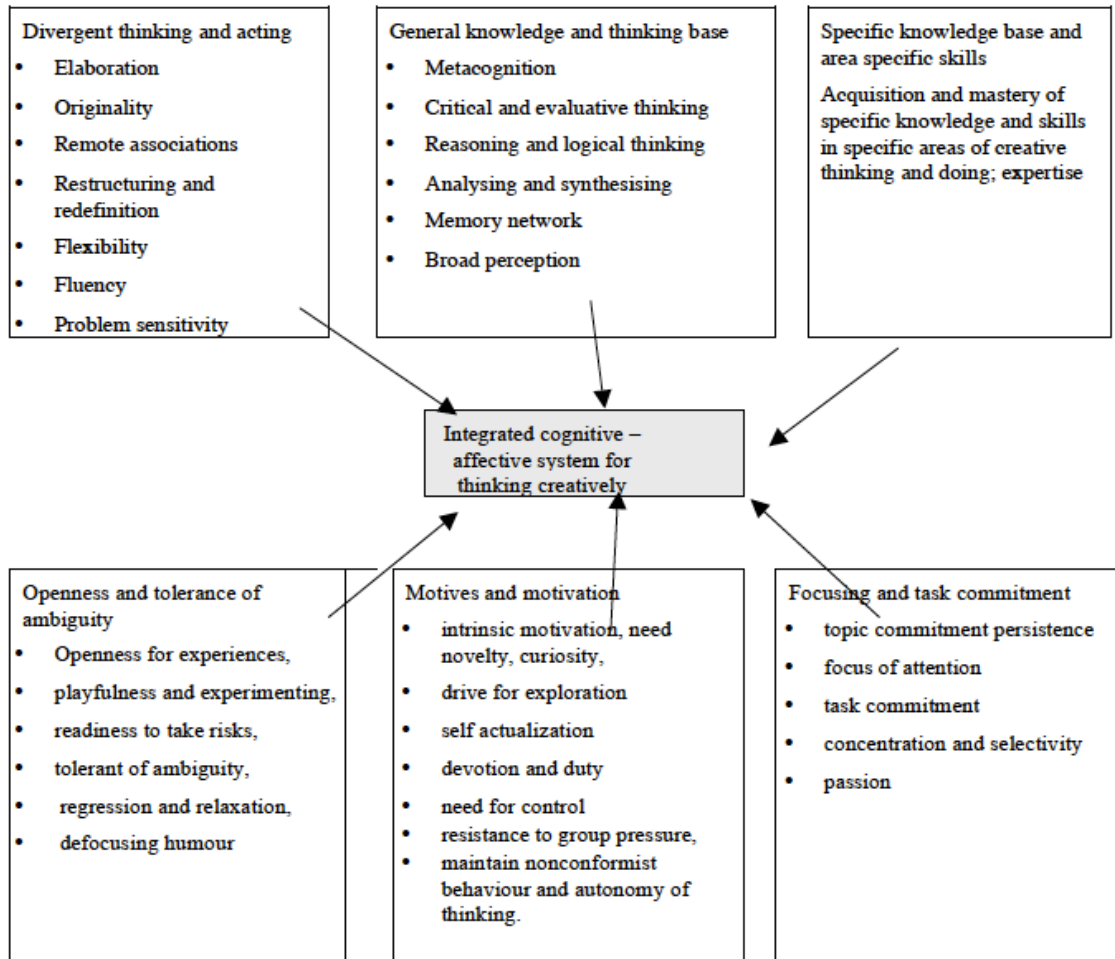


Urban's (2000) Componential Model of Creativity

A: individual dimension/environment

B: group or local dimension/ environment

C: societal, historical, global dimension/ environment



Munro (n.d.) Components and Sub-components of Creativity

APPENDIX E

Original Teacher Self-Improvement Checklist

How often does your teaching help students	Never	Not often	Some times	Often	Al-ways
Divergent thinking : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach or support thinking activity that could be called divergent thinking ? • show a sensitivity to and value problems, questions raised by students ? • make students aware of problems ? • make time available for more than one attempt at solution to problems ? • examine topics from different aspects ? • show a valuing of multiple ways of solving problems? • use open ended vs ill-structured problems for learning ? • encourage students to question ideas at a number of levels and generate their own problems ? • encourage students to explore ideas from different perspectives ? • positively value ideas from all perspectives ? • encourage individuality in understanding ? • model how to think and learn creatively by teachers ? • give students the opportunity to solve problems and learn collaboratively ? • give students the opportunity to explore ideas ? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General knowledge and thinking base : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take account of and build on student interest in what they learn ? • use good questioning skills to develop new topics ? • show that the teachers have a great passion for their subjects ? • require students to take a broad focus on the topics they are taught ? • use different sense channels ? • target systematic analysis and synthesising of problems, topics, facts ? • encourage inductive and deductive reasoning ? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific knowledge base and specific skills : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage students to draw on their individual interests and experiences when learning new topics ? • encourage students to pursue in-depth studies for topics being covered ? • provide opportunities for research projects and self directed learning ? • value expertise? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focusing and task commitment : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster a community of purpose in the classroom ? • value longer occupation by students in tasks that have a special interest ? • allow students to complete tasks in a variety of ways ? • help students think about how they focus ? • foster enquiry based learning ? • encourage students to pursue a passion in learning ? • encourage task commitment ? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motives and motivation : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage divergence of thought ? • provide genuine feedback for high level outcomes ? • allow intrinsic motivation ? • balance formal curriculum outcomes and personal interest knowledge ? • support natural curiosity and strive for knowledge ? • allow opportunities for self determined discovery learning ? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Openness and tolerance of ambiguity : To what extent does the teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to reflect on ideas don't seem to fit, take risks ? • Encourage students to welcome / value ambiguity ? • Develop students' ability to self reflect ? • Allow students to persevere and complete tasks ? • Encourage interdisciplinary learning ? • Encourage fantasy and imagination ? • Value the individuality and uniqueness of each person ? • Allow students to make errors and mistakes during regular learning ? • Encourage students to celebrate achievements ? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Munro (*n.d.*) Checklist for Instructor and will be adapted for students to complete: Evaluates the extent to which teachers have fostered conditions of creativity.

APPENDIX F

Creativity Checklist for Professors

Creativity Checklist for Professors, from Munro (n.d.)

How often does your teaching enable creativity? Please respond to the following components of creativity in each section of the checklist.	Never	Not Often	Some times	Often	Always
Divergent thinking: To what extent does the teaching:					
● teach or support thinking activity that could be called divergent thinking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● show a sensitivity to and value problems and questions raised by students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● make students aware of problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● make time available for more than one attempt at solutions to problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● examine topics from different aspects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● show a valuing of multiple ways of solving problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● use open ended vs ill-structured problems for learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage students to question ideas at a number of levels and generate their own problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage students to explore ideas from different perspectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● positively value ideas from all perspectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage individuality in understanding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● model how to think and learn creatively by teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● give students the opportunity to solve problems and learn collaboratively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● give students the opportunity to explore ideas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General knowledge and thinking base: To what extent does the teaching:					
● take account of and build on student interest in what they learn?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● use good questioning skills to develop new topics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● show that the teachers have a great passion for their subjects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● require students to take a broad focus on the topics they are taught?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● use different sense channels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● target systematic analysis and synthesizing of problems, topics, and facts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage inductive and deductive reasoning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific knowledge base and specific skills: To what extent does the teaching:					
● encourage students to draw on their individual interests and experiences when learning new topics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage students to pursue in-depth studies for topics being covered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● provide opportunities for research projects and self directed learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● value expertise?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus and task commitment: To what extent does the teaching:					
● foster a community of purpose in the classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● value longer occupation by students in tasks that have a special interest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● allow students to complete tasks in a variety of ways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● help students think about how they focus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● foster enquiry based learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage students to pursue a passion in learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage task commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motives and motivation: To what extent does the teaching:					
● encourage divergence of thought?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● provide genuine feedback for high level outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● allow intrinsic motivation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● balance formal curriculum outcomes and personal interest knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● support natural curiosity and strive for knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● allow opportunities for self determined discovery learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Openness and tolerance of ambiguity: To what extent does the teaching:					
● encourage students to reflect on ideas that don't seem to fit or take risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage students to welcome/value ambiguity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● develop students' ability to self reflect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● allow students to persevere and complete tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage interdisciplinary learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● encourage fantasy and imagination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- value the individuality and uniqueness of each person?
- allow students to make errors and mistakes during regular learning?
- encourage students to celebrate achievements?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX G

Creativity Checklist for Students

Creativity Checklist for Students, from Munro (n.d.)

This survey is designed to determine the extent to which teaching in the “Professionals in Rural Practice” course enables creativity. Please reflect on the six components of creativity.

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't Know
(1) Divergent thinking: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) support thinking activity that could be called divergent thinking?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) show a sensitivity to and value problems and questions raised by students?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) make students aware of problems?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) make time available for more than one attempt at solutions to problems?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) examine topics from different perspectives?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) show a valuing of multiple ways of solving problems?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) use real-world problems for learning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) encourage students to generate their own problems?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) encourage students to explore ideas from different perspectives?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) positively value ideas from all perspectives?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) encourage individuality in understanding?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) model how to think creatively?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) give students the opportunity to learn collaboratively?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) give students the opportunity to explore ideas?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) General knowledge and thinking base: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) take account of and build on student interest in what they learn?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) use good questioning skills to develop new topics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) show that the teachers have a great passion for their subjects?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) require students to take a broad focus on the topics they are taught?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) use different sense channels?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) target systematic analysis of problems, topics, and facts?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) target synthesizing of problems, topics, and facts?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) encourage inductive reasoning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) encourage deductive reasoning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Specific knowledge base and specific skills: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) encourage students to draw on their individual interests and experiences when learning new topics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) encourage students to pursue in-depth studies for topics being covered?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) provide opportunities for research projects		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) provide opportunities for self directed learning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) value expertise of guest speakers and professionals?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Focus and task commitment: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) foster a community of purpose in the classroom?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) value longer occupation by students in tasks that have a special interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) allow students to complete tasks in a variety of ways?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) help students think about how they focus?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) foster enquiry-based learning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) encourage students to pursue a passion in learning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) encourage task commitment?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Motives and motivation: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) encourage divergence of thought?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) provide constructive feedback for high-level outcomes?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) allow intrinsic motivation?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) balance formal curriculum outcomes and personal interest knowledge?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) support natural curiosity and strive for knowledge?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) allow opportunities for self-determined discovery learning?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) Openness and tolerance of ambiguity: To what extent does the teaching...							
a) encourage students to reflect on ideas that don't seem to fit?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b)	encourage students to take risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	encourage students to welcome and value ambiguity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	develop students' ability to self reflect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	allow students to persevere and complete tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	encourage interdisciplinary learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	encourage fantasy and imagination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h)	value the individuality and uniqueness of each person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i)	allow students to make errors and mistakes during regular learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j)	encourage students to celebrate achievements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX H

Interview Questions for Instructors

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS

- What was your role in the design and development of the course?
- Describe the experience of being part of an interdisciplinary team. In what ways has your instruction changed as a result of working on this team?
- What has been surprising for you as an instructor in this course?
- What do you think has been surprising/eye-opening for your students?
- What were your expectations about the course prior to the start? In what ways were your expectations about the course changed, challenged, and/or confirmed during the course? After the course?
- In what ways do you think you have contributed to influencing a change in students' perspective about rural life and practice?
- Please name a time when it was made clear that students' perspectives had been broadened or transformed as a result of the course material? As a result of the interactions amongst students? Amongst instructors?
- Were there aspects of your teaching that you think facilitated an opportunity for students to think creatively? What learning activity, interaction, or perhaps conversation was linked to such a moment?
- Please recall a time in the class where students demonstrated a synthesis of ideas? A collaborative approach to their work? A restructuring and redefinition of sorts? An ethereal connection to the class activity? How did these moments manifest themselves?
- What opportunities were provided to enable students the ability to play, experiment, explore, and test out ideas?

APPENDIX I

Interview Questions for Students

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Now that the course is over, what is the first thing that comes to mind when you recall your learning experience?
- Many come to graduate school with the notion that the master's or PhD program will change you as a person... was that the case for you having taken this course?
- What specific learning activities from the course influenced a change in your perspective (show them their Transformative Learning survey responses with specific activities/ events that they checked off). Please expand on your selections from your Transformative Learning survey.
- What specific experiences in this course triggered changes in perspective? Did these changes in thinking occur in the context of classroom activities, interactions, and conversations? (look at/discuss journal and assignments)
- Could you please name a concept or theme that you explored and reflected on extensively throughout the course. Did this process lead to a change in viewpoint(s)?
- What will you do differently because of this change/ these changes?
- How did your core values or beliefs about your profession/area of interest change as a result of this course? How so?
- In what ways did this course challenge assumptions that you had made previous to taking it?
- Was there anything during the course that surprised you?
- Thinking back to one of the times that your views or perspectives had changed as a result of this course:
 - a. When did you first realize that this change had happened? Was it while it was happening, mid-change, or once it had entirely happened (retrospective)?
 - b. What made you aware that this change had happened?
 - c. What did your being in this course have to do with it?
 - d. What did you do about it?
 - e. How did/ do you feel about the change?
- Were there opportunities to think “outside of the box?” If so, what did those situations look like?
- Please describe a time in the course when you were able to generate an idea to problem solve about an issue in an interdisciplinary way. (e.g. consideration for legal issues, political issues, social (justice) issues, ethical issues, historical factors etc.) Did this happen on an individual basis, in the context of conversation...what was the impetus?
- Did group interactions (IP team work) play a significant role in looking at things differently? How so?
- How were associations between disciplines facilitated in this course?
- In what ways were topics of the course dealt with on an emotional level?
- Was there anything in this course that appealed to your senses or intuition more than your logic?

- How did you spend your afternoons and evenings following the morning sessions? (intensive 2 week course) How did your ideas/ thinking evolve in the time that you had to reflect each afternoon and evening?
- Please describe a moment from the interprofessional interviews that elicited a fresh perspective or a new way of thinking?
- In what ways has your perspective about rural life change as a result of the retreat to Picton? How did this part of the course impact you? Can you tell me about one of these transformative moments in greater detail?

APPENDIX J

Data Coding Schema, Data Transcripts, Case Studies, and Data Tables

Interviews:

(Maren, RHBS830, I)

Maren= participant's pseudonym "Maren"

RHBS 830= indicates course code

I = interview data source

Classroom Observations

(Rebecca, EDUC911, CO)

Rebecca=participant name

EDUC911= course code

CO=classroom observation data source

Journals

(Norman, OT825, J)

Norman=participant's pseudonym "Norman"

OT825=course code

J=journal data source

Additional data source codes:

D=Discussion

FN= Field Notes

CN=Class Notes from Educ-911

CC=Creativity Checklist

LAS= Learning Activities Survey

Pseudonyms for EDUC 911

Clara

Bonnie

Lucia

Rhiannon

Pseudonyms for RHBS 830

Sally

Charlie

Andrea

Rebecca

Brian

Sarah

Naomi

Abby

Pseudonyms for OT825

Students:

Norman

Jessica

Phil

Peggy
Maren
Vanessa
Charlotte
Katie
Kara

Mentors:
Alexandra
George
Bob

Interview with Anne O' Riordan

Course: The Lived Experience of Disability

Interview Date: Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Location: Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada

Time: 45 minutes

M: Could you please provide me with some context for your role in the Lived Experience of Disability course?

A: So traditionally, the OT program had run a disability course, theory and experience together. Back in the '90s, they would have guest speakers come into a class, people with disabilities, and speak about their lived experiences. And that would take the form of maybe a one-hour lecture. So around about 1999, they decided maybe that wasn't the optimal way for students to learn about peoples' live and at that time, I was working part time at the school, so they said, Anne, are you interested in developing something that would be a separate experience for the students called the lived experience of disability and I said yes. I was nervous because I wasn't really sure what they wanted and it was up to me to design something and go with it. So I had some help from doctor Jameson at the time who was doing some of the disability teaching and I developed an outline and brought in reflective journaling and spent a lot of time that first year just trying to find volunteers, we called people with disabilities volunteers back then, to match the students with. It was always two students to one volunteer, so that was the same. But I wasn't really sure of how to implement it, I just went with my own ideas and after the first year of running the program, I realized I needed more insight about how to do this properly. So I approached three different people who had volunteered that year and asked if they would form an advisory committee with me. So that's what happened for year two. So we met together, went over how the project had been structured and then made some decisions about how to make it better and provided more documentation for guidelines for volunteers and for the students and so on.

M: So this had not been really modeled off of any other program that was already in existence at another university or institution?

A: No.

M: Do you know of any other courses that are similar?

A: There are some others. The health mentorship project in Jefferson health mentorship program in Philadelphia. It takes students and in an inter-professional way matches them with mentors who meet with them over a period of a couple of years. That's the be-all and end-all, but that came later. This was done as a project, not as a course, initially. And it was considered one element of the student's professional portfolio, the evidence of their learning, that they finished off by the fourth year, this is in the four year undergraduate program at the time. I was responsible for organizing it, conducting the tutorials, meeting the mentors and orienting them, so I met each of them in their home and then match in the students and reviewing their journals and providing an evaluation for that component. And at that time I was also grading the portfolios as a whole, so that was just part of it. And the journal really was the evidence that they would include in their portfolio.

M: In your vision for future iterations of this course, do you think that there will ever be an opportunity to have more interaction with the mentors, more than the six hours?

A: Initially, it was 8 hours and that just seemed to be difficult to fit into the time period and the value of the project according to the number of hours the students put into it. In a half-credit course, I think the students would love more time but I really am careful to try to balance that with the mentor's ability to spend the time and I'd rather have a short, rich learning opportunity where the students know they've got to do something within six hours than to spread it out too much and have it lose its impact, I think. So ideally it would be great to have more time. It would be great to have the students either continue throughout a year and have regular intervals with the visit and time to reflect. It would be great to have the students come back and meet the mentor again in the second year of the program and have something similar but with much more experience. It would be great to have the students meet multiple mentors and learn from the diversity and that's why the tutorials are important in sharing the story and benefit from six stories as opposed to one. And also the textbook and first-person resources expand their learning. So I mean ideally I would love to change the course or add to it in a number of ways but I feel fortunate in a two-year program to have a half-credit course. And here in this position, I've been trying to replicate that by having an inter-professional mentorship program, and that's very challenging. Starting, but challenging. So the other thing about the history of the course is that when the occupational therapy program became a masters program, the course then achieved half-credit status. Before that, it was a project within a course. So that was significant.

M: And again, what year was that, then?

A: Seven years ago the program changed. I could look that up.

M: So I think you've delved a little bit of what your role was in the design and development. I guess the one thing I might want to know more about is the intentional, pedagogical decisions that you made throughout the class.

A: Well, I know in every other course the students have, there is a very definite structure and classroom lecture, schedule, and it's very organized and the students arrive with their laptops, sit back, and listen, or not, interact or not, learn or not. I think that has its values and for teaching theory and the many different aspects of Occupational Therapy practice, that's the way it's got to be done. But my feeling was that in order for students to really challenge to even reveal and then challenge their stereotypes or preconceptions about disability or people with disability, the atmosphere was critical. My decision was that it would be an informal setting. It would be in very small groups in order for students to have a voice in that setting and the expectation was everyone must participate and they're graded on that. Not graded, their provided feedback on that. As far as pedagogy, my feeling is it had to be tutorial-based, discussion-oriented, and within an atmosphere of trust and respect. Otherwise, the students would not reveal what was probably critical in their learning, and that was their own attitudes, their own understanding and values about living with a disability. So that's how that got done and the journal supplemented that because even with an atmosphere of trust and respect, some students, as you could see, are very shy, nervous in that environment, but would reveal in the journal more deeper-level feelings or attitudes that they may not

offer and share openly. And so for me, it's very important that I as an individual and instructor, model and share some of my own thoughts and understanding so that the students can say okay, she is a person I can disclose this to. Not disclose personal information, but their attitudes and perceptions.

M: Are you aware of the philosophy of other two tutorial leaders in the course...do they share a similar vision? Do you sit down in advance with them and discuss some of those ideas?

A: Yes. In the past, before this year, I've either done this alone, when it was 45 students in the program I did it myself. When the program went up to 70 students, I realized I couldn't still do that and still have the small tutorial-based discussions. So I was able to work with a faculty member and run the course that way. Often, I would take $\frac{2}{3}$ and the faculty member would take $\frac{1}{3}$, or if two were available we would split it into thirds. I still did the administration and coordination and mentor recruitment and orientation. I still gathered most of the feedback comments from the mentors, but the faculty were there to run the tutorials and review journals and evaluate. So when it was another faculty member, it was easy for us to sit down and discuss philosophy and how it was going to run. And for the most part, that worked really well. There were occasional differences in how that was done and I would make my expectations very clear as the course coordinator, it was my responsibility to do that, but sometimes people differed a little bit in their approach, as with any kind of collaborative approach. Then this year, our faculty numbers were such that I didn't have the possibility of working with another faculty involved in the course, so we recruited, advertised for two academic assistant positions and there were a number of applicants for that, I was surprised at the number, so I was asked to review them and give my comments and then it went to the chair and the director of the school. And my recommendations were considered in the hiring of those two individuals. Ironically, luckily, really, the two people we hired were former students in the course, and now practicing locally. I think one has been practicing for four years and the other for five or three and four or something. So they had the experience of being a student in the course and that was valuable. But I sat down with them for a long orientation session and continued to mentor them in how the course, I think, should be run, and we're on email all the time, we meet face to face. We had a meeting about the half-way point of session one. We had a meeting a couple hours of meeting in September before the course started, so we have good open communication about it.

M: What has been surprising for you as an instructor in this course?

A: I think the surprising thing is how effective and valuable it's been for the students and every year when I get my USAT's, not that USAT's are the be-all and end-all, but the students are always positive. They always rate the course at the top of the scale in terms of other courses in the program. I don't take all the credit for that. The credit goes to the mentors, because they are so excited to have hands-on experiences from the get-go and they value those mentoring experiences. I think the opportunity to relax and sit back and enjoy, they embrace that as well, and partly it's not just the mutual trust and respect, partly, it's the way I try and set it up is as if it is a team meeting. So I call the students colleagues when I'm referring to all of them and indicate that this is a flattened hierarchy here. Yes, I'm evaluating, but I'm part of your team and I reinforce the idea of working together as a team. I think it's a nice surprise that the students embrace that. They welcome that, and I think that for the most part, they rise up to the challenge of being team members, supportive of one another and respectful. And partly, that comes from the ground rules that we work out together in the first session. So that's an ongoing, not a surprise, but an ongoing

pleasure that they keep rating the course so highly. And some years I think, that wasn't great, but inevitably, the USAT's prove otherwise that they value that opportunity.

M: When you reflect on this particular iteration of the course, what were the most transformative moments for you?

A: I was thinking about this last night, and I remember one student in particular I had concerns about in this group. And in the second-last tutorial, she disclosed information about her personal life that I feel probably has influenced how she started into this program. After that disclosure, I spoke to her personally after class and the next tutorial, I felt she was more animated and engaged than she had been in any of the previous ones. So to me, it's just one example that the process of how you do something can influence and change your perceptions of a student's of an issue and that was a moment when I thought, okay, this was really useful for the student, and it changed my understanding of what she was thinking. I had given her feedback in her journal, as well, at midterm, because I felt it difficult to follow, and I wasn't sure what she was getting at at times, so I gave her pretty clear feedback, and in that last tutorial, again, after that moment when she disclosed, she approached me directly and spoke about the feedback and offered insights and requested guidance of how she might complete the journal in order to meet my expectations. And I felt that was really positive. Many students in that situation, there haven't been a lot I've been concerned about, some become more defensive than engaged, and she was able to deal with that really well, given time to reflect. So that was a moment in this iteration when I thought. Also, another transformative moment was when the students matched with an individual who has a significant depressive illness were able to organize, structure their last visit according to the needs they perceived this mentor had. And to me, that's a quality that I would expect of a practicing clinician, not necessarily of students in their first semester of the program. Sharing that experience with the other students meant that everybody got to learn from that moment when all of a sudden, they realized they got it, what his life was like. And while they didn't experience it personally, they were able to understand, empathise, and adapt their own interactions so that he could participate fully and continue to teach them. I thought that was probably a really an excellent example of what the course can do for students. Students who are engaged and take that opportunity and jump-in, not all students do, but these two students clearly did. The first meeting, they were pretty lost thinking how do we do this.

M: I remember them coming up with that idea, they talked immediately after one of the sessions, so was another pedagogical choice that you made to set aside time within the schedule following the class for people to interact with you as well as with one another? Can you speak to that; that is, about the reason for allotting space?

A: Part of the problem is that I don't, in looking at the students' schedule and my schedule, I could not find a common open period for office-hours. Even if I could, I'm not sure the students would find me and make an appointment to do that. But right after tutorial, if there's office hours then, even if it's twenty minutes, which is what it was, it gives the students the understanding that they can speak to me right then and because it's informal and there's food and I'm urging them to take the food, I think they're more relaxed and it can happen more spontaneously. To me, that's probably more effective than set office-hours when the student has to make a decision, do I ask or not ask, this makes it more spontaneous and probably helpful for them.

M: What do you think has been eye-opening for your students?

A: I think they're surprised at how frank people are as mentors. One mentor in particular discussed personal issues and prefaced I don't always share this with students, but I'm sharing this with you because we've developed a relationship and a level of trust, so I think that, for the students, was a huge compliment and something they will value for ever. And it helps them to realize that what you learn from a future client very much depends on the relationship you have with them, not just on what is written in a chart, or what tools you use to evaluate or interview processes and so on. That, to me, was eye-opening for all the students because they shared that. Also, for other students, eye-opening that a person with a serious depressive illness can also have strengths. It's not just about identifying problems and providing interventions, it's about understanding a person's life and seeing that they have strengths and in some sense, we all have challenges and strengths that may be perceived as a sliding scale and may change daily, hourly, or over time, if there is a disability or illness. So I think those things came as surprises for the students. They did quite enter the course thinking that's the way the world was, or their understanding of it.

M: So number six, in what ways do you think you have contributed to influencing a change in students' perspective about disability?

A: Well...the change in the students' perspective about disability. That it's not a clear-cut, tangible concrete thing. It's an attribute of a person that is influenced by multiple factors. Every person embodies that in a different way. Other than disability, these are all related, I think to disability. Self awareness, the student becoming a professional and going through a process of, not socialization, but self-awareness.

[interruption by her colleague]

A: so related things to disability. Accessibility is huge for a topic of conversation, advocacy, boundary issues, professional boundaries, healthcare policy, and advocacy, no, self-care, I mean. All of those can be touched on in terms of OT, the profession, but also in terms of a person's own approach to work and to life. And I think the students learn about their own need for self-care and their own resiliency in how they approach things. You remember the one student, two students who were in tears, one in particular talking about her personal struggle and how she identified with mentors and why, and her fear that she wouldn't be able to separate herself and keep herself well because she would want to give so much. I think there is the opportunity to touch on that. I think we need much more there, but at least we can touch on it.

M: Do you have anything more to say about the ways that you tried to challenge their assumptions about any of those topics or issues?

A: Well, this iteration we didn't spend a lot of time on the readings, which was problematic. I think probably I need two hours and not an hour and a half, but the stories that came out of the textbook readings, I think, served to challenge them in a different way. They can depersonalize and say here is a story. And they can become outraged or sympathetic or go through all the similar things that they do with

their mentors, but in a more removed way. Although, I think it became clear in this iteration that a few of the mentors had stories that would easily fit right into that book and be shocking. Remember the woman who had cancer and a stroke and the doctor's said there is nothing we can do for you and the students were appalled. I love it when the students are outraged and appalled because that will stick with them and that might be the impetus for them to get involved in something in their future careers that might make a difference there. I think also, in this iteration, one of the mentors passed away and the students didn't actually meet her, but just announcing that to the students when I did that, I think that brings back a lot of issues home as well. Not only that they might lose clients, but their own reaction might be a struggle in coping with that. I know I had tears in my eyes when I talked about that, and I probably could have restrained myself more, but I try and also show a personal side, not just a professional side. And it's happened many times. It's not the first time and it won't be the last time and I think that kind of silence that happened afterwards can be powerful. Not saying anything after that.

M: As a result of the interactions with one another in class, was there anything specific that you saw, especially when you started to give them more freedom to lead it themselves and interact, did you notice anything transformative in any of those interactions?

A: I have a feeling that these two-student teams that are put together and that are matched and have inter-team matching with the mentors, I have a feeling that there are changes that happen as a result of that, but not when I see them. Out there, when they're in other courses, I think they are probably drawn more toward each other and support each other in a more helpful way, especially this first session for the students who don't know each other coming in. For session two, they'll already have been together in their own learning team, but it gives them an opportunity to work with a larger team of people, and I think that's probably a skill that is helping them in their other courses. But I don't necessarily see that.

M: In their partners especially I certainly observed that there was something happening in terms of transformation and challenging their original assumptions. Also there was a very close relationship developing through the experience that they shared together. I was curious again about how you went about selecting or pairing up the people together. Can you please tell me more about that.

A: It's an interesting process and I'm about to do it for session two. So they're already in student teams, usually six in a team or five in a team. So I look at that and when they come into the program, they fill out a questionnaire and that questionnaire tells me what their past education is, whether it's arts or science, life science, how much experience they have with disability. They talk about any volunteer work experience with disability and they also tell me if they have a car or not. That's very important. So when I'm matching them, I cross teams in the match to make it more interesting and to increase their understanding of one another. I match students who have different backgrounds and I do my best to match them with a mentor who does not fit into the category of the people they've worked with. So if I see a student who has done a degree in psychology, she's done a lot of work with kids with autism, then I might match her with a volunteer mentor who has a spinal chord industry and is an adult...so to just broaden their horizons a little bit and to make it more of a novel learning experience. I think they can learn equally from a person with autism, even if they have experience because it's a different perspective, but this gives them a different point of view and is more exciting for them. So I do try and do that. And if they have a car, then I'll match them with a mentor who lives further away, pretty practical. I don't

know the students to match the student to student, I don't know them at all. I've said hello to them in an orientation, but I don't know anything about how their personalities might match, so sometimes it works better than others.

M: Were there aspects of your teaching that you think facilitated an opportunity for students to think creatively?

A: I think that just generally creating an accepting atmosphere allows for that to happen naturally. So that's really important, and the other thing is that the journaling workshop that's provided really approaches creativity as a positive thing. So they see that model when Susan gave that workshop, they have a handout that they can try different things, and when I review their journals, I'm very accepting of different styles, as long as they address key issues that are relevant to the course and don't go off in a tangent, but I encourage them to think about organizing and documenting their understanding in their own style. I do look at the different levels of reflection and I make that very clear that I'm looking for the observed, the reactive, the interpretive, the decisional. I want to see that somewhere, but the style in which they show that is up to them. I remember the journals used to be more creative in the older iterations of the course and maybe it's the Master's level students who feel that they have to be very professional, academic. But I used to see, well and also the privacy legislation was quite different then. I used to see photographs of students with their mentors, articles clipped out, the age of the internet, I think, makes that different too. They might put a website in, but I think students are so pressed for time that they try to include different elements, but basically it's a narrative type of journal now. I encourage them at midterm when I give them feedback is I have seen creativity and I encourage that and applaud their efforts.

M: Can you please recall a time in class when students demonstrated a synthesis of ideas or a collaborative approach or any of those that are listed?

A: Well, we talked about the students planning that meal with their mentor. I think that was a true consolidation. I also think about the students who were walking through the neighborhood with the twins and just the joy they experienced in that activity. It seems so simple, but they were delighted to see the joy on his face and to realize that an adapted bike gave him the opportunity to experience life as any other kid would, in that age. So that, I think, was a really a nice example of that. And also a synthesis of ideas a collaborative approach, sometimes it comes in what the students choose not to share in tutorial. I think a few people may have alluded to that fact around discussions with the mentor with the spinal chord injury, some of the details they shared with him, and also the woman who is being treated for cancer right now, they hinted at a very detailed discussion and the mentor with alzheimer's, even more powerful, there were a lot of emotions there, but they were careful there to protect the privacy, even though they have permission to do that and everyone has consents, I think that's a really important judgment call to not share just for the purpose of being able to, but to filter and decide how they want to present information to their colleagues.

M: And is the journal, then, providing an outlet to share some of those further details with you and explore some of what that could mean if they're not comfortable doing that in a tutorial?

A: It does, and often I'll read the information in the journal and decide, do I caution the student to be careful even about how much they record because of confidentiality and privacy, but sometimes even there they will say, we went into a lot of detail and this really helped me to understand, but they choose not to record it and I think that's really quite valid and fair. That's going to help them when they think about what am I supposed to document in a client chart, what's important for the team to know. What maybe would have been shared that doesn't need to be there. If there is not a therapeutic reason and it's not that you're withholding and developing a private relationship, all of that really lends itself to professional learning, I'd say.

M: What opportunities were provided to enable students the ability to play, experiment, explore, and test out ideas? Time seems to be a factor in most courses as to whether there are these types of opportunities. Was that the case here?

A: I think so. The opportunity is there to do lots of that, but I think that probably comes out more with the mentor visits where they think and decide what questions am I going to ask, what do I want to know, and how can I broach that topic? I think that's where there is more creativity and the mentor plans things out, but there is always room for the students to say could we meet here, how might we learn if we go to this environment? There is an interchange there and a back and forth in how things unfold. Some mentors are very set on delivering a certain number of hours in a certain way others are feeling their way and really say to students, is there anything else you'd like, should we add another session? So the students have the ability to be creative in how they approach those visits. And I'm not there. That's part of the important thing that I am not there, they're out there on their own. They have safety processes in place, they have guidelines, they have documents on how to do things, but there is judgment that comes into it and interpersonal relationship that develops that's going to challenge that or help to mold that.

M: I guess that's why the feedback can be very helpful too from the mentors...to know when you're not considering them. Is there anything more that you'd like to share about that aspect of the mentoring process?

A: That feedback is critical. It's one thing to talk the talk, but if you're going to walk the walk, mentors need to be giving feedback. They're the ones who see them in action and their feedback means that client partnership is being modeled here. It's not just saying the person who's just set up as a token, it's not just a token person with disability involved in teaching, they are teaching and evaluating throughout the whole process and planning it as we go, all elements of the course. So the advisory committee helps to plan it, the mentors implement it and evaluate. And I do as well, because there has to be that professional person involved. But one thing that I would love to do at one point, I don't know if it's going to be possible is to co-facilitate the tutorials with a person with a disability. That would be wonderful we haven't gotten to that point yet. Logistically, it's hard. The course is so complex just coordinating and finding the right people and ensuring they can teach appropriately and taking care that their health is not impeded. People miss appointments or skip appointments because, visits, not appointments, because of their own health issues, so it's a true fieldwork course. It's not a not a theory course, it's a fieldwork course.

Professionals in Rural Practice: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Boundaries: One Student's Story

This is the story of Jane and her relationship with her primary school teacher, Mr. Barrett, known to many of the students at this rural school as 'Sir'. Jane had known Mr. Barrett since her early years at the school, on the playground separating fighting children, as the Vice Principal wielding the strap when necessary, and organizing Track & Field Day. In grade 5 she felt quite special as, due to overcrowding, her class of 25 students moved to a classroom in the secondary school, adjacent to the playground. With this exciting new venue came another privilege – Mr. Barrett was the Science teacher for the class. Jane remembers fondly the characteristics of various species and the *scientific method*. She received good grades and blushed when Mr. Barrett used her test paper to discuss the correct answers in class one day.



Grade 6 found Jane in Mr. Barrett's homeroom which meant most of her subjects were taught by him. Though shy by nature, she often raised her hand in response to Mr. Barrett's questions as she enjoyed the attention he gave her as a result. One day she remembers running through the school yard after lunch in order to arrive in class before the bell rang. She lived steps from the school so went home each day for lunch but was always eager to return. Students often dawdled after lunch. Mr. Barrett pointed this out once and suggested that Jane was a good example for others, stressing the importance of punctuality and responsible behaviour. He regularly found time for lectures on life as well as science, arithmetic and grammar. If an issue arose about conflict or injustice, Jane and her classmates expected a heated lecture from Mr. Barrett, who relished the opportunity to provide a forum for tough issues. Most students did not dare to voice their opinions as this could be construed as disrespectful. Instead, they listened quietly to Sir, hoping this would shorten the lesson and bring an early recess.

The school did not have a gymnasium at that time so Physical Education classes took place on the playground or nearby baseball diamond in spring and fall and in the village arena in the winter. Skating was a favourite activity for all students. Jane remembers holding Mr. Barrett's hand during skates, as did other students, and again considered this a privilege.

That same year, it was announced that Mr. Barrett was resigning from his position with plans to teach elsewhere. Jane was devastated – her favourite teacher leaving her? She summoned her courage during a skate one Friday afternoon to ask him why he was leaving the school (and her). His response made no sense to her and she persisted in questioning him about his reasons for leaving, stating that he was clearly needed in this school, by these students (by her). Shortly

after this interaction, he reversed his decision and remained at the school until his retirement a few decades later. Jane was convinced that she was the reason for his change of heart (despite the fact that he married a local woman shortly afterward). Jane's belief of her influence was reinforced by Mr. Barrett, who told her that her sincerity and rationale echoed in his mind for weeks, leading him to revoke his resignation and remain forever in that small, rural town. This story was repeated to her long after her graduation and departure from the community.



At the end of each school year, Sir asked a small group of students to remain after class. The purpose was to inform them that they had been chosen to accompany him to a movie at a small movie theatre in the town 10 miles away. Parents were consulted and off they went to the movies, packed into Sir's convertible. Over and over again, Jane was made to feel special for her effort, ability and sense of humour. Her athletic abilities did not command any positive feedback, but even then her efforts were recognized and praised.

Mr. Barrett remained Jane's homeroom and principle teacher through grades 7 and 8. Each year as she passed into the next grade, he followed her, telling her this was his intention. She took for granted his dedication to her and to her learning, and she reciprocated with loyalty, respect and attention to this student-teacher relationship.

In the years that followed Jane's move to university and later to work in a nearby city, she visited her hometown often and met Sir for coffee and chats at the local café. Each September, as she began a new year (aren't years always marked by the school calendar), she wrote a letter to her favourite teacher to bring him up to date on her activities. Christmas cards also found their way to the home of Mr. Barrett and his wife and Jane and Sir hugged affectionately when they met on the street when Jane visited home. The occasional visit also took place in hospital when Mr. Barrett experienced health problems which were both physical and emotional. Jane appreciated the opportunity to give back to her teacher and to acknowledge his importance in her life, though words about feelings were minimal.

Not so very long ago, Jane received one of those dreaded phone calls that bring sad news and forces one to stop all activity and sit down to allow the impact of the message to register. Mr. Barrett had died of cancer and the funeral was being held a few days later. The first reaction Jane experienced was anger that no one had contacted her so that a final visit could be arranged. Why had no one thought of that? She arrived at the funeral home to sit with the many other mourners. It was only as one of her childhood peers, the son of Chinese immigrants who went on to become a surgeon and professor, rose to give the eulogy that she understood the legacy her teacher had left in their village. What came as a shock to her was the fact that the eulogist felt exactly the same way about her beloved Sir as she did...and judging from the many other adult students who returned home that day to mourn, it was a commonly held belief that each and every one of them was unique, special, wise and worthy.

N.B. Jane graduated from her primary school in 1969.

Professionals in Rural Practice: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Boundaries and burnout: A remote perspective

The following is a story of one nurse's experience working in the challenging environment of remote northern communities...

Nicole is a Community Health Nurse (CHN) living and working in a remote native community located more than an hour's drive away from the city of Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories. She is one of six nurses working at the local health centre that serves a community of 2000 people. The community consists of 95% local native residents and 5% Caucasians who are, like her, relative newcomers to this setting. They are teachers, police officers, social workers, and local merchants who have, for a variety of reasons, chosen to pursue work in this remote northern setting. Local customs, as well as subtle cultural nuances are a challenge to understand in this new environment. English is a second language here. She does not understand the local Tlicho language.



Nicole is new to her role as an advanced practice nurse having previously lived and worked in rural and urban settings where resources and support are more readily available. Never before has she been in a position of working with so few resources or beyond nursing's standard scope of practice. Never before has her work been so autonomous and independent of a physician's oversight. She is excited by this new challenge. Her 15 years of practice has, she feels, prepared her well for this new experience.

She must wear many hats in this new role... she is simultaneously diagnosing, treating, and educating her patients.

She advocates for new housing; she provides home visitation for elderly clients with chronic ailments; she liaises with the school principal regarding school based health programs; and she consults with the local priest regarding health promotion initiatives that challenge church doctrine. She facilitates the implementation of public health programs, rotating through tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STI), immunization & well-child, prenatal, and chronic health programs. She also tends to emergencies as well as unexpected outbreaks of communicable diseases. She sutures and takes x-rays when required. Additionally, she and her colleagues tend to the health care needs of a smaller fly-in community of 150 residents. They take turns visiting this community monthly.

After hours she rotates through an on-call schedule that she finds exhilarating at first. The impacts of this grueling schedule are however, soon realized as non-urgent calls keep her up most nights only to be followed by a return to work at 0800 the next morning. When not on call she likes to go for walks around the community but finds that

difficult at times as she is occasionally approached by community members with requests for medical assistance. This difficulty in separating herself from her work is further augmented by her living arrangements. The nurses live, work and often socialize together. Their residence is also located directly beside the health centre. When emergent help is needed, it is "all hands on deck" and so, time for self-care becomes increasingly difficult to cultivate. She must ensure that regular time away is planned. As time goes by, she requires this more and more.

Responding to emergency situations is a great stressor in this setting, for the nearest hospital is more than one hour's drive away on a roughly paved road. Local residents have been trained to assist with the ambulance service, but the burden of responsibility resides always, with the nurse. She has, on occasion, found herself at the site of an MVA, implementing trauma life support in an effort to safely extricate drivers and their passengers from their wrecked vehicles and transport them to hospital. Not everyone survives. This can be difficult to process. She works very closely with the local police in such instances. They have become both friends and essential colleagues.

Doctors' visits occur every other week. Doctors are also available by phone for consultative purposes or to arrange a medevac to the city. The ophthalmologist comes in monthly. A traveling diabetic program comes to the centre one week per month. Mental Health services are provided once per week. In the absence of this crucial service, she has found herself filling the gaps, helping residents who are suicidal, depressed, and abused.

There is much to be done here and the residents are very dependent on the system. Much is asked of the nurses and this leads to great turnover of staff. This is difficult for the residents for they have come to expect that nurses will not stay and so, they do not try to know them beyond what they encounter at the clinic.



To combat this, Nicole creates opportunities to mingle with residents during various local celebrations. This helps to address this divide as such efforts create a deeper connection with the people and the place. She has also made some friendly connections with the local residents who work at the health centre. Together, they have created a small walking club which they enjoy during their lunch break.

She has also discovered a love of the local environment and so, in the winter months she cross country skis on the snowmobile trails and takes in the frequent display of northern lights during the long dark days of winter. In the summer, she kayaks on the lake that the town is built next to. This rejuvenates her body and soul, and she is able to go on...

Creativity Checklist Data Summary Table – The Lived Experience of Disability

	(1) Divergent thinking: To what extent does the teaching... Base: To what extent does the teaching... does the teaching...	(2) General knowledge and thinking Base: To what extent does the teaching... does the teaching...	(3) Specific knowledge base and specific skills: To what extent does the teaching... does the teaching...	(4) Focus and task commitment: To what extent does the teaching... does the teaching...	(5) Motives and motivation: To what extent does the teaching... does the teaching...	(6) Openness and toler To what extent doe
Support thinking activity that could be called divergent thinking?	4	4	4	4	4	4
show a sensitivity to and value problems and questions raised by students?	5	5	5	5	5	5
make students aware of problems?	5	5	5	5	5	5
make time available for more than one attempt at solutions to problems?	4	4	4	4	4	4
examine topics from different perspectives?	5	5	5	5	5	5
show a valuing of multiple ways of solving problems?	5	5	5	5	5	5
use real-world problems for learning?	5	5	5	5	5	5
encourage students to generate their own problems?	5	5	5	5	5	5
encourage students to explore ideas from different perspectives?	5	5	5	5	5	5
positively value ideas from all perspectives?	5	5	5	5	5	5
encourage individuality in understanding?	5	5	5	5	5	5
model how to think creatively?	4	4	4	4	4	4
give students the opportunity to learn collaboratively?	5	5	5	5	5	5
give students the opportunity to explore ideas?	5	5	5	5	5	5
take account of and build on student interest in what they learn?	4	4	4	4	4	4
use good questioning skills to develop new topics?	4	4	4	4	4	4
show that the teachers have a great passion for their subjects?	4	4	4	4	4	4
require students to take a broad focus on the topics they are taught?	4	4	4	4	4	4
use different sense channels?	4	4	4	4	4	4
target systematic analysis of problems, topics, and facts?	3	3	3	3	3	3
target synthesizing of problems, topics, and facts?	3	3	3	3	3	3
encourage inductive reasoning?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage deductive reasoning?	3	3	3	3	3	3
encourage students to draw on their individual interests and experiences when learning new topics?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage students to pursue in-depth studies for topics being covered?	4	4	4	4	4	4
provide opportunities for self-directed learning?	3	3	3	3	3	3
provide opportunities for research projects	3	3	3	3	3	3
value expertise of guest speakers and professionals?	5	5	5	5	5	5
foster a community of purpose in the classroom?	5	5	5	5	5	5
value longer occupation by students in tasks that have a special interest?	4	4	4	4	4	4
allow students to complete tasks in a variety of ways?	5	5	5	5	5	5
help students think about how they focus?	4	4	4	4	4	4
foster inquiry-based learning?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage students to pursue a passion in learning?	5	5	5	5	5	5
encourage task commitments?	5	5	5	5	5	5
encourage divergence of thought?	5	5	5	5	5	5
provide constructive feedback for high-level outcomes?	4	4	4	4	4	4
allow intrinsic motivation?	4	4	4	4	4	4
balance formal curriculum outcomes and personal interest knowledge?	4	4	4	4	4	4
support natural curiosity and strive for knowledge?	5	5	5	5	5	5
allow opportunities for self-determined discovery learning?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage students to reflect on ideas that don't seem to fit?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage students to take risks?	4	4	4	4	4	4
encourage students to welcome and value ambiguity?	5	5	5	5	5	5
develop students' ability to self-reflect?	5	5	5	5	5	5
allow students to persevere and complete tasks?	5	5	5	5	5	5
Instructor 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Students						
Student 1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 2	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 6	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 7	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 8	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 9	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 10	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 11	4	4	4	4	4	4
Student 12	4	4	4	4	4	4
Group Mean						
		4.1	3.9	4.3	4.4	4.4

1 Never
 2 Rarely
 3 Sometimes
 4 Often
 5 Always
 Don't Know

Learning Activities and Transformative Learning Data Summary Table

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		Learning Activities & Transformational Learning Survey Data Summary Table																					
Pilot:	Class code:	(School, Class and Date)																					
ITEM#	1a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	2	3	4	P	SS	CS	AS	CT	TS	
1																							
2																							
3																							
4																							
5																							
6																							
7																							
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15																							
16																							
17																							
18																							
19																							
20																							
Total yes (2)																							
Percentage																							

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 Contact email: TransformationEd@gmail.com

Learning Activities & Transformational Learning Survey Data Summary Table, Page 2

	7			8			9			10			11			12			13								
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	
Another Student's Support	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A challenge from your teacher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
your classmates' support	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
your teacher's support	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
class/group projects	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
verbally discussing your concerns	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
writing about your concerns	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
term papers/essays	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
personal journal	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
self-evaluation in a course	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
nontraditional structure of a course	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
class activity/exercise	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
deep concentrated thought	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
personal reflection	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
personal learning assessment	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
assigned readings	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
interviews	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
team work	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
field trip	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
single	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
married	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
partner	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
separated	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
widowed	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
white	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
aboriginal	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
black	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
chinese	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
filipino	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
japanese	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
korean	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non-north american indigenous	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
south asian/east indian	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
south east asian	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non white west asian	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non white north african	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
arab	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non white latin american	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
person of mixed origin	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theology	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nursing	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering Science	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medicine	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Science	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arts	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High School	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Masters	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
College Diploma	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doctorate	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bachelors Degree	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
< 21	3	6	8	7	6	9	11	7	11	5	7	7	4	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1=other
2=female
3=male

1=nothing
2=check

numb

Queen's University, "The Lived Experience of Disability", October

Item #	1													2			3			4(i)			4(ii)												4(iii)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	aa	ab	ac	ad	ae	af	ag	ah	ai	aj	ak	al	am	an	ao	ap	aq	ar	as	at	au	av	aw	ax	ay	az	ba	bb	bc	bd	be	bf	bg	bh	bi	bj	bk	bl	bm	bn	bo	bp	bq	br	bs	bt	bu	bv	bw	bx	by	bz	ca	cb	cc	cd	ce	cf	cg	ch	ci	cj	ck	cl	cm	cn	co	cp	cq	cr	cs	ct	cu	cv	cw	cx	cy	cz	da	db	dc	dd	de	df	dg	dh	di	dj	dk	dl	dm	dn	do	dp	dq	dr	ds	dt	du	dv	dw	dx	dy	dz	ea	eb	ec	ed	ee	ef	eg	eh	ei	ej	ek	el	em	en	eo	ep	eq	er	es	et	eu	ev	ew	ex	ey	ez	fa	fb	fc	fd	fe	ff	fg	fh	fi	fj	fk	fl	fm	fn	fo	fp	fq	fr	fs	ft	fu	fv	fw	fx	fy	fz	ga	gb	gc	gd	ge	gf	gg	gh	gi	gj	gk	gl	gm	gn	go	gp	gq	gr	gs	gt	gu	gv	gw	gx	gy	gz	ha	hb	hc	hd	he	hf	hg	hh	hi	hj	hk	hl	hm	hn	ho	hp	hq	hr	hs	ht	hu	hv	hw	hx	hy	hz	ia	ib	ic	id	ie	if	ig	ih	ii	ij	ik	il	im	in	io	ip	iq	ir	is	it	iu	iv	iw	ix	iy	iz	ja	jb	jc	jd	je	jf	jg	jh	ji	jj	jk	jl	jm	jn	jo	jp	jq	jr	js	jt	ju	jv	jw	ka	kb	kc	kd	ke	kf	kg	kh	ki	kj	kl	km	kn	ko	kp	kq	kr	ks	kt	ku	kv	kw	kx	ky	kz	la	lb	lc	ld	le	lf	lg	lh	li	lj	lk	ll	lm	ln	lo	lp	lq	lr	ls	lt	lu	lv	lw	lx	ly	lz	ma	mb	mc	md	me	mf	mg	mh	mi	mj	mk	ml	mm	mn	mo	mp	mq	mr	ms	mt	mu	mv	mw	mx	my	mz	na	nb	nc	nd	ne	nf	ng	nh	ni	nj	nk	nl	nm	nn	no	np	nq	nr	ns	nt	nu	nv	nw	nx	ny	nz	oa	ob	oc	od	oe	of	og	oh	oi	oj	ok	ol	om	on	oo	op	oq	or	os	ot	ou	ov	ow	ox	oy	oz	pa	pb	pc	pd	pe	pf	pg	ph	pi	pj	pk	pl	pm	pn	po	pp	pq	pr	ps	pt	pu	pv	pw	px	py	pz	qa	qb	qc	qd	qe	qf	qg	qh	qi	qj	qk	ql	qm	qn	qo	qp	qq	qr	qs	qt	qu	qv	qw	qx	qy	qz	ra	rb	rc	rd	re	rf	rg	rh	ri	rj	rk	rl	rm	rn	ro	rp	rq	rr	rs	rt	ru	rv	rw	rx	ry	rz	sa	sb	sc	sd	se	sf	sg	sh	si	sj	sk	sl	sm	sn	so	sp	sq	sr	ss	st	su	sv	sw	sx	sy	sz	ta	tb	tc	td	te	tf	tg	th	ti	tj	tk	tl	tm	tn	to	tp	tq	tr	ts	tt	tu	tv	tw	tx	ty	tz	ua	ub	uc	ud	ue	uf	ug	uh	ui	uj	uk	ul	um	un	uo	up	uq	ur	us	ut	uu	uv	uw	ux	uy	uz	va	vb	vc	vd	ve	vf	vg	vh	vi	vj	vk	vl	vm	vn	vo	vp	vq	vr	vs	vt	vu	vv	vw	vx	vy	vz	wa	wb	wc	wd	we	wf	wg	wh	wi	wj	wk	wl	wm	wn	wo	wp	wq	wr	ws	wt	wu	wv	ww	wx	wy	wz	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	xg	xh	xi	xj	xk	xl	xm	xn	xo	xp	xq	xr	xs	xt	xu	xv	xw	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	yg	yh	yi	yj	yk	yl	ym	yn	yo	yp	yq	yr	ys	yt	yu	yv	yw	ya	yb	yc	yd	ye	yf	zg	zh	zi	zj	zk	zl	zm	zn	zo	zp	zq	zr	zs	zt	zu	zv	zw	zx	zy	zz	aa	ab	ac	ad	ae	af	ag	ah	ai	aj	ak	al	am	an	ao	ap	aq	ar	as	at	au	av	aw	ax	ay	az	ba	bb	bc	bd	be	bf	bg	bh	bi	bj	bk	bl	bm	bn	bo	bp	bq	br	bs	bt	bu	bv	bw	bx	by	bz	ca	cb	cc	cd	ce	cf	cg	ch	ci	cj	ck	cl	cm	cn	co	cp	cq	cr	cs	ct	cu	cv	cw	cx	cy	cz	da	db	dc	dd	de	df	dg	dh	di	dj	dk	dl	dm	dn	do	dp	dq	dr	ds	dt	du	dv	dw	dx	dy	dz	ea	eb	ec	ed	ee	ef	eg	eh	ei	ej	ek	el	em	en	eo	ep	eq	er	es	et	eu	ev	ew	ex	ey	ez	fa	fb	fc	fd	fe	ff	fg	fh	fi	fj	fk	fl	fm	fn	fo	fp	fq	fr	fs	ft	fu	fv	fw	fx	fy	fz	ga	gb	gc	gd	ge	gf	gg	gh	gi	gj	gk	gl	gm	gn	go	gp	gq	gr	gs	gt	gu	gv	gw	gx	gy	gz	ha	hb	hc	hd	he	hf	hg	hh	hi	hj	hk	hl	hm	hn	ho	hp	hq	hr	hs	ht	hu	hv	hw	hx	hy	hz	ia	ib	ic	id	ie	if	ig	ih	ii	ij	ik	il	im	in	io	ip	iq	ir	is	it	iu	iv	iw	ix	iy	iz	ja	jb	jc	jd	je	jf	jg	jh	ji	jj	jk	jl	jm	jn	jo	jp	jq	jr	js	jt	ju	jv	jw	ka	kb	kc	kd	ke	kf	kg	kh	ki	kj	kl	km	kn	ko	kp	kq	kr	ks	kt	ku	kv	kw	kx	ky	kz	la	lb	lc	ld	le	lf	lg	lh	li	lj	lk	ll	lm	ln	lo	lp	lq	lr	ls	lt	lu	lv	lw	lx	ly	lz	ma	mb	mc	md	me	mf	mg	mh	mi	mj	mk	ml	mm	mn	mo	mp	mq	mr	ms	mt	mu	mv	mw	mx	my	mz	na	nb	nc	nd	ne	nf	ng	nh	ni	nj	nk	nl	nm	nn	no	np	nq	nr	ns	nt	nu	nv	nw	nx	ny	nz	oa	ob	oc	od	oe	of	og	oh	oi	oj	ok	ol	om	on	oo	op	oq	or	os	ot	ou	ov	ow	ox	oy	oz	pa	pb	pc	pd	pe	pf	pg	ph	pi	pj	pk	pl	pm	pn	po	pp	pq	pr	ps	pt	pu	pv	pw	px	py	pz	qa	qb	qc	qd	qe	qf	qg	qh	qi	qj	qk	ql	qm	qn	qo	qp	qq	qr	qs	qt	qu	qv	qw	qx	qy	qz	ra	rb	rc	rd	re	rf	rg	rh	ri	rj	rk	rl	rm	rn	ro	rp	rq	rr	rs	rt	ru	rv	rw	rx	ry	rz	sa	sb	sc	sd	se	sf	sg	sh	si	sj	sk	sl	sm	sn	so	sp	sq	sr	ss	st	su	sv	sw	sx	sy	sz	ta	tb	tc	td	te	tf	tg	th	ti	tj	tk	tl	tm	tn	to	tp	tq	tr	ts	tt	tu	tv	tw	tx	ty	tz	ua	ub	uc	ud	ue	uf	ug	uh	ui	uj	uk	ul	um	un	uo	up	uq	ur	us	ut	uu	uv	uw	ux	uy	uz	va	vb	vc	vd	ve	vf	vg	vh	vi	vj	vk	vl	vm	vn	vo	vp	vq	vr	vs	vt	vu	vv	vw	vx	vy	vz	wa	wb	wc	wd	we	wf	wg	wh	wi	wj	wk	wl	wm	wn	wo	wp	wq	wr	ws	wt	wu	wv	ww	wx	wy	wz	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	xg	xh	xi	xj	xk	xl	xm	xn	xo	xp	xq	xr	xs	xt	xu	xv	xw	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	yg	yh	yi	yj	yk	yl	ym	yn	yo	yp	yq	yr	ys	yt	yu	yv	yw	ya	yb	yc	yd	ye	yf	zg	zh	zi	zj	zk	zl	zm	zn	zo	zp	zq	zr	zs	zt	zu	zv	zw	zx	zy	zz	aa	ab	ac	ad	ae	af	ag	ah	ai	aj	ak	al	am	an	ao	ap	aq	ar	as	at	au	av	aw	ax	ay	az	ba	bb	bc	bd	be	bf	bg	bh	bi	bj	bk	bl	bm	bn	bo	bp	bq	br	bs	bt	bu	bv	bw	bx	by	bz	ca	cb	cc	cd	ce	cf	cg	ch	ci	cj	ck	cl	cm	cn	co	cp	cq	cr	cs	ct	cu	cv	cw	cx	cy	cz	da	db	dc	dd	de	df	dg	dh	di	dj	dk	dl	dm	dn	do	dp	dq	dr	ds	dt	du	dv	dw	dx	dy	dz	ea	eb	ec	ed	ee	ef	eg	eh	ei	ej	ek	el	em	en	eo	ep	eq	er	es	et	eu	ev	ew	ex	ey	ez	fa	fb	fc	fd	fe	ff	fg	fh	fi	fj	fk	fl	fm	fn	fo	fp	fq	fr	fs	ft	fu	fv	fw	fx	fy	fz	ga	gb	gc	gd	ge	gf	gg	gh	gi	gj	gk	gl	gm	gn	go	gp	gq	gr	gs	gt	gu	gv	gw	gx	gy	gz	ha	hb	hc	hd	he	hf	hg	hh	hi	hj	hk	hl	hm	hn	ho	hp	hq	hr	hs	ht	hu	hv	hw	hx	hy	hz	ia	ib	ic	id	ie	if	ig	ih	ii	ij	ik	il	im	in	io	ip	iq	ir	is	it	iu	iv	iw	ix	iy	iz	ja	jb	jc	jd	je	jf	jg	jh	ji	jj	jk	jl	jm	jn	jo	jp	jq	jr	js	jt	ju	jv	jw	ka	kb	kc	kd	ke	kf	kg	kh	ki	kj	kl	km	kn	ko	kp	kq	kr	ks	kt	ku	kv	kw	kx	ky	kz	la	lb	lc	ld	le	lf	lg	lh	li	lj	lk	ll	lm	ln	lo	lp	lq	lr	ls	lt	lu	lv	lw	lx	ly	lz	ma	mb	mc	md	me	mf	mg	mh	mi	mj	mk	ml	mm	mn	mo	mp	mq	mr	ms	mt	mu	mv	mw	mx	my	mz	na	nb	nc	nd	ne	nf	ng	nh	ni	nj	nk	nl	nm	nn	no	np	nq	nr	ns	nt	nu	nv	nw	nx	ny	nz	oa	ob	oc	od	oe	of	og	oh	oi	oj	ok	ol	om	on	oo	op	oq	or	os	ot	ou	ov	ow	ox	oy	oz	pa	pb	pc	pd	pe	pf	pg	ph	pi	pj	pk	pl	pm	pn	po	pp	pq	pr	ps	pt	pu	pv	pw	px	py	pz	qa	qb	qc	qd	qe	qf	qg	qh	qi	qj	qk	ql	qm	qn	qo	qp	qq	qr	qs	qt	qu	qv	qw	qx	qy	qz	ra	rb	rc	rd	re	rf	rg	rh	ri	rj	rk	rl	rm	rn	ro	rp	rq	rr	rs	rt	ru	rv	rw	rx	ry	rz	sa	sb	sc	sd	se	sf	sg	sh	si	sj	sk	sl	sm	sn	so	sp	sq	sr	ss	st	su	sv	sw	sx	sy	sz	ta	tb	tc	td	te	tf	tg	th	ti	tj	tk	tl	tm	tn	to	tp	tq	tr	ts	tt	tu	tv	tw	tx	ty	tz	ua	ub	uc	ud	ue	uf	ug	uh	ui	uj	uk	ul	um	un	uo	up	uq	ur	us	ut	uu	uv	uw	ux	uy	uz	va	vb	vc	vd	ve	vf	vg	vh	vi	vj	vk	vl	vm	vn	vo	vp	vq	vr	vs	vt	vu	vv	vw	vx	vy	vz	wa	wb	wc	wd	we	wf	wg	wh	wi	wj	wk	wl	wm	wn	wo	wp	wq	wr	ws	wt	wu	wv	ww	wx	wy	wz	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	xg	xh	xi	xj	xk	xl	xm	xn	xo	xp	xq	xr	xs	xt	xu	xv	xw	xa	xb	xc	xd	xe	xf	yg	yh	yi	yj	yk	yl	ym	yn	yo	yp	yq	yr	ys	yt	yu	yv	yw	ya	yb	yc	yd	ye	yf	zg	zh	zi	zj	zk	zl	zm	zn	zo	zp	zq	zr	zs	zt	zu	zv	zw	zx	zy	zz

