

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The purpose of this study was to understand the individual experiences of four adult literacy practitioners, Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily, in the first cohort of the Oregon Field-Based Cohort Master's Program. This program, which Oregon established in 1993 as one venue of professional development for adult literacy and English as a Second Language practitioners, was developed jointly by the Office of Community College Services of the state Department of Education and Oregon State University.

The inquiry proceeded from three assumptions. First, effective professional development must be grounded in understandings about how practitioners learn. Second, an understanding of practitioners' learning is attainable only through intensive examination of individual experiences. And third, practitioners' accounts of their learning experiences are legitimate sources of knowledge; they are, in fact, the only accessible avenues for investigating individuals' learning.

Transcripts of in-depth interviews and participants' cumulative portfolios were coded and analyzed in the first phase of data analysis to produce stories which integrated Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's own words with metaphors they created to frame their experiences. Each story reconstructs a practitioner's construction of the emotional, intellectual, and material experience of learning in a cohort. Together, they represent the uniqueness and complexity of adults' learning.

In the second phase of analysis, the stories were compared to reveal relationships of similarity and difference among them. The cross-case analysis generated five themes around the self as learner, the contribution of dissonance to reconstruction of meaning, personal transformations in an academic setting, increased confidence as an outcome of graduate study, and stance as a contributor to the variability and complexity of adults' experiences of learning in a formal setting.

The final chapter drew directly on the themes to make suggestions for planning and practice and pose questions which might be used to focus conversations or frame future research about adult learning, graduate programs, or staff development for adult educators. Specific topics included authentic learning situations, reflection, graduate cohorts, collaborative learning, adult learners' stances toward learning situations, distance delivery and professional networks for adult literacy practitioners, and evaluation of professional development programs.

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Five Programs for Four Participants: Stories of Paradox and Learning in a
Graduate Cohort for Adult Literacy Practitioners

by

Susan A. Fish

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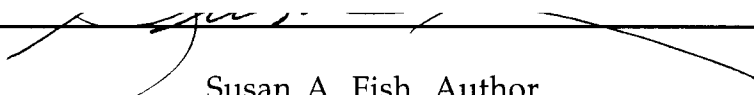
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Susan A. Fish, Author

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to my father, Edward H. Fish, who would have read and admired it if he had only had time.

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Five Programs for Four Participants: Stories of Paradox and Learning in a Graduate Cohort for Adult Literacy Practitioners

1. Introduction and Review of Related Literature

I was trained in therapeutic recreation. . . . I had taught pre-school, but I didn't have any formal training. . . . It was just (snaps fingers) I was in there. . . . I started teaching nights, part-time at an outreach center. . . . It was walk in, turn on the lights, and say, "This is the room." . . . The [books] were all there. I stepped into an on-going classroom. So I sort of had to make myself fit into that situation. . . . I did some other things. I went to some other outreach areas. . . . Mostly I stayed in [the small town] for eight years. (E1A 142-223)¹

This description of beginning a career as an adult basic skills instruction with no prior training and little orientation was offered by Emily, one of the participants in this study. Hers is a not an unusual story. The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs reported that in the 2,819 programs and 24,000 sites where adult basic education (ABE) is offered, only 18% of full time and 8% of part-time staff are certified in adult education. (Development Associates, 1992, p. 1-17). Nor is being part-time for eight years exceptional. The same national study reported that part-time instructors outnumbered full-time four-to-one (p. 23) in adult basic education programs. That Emily continued to teach in the field despite her part-time status, however, is unusual. Eighty-one percent of full-time adult literacy and English as a second language (ESL) instructors have been teaching adults for more than three years, but fewer than half, 43%, of part-time instructors have three or more years of experience (Development Associates, 1992, p. 77).

Given the unavailability of pre-service preparation and lack of incentive for pursuing scarce graduate programs, specific training for adult literacy educators has become almost solely the province of in-service staff

¹Citations which follow quoted or paraphrased material from interviews include the participant's first initial, the number of the interview, side of the tape, and line numbers from the transcript. E1A 142-223 indicates lines 142-223 from side A of the first interview with Emily.

development (Beder, 1991; Fingeret, 1992; Foster, 1988; Kutner, Sherman, Webb, Herman, Tibbetts, Hemphill, Terdy, & Jones, 1992). Hemphill (1990) underscored the difficulties of teaching in ABE and the critical need for in-service training: "Such instructors usually come to adult teaching with minimal pre-service training, they are almost always faced with wide-ranging and daunting curricular and situation demands (such as multilevel classes and substandard facilities), and they are provided with limited (if any) teaching resources" (p. 15).

Recognizing the necessity of in-service staff development, the U.S. Office of Education and later the U.S. Department of Education has funded national, regional, and state staff development since 1966, when the Adult Education Act established a federal adult literacy program. The most recent amendment of the Adult Education Act, the National Literacy Act of 1991, directed each state to spend a minimum of 10% of its ABE grant for staff development. However, significant barriers to effective professional development for adult literacy educators have not been eliminated: insufficient funding, the part-time workforce, high turn-over rates, unstable funding and program goals, and a lack of reliable information about how to make staff development effective.

Funding for ABE programs has been described as ranging from "abysmal to barely adequate" (Beder, 1996, p. 6). To illustrate just how inadequate the funding is, Beder cited a comparison between spending in adult education and spending in kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12): "This point is driven home when the average expenditure per student per year of \$248 in adult literacy education is compared to expenditures in elementary and secondary education, which in 1992 averaged \$5167 per student per year (Smith et al., 1994)" (as cited in Beder, 1996, p. 6). It is not surprising that program administrators hesitate to use their scarce resources for teacher training rather than literacy classes.

Inadequate funding also makes it difficult for programs to afford full-time instructors. In the 1992 national study, researchers found that over one-third of ABE programs did not have full-time staff of any kind, and nearly two-thirds did not have full-time instructional staff (Development Associates, 1992). Beder (1996) described the impact of the four-to-one ratio between part and full-time staff, cautioning against a conclusion that part-time teachers were poor teachers. Instead he pointed out the consequences

of reliance on a predominantly part-time workforce: limitations to staff development, impeded communication within and between programs, and high turn-over which inhibits knowledge production and sharing.

Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, and Jones (1991), in a national review of ABE staff development, noted specific difficulties in scheduling services for part-time staff with varied day and evening schedules who are, like Emily, often located in outreach sites. Moreover, part-time teachers with full-time jobs or professional affiliation elsewhere are likely to be reluctant to invest in professional development in adult literacy. Furthermore, programs are reluctant to invest scarce staff development dollars in part-time educators. Fingeret (1992) observed that many literacy programs do not pay for teachers' time or expenses when they participate in staff development activities.

High turnover rates like the ones reported by Developmental Associates are predictable among part-time educators, especially when most professional staff is certified in other fields, i.e., elementary or secondary education. Calling attention to the fragmentation and poor funding of adult literacy programs, Chisman (1988) explained both the disproportionate number of part-time staff and the high rate of turnover: "There are no full time basic skills teachers in the United States for the simple reasons that very few public or private programs operate full-time, pay a competitive wage, or provide benefits. Most teachers are part-time professionals or volunteers. Their primary training and career paths are outside this field" (p. 8). Finally, as the review of related literature presented later in this chapter will show, there is little reliable or useful information about how to make staff development for literacy practitioners effective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this inquiry was not to propose or evaluate a particular model of staff development; rather it was to understand the experiences of individual adult literacy practitioners during a graduate program. I proceeded from three assumptions. First, effective professional development must be grounded in an understanding of how practitioners

learn. Second, an understanding of learning can only be achieved through intensive examinations of individual experiences. And third, practitioners' accounts of their learning experiences are legitimate sources of data. They are, in fact, the only valid sources for investigating individuals' learning.

In order to pursue an understanding of ABE practitioners' learning, I examined accounts offered in interviews and cumulative portfolios by four adult literacy practitioners in the first cohort of the Oregon Field-Based Cohort Master's Program. This program, which the state of Oregon established in 1993 as one venue of professional development for adult basic skills practitioners, was developed jointly by the state Adult Basic Education staff development office and Oregon State University (OSU).

Significance of This Study

The significance of research is usually measured by its potential contribution to policy, the knowledge base, or practice, in the area of inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Due to the scarcity of research about adult literacy staff development, this study has the unusual potential to contribute at all three levels.

The importance of this inquiry to policy is supported by the continuing emphasis placed on staff development by federal legislation and appropriation. The 1991 amendments to the Adult Education Act increased the proportion of its allotment that each state must spend on staff development and special projects. Moreover, staff development was one of 12 model indicators which the U.S. Department of Education recommended when it mandated that each state develop quality standards for ABE programs. Furthermore, in 1991, the U.S. Department of Education itself commissioned a national study of state staff development programs. In the project's statement of purpose, the researchers asserted a causal relationship between staff development and the effectiveness of literacy programs. "Although empirical data are not available, it is considered likely that a relationship exists between training and improved learning gains in adult students" (Tibbetts et al., 1991). Given such an emphasis on staff development at the national level, Lytle and McGuire (1993) concluded that

the field was at a crossroads in policy-making and had “a unique chance to consider promising alternatives to what currently serve as acceptable professional development alternatives” (p. 1). In 1997, staff development was again on the national research agenda in adult literacy. The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), established with federal support in 1996, included staff development among the four questions of primary importance to the field which it would study (NCSALL, 1997).

The second criterion for research significance is its contribution to the knowledge base in the area of inquiry. Despite the interest in adult literacy staff development in policy circles, the knowledge base is very limited. Researchers from the National Center for Adult Literacy called the research on staff development “scant” (Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1992a, p. 2). The team from Pelavin Associates who conducted the U.S. Department of Education study regretted the paucity of research information available on the topic. Because of its intensive focus and unusual context, this inquiry both expands the general knowledge base and opens more specialized areas of research. Existing research about ABE staff development tended to describe and assess the structure of programs without regard for individuals' experiences. The particularistic nature of this study, therefore, introduces a new kind of inquiry to the field. Furthermore this study examines practitioners' experiences in an adult education graduate program, which is important because graduate work has not been examined before and because findings from earlier research (Spear et al., 1972a; Stafford, 1981) indicated that graduate credit is an incentive for practitioner involvement in staff development. Moreover, since the Oregon program employed a variety of delivery systems and instructional strategies, this inquiry illuminates multiple approaches over a period of time. Another new direction examined here is staff development for adult literacy educators in community colleges which comprise about 15% of program providers (Development Associates, 1992). Finally, the recursive application of adult learning theory to staff development for adult literacy practitioners contributes to the growing knowledge base of professional development and adult learning.

The final test of significance for research is its implications for practice. Dixon (1995) pointed out that, “due to lack of research, very little is

known about the actual process which practitioners go through as they are acquiring the knowledge and skill which they need to do their job[s] well” (p. 102). By developing detailed descriptions and analysis of four participants’ experiences, this inquiry offers staff developers distinct and complex stories of practitioners’ learning. Finally, the emphasis on practitioner as learner in this investigation offers other educators a window on their own learning.

Review of Research about ABE Staff Development

The lack of research about professional development for adult literacy practitioners was a common theme among the reports of research, but a comprehensive search of the literature since 1966 revealed a number of relevant reports. The nineteen studies reviewed below were primarily concerned with three broad purposes:

- determining content for staff development,
- examination of existing programs, and
- evaluating new models of staff development.

The literature review which follows is divided into three sections according to these purposes.

Determining Content for Staff Development

Over half of the investigations about adult literacy staff development aimed to identify appropriate content for training. They can be divided into two major categories: assessment of teachers’ training needs (Bryant & Antusa, 1973; Campbell, Rachal, & Pierce, 1983; Crew & Easton, 1992; Mezirow & Irish, 1974; Spear, Mocker, Zinn, & Sherk, 1972a, 1972b, 1973; Stafford, 1981) and identification of necessary competencies for teachers (Leahy, 1992; Mattran, 1977; Mocker, 1974; Nunes & Halloran, 1987; D. Smith, 1978; R. Smith, 1972).

Needs Assessment

Within a year after the passage of the 1966 Adult Education Act, “A report by the Xerox Corporation called for a ‘continuing attack on the problem of teacher preparation’ and recommended that the federal government initiate a program to professionalize the area of adult basic education” (Leahy, 1992, p. 22). Six major studies about the content of teacher preparation for ABE programs were undertaken at both national and state levels in the early during the following 17 years.

The specific intent of the first national project, the Feasibility Study of Multiple Alternatives for the Training of Adult Education Teachers and Administrators (Spear et al., 1973) was recommendation of guidelines for funding and structuring teacher training to the U.S. Office of Education. Its current importance is due to the portrayal of early ABE staff development it provided. Data for the study were collected in two surveys. The first survey queried federal and state agencies in an attempt to collect comprehensive and accurate information about programs and to identify successful model programs. The second survey sought to ascertain students, teachers, and local program administrators’ perceptions of training needs.

Results indicated that 18,584 of the 23,241 teachers involved in ABE had received some kind of training in 1971, but information about programs was neither complete nor comparable enough to establish the intended guidelines (Spear et al., 1972a). Instead the researchers listed ten characteristics which they regretted to say captured the “state of the art” in ABE teacher training. Five of them had implications for or persisted in later research:

- It was not possible to identify success factors or components from statements about the programs made by respondents.
- Content, format, and location did not appear to be major factors in successful models.
- The “quality and unique characteristics of the training staff” (Spear et al., 1972a, p. 53) seemed to be the only significant difference between outstanding, average, and ineffective programs.

- Colleges and universities were the major resources for training programs.
- Program planning and development were limited by funding and time.

The second survey conducted by Spear et al. (1972b) produced responses from 1,182 students, 123 teachers, and 22 local program administrators about the qualifications they considered most important for instructors. Nearly half of students ranked knowledge of subject matter above other factors such as knowing how to teach and understanding students. Teachers, on the other hand, chose effective teaching procedures and relating to students above knowledge of subject. The authors speculated that students might not know the effect of method on subject matter knowledge, but did not consider that teachers' rankings might simply reflect their confidence in their subject-matter knowledge.

In their conclusions about teachers' qualifications, the researchers discussed an issue which appeared repeatedly in studies about staff development: elementary and secondary-certified teachers were prevalent in the workforce in adult literacy programs. Mezirow (1970) responded to the same issue during an oral presentation of interim findings from a national study of ABE programs. In reply to a question about the use of K-12 teachers, he reported "a pattern of teaching that was very much like elementary school" (p. 94) and noted the absence from literacy programs of effective practices that were elsewhere standard in adult education. However, he was equivocal about "whether that argue[d] in favor of a different teacher or different training for existing teachers" (p. 94). Spear et al. likewise speculated about the use of certified elementary and secondary teachers in adult literacy:

Professional educators have perhaps the wrong basic preparation and by experience establish habits and practices that may reduce their effectiveness as adult educators. . . . Elementary teachers, viewed by administrators as the most likely adult literacy instructors, frequently build patterns of behavior that include condescension, authority, favoritism for high achievers, and preference for students with values and behavior similar to their own. (Spear et al., 1973, p. 14)

In their conclusions to the feasibility study, the research team recommended establishment of regional and national staff development institutions, but did not identify “the appropriate behaviors and ways to help teachers adopt those behaviors” which they had asserted at the outset were among the “most critical needs of the field” (Spear et al., 1973, p. 17). Their hesitancy was due in part to a finding which disconcerted them and which foreshadowed the findings of similar national studies undertaken later:

The most singular discovery emerging from the nearly 18 months of study devoted to this project is how little is known about Adult Basic Education teacher training by those most closely associated with it—its supporters, administrators, practitioners and participants. This problem attends all of adult education, but comes more quickly and sharply into focus with adult literacy staff development when systematic inquiry is made into existing circumstances and conditions. Its literature is scattered; its records imprecise or missing altogether; its costs uncalculated; its students and teachers uncounted and unknown; its objectives obscure; and its organization adrift. (Spear et al., 1973, p. 1)

Surveys, like those conducted by Spear et al., were used frequently to specify content for staff development (Bryant & Antusa, 1973; Campbell, Rachal, & Pierce, 1983; Crew & Easton, 1992; Mezirow & Irish, 1974; Moore, 1979; Stafford, 1981; Williams, 1983). Reliability and validity were not addressed in any of the survey projects. Samples were not representative (Mezirow & Irish, 1974), too small for the specified level of confidence (Spear et al., 1973), or even unknown in one study in which the researchers lost the list of respondents (Bryant & Antusa, 1973). However, similarities in findings among several investigations gave them some credibility.

The area of need most often reported was how to teach adults (Bryant & Antusa, 1973; Campbell et al., 1983; Crew & Easton, 1992; Mezirow & Irish, 1974; Moore, 1979; Stafford, 1981; Williams, 1983). More specific topics given high priority were directly related to the need to adapt elementary and secondary practices to adults, including selection and revision of materials and motivation and retention of students (Bryant & Antusa, 1973; Campbell et al., 1983; Crew & Easton, 1992; Mezirow & Irish, 1974; Stafford, 1981).

Several of the studies reported disagreement among teachers, administrators, and higher education staff about the necessary qualifications for professional adult literacy teachers. Spear et al. (1973) found that half of the administrators ranked training in specific subject matter highest, compared to only about one-eighth of the teachers. They also found that administrators preferred instructors who were elementary teachers, while teachers themselves contended that specifically trained, full-time instructors would be the most successful. Similarly, when Bryant and Antusa (1973) surveyed superintendents, higher education staff involved in adult literacy, local administrators, and non-administrative personnel in adult literacy in Minnesota, they found that the majority of teachers supported adult education certification while administrators and higher education staff opposed it. In a separate inquiry which sought to establish priorities for federal special demonstration project grants, teachers and administrators did not agree on the priority to be placed on in-service training itself (Mezirow & Irish, 1974). Administrators ranked it second of seven choices while teachers did not even place it in the top three. Later, Stafford (1981) found that teachers in Washington State viewed college courses as most effective, while both local coordinators and state-level administrators preferred staff development planned and offered by local programs.

Competencies for Teachers

One of the researchers involved in the 1973 national study (Spear et al., 1973) later undertook "an extensive search of the literature and final reports of university adult literacy teacher training institutes" (Mocker, 1974, p. 1) in order to identify appropriate teaching behaviors or competencies for adult literacy teachers. A set of statements derived from those sources was refined, validated by two expert panels, then ranked by 234 teachers and administrators. This process produced a list of 291 competencies divided into three levels (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) in each of four areas (scope and goals of adult education, curriculum, the adult literacy learner, and instructional process). Although Mocker's stated purpose was to outline criteria for planning training programs and hiring new teachers, the list was too long and too unfocused to be useful. Of 153

competencies ranked above the mean by participants, 94 addressed instructional processes in arithmetic, reading, language arts, vocational education, community resources, and many other topics. The usefulness of the list was further weakened by the inclusion of both general approaches and very specific methods, and the absence of any explicit philosophy of education or instruction.

Mocker's list of competencies was the basis for three other competency studies, the latest completed in 1992 (Leahy, 1992; Mattran, 1977; D. Smith, 1978). Mattran's primary purpose was to determine if the previously found divergence of administrators' and teachers' priorities for pre-service training would be supported, but he found no significant difference between the groups. He did, however, call attention to the contrast between the range of skills and knowledge encompassed by the competencies and the status of the teachers. "Perhaps no other class of teaching professional in this era of relatively narrow academic specialization is required to be prepared to do so much on behalf of the learner than this group of mostly part-time teachers" (Mattran, 1977, p. 268).

Nunes and Halloran (1987) used a DACUM² process to identify generic competencies which could to evaluate the elements of a future training design. The researchers asked "a group of adult literacy instructors who were perceived to be 'successful' . . . to reflect on their own performance and determine what made them 'successful'" (Nunes & Halloran, 1987, p. 1). The teachers and a separate group of administrators identified eight very broad competencies under which more specific skills could be classified: "understanding the adult learner, personal qualities, knowledge of the field, knowledge of teaching techniques, creativity, communication/interpersonal skills, professionalism and organization management" (Nunes & Halloran, 1987, p. 3). The competencies were then ranked and expanded upon by an expert panel. Although the list was much shorter than Mocker's, the topics were similarly diverse. Like earlier needs assessments, the report emphasized the importance of knowledge about adult learners. One notable detail of the project was the difficulty researchers had recruiting the

²DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) is a procedure developed by the National Academy for Vocational Education to perform task analyses in workplaces in order to develop training curricula.

“successful” teachers. When the sponsoring agency asked for nominations of successful adult literacy teachers in Florida, only two names were offered. To explain this dilemma, the investigators paraphrased a presentation by Fingeret who had “argue[d] that there is a lack of clarity among adult literacy instructors about their own success” (as cited in Nunes & Halloran, 1987, p. 2).

In 1992, Leahy undertook re-validation of Mocker’s 1974 list to provide “some indication” (p. 185) to programs about expectations for teachers. She found 11 statistically significant differences in rankings between 1974 and 1991. Leahy attributed these differences primarily to three changes in the broad adult literacy/GED environment: the 1988 revisions to the GED math test, the emergence of a process-oriented approach to reading instruction, and an increased emphasis on student assessment. She suggested that the number of competencies be reduced by eliminating low-ranking items and duplications, and by clustering similar items to create subsets. She also recommended additional competencies to address new topics including learning disabilities, specialized literacies, and technology. Like earlier studies, Leahy noted differences between teachers and administrators in priorities assigned to some competencies. Overall, she maintained the value of the list as a “ranked listing of essential competencies for adult literacy teachers around which content for pre-service and in-service training activities could be developed” (p. 185).

Competency-based training for teachers has not appeared in the literature since the Leahy study. In 1992, as states prepared staff development plans for newly-funded state literacy resource centers, Quigley called competency-based training “the fix of the moment” (p. 113). He asserted that defining teaching so narrowly meant losing “not only control of our own field, but part of our moral integrity and purpose” (p. 118). Instead, he referred states to the model programs selected by Pelavin Associates in one of the studies reviewed in the next section.

Examination of Staff Development Programs

More recent studies of ABE staff development have focused on improving state and national ABE staff development systems (Crocker, 1988;

Fingeret & Cockley, 1992; Kutner, Sherman, Webb, Herman, Tibbetts, Hemphill, Terdy, & Jones, 1992). A common thread among the reports of these projects was use of K-12 staff development models as frameworks.

Analysis of Several Statewide Programs

In order to describe state ABE staff development programs and develop useful models for them, Crocker (1988) gathered data from planning and reporting documents of selected states and interviewed state staff development directors and program directors. She then compared characteristics of five of the state programs to two K-12 staff development models. Because none of the programs met all of the recommendations from staff development literature, she concluded that they were not successful and hypothesized that literature from traditional education settings might not have application for adult literacy.

The Study of ABE/ESL Training Approaches

In 1991, the U.S. Department of Education, responding to federal literacy legislation, commissioned Pelavin Associates to conduct a second national study of staff development in federally-funded adult literacy programs. The investigators emphasized the importance of staff development, citing "widespread concern that inadequate training is a major impediment to the effective delivery of adult education services" (Kutner, et al., 1992, p. v).

The report echoed conclusions of earlier research about the lack of comprehensive and comparable data about adult literacy staff development:

Although federal moneys have been available to states for teacher training for approximately 15 years, staff development programs funded with these moneys have not been examined in a systematic manner (Crocker, 1988). Instead, the field has generally relied on sporadic and incomplete program reports, graduate student studies, self-promotional articles, and word of

mouth information. (Tibbetts, Kutner, Hemphill, & Jones, 1991, p. 2)

The Pelavin project sought to remedy this lack of systematic research by conducting a “comprehensive examination of training for adult basic and English-as-a-second language (adult literacy and ESL) teachers and volunteer instructors” (Kutner, et al., 1992, p. v). Ultimately, the researchers hoped that the information would lead to a “more focused and integrated approach to providing effective staff development” (Kutner et al., 1992, p. v).

The project was implemented in two phases. The first sought to describe current delivery and content of training, the second to produce a series of training modules for use in the field. In order to accomplish Phase I, the researchers carried out three activities: a review of “the literature and current thinking” (Kutner et al., 1992, p. v) on staff development in adult education, compilation of information about state staff development programs from annual reports submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, and visits to nine state and local staff development programs that had been identified as “providing successful training services” (Kutner et al., 1992, p. 3).

The Delivery and Content of Training for Adult Education Teachers and Volunteer Instructors (Tibbetts et al., 1991), one of the project’s reports, described teachers and volunteers, state requirements for certification and training, factors influencing staff development, and the format and content of training. The researchers characterized teachers as “almost as varied as the student population” and found that approximately 90% of teachers were part-time (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 4). Like earlier researchers, they questioned the widespread use of grade K-12 teachers, whom they identified as approximately 60% of the instructional staff in adult literacy/ESL. “The problem with this situation is that while full-time elementary and secondary teachers may be highly educated, they are not necessarily knowledgeable about either adult characteristics that influence learning or teaching procedures that are appropriate for adults” (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 5-6).

The factors found to influence staff development were all negative: limited financial resources, difficulties in scheduling services for staff who are part-time and often separated geographically, high turnover rates, and

minimal state or local certification requirements. The most frequent formats for training were workshops, conferences, and university coursework. Action research, self-directed learning, and peer-coaching were noted as emerging models. Researchers found that only one topic, curriculum and strategy selection, was listed by more than half of the states as content for training.

The Pelavin Study's conclusions, which were never explicitly linked to the findings, were recommendations about the delivery and content of training. Echoing the earlier study by Spear et al (1972a), Sherman, Kutner, Webb, and Herman (1991) found that experienced and dedicated training staff were one key element of effective staff development systems. Referring to K-12 research literature for "useful suggestions for providing adult education training services" (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 63), the researchers made the following recommendations about the structure and format. Staff development in ABE/ESL should:

- be based on systematically-identified needs,
- involve participants in planning and decision-making,
- maintain a positive climate for growth and change,
- show evidence of systematic decision making,
- reflect up-to-date knowledge bases,
- reflect continuity and a relationship between different types of activities, and
- include follow-up activities to ensure that skills have been transferred from training to classroom settings. (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 63)

Like earlier studies, the Pelavin project recommended an expansive list of topics which included specific subject matter (reading, writing, mathematics, and second language acquisition) and pedagogical areas relevant to the differences between adult and child learners: "For example, adults are more self-directed than children, have a reservoir of experience, and want learning to be problem centered" (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 65). Also named were learning disabilities, cultural differences, opportunities for student success and immediate feedback, and second language teaching.

In Phase II of the project, Pelavin Associates developed and disseminated eight staff development modules. Each one provided a script for a two-part workshop which included theory, demonstration, practice, structured feedback, and application with follow-up. The topics reflected the recommendations in the Phase I report: adult learners, communicative ESL, student assessment, lesson planning, group/team learning, using volunteers in the classroom, whole language, and mathematics.

Virginia Staff Development Evaluation

A smaller scale assessment of staff development programs was conducted in Virginia at the same time as the national project, but with very different purposes and assumptions (Fingeret & Cockley, 1992). The researchers proposed to look at staff development in ways which would “enhance the ability of the system to respond to adult learners” (p. 1), rejecting the traditional “expert model” of staff development which they defined as “policies and practices that, implicitly or explicitly, assume literacy practitioners like their adult students have deficiencies needing remediation” (p. 5). Alternatively, they proposed a staff development model in which “teachers’ experience and knowledge are valued and provide the basis for continuing inquiry, learning and action” (Fingeret & Cockley 1992, p. 6). They also made problematic the assumed relationship between staff development and instructional effectiveness in adult literacy education, asserting that there was not enough empirical research to justify that assumption.

The research project aimed to determine “the extent to which staff development mechanisms in Virginia . . . meet teachers’ needs for skill and knowledge development” (Fingeret & Cockley, 1992, p. 2). Using a variety of naturalistic techniques with individuals and groups of practitioners, the program evaluators inquired about teachers’ learning, about their first night of teaching, about the things that puzzled them in their teaching experiences, and about the type of help with their own development they would find most helpful at this point in their careers.

In their findings, Fingeret and Cockley recounted teachers' own experiences of learning from their students and colleagues, as well as from independent study of professional literature. They noted teachers' desire to belong to a statewide community, to be recognized for their work, and to be part of a coherent plan based on shared beliefs and values. Drawing on the their own explicit philosophies as well as their findings, Fingeret and Cockley recommended that Virginia adopt an inquiry-based staff development model and predicate all staff development activities on four premises.

Teachers' knowledge is valued.

Teachers are helped to use what they know to continue learning.

There is a focus on program improvement as well as individual change.

Staff development is a continuing process involving administrators as well as teachers. (p. 77)

The Virginia evaluation led to implementation of a new state staff development framework, based on a plan created by practitioners (Drennon, 1994). In the introduction to the plan, the thirty members of the planning team made explicit "what they knew about their own learning, based on their own experiences" (Drennon, 1994, p. 7). They asserted that they learned in meaningful, relevant contexts, and through collaboration, hands-on experience and practice, observation and modeling, and feedback. The teachers on the planning team reported that psychological safety, overt goals, and a reflective phase were necessary to their learning. They were also "self-motivated" when there was "high interest, enjoyment, fascination, and curiosity involved" (Drennon, 1994, p. 7). The staff development planning team recommended an inquiry-based staff development system because they believed it would provide a coherent theoretical perspective, promote staff development as a process for program improvement rather than individual growth, and encourage practitioners to acquire and generate knowledge actively within their own educational communities (Drennon, 1994, p. 22).

New Models for Staff Development in Adult Literacy

The final area of relevant literature comprises research about staff development models which have emerged primarily since the passage of the National Literacy Act of 1991. The most visible was action research, variously called practitioner or teacher research, or practitioner inquiry. It was the focus of four projects reviewed here (Fingeret & Pates, 1992; Hill, Lawrence, & Pritsos, 1995; Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1992a; Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1992b; Lytle, Belzer, & Reumann, 1993; Pates & Fingeret, 1994). Another model was described in a report of a study circle support group (Dixon, 1995). All five of these investigations were distinguished by smaller scale, participatory assumptions, and some delineation of individual participants in staff development.

Practitioner Research

With funding from the National Center on Adult Literacy, the University of Pennsylvania initiated the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) in the spring of 1991. Two interim reports described the participants, the literacy programs where they worked, and their planned practitioner-research topics (Lytle et al., 1992a; Lytle et al., 1992b; Lytle et al., 1993). The University of Pennsylvania project itself was distinguished by its definition of practitioner inquiry as not only a social and collaborative process, but a critical one. By this definition, according to Lytle et al. (1992a), practitioners should use a field-based perspective to question assumptions behind current theory and research and “make problematic the social, political, and cultural arrangements that structure literacy learning and teaching in particular contexts” (p. i). In a report of preliminary findings from the project, the researchers asserted that all staff development should acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of practitioners as a resource, focus on practitioners’ own interests and questions, provide opportunities for connection among them, and encourage them to contribute to the knowledge base of adult literacy (Lytle et al., 1992a, p. ii).

Staff from Literacy South both implemented and investigated two other practitioner research projects (Fingeret & Pates, 1992; Pates & Fingeret, 1994). The first was a demonstration project at two community colleges, funded by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges. The researchers called the report of this project a “story within the story” (Fingeret & Pates, 1992, p. 2) as they related the research conducted by the community college educators (the micro projects) and their own research (the macro project). The macro project accomplished its original goal of establishing practical guidelines for practitioner research projects, but the most relevant findings concerned the participants’ own assessment of the outcomes. While the practitioners did not report immediate changes in their practice, they did report changes in the way they thought about their work, and predicted future action in the specific areas they had researched. Moreover, the Literacy South researchers found that after the action research projects, “All the practitioners think more deeply about philosophy, theory and practice. They also have developed a deeper understanding of research and a deeper belief in their own knowledge” (Fingeret & Pates, 1992, p. 46).

The second practitioner research project investigated by staff from Literacy South was funded by the National Institute for Literacy (Pates & Fingeret, 1994). In this study, Pates and Fingeret intentionally looked at practitioner research as staff development. “A major purpose of this Project was, therefore, to see if it is possible to identify what types of learning (and by extension staff development) take place during practitioner research, and where and how this happens” (1994, p. 5). Each of the twelve participants were interviewed before and after they had conducted their own inquiries, and the staff development outcomes of the larger project were reported in excerpts of those interviews. The Literacy South investigators noted that the practitioners had developed new support networks and perceptions of themselves as “writers, teachers and researchers” (Pates & Fingeret, 1994, p. 124). Again they found that participants articulated “how their way of thinking about their work has changed, and how their intentions about future work incorporate their learning from this project” rather than immediate changes in their classroom practice (Pates & Fingeret, 1994, p. 124). Pates and Fingeret also reported more personal changes such as enhanced sense of confidence, consolidation of knowledge, deeper

understanding of work, and a sense of power in relation to roles. The active involvement of directors at both of the research sites had the double benefit of enhancing the administrators' professional development and encouraging them to support continued practitioner research in their programs.

The final example of practitioner inquiry was a small action research project conducted by three staff development coordinators in two community based literacy programs in New York City (Hill et al., 1995). They asked teachers about their "the learning processes" (p. 646) in order to find out how practitioners' perceptions of themselves as learners influenced their learning in professional development situations. Using small focus groups and interviews, the researchers uncovered themes around the emotional aspects of learning, the importance of reflection and peer discussion as staff development, and differences between teachers educated in and out of the United States. They concluded that "Teachers need to become students of their own learning" (p. 652).

Study Circles

Dixon (1995) intended to "examine how a study circle support group can be used by community-based literacy programs as an appropriate vehicle for staff and program development" (p. 9). The site of her research was a study circle³ funded by the Study Circle Resources Center at a community-based literacy program in Massachusetts. The study circle began with a formal syllabus on the topic of the social context of literacy, but during the first five sessions, abandoned the syllabus for more immediate issues. This changed Dixon's role and the intent of her research: "I changed to my research mode and focused on what could be learned about practitioners and practice from listening to the natural flow of conversation" (p. 142). The contrast between the written syllabus and the "lived syllabus" illustrated how adequate time and space moved the focus of staff development beyond

³Dixon defined study circles as "a democratic approach to education where a group of peers learn about an issue together through discussion. The goal of the study circle is deeper understanding and deliberation that can lead to individual or group action on social or political issue" (1995, p. 124).

an academic topic to a much more meaningful one—"the perception of one's roles in relation to the social context" (p 146)—and then further to the task of creating and articulating the praxis of the program itself.

Dixon's questions addressed the creation of a staff development model that would fit real practice in terms of time, context and purpose, and allow educators to build the knowledge base. Her conclusion, therefore, was a set general recommendations, "in keeping with a tradition set by other researchers on effective staff development" (p. 324). She asserted that staff development in community-based literacy programs should:

1. Reinvent old theories and build new theories from reflection on actual practice.
2. Focus on problem posing and solving rather than topic discussion.
3. Be based on authentic experience.
4. Be embedded in the social context of actual programs.
5. Be on-going and flexible in order to incorporate emerging issues in the content.
6. Have program development as its goal.
7. Connect programs to a larger system that is working to change social and education systems. (p. 325-327)

Theoretical Framework

Three common findings are apparent from the research on staff development for adult literacy educators:

- In-service staff development is perceived to be critical to the success of adult literacy programs.
- Most adult literacy practitioners are trained as elementary and secondary teachers and need additional training about teaching adults.

- There are significant barriers to effective staff development including high rates of part-time staff and turnover, staff that is dispersed over many locations and times of day, and disagreement about the content of staff development.

Existing research produced lists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which might be important, and somewhat conflicting recommendations about what staff development programs ought to be. Studies of new models of staff development encouraged use of practitioner research and study circles. However, as Dixon (1995) pointed out in her own examination of study circles, almost nothing has been revealed about how adult literacy educators learn. "Due to lack of research, very little is known about the actual process which practitioners go through as they are acquiring the knowledge and skills which they need to do their job well" (p. 102).

To understand what practitioners experience, investigators must examine complex interactions among the underlying processes, overt events, and tacit conceptions of teaching and learning that constitute professional development. Research on staff development for adult literacy educators has simply not attempted this. One apparent reason for this failure is lack of a conceptualization of staff development that goes below its surface features. Fingeret, writing about policy in adult literacy education, refers to one aspect of this omission when she discusses the failure of experts to examine their own implicit frameworks. "The literature in staff development in adult basic education, however, reflects a lack of critical analysis of the assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes that are embedded in current staff development practices. The underlying philosophy for staff development is treated as unproblematic" (Fingeret, 1992, p. 22). In fact, it was difficult to discern an underlying philosophy in traditional staff development evaluation other than a deficit model which assumed that adult literacy teachers, like their students, needed to be "fixed" and that the challenge of staff development was to do so in the most efficient way possible. "It does seem clear that we continue to labor under the deficit model of education when considering staff development; in other words, adult education practitioners, like their students, are assumed to come to their work as empty vessels to be filled by outside knowledge and expertise"

(Lytle & McGuire, 1993, p. 10). Promoting this view, one policy analyst suggested that the function of staff development was "to infuse the state of the art into the minds of literacy practitioners" (Foster, 1988, p. 14).

This study assumed a different framework, one that viewed staff development as process, as practitioners' learning experiences, and the meaning they constructed from those experiences. Such a conceptualization clearly placed this exploration of staff development in the framework of adult learning theory. Several of the adult basic education researchers actually suggested and rejected such a framework (Pates & Fingeret, 1994; Tibbetts et al., 1991). Discussing the outcomes for practitioners of conducting their own research, Pates and Fingeret (1994) made learning and staff development synonymous. "A major purpose of this Project was, therefore, to see if it is possible to identify what types of learning (and by extension staff development) take place during practitioner research, and where and how this happens" (p. 5). In the 1991 national study of ABE staff development, Tibbetts et al. actually proposed that the investigation should be grounded in adult learning theory. "Ideally, the content of adult education services, as well as training for teachers and volunteer instructors, should be based on a universally accepted understanding of how adults learn" (Tibbetts et al., 1991, p. 36). However, they found the "wide range of alternative, and sometimes competing, theoretical constructions of adult learning" (p. 36) to be unmanageable. I propose instead that these multiple constructions offer a body of theory from which to draw or build conceptual frameworks for both implementing and investigating staff development for literacy educators.

Adult educators in other arenas have already looked to adult learning theory as a foundation for professional development. Cranton (1996a) drew on three theories of adult learning by proposing self-directed learning, critical reflection, and perspective transformation as the bases for professional development for all adult educators. "If adults learn by transforming their perspectives (Mezirow, 1991), or by reconstructing their experiences (Tennant & Pogson, 1995), then we should be able to apply our understanding of these processes to learning about educational practice" (p. 26). To understand how new community college faculty learn to teach, Keir (1991) turned to two theories from adult learning, experiential learning and reflection in action. Abbott (1990) used the theory of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1991) to inform her examination of how

facilitators in the church-based Cursillo Movement were trained and transformed. Brookfield (1995) extended his own theory of critical reflection to the practice of teaching, calling upon college instructors to be responsible for their own professional development.

Viewing professional development through adult learning theory has not been automatic even for adult educators. Cranton (1996a) pointed out that “historically, professional development for adult educators has focused on the techniques and technical skills required to transmit information or meet learners’ expressed needs. No theoretical framework or developmental model guided these endeavors” (p. 162). Some change began in the late eighties when adult education, which had traditionally been viewed strictly as an applied field, re-created itself as a field of study. This led to a new emphasis on theory building rather than solving problems of practice (Deshler & Hogan, 1989, p. 151). An outcome of this shift has been what Baskett and Marsick (1992) in a review of professional development literature called, “a virtual revolution” which resulted from “an understanding of learning from a learner’s perspective” (p. 9).

Boud and Griffin (1987) offered three compelling reasons to support this perspective. “First, and foremost, it is the learners who can learn and who must have access to meaningful knowledge about themselves and their learning. Second, learners who read about other learners’ experiences are likely to understand and therefore learn better” (p. 14). Finally, citing both Lewin and Freire, Boud and Griffin (1987) reminded us that in order to be effective teachers and facilitators of learning, we need to see things from the point of view of the learners: “If, paraphrasing Ausubel (1978), the most important thing for teachers to do is to ascertain what the learner already knows and teach accordingly, it behooves us to find out not only what the learner knows, but what the world looks like from his or her perspective” (p. 14). It is ironic that a framework which privileges learners’ own perspectives should be novel in the field of adult literacy education which prides itself on its attempts to understand literacy from the learner’s perspective. Paulo Freire, perhaps the best known of literacy workers internationally, repeatedly admonished educators to learn from their learners how to work with them.

Maciuka, Basseches, and Lipson (1994) recommended a way to research adult learning. “By listening to learners’ own perspectives on

learning, by privileging learners' knowledge rather than researchers' frameworks, issues of difference and complexity enter discussions of theory as well as practice and thus challenge researchers and practitioners to take the role of learners themselves" (p. 265). This inquiry attempted to understand the professional development experiences of practitioners by listening intently to and recounting their perspectives rather than by exploring any particular theory of adult learning. Connections to existing theories and possibilities of new ones were grounded in the experiences of the four participants. Therefore, references to specific adult learning theories follow and illuminate the practitioners' stories rather than appearing in this chapter as a framework from which the study began.

Preview of the Remainder of the Report

Chapter two describes the context of the study. It outlines the design and the specific methods which were used to gather and analyze information about the experiences of the practitioners. Chapters three through six constitute the descriptive accounts—the stories—of Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's experiences using their own frameworks and their own words. Chapter 7 is an analysis across the four cases. The final chapter offers possible implications for policy, practice, and further research about adult learning and adult literacy staff development.

2. Context and Design of the Study

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the learning experiences of four of the adult literacy practitioners who were part of the first cohort of the Oregon Field-Based Cohort Master's Program. I relied on a framework that viewed staff development as process, as practitioners' learning experiences and the meanings they created. Understanding the meanings practitioners themselves construct of their learning experiences is critical to creating staff development programs that help ABE practitioners to succeed. I pursued this understanding by relying on the participants' own reports of learning offered in interviews and in the final portfolios they assembled for the program; I then described, analyzed, and interpreted their stories. This chapter is generally organized in the same sequence in which I carried out the inquiry: the program in which the four participants were enrolled as the context of the study; the design including selection of participants, data collection, and data analysis; and a concluding section which

The nature of the singular community of learners who called themselves simply, "the Cohort," strongly influenced the design of the research. It shaped my introduction to the program and the expectations the participants and I had of each other. In the first section of this chapter I have described fundamental features of the ABE Cohort program: philosophy, structure, and content; participants; and the conspicuous emphasis on process in the program. In the second section, I describe the design of this study including how trustworthiness was established. The final section addresses the limitations of the investigation.

The Oregon Field-Based Master's Cohort Program

The 1992 Oregon State ABE Plan included the goal of increasing the professionalization of the field. That was also the stated goal of the master's degree program. Professionalization has a unique meaning in adult literacy programs in Oregon because practitioners are administrators and instructors in the community colleges. Like adult literacy practitioners nationally,

however, they were not required to have graduate degrees or certification in adult literacy. The creation of a graduate degree program jointly with Oregon State University (OSU) would itself represent an advance for the status of the field. The university was a logical partner to the Oregon Office of Community College Services (OCCS), the state ABE provider, because OSU staff had provided state-wide staff development for many years and currently houses the Western Center for Community College Development which provides coordination for all state ABE staff development activities.

While graduate programs are generally considered individual professional development, the Oregon State University program shared three fundamental characteristics with staff development: interagency collaboration, accessibility to practitioners, and restriction to current employees of adult literacy programs. Moreover it integrated regular staff development offerings into the course requirements. The proposed participant outcomes of increased instructional effectiveness, broader understanding of ABE programs and systems, completion of action research projects, and development of leadership skills were also expected to contribute as much to the field as to the individual.

The task force which designed the program was composed of directors of local ABE programs, a potential candidate for the program, and representatives of OCCS and OSU. It was charged with developing the program philosophy, stipulating entry requirements, and selecting the first entrants. Members of the task force envisioned a unique learning situation for adult literacy professionals who work with diverse populations in a variety of settings. They wanted graduate students/practitioners to experience individual and group learning and demonstrate outcomes in a culminating portfolio. The task force specified accessibility to practitioners as a primary condition and stipulated that the program be located off-campus. Access was further promoted through a variety of course schedules and delivery methods including weekend meetings and distance learning technologies. The emphasis on access and collaboration fit the School of Education's commitment to a cohort model for delivering graduate programs and its encouragement of group problem solving and critical reflection as a means to promote democratic values and practices. The two came together in the cohort model which OSU used for scheduling, delivering, and staffing the program.

Cohort learning and support became so integral to the program that participants and staff alike called it simply, "the Cohort." Cohort took on two meanings. One was the program itself, which could not be separated from the second, the relationship among the participants. Students were more likely to say, and adult literacy colleagues across the state more likely to understand, that they were "in the Cohort" than that they were enrolled in a graduate program at OSU.

Classes in the ten quarters of the Oregon Field-Based Master's Cohort Program were delivered either in times and places accessible to Cohort members or via distance learning technologies. The table on the next page summarizes the program content and delivery techniques showing the provisions for access. During the first two quarters, winter and spring of 1994, workshops were held in three different sites around the state, and whole ABE Cohort meetings were scheduled on two weekends at central locations. The Cohort spent parts of both of the two summer quarters on campus. The Oregon educational satellite broadcasting network, EDNET, was used to deliver classes during the 1994-95 school year. In the final three academic quarters, the Cohort met on one weekend each month. Two of the required courses, the internship and the action research project, extended over several quarters. Many of the practitioner/students also enrolled in an elective class on the World Wide Web.

The variety of media, especially the use of satellite and on-line formats, provided practitioners experience with new technologies. Participants and the ABE Cohort coordinator also used e-mail extensively to discuss organizational issues and arrange logistics. The weekend classes and summer residencies resulted in a retreat-like climate which created and supported the solidarity among the participants.

Within the constraints of the university curriculum and faculty, planners sought to tailor course content to the practitioners' situations. (Catalog descriptions and the program of studies can be found in Appendix A.) Required courses covered instructional strategies, design, and assessment; adult learning and development; counseling, and cross-cultural communication. The action research project and internship provided even more individualized opportunities for the Cohort to explore specialized topics that were meaningful to them in their own settings.

Summary of Cohort Schedule

Quarter	Used title	Major Assignments	Schedule	Delivery
Winter 1994	Orientation Adult Learner Module Math Module	Teaching practicum Team paper	Weekends	Retreat & Regional workshops
Spring 1994	Whole Language Module ESL Module	Teaching practicum Team paper Team presentation	Weekends	Regional workshops & Retreat
Summer 1994*	Adult Development Instructional Systems Action Research 120 hour Internship	Team presentation Historiography Design project Report Log and Report	August 17-21 September 8-11	OSU campus
Fall 1994	Principles & Practices	Team presentation Reflection paper	Weekly & one weekend	EDNET & Retreat
Winter 1995	Learning Theories	Team presentation Reflection paper	Weekly & one weekend	EDNET & Retreat
Spring 1995	Assessment	Consolidation paper Assessment Plan	Weekly & one weekend	EDNET & Retreat
Summer 1995*	Cross-Cultural/ Counseling	Dialogue journal Culture study	June 14-17 August 23-28	Retreat & OSU campus
Fall 1995	Leadership	Philosophy of leadership	Weekends	Retreat
Winter 1996	Synthesis: Literacy, Numeracy, & Language Acquisition	Definition of literacy Lesson Plan	Weekends	Retreat
Spring 1996	The Web Class Portfolio Comprehensive Examination	Design Philosophy of education		WWW

*Summer sessions included the annual statewide ABE conference in August.

**These courses were designed to be completed over several quarters. Participants presented their action research reports at summer conference in 1995.

The culmination of the program was a comprehensive take-home examination and a portfolio presented and defended before graduation. Participants themselves selected the work to be included in the portfolio and the approach they would use for organizing it, but five elements were required:

1. Statement of ABE philosophy
2. Statement of leadership philosophy
3. Video-taped lesson with detailed lesson plan
4. Final reflection
5. Current resume

Participants

Of the 29 practitioners who began the Master of Education (EdM) program in January of 1994, 26 were still enrolled in the final quarter of the program, 22 graduated in June of 1996, and the remaining four graduated the following year. There were 22 teachers and four administrators from a variety of adult literacy, GED preparation, high school completion, ESL, workplace literacy, and family literacy programs. Twenty-three worked in community colleges sites: on or off-campus, a county jail and a state prison, a teen parent program, and a workplace literacy class in a factory that produced doors. Two participants worked at Job Corps and one worked for a county community action agency. During the second year of the program, one Cohort member was appointed to the state legislature.

Their literacy programs were spread throughout Oregon, reflecting the size and geographic diversity of the state itself. The distances were a crucial factor. Only five participants lived within an hour of the OSU campus. Ten were from areas that were more than five hours away, and one participant routinely flew to Portland in order to get a ride the rest of the way to class. Just as geography compelled off-campus delivery modes, it determined the work teams which became an important factor in the Cohort's development. Participants were immediately assigned to regional teams which produced three collaborative papers and a poster presentation for courses during the first two quarters. Dealing with co-authorship transacted over fax, phone,

and e-mail, they encountered unfamiliar academic expectations, group dynamics, and complex technology all at the same time.

These are not unusual challenges for adult learners, nor were the conflicts arising from job and family responsibilities unique to the Cohort. However, the availability of their own programs and classrooms as contexts and laboratories for course assignments affirmed the task force's decision to require that all participants be employed in ABE. However, the fact that they were graduate students who were also teachers or administrators in adult education created a paradox. One participant likened it to a Mobius strip, an analogy for the impossibility of telling teaching from learning when adult learners learned about adult learning while they taught adult learners.

Emphasis on Process

In the fall of 1995, the eighth quarter of the program, I conducted group interviews with ABE Cohort members to collect information for a formative program evaluation. As I listened to participants' responses to questions about the program, I was struck by their consistent emphasis on process over content. It was this emphasis which created the dual realities in the Oregon Field-Based Cohort Master's Program: the formal graduate program initiated by the collaboration of institutions and the informal community which emerged from interaction of the participants and faculty. The institutional program consisted of quarters, courses, and graduation requirements, while the community incorporated the participants and their interactions. Negotiating the two realities was the task of the program coordinator. He dealt with the university bureaucracy, responded to the dialogue journals, facilitated the seminars, and taught some of the classes. He made coexistence among the elements possible.

The program's underlying philosophy, committed participants, and the processes of collaboration and reflection engendered the ABE Cohort which became a major character in the learning experience. It evolved its own language, history, and standards of behavior. To explore the interaction between this important character, the participants, and learning itself, I sought an approach that could deal with process rather than product, and

that privileged participants' own meanings over any preconceived framework.

Design of the Study

A qualitative approach was indicated both by the inquiry's purpose of exploring experience and its location in a program that so sharply emphasized process over product. However, qualitative research has come to have multiple meanings. Denzin and Lincoln (1994a) offered a generic definition in the introduction to the Handbook of Qualitative Research.

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 2)

Discussing the research tools needed to understand adult learning, Brookfield (1990) specified two conditions which call for the use of qualitative approaches. One was the absence of an accepted and established research model that included a well-developed body of literature, reliable, valid, and easily replicable data collection instruments; and generally agreed upon concepts to inform discussion and analysis. The second condition was a high degree of complexity in the subject to be studied. These, then, were the factors that indicated a qualitative methodology for this inquiry: a natural rather than experimental setting, the intent to make sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people make of it, the absence of a well-established research paradigm, and highly complex subject matter.

Once methodology has been selected, Marshall and Rossman (1995) point out that the researcher must choose strategies and methods which should follow logically from the purpose of the study. They compared strategy to a plan and methods to the tools used to accomplish it. Accordingly, an exploratory project which attempts to understand a phenomenon and the meanings attached to it is best accomplished through participant-observation, in-depth interviewing, and document analysis. Since my primary goal was to reveal the practitioners' understanding of the

phenomenon of their own learning, participant-observation was not a research tool. Instead, I used it to become familiar with the program and build rapport with the practitioner/students. My sources of data were in-depth interviews and participants' own writing. These were exactly the tools Brookfield (1990) suggested for use in studying adults learning. "Something as complex and sophisticated as understanding someone else's meaning schemes and meaning perspectives can be accomplished only through talking to them intensively and at length, through watching them closely, and through reading their personal jottings" (p. 331).

These choices were also consonant with my determination to make this study as participatory as possible without asking the participants to become co-researchers. Participatory research is characterized by the same democratic values and practices which were espoused by the EdM program itself. I used active interviewing as one of two major means of data collection. This technique encourages participatory research by positioning the respondent as a "kind of researcher in his or her own right" who "actively composes meaning by way of situated, assisted inquiry" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 29). I also kept participants informed about the progress of the research, obtaining feedback from them, and negotiating meanings with them. Additionally, I attempted to minimize overly specialized language about research or about educational philosophy which might exclude practitioners either from the investigation itself or from the report. Given that the participants, like the researcher, were themselves practitioners and students of adult learning, a study that did not rely on participatory strategies would have made little sense.

The actual methods are presented below under three headings: participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. In fact, these processes were not sequential, but overlapping in the iterative fashion which is typical of qualitative research.

Participant Selection

In order to carry out an intensive exploration of participants' experiences, I limited the sample to four individuals chosen purposefully

from the Cohort members who volunteered. According to Merriam (1988), purposive sampling is based on an assumption that a researcher should select participants as she would select consultants—those from whom she is most likely to “discover, understand, [and] gain insight” (p. 48) about the topic of inquiry.

Because I had worked with the practitioner/students for over a year and conducted focus group sessions with them prior to participant selection, I could match the volunteers with concepts that had emerged from my review of the literature. The first participant I chose was Anne⁴, a basic skills program director, because of her comments about her attempts to ground her administrative practices in what happened in the classroom. I felt she might illuminate the relationship between staff and program development. The second participant I chose was Bill, a Job Corps GED instructor, who credited the Cohort’s support with his ability to critically reflect, thus suggesting both reflection and collaboration which were important strategies included in the planning of the OSU program. I then selected Candy, a basic skills instructor for Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) clients. Her action research project had evidently changed her practice of writing instruction, but she also seemed skeptical about the program. In selecting the last participant, I looked for an opportunity to explore the relationship between practice and definitions of literacy as emphasized by Venezky et al. (1989), Lytle and Wolfe (1992), and Fingeret (1994). I found this opportunity with Emily, who taught at a county jail and whose sample lesson plan manifested an evolving definition of literacy which moved her sharply away from a deficit view of learners.

Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily were the sample. Their ages ranged from 42 to 45. They were diverse although not intended to be representative of the Cohort: three teachers and an administrator, three women and one man, three employees of community colleges and one employee of the Job Corps. They were located across the state in varying sites and worked with varied populations.

⁴All names of participants and OSU staff are pseudonyms.

Data Collection

Wolcott (1994) divides the processes of gathering data in qualitative research into three modes: inquiry through interviews, examination through studying materials prepared by others, and experience through participant observation. The sources of data for this inquiry fell into the first two categories: in-depth interviews and the portfolios of the four participants.

Interviews

Interviewing is an important tool in naturalistic inquiry because the participants' own meanings are paramount. I used active interviewing which calls on participants to be creators and reporters of meaning. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) describe the interviewer's role in this process.

The active interviewer sets the general parameters for responses, constraining as well as provoking answers that are germane to the researcher's interest. He or she does not tell respondents what to say, but offers them pertinent ways of conceptualizing issues and making connections, pertinence being partly defined by the research topic and partly by the substantive horizons of on-going responses. The active respondent may selectively exploit a vast range of narrative resources, but it is the active interviewer's job to direct and harness the respondent's constructive story-telling to the research task at hand. (Holstein & Gubrium, p. 39)

In planning the interviews, three concerns beyond eliciting the participants' interpretations of their experience were paramount: consent and confidentiality, authenticity and reciprocity, and description of the participants' professional situations. Consent was obtained twice, once when informants volunteered and completed a form with information about where and when to reach them, and a second time at the first interview when I briefly restated the purposes of the project and asked them to sign a formal permission statement. (Both forms appear in Appendix B.) At the

same time, I reviewed the measures I would take to protect their confidentiality including not revealing the names of those being interviewed to the faculty or other Cohort members. I suggested that they consider maintaining that discretion themselves.

My second concern was to establish a reciprocal attitude so that interviews were conversations in which participants and I were both authentically engaged in exploration of their experiences. I did not view the participants as passive vessels of knowledge to be tapped by the interviewer (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17), nor was I looking for standard responses. Rather, we conversed in ways that encouraged complex and diverse responses. Consequently, the encounters often became discussions or conversations rather than interviews.

My third concern was with the product of the inquiry, i.e. the report. In order to allow other adult literacy practitioners to connect the participants in the study with their own experiences, I planned to offer rich descriptions of Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's contexts as practitioners as well as graduate students. Therefore, I gathered information about their professional history and current practice as well as their experiences in the Cohort. This background was the initial topic of the first interview with each participant. We discussed their earlier experiences with school, their entries into the field of adult basic education, their previous professional development, and their decision to enroll in the OSU EdM program.

Although I did not create a rigid interview schedule, I introduced the topics below if the participant did not address them during the first interview.

- Professional background
- Entry into the field of ABE
- Initial training for ABE
- Staff development prior to the Cohort

For teachers: mentoring, observation, supervision, peer training

For administrators: help from the state agency, from other directors

- Current position

Duration, setting, responsibilities, students, curriculum, assessment

- Prior experience as a student
- Reasons for seeking a graduate degree

- Reasons for choosing the OSU program
- Expectations about the graduate program
Content, access, requirements

At the end of each of the first interviews, I asked participants, except Bill, to think about a way to tell the story of their experiences in the Cohort. Bill had already named several ideas he was considering for his portfolio. With the others, I suggested some vehicles I knew were familiar to them: a drawing, graph, metaphor, or titles for the chapters in a book. Their representations became the formal structure for the participants' narratives and are described in detail in the findings.

In the second and sometimes third conversations, they explained the representations of the program they had created, and in two instances, discussed how they might put together their portfolios. I also asked about particular aspects of the program if they did not arise, e.g., the orientation or support from their employers. I also asked if they felt the program had been worth the time and cost to them.

The total length of the interviews ranged from approximately three hours with Emily, to six hours with Bill. Anne and Candy were both interviewed for about four and one-half hours. An experienced transcriptionist made complete, verbatim transcripts of all interviews except for the first few minutes of Anne's interview which I transcribed. I reviewed each transcript for accuracy while listening to the tapes. Participants were also given the opportunity to read and comment on the transcripts. No one made changes, although Candy commented on her own language and Bill identified quotes he thought were particularly important and suggested several which he thought should be used in his story.

Documents

Documents used as data originated with participants and included their application materials and all of their final portfolios. The portfolios all contained separate statements of their philosophies of education and leadership, a final reflection, a lesson plan, a videotape of the lesson, and a

current resume. Participants selected additional materials from course papers, their action research, their journals, and responses to their comprehensive examination questions. The portfolios were also the vehicles for their oral defenses in which I also participated. Each portfolio was unique in organization, choice of exhibits, and length. They ranged from 150 to 250 pages. (The table of contents from each portfolio is included in Appendix C.) Participants made sense of their experiences as they made decisions about how to preface their portfolios, how to organize and explain each document, and how to conclude them.

Observation of the Cohort

My contact with the ABE Cohort began in the fall of 1994 when I was assigned to it as the graduate teaching assistant. I acquired background knowledge about the Cohort as context for inquiry, attending or assisting in some of the classes, conducting focus groups with a colleague as part of the program evaluation, and attending participants' portfolio presentations. Although I observed the Cohort during this time, my intent was to build trust with the participants and familiarity with the program.

Data Analysis

Wolcott (1994) suggested that the term, "data analysis," is misused when applied to the ways that researchers organize and report qualitative data. Instead, he proposed "transformation of qualitative data" (p. 10) as a more-encompassing term for three different treatments of data: description, analysis, and interpretation. Description attempts to produce an account that is as close as possible to the original data. Analysis extends description by carefully and systematically identifying relationships among data. Interpretation, which may follow description or analysis, attempts to address "processual questions of meanings and contexts: 'How does it all mean?' 'What is to be made of it all?'" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12).

For this inquiry, the data were transformed in two distinct but overlapping phases, each with its own framework. In the first, which was descriptive and analytical, I reconstructed the participants' constructions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 332) to create stories of the individuals' experiences in the program. In the second phase, I combined analysis and interpretation. I conducted a cross-case analysis of the stories and some parts of the original data to identify important relationships among them, then developed themes in an attempt to understand what had happened and propose implications for practice and future research. More specific descriptions of the procedures I used to manage, describe, analyze, and interpret the data appear in the next three sections.

Data management

In order to cope with the volume of the data—423 pages of transcripts and approximately 600 pages from the portfolios—and keep the input from the four participants separate, I used several strategies. I made two copies of each transcript and portfolio so that one set could be cut apart after it was examined and coded. Both sets were identified with the participant by a choice of colored paper. This aided not only in managing the data, but in highlighting the patterns either for a single participant or among them. To track data from the transcripts, I labeled each entry with the interviewee's initial, interview number, and cassette side. Then the lines were numbered continuously for each interview. (A page from one of the labeled transcripts appears in Appendix C.) To track excerpts from the portfolios, which were not standard in sequence or inclusions, I numbered all of the pages by section and document. (Copies of the tables of contents for each portfolio are included in Appendix C). During the first peer debriefing⁵ for this inquiry, my colleagues approved the steps I had taken to manage the data for the first phase of analysis. Later, I also created indexes for the interview transcripts using words and phrases which were significant for one or all of the participants for use in the cross-case analysis.

⁵Peer debriefing is a process used to confirm naturalistic inquiry. Its use in this study is more fully described in the section on credibility.

Phase 1 of Data Analysis: Creating the Stories

I initially read each transcript while listening to the interview tape to check the transcript and remind myself of what, in a holistic sense, had been said. The second reading of a transcript, like the reading of a portfolio, was more analytical. I highlighted salient words, phrases and paragraphs and wrote notes in the margins to indicate questions, import, or possible connections.

I then reduced the data by isolating and excerpting meaningful units. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that to be meaningful, a unit must be heuristic or “aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or take,” and must be “the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself” (p. 345). I then cut units that fit Lincoln and Guba’s criteria into strips. On each strip, I was careful to include adequate text to keep the excerpt in context and a label to mark its original location.

I sorted the strips into the three broad categories which would structure the stories: background information on the participants, participants’ experiences in the program, and outcomes. (A list of categories and codes appears in Appendix C.) Units in the first category were sorted logically in terms of the intended narrative using codes for kinds of information collected about participants’ backgrounds and decisions to enroll in the OSU program.

Units in the second category were coded according to the terms participants themselves used in the frameworks they created for their experiences. Holstein and Gubrium (1995) designated this as “indigenous coding” (p. 57) because the codes are integral to the participant’s own account. The stages of tuning raw wool into a finished product which Candy used as a metaphor for her experiences are examples of indigenous codes.

The third category, program outcomes, emerged after the first drafts of Anne and Bill’s stories. I realized that they had structured their portfolios and final reflection pieces to present, at multiple levels, their achievements. The codes within this category are also indigenous. They originated either in the titles of sections of a portfolio (Anne and Emily), the preface to the portfolio (Bill), or the conclusion (Candy). To develop the stories, I

combined the units from interview transcripts and portfolios which were coded alike, then examined them for duplication or contradiction, and ordered them in a way that appeared sensible. I wrote the stories by developing the narrative transitions between the units.

Phase 2 of Data Analysis: Cross-Case Analysis

Wolcott (1994) defined analysis as “systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features and relationships” (p. 24) in the data. Among the ways he suggested to carry out the analysis, I chose four for this inquiry: highlighting and displaying findings, comparing across cases, and contextualizing findings in a theoretical framework. Interpretation occurred, as he also suggested, during and after the analysis. I have outlined the procedures I used for analysis and interpretation sequentially, although it was actually an alternating and iterative process.

Before I began looking systematically across the data, I made a list of potential themes in order to make explicit any assumptions I might have. I then reread the literature review and memos I had written during the first phase of analysis to generate a list of potential questions and implications for the cross-case analysis. The first set of 50 codes for the cross-case analysis resulted from this list. At the second peer debriefing, my colleagues and I discussed those documents and my tentative plan which included construction of data matrices.

By combining and eliminating duplicate codes, I was able to reduce the number of codes to 20 which appear in Appendix C. These codes were used to analyze the stories, index the transcripts, and identify additional units from selected portions of the portfolios (introductions, philosophy statements, critical incidents, and reflective pieces). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), returning to the original data in this manner is not unusual: “Later, when developing new insights, an investigator can legitimately return to old materials and re-code them in the light of new knowledge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 181)

In order to understand the participants’ accounts temporally, I created a set of matrices using the codes for headings of the columns and the

quarters for rows. After making matrices for all the participants, it was evident that some of the codes were too narrow, applied only to one participant, or were not suitable for chronological display. (A sample page from Bill's case matrix appears in Appendix C.) I then studied each matrix both vertically (chronologically) and horizontally (across codes) which confirmed and strengthened the narratives in the stories.

Analysis across cases was based on a set of meta-matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which displayed data across codes and quarters. All of the moves I describe below—scanning, comparing, matching—were performed several times since looking across the cases revealed complexity and richness that was not apparent in the single cases. I scanned these matrices for patterns of unfilled space and returned to the data to verify that the phenomenon was genuinely not described by the participant or not described for that period of time. I compared my notes on the participants' reports chronologically and topically. This revealed their varied rhythms and perceptions of the program features and concepts which were the codes. I used the matrix for statements about change to identify relationships that might be causal, reading each statement about change over and over again after the codes for the quarters that preceded it. I repeated this process for transformation. The information in the topical matrices was similarly analyzed, as I looked for relationships. Comparing the four cases aided my understanding of the individual cases as well as I asked myself what happened to one participant in a particular quarter that did not happen to the others or how one participant apprehended something in such a different way from the others.

As I tried to make sense of the differences in Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's stories, I also created a series of continua to display my perception of the effect of each of the program features. (The continua are included in Appendix C.) The continua were important in the development of the final themes which dealt with the differences as much as the similarities in the participants' constructions of the meaning of their experiences. In the final stage of the cross-case analysis, contextualizing the data in a theoretical framework, I viewed the themes through the various lenses of adult learning theory.

Trustworthiness

Traditional research which leads to discovery of a law or confirmation of hypotheses is judged by certain standards of reliability, the extent to which findings can be replicated, and validity, the extent to which findings reflect reality. A study which leads to understanding of an experience like learning must be judged by different criteria. In her book on case study research, Merriam (1988) dealt extensively with criteria for assessing qualitative research, relying primarily on a set of approaches which Lincoln and Guba (1985) named "trustworthiness." Trustworthiness consists of four elements: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Merriam (1988) compared each element of trustworthiness to an aspect of quantitative research: credibility to internal validity, confirmability and dependability to reliability, and transferability to external validity (p. 170-178). The specific ways in which these criteria were met in this inquiry are discussed below.

Credibility

Credibility results from the triangulation of three factors: sufficient time in the field, data, and confirmation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), time is adequate for credibility if it constituted prolonged engagement, if it was long enough to learn the culture, become aware of sources of distortion, and build trust. Time must also be well-spent to qualify as persistent observation, that is, deep enough observation to determine the salient features in the situation. I was able to observe and interact with the Cohort for almost two years, during which time I became well-acquainted with the practitioner/students and the faculty, the program requirements, the Cohort culture.

The second factor which contributed to credibility in this inquiry is triangulation of data which requires multiple modes of data collection: in-depth interviews, participants' own writing, and my own notes. The third factor of credibility, confirmation, comes from others. The primary source of confirmation is the use of member checks of the data and analysis by

participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) called this “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). I performed member checks by sending each participant interview transcripts, the completed story, a preview of the rest of the report, a set of questions (See Appendix D), and a letter which included an offer of a face-to face meeting if that would be preferable. The most important question I asked was whether or not the stories of their experiences were credible, to which all of the participants answered positively. Anne chose to meet rather than respond in writing and requested that I be explicit about her sexual orientation. Bill responded by e-mail, recommending additions which he felt would strengthen the story of his transformation. Candy also responded by e-mail, but requested only very superficial changes to her language. Emily returned a copy of her chapter with suggestions for making the excerpts from her interview transcripts clearer.

Another source of confirmation is a process in which one submits the analysis to a peer researcher “who probes for bias, explores meaning, clarifies the basis for interpretation, and questions working hypotheses” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). I conducted peer audits at two times during the process. The first was after I coded the units from Bill’s data, when a colleague examined the system I developed to cite the material from interviews and transcripts. Prior to the cross-case analysis, two colleagues and I conducted a more complete peer debriefing to examine the provisional categories I had created, discuss the assumptions I carried into the next phase, and finalize my plan for conducting the cross-case analysis.

Confirmability and Dependability

Confirmability and dependability are together an analog to reliability. Although Merriam (1988) did not include confirmability among the elements that parallel reliability, it is closely linked to dependability because both of these criteria rely on an audit trail to document each step of data analysis from raw data, through data reduction and display, and coding, to the final categories and themes. The audit trail for this inquiry consisted of the interview transcripts and portfolios in various stages of the process, my process notes, my coding guides, responses from participants, notes I took

during peer debriefings, and extensive memos written during cross-case analysis.

Dependability was established through inquiry audits during the peer debriefings. On each of these occasions, my colleagues, Janice McMurray and Bonnie Morihara, systematically examined my documentation and methods of analysis and made recommendations to strengthen them.

Transferability

The particularistic nature of qualitative research makes external validity, or the direct application of findings from one study to another, impossible, but Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that researchers have a responsibility to provide enough description so that another investigator can decide whether situations are sufficiently similar for transfer. The basis for assessing transferability in this study can be found in the stories of the four participants as well as in the description of the ABE Cohort program.

Ethical Issues

Since the participants themselves conducted action research as part of their coursework, they were aware of the formal processes for obtaining informed consent and protecting participants' anonymity. The specific measures I took to obtain consent were described earlier as part of the discussion of interviews. I also followed four principles outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994b): "mutual respect, non-coercion and non-manipulation, support of democratic principles, and the belief that every research act implies moral and ethical decisions that are contextual" (p. 21). The first four of these naturally followed my prolonged engagement with practitioner/students who had always been aware of my role as researcher and with whom I shared so many professional contexts. One element of the context which called for ethical decision-making was predictable given the intimacy of the Cohort—protecting the anonymity of individuals in the

report while describing their experiences largely in their own words. I used pseudonyms, created fictive work sites, and altered team locations in the stories in order to disguise the participants, but it is unlikely that the rest of the Cohort members would be unaware of the informants' identities. However, the intimacy also allowed few secrets among the ABE Cohort so that colleagues who see through the disguises are likely to already know anything that appears in the stories. The pseudonyms and other devices will, however, protect participants outside of the Cohort family.

Researcher as Instrument

In describing the characteristics of qualitative research, Merriam (1988) emphasized the importance of the researcher as "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this *human instrument* [italics added], the researcher, rather than some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or machine" (p. 19). She cited the advantages which Lincoln and Guba (1985) attributed solely to the human instrument: responsiveness, adaptability, holistic emphasis, access to nonverbal information, the ability to immediately process data and ask for clarification or expansion, and the opportunity to explore anomalous responses. Only a human can adapt and respond to all these stimuli in a research situation, but there are concomitant concerns.

Researcher Bias

The concern most frequently mentioned with human instruments is the possibility of bias. The researcher brings tacit theories to the inquiry which can affect the research process (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Among the sources of that bias, they list ascriptive characteristics such as gender, age, and ethnicity as well as life experiences, ideologies and professional philosophies (p. 122). They suggest that the researcher make such influences explicit in order to reduce their potential for distortion. I have done so in the brief

biography which follows. It is organized under the same headings as the biographies of the four study participants: becoming a teacher, prior staff development, entry to the Cohort, and current program. As for the specific ascriptive characteristics named by LeCompte and Preissle (1993), I could have disappeared into the Cohort. In age, ethnicity, and gender, I was like most of the participants. In experience, I also shared a great deal with them.

Becoming an ABE Practitioner/Teacher

Like all of the participants in this study, I became an adult literacy teacher without preparation or planning. I had gone to Germany on a break from a graduate program in anthropology which I had begun the fall after completing a traditional baccalaureate. While there, I applied to teach high school completion to U.S. soldiers in a program offered by a community college. The college recruited instructors who had no background in education to create a program with minimal resemblance to traditional secondary education. I had steadfastly avoided taking any education courses, so I was a qualified candidate. I taught, developed curriculum, and coordinated various parts of the program for five years until the unpredictable funding and my own need to learn how to teach better returned me to the United States to pursue a master's degree in adult education at Auburn University.

I completed my master's degree at Auburn University and a fellowship in community education at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. I then continued to work in community colleges, teaching pre-college academic skills, ABE/GED, ESL, and high school completion for three years, then spent three years working with southeast Asian refugees in a camp and in Washington, DC. Though teaching has always been my passion, full-time instructional positions were rare, so I have taken administrative positions at both the local and state levels. I have also been a frequent trainer and curriculum developer. As my responsibilities took me further from the ESL and adult literacy classrooms, I became increasingly concerned about the self-confidence and success of teachers. Consistently sending new teachers into classrooms with little preparation and seeing

even experienced practitioners struggle to understand what was happening in their classrooms and their programs, I began to question first the way staff development was delivered, and then the assumptions underlying it.

Prior Staff Development

During the years between completion of my master's degree and entering the PhD program at OSU, I participated in every available staff development opportunity, but experience continued to be the most important influence. I became an expert in ESL by becoming the coordinator of an ESL program which had been overwhelmed by southeast Asian refugees. I learned about volunteer tutoring by working with community groups to start a literacy council. I became expert in workplace literacy by developing classes at local factories. I am knowledgeable about family literacy because I developed an Even Start program. I became expert in competency-based curriculum by serving on the steering committee of the Washington State Core Competencies Project. I became familiar with new workforce skills by developing standards and a training model for a state-wide staff and curriculum project related to the SCANS report. I immersed myself in program evaluation by leading teams which carried out federally mandated reviews for ABE programs.

Entry to Cohort

Like the members of the ABE Cohort, I came to OSU specifically because of the EdM program. For me, it afforded an opportunity to investigate practitioners engaged in long-term staff development for my doctoral research. I originally became interested in staff development because I viewed teachers as the most important instruments for improving adult literacy and second language learning. My own experience, as a teacher who had no training and as an administrator whose staff had little or no training, convinced me that we could not improve the adult literacy

statistics without better preparing adult literacy teachers. However, just as distance from the classroom helped me to understand literacy differently, distance from programs helped me to understand staff development differently. Working at the state level, I began to suspect that our lack of success in training was rooted in our view of teachers as instruments, that this view promoted and modeled the very content-centered instruction that we exhorted teachers to avoid. A critical incident which occurred in the spring of 1993 at a meeting with a state cadre of teacher-trainers deepened my questions. I was dismayed to see so clearly that the trainers' model of staff development was a deficit one just like the deficit model they criticized teachers for using with their students. The frustration and occasional contempt with which the trainers described their interactions with teachers stunned me. At the same time that I acknowledged that adult literacy practitioners needed to examine and change their practice, I saw that staff development as we understood it could not work. Considering alternatives, I began to see the practitioners themselves as adult learners and realized that current staff development methods ignored all but the most superficial knowledge that we have about adult learning.

During the coursework for my doctoral program, I studied adult learning in its general applications, but focused on theories that might help me understand how teachers of adults in community colleges and basic skills programs might themselves learn.

Current Program

In the fall after the ABE Cohort graduated, I began teaching ABE/GED, pre-college academic skills courses, and high school completion at an outreach campus of Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. As I continued the data analysis and developed this report, I found myself faced with the same issues that the participants encountered. The ostensible efficiency of individualization, the larger teaching load required for basic skills instructors, state and federal accountability requirements, and the inertia of programs with no clear measures of success all seemed to coalesce into an insurmountable barrier to good teaching. Yet, unlike eighty percent

of other adult literacy teachers, I am full-time, highly prepared, and accustomed to making decisions.

Looking back on his own career as an ethnographer, Wolcott (1994) reflected on the subject of bias.

How a researcher might spend a year teaching a classroom of Kwakiutl Indian children, or make repeated round-trips of a 50-mile drive from Kuala Lumpur to observe a village project, and yet stand ready to deny any hint of bias, strikes me as patently absurd. The biases of our careers, our personalities, and our situations constitute essential starting places for our research attention. Inventory your "good" biases and use the inventory to guide your broad initial problem statement. (Wolcott, 1994, p. 408)

It would be absurd to think that I might observe, help plan, and teach for one and one-half years in a program for ABE practitioners, a group about which I have become passionate, and then deny any hint of bias. My bias is to believe that teachers want to teach well and that administrators want to lead well. However, they are often ill-prepared because the preparation is inaccessible or unrealistic given the scarcity of long-term, full-time positions in ABE. Moreover, my own experiences as teacher, manager, and trainer have shown me that our current staff development strategies are not only ineffective, but sometimes destructive.

Preview of Remaining Chapters

The stories which constitute chapters three through six were reconstructed from Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's constructions of their experiences captured in our conversations or their portfolios. I have relied on their own words to a great extent, but reminded readers occasionally of my role when it seemed to have prompted the response. The stories all follow the framework of the categories described above: information about the participants' education and professional experience prior to the Cohort, their experiences in the Cohort, and their portfolio as it presented their own assessments of their achievements. Chapter 7 presents the five themes that

emerged from the cross-case analysis and the final chapter reports some implications suggested by the findings.

3. Anne

Sally Share: Director of Academic Skills Center (ABE, GED, ESL, Single Parent/Displaced Homemakers, Dislocated Workers, and JOBS programs). Represents the transitional work force and advocates for integration of academic and life skills for adults in transition. Has used her skills as a facilitator to assist Leonard (when he was mayor) and Becky (training the Employment Department staff in cultural awareness). Sally prides herself on her ability to collaborate on projects, yet is feeling somewhat uneasy about how supportive the budget committee will be about the programs and students she serves. (AP 6.1.5)⁶

Getting into ABE: Some Basic Administrative Work

Sally Share was one of the characters in an elaborate simulation which Anne and another Cohort member created as the demonstration lesson for their portfolios. The activity required teachers and representatives from community agencies to take on the roles of members of a regional workforce quality committee⁷ to negotiate the distribution of an anticipated budget cut. The role of Sally Share might be Anne's description of herself. She currently directs all of the programs assigned to Sally Share at the small community college where she has worked for seven years.

Like most ABE practitioners, Anne did not seek a career in ABE. Her undergraduate degree was in rehabilitation counseling which she did for five years before becoming the director of a non-profit organization which provided "a full range of programs in vocational, semi-independent living, and every kind of imaginable disability" (A1A 11-12).⁸ During her eight years as

⁶Citations which follow material from portfolios include the participant's first initial, the letter P, and the section, document, and page number from which the quoted or paraphrased material was taken. AP 6.1.5 is the fifth page of the first document in the sixth section of Anne's portfolio. A table of contents for the portfolio appears in Appendix C.

⁷Workforce quality committees were created in fifteen regions of Oregon to coordinate delivery of work force development services.

⁸Citations which follow quoted or paraphrased material from interviews include the participant's first initial, the number of the interview, side of the tape, and line numbers from the transcript. A1A 11 indicates line 11 from side A of the first interview with Anne.

the director of a rehabilitation industries program, she found that she “could work effectively with staff to get things done, and [she] liked that a lot” (A1A 6-7). She expanded the program and tried new things. “I think we were really successful, and we got into all kinds of wonderful learning situations” (A1A 9-10). Anne was a leader in her state, chairing her professional association’s legislative committee, co-founding the Human Rights Coalition, and working with a task force appointed by the governor to consider budget priorities for the state.

When Anne came to Oregon in 1988, she joined the staff of a small community college, “just doing some basic administrative work” (A1A 17-18), then became the coordinator of a career education program for displaced homemakers and single parents. Six months later, she was also asked to coordinate the ABE program. She labeled her transition to ABE coordinator, “very difficult” (A1A 89). While she had a solid background in administration and the “right broad concepts” (A1A 28), her sole experience with basic skills instruction was referring rehabilitation clients to other programs. Moreover, she was a relative newcomer to the college.

I’m not sure if people understood why I was the one that got the position, because I did not have the strong background in adult basic ed. And quite frankly, I didn’t understand it. I had no training, I didn’t know even how to begin going about getting any training around it. I called the state office and got some idea of the statistical reporting process and how the budget kind of worked. But, understanding even what was on the GED test⁹ — I didn’t even have a clue. (A1A 89-96)

Prior Staff Development: It Needed More Depth

Anne had not received training that she found appropriate after becoming the director. The available workshops and conferences had just not been relevant enough.

No formal training at all. . . . I did [go to workshops]. I’ve gone to summer conferences. I’ve taken advantage of any kind of

⁹Pauses in participants’ interview responses are indicated by very long dashes.

conference I could possibly attend. Student success conferences. . . . But so much of it was practitioner-based. It still didn't give me the administrative connections that I wanted. Things like, what kind of things to look for in a faculty evaluation. How to design your own faculty evaluation that wasn't awful. How to design student evaluations so you get valid feedback. Those kinds of things aren't included in those. (A1A 185-196)

Nor had anyone suggested a path she might follow to orient herself to ABE: "Nope, no. Nobody had a clue of a path, nobody even saw what the big deal was. I mean, it was like, administratively, you just do some things, like do the reporting and make sure the students are enrolled" (A1A 99-102). Anne knew that she needed more than directions for reporting enrollment.

So, you know, to me, I always wanted more depth, more —I wanted more depth. How do you go about deciding enrollment levels and student-teacher ratios? And because I brought with me all the program development from the rehab background, I knew there was much more to designing programs than just figuring out, just arbitrarily picking numbers. And trying to decide cost-effectiveness. . . . I also knew there needed to be more of a connection between, to make it effective, to make it a program that had the integrity and the (tapping the table) —that had the foundations for development. That had the —depth. I don't know how else to describe it. That it needed leadership, that it needed strong understanding and depth of leadership.

And I felt inadequate. I felt I didn't even want to admit that to anybody at the state level. (Laughing) It was like, "How do you even ask the question without exposing yourself?" So that was a real struggle. (A1A 102-125)

She established herself in the ABE director's position by relying on the perspective she brought from vocational rehabilitation, going into classrooms as often as she could, and looking to her peers for clues.

Well, I got involved with the directors' group. I slowly and carefully attended those meetings and started finding out and asking, carefully asking questions. I built some trust and struggled through and then just started, jumped in and started doing some things that made sense to me, started working for me. And [I] was amazed that it wasn't necessarily the standard practice. (A1A 126-133)

Because she valued the mentoring she received from her peers, she began developing a program to orient new directors in the future.

One of the things I'm working on right now with the directors' group is to establish some kind of mentoring component to bring new people in. People are really busy and there are a million questions and there's not always good leadership from the state about things that come up. And there's so much history to get to the point where we are now, with the things that we are doing. [It] would take years just to bring people up to date. (A1A 236-242)

Enrolling in the Cohort: I Can Always Drop It

Developing a program for new directors was typical of Anne's action-oriented stance. She became a leader in the statewide group of basic skills administrators in community colleges and steadily built her basic skills programs. Given this proactive attitude, it was not surprising that she applied for the first Cohort of the Oregon Field-based Master's Program.

The college did not require a master's degree for Anne's position, but she was convinced it was necessary. "I think in the back of my mind, I think it was a credibility issue because I didn't have a master's [or] the background in adult basic ed. I didn't have the teaching foundation. In my mind it was, "How can I be planning and working with this program if I don't have those skills? Or that knowledge?" (A1A 327-332).

She had considered graduate programs in business or community college administration, but felt that she had the management skills; she wanted background in "education and learning" (A1A 346). When she read the tentative list of classes for the Master's Cohort at OSU, she was not sure it was exactly the right program, but she hoped it "would answer some questions for me around being grounded in learning theory, understanding how students learn and how teachers teach, and what some of the key issues were in adult basic ed" (A1A 357-360). Since she had stated topical goals, I asked Anne how she would have labeled six or eight drawers in a chest she wanted to fill up in the Cohort.

Oh, learning theory. I was very interested in understanding how teachers teach and are effective as teachers. Program planning, what are the key elements of programs? Good teaching practice. I may have said that, but I wanted to know, I couldn't believe that having people work in workbooks was good teacher practice.

Understanding, I guess, student outcomes. Measuring effectiveness at a student outcome level. What were the keys there? How do we know what we're doing is effective?

Recruitment, how do we provide the essential pieces to keep relevancy, [to keep] curriculum meaningful? ESL was a big one, I think. Just language learning, language acquisition, because that was really important to me. (A1A 386-395)

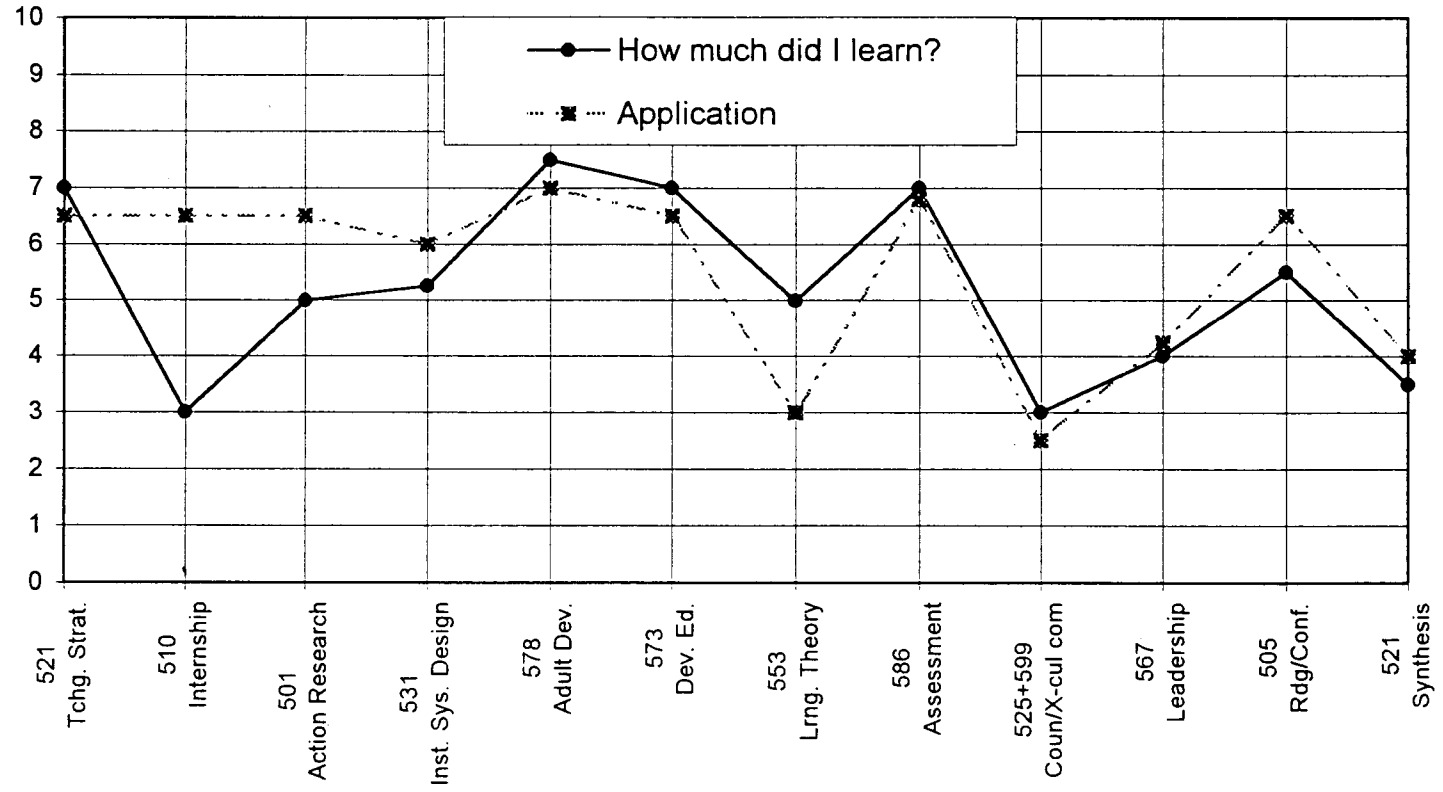
At the end of the program, Anne remembered that her expectations for the master's program had not been clear. The structure met her needs for "access, affordability and length of time to complete" (AA 2).¹⁰ She "knew that it would be challenging which [she] was hungry for" (A1A 355-356), and she was willing to try it. "I was kind of like, my eyes are open and 'OK, let's see what happens.' I always thought, 'I can always drop it if I, if it doesn't work'" (A1A 362-364).

Anne's Experience in the Cohort: The Struggle for Fit

Anne recounted her experiences in two very different ways. To compare the classes to one another, she created a graph (Figure 3.1) in which she assigned each course two scores on a scale of one to ten. One score indicated how much she had learned: "What did I remember? What was meaningful? How much was I engaged? At what level of engagement? Was it interesting? How meaningful was it to me?" (A3A 82-84). The other score was for applicability, how much she felt she had applied the course content or project to her job.

¹⁰Citations which follow material from a participant's application for the graduate program include the participant's first initial, the letter A, and the page on which the information appeared. AA 2 is the second page of Anne's program application.

Figure 3.1 Anne's Graph



To create a representation of her experience, Anne named eight chapters she would include if she were writing her own book about the Cohort: “OK. I did this in a non-linear way, so. Well, I did it just as thoughts came to me about the key areas” (A2B 590-593).

1. Getting in the Groove and Adjusting to Reality
2. With a Little Help From My Friends
3. Now I Understand and This Is Exciting
4. How Does This Relate to My Life?
5. What’s Missing?
6. Respect and Admiration: I Now Have a High Standard
7. Transformations and Personal Growth
8. Glad It’s Over and Preparing for Endings

These titles or themes provided the organization for the following description of Anne’s experiences in the Cohort.

Getting in the Groove and Adjusting to Reality

The reality of the Cohort, being a student again, my own fears as an adult learner, going back to school, the reality of the time that it was going to take to do this, the demands on my life. Am I up to actually doing the work? So facing the fears, I guess, and adjusting to them. (A2B 601-605)

Anne knew that difficulties in balancing professional, personal, and student roles were common for adult learners. For her, there was added anxiety from her prior school experiences. She had earned a baccalaureate degree, but she questioned her academic ability, especially at a graduate level. Although a master’s degree was one of her goals, she “feared that she could not pass the entrance tests and did not want to expose my weaknesses as a learner”(AP 7.1.1). In the final reflection for her portfolio, Anne looked back on how she had felt when the program began.

I was not confident in my academic skills although I knew I was capable of learning. I had a difficult time in high school, at one point I considered dropping out. . . . I missed so much school those last two years that I had gaps in many academic

areas. I did go to college and chose a very experiential program with several hands-on, practical internships. (AP 7.1.1)

Along with the lack of confidence, came ambivalence about traditional academic standards and writing style, her long-standing “rebellion around school” (A1A 370-377). The differences she anticipated between her criteria for success and faculty’s did appear. She found herself “struggling with the papers and the style, and struggling with Stan[who taught Adult Development and the assessment class] and, you know, scholarly works, which forced me to ask other people who were grammar experts, ‘Please read my papers, because I’ll never pick it up and I really don’t care’” (A3B 335-340).

Grades heightened her ambivalence. On one project, Stan had given Anne an A- with very favorable comments, followed by an admonition to proofread because “the typos detract from an otherwise exemplary piece of graduate work” (AP 4.2.2). “I had a real reaction to the grades. I don’t know, it was Stan’s class where on one of the papers I got a B, or less than an A, and I reacted to that a lot. Not so much that I got it, but that I was being judged on things other than I, I mean I really put my heart into that. I didn’t get it grammatically, totally 100% correct, but. . .” (A1B 369-374). Anne felt that her credibility was again at stake. Surrounded by colleagues, she had to “relearn how to be a student and was a little intimidated by the fact that there so many good students in the Cohort” (A1B 321-322).

She was also apprehensive about being one of the few administrators in the OSU program. The sense of separation between teachers and administrators that she felt in the community colleges made Anne uneasy about being regarded as an outsider. She was both dismayed and reassured, in the third quarter, when the differences between teachers and administrators came into the open.

I shared some thoughts, my own beliefs around program directors and some suggestions. Several people came up to me afterwards and—I think I may have felt, these few times, like I was not quite a member, yet, because I was this program manager. There were comments that came through from other people that said, “Well, you’re a program manager. What are you doing here?”

I think there's this culture. I was overwhelmed when I came into the community college system. I could not understand why there was this polarization between administration and teachers. I was, like, "Wow. Whew." This distance, it just blew me away. And so I kind of came into that feeling like there was this distance. And so at this point I started feeling like there was connecting happening. OK. You're OK. Or we can let you into our ranks, a little bit. (A3A 622-635)

Anne also feared that a program designed for teachers would not be relevant to her as a program director. This concern resurfaced throughout her portfolio and interviews and was the focus of her theme, "What's missing."

The Cohort structure itself, designed to promote collaboration and create support, demanded adaptation of Anne who described herself as an isolated learner. On her graph, she pointed to the summer of 1994, when "the smaller teams became a larger team . . . and there was a real bonding of all of us" as the point at which she reached a "comfort level" with the Cohort (A3A 343-344).

With a Little Help From My Friends

The next [title] was "With a Little Help From My Friends." And I include both the friends in the Cohort as well as the rest of my community of friends, because they certainly were part of getting me through. And certainly the teachers here. (A2B 613-618)

Once Anne was accustomed to the Cohort, she found the relationships to be "one of the greatest strengths" (AP 7.1.2) of the program. "I am sure that the friends I gained will be lifelong. We shared a life-changing experience" (AP 7.1.2). Cohort colleagues offered assistance in a number of ways: support to persist, means to learn, safety to explore new roles, and models for her own leadership.

The master's degree had been the carrot at the end of the two and one-half years, but even the degree might not have been incentive enough to get Anne through the torture (A1B 336). Although she valued what she was learning, "It was primarily the Cohort. I mean, as I got to know certain

people that I respected highly, it was that support and encouragement, because I talked about it to several people" (A3A 552-554). The encouragement came from her work team¹¹ and three other administrators who were in the Cohort.

The support came from trying to figure out how to apply some of the projects and assignments. Even if [they] appeared to be fairly simple, we really needed to work through them because we didn't have access to classrooms of students, so it was a little further jump for us. So that helped a lot. We could kind of brainstorm that. And the fact that Barb and I are doing our final project together has really helped. I don't know if she'd make it through if we weren't. I don't mean to say she wouldn't make it through, but she was telling them the other night that at this point. . . . And I don't think I would either. I mean I really appreciate her input into that one. (A1B 153-167)

The support was clearly reciprocal. In the final quarter, Anne reported that she called a teammate four times during a single weekend. "I think it was getting all the incompletes done. 'Got to get these incompletes done, you got to get these incompletes done. How are you doing?' You know, (laughing) so we kind of helped each other through that" (A1B 137-140).

Collaboration was one of the standards of excellence for teaching she had acquired from the graduate program: "Not maybe totally cooperative learning, but enough learning — that learning shouldn't be happening in isolation, that learners should be connected in some way, and either paired or grouped or some kind of cooperative team learning is occurring" (A2A 202-205). The impact of the help from her friends on her view of collaboration is also reflected in her leadership philosophy.

It always takes a group of people working together with a common purpose in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration to get extraordinary things done. Leadership is an affair of the heart. . . . A leader is a role model when it comes to developing relationships that are genuine and caring. . . . People want to be a part of something that is larger than the moment and are motivated to achieve and succeed if they feel included. (AP 2.3.6)

¹¹Each member of the Cohort was assigned geographically to a team that completed various assignments collaboratively.

Anne attributed the strength of the OSU Cohort model to the length and structure of the program which allowed deep relationships to be built. In our conversations and in her final reflection she acknowledged that she became more integrated with the group over time. Greater connection was especially apparent to her after the summer sessions when participants came together for periods of on-campus residency.

Because of the longevity of the program, the [cohort] model lends itself to the development of relationships among members. The relationships increased the trust level among members which in turn reduced the stress and competition level for me as an individual. I definitely felt more comfortable over time. The extended summer session solidified the bonding that occurred among the members, and I was eventually able to totally share myself with the entire group. (AP 7.1.2)

Now I Understand and This Is Exciting

“The next chapter would be, ‘Now I understand, and this is exciting’” (A2B 621). Anne explained that the excitement came when something “made sense.” She used the phrase to identify aspects of the program that she had found positive. To clarify, she related it to an experience she also had in other parts of her life.

Having the effect of something before I totally understand the issue. It’s like having — It’s like this thing up here, and I don’t understand the foundation of it or the issues underpinning it, and then it’s kind of like, “Oh, now I understand where that comes from or how those things are connected.” And I’ve had that experience many, many times, because this program has given me that foundation. (A2B 105-113)

This title was about “ahas,” and she used an example from Principles and Practices of Developmental Education to illustrate it. The course was one of the highest points on her graph for both learning and application because it helped her situate her own ABE program in the national context. “I actually got a lot out of the class, because it gave me — now it made sense to me. I’m

whole — my learning is whole — is that the word? Global. So I need to see the big picture before I understand a lot of the little pieces” (A2B 197-198).

“Having been in the field and not having the foundation” (A2B 182-183) left gaps which the text, Leadership for Literacy (Chisman, 1990), filled. She connected the examples in the book to her own experiences and understood some aspects of ABE that had puzzled her. “I can make the connection of why things are so fragmented, because this is what’s happening at the national level. Or this perspective gives me an idea why there’s the problem with tutor programs and adult basic ed. Because I’ve experienced that personally” (A3A 286-292). Learning Theories also helped her make sense by providing words and organization for “things that I maybe intuitively knew or believed in” (A2A 283-284).

How Does This Relate to My Life?

Anne’s fourth title was a question: “How does this relate to my life and my teaching and my supervision, to [how I] administer the program?” (A2B 626-629). Relevance was very important to Anne. It was the standard for the documents she included in her portfolio, the first criterion for learning in her philosophy of education, and the basis on which she examined her actions and decisions. She answered her question about relevance in her graph where she rated each course on two criteria: learning and application. She was intrigued by some of her own assessments.

What’s interesting to me was I thought about the two very much in relation to my job, I’m applying things all the time. And things —unexpected things, I guess, like the research concept and instructional design concept. I’m applying this, at least as far as the models and stuff that I learned. Not maybe necessarily my actual product, but the stuff that I learned. But at the time, like the internship, I didn’t see it to be that valuable. (A3A 92-100)

The difference between the score for application and the score for learning which Anne gave the internship illustrated how she defined the criteria: “I wasn’t learning that much because it was so —It wasn’t new stuff, but in

terms of what I'm applying from that internship [it's one of the highest places on the graph]" (A3A 97-100). Since understanding teaching was one of her objectives for the graduate program, teaching math and ESL were significant parts of internship. "It was probably the most powerful, one of the most powerful for understanding what teachers go through in terms of teaching, and the interaction and involvement with students" (A3A 202-204).

The other three peaks in application on the line graph were Adult Development, Leadership and Human Relations, and Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education. Anne discovered that she was "finding just all the time I'm able to apply the knowledge that I got out of [Adult Development]" (A3A 244-246). She compared that to the Learning Theories course:

I think [Adult Development] was more relevant to me. I could see more meaning in that than learning about a person who's said something. You know, I make the connections around — the theorist that spoke to me, reinforced, I guess, my own beliefs. But it's the application of that kind of thing in the real world that makes a difference. (A3A 251-255)

Different teaching strategies between the two courses might account in part for their relative relevance to Anne. Again comparing Adult Development to Learning Theories, she remembered that Stan was "always saying, 'How does this fit with your experience?'" (A3A 409-410). In the other class she felt her own experience was discounted.

I wonder if — where my voice is, when I'm always looking for the research to back up my own thinking. I will probably remember till I die, you know, the theoretical underpinnings, the research to back up what you're saying — It's like [how do you make] sure that your authentic voice, your voice, is heard in that process and it doesn't get all mushed together with other people's thoughts and theories. (A3A 363-371)

Another difference between the outcomes of the adult development class and learning theories reinforced the difference between learning and application and exemplified what Anne felt she missed in the Cohort. "There's a gap between what I learned. I learned a lot, very broadly, about learning theorists. But I struggled with that, in terms of trying to get those

theories, because I don't teach. Again, not being a teacher it was — applying these, trying to find a context to try to apply those kinds of concepts" (A3A 229-233).

The leadership class was clearly relevant to Anne's job responsibilities, but given her experiences administering programs and training community leaders, she might have discounted it. However, she was challenged by the process, "I think, again until the master's program with going through and defining my own philosophy of education and philosophy of leadership, I probably would not really have done it as concretely and comprehensively and clearly" (A1A 223-226).

"How this relates to my life" was also a question Anne answered in her portfolio. "My portfolio contains many items that demonstrate the knowledge I have gained and how I have applied it. I am frequently surprised when issues surface at work that directly relate to something I learned" (AP 7.1.2). Anne chose three specific projects to exemplify how she had integrated and applied her learning: a lesson plan and video which were graduation requirements, the Life Skills Portfolio Assessment process which she developed for Diagnostic Techniques, and the Faculty Evaluation process which satisfied one of her goals for taking the graduate program.

Summing up her estimation of the course work's relevance, Anne also indicated what was missing:

It was accessible, applied to my work. I could, with some effort, make some connections. You know, talking to different people, different instructors, and saying, "This is what I want to do. How do you feel about it?" But I think there could have been a lot more things that, if it was, again, more focused on the management aspect of it, I could have accomplished. (A3A 557-562)

What's Missing?

When Anne named her next key area, "What's Missing," I asked if this was "the things-I-still-need-to-learn thing?" She replied, "Yeah. And that I wish I would have gotten" (A2B 643-645). Her clarification, that there were things she wished she had gotten as well as things she still wanted to

learn, suggested more than a list of missing topics. Anne did have such a list, much like the one generated by the whole Cohort six months earlier: learning disabilities, more about ESL, and reading methods—which she added when I asked, “Anything else?” Her reluctance to add reading was part of the struggle for relevance that Anne faced throughout the program. Although she thought methods of teaching reading ought to have been in the program, she asserted that it would have been presented in a way that “would not have been pertinent to me because I’m not a teacher” (A3B 1-2).

Anne differentiated between the roles of practitioners and administrators: practitioners have regular contact with students, daily lesson planning, and intimate involvement with the curriculum, while administrators are concerned with broader vision and issues of program planning, teacher effectiveness, and staff development (A1A 269-276). Examining reading methods made sense to her as an administrator “in a bigger, a larger context, which would be how do I do program planning around students who are adult basic ed” (A3B 18-20). Her experience with the Cohort made her believe that such focus was unlikely: “I don’t mean to be cynical, but I would have expected the assignment to be a teaching assignment, to teach reading, rather than applying teaching of basic reading to a broader context” (A3B 9-32).

Anne was jaded about assignments because she had so often been disconcerted by assignments that were for teachers. “Actually the last assignment, I got around the synthesis class, and Paul’s memo that said — There were two or three things, you know, applying this to your own teaching experience, or bring in a lesson plan and apply it to this. And it was like, ‘God, here it is. One more time.’ It just wasn’t fitting” (A3A 486-490).

The applicability of the assignments was an up and down issue for Anne. In just one quarter, she was both elated and discouraged. At the middle of the first fall quarter, she wrote in her journal that the textbook was “right on for her” (AP 7.2.10). It discussed measurement of student outcomes, retention, quality standards, part-time faculty, program evaluation, and limited funding. It was the first time she had seen lack of training for “people like me” (AP 7.2.10) addressed. Her journal entry reflected her relief: “I was beginning to think maybe I wasn’t in the right program because everything was so teacher-based. I would really appreciate some dialogue around this” (AP 7.2.10). Paul, the Cohort coordinator,

replied that it was extremely important for administrators to experience teaching and learning from an instructional point of view: "It will give you the depth and the sensitivity that is so much needed in our community colleges" (AP 7.2.10).

Six weeks later, at the end of the first year, Anne addressed Paul in her journal, telling him about a faculty meeting she had held that day. She was elated about its success which she attributed to her new "understanding from the teacher's perspective of what was important" (AP 7.2.1). She felt the program had given her the "foundation skills" to assist her in her current job: "I hoped the skills [I would get from the ABE Master's program] would include sound theory, broad principles, and examples of excellent teaching practices and programs that as a leader/administrator, I could apply in some fashion. If the Master's program ended tomorrow, I would feel I have met this goal" (AP 7.2.1). This time Paul responded that he wanted her help in remembering her emphasis on management as well as teaching. The absence of management issues was the reason that Anne gave no class a score higher than 7.5 on her graph:

Well, I think if it had been a program for program directors — I purposely chose — I didn't want to get into a program that was administration. I think I mentioned that before. Because it was like, I've got the administrative piece. I really needed a piece that was broader. For me, I had to always make this leap into — from the teaching place into how does this apply, then, in my job? Just one step above, or if I don't have a classroom — so I always had to make that leap. (A3A 136-142)

Fit was more than relevance of content and assignment, it was the connection—the belonging—which the OSU faculty sometimes undermined. Anne recounted an incident from the fifth quarter of the program when a faculty member teaching the Cohort for the first time asked the members to introduce themselves, then challenged one of the administrators: "Why are you here if you're not a teacher?" That was a question Anne asked herself.

I mean, I'm a fairly independent, isolated learner, anyway. I work fairly well by myself. But it was definitely affecting my comfort level in the overall Cohort. It was like them and us, them teachers and us administrators — It was only — it was me.

I don't think anybody ever said that to me, but it was like, "How does this fit with me?" All through the program. (A3A 514-519)

Reflecting on her graph, Anne expressed regret for not having been more assertive about the projects, despite my insistence that it was the responsibility of faculty to help her tailor the assignments.

I think that probably happened when we as a group, right about here [indicating Winter of 1995] and I would have taken more charge of my learning and said, "No, this isn't working for me." But I didn't have that confidence or understanding. I didn't know what I needed, actually. I mean, I was not clear in my own thinking, about how I could take that step. (A3A 583-588)

Respect and Admiration: I Now Have a High Standard

"Another chapter would be, 'Respect and admiration.' And then as a subheading, 'I now have a high standard.' That goes back to what I was telling about, as far as I now know what excellent teaching is" (A2B 639-642). Anne's new standard for teaching came from observing the "skill of the teachers in the Cohort" (A31 610). "Many classes provided the opportunity to observe excellent teaching. I now have a standard of excellence I expect from teachers in the field. I will use this as a model for my own teaching and learning and as a guide for faculty for their own professional development" (AP 7.1.2).

When asked what would happen if she had to begin teaching the next day, Anne replied with an audible gasp:

I would panic. I would panic initially, because teaching is scary. It's a very scary process. And being forced to teach in the first two terms of the Master's was very good for me, to go through that experience, actually teaching. At the same time that I panic, part of my observations in the classrooms — that's why I love to do ESL, because there is an opportunity to start working with students often, there's so much is going on and I really enjoy it.

So the energy that comes from teaching, really makes me realize that's what it's all about. And I really enjoy that, just the

contact with the students. The teaching part, I guess, because I don't feel comfortable doing it, I mean, that's why I panic a little bit when I think about it, was like, you know, "Wow, I'm not prepared — I'm not prepared to do it, I have — especially if they ask me, like a math question, and I think, "Oh, God." (A2A 5-19)

Anne saw teaching as the source of energy in the program, but something for which she was not prepared. Her experiences with teaching math during her internship had been simultaneously wonderful, exciting, exhilarating, and horrible. Yet she had to supervise, evaluate, and lead teachers every day.

Well, that was one of the reasons I took this program, because I don't feel like I'm an expert, or I'm still struggling with understanding, having that credibility, I guess, around teachers or supervising teachers, and being able to give feedback or assistance. And that may be why I go back to having them discover for themselves how to make themselves more effective, because I'm learning constantly from them good techniques about teaching, and that's one of the key valuable pieces of this Cohort was seeing excellent teachers and understanding what they're doing and how they're going through it. (A3A 425-433)

Anne made it clear that the models of excellence were not necessarily university faculty, although she included some of them when asked. The true models were the practitioners in the Cohort.

So just observing them, you know, one of the things I was thinking about before you came was, to me, that kind of teaching has become kind of a standard. You know, it's the holistic concept, and there's just some excellent teachers and it was wonderful to be able to observe them. So it's like anything less than that is almost disappointing, to see that experience or to have that experience, to be part of that. (A2A 159-165)

The challenge that Anne identified for herself was to translate that standard consistently into her own program: "And so how do you — how do I, in my position, bring other teachers into that level of standard or experience? [How do I] put them in a place where they can experience excellent teachers? And I've seen it also, in another teacher here" (A2A 165-169).

One way she hoped to promote excellent instruction was by selecting good teachers. She offered a detailed criteria for the perfect instructor, someone who is “more of facilitator than all-knowing authority-stand-in-front-of the-classroom,” and is “sensitive and able to gauge and engage every learner in the classroom in some way”(A2A 197-200). The perfect instructor is “tuned in to what is relevant and meaningful to that student and not content driven” (A2A 200-201). She sought instructors who understand that “learning shouldn’t be happening in isolation, that learners should be connected in some way” (A2A 203-204). Given her own experiences in the Cohort, however, Anne believed the perfect instructor should also understand “the issues around — not maybe totally — cooperative learning” (A2A 202). Another qualification was the ability to create lessons that integrate “as many things as we can” (A2A 206-207). She did not want instructors who view the college as an “isolated little institution” (A2A 212-213), but who saw students as workers and family members and community members. Finally, she expected instructors to be “willing to look at themselves, at their own teaching, and ask about their own effectiveness, wanting to continue to grow professionally and as individuals, too” (A2A 207- 210).

Transformations and Personal Growth

Another chapter would be “Transformations and Personal Growth.” [I chose transformation] because [the experience] was very — there were things that were very profound and they weren’t necessarily related to content. It was the relationships of the Cohort, just my own changing and that process — my experience as a learner, my [previous] bad experiences as a learner, as a student. Just major, major kinds of life transformations. (A2B 630-638)

Anne paired transformation with personal growth in this title to emphasize a distinction between personal and professional or academic learning. The graph again illustrated the difference, this time in her rating of the combined Cross-Cultural Communication and Counseling classes.

Here, my counseling piece was low, because I have a lot of counseling background. So I didn't learn anything new. And even though those skills that I got there were good, they're not something that I'm going to necessarily apply in my job, even though I am counseling and coaching and working with faculty and staff. I haven't found that I've used much from there. The same with the cross cultural communication. That was a great class, but in terms of what — I didn't learn anything new. In actuality, personally, those two [classes] were probably the most empowering for me personally, you know, from a personal aspect. (A3A 158-169)

One example of her personal growth was “the transformation of my educational experience” (A3B 327-328). The transition from fearful to confident learner was gradual as her confidence and self esteem increased each term. She maintained that her new self-image was not just the result of having made it through the program; she saw specific areas of improvement. “In this program, I learned I am a good student. A few of the areas where I improved my skills are as a writer, critical thinker, researcher, problem-solver, communicator, team member, and learner” (AP 7.1.1). Moreover she discovered something important about how she learned—that her learning was enhanced by working with others. Anne still described herself at the end of the program as a “fairly isolated, independent learner” (A3A 515), but admitted that the skills to organize, synthesize information, and use technology were just part of what she learned from her teammates: “More importantly I learned how important it is not to feel isolated as a learner and to have support from others” (AP 7.1.1). In her final reflection, she wrote about the Cohort model itself: “Learning is a social process for me. I first need to experience the creativity and positive energy created with a group that know and trust one another” (AP 7.1.2).

Anne's academic growth overflowed into professional growth. The second change was her new confidence as an administrator which she attributed to the “the personal connections, the content, the struggling, the being a student” (A3B 266-267). She found that she had developed and strengthened her vision for the basic skills program: “It's the affirmation or the validation or the credibility or the understanding, all of those things, around what I want to see, what I want to be a part of in adult basic ed” (A3B 267-271).

The third change, the major life transformation, resulted from Anne's own action, but required the impetus, support, and safety of the Cohort. During the second summer, she "came out to the whole group" (A3B 276).

Anyway, here, there was an experience, a personal experience, that was the first time I've ever done that in my life, to a whole group, which was so freeing and so empowering. It's just been — it's been transformational. . . . So this was a very important part of my own personal development, just for who I am as a person. So that was a big, major piece of just my own life. (A3B 278-281)

Since Anne "saw the gay and lesbian issue culturally" (A3B 608), the cross-cultural communication/counseling class had provided the right setting. The idea "had been, you know, percolating" (A3B 613), but it took the safety of the group and a very specific impetus in the form of a video and Bill's comments "around traditional family values and that lesbians have no business having a family" (A3B 629-630) to move Anne to speak publicly. "I was compelled. I could not keep my mouth shut any longer" (A3B 602-603). When Bill apologized for his remark, Anne recalled reassuring him: "Don't be sorry. You've really freed me. I've been trying to figure out a way to do this for a year" (A3B 625-626). Although Anne had revealed her sexual orientation to the Cohort for herself, she felt her disclosure had an effect on her relationships with her peers. "What ended up happening, I think, was I feel a much deeper connection, because now they know who I am" (A3B 296-297).

So that was a big, major piece of just my own life. And I think I was seeing those kinds of needs in the adult development piece. I mean, this whole life cycle and when do you start — when does life become you individually? You know, "This is who I am." . . . And the rest of the world, it doesn't matter. And it's just something that I've had to deal with, as many of us who are gay and lesbian have to deal with our whole lives. And when do you quit doing that? So that's when I quit doing it, quit having to deal with hiding. And it's been much easier in other situations now, to be more honest. And that's that authentic voice piece, too, to know who I am as a person, to have my voice there, as — not only as a lesbian, but partly being

a lesbian — is really important, I think, for people to know that.
(A3B 302-315)

She suspected some of her colleagues had also undergone a transformation. “Probably one of the most powerful things any instructor said to me was after that, when both Roberto and Larry came up to me and said, you just moved many people in this room about a million years ahead” (A3B 580-583).

Theories of transformational learning had been introduced in both the adult learner module and the learning theories class through the works of Mezirow, Freire, and Daloz. I showed Anne a definition of perspective transformation from Mezirow: “Transformative learning occurs when, through critical self-reflection, an individual revises old or develops new assumptions, beliefs, or ways of seeing the world” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167). Some of the assumptions Anne had examined were about “other people. About myself. About my own voice, my own homophobia and how long it took me to get to the point of coming out”(A3B 651-653). Others were about the program itself. “I think the assumption that I was not necessarily a good student. The assumption that perhaps I would be judged for who I was. An assumption about — I mean, they were my assumptions about my own beliefs — that perhaps I didn’t really fit into this program” (A3B 494-497).

The transformative event of the summer session directly affected the remainder of the graduate program, especially the leadership course in the fall quarter. She pointed to the class as the occasion for personal growth, partially due to the level of confidence and comfort she had achieved over time. She was more comfortable with “Cohort members and what I was doing as a learner. I was freer to be engaged, I guess, and there to be learning” (A3A 175-177).

Glad It’s Over and Preparing for Endings

“And then, ‘Glad it’s over and preparing for endings.’” Anne’s book on the Cohort closed with satisfaction at having earned her master’s degree and delight in the prospect of free weekends: “I mean it was, every term was a drag and the summers were just very hard. And I was so relieved to have

it over, you know" (A1A 366-368). However she did regret the end of an intense and meaningful experience. This mixture of feelings had recurred throughout the program.

I think there were cycles of that. I think at every — like at summer, there was a summer thing there "Well, OK, this is ending." It was like, "Whew." A real relief. And then the counseling and communication. It really kind of applied to the downhill stretch here, and even though we're moving. I'm very glad to be done, there's a great loss. (A3B 98-101)

The end of spring quarter, the last in the program, ended the cycles. "Well, and again, there were some very powerful things that happened this summer, I think, to all of us. And it brought us — I mean, every step there were people — there was more and more connecting, a deeper level of connection" (A3B 181-189).

Anne's Portfolio: As a Leader in Adult Basic Education

Anne used her portfolio to explicitly connect her new knowledge and skills to her position as an ABE director. In the introduction, she outlined her multiple professional roles:

I am an administrator, a program planner, a teacher, and a learner. I design and implement programs to provide basic skills instruction for students who are upgrading their skills, preparing to take the GED test, improving English skills, or entering the work force. I develop partnerships with various agencies to increase services for students. Together with faculty I have hired, we co-create a learning environment to optimize student success. (AP 1.0.1)

Each section of the portfolio contained documents to "show how I have applied what I have learned in a relevant, meaningful way" (AP 1.0.1). Anne introduced the sections by relating the individual entries to each aspect of her hypothetical job description.

Create a Learning Environment

In the first section, Anne defined the learning environment as the “human, physical and organizational effects upon optimal student learning” (AP 2.0.1). The section contained her Action Research project, her philosophy of education, and her philosophy of leadership. Developing the philosophy statements helped Anne to understand her assumptions and her practice: “[The process] helped me to formulate what I value and believe. I can now make sense of my work which helps me understand the decisions I make” (AP 7.1.2). In a response to a comprehensive examination question, she described how she integrated the two philosophies to affect student learning directly through her “influence on development of individual teachers and staff” (AP 2.1.1), and indirectly through management of the physical and organizational aspects of the program. Her philosophy of education, she wrote, was part of her personal vision. Her philosophy of leadership was the foundation for enacting a shared vision.

Anne put learner-centeredness, which she defined as self-directed learning, at the core of her educational philosophy and her own learning. “Self-directed learning means that a learner learns best when she knows, or discovers along the way, what she needs to learn; she designs how she will learn it and evaluates the outcome of what she learned” (AP 2.2.1). Her philosophy emphasized that content must be relevant and meaningful, “relate[d] to the world in which the person functions as herself, a worker, and a member of the community” (AP 2.2.1). Programs should be accessible, offer activities and assessment which are authentic, and “expose the learner to information and knowledge” so the learner can “construct meaning in her own world” (AP 2.2.1). Anne cited Maslow in designating “self-understanding and self realization, making full use of talents, capabilities and potentials” (AP 2.2.1) as goals for education. One of her tasks in realizing this vision was to choose and lead faculty who would create “relaxed, respectful and safe” (AP 2.2.2) learning environments.

The application of her educational philosophy to faculty evaluation led her to pursue a “collaborative” process “for self-discovery and learning about how one is an effective teacher” (AP 2.2.2). She wanted to design a process that would encourage the teacher to “find within herself the

answers about her effectiveness as a teacher and areas where she needs to learn and expand her professional and personal skills" (AP 2.2.2). Anne believed in continuing her own expansion as well: "I am constantly learning and redefining my philosophy of education and leadership. The issues I face daily and the results of the decisions I make cause me to consider and adjust my basic principles. I believe this to be part of my evolutionary learning process" (AP 2.2.3-2.2.4).

In her philosophy of leadership, Anne specified "the principles which are the foundation for my leadership practices and decisions" (AP 2.3.0). She defined leadership as "creating a vision with others, inspiring them to share and embrace the vision, and empowering them to work toward its realization for the betterment of all. . . . Leadership is leading the shared process of creating a vision" (AP 2.3.2-2.3.3). To Anne, inspiring others meant "finding a common thread or bond that everyone is interested in attaining" and creating circumstances in which they are able to "develop and tap into their deeper sense of purpose and to feel better about themselves" (AP 2.3.4). Anne believed that empowerment resulted when a leader recognized everyone's skills and knowledge, allowed them to contribute to the mission of the organization, and enabled them to be accountable (AP 2.3.5). Her understanding of power was a unique and vital aspect of that empowerment: "Power to me is the infinite possibilities one can accomplish and bring to a situation when one knows her own power. A key to leadership is seeing power as a collection of people who know their power and because of their relationships with each other can co-create infinite possibilities" (AP 2.3.6).

Apply and Integrate Learning

Another section was devoted to "documents that demonstrate how I have applied the things I learned" (AP 6.0.1): her final lesson plan, a Faculty Evaluation Process, and a Life Skills Portfolio Assessment process for JOBS students. The portfolio assessment process, which she developed as the mid-term project for Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education, was implemented in the college's JOBS program. It satisfied Anne's ideal of

authenticity in terms of curriculum alignment and movement toward the program goal of employability: "Life Skills students benefit tremendously by being active participants in this assessment process because the knowledge they are acquiring is relevant to real life tasks needed to become self-sufficient and independent of the welfare system" (AP 6.2.3).

Anne also placed the plan she and another administrator developed for a role-play titled, "Budget Crisis, A Leadership Development Simulation" (AP 6.1.3) in this section. In this final lesson plan, teachers or agency personnel learners were asked to decide how to cut the spending of a regional Work Force Quality Council. The simulation integrated her commitment to collaborating with other agencies, her interest in developing and empowering teachers, and her philosophy of learning: "Self directed learn[ing] is how students learn best. Self directed learning means that a learner learns best [when] she knows what she wants to learn, designs how she will learn it, and evaluates the outcome. Learning must be relevant and meaningful" (AP 6.1.0).

The third demonstration of her learning in this section was the part-time faculty evaluation process which she instituted during the second year of the program. It was a vital piece for Anne because understanding "what exceptional teaching looked like" in order to "evaluate teaching within the programs that [she] manage[d]" (AP 6.3.0) was a primary goal for her in the graduate program. The project was not a class assignment, so she prefaced it with a statement about its relationship to what she had learned: "This is the Faculty Evaluation Process I developed during the Master's Program. It is not finished, but still evolving as I learn more about teaching principles. The knowledge I gained during the program gave me the knowledge base and confidence to develop and implement the process" (AP 6.3.0). The process consisted of a classroom observation, student evaluations, a choice of teacher self-evaluation strategies, and required feedback to Anne on her performance as a supervisor. Several completed feedback forms appeared in the next section of her portfolio, "Learn and expand as a leader" (AP 8.0.1). One of the teachers commented on Anne's use of what she learned in the graduate program: "Anne helps her staff explore other possibilities and processes when problems and barriers occur. She is certainly open to any new ideas. In fact, she often facilitates opportunities for people to try their new ideas. . . . The manner in which [she] has integrated new knowledge

from her Masters Program into her work is an example of how flexible she is" (AP 8.2.2).

Reflect

Anne stated that "as a leader, it is important to examine my actions and practices continually for improvement and relevancy" (AP 7.0.1), but in this section of her portfolio, she examined her own learning. She chose four themes which "synthesize[d] the entire experience" (AP 7.1.0) of the master's Cohort and summarized the chapters she had chosen for her narrative: "growth from personal experience, knowledge gained, lessons learned from other members in the cohort, and the powerful experience and strength of the cohort model" (AP 7.1.1). She reiterated her discovery of herself as a successful student, the acquisition of at least a foundation of knowledge about learning and education, the contribution of support and models from other cohort members, and the benefits to her of the way the program was structured.

She returned several times in the essay to her struggle with the OSU program's focus on teaching. Calling herself, "a teacher at heart" (AP 7.1.1), she expressed the contradiction she felt between her interest in the course content and her doubt about its applicability either in the many course assignments that required "a classroom with students" (AP 7.1.1) or in her administrative position. Yet she declared that the most important thing about the knowledge she had achieved was that it "now comes from a teacher's and learner's perspective" (AP 7.1.2). On the other hand much of it seemed only of secondary relevance: "Because so much of what I learned is applicable to a classroom environment, I am also able to pass along knowledge to other faculty" (AP 7.1.2).

While in the graduate program, Anne had encountered teaching at three levels of relevance to administration. On the first level, she had an opportunity to be a teacher, to work directly with students. She declared it a highlight of the program. "I experienced the excitement of teaching and the relationship that develops between a teacher and students in the learning process" (AP 7.1.3). On the next level she had observed teacher-students and

seen “what exceptional teaching looks like,” which she regarded as “a model for my own teaching and learning and as a guide for faculty” (AP 7.1.3). It was not until she taught the video-taped demonstration lesson that she encountered the third level and teaching made sense to her, for her.

Possibly the best culminating activity for me in the Master’s Program was the development and implementation of a lesson plan. . . . [The lesson plan] again left me with the knowledge of the excitement created in a learning situation and allows me an opportunity to consider my overall progress. I discovered I do teach. My plan is to develop the simulated game prepared for this portfolio and present it again for teachers. This activity stimulated me to incorporate teaching on a more regular basis into my job. (AP 7.1.3)

The final words in Anne’s brief introduction to her portfolio declared her integrated vision of her roles.

. . . I listen, I learn, I lead

I am an educator. (AP 1.1.1)

4. Bill

I think [my students] would say stuff like, "Rocks. Bill rocks!" Occasionally I'll hear somebody yell that, "Rocks!" I don't do anything on purpose to try to be a popular teacher, but that kind of recognition really helps, because it tells me they think something cool is happening in that class. At my students' age, cool is everything. (B1D 825-845)¹²

Becoming an ABE Teacher: The ABE Calling

Bill's students are disadvantaged young adults between 16 and 24 years old, who are enrolled in a GED preparation program at a rural Job Corps Center in Oregon. Bill has worked at Job Corps facilities throughout his career in ABE.

I first heard the ABE calling twelve years ago, when I was tutoring ESL and developmental writers at the writing lab at [a state college], and ABE has been my profession ever since. I've taught a number of subjects in a variety of settings, both traditional and non-traditional, and my Job Corps GED program consistently ranks in the nation's top 10. (BP 7.1.2)¹³

The tutoring experiences which introduced Bill to this calling occurred when he returned to college after a ten or eleven year gap during which he played in a band, worked construction, and managed a music store. It was 1986 and he was in the final year of a baccalaureate degree in liberal studies, his "fifth or sixth major" (B1A 128). He held "a bunch of part-time jobs" (B1A 130), one of which was working in the college's writing lab. He became the master tutor and night manager.

¹²Citations which follow material from interviews include the participant's first initial, the number of the interview, the side of the tape, and the line numbers of the quotation. B1D 825-845 is lines 825 to 845 of side D of the first interview with Bill.

¹³Citations which follow material from portfolios include the participant's first initial, the letter P, and the section, item, and page number from which the quotation was taken. BP 7.1.2 is the second page of the first item in the seventh section of Bill's portfolio. A table of contents for the portfolio appears in Appendix C.

He enjoyed working with adults so much that he dropped his elementary teaching courses and enrolled in the ABE Credential Program (BP 8.1.3). He applied for a GED teaching position at a Job Corps Center thinking, “You know, wouldn’t it be cool if eventually. . . I could do this and eventually teach adults?” (B1A 153-154). The Job Corps, encouraged that he had “different jobs and [had] gotten along with the working class really well” (B1A 161-162), hired him without his teaching credential. He taught there for over three years, then moved to Oregon for a similar position at a Jobs Corps Center in 1990.

Current Program: Job Corps GED Competency Program

Bill depicted his GED preparation class in several ways that reflected his varied attitudes toward it. In the introduction to the critical thinking and problem-solving curriculum he created for Instructional Systems Design, he highlighted the effects of the standard GED curriculum on the classroom.

The Job Corps GED Competency Program is rigidly structured around individualized instruction based on the independent study programs of three major GED text book publishers. Their application in the Job Corps classroom results in silent, isolated students aided one at a time by a teacher for whom students must often literally stand in line. (BP 4.1.2)

In another critical thinking project for Action Research, he characterized himself as “at the business end of a rigidly-administered, accountability-minded, competency-based GED program” (BP 4.2.7), and continued his description of the setting to reveal his ambivalence about his success rate:

You can’t always do something just because it is a better way, if it differs much from the way you are told to do it. That, and a realization—a difficult one for me—that it is possible to rack up great program statistics without teaching much of value very well, or engaging students at a much more meaningful level than graduation, that is getting themselves the hell out of there. It’s a sad fact that you can extract GEDs from students without any transformation at all. (BP 4.2.8)

Bill illustrated this contradiction with a story about a student who “just steadfastly refused, respectfully and politely” (B1D 50-51) to work in class for nearly a year until Bill “kicked his ass into doing” (B1D 74) what was required and the student passed the GED test. It was a positive termination for the Job Corps program’s statistics, but Bill did not count the student among his successes nor accept the student’s thanks:

This is not the way it’s supposed to work. This is just not the way it’s supposed to work. . . . I surrendered. . . . I was statistically successful, but he didn’t learn a thing from me. He doesn’t think any different of me, nor I of him, than when we started. And it’s been nothing¹⁴ — He got his GED. There’s something to be said for that. It is possible to extract a GED from somebody without any genuine learning going on or authentic interaction. (B1D 65-79)

Bill wanted more than to extract GEDs, he wanted a “transformational effect” (BP 4.2.8). He sought transformation because of his theory about the learning machine which was the cause of his students’ difficulties with school.

A theory I have no basis for at all — except that it’s a theory that I have and eventually I’ll test it in a formal way — is that [in] my students, that the [learning] machine stayed on. And it has continued to stay on. The defiance and the cynicism and the low self-esteem is all based around this thing which is sucking air, trying to gather understanding and knowledge and a sense of what’s going on. (B1C 313-320)

The defiance and cynicism, which he labeled alienation, was Bill’s explanation for both his students’ and his own lack of comfort in traditional schooling.

OK, I have a feeling that under-education is so often so closely tied to alienation with school — a feeling that you’re not getting understood or heard or even asked — tied to a real passion to learn things. I mean, it’s on automatic. But I do what I can to crack that [cynicism] and let a little glimmer of hope come through there. But it’s that — oh, shoot. I’m not exactly sure how to say it. OK. These people and I became so alienated

¹⁴Pauses in participants’ interview responses are indicated by very long dashes.

and cynical because we were learning at the rate every kid learns. . . . But we weren't learning the same things that every other kid was learning. (B1A 787-798)

Bill recognized that this shared sense of alienation, the connection between him and his students, was the source of both his success as teacher and the ambivalence he felt about the limited expectations of the Job Corps program.

You know, there's a lot of things I can do. And I can do some of them pretty well, but there's one thing that I do extremely well, and I know this now from experience, is that I can teach Job Corps students how to get GEDs. And if I can teach those Job Corps students how to get GEDs, I can teach almost anybody anything, because what it takes to do that is the personal and social connection that can somehow short circuit those barriers, make the electric door open, you know, "zhzhzhz." I know I have that. (B2C 754-761)

Prior Staff Development: Mostly Teaching Techniques

Bill relied heavily on this rapport and intuitive teaching strategies, although he participated in a significant amount of staff development and learned from a mentor over several years before he enrolled in the graduate program. He took course work for a preliminary state ABE credential which he found beneficial. "It was mostly teaching techniques. It was very little theory. There was a whole lot around the GED" (B1A 263-264). He also participated in the state GED Teacher Academy to "get all that update and fresh information and that was pretty helpful" (B1A 270). But he found something missing in formal staff development.

I've always found at conferences and workshops that it's swapping stories and stuff with other people who do the same thing that's of the best, of the most use. I like to hear it from the horse's mouth and then put it together myself. What I wanted to know from those classes and from other people was: How can I do this better? What can I do? What should I have done when. . . ? What should I do the next time? What do you do if. . . ? (B1A 272-289)

This need for technical knowledge to help him understand and support his natural skill was a topic that reappeared several times during our conversations. Bill referred to an early mentor who challenged him to learn how to account for his teaching techniques. "He'd say, 'How do you know what you do?' And I'd go, 'I don't know.' and I didn't either" (B1B 111-112).

Enrolling in the Cohort: An Alternative to a Credential

When Bill relocated to Oregon, he found himself in a jam over a credential because his ABE credential was not recognized in Oregon. "It doesn't exist in Oregon. Closest thing would be a master's degree" (B1A 398-399). He was immediately sold when the Office of Community College Services informed his supervisor at the Job Corps that "this was as close to an equivalent in adult education as Oregon has" (B1A 456-457).

Bill entered the EdM program with minimal expectations and little apprehension about his ability to succeed. In his application he gave three reasons besides the necessary certificate for wanting to enroll. His first reason was to contribute to the other ABE programs in Oregon because "as much as I stand to learn, I think I have a lot to contribute to others in the field" (BP 8.1.1). Second, he hoped the program would support his goals of "publishing, consulting, and politicking in education issues" (BP 8.1.2). Finally, he stated his desire to expand his leadership capacity and roles (BP 8.1.2).

His certainty about doing well in graduate work arose from his previous success in college. Within the first month of the program, he wrote in his journal that he had all the skills for academic success: "I'm a guy who knows how to make A's in a conventional classroom. I'm a good note taker and reader, I like to lead class discussions, and I'm real good at sit-down exams" (BP 2.1.1). The best depiction of his initial attitudes was a retrospective one he offered in his comprehensive examination.

I was pretty jaded. I loved my teaching job most genuinely, but I was sure I could already do it at least as well as anyone else on the planet. Going back to school was a chore to me, an

unfortunate requirement of my profession. But we take the bad with the good, I thought to myself as I recollected my days as wrecker of the grade curve, the front-row sitter, the master student. I was confident that I could tolerate the inconvenience of graduate school. Continuing for a moment in terms of the spiritual, I was guilty of the sin of false pride, and how. (BP 8.2.1)

Bill's Experience in the Cohort: Summer and the Spaces Between

When Bill and I first spoke, he was looking forward to a summer without graduate classes. He joked that he had calculated the length of the program by the number of weekends of homework; there were 121. When I asked if he could step back and see larger cycles in the past two and one-half years, he replied, "There were the two summer schools and the spaces in between." To him, the on-campus sessions with the entire Cohort each summer had been the most important times of the experience. He explained the impact with a reference to Bandura's social learning theory.

The whole thing is, what I've learned about teaching and learning has been manipulated by the social part, by the Cohort structure. . . . because a lot of what we've done, of what we've learned has been purely in the process of being together and hanging out, and trusting that our teachers had something in mind when they had us do things together. Then doing those things together and the experiencing — then asking did we learn something, did we not? (B1E 4-14)

For Bill the summer sessions of being together and hanging out were like "punctuation" (B2B 762) for his experience. The following story of the ten quarters of the program is therefore arranged in five periods: before the first summer, the first summer, between the two summers, the second summer, and after the second summer.

Before the First Summer

In the first two quarters of the program, January through May of 1994, Cohort members attended four, two-part workshops rather than traditional graduate classes. The workshops which addressed adult learning, ESL, reading, and math were repeated in several sites around the state.¹⁵ Graduate students attended the sessions nearest them and worked in geographic teams on assignments to supplement the workshop material. During this period, three topics dominated the excerpts from Bill's journal: new strategies he was trying out in his classroom, the trials and tribulations of working with his team, and adjusting to a new kind of learning.

Following the first workshop on the adult learner, Bill experimented with self-directed learning as a technique in his own class. He responded to students' complaints about the prescribed material, by offering to let them design the "perfect GED program" (BP 2.1.2) which he promised to implement if it didn't "involve injuries or property damage" (BP 2.1.2). When the experiment failed, he reflected on their failure to come up with a plan and wrote that the experiment had supported what he had learned in the workshop about the genuine "conservatism of adult learners" (BP 2.1.3). In the case of his own students, Bill felt the difficulty was a result of "an inability (disability?) to imagine school other than the lockstep; top-down, do-as-you're-told stuff they'd fled to end up in GED class in the first place" (BP 2.1.3). The experiment led him to conclude that self-directed learners needed teachers to become self-directed: "If I really do believe they'll do better if self-directed, I'm going to have to lead them, which seems a lot less contradictory of self-directed learning theory now that I've demonstrated that it will require teaching of self-direction" (BP 2.1.3).

His experimentation with math manipulatives, an innovation suggested by the second workshop, resulted in such success that Bill expressed concern for his colleagues. "I'm afraid a couple of other classrooms are going to be forced to introduce some of this stuff too, or else

¹⁵The four workshops in which the Cohort participated are part of Oregon's Professional Development Series which is available to all ABE personnel. They are regional adaptations of the Pelavin training modules which were developed at the request of the U.S. Department of Education.

find themselves surrounded by students who've suddenly discovered something they've been missing" (BP 2.1.6).

Working with his geographic team was less exhilarating. The second theme for Bill at this phase was "team troubles." He wrote several entries in his journal about producing the first of the team-prepared method critiques, the "Freire paper." Formally titled, "Militant Math," the paper located transformational learning at the intersection of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics curriculum standards, systems theory, and Freire's problem-posing methodology (BP 2.2.2). Initially, Bill approached his assigned role as synthesizer-editor with enthusiasm. "I've thrown my original individual contribution away. . . . My individual contribution will be in the transition in our copy. I get to be mortar, a role I've always liked and one that should support my leadership education" (BP 2.1.8). A week later Bill wrote simply and painfully in his journal: "I take it back. This is really hard" (BP 2.1.8). After his teammates critiqued his synthesis, Bill reported that he was "just plain sore at my group and there's no two ways about it." He felt their complaints had been "in inverse proportion to the level and quality of their respective contributions" (BP 2.1.9). Two years later, Bill told me the story of that paper with self-deprecation and humor.

Until this program, I hated group work. Group was odious to me because the groups always turned into one person who wanted to run things, one person who didn't get it, somebody who told anecdotes about their second cousin's teacher in the ninth grade, somebody who never showed up because they've got all kinds of personal problems, and you end up doing all the work yourself. And, I really disliked it intensely. And I went into our Freire project with that bias, and it really just blew up in my face.

Since I've always known I'm a good writer, I volunteered to synthesize the text. (Laughing) I was the only one whose thinking was genuinely reflected in that. I mean, I had their information in there. Everyone had some information in there. But as far as perspective was concerned, I was right and anything that differed had no place in this very cohesive, cogent examination of militant math. . . . The way I proceeded with the group process was just miserable. And it didn't work at all. Everybody was unhappy. Everybody thought everybody was mad at everybody else, and they were. (Laughing) And it was awful. (B2A 423- 446)

I asked him how the team, which produced several creative presentations during the remainder of the program, had managed to recover. Bill attributed their healing to Paul's encouragement and a heart-to-heart talk with the teammate whose perspective on the process had most differed from his own. "There were no hard feelings and the next time we did it a different way and it worked out just great" (B2A 415-416).

The third theme in Bill's experience before the first summer was his struggle with the "unique structure of education" (B2A 340) which confronted him. At the beginning of our first conversation he was eager to tell me that he had been the "biggest skeptic in the room" when the program was laid out at the orientation meeting of the Cohort. "And it all boils down to this. I started out as a total skeptic, complete and total skeptic. I was mad at my study group, I was mad at everybody. I thought this is really stupid. Please let me read the book, take the test, make my A, and continue to rack up my grade point average" (B1A 18-23). He portrayed himself as having been frustrated and suspicious during the first workshop: "I was frustrated that I didn't get something and then I was suspicious that there wasn't anything to get" (B1D 6-7). The something he expected was a "transformation process" that he felt he should be looking for and "... if it [was] not coming along, then maybe [he] should look a little harder" (B2A 343-344).

The assignments between workshop sessions provided the "demonstration that there was something there to get" (B1D 11-12). After the second workshop, he celebrated his adaptation to the loosely-structured reading and writing assignments he had formerly found so frustrating: "Going hog-wild with written Math Strategies homework. The discomfort I felt (still do, some) with very open ended assignments is yielding to liberation" (BP 2.1.6). He rejoiced in his own conversion: "Damned if I'm not a little giddy! What do you know? I'm actually flirting with genuine commitment to a teacher-training program. I hate being so exuberantly introspective, but I do know a good case study when I see one" (BP 2.1.2).

It was his confidence in his academic ability and cynicism about education that lead him to simply do what he was told and not complain. This sustained him until he began to see a purpose. "I found what I chose to do was to put my trust in somebody else's know-how, and integrity, and

good intentions, and suspend disbelief and let it happen" (B1B 167-169). Moreover, he was determined to understand.

As soon as I began to realize there was something here I didn't understand, I became way more open-minded about the things that I used to even disagree with. But now I was maybe able to at least compromise, by saying, "I think I don't maybe understand this fully." In other words, I was [made] open-minded by the certainty that there was something here that I didn't understand. (B1C 263-271)

Despite the remarkable change in his attitude toward the program, Bill assessed the workshop meetings as merely "good trainings" (B1A 505) which lacked the cohesiveness which was crucial and happened when, "... we're all together, and holed up in some place" (B1A 502-506).

The First Summer

The cohesiveness was partly the product of being in-residence together for two long sessions during the summer, an experience very different from attending workshops with non-Cohort participants and working in teams. "I think we all sensed that the summer school was a big deal. Not just because of the workload, but because we were going to Corvallis. We'd be away from home. We'd be, like, camped out together with a heavy workload" (B2B 765-768). During this quarter, the Cohort took Adult Development, Instructional Systems Design, and Action Research, but for Bill the course work was secondary to the experience of being together, of making "it" happen.

The material was challenging and we had a lot of work to do, and we got it. But I think it all happened, I think it was all driven by the social interaction. My perception is, and I know this is true for me, more people have paid closer attention to our dynamic as a group and the way we've come to love each other than — The content of what we've been learning has kind of been how to facilitate that in others. (B2C 24-29)

Bill recounted in detail an incident which epitomized for him how relationships were built that summer. The story of Penny's cows was part of ABE Cohort lore.

One night, outside the women's side of our [dormitory] floor, sitting in the hall outside the shower, passing around potato chips and some people were drinking wine and pop and just having a wild time, just rocking all night long, telling funny stories. Penny about killed us with this story of these cows. We were just — it was painful. And my face hurt for days from laughing so hard, and so did other people's too. (B2B 818-824)

Bill's recollection of a conversation with another male member of the ABE Cohort emphasized what he found different and rewarding about being with a group of women.

It was like a pajama party. . . . We were trying to relate that experience to doing the same thing in the [boys'] dormitories when we were undergraduates, and it wasn't the same thing at all. This was the girls' dorm. This was with the quilted bathrobes and the little bags and shower caps and hats and all that kind of silly stuff. Whereas in the boys' dorm, it was Swisher Sweet Cigars, malt liquor, you know, pot back in somebody's room. It was a totally different atmosphere. It was a way more feminine thing.

It was way more intimate, actually. Because guys tend to show off for each other, a little bit, and the girls seemed not to do that. The girls seemed to just put themselves out there and I, Ernie and I, found ourselves doing that. And I told a story that I never would have told to a bunch of guys. But I told it to a bunch of women and it went on just great. And I remember just thinking there, you know, I don't know how long it's been since I've just been this happy. And it was wonderful. Just wonderful.

And we worked our asses off. (B2B 842-850)

The courses were challenging, but content was secondary to process: "The classes were the framework for all the socializing, but everything we did. I mean everything we did, except for, I suppose, the actual readings, we did in groups. And it was really neat as we made friends" (B2B 854-857).

Between the Two Summers

The proximity of these new friends was missing during the next nine months when the Cohort met together only at the end of each quarter. Principles and Practices of Developmental Education, Learning Theories, and Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education were taught on-campus to a non-Cohort studio audience and simultaneously broadcast with two-way audio to fourteen sites. Bill attributed rowdy behavior at his reception site to the developing Cohort culture: “We had a ball at the expense of the studio audience. But they weren’t us. See, already, we — they weren’t us. And there was us and them” (B2C 344-345). As he had for the summer, Bill considered course content and process separately, this time finding content more substantial than the process. His adjectives for the weekly, three-hour broadcasts were “isolated, passive, stifling, and exhausting,” though he asserted having “no real beef with the medium” (B2C 214-220).

He wrote in his journal that the fall quarter introduction to developmental education, especially readings from Leadership for Literacy: The Agenda for the 1990s (Chisman, 1990), led him to examine his professional identity. “Less than a third of the way through, this program had shaken up the way I saw myself as an educator; in fact, until recently, I never thought of myself as an “educator” at all, limiting (I suppose) my professional identity to teacher. There’s nothing wrong with that (again, I suppose) unless I’m supposed to do something else” (BP 2.1.2).

Even his teaching behavior seemed to him to have become more conscious. In discussing his metaphor for teaching in response to the fall quarter final exam, he told Paul that the class had “stirred up far more than it had settled, especially in terms of how, why, and what it is we do when we do what we do, and under what circumstances” (BP 2.1.16). In his quarterly reflection paper, he compared his multiple professional roles to the character on “Quantum Leap—who gets yanked from one reality to the next, filling a new role on each episode” (BP 2.1.16). He enumerated his personae so far: invisible man, midway barker, organ grinder’s monkey, septic tank serviceman, Jackson Pollock, revolutionary, and star ship crewman. Then he concluded, “I’m not done yet. I’ve stuck in a toothpick, and I’m still all

doughy on the inside. I don't reckon I much miss the complacency I'd shaped about myself before starting the program, but now, I've no clue where I'm headed" (BP 2.1.17).

The next quarter, when learning theories was the topic, Bill felt he was on firmer ground. "I liked that class a lot, and Erica [the instructor] has a very strong personality and presentation, and there was no question, I mean, when Erica talks, people listen. We sat up and listened, you know? It's like, 'This woman is not to be trifled with and therefore there's probably some really good stuff in everything she's saying'" (B2C 290-294). The content was clear and mastery was assumed, so Bill continued to explore the new ways of learning the program presented to him. He reconsidered the nature of team presentations, which had become routine assignments, and asserted that they were not intended to test participants' knowledge: "Everyone knows this stuff," but to "put on a show and just celebrate knowing" (B2C 377-379).

And that was the philosophy [our team] had about our presentations from then on. And I think all the other groups got to the same place. It was really show biz. It really wasn't, "Are we clear enough on the principle of blah-blah?". . . . I think you can tell that other groups did the same thing and that we were having fun with that stuff. There was no question that we knew it. It was, that's like grades, who cares? Grades don't count. They don't mean a thing. (B2C 380-400)

In spring quarter, the Cohort faced what many found to be the toughest course, Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education, the assessment class. Because of illness and family demands, Bill missed some classes. "We copied tapes for each other. That's how we handled that. But I came out of that term with very little of the work done, many hours of tape, thinking how am I gonna get out from under this, and trying to catch up, but having already gotten too far behind" (B2C 429-432). Already overwhelmed by commitments because he had "let things slide" (B1B 380-385) for several months, he expected his ego to say, "You idiot, you stupid, stupid idiot. It's like virginity, you'll never get that 4.0 back!" (B1E 62-63). He was surprised to find that voice silent and that he could allow himself to drop the class and retake it in the fall. He attributed this new willingness to "surrender something" (B2C 437) partially to the support of the Cohort, to

knowing that “those people were going to hold me up if I stumbled. . .” (B1E 43). He also attributed it to the structure of the program itself: “Last April, when I actually didn’t finish that class, I was — I knew that I could not have made it any other way. No — I mean, any other way than the way that we did it” (B2B 28-30).

The Second Summer

When the Cohort met in June of 1995, for an end of spring/beginning of summer session, they rallied around Bill and the others for whom spring quarter had been difficult. Before starting the summer course, they debriefed the assessment class and affirmed their togetherness.

It was terrific. We first met at the Friends’ camp down the coast. Those guys [the summer instructors] started talking and it was like, “Whew, all right, OK, we’re all right.” You know, we had a bitch session about the [assessment] class. But that’s all it was, it was a bitch session. . . . Everybody aired their feelings and for what it’s worth, I don’t know how much that’s worth, but we did it. (B2C 449-454)

The next day they began the first segment of a team-taught course that combined counseling and cross-cultural communication. When I asked Bill specifically about the summer course work, he gave an unambiguous instructor endorsement: “Larry and Roberto [the two instructors] presented, and we all thought, ‘Oh, this is going to be great, they can combine the class and team teach.’ Those two demonstrated team teaching. I’ve never seen better team teaching. You see a lot of partner teaching, but you don’t see a lot of genuine team teaching” (B2C 450-455).

In the August session, the Cohort returned to campus for the other half of the courses and presentation of their action research projects at the annual statewide ABE summer conference. For Bill, the second summer was very different from the first because he knew what to expect and he already sensed the beginning of the end.

Last summer we knew what we were doing. Had a great time, I think. We were far more relaxed. We knew how to manage the

work of the summer conference and the work of school. Now we understood what Paul and Harry meant by reflection time, and I think [we] had a great time. And I think we did have the sense that this was our last big gathering, that we'd be together, you know, for days and days. And I think most of us went out of our way to make the most of it. I don't think too many people passed by the bull sessions and the room where the laughter was coming from. (B2C 638-647)

In the cross-cultural communication/counseling course, they viewed a video about lesbian and gay families. Bill, recently divorced and struggling to maintain a relationship with his children, objected to "bringing a child into such a tough situation" (BMC p. 3).¹⁶ This brought him into an unexpected confrontation with Anne who at that point had not yet revealed to the Cohort that she was a lesbian. I asked Bill directly what had happened, particularly about the climate that permitted the incident. After an unusually long pause, he responded:

I'm not sure I wouldn't have said what I said under any different circumstances. But, I would have felt different under other circumstances when I found out how it affected Anne. I don't know.

Anne was explicit about this, she would not have responded the way she did under other circumstances. And it was because of the safety that was there. And even with me there. . . in an oppositional position in that debate about gay parenting, she did feel safe. She didn't clam up. She didn't sulk. She didn't gripe. She didn't make up some intellectual argument to try to debate or anything like that. She said, "I feel this way about this because this is who I am."

And I, well it was Roberto's [the instructor] words, "That's so powerful." We started to tease him about how "powerful" he said things were, but boy, that was powerful. It was pow-er-ful. (B2C 507-521)

I asked him how he had felt when Anne had told him that she was one of the people he seemed to be condemning. He paused again before answering.

¹⁶Citations beginning with the letters BMC are from Bill's responses to the first version of this chapter.

I really thought that I had hurt Anne badly. I felt like, Oh, my God. What have I done? You know? And I [was] trying to think, what did I do? What did I say, you know? And going, oh, Jesus, you know, God damn, I'm — Nobody's going to like me anymore. . .

And — I thought I'd blown it and I didn't see why, which made me think maybe there's something fundamentally wrong with me, that everybody sees this issue that I don't see at all. And maybe I am a bigot, you know. That was — that was really tough. And I really had a feeling that it might not be the same after that. . . (B2B 165-175)

He used a simile to represent the unintended the impact of his statements: "I guess it was like playing basketball with friends, you know, you sling an elbow around and you hit somebody in the eye" (B2B 178-180). His concern, however, went beyond sportsmanship, he was concerned that his actions might have ruptured the connections that he valued as the core of the Cohort program, "... when it appeared that I may have blown it with my — my — my friends, my club, you know, that really was scary" (B2B 227-228).

Despite his apprehensions he ended summer session sensing that "a bunch of little ahas" (B2A 552) had come together into a large one.

I just walked around the campus. There was no one else around, the sprinklers were on, and it was very beautiful. It just. . . . I really got a sense that something very special had happened, and I thought that might be it. And I had a real deep sense of satisfaction about the whole thing and it having been worthwhile, and I was hoping that every one else was appreciating that this was our last summer school together. (B2A 554-568)

After the Second Summer

For the leadership course fall quarter, the Cohort met monthly and completed interim assignments that called for examination and articulation of their leadership philosophies. It was a difficult course for Bill. "I started really struggling with the leadership class because I couldn't come up with a metaphor for leadership. Because my leadership is so ego driven, I realize

that. I know that" (B2C 670-673). In the end, he said he had given it up. His statement of leadership philosophy, "Fractal Rapids—Steering with the Current," discussed the concepts of new science and their potential applications to adult education, but never arrived at a statement of Bill's own core principles which had been the assignment. It appeared in his portfolio after a disclaimer: "I still don't 'get' the leadership part, and I don't know if my leadership philosophy is a work in progress or just a mess. I include the following [leadership paper] for humility's sake" (BP 6.0.1).

The final required Cohort class in the spring of 1995, was a special topics course that included literacy, numeracy, and second language acquisition. Bill assessed the class favorably, giving each section brief consideration.

Not having a textbook made me feel a little insecure, but that allowed me to reflect on what it's like not even to have a textbook, you know. And the readings were really interesting. [Literacy] didn't get enough presentation time, because I don't think we got it in the time we had to get it in. I thought the [second language acquisition] presentation was really good. [Numeracy] was really good. That was a neat class. (B2C 808-817)

Moreover, by this time Bill felt free to focus on the class. "OK, stuff is not hanging over me now, I got caught up. I actually can start to really charge and so I went through the winter term on a generally upward trend in terms of morale, and getting things done. And then things started to really come together, the concepts really meaning something to me in my life" (B2C 825-830).

Winter quarter, participants also prepared lesson plans for the classroom presentations that they would video-tape and statements of philosophy for their portfolios. I asked Bill if he thought the mentor who had challenged him to account for his classroom success would find an adequate explanation in the philosophy of education he was writing. He replied that only in the last term had he begun to understand: "But the thing that's started to come to me now is that this really is all about how you do what you do and that education isn't — I didn't have the theory, but the important thing about the theory is how it informs what you do" (B1B 191-197).

The role of theory was one of several issues that became clear as the program ended, reassuring Bill who had noted several times during the program that he was afraid he might not get it.

I've been feeling that way until recently, that everybody was getting something that I wasn't getting, that I didn't understand the question that was written on the board, that something is supposed to be happening that is not happening here. And that's gone on through the whole thing. I'm learning the things. I can recognize it in other people. I can see when something's happening for somebody that's big. I've always recognized when something big was happening with a student. I began to see those things happening with my classmates. And I'm going, you know, where's the line?

. . . . Did I not sign up or something? Am I supposed to be going to some lab where I get, you know, special enlightenment treatments or something like that? (B2B 200-218)

At the end of winter quarter Bill did get it. In an e-mail, he told the program coordinator that the emotions he felt while considering the forward to his portfolio were evidence of his grasp. "Do you remember all the times I wondered when I would get it? Well, I think I got it. I thought you'd like to know. For the first time, I do feel like I'm on track. Right here at the end. Is this a perfect education or what?!" (BP 2.1.22).

Bill's Portfolio: Going Native

When we met for our first interview, Bill was putting his final portfolio together. He was going through all the notebooks which contained two and one-half years of papers, tests, and reflections to decide which to include and how to organize them. He suggested he might structure the portfolio as a series of before and after statements about assessment, instruction, and philosophy. He did not devote his entire portfolio to those contrasts, but he did revisit his original perfunctory goals. Quoting from his own letter of application, he restated his reasons for applying: "First, I want to establish a connection with Oregon's state ABE system. . . . Second my employer requires that I be licensed to teach in the state where my classroom

is located. . . . Finally, a Master's will be a serviceable credential as I pursue writing, consulting, and politicking on education issues" (BP 2.0.2). So limited were his expectations that in the first interview, when he credited the program with "a fundamental change in how I look at life," he added, "and if somebody told me two years ago that I would be talking this way now, I would say they were full of shit" (B1B 156-162). He would have said that, he said, because he was a skeptic then.

Skeptic to Believer

Going from skepticism to belief had for Bill "the sensation of religious conversion" (BP 8.2.1). He used the analogy even more elaborately when he discussed the impact of the program's conscious modeling on his learning experiences: "I don't think this is an act of will and this religious perspective keeps coming back. Some of the metaphors really apply. Including the metaphor about — The Christians say salvation is not deliberate, you get picked. And there is a certain way in which this experience was provided" (B2A 335-339).

In interviews, the introduction to the journal excerpts in his portfolio, and in his response to reading the draft of this chapter, Bill called what had happened to him transformation. His experience fit with what he had read about transformational learning in the adult learner workshop and Learning Theories. He gave evidence of it in the foreword to his portfolio and in the comprehensive examination when he wrote about identification with his students, self-efficacy as a teacher, and the inseparability of teaching and learning.

Going Native as a Learner

The title of Bill's portfolio, Going Native, referred to his discovery of experiences and attitudes he shared with his students. He had not been

aware that his experiences as a teacher had led him to “go native” as an adult learner even before the master’s program.

I was always a pretty successful traditional learner. I made A’s and B’s mostly, just by showing up. . . . I never came to hate red pens until I was a teacher. My students have taught me my dislike of red ink. In this way, I have been the student. I’ve gone native.

I never got suspended from school, either, until I was a teacher—for three days once for insubordination [when] I protested my administrator’s lowering of math competency standards. (BP 1.0.1)

By comparing his new attitudes with his answer to an OSU program application question about what he had learned from his students, Bill demonstrated that he had come “full circle on this” (B1B 48). In the application his response had been, “Really, not much. Because they’re not there to teach me and I’m not there to learn. I’m there to teach them things they need to know that I [know]” (B1B 53-55). At the end of two and one-half years, in the description of a critical incident for his comprehensive examination, Bill related how the process of putting together his portfolio had prompted him to discover that being the learner had transformed his attitude. It was “something completely unexpected and utterly welcome.”

As I looked at myself as an adult learner, the comfortable, therapeutic space between me and my students seemed to close with a *whoosh*. I think it was what Mezirow called *perspective transformation*, and I suspect that, like much of transformational learning theory, it has to be felt to be fully understood. I never knew how deeply I felt about my identity as a learner, or how much like my students I would find myself to be. (BP 8.2.2)

Making His Case

The change in Bill’s self-efficacy as a teacher was more predictable because he had consciously sought it. He had always been a successful teacher and so he was not surprised to find that, “the one thing that was missing [from his program application] was a desire to become a better

teacher!” (BP 2.0.2). What he did acknowledge was lack of understanding of what he did to be successful. In the first quarter he wrote in his journal, “If there’s one thing I need to work on generally, it’s justifying my intuition, which is good but hard to communicate” (BP 2.1.7). It was the challenge to explain his success that his mentor had given him years before and one I reiterated during the first interview. He answered in the portfolio foreword: “A friend asked me once, if I had intuited as much about adult education as I’d said I had, what did I learn from my studies? ‘Oh,’ I told her, ‘Now I know what I’m talking about.’ . . . In this program I have learned to make my case” (BP 1.0.1). Making his case was what he meant by self-efficacy. “But I didn’t know I knew it. I had no sense of self-efficacy about it. I couldn’t have described it to anybody else” (B1D 505-506). He explained the consequences of being able to describe what he does.

I do think that I serve students better now because I think I’ve gotten a lot of good nuts and bolts, good technical, good hands-on stuff. I really, really do. But what I feel different about is this, that I knew how to do what I was doing, but I didn’t know what I was doing. Now I do know what I’m doing and I can take those experiences that I may have handled successfully intuitively over the last eight or nine years that I worked in ABE before I started this program. All that stuff is in my pocket. (B1D 513-520)

The Con-Fusing Connection between Teaching and Learning

He used another metaphor to illustrate his increased self-efficacy again a few minutes later. “In other words, I’ve got my bag of tricks, but I’ve got my briefcase of support for that now” (B1D 552-554). Moreover, he had learned something about teaching from his experiences as a learner in the Cohort. “I wonder if having belonged to the Cohort for two full years, learning in the very way my students tend to learn (Bandura again) has made me feel about teaching and learning the way my students feel about teaching and learning, that the respective roles of teacher and learner are at least in this way inseparable” (BP 1.0.1). Here Bill illustrated the Mobius strip that teaching and learning had formed from his experience.

What I found was that — my biggest aha was when I realized that we were learning the principles of adult education as they were being practiced on us. That we were learning in the style in which we were learning to teach. . . . Our class was a model for how to do it. Paul and Harry were in on it. You. And I think we began sort of inductively to realize that we were getting a taste of what was going to be our own medicine. (B1A 214-224)

He saw the potential early in the program, “I had always been a good teacher. I’m beginning to see that I have ample capacity to become a great one. If I can do for my students what’s gradually being done for me” (BP 2.1.6). He seemed to have rediscovered this understanding again and again during the program. “We all signed up to learn this stuff not knowing what it was we were supposed to learn until it was happening to us. . . . I mean nobody was saying, ‘In six weeks, you should feel this way.’ They did tell us our students would be more likely to respond in these ways” (B1A 183-204).

Bill found the program’s content, the something he had kept hoping for, in the cohort model:

I think everybody kinda acknowledges that the that the formation of us as a group has been more impressive than the content. . . . That happens to be the content. And that’s what tells me that this stuff works. Wow, this isn’t progressive bullshit, this works! It really works. How do I know? I been there. I been there, you know. I’m there. (B2C 417-422)

The “mutually reinforcing” nature of teaching and learning was “con-fusing.”

I have a real hard time separating teaching, learning, and life in general now. . . . Those, all this stuff, these principles, exact same ones, if they’re what’s defining the way I look at life in general, teaching, and learning, then I can’t distinguish between life in general, teaching, and learning because they’re defined by exactly the same thing. And so, now the difference really is, when I’m wearing a tie and slacks, whether somebody’s asking me questions that I need to lead them to answer or whether I’m seeking answers through others. (B2C 830-839)

Despite the “con-fusion” which arose from this connection, he found in it a unique “sense of wholeness” that wasn’t “mystical,” but “completely

rational" (B2C 876-878). He put this new way of looking at teaching and learning at the core of his experience in the program. The foreword to his portfolio, which was his final reflection, ended with a powerful summary of his transformation and a preview of his future teaching practice. "I do feel different about teaching and learning after being in the Cohort, and this is what this portfolio is about. *I feel better*. So I wonder, if I teach my students to learn in the same way I have learned how to teach them, whether they won't feel better, too. It's a working hypothesis" (BP 1.0.1).

5. Candy

The idea is to move away from textbooks. It's a package of competency kinds of things but it gives students freedom. I'm thinking, isn't that incredible! Students would have some control and power over what they're going to learn. I'm ready to do it. I know that there's far more work involved than saying, "Here's the textbook. Read the chapter, take the quiz. Whether you learn anything or not, you'll get the credit." There are other people who are going to see me as a rabble-rouser and shaking it up. . . . [The director] knows that I'm a risk-taker and I'll charge through if it looks like it makes sense and is going to better our program. (C2A 217-228)¹⁷

Becoming an ABE Teacher: A Natural Progression

In the brief autobiography Candy provided for the program application, she described entering the field of ABE when she had completed just two years of college. "I first became aware of Adult Basic Education in 1978 when I was hired by the community college as a secretary/teacher's aide for the Basic Skills Department" (CP 1.2.1).¹⁸ During six years in the position, she "did a lot of stuff a secretary doesn't usually do" (C3A 625); she tutored in basic math and reading, assisted with a grant program for low-level readers, and worked with ESL instructors on citizenship curriculum (CP 1.2.1). She informally observed the basic skills classes: "As a secretary they were just right here and I would listen to what was going on. So I learned some things there. I also learned some things not to do. You know, that kind of thing, especially how to treat people and stuff. I didn't like some of what I saw" (C1A 6-10).

¹⁷Citations which follow quoted or paraphrased material from interviews include the participant's first initial, the number of the interview, side of the tape, and line numbers from the transcript. C2A 217 indicates line 217 from side A of the second interview with Candy.

¹⁸Citations which follow material from portfolios include the participant's first initial, the letter P, and the section, item, and page number from which the material was taken. CP 1.2.1 is the first page of the second document in the first section of Candy's portfolio. A table of contents for the portfolio appears in Appendix C.

Because she “found [her] efforts effective” (CP 1.2.1) at the college, she changed her major from social services to education. This was a turn-around for Candy who had resolved as a teenager to be “anything but a teacher” (C1B 649). She continued to work full-time at the community college while completing the last two years of her B.S. in elementary education with a specialization in early childhood education. The choice of elementary education was both cause and consequence of “some real strong beliefs about education itself” (C3A 606) she developed while working in the basic skills program.

So even when I went in . . . to teach first graders, the first thing I'm working on is self esteem. The next thing I'm going to work on is to make sure that they get what they need, if at all possible. That's a lot of adult ed criss-cross. . . . So I think a lot of [my beliefs about education were] being developed then. It carried over to the elementary to a certain extent, and so it was a natural progression, then, through adult ed. (C3A 606-621)

After earning her degree in 1984, she taught first grade for two years, then took a break to have a family, before returning to the ABE program in 1990.

Current Program: JOBS and Corrections

Candy returned to teaching adults when the college's program expanded to support Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) clients. “I was contacted in October 1990 regarding teaching Basic Skills as part of the Family Support Act (FSA). The first eight months I was Case Manager and Basic Skills Instructor. From July 1991, I have concentrated on Basic Skills but have trained new Case Managers and was Case Manager during another's maternity leave” (CP 1.2.1). After holding both positions, Candy knew the roles were too different. “You cannot be a case manager and beat on these people, figuratively, and then turn around and be the compassionate, caring person in the ABE class” (C1A 43-45). When given a choice, the decision was easy. “Well, hands down, I wanted ABE teacher. I didn't want case manager. That's all the paperwork and the details and the meeting with AFS [Adult and Family Services] and all that stuff. And when

I got separated from that, then I could start looking and trying different things in my class" (C1A 47-50).

Her JOBS classes at the college are in ABE, GED preparation, Adult High School Diploma, and ESL. In the last year of the graduate program, she also began teaching at a state correctional facility. She explained why, after six months of experience, she preferred the prison.

I've been in the JOBS program since 1990, when we started. I've had some people come back for the fourth time. Maybe if I saw the prison system in that same light, you know the recidivism rate. But I won't see it. . . . What are the chances they're going to come to our facility [again], be in my class again, you know? Where in the JOBS program, so I only see these — and I guess the hard thing has been I've watched women, and some men, women get their GED and be pumped and ready to really make changes in their lives, and slam back into the same wall. (C3A 258-267)

Prior Staff Development: Trying Things

Candy's immediate answer to a question about the training she had received before she entered the Cohort was that she had learned entirely from experimentation. "I started trying things. I started doing some group activities, a little bit [because] I had some students¹⁹ — well, we — well, I don't know where some of my inspiration came from, OK?" (C1A 323-329).

I'll throw out stuff, and if [students] don't like it, then I'll throw out more stuff. . . . And I still firmly believe if you only spark one person's interest, then it was successful, because you've gotten them going. Then what you have to do is keep working until you find what sparks the other persons'. . . . So I try to offer a very eclectic approach in class and try new things and different things. (C2A 111-116)

She attended a few workshops offered by JOBS, but her children were small so it was difficult for her to travel to Portland or Salem for training. Moreover, she speculated, "I think I didn't get training, because Fran [the

¹⁹Pauses in participants' interview responses are indicated by very long dashes.

director] figured I didn't need it?" (C1A 175-176).²⁰ When she began to use the state's new competency-based placement test, the BASIS, Candy quickly found herself training others.

I developed my own little thing. I figured, OK, this is what I needed to know to give the BASIS, so this is what everybody else should know, and I followed the manual. So I had my own whole own training process. And to be quite honest, it was real close to what—when I got the blessing of what to do. But I thought mine was better. (C1A 252-258)

She found the information about administering the BASIS test less useful than the process for holistic scoring of the writing portion. It did help "towards teaching writing, because then I had a better understanding of what would be expected of my students on the GED writing." This was an area she concentrated on during the graduate program: "Going into the cohort, I really felt that was my weakest area, was writing" (C1A 298-303).

The most significant source of professional development for Candy was mentoring she received from Fran, her program director. This began when she was the department secretary and continued when she became an instructor. In a reflection written early in the graduate program, she declared the importance of that relationship, "My ABE Director has probably had more impact on my teaching than anyone" (CP 7.2.1).

Enrolling in the Cohort: A Piece of Paper

Candy had two different goals for the graduate program. The first was the lofty one she expressed in her program application:

I want to participate in this program because I want to be the best prepared that I can be to better facilitate the learning process for my students. I feel this program is better than a traditional master's program since more learning will be hands-on. I am hoping my students can immediately benefit from my learning while I'm in this program. (CP 1.2.5)

²⁰ Candy frequently ended sentences which were declarative in structure with the rising intonation that usually marks a question. Question marks have been retained at the end of sentences when Candy otherwise indicated that the statement was tentative.

The other goal was more instrumental. She realized she needed either 22 credits for an endorsement if she chose to return to K-12 teaching, or a master's if she wanted to secure her position or perhaps advance in the basic skills program. When I asked if she had any concrete objectives for the OSU program other than the degree, her reply was typically forthright. "Mostly I wanted a piece of paper" (C1B 218). When I pursued this, asking if she had any expectations about being a better teacher, she maintained that was not her reason for enrolling. "Not really. I don't think so. Partially because I felt real confident in my own ability as it was" (C1B 239-242).

Her expectations for the what the graduate program would be like, on the other hand, were very uncertain.

Oh, I didn't have a clue. I did not have a clue, Susan. In fact, I figured, OK. Most master's—I knew what a master's degree was, because my husband had done one and I'd typed all of his papers and I'd agonized with him and gotten through it. So I knew what a traditional master's looked like. . . . So when this one came up, and it wasn't going to be a traditional program, the risk-taker in me said, "Oh, let's try." (C2B 192-200)

She had taken a risk just by applying for the program which was structured to accept only two participants per college. Candy was aware that several other teachers from her college also intended to apply because they had all discussed each other's chances. Later she conjectured that the competition for admission had foreshadowed, if not contributed to, the problems that developed when they were all accepted and assigned to the same team.²¹ "I mean it was all—The games were being played before we even started" (C2B 173-174). She had no doubt about the outcome, however, if she were accepted. "I was stubborn enough that it didn't matter what they were going to throw at us. If I got accepted I was going to live through it" (C1B 219-220).

²¹ Each member of the Cohort was assigned geographically to a team which completed various assignments collaboratively. The membership of some of the teams, especially those in remote areas, remained constant throughout the graduate program.

Candy's Experience in the Cohort: Wool-Gathering about ABE Cohort 1

Candy constructed a poster entitled, "Wool-gathering about ABE Cohort 1," to represent her experience. Her hobby of spinning wool became an analogy; nine samples of wool in stages from shearing to knitting were metaphors for periods of the Cohort. Her captions for the steps of spinning are quoted directly to introduce the phases of her experience.

1. The Beginning
2. Washing
3. Picking
4. Carding
5. Spinning
6. Yarn
7. Setting the Twist
8. Creativity and Boldness
9. Celebration

The Beginning

The wool was there, but so were the bugs, dirt and sheep poop, but we had some basics.

Candy began her chronicle by pointing to a small plastic bag of lumpy yellow wool. "This is where we came in. We had the basics, we were the wool. . . . This is fresh off — This is shorn right from the sheep. So there's sheep poop in here. There are dead bugs. There's grass. But the wool is there. So we had the basics to work with, OK?" (C2B 738-743). By identifying herself with the wool, with having the "basics to work with," she asserted her own professional and academic preparation. She presented her strengths and ambitions as teacher and leader in her program application and in early journal entries. She reported the ways that she had responded to her "gut feeling," as a teacher, in order to develop her own strategies: "I decided to do group work, oral discussion, board work, whole language lessons, and family literature lessons," concluding that "I'm headed in the right direction, but I'm not there yet" (BP 7.2.2).

She confidently compared herself to other applicants as a leader, pointing to innovations such as managed enrollment, cooperative learning, competency testing, family literacy, and ESL transition which she had introduced in her classroom. "My past experience in ABE has allowed me to take a strong leadership position to envision and facilitate change" (CP 1.2.4).

Academically, Candy was equally self-assured. She had entered college with high test scores and completed the last two years of her degree while working full-time (C1B 673-675). She was certain that she would finish her master's degree. "I have the patience to do something so that the end result is satisfying. Once I have started something, I am determined to see it finished. Since I have the full support of my family, the ABE director, the FSA coordinator and my co-workers, I know I can do anything that I set my mind on" (CP 1.2.2). Moreover, she had always considered herself a self-directed learner, even before she "knew anything about Brookfield" (C1A 370).

I went to a little tiny high school and so they were very limited. I said, "I don't want to do it this way. I want to do this independent study. I want to learn about mythology." Students in [another high school] were taking mythology. I didn't get it at [my high school]. So I started taking control of my own learning quite young. (C1A 373-380)

Although her academic and professional basics were more than adequate, apprehensions about the graduate program appeared as extraneous matter in the wool. The first entry in the journal she kept during the orientation to the program reflected immediate mixed feelings.

The facilities were great! The get-acquainted session Friday afternoon took much longer than expected and was more emotionally intense. It was good to hear [each other's stories], but I was surprised we all shared so much so soon.

The scheduling for summer session was a nightmare. It certainly would have been easier for the leaders/teacher to say when it would be scheduled than leaving the responsibility to us. But, we felt the frustrations and triumphs our students will feel as we move from teacher to facilitator.

Fears as I left: 1. more work than I thought it would be,
2. not clear what counts for the 60 hours on the [internship]

log, 3. how will I ever be able to work in a group? I'm too self-directed. I've never experienced success working in groups; groups are no stronger than their weakest link, and 4. I strongly dislike journal writing. (CP 1.1.1)

During our first conversation which took place a few weeks before her final portfolio was due, she recalled a less measured reaction to the orientation: "I remember the four of us rode down together. And we rode back. And none of us — We were all scared to death. We just figured we could not do it" (C1B 161-164). The presentation in which the director and coordinator outlined the program requirements had "scared the bejeebers out of us!" (C2B 211).

That first weekend, they laid out the whole thing. They even talked with us about this stinking portfolio. And we're going, "What's that? What? How are we going to do this?" And then, there was all this discussion about the summer session and the money and we had to decide summer right then and three people dropped out. (C2B 223-229)

Her determination to finish, however, was unchanged. "I was going to get a master's degree, period. And I said, 'If this is the one I'm going to do, then I'm in. I'm going to do whatever it takes.' And I've had that attitude all the way along. There was no way I would drop out" (C2B 213-216).

Washing

Clean the wool by gently soaking in warm water and soap. Don't agitate. First six months were like the gentle soaking to clean the wool. We began to build on what we already knew and clarify what worked. By summer, we were ready to challenge ourselves.

The first six months of the program were structured around four professional development modules offered to all ABE practitioners in the state. The workshops' focus on application was designed to give participants opportunities to build on their experience. Each of the modules was presented in two, day-long sessions, separated by several weeks during

which participants were to try some of the strategies which had been presented. The graduate students also did a 20-hour teaching practicum for each module, wrote individual reflective papers, prepared reviews of methods with their geographic teams, and presented one of their method critiques to the whole Cohort at the end of spring quarter.

The topics of three of the workshops, whole language, math, and communicative ESL, were ideal for Candy's willingness to experiment in her classroom. She reported in March that she had asked an ESL student who had been a teacher in his native country to help the other students with math in return for help with English. "I wouldn't have thought to ask him to tutor if I hadn't been taking these classes and trying new things already" (CP 7.3.6). The math module demonstrated how she built on what she already knew while experimenting with new strategies. "I was excited to see [a book I had ordered last fall] as a resource. It was further confirmation that I'm heading in the right direction with my class" (CP 7.3.4). The whole language module also confirmed her intuition. She had begun using whole language activities in her classroom even before she attended the workshop because her children's school district was "going to do whole language" (C1A 331-332). The module helped her primarily with materials: "like family math and getting it together, that kind of stuff. And how to use some of the materials I already had and turn them into a whole language kind of thing" (C1A 355-358). But the readings caused "gentle agitation" when she understood the differences between the elementary school setting of the texts and the realities of her diverse adult students.

My concern is that "pure" Whole Language in ABE is impossible. If I left [my students] to choose what they wanted to read and learn about, most of my JOBS students would do very little, while my ESL students want to learn everything and do it now. I think using a modified whole language approach in which I give suggestions for themes and simple directions, perhaps we'll learn more. (CP 7.3.10)

Moreover, she saw a potential conflict between Whole Language and the direction of the statewide Adult High School Diploma (AHSD) program. In her journal, she signaled her concern with multiple question marks.

p. 197 ????? Outcome based education: This is incompatible with whole language because it starts with prespecified goals which do not consider the personal and social goals and needs of learners. The goals also tend to be too narrow and specific and unrelated to modern knowledge of language development. Most often the goals are stated in terms of performance on tests.????? AHSD is to become Outcome Based: We can't be whole language at the same time? Even though students must accomplish those objectives, they will learn more and appreciate what they have learned???? (CP 7.3.11)

The workshops had not washed away the apprehensions Candy so succinctly outlined in her journal entry after the orientation. Specifically, the “soaking and rinsing” of the first two quarters had not relieved her fears about the amount of work in the program, about learning in groups, or about writing in a journal. The practicum assignments for both the math and the ESL modules were problematic. In math, she was uncharacteristically daunted by a new technique and concerned about how she could log twenty hours.

We had to teach, I think it was, twenty hours of math, that we used manipulatives and all of this jazz. And I thought how am I going to come up with twenty hours? That's a long time. Well, then they said you could use your prep work, so a lot of my hours were prep and getting materials and, you know, all that kind of stuff. But it was still hard, because I—I didn't really feel ready to be doing some of that? It's almost like it happened too quickly. . . . Now it would be a piece of cake, but at that time, it was—it was a difficult process. Not too difficult, but...(C2B 399-403)

For ESL, it was the timing. Candy wrote in her journal in early March that she was “very frustrated!!!!” by the schedule of the ESL practicum. If she waited until it fit in the graduate program, she would no longer actually have ESL students in her classes because they would be working rather than attending school. Paul, the Cohort coordinator, agreed to allow her to do the practicum early, and Harry, the program director, reassured her in his response to her journal: “P.S. Don't worry about the mix-up with practicum. You will have ample opportunities to try new strategies and reflect on them in the next three years” (CP 7.3.7).

The course work requirements proved less ominous as Candy became accustomed to applying assignments to her own classroom, but her journals and our conversations revealed that learning in groups was alien to her. Her recollections about the Adult Learner module illustrate her ambivalence. She reported that when the workshop began, “I was so excited I could hardly stand it” (CP 7.3.2). But afterward, she was disappointed: “I felt there were major areas of confusion for me. The groups teaching each other mostly. Maybe I don’t trust others enough. I’m such a strong self-directed learner and have been all through my school experiences” (CP 7.3.2). One of her fears about group learning had been affirmed, yet after re-reading the workshop materials she could see some potential benefits for her students and for herself. “Working as a group helps clarify my own thoughts as well as receive input or branch out in another direction –so have my students work more in groups” (CP 7.3.2). She was encouraged again when she observed a college-level writing instructor on her own campus as part of the practicum. The instructor taught “with adult learning theory and [broke] her class into groups and stuff. . . . I was so excited. I could hardly wait to get back to our group and say, ‘There is too a teacher who teaches like this. And she teaches writing.’ . . . I was so impressed with how she did it and how it was working” (C1B 195-202).

Candy’s experiences with her own team only heightened her resistance to working in a group herself. The group seemed to be “dysfunctional” (C3A 525) from the beginning, perhaps because it was composed of women from “pretty horrendous family situations” (C2A 227): one member who alternately berated and praised her teammates (C1B 288), another member who had to be “drug along” (C1B 282), and Candy herself who had such difficulty trusting others. Referring to a popular theory that groups form, storm, and norm before they perform, Candy declared that confronting their differences, as one of the other teams had done, would not have helped: “Excuse me. I think because it would have done no good” (C1B 867). She regretted that “there was no such thing as a team paper” (C2B 301) for her group. “We’re very strong-willed people in our group, which was pretty hard to take, because we bashed heads a lot. And we still have not ever—I don’t think we ever got into performing and norming. We just worked on storming” (C2B 302-308). When she described the elaborate

poster presentation on whole language which they did in June, she said, "It was pretty good," but "it was still not really a group thing" (C2B 428-429).

Candy's other fear, of journal-writing, was likewise not mitigated by experience. She admitted that, although she saw value in journal writing, she would avoid it unless someone said: "You have to do it and turn it in" (C2A 176-182). So she did it, but with great caution.

I was very careful when I did my journaling that first six to eight months. I never spilled my guts. . . . I never shared in my journal something that I wouldn't have wanted anybody in the Cohort to read. And so if I kept a personal journal, that no one else read, I think it might be different. And I haven't really tried that. (C2A 342-348)

She explained that she spent lots of time "in the shower or driving down the freeway in the car" (C2A 150-171) thinking about what she would in her classes, but she did not reflect about the past. "I don't think I do a lot of that? I know I don't. And I wrote that in one of my journal entries, that that's an area that I'm really weak in? And that could — Part of it could be when my dad [died], there were some pretty ugly years there for a while. And I tend to block out the bad stuff?" (C2A 169-172). Her apprehension about the emergence of "bad stuff" in journals resurfaced during the next stage when she chose dialogue-journals as the activity for her action research.

Picking

The wool is gently pulled apart to separate the fibers for the next step. Summer and fall put quite a bit of pressure on us. Most of us had never had incompletes before. The first chaos of EDNET transmission, plus summer leftovers, had many of us feeling pulled apart.

Candy described the schedule for the first summer simply as "horrible" (C2B 449). The Cohort had two months off after their meeting in June, but took two full classes, facilitated the state's summer ABE conference, and began both their internships and action research projects during one week in

August and another in September. As she talked about the first summer, Candy pointed to a sample of wool that was so fine it was nearly transparent. "Summer we got into what's called the picking. That's where you separate the fibers. So you take this and you pull them apart. And it can be pretty relaxing, but also, you're really causing trauma to the wool. It's changed. You can't see the curlicues anymore? It's really pulled apart" (C2B 757-760).

Candy recalled an incident which demonstrated the effect of the summer on her family.

When we came back from summer school the first time, my then seven-year-old, Stephanie, the middle one, ran away from home. She was halfway down the street. And I hollered out the window, "Stephanie, where are you going?"

"I'm running away from home."

I think she just needed attention. I'd been gone for that — you know, that horrendous first session that we did. And had just come home and then we had to go back for the next four days. And school was getting ready to start and I still had tons of work to do. (C2A 190-205)

Tons of work included preparing a team presentation for Adult Development. "Well, our group still was in the storming section. And the person that we chose [was] Elizabeth Kübler-Ross" (C2B 441-452). Although several members of her group found the topic difficult, studying Kübler-Ross was especially difficult for Candy because her father had died when she was a child. On the other hand, the adult development class introduced her to another theorist whose work helped her to understand why the event of her father's death continued to be so painful. "That could be why Bernice's [Neugarten] on-time/off-time²² garbage or stuff hit me so strongly then, because I had — I had poked this — pulled this scab off and was open to some of these feelings. So when here it comes, I go, 'Oh finally, an explanation for why this hurts so bad.' Why it still hurts so bad" (C2B 617-622). Candy was surprised when she read her reference to Neugarten in the interview transcript as "garbage or stuff." She reasoned that she had tried to distance herself from disclosure.

²²Neugarten (1979) asserted that events which are "off-time," i.e. do not follow a "normal, expectable life-cycle," are more difficult and disruptive than events which are "on-time." (Bee, 1992, p. 14).

What I said is accurately reflected in how I felt when I talked to you. I don't know how to say how much her theory or explanation of timing really changed me. I really didn't think of it as garbage or stuff, but I said it that way maybe because she touched a part of me so deeply and strongly that I needed to protect myself from revealing how deeply it went so I put a negative connotation on it. (CMC 1)²³

When the summer session was over, Candy still found herself with an instructional design project, a historiography, 120 hours of internship, and an action research project to do. She started them all, but realized later she had begun the action research project without enough forethought.

So I did try to do [some research] first, find out some things before you get going in the middle of something. But it was — I wanted to meet the criteria and get done. . . . I needed to have a life. So it was like, "What's the easiest way to meet the requirements to get it done and learn something and not kill my students in the process?" (C2A 280-287)

Although using dialogue journals with her students and researching the effect on writing skills seemed like a "nice tidy little thing" (C2A 275), it created an ethical dilemma for Candy after she began. The difficulty arose when she read in the literature about student journals to prepare her reflection paper for the fall quarter class: "That's when I came across that one article. I've never had one article just leap out and stop me in my tracks. I mean, I was — even when we got together in December, I was really upset" (C2A 272-276). The article raised questions about the consequences of assigning personal topics for student writing. Candy was concerned that topics she chose might evoke emotional responses from students, something she so carefully avoided in writing her own journal. She noted her concerns in a journal entry dated December 5, which was nearly the end of the term during which she experimented with the dialogue journals.

Concern on ethics of students writing personal stuff and me reading it. Also the responsibility and load (emotionally) of

²³Citations which follow material from participant's responses to the first version of this chapter include the participant's first initial, the letters MC, and the page on which the material appeared. CMC 1 is from the first page of an e-mail Candy sent detailing her reactions and suggestions about her story.

reading such heavy stuff. I need to talk to Paul and Wes (the Action Research instructor) about this. Also wished I had done some research ahead of time. Might have looked at journaling in a different light. (CP 8.9.1)

Candy kept a journal at the same time that her students did and noticed that while they were growing, so was she. "I saw some things in myself. So there — It's valuable to me. There is interest — There's information there. It's seemingly — The problem is sitting down, putting it into words, and then getting so I can look back at it" (C2A 197-200).

The fall term of 1994 also represented the absolute low point for Candy in terms of program delivery methods. For Principles and Practices of Developmental Education, the Cohort used the statewide educational satellite network called EDNET for the first time. Candy evaluated the medium and the arrangements unequivocally, "EDNET. That stunk." She explained why:

Basically, I think I was the only one that had to drive. And I had to drive 30 miles to [the receiving site] and 30 miles home. And then the whole transmission thing. We really felt like we were out in left field. First of all, it was real easy to fade in and fade out. Mostly fade out. I sure never did get the hang of what that course was supposed to be. I'm still not sure. And I know a lot of it was the technology. (C1B 343-349)

Erica, who taught the learning theories class the following quarter, made the technology more acceptable. "Actually I think when Erica finally realized, in the middle of winter term, that this wasn't working and she was willing to change gears and go — That's when EDNET finally became tolerable" (C1B 376-379).

Carding

Next, card the wool so that the fibers are all in the same direction. Erica's class gave us the theoretical base for what we learned. Stan's class on assessment for our group showed us information we had never known before about tests which we use and help our students prepare.

Erica's learning theories class was one which Candy had not wanted to take. She thought it would repeat the previous summer's adult development class and the many psychology classes she had taken as an undergraduate. "I thought, 'Overkill here'" (C1B 425). In fact, she discovered theorists that did "affect what I'm doing now, or at least confirmed what I'm doing" (C1B 426-427). Candy compared the effect of the class to carding which makes the wool soft when the spinner combs all of the fibers in the same direction. "So we kind of knew where we were headed. We were all going in the right direction. We had some background that said, 'OK, this is why all this stuff works. OK'" (C2B 771-775). The presentation for the learning theories class was the only occasion when Candy felt her own group was going in the same direction. In her portfolio, she introduced a visual from the presentation: "I feel that this activity . . . demonstrated to our group what should really happen in the group process. I also feel like it was the only time our group really performed as a group" (CP 8.0.1).

The other class Candy included in carding was Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education. The instructor was Stan whom Candy had liked very much when he taught Adult Development. For her assessment project she learned "a great deal" (C2B 243) about the GED tests. She reported that she was also able to apply criteria she had learned in the class to a published test. "There was this cool looking test that came around for forty-five bucks. And another colleague jumped on it. And when I looked at it and measured it against what Stan said, it didn't fit the rule and I wasn't comfortable with it, and so I didn't order it" (C2A 687-691). Nevertheless, she did not "like what happened in the class. Not so much to me, but what happened to other people" (C1B 429-430). She explained that it had been "a different Stan" (C1B 440-441).

It was very obvious that he [hated EDNET]. . . . We never knew who wrote — who read our stuff and was writing comments. I think I'm still stuck on the idea if the instructor's reading it. . . . That old school where you still — the instructor has the last word. (C1B 443-452)

Although she included the assessment class in the carding stage, she felt that for some of the Cohort, the class had been a return to the washing stage and

the wool had been harmed. "There were a lot of other people that it [referring to the wool on the poster] was ruined — which is very easy. If you agitate in this process, in the hot water, you will have what's called felt, which you can't spin. I mean, it's only felt. You can make a hat out of it. . . ." (C2B 779-784).

Spinning

Now the wool is ready to spin. The fibers are gently twisted to form yarn. The spinning process is the most relaxing and rewarding. We started summer at the beach. The pressure was off. A great deal of healing took place as well. The amount of work between class sessions was an enormous relief.

Candy seemed perplexed when asked if she was the wool or the spinner in the wool-gathering metaphor. She decided that her role had evolved. "I'm kind of the wool, until I get a little bit further along, and then I change?" However, she was unsure about when the change took place. "Maybe if you read all of [the steps], you'll see where, because — I don't know. Maybe you'll pick it out" (C2B 803-808). It did seem that the change from object to subject occurred when she identified the program activities with spinning. Perhaps the change had begun with the course work for the second summer.

And so I put Larry and Roberto's class [cross-cultural communication and counseling] under [Spinning], because I think it was a real healing — We started at the beach, and that — those nights with the bonfire and stuff. A lot of garbage from Stan's class got out. I didn't have the garbage, but those characters asked us about that. (C2B 787-791)

During the course, Candy was empowered by Larry and Roberto, the topic, or her own growth to take a risk that she had avoided for years—to "pull at the scab" she had so unwillingly disturbed the previous summer (C2B 617-622). "Well, they wanted us to do an autobiography of a certain segment in our lives. And I skipped class for a while and walked on the beach. And I mean, the tears were rolling, because I decided I was going to finally deal with some of that crap from my dad's [death] and the few years

after it" (C2B 792-796). She prefaced the autobiographical paper with her intentions: "In writing this paper, I am going to concentrate on a period of years that were particularly painful. This time instead of just concentrating on the negatives, I'm going to try to find the positive or good things that occurred in this period that have made me a better person" (CP 8.7.1).

Yarn

Once the spinning process begins, the "personality" of the yarn is evident. Some lengths are thicker than others. The fall leadership class forced us to look inward to find out what we believed, and how we saw ourselves as leaders.

Introducing the paper in her portfolio, Candy explained why the Leadership and Human Relations course had been so difficult, why she felt "forced" (CP 4.2.1) to look inward for her own leadership style. The materials were "the most challenging of the whole master's program" (CP 4.2.1). Aligning her beliefs with practices and behaviors came from "agonizing soul searching" (CP 4.2.1), and showing what a good leader should look like "proved frustrating" (CP 4.2.1). However, she was able to locate herself in the literature about transformational leadership: "I found myself in Leadership Jazz, Max DePree's section where he talks about amateurs . . . That's me" (C2A 73-74). Identifying with the amateur in the jazz metaphor helped Candy to understand her fearlessness about teaching. "My process of change is to recognize a situation that could be better and go about finding new solutions. I am not afraid to fail or play sour notes, but hope I learn from the failure so [in] the next performance the notes will be sweeter" (CP 4.3.9). Furthermore, to be an amateur, according to DePree, "means literally that you do something for the love of it," which explained "why I am happy in the classroom because I love what I do" (CP 4.3.9).

Enumerating potential leadership roles for herself, Candy did not limit herself to teaching. "I see myself working with colleagues to encourage and guide them, offering ideas or resources to help them facilitate change or expand their thinking" (CP 4.2.3). However, she admitted some uncertainty about her role in the future, after the graduate program: "I am still searching

for my leadership role. Now I perceive it as teacher/facilitator in the classroom. At the completion of the master's program, will it change?" (CP 4.0.1). Six months later, when I interviewed Candy for the second time, she continued to have reservations about taking a traditional role as an administrative leader, again referring to herself as an amateur.

Well, let's just go do it. And forget about all of the politics and all of the why-can't-we's and the we've-never-done-that-before, and let's just jump in and try it. Yeah. Why can't it be? I'm real impatient for making wheels — waiting for the wheels to turn. So when I see myself in a leadership role, I don't see the person, like the ABE director who has to sit back and wait for all those things to happen and sit in boring meetings. . . (C2A 76-83)

With the leadership class, the Cohort changed to a new format using temporary task groups and once per month meetings. It was, at last, a structure that worked well for Candy.

Nothing permanent. Nothing permanent and nothing forced. What changed a lot of it for me was when we started getting together, especially this last year on the weekend courses and our end of quarter things, when we could split up and work in different groups and different personalities. I'm going, "Yes. This is cool. I really like this. That was a good learning experience." (C1B 314-319)

Setting the Twist

The yarn must be soaked. Then it is stretched by draping the yarn over a wooden pole [with a] hanging weight at the bottom. As the wool dries, the twist is set so the yarn holds its shape. For many of us, the cohort stretched us in many exciting ways. We have the theory to match the practice.

Stretching was not unusual for Candy. She referred to the chronic "risk-taker" in herself when she talked about her classroom practices and when she discussed her decision to join the Cohort. The primary challenges in the graduate program continued to be the ones she had predicted initially, but

she also found herself stretched in small ways throughout the program. She was uncomfortable when called upon to create non-verbal representations of ideas or processes, so when I asked her to draw or create a representation of her learning, she was reluctant.

That's one of the things that's been hard for me in the Cohort, when they say, "Draw a picture of your culture." You know, the tree ring thing that we did? Anything that we would come up with, because I don't consider myself creative. And I'd look at all these people with all their colors — And then I finally didn't let it bother me anymore. (C1B 508-512)

Another stretch for Candy was becoming proficient at writing instruction, which she had identified as her weakest area.

As I look back, now, I can see how my sub-conscious recognized this fact and took over. My action research project was on journal writing. The group paper I wrote on whole language showed me ways of improving writing skills. I seemed to focus on writing in many areas, especially creating daily writing opportunities. I am almost amazed to see how much better I facilitate the writing process for my students. (CP 10.1.1)

The biggest stretch presented itself six months before graduation when she had an opportunity to add hours to her part-time schedule by teaching at a state correctional facility. "I never could have taught at the prison [before the Cohort], for instance. I don't think I would have had the confidence to go down into that kind of a setting and teach, because it's really frightening. You walk in and clang go the doors and clang goes another door. . ." (C2A 590-593). The OSU program did not silence the doors, but it did make the teaching manageable: "I can deal with the doors. I couldn't deal with the doors and the teaching both" (C2A 597-598). I expressed my surprise because she had portrayed herself as such a confident teacher before entering the program. Her response was a perfect example of how the twist was set, of having the theory to match the practice.

[Before] I wrote a lot, "I feel." "I think." At this point, I feel like, "I know." . . . There was that risk taking — I was trying whole language. I was trying family literacy stuff. I was trying group things before we started. But I didn't have a theoretical background and I didn't have enough — a knowledge base

from other people that said, "Yeah, this really does work." I only had what I went by. And you know, it's like one person doing research. Is that really valid? (C2A 670-678)

Creativity and Boldness

The experienced spinner can now try other fibers such as dog hair or llama with the wool for a different look. The yarn can be dyed or plied to change its look. We looked at literacy, math, and language acquisition. Some took the integrated class, combining several elements to make a new whole. The technology of the [World Wide Web] was a new challenge for some as well.

The culminating assignment for the program, which the Cohort worked on during winter and spring quarters, was a lesson plan that integrated literacy and numeracy and demonstrated their definitions of literacy and philosophies of learning. It was an opportunity to create a new whole from all of the pieces of the Cohort program. Candy created a thematic poetry lesson for Black History Month, and utilized portfolios to assess student achievement. Her goal was ambitious: "By reading, speaking, listening, and writing, students can participate in activities centered around Blacks' contributions to our society through literature and music while internalizing the literature's emotion and following up with critical self reflection" (CP 5.2.1). Her plan for assessing the lesson itself demonstrated how she had brought together the elements of the course work with her fundamental belief in experimentation. "If only one student gets excited about writing, then to me the lesson is a success. I need to try something else to get the other students excited" (CP 5.2.1).

Candy used another metaphor for discovering her own creativity and boldness.

I'll tell you what I was going to do for a portfolio presentation. I was going to have my kids draw a flower, you know a children's drawing? Then I was going to buy a Georgia O'Keefe and say this is where I was and this is where I am. But I can't afford a Georgia O'Keefe right now, so, you know. . . . But when I had thought about it, if you want a visual of where I feel like I

came from, at least confidence-wise — here's where I was and here I am now. . . . I don't know how I got from one to the other. I just know that's where I am now and where I was. (C1B 489-500)

Celebration

The yarn is ready to use in any way the artist wishes. It can be knitted, crocheted, woven, or felted into functional or aesthetic pieces. The artist proudly celebrates the completion. So we, too, celebrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned and move on to the next challenge.

Candy began to feel the celebration several months before the end of the program when she had "one of those ahas" (C2A 590). She recounted an incident that occurred in the previous fall quarter in response to a question about whether the program had been worth the expense.

Probably not. Geez, Susan, I'm not even going to get a raise out of this. (Laughter) It's worth it in one respect, because I'm so much more confident in what I'm doing. . . . Just before Paul [the graduate program coordinator] came, Loretta [another student in the OSU program] was just sweating bullets over his visit. And I thought, "What's wrong with me? I'm not nervous about this at all." And finally the night before he got there, I thought the reason I'm not nervous about this is I feel like a master teacher. And I need him to come and offer some suggestions. . . as a colleague. Not as an evaluation process. (C2A 577-588)

Another event, the portfolio defense, had not been joyful for Candy. Paul had insisted to the participants that the defense of their culminating portfolios would be celebration rather than ordeal. But for Candy the defense had been one more occasion for discord in her group. They were scheduled to present their portfolios to Fran, the ABE program director, Paul, and me in the afternoon after preparing their joint presentation in the morning.

I've got to tell you this, Susan. This is going to sound like I'm griping again, but we had spent the whole morning saying we

were going to discuss when not to use teacher-centered instruction and when to use student-centered instruction. That's what we spent the whole morning discussing and that's what Fran was ready to come down and talk about. And then Marlena got up and did her thing. And I'm going — if my mouth could have hit the floor, or my chin, it would have. And I decided, "OK, dysfunctional group." [The others] had decided they were going to go through the portfolios and their video tapes. That was their plan. They did not tell Penny. They did not tell me. (C3A 518-528)

The portfolio defense left her with "an enormous let-down feeling" (C3A 11), but she was glad that the course work was done and pleased with the changes in her job. "I love what I'm doing right now. I have campus and prison, thirty-seven hours, benefits. Close enough to [full-time] — You know, life is great" (C3A 335-336). Moreover, she had just convinced the college to raise her teaching assistant to full-time in order to avoid losing her. It was evidence of her new standing. "And — well, I don't know how this has to do with the portfolio, but I think it really does, this whole process, because I have the skills for Fran to come to me as an equal. And to be part of making change for our program — There's a lot of credibility. . . . I don't think any of that would have happened without this stuff" (C3A 486-492).

Candy's Portfolio: Final Reflections and the New Beginning

Candy called her portfolio "a three year culmination of course work toward her degree" (CP 1.0.1). In it, she included journal entries, course papers, the report of her action research project, and student work samples. The final section was two pieces she had written specifically for her portfolio, "Final Reflections" and "The New Beginning."

Final Reflections

In "Final Reflections," Candy referred back to the fears she had listed in her first journal entry, and asked herself, "So did these fears materialize?"

(CP 10.1.1). Her first fear had been the amount of work and her uncertainty about “how things would ‘count’” (CP 10.1.1). She reported that this concern had not disappeared, but they had been re-framed: “It was more work than I thought it would be, and a different kind of work than I expected. How things would ‘count’ is now my old self. What counts is what I have learned through this process” (CP 10.1.1).

Next, she repeated a question she had asked herself two and one-half years earlier about the lack of fit between the OSU program’s structure and her own strong self-direction. “How will I ever be able to work in a group?” (CP 10.1.1). She responded, not by maintaining her continued inability to work in groups, but by assessing her team which “never did function as a group should” (CP 10.1.1). In one of our conversations, she asserted that the program designers should have foreseen and forestalled the group dysfunction. “They should have talked about if you’re going to be in a group, there’s some group dynamics. You should be aware of these kinds of things” (C1B 309-311). A few days before her portfolio presentation, when I asked Candy how she would have done the master’s degree if she had “gotten to do what [she] wanted,” the group was still the sore point, but in a more limited way. She remembered and reiterated her reactions to the orientation and again distinguished between the ad hoc groupings at Cohort meetings and the geographically-assigned team.

It was this long-term belonging to this group. And I wrote down on my reflection from the first weekend, the part that I was most afraid of was that group process, because I’m so independent in my learning and have learned very much not to depend on anyone else for anything. And I’m right. I was right. That was my biggest fear, and it still is my biggest headache. (C1B 262-267)

The other fear she returned to in her final reflection was reflection itself. She asked herself, “Do I still strongly dislike journal writing?” and answered wryly, “Well maybe strongly dislike is too harsh” (CP 10.1.1). Although she gave little ground in this entry, she noted the benefits of journal writing in several other places in her portfolio. In the introduction to the section of journal entries, she admitted that she had written one entry during the leadership class to “relieve her frustrations” (CP 7.0.1). She had torn up the reflection and felt better afterward. “I see the benefits of journal

writing. Convincing myself to take the time to do it is difficult. Perhaps that is an area I will work on after this degree" (CP 7.0.1). In the report of her action research project she wrote about her ambivalence about reflection: "I vacillated between loving and hating my journal. I could see my own growth and successes. My journal also reminded me of things I had planned to do and forgotten. Yet I resented taking the time to write in it. I was also concerned that someone might read my inner-most thoughts" (CP 3.2.14).

Candy and I also discussed reflection at some length. I told her I admired "people who are willing to take risks and try things, but I also know that if you're taking risks and trying things, one of the things that you have to do is think about them later" (C2A 216-219). Her reply began with another story of a successful teaching risk, moved to a tentative connection between reflection and getting along with her colleagues, and concluded with her own demanding definition of reflection.

Back to what you were saying, though, about the risk and the reflection, that could be why I am — why I have problems with my colleagues is that I'm willing to take the risk, but I'm not willing to stop and think about what's happened. Or I haven't taken that time? So maybe that's something I need to work on. . . . I think that it's a part of me that needs to change and there are some things that are like pulling teeth? And that's the area for me, just sitting back and thinking. You know, I don't mind going through this process, talking about what we've done, even looking at the portfolio. That was fun. But it's still not a reflection. It's just going back over what happened. Reflection has to be more of an analyzing than that, I think. So that's probably a weak area I need to work on. (C2A 249-259)

The New Beginning

Looking toward the future, Candy outlined possibilities for new learning projects about teaching in a prison setting, about the human brain, and about learning disabilities. She also identified roles she might take on as one of "the new leaders in Adult Basic Education in the state" (CP 10.2.1). She might find herself acting as mentor for the new Cohort, trouble-

shooting the new state record-keeping system, or developing a family literacy program (CP 10.2.2).

Confidence in these new roles was the primary outcome from the graduate program for Candy who felt that increased confidence was a general benefit for everyone: "Because I've talked to other people in the Cohort and I can't even — I can't name names, because I can't think of who it was, but people who said, 'I really am not doing anything differently. I just now am more confident and know I'm doing it the way — the right way adults learn'" (C3A 630-631). Candy had enthusiastically implemented many new classroom techniques during the first year of the program, but mostly, she said, "Now I just feel better about it" (C3A 587).

6. Emily

[Emily] has become one of our very finest instructors. The process she used to achieve this is indicative of her usual thorough and effective approach to any new skill or project. She did academic research, attended workshops, interviewed and observed specialists, reviewed texts, identified the needs of students, prepared lesson plans, practiced, asked for feedback, revised, and then kept on learning and revising.

She is known for her dedication, competence, and dynamic approach to teaching. She has the ability to help the most negative and discouraged students believe in themselves and in education. (EP 6.2.1)²⁴

Becoming an ABE Teacher: By Default

The letter of recommendation quoted above was written ten years after Emily became an ABE teacher by “default” (E1A 108)²⁵ in 1983. A friend knew someone who needed a replacement for a night ABE/GED class offered by the community college. Emily applied, “and it was just (snaps fingers), you know, I was in there” (E1A 152). She taught several nights a week at a college outreach center. The arrangement worked well for Emily who had four small children, and she enjoyed teaching:

[It was] very rural. And of course, nights, that has a different flavor than days. I really loved those night people. They're so dedicated. I'm in awe, always, at how they manage and balance work all day or do kids, and come too. So, that was²⁶ — that was a very good, very good beginning. It was a solid program and had support from the administration and all. (E1A 208-214)

²⁴Citations which follow material from portfolios include the participant's first initial, the letter P, and the section, document, and page number from which the quoted or paraphrased material was taken. EP 6.2.1 is the first page of the second document in the sixth section of Emily's portfolio. A table of contents for the portfolio appears in Appendix C.

²⁵Citations which follow quoted or paraphrased material from interviews include the participant's first initial, the number of the interview, side of the tape, and line numbers from the transcript. E1A 108 indicates line 108 from side A of the first interview with Emily.

²⁶Pauses in participants' interview responses are indicated by very long dashes.

Emily had not been prepared to teach ABE by her undergraduate degree in therapeutic recreation, nor by her previous experiences directing a work activity center for handicapped adults and teaching preschool. She had, however, volunteered for Laubach Literacy and become a master tutor.

The college had provided no training for her first assignment. "It was walk in, turn on the lights, and say, 'This is the room.'" (E1A 162-163). She did have books and a classroom. "[The books] were all there. I sort of stepped into an on-going classroom. So I sort of had to make myself be — fit into that situation" (E1A 167-169). For the next eight years she continued to teach up to twelve hours per week at one of several outreach sites.

Current Position: The County Jail

In 1991, she learned that the college had created a full-time position for an instructor at the county correctional facility. She investigated the job with typical care, volunteering there for a summer before she applied. Although she still was not sure that she wanted to work in such a restricted environment, she accepted the position because it was full-time.

My kids were teens, we really needed the money. My husband worked for a non-union place, and they just kept cutting benefits. So it was sort of meager. And I said, "Well, I'll try it. And if it's not my cup of tea, I'll hopefully, be able to get out." So, five years later. . . . I'm still here. And to tell you the truth, I don't know whether it's my cup of tea just because I still feel stifled. I have to respect the security issues [for] my own safety. I can't take things into that classroom that could be used against me. (E1A 306-317)

She learned to take the necessary security precautions and accept the risks. She built a relationship with the staff at the correctional facility, giving the educational program new stability. "And so I've — I fit into this system. They trust me. . . . I get these [informal] messages all the time that I'm part of this operation. And that makes me feel good, because . . . I feel almost like I have to market this program because — there's an attitude here" (E1A 347-352). The administration of the facility was supportive of the classes, but the

security staff felt the inmates did not deserve an educational program. Sometimes, Emily admitted, she agreed. "You know, some days, I'm in the same boat as [the security staff] are. It's like. . . the inmates are just manipulating me and the system and everything up there like they've always done and I'm getting nowhere" (E1A 366-369). She summed up the dual roles of teaching in a correctional facility:

It's an interesting walk that I walk, because I feel like when someone comes into my room, I treat them as I would any other student, whether they were on the outside or the inside. But I have this consciousness level of what's reality, who they really are, and the opportunities for something to go to hell quickly.

But in terms of how I deal with them, I feel like I'm genuine. I respect them, until they give me the opportunity to say, "That's not OK, you're out of here. That sort of behavior isn't OK." . . . I've had comments like, "You're like a breath of fresh air," where everything else is so negative towards them. And I think they appreciate [my honesty]. Inmates read that and they can tell whether you're giving them a line or you're not sincere, that sort of stuff.

So, on both sides, I walk this walk. I'm a staff member, yes. I have that allegiance and the necessity to behave like that. But student to teacher, it isn't really a game that you play, but there is this different role. (E1A 373-403)

Asking forgiveness for "tooting her own horn," Emily described how successful the GED preparation program at the jail had been. "The students seem to be appreciative of the whole education program and the package that we've gotten here, so they participate. In fact, last year this site, this jail site, had the highest percentage of GED completions for the amount of students" (E1A 932-938). In her portfolio, Emily included a table showing that, at the end of her first year, the number of GED tests taken had tripled and the number of completions was nearly six times higher.

One reason for her success was her effort to make lessons relevant for the students. "[I can] come up with some other ideas about how to approach things using the inmates' experiences, which are very different from normal ones. It's like we can get off on using tattoos, and get off on a whole thing on symbols and meaning and all this stuff. It's like I have to—I have to look into their world. And so that's a challenge" (E1B 1-8). But she was

restless with the restrictions required in the facility. "I am not just a sit-back-on-my-laurels person. And I think that might be one problem I have with this particular job is that I don't have a lot of high demands. It's sort of the same thing over and over. And there are only so many creative ways that you can do certain things in here" (E1A 104-108).

Prior Staff Development: Soaking It In

When Emily worked part-time, she was responsible for her own professional development, discovering her own resources like a book on language experience approach, and voluntarily attending in-service training.

I made myself [participate], just because [part-time outreach] was out of the mainstream, in terms of the main campus, where all the action always was. . . . [There] has been a policy here at this college, to have an open extended invitation to part-time faculty to participate on whatever level, and so I was always there beyond what was required as a part-time faculty, was on committees, and at the in-services, and doing all the things that I could, I felt, to make myself a better instructor. (E1A 227-234)

She regarded staff development as sustenance and connection to the world outside of corrections.

I just am sort of like this sponge person. I just soak stuff in all the time. So sometimes I soak it in and it isn't used right away. For the most part, I'd say that all the things I do that are related to in-service activities at the college have always been good, in terms of either helping me refine skills or just broadening my horizons as to what's out there. . . . So those in-services do give me the connection. Also, it's sort of a feeding, because [the jail] can become a really negative place to be sometimes. Sometimes . . . when I am walking into this building, I can feel the — I hate to say oppression, but there's this kind of cloud some days over this place. You just walk into it and it's just there. (E1A 592-610)

When I asked about specific training for teaching in corrections, Emily returned once again to safety procedures.

I watched the procedures and caught on to what that was about. But, I've had my knocks, in terms of letting contraband out and all of that stuff. . . . You know, you learn by experience. There hasn't been anything super-major. I am not willing to take any inmate on. I rely on those security officers in a heartbeat if I feel like — I'm not trained. I may have the extra pair of eyes and ears, but I'm not trained to do intervention or wrestle somebody down to the floor. So I'm out of that room and down the hall if I think somebody needs attention. (E1A 420-432)

She also attended the Corrections Education Association conferences held twice each year and reported that they were useful: "Usually they try to highlight something that all of us would be interested in knowing about and dealing with. They've done one on security issues and gang culture and those sorts of things, so it's topical" (E1A 331-334).

In her graduate program application, Emily listed an entire page of workshops, institutes, conferences, and university courses she had attended since 1987, but at the end of the list she asserted the value of her on-the-job training. "I believe that ten years of classroom experience has given me a valuable education" (EA 2).²⁷

Enrolling in the Cohort: A Gift to Herself

Emily was moved to enroll in a graduate program both by her desire to learn and a need to improve her professional standing.

It's something that I always wanted to do for myself. It was like a gift to me. Because I operate so much, you can tell, in my head. And then the other part was that I felt like I had a deficit, because I didn't have any education training. Came up through the ranks as this part-time, sort of, non-essential person in the program. And you just get those messages. Even though I don't think anyone really said that, you just get that message about yourself. And so there was this need to fill in, I thought, this

²⁷Citations which follow material from a participant's application for the graduate program include the participant's first initial, the letter A, and the page on which the information appeared. EA 2 is the second page of Emily's program application.

gap that I had. And of course, now looking from the other side, I see how valuable all that part-time work was. (E1A 1070-1079)

Moreover, the community college's recently instituted requirement of master's degrees for new faculty made Emily feel less secure about her job.

She had waited for a program that was relevant and accessible, so she welcomed the new OSU program as "being able to fit into my work life—my home life kind of went on hold. But being able to work and being able to pay for it. I mean OSU [is] really getting a good bead on the market, [on] who they have to target. You just can't say, 'Oh, we only hold this class eight to ten, Monday'" (E1B 23-32). She was also attracted by specific elements promised by the planners including the action research project, the opportunities to integrate her "practical knowledge with broader issues and philosophies in adult education," and the cohort structure which she looked forward to as a learning community "practicing the very models of change that are on the forefront of educational reform" (EA 1).

She referred to enrollment in the master's program several times as something she had done for herself. She wanted it to be challenging and meaningful. "I felt like I went into it with, kind of this quest and zest for learning. . . . I wanted to make this experience as meaningful — my favorite word—as I could for myself" (E2A 468-476). She approached the program with "a high degree of self-efficacy, thinking that I could certainly do it and pull it off" (E2A 730-732). She had been a straight A student in college and a "sponge person" for professional development. On the other hand, she acknowledged some apprehensions. "I mean, I think it was leftover from being, again, that part-time, not full-time staff. I mean, that issue just kept coming back and haunting me. [I was] thinking, 'Well, I'm not a real professional. I'm not really capable, Blah, blah, blah.' And so, looking at the application form, [I was] going, 'Oh, my God!'" (E1B 61-65). However, after she was accepted, she returned to her former confidence about her academic abilities. "But then, once getting in the program — My love is books and thinking and learning. Once I got there I felt like it was a gift to myself" (E1B 66-73).

Emily's Experience in the Cohort: Through a Prism:

At our second interview, Emily showed me a handful of beautiful rock crystals that she and her husband dug in Montana. She pointed out that each one was unique. One was smoky, another had amethyst in it, and one was a rare phantom. The crystals were the visual for her story of the experiences in the graduate program which she compared to a prism. She brought a sketch to illustrate the metaphor.

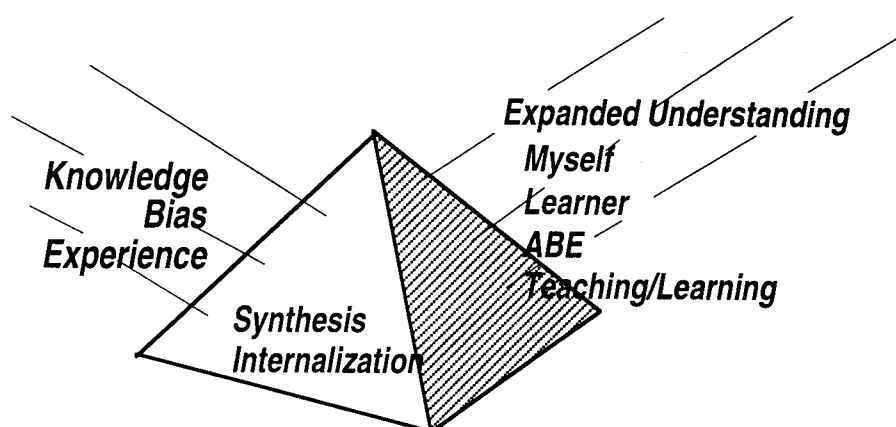


Figure 6.1 The Graduate Program as a Prism

What I drew was this little crystal. . . . The idea of a prism If I look at the total picture of this program and what happened to me. I brought my knowledge, my biases, my experiences in life and as an ABE person and my perspective from corrections, all that sort of stuff.

And in different ways I, we focused. I felt like I had to focus. And then synthesis happened, internalization of whatever through whatever lens I was looking.

On the other side, then, comes an expanded understanding of —sometimes —it wasn't always positive, you know? You can have an expanded understanding of something and it [can] be really, not a positive thing. (E2A 3-20)

She explained the prism effect on her learning: "There's this focus, but then it's like expanded or blown out (laughter) afterwards. And the areas that I learned about were myself, myself as a learner, learners in general, the field of ABE, and teaching and learning. And those are just some of them. Anyway, then I felt like it broke or divided into bands of color" (E2A 66-70).

She began with a puzzle as a metaphor which might integrate the elements of her learning, but it evolved into the prism. "There were all these puzzle pieces. And I was trying to interconnect them and weave them and get my perspective in on it. And so then my puzzle started looking like this, if I folded it. . . . And so I kept with that. I stayed with that. I have my little puzzle — I have my little pyramid or my prism blown open here" (E2A 37-46).

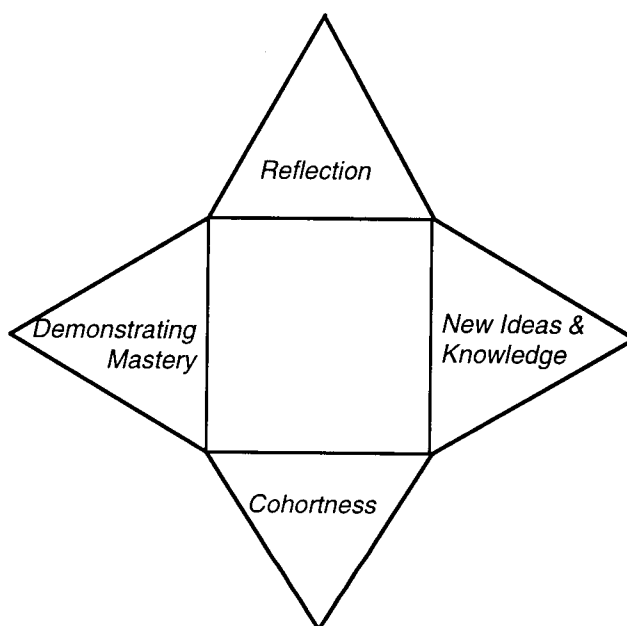


Figure 6.2 The Faces of the Prism

The following story of Emily's experiences in the graduate program is structured by the four faces of the prism in the figure: reflection, new ideas and knowledge, cohortness, and demonstrating mastery (E2A 50-51).

Reflection

Emily chose reflection as the first face of the prism to discuss because it “certainly was a big piece in this program” (E2A 51-52). To her, reflection meant “being required to journal, write reflective papers, position papers; having that be a part [of the requirements]. I mean, even though that was imposed by the instructor, essentially. It was still — it was a good, a really good piece, I thought, to stop and do the reflection. It was real key to my learning” (E2A 76-79).

Although Emily wrote all the required journals, there were few excerpts in her portfolio. The section which she titled, “Reflection,” comprised critical incidents, responses to some of her personal readings, and notes about personal learning. Three of the entries demonstrated that she had reflected on her own learning by putting herself “in the shoes of a learner” (EP 5.1.2). In the first, written during the first quarter of the program, she applied theory to both her learning and her students’.

How many times have I heard “I read the paragraph, but I don’t understand the meaning”? One of the differences for me as a learner is that I have a high degree of self-efficacy. I am aware of my learning and thinking processes and have a variety of strategies to draw upon. These significant aspects of self-efficacy are noted by Bandura and are important to keep in mind as I work with learners who are struggling with basic skills. (EP 5.1.2)

She also looked at herself as an adult learner, juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, during the first summer session (BP 5.1.3). In an entry in which Emily reflected on the first year of the program, she wrote that she had learned to “honor and acknowledge every piece of student work” (EP 5.1.1) because of incidents when her assignments were unacknowledged or lost in the mail or cyber-space. “I felt angry, hurt, and devalued as a learner. These unfortunate experiences taught me that it is imperative to fully recognize students’ efforts, to give them constant feedback on their tasks, and to be careful not to misplace any products of their labors” (EP 5.1.1).

Emily did not limit her definition of reflection, however, to the journals. She also viewed the philosophy statements and several of the

course projects as occasions for reflection. Development of a philosophy of teaching and learning was so useful to Emily that she suggested it as a process for faculty development at her college, “because I just felt like [it] was a really strong piece of my learning and I would like all of my coworkers to be able to experience that and to feel really sure and secure and all that — on some level, about why they're there and what they're doing (E2B 498-501).

Her leadership philosophy was also a “biggie” (E2B 425). The class itself, taught in the fall of the final year, marked the point at which “things started to, like, go ‘wong’ (sound effect) for me. And I hadn't realized it until I put the portfolio together and went back and said, ‘Look, I was saying this. I was acting like this. I was doing this all along, but I wasn't really catching on’” (E2B 207-209).

The importance of reflection was evident on two levels in the high-impact literature curriculum Emily developed for Instructional Systems Design, implemented for her Action Research project, and revised for her lesson video. Her design integrated reflection as a teaching strategy, and her report showed that she had carefully assessed its usefulness.

The curriculum also incorporates Brookfield's (1985) notion of critical reflectivity. . . . I expected the writing probes to help students critically reflect on the selections and their world views, but I discovered that more reflection happened when the group shared their ideas and perspectives. They watched each other struggle as they helped one another develop insights. (EP 4.3.8)

The action research project required that Emily keep a teaching log, a reflective process that she described in the report. “After each class, I jot notes in a field journal about my perception of the lesson. I look at how the individual students responded, what worked and didn't work and my interpretation as to why” (EP 4.1.6). Emily also included the lesson plan, another required portfolio element, in her list of reflective pieces because it was “such a synthesis” (E2B 256).

As a result of her reflection Emily became more critical about educational trends, for example, about the conditions for using cooperative learning. “I find it beneficial with this group of people, to a certain point. And then there are other times when it's just like, “Hands off.” So I guess that's being responsive or, being able to read students — Again, it's that

same ability to — to critically reflect on what happened that day or what's happening and say, "Yeah, this is the current, going, vogue thing, but — " (E2B 539-543).

Overall, Emily felt she had become a more objective observer. "Going through the process in this program has given me the ability to distance myself to a certain degree — rather than just be emotionally involved" (E2A 108-110). Although she had always been an active observer, "in terms of the work and the value I place on it . . . the key that reflection gives me is an ability to step back from it" (E2A 115-117).

New Ideas and Knowledge

As Emily showed me the crystals, she explained that they were the inspiration for using a prism as a metaphor for learning. "So that's where I came up with it. Physics, the property of, like you say, breaking the light out" (E2A 291-293). The second face of the prism in her drawing was labeled, "New ideas and knowledge."

And then new ideas, knowledge. The readings, like Gilligan, Mezirow, Daloz. Those people meant a lot to me as I read them. And then, in Paul's classes, lots of times, you know he's big on raising issues and examining them, so I put that on that same kind of face. I had several faces going, but I kind of combined it. I don't know, getting new input, changing your perspective, those sorts of things. So if I were to focus on this new idea, then it gets blown out [of the other side of the prism]. (E2A 296-304)

New ideas and knowledge complemented reflection. Emily noted that the classes she listed as most useful all included "the other piece to reflect upon, besides just what I brought to it" (E2A 88-89). She found that other piece primarily in two sources: the readings and examination of issues raised in the classes.

She mentioned having read Daloz, Gilligan, and Mezirow in her explication of new ideas and knowledge, but because she frequently referred to other experts in her portfolio, I asked her whom she would invite for a conversation over coffee. "Oh, gosh. Do I have to pick just one? Oh, I want

Laurent Daloz. He's so personable. You can just tell — it's the stories that he weaves. And he seems so humble. I just really liked — He just said 'I don't have all the answers.' . . . I loved the article he wrote about Gladys who refused to grow (E2B 362-367). Emily cited Daloz in her philosophy of teaching and learning because she shared his view of "learning as a personal journey where growth can be understood as a series of progressive changes in ways of making meaning" (EP 2.1.2). Moreover, Daloz defined teaching as a relationship, which supported Emily's own stance. "I recognize that emotional engagement on the part of both teacher and learner is necessary to the learning process" (EP 2.1.2). The second theorist she put on her guest list was Carol Gilligan, whose book was pivotal to Emily's most recent insights about herself.

Carol Gilligan shed light on my experiences as she explored attachment and separation issues in her book, *In a Different Voice*. I see that I have disassociated myself from myself. One of the issues I struggled with in the masters program was identifying my voice. I understand now that I lost my voice as a young girl and became very privatized in my political and public worlds. (EP 5.1.4)

Her third guest would be Stephen Brookfield whom she had heard earlier at a summer ABE conference. He was also her choice for someone to help the community college faculty to "[grapple] and come to grips with, really figuring out what your philosophy is, in teaching and learning" (E2B 488-489). Jane Vella, whose book Emily chose as a personal reading, would be the final guest. In her journal, Emily noted Vella's principles which were closest to her own. "Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach discussed twelve principles to be used to become an effective teacher. . . . Sound relationships with students, honoring immediacy and relevancy, teamwork, and active learning are principles I feel are most important when working with adult learners" (EP 5.1.3-5.1.4). She chose Vella over Paulo Freire because, "She pretty much follows his thinking but does it in a way that I can — I can assimilate her approach. And so it's not that [Freire] is totally off my, out of my scope. It's more the political action part that is" (E2B 424-427). Her discomfort with Freire arose in part from the correctional setting in which she taught. She again spoke of protecting the inmates' access to education. "They have to be oppressive here. . . . And I would be committing suicide if I

tried to get the inmates up in arms over something. And granted there are things that probably could and should be changed. But I can't step out there and do that. It would jeopardize what we do have" (E2B 413-417).

The second source of new ideas and knowledge in Emily's learning experience was examination of issues by the Cohort. One issue, which she identified at the end of the program as a critical incident, was the need for practitioners to define literacy for themselves. In March before graduation, she wrote about examining her own definition.

Revisiting the definition of literacy was a significant growth activity. . . . Based on readings and discussions, I aligned my philosophy with Fingeret who said, "Construction of meaning is at the heart of literacy" (Fingeret, 1991). The impact on my teaching is the commitment to use contextual, meaning centered instruction vs. skill-based, hierarchical activities. (EP 5.1.3)

Examining literacy led Emily to find that she "needed to consider our work in the larger framework of diversity and conflict" (EP 5.1.3). The change in her approach was apparent in the evolution of the goals for the literature lesson. In the first version, which she developed for a curriculum design project in the first year, the goals are listed as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes "that make up a successful performance" (EP 4.4.2). Although she had chosen selections that were relevant to students' experience, in her original design students were asked to demonstrate their ability to analyze the authors' work. In the final version of the lesson which she created and video-taped for her portfolio, she noted that "the emphasis is on making meaning, [so] the functional aspect of skill building becomes the vehicle and not the end in itself" (EP 2.2.3). Emily had changed the theme of the lesson to beliefs and values, and presented topics and concepts that fit her commitment to exploring the larger issues in the lives of her incarcerated female students.

- Introduction of Maya Angelou
- Communication of values and beliefs through poetry
- Beliefs and values promoted through popular media
- Values American society gives to relationships, marriage, intelligence, beauty, and talent
- Decisions, actions, and attitudes connected to one's beliefs and values

- Personal growth and self-knowledge as an outcome of examining beliefs and values. (EP 4.1.1)

Emily's drive for new ideas and knowledge was not quite met in the graduate program. Sometimes she felt a course lacked the content she needed:

I'm willing to be self directed and get what I felt like I needed, you know, the most I could get out of that. But I guess it was in the counseling area that I felt a little let down, just because I think my students are more at risk, obviously, but are much more volatile, have a lot of drug addiction issues, and a lot of things — I felt like if I had a few more tools, perhaps I could be more rounded. (E2B 30-35)

More generally, she expected the program to be “a little more difficult than it was, a little more academic and research oriented” (E1B 112-113). Although she recognized the growth demanded by the program's emphasis on process, she wanted more information and structure. “When a professor surfaced that most everyone else hated, I said, ‘Ooh, wow. This is what I expected a master's program to be’” (E1B 120-125).

Cohortness

Referring again to the four faces on the prism, Emily described the third lens: “And then going along the corner, here, ‘Cohortness,’ I called this one. (Laughter) But there's sort of — again, there were positives and negatives for me” (E2A 321-323). The positives were ways that the Cohort made the master's program accessible and supportive. The negatives, a much longer list, were ways the Cohort created its own hurdles.

The most positive aspect of the Cohort was the coordination with OSU. “The whole thing that you and Paul did, in terms of relieving us of interacting and interfacing with the university and the graduate school. You don't know how much I appreciated that” (E2A 323-329). She felt strongly that her engagement in the program would have been diminished without the buffer. “It would have impacted the learning. I know. So it was really nice that we just went there and we learned” (E2A 350-351).

On the negative side, Emily found that Cohortness sometimes interfered with her learning. The most predictable difficulty with group work was the energy and time that it consumed, but for Emily there was also emotional drain, an effect which she had examined before our conversation.

When I wrote these down, I'm going, "OK. Now why is that?" Because I'm sociable and I enjoy hearing people's perspectives and all that. But when you actually get down to doing the work in a group — it took its toll, I think, because I tend to be aware. I'll watch people and [read] body language and [I'm] always checking, "What's going on here? Am I doing something?" Those sorts of things.

And then I tend to be really task-oriented and very driven to get things done. (Laughter). I like to have time order and all that. And so if you're in a group with people who don't quite mesh with that, it does cause some conflict. (E2A 356-364)

Emily sometimes coped with the emotional drain by distancing herself from the interaction of the large group—being intrigued by, rather than involved in, the proceedings. "Some of the people in the Cohort drove some of the other people in the Cohort absolutely crazy. Well, I just kind of looked at it as this big movie. You know, there goes — there she goes again. It's just like almost entertainment level. I couldn't become emotionally engaged, even when they wasted hours of time, sometimes" (E1B 638-643).

Although the whole Cohort activities were difficult, it was "mostly the smaller teamwork kinds of things [that] tended to be a drain" (E2A 553). She felt she had gone into the program with an open mind. In fact she had written in her program application that she looked forward to being in a learning community, but over time "there were critical incidents that kept happening that discouraged me, I'd say. Maybe half way through, I'm going, 'Oh, I don't know. I would like to just be left alone to do this. Or [to do] some of these activities.' It depended on the class too" (E2A 569-573).

Her original team was small and located in only two sites, but after the first two quarters, they added members from more distant programs. Logistics became a major barrier to working well as a team. "It was a big deal to get days and times and space for us to meet as a team" (E2A 373-374). An even larger barrier was the "breakdown in communication among team members" which she described as a critical incident for her portfolio: "Diverse learning styles, differing levels of commitment, and personality

clashes created stresses that were difficult to overcome" (EP 5.1.2). Although she reported having been generally pleased with the products of the teamwork, "getting there" was stressful. Emily, who wanted the work to be challenging, was disappointed to find herself dependent upon people who did not share her commitment (E2A 466-467). She likened it to a century bike ride on a tandem bicycle with someone who was enjoying the scenery. "I looked at it as a relatively high-stakes situation for me. . . . And so I was less willing — If you're in cooperative learning groups and it's just for fun . . . it's one thing. But when it meant as much to me as it did, I was less willing to take so much time, or to rehash stuff, to do whatever it was" (E2A 450-455).

However, she insisted that the work with the teams were not entirely negative. "It still expanded my understanding about teamwork, group work, when members feel the stakes are high and it's just like, 'Whoa. Look what's going on here.' So it wasn't a total bummer" (E2A 511-515). She also applied what she experienced to her classroom. In her journal, she listed team-related topics she would include in her adult education curriculum to help prepare students for the workplace. Moreover, she developed productive relationships with some of her team members, a process she subjected to typical analysis at the time:

Barb [a pseudonym] and I work well together. . . . I believe it is because we both have a commitment to the process and tolerance and respect for one another's differences. As I reflect, I see that we were engaged in a philosophy of human interaction that Covey describes as Win/Win. We felt good about our decisions and committed to our action plan. The process involved mutual learning and mutual influence with mutual benefits as the result. (EP 5.1.2)

Emily's final reservation about Cohortness had to do with her observations about some of the faculty's behavior. Without consulting her, instructors in several of the "grueling" classes wrote on other participants' papers that they should look at Emily's work.

I don't know whether they felt like because we're a cohort and we're all — That put me at such an odd position. It was sort of like, "Well, you didn't do so well. Go read Emily's. She's a lot better." It was just so uncomfortable. I just didn't feel good

about that. It happened a couple of times. The other part — the other side of that for me . . . is that I really want to share with whom I want to share . . . I guess there's a trust level that you build up with certain people. (E2A 665-674)

She continued, ascribing some of the discomfort she felt to “co-dependent behavior going on” with instructors and students. It was behavior which she felt deprived her colleagues of the process of learning and growth that was so important to her.

And that puzzled me sometimes. I didn't want to become part of that because I really felt like everyone needs to kind of come to these places themselves and understand their own learning and all that. They need to do the synthesis part for themselves. I mean that there's a certain level of support, but again, you just don't hand it out to them or make them dependent on you for things. They need to go through that same growth process, whatever way it takes them. (E2A 685-691)

Ultimately, Emily saw the difficulties of learning in a Cohort as an important contributor to her own growth as a teacher, learner, and person, and used her own experiences to guide her classroom use of group activities. During the first quarter of the graduate program, she noted in her journal that she had been “pleasantly surprised” by the success of cooperative math activities with her students and recognized her need to “incorporate this structure in my classroom to promote pro-social behavior among corrections students” (EP 5.1.1). However, she realized after experimentation and reflection that she needed to be cautious. “Sometimes my students, because they live in dormitory situations of 20 plus people and they have this noise and chaos all the time, I learned to respect the need that they had to just interact one on one with their material or with me” (E2A 524-527).

She also recommended that people at all levels be trained before being asked to work in teams.

I see the necessity to employ strategies for building and maintaining effective learning teams into a cohort model such as this one. As we move to a teamwork concept in the workplace, I will be mindful of the need to include activities such as team building, setting team goals, and holding effective team meetings within [an] adult education curriculum. These

activities are also needed within my workplace at the college, department, and program levels. (EP 5.1.2)

While we were discussing Cohortness, Emily jokingly referred to times when she wondered if she would be able to make it through the program, so I asked her if the challenges she had expected would have been easier to overcome than the challenges that had actually arisen. She agreed that a different program might have been easier, but asserted the value of what she had been through. "But, in who I am and what I understand now, I think it was valuable. I mean, it certainly was not a black hole in my experience, in my graduate program. It was not. It was, 'Wow. Look what's happening here!' And I've gained from the negative just as much as from when everything was going perfectly" (E2A 737-742). She reiterated this later when she checked her notes to make sure she had told me everything. "Oh, I put down transformational learning, you know, Mezirow's stuff" (E2B 292-293). When I said I was surprised that it had been transformational given her already strong sense of academic self, she assured me that "coping with the whole Cohort thing" was "mind-expanding and transformational" (E2B 294-295). In the last quarter of classes, she reflected on her transformation in a journal entry: "My personal response most closely relates to those theorists who see learning and growth as a transformation process. What seems like chaos and confusion is part of the movement from simple meanings to loss of meaning, to reconstructing new meaning. (Daloz and Mezirow)" (EP 5.1.3).

Demonstrating Mastery

Emily labeled the fourth face of the prism, "Demonstrating mastery," the tests, products, and applications which were part of the course work.

Then the other one I felt like I spent time focusing on was when we were asked to demonstrate mastery. Whether it be those consolidation tests that Stan had us do, or products, or presentations as team people, or applying what we were doing in the classroom. You know, doing that looping kind of stuff. That was a good piece for me, to put the kind of structure. . . . It

helps with this whole synthesis thing for me. I know it's "product oriented," but it really does help me to physically, or whatever. . . (E2A 747-755)

She saw the value of the applications early in the program, noting in her journal at the end of the first year that she was "pleased with the overall relevancy of the masters program" (EP 5.1.1). After the program ended, she included application in her definition of the ideal course structure.

"Especially I felt like the way that the classes were designed where a lot of your experience was — where you were asked to integrate or to relate or to take the application back to the classroom and then do it. Then reflect or write papers." (E2A 764-767). She compared the list of classes she brought with her to this ideal, first addressing the 120-hour internship which was intended to help participants become acquainted with adult education in their own communities. "I designed [my internship] to sort of go out and do research and look. . . . It was more like a travelogue or something . . . and I did put my reflections in it, but it wasn't as deep. It was more like surfing through ABE" (E2A 774-778). She then quickly catalogued several of the other classes:

Most of the other ones, the modules where we were given a charge and we had to create this action plan and go do it.

Adult Development, the same way with the historiography. And then there was a lot of info processing, too. But I think because the things that were happening in that class were happening to us as human beings as we're going along the journey of life. I mean, how can you not get excited . . .

And then the research, of course, the action research was really, really good. (E2A 796-808)

The cumulative demonstration of mastery for the graduate program was a portfolio which was to include a statement of teaching and learning philosophy, a statement of leadership philosophy, a videotape of a lesson with a detailed lesson plan, completed projects, and final reflections.

Emily's Portfolio: A Web of Meaning

When the Cohort met to discuss their individual portfolios, I worked with a small group that included Emily and several of her teammates. Emily was searching for a metaphor to convey the way she constructed the meaning of the past two and one-half years. She told the small group that she was attracted to the idea of weaving which was one of her hobbies. Weaving could represent the synthesis and integration that were essential to her learning, but she felt warp and woof were too linear and had too few dimensions to depict her experience. When the idea of a web occurred to her, she realized that it could frame the work she included in her portfolio, which she later titled, A Web of Meaning. In the introduction, she explained why the metaphor was so appropriate. "The purpose of a web is to create a strong yet flexible tool to catch prey for nourishment. My metaphorical web captures experiences that have led to my growth and development of the past two and one half years and represents a graphical illustration of that growth" (EP 1.1.1). She used a drawing of spider's web as the table of contents of the portfolio, labeling each anchor line as a section.

The anchor lines of the web are strong and firmly grounded in philosophy, critical reflection, my identity, and application and practices. The intricacy of the web and the interconnectedness of the major anchor chords signify the necessity to look at inter-relationships and patterns rather than individual snapshots of reality. The anchor lines are connected to one another to form a whole, the gestalt I have constructed by integrating my learning. (EP 1.1.1)

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

The web was also a powerful metaphor for Emily's philosophy of teaching and learning. It communicated the complex, holistic, and non-linear qualities of learning to which she as a teacher responded with multiple strategies. "Just as different types of silk are used for web making, ballooning, and binding prey, different methodologies and orientations to learning are used appropriately to assist learners" (EP 1.1.1). She outlined

several teaching, counseling, and curriculum approaches which she used to implement her view of instruction, then identified her goals for learners: to make connections to previous learning and experiences, to incorporate new learning that had meaning for them, to understand the meaning of their experiences in ways that led to broader perspectives. "This is exciting for them and for me" (EP 5.2.4).

The construction of meaning for herself and her students, a dominant theme for Emily during the last two quarters of the program, was evident in the summary of her teaching-learning philosophy. "The web builder or learner is actively involved in constructing meaning from new experiences. With the help of a supportive learning community, the builder connects new learning to past experiences and knowledge. . . . This involves building understandings that become part of the learner's personal conceptual framework and actions" (EP 1.1.1). It was also evident in a description of her own web-building: "I began this master's program with bits and pieces of theories, no thoughtful philosophy of adult basic education, and little confidence in myself as a leader. Over the last two and one half years, a strong web has replaced a formerly incomplete one" (EP 1.1.2).

Another reference to the spider web that Emily used for student learning in her philosophy also described her own learning.

A break in the fabric of the web causes a disruption in meaning and can be related to cognitive dissonance. Sometimes a break is repaired and the gap is closed. Other times it is not and a new web must be built. New web building represents transformational learning where meaning is made from experiences that cause the learner to reconstruct perceptions. (EP 1.1.2)

The process in which the graduate program disrupted and then transformed learning for Emily was complex. She used the crystals to illustrate it.

On crystals, lots of times, they're cloudy at the bottom and clear at the top? So my husband and I were saying it's sort of like my learning. It was kind of fuzzy and what am I doing and all that? And sometimes even in each class, it seemed like I needed to focus. I needed to get my bearings, get plenty of books read. Then it all becomes clear, as he said.

And then this one has the phantom in it? And I thought that was like, sometimes you look through one of these faces and you think you're going to see something and you see something completely different. . . . And it's like, "Whoa!" It's not really as it appears or as you think it's going to appear. That's why I included biases in that initial little thing. (E2B 178-191)

She was required to do more than follow the academic rules under which she had been so successful in the past. "I can be a successful student, blah, blah, blah, blah. But who am I really? . . . You know, you sit there and you construct your own reality and you're on totally different ground" (E2B 224-233).

During this time I have had to construct and reconstruct my own meaning about how the world works. Parts of this experience have been more difficult than others, just as parts of a web are stickier than others. The sticky places seemed to have been strategically placed to effectively capture the experiences I needed most. (EP 1.1.2)

The experiences Emily identified as difficult were often those she had not anticipated. In her application for the program, she revealed her expectations by listing skills which she expected would fit the tasks ahead. "I am organized and can juggle many obligations at the same time. I love learning and reading, and I can synthesize and evaluate written materials easily. I am an engaged team member, always carrying my share of the responsibilities" (EA 2). Once in the program, she found that she was "forced to operate in another way" (E1B 183) that stretched her skills and understanding. "As the builder, I had to be careful not to become caught and tangled in my own web. I was challenged by the paradoxes of life and was confronted with the tasks of balancing complexity with efficiency, rationality with intuitiveness, and freedom with framework" (EP 1.1.2). She admitted her reluctance to give up perfection in her assignments. "I learned to focus more on the process, because that was where growth was happening for me. However, it was a major change in my learning paradigm to understand that sometimes the product is not the essential piece of learning" (EP 5.1.3).

Frequently in both interviews and writings, Emily referred to discomfort with the lack of structure in the program, the paradox between

freedom and framework that she knew threatened to entangle her in her own web. "The whole putting it together and weaving it together — and I know part of it just happened that way, because we were the first cohort that went through. You know, you guys didn't have anything set — and so we constructed it" (E1B 129-132). In the end, she made the program meaningful for herself, but it did not come easily. "I did it. But, it was not without agony and thinking, 'What is going on here?'" (E1B 195-196).

The final challenge to her need for structure was the portfolio itself. The program offered no guidelines other than a list of documents which were required. Emily and I talked about how unique each of the participant's portfolios was, and she explained her own change of heart about the value of freedom in the assignment.

Because I think being able to put your own personal mark on it is so powerful. . . . For awhile that was hard to grasp. You struggle with that. And then you realize having the freedom to do that is so much better than having someone say, "Roman numeral one." . . . I mean, at first I was really distraught because it just wasn't clear-cut. But I think that was one of the strengths. . . (E1A 75 - 99)

In the answer to one of her comprehensive examination questions, Emily wrote that she understood the place of ambiguity in her "transformational journey," again citing Daloz: "I have learned that paradox is valuable and that confusion and anxiety brought on by cognitive dissonance are part of the growth process (Daloz, 1986)" (EP 5.2.5).

The other dominant theme for Emily was discovery of her lost voice. Trying to explain her silence in the large group, she examined her need for "lots and lots and lots" (E2A 647) of information before making a judgment. Reading Gilligan (1982) helped her understand another cause for it.

Part of it is the part that Carol Gilligan speaks to about not being in touch with your voice, your public voice and your political side. And having that, but having it be diminished or squashed down. And so it all fit for me, seeing that I lived with this domineering father and this very submissive mother and so the whole model I had and the way I was treated — Actually, my father did not want me to go to college, if you can believe that. (E1B 248-254)

Emily believed she would not have found her voice in a more traditional program. "Oh, I don't—I don't believe so. I think I would have stayed introverted unless I had read that book" (E1B 329-330). When she described the differences others saw in her since the master's program, she again mentioned the discovery of her voice.

They think I am much more willing to speak out, which is probably this learning who I am and being able to do that voice-wise. But my ability to articulate and to bring in some of the things that we've learned, whether it be workplace or whatever, and to make that clear to others who haven't experienced those kinds of things or read those kinds of books. . . . It isn't just reading the books, it's being willing to talk about ideas and being able to talk about them to other people. (E2B 317-329)

Leadership

The leadership class "opened up" (E2A 842) more areas than voice for Emily. She found that she preferred "a leader who sees herself as one of the group members who works at fostering collaboration, enabling others by actively involving and strengthening them so that they feel capable and powerful" (EP 3.1.3). She framed this later within her metaphor of the web: "The interconnectedness of the web represents the notion of collaboration which is foundational to my leadership definition. A strong web supports empowerment of individuals, students, and other professionals with whom I work daily" (EP 1.1.2).

Another aspect of her leadership philosophy was the necessity for core principles in order to "stay aloft in these turbulent times of unpredictable change" (EP 3.1.5). "Some webs are symmetrical and others are designed to fit odd-shaped spaces, but the core of the web is always consistent. This inner consistency is indicative of the role principles play as the firm base of leadership behaviors" (EP 1.1.2). Finally, her leadership philosophy encompassed another paradox, that a leader must have genuine and passionate commitment to her vision, while not becoming emotionally involved in it (EP E.1.5). Vision provided the leader/web maker "a balloon

line of silk to a new location" (EP 1.1.2). For herself, Emily found the willingness to take on new leadership roles: "The growth and development I have made have given me the courage to step into leadership positions I would not have previously considered" (EP 5.2.4).

Conclusion

Emily concluded the introduction to her portfolio by returning to the metaphor of the web to evaluate her graduate achievements.

An intricate web with many meaningful connections has taken dedication to weave. I am pleased with my accomplishments and performances, my growth and understanding, and my commitment to becoming a better teacher and person. The firm foundation I have constructed will be the ground work for continued growth and development as I proceed to weave and expand the meaning in my life as an adult basic education professional. (EP 5.1.2)

7. Five Programs for Four Participants

The previous four chapters of this study related the stories of Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily in an EdM program designed for adult basic skills practitioners. Each story reconstructs one participant's construction of the emotional, intellectual, and material experience of learning in a cohort. Together, the stories attempt to represent the singularity and complexity of adults' learning.

In this chapter, I report the results of a cross-case analysis of the four practitioners' accounts, not merging them, but exploring relationships of similarity and difference among them. Comparing their accounts chronologically made visible the rhythms of learning and change over two and one-half years. Contrasting their uses of the program's strategies revealed varied conceptualizations of theory, reflection, collaboration, application, and modeling. Patterns of like and unlike response revealed transformation, accommodation, and resistance. Their reports of transformation and growth suggested multiple intrinsic and extrinsic forces. Many themes emerged as the data were further distilled through summarization, comparison, and re-telling; five are developed in this chapter. Each of the first four themes was chosen because it met four criteria:

- It would be recognized by Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily.
- It was evident in at least three of their stories.
- It could be exemplified by one of the participants who had apprehended and articulated it as a theme in his or her experience.
- It would further understanding of professional development and graduate study as adult learning.

The first theme, *Going Native*, is about the participants' realizations, affirmations, and discoveries about themselves as learners. The second, *Sticky Places*, identifies the role dissonance played in their accounts. *Transformations and Personal Growth*, the third theme, addresses supportive relationships and personal change. The fourth theme, *Confidence-Wise*, describes the growth of confidence as a program outcome.

The final theme, Five Programs for Four Participants, was not identified by Anne, Bill, Candy, or Emily. It summarizes differences among their responses to the graduate program's structure and strategies and proposes a partial explanation for some of the differences.

Theme One: Going Native

I was always a pretty successful traditional learner. I made A's and B's mostly, just by showing up. I did not work any harder than many of my classmates who never did as well as I did—the ones who were so much like those I teach today. . . . I never came to hate red pens until I was a teacher. My students have taught me my dislike for red pens. In this way, I have been the student. I've gone native. (BP 1.0.1)²⁸

Going Native in Adult Basic Education—the Discovery of an Adult Learner was the title of Bill's portfolio. Among traditional ethnographers, "going native" is a disparaging term used when fieldworkers lose the distance between themselves and their research subjects. As Bill prepared his portfolio, he discovered he had lost the "comfortable, therapeutic space" (BP 8.2.2) between himself and his students.

Going native as an adult learner was Bill's manifestation of a theme I named, "self as learner." It was the code for Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's statements about themselves as learners. When the program began, Emily and Candy recognized themselves as self-directed learners. Anne perceived herself as an at-risk student, and Bill as a "wrecker of the grade curve" (BP 8.2.1). Over time, they all added new labels which reflected new perceptions of themselves as learners. Anne became a good student as she developed academic strategies that made sense to her. Candy redefined what counted in school: "What counts is what I have learned through this process" (CP 10.1.1). Emily discovered the advantages of unstructured assignments. Bill

²⁸Citations which follow material from portfolios include the participant's first initial, the letter P, and the section, item, and page number from which the quotation was taken. BP 1.0.1 is the first page of the introduction to the first section of Bill's portfolio. A table of contents for each of the portfolios appears in Appendix C.

surrendered “the traditional study/lecture/test approach [he] had once looked for with such confident resignation” (BP 8.2.2).

As adult learners themselves, the participants related the theories about adult education introduced in their classes to their own experiences. Bill’s identification of himself as an adult learner, however, stretched beyond the examples in textbooks to reach his Job Corps GED students.

As I looked at myself as an adult learner, the comfortable, therapeutic space between me and my students seemed to close with a *whoosh*. I think it was what Mezirow called a *perspective transformation* and I suspect that, like much of transformational learning theory, it has to be felt to be fully understood. I never knew how deeply I felt about my identity as a learner, or how much like my students I would find myself to be. (BP 8.2.2)

The connection between the two elements of Bill’s transformation—the depth of his identity as a learner and the extent of his kinship with his students—was his conceptualization of the model of teaching and learning he perceived in the graduate program. “My biggest aha was when I realized that we were learning the principles of adult education as they were being practiced on us, that we were learning in the style in which we were learning to teach. . . . Our class was a model for how to do it” (B1A 215-222).²⁹

Bill began the program angry and frustrated about the model he later embraced. He resented the absence of the comfortable academic structure which he had so confidently expected: “I started out as a total skeptic, complete and total skeptic. I was mad at my study group, I was mad at everybody. I thought this is really stupid. Please let me read the book, take the test, make my A, and continue to rack up my grade point average” (B1A 19-23). His skepticism was suspended only because he suspected that there was something he did not understand. “In other words, I was [made] open-minded by the certainty that there was something here that I didn’t understand” (B1C 269-271). Grimmert (1988) called this kind of contradictory response an essential paradox of learning in which learners do not

²⁹Citations which follow quoted or paraphrased material from interviews include the participant’s first initial, the number of the interview, side of the tape, and line numbers from the transcript. (B1A 215-222) indicates lines 215 through 222 from side A of the first interview with Bill.

understand what they need to learn and are only able to begin the process by acting as if they did, “This ‘launching out’ is a necessary precursor to knowing that something exists and to knowing how something functions” (Grimmett, 1988, p. 8).

At times during the program, Bill reported that he felt something was wrong with him because he could not get it. He suspected “that everybody was getting something that I wasn’t getting, that I didn’t understand the question that was written on the board, that something was supposed to be happening that was not happening here” (B2B 200-204). Bill’s continued struggle for understanding awakened the sense of self as learner which was half of his perspective transformation. It was an effect Brookfield (1995) attributed to conditions of authentic learning, “Learning something new and difficult and then reflecting on what this experience means for teaching is a visceral rather than an intellectual route into critical reflection” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 50).

Key to the other half of Bill’s transformation—how much like his students he found himself to be—was his conceptualization of the graduate program as a model for his own teaching. At the same time that he struggled to understand his own learning, he wrote with alternate exuberance and dismay about his experiments with new techniques and theories in his own classroom. He watched and reflected on his students with new awareness: “When we looked at who we teach, see. And this all has to do with me, saying, ‘Am I like this? Am I like this person?’” (B2A 645-647). He arrived at the answer to his question when he realized that he and his students learned from the same collaborative, experiential model.

He had linked teaching and being taught in the first quarter when he wrote that he aspired to “do for his students what [was] gradually being done for [him]” (BP 2.1.6), but the sense of connection as he worked on his portfolio was not so rational: “I knew it sort of intellectually [before], but I didn’t know they really felt the same way I do. I didn’t know it in the sense of we really do see blue in the same way” (B2A 126-128). Similar to Brookfield’s (1995) use of the word, “visceral” (p. 50), to describe reflection on one’s own learning as an adult, Bill described his revelation as “totally affective” (B2A 143).

In our last conversation which took place after he had presented his portfolio, Bill applied his identification with his students to his practice,

explaining that seeing himself as an adult learner had moved him away from a deficit perspective about his students. He recalled that during her portfolio presentation another Cohort member had admitted having disrespected her students until recently, and explained that her statements triggered his own recognition that he had looked down on his students as a defense against acknowledging that “[he] was looking down at [him]self. This all goes back to old shame and all this kind of stuff” (B2A 135-138).

Bill was conscious of the significance of his revised assumptions. In his response to the first draft of his story, he wrote, “I guess I’d have to say congratulations. You’ve really captured the most important parts of my cohort experience—my personal transformation while learning techniques to facilitate transformation in others” (BMC 1).

Theme Two: Sticky Places

In the introduction to her portfolio, A Web of Meaning, Emily illustrated her Cohort experience with a spider’s web, citing the properties of intricacy, interconnectedness, multi-directionality, and strength. A web, she elaborated, is designed to capture prey for nourishment; her metaphorical web captured experiences that led to her “growth and development of the past two and one half years” (EP 1.1.1). Those experiences had been both positive and negative: “Parts of this experience have been more difficult than others, just as parts of a web are stickier than others. The sticky places seemed to have been strategically placed to effectively capture the experiences I needed most” (EP 1.1.2).

“Sticky Places,” with its double meaning of cohesion and discomfort, is an apt appellation for a theme which represents the ways in which participants learned from parts of the graduate experience they found uncomfortable. It is a theme that goes against traditional expert prescriptions for adult education which recommended comfortable situations which respond to learners’ experiences (Knowles, 1984), but it is supported in theories which promote transformational and emancipatory adult learning. Wilson and Burkett (1989) summarized the proposition that a situation must be somehow dissonant to induce learning, “So while learning has to

relate to biography, it also has to provide some contradiction, some element of mystery or doubt to invite a learning response" (p. 13).

All of the participants expressed a sense of dissonance with at least one aspect or period in the program. One of Anne's sticky places was academic style, "struggling with Stan and his scholarly works, which forced me to ask other people who were grammar experts, 'Please read my papers, because I'll never pick it up and I really don't care'" (A3B 335-340). Bill wrote painfully in his journal about miscalculating his role in the first team paper, "I take it back. This is really hard" (BP 2.1.8). Candy did not feel ready for the math practicum: "It's almost like it happened too quickly. . . . Now it would be a piece of cake, but at that time, it was a difficult process" (C2B 400-403). Everyone learned by moving through these sticky places—about coping academically, about collaboration, or about what counted as learning. For Emily, however, the "sticky places" accounted for a new paradigm of learning because they challenged larger issues of meaning, "the paradoxes of life. . . the tasks of balancing complexity with efficiency, rationality with intuitiveness, and freedom with framework" (EP 1.1.2).

A primary source of stickiness for Emily, who was well-prepared academically, was the unexpected unscholarly nature of parts of the program. She had been an A student in college and looked forward to graduate school as a gift to herself, but she found her customary strategies limiting. She recognized the benefits of the discomfort. "It was just really good for me to be forced to operate in another way. I'm very, very good at reading, understanding, analyzing, comparing, contrasting, you know. But constructing my own meaning out of all that. . ." (E1B 184-187).

She was also disconcerted by the lack of structure in some of the courses: "The whole putting it together and weaving it together — and I know part of it just happened that way, because we were the first cohort that went through. You know, you guys didn't have anything set³⁰ — and so we constructed it" (E1B 129-132). Lawrence and Mealman (1996) noted similar reactions in another cohort-based graduate program in adult education, pointing to the participants' prior success with traditional forms. "Students have come to expect clear, concise instructions regarding assignments with little room for personal and group choices. They stay in that rut, showing

³⁰Pauses in participants' interview responses are indicated by very long dashes.

resistance, when an instructor gives seemingly vague instructions and offers negotiation and choices in regard to assignments" (Lawrence & Mealman, 1996, par. 18). In the end, Emily made the assignments meaningful for herself, but it "was not without agony" (E1B 195). The greatest challenge was the final portfolio for which the program offered no guidelines other than a short list of documents which must be included. Only when the portfolio was complete was she satisfied with having put her personal mark on her work. "You struggle with that, and then you realize having the freedom. . . is so much better than having someone say, "Roman numeral one." . . . I mean, at first I was really distraught because it just wasn't clear-cut. But [now] I think that was one of the strengths. . . (E1A 84-99).

Although, or perhaps because, Emily had entered the Cohort with positive expectations about being in a learning community, the major source of dissonance for her was her work team. The value she placed on task-completion and timeliness created a "relatively high-stakes situation" (E2A 450) for her. Providing an illustration of Cranton's (1997) distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning, Emily pinpointed the source of her own discomfort: "If you're in cooperative learning groups and it's just for fun . . . it's one thing. But when it meant as much to me as it did, I was less willing to take so much time, or to rehash stuff, to do whatever it was" (E2A 452-455). She became discouraged with the reality of collaborative learning, "Maybe half way through, I'm going, 'Oh, I don't know. I would like to just be left alone to do this.'" (E2A 570-571). In her portfolio she related a critical incident which exemplified the "breakdown in communication" among team members. "Diverse learning styles, differing levels of commitment, and personality clashes created stresses that were difficult to overcome" (EP 5.1.2). Emily was deeply troubled by the team's differences and went to her directors for perspective: "Tell me what's happening here that you can see from the outside about me. And then I finally decided I don't think it's all me" (E2A 434-436).

Despite the unpleasantness, Emily insisted that working with the team was one of the experiences she needed: "In who I am and what I understand now, I think it was valuable. I mean, it certainly was not a black hole in my experience, in my graduate program. It was not. It was, 'Wow. Look what's happening here!' I've gained from the negative just as much as from when everything was going perfectly" (E2A 737-742). Emily's response

demonstrated Daloz' (1986) wisdom in delineating the role of faculty, "The [teacher's] job, it seemed, was not so much to individualize instruction as to *enrich education* so each student could take from it what he or she most needed at the time" (p. 14). Emily's transformation was a new paradigm of learning. "I learned to focus more on the process, because that was where growth was happening for me. However, it was a major change in my learning paradigm to understand that sometimes the product is not the essential piece of learning" (EP 5.1.3). She had revised a distorted epistemic perspective, one that lacked "permeability, or openness to other ways of seeing," and did not "facilitate an integration of experience" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 188). Her revised perspective was more inclusive and integrative in its definition of learning as "a continuous, complex process involving the whole person" (EP 1.1.1).

Emily came to the program with a "quest and zest for learning" (E2A 730), the commitment she referred to when she asserted that the intricate web she created from her experience "took dedication to weave" (EP 1.1.2). However, appreciating the problematic parts of the program as "strategically placed to effectively capture the experiences [she] needed most" (EP 1.1.2) demanded more of the web-builder than commitment. It also required reflection (Mezirow, 1991, 1997; Brookfield, 1995), which Emily identified as one of the four strategies which focused her learning. Reflection was key; it fit her expectations for a contemporary academic program and her insistence on meaning. Yet when she listed her favorite classes, she omitted those "where [reflection] was the only thing that we did" (E2A 87). She needed "that other piece to reflect upon, besides just what I'm bringing to it" (E2A 88-89).

Emily called the other requirement for her own learning, "new ideas and knowledge" (E2A 296), which she found primarily in the work of adult learning theorists. She supplemented the assigned readings with her own choices in order to clarify her understanding. "Sometimes even in each class, it seemed like I needed to focus. I needed to get my bearings, get plenty of books read. Then it all becomes clear" (E2B 180-182). Although Emily was disappointed that the program had not been "a little more difficult than it was, a little more academic and research oriented" (E1B 112-113), she did find theories that illuminated her paradoxical experience and made it more comprehensible. The theories helped her perceive her experience as

transformational: "My personal response most closely relates to those theorists who see learning and growth as a transformation process. What seems like chaos and confusion is part of the movement from simple meanings to loss of meaning, to reconstructing new meaning (Daloz and Mezirow)" (EP 5.1.3). Brookfield (1995) argued that professional reading should be added to experience as the subject of reflection because it might "name, illuminate or confirm aspects of experience that elude or puzzle us" (p. 186). That was clearly how Emily had used the experts.

Emily's new paradigm of learning as "a continuous, complex process involving the whole person" (EP 1.1.1) was apparent in her revised definition of literacy which exchanged product—"basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes" for process—"the continuous and ever-changing activity of making meaning" (EP 2.2.2). In her new definition, she emphasized the holistic nature of learning and was "tempted as an instructor to explore the larger issues in the lives of students" (EP 2.2.2). The process of understanding became paramount: "When the emphasis [in literacy] is on making meaning, then the functional aspect of skill building becomes the vehicle and not the end in itself" (EP 2.2.2). The emphasis on literacy as construction of meaning, as Emily pointed out in the introduction to her lesson plan, is promoted by one side of the on-going debate about adult literacy (Beder, 1991; Fingeret, 1992; Fingeret & Pates, 1992; Kazemek, 1988; Lytle et al, 1992a; Lytle et al, 1992b). Emily indicated how the transformation would inform her practice, "The impact on my teaching is the commitment to use contextual, meaning centered instruction vs. skill-based, hierarchical activities"(EP 5.1.3).

Emily's transformation did not leave her elated; the sticky places were not pleasant and the perfect product had lost its power to make her secure. Robertson (1996) called such a sense of loss "epistemological nostalgia" (p. 45). Emily had lost a kind of innocence, as had the learners from his own practice whom Brookfield studied:

In contrast with the relentlessly upbeat rhetoric surrounding much exposition on empowerment, liberation, emancipation and transformation, their descriptions of their journeys as learners are quite often infused with a tone of sadness. In particular, they speak of a loss of innocence, innocence being seen in this case as a belief in the promise that if they study hard and look long enough they will stumble on universal

certainty as the reward for all their efforts. (Brookfield, 1994, p. 209)

The difficulties and rewards of constructing and reconstructing her meaning about “how the world works” (EP 1.1.2) impelled Emily to look back at her past learning with mixed feelings. “I can be a successful student, blah, blah, blah, blah. But who am I really?” (E2B 224-225). She left that question unanswered, but she hinted about what she expected: “I have learned that paradox is valuable and that confusion and anxiety brought on by cognitive dissonance are part of the growth process (Dalo, 1986)” (EP 5.2.5).

Theme Three: Transformations and Personal Growth

“Transformations and Personal Growth,” would be one of the chapters if Anne wrote a book about the Cohort. When she explained the title, she emphasized her choice of words, making it clear that neither phenomenon was academic: “There were things that were very profound and they weren’t necessarily related to content” (A2B 630-632). Instead, the profound changes were related to relationship, to the support of others in the Cohort, and to the way she viewed herself.

The theme of personal change and supportive relationships applies to the other three participants in different ways. Bill never mentioned personal change, but the support and encouragement of the Cohort was part of the “something” he suspected and eventually understood. His belief that his colleagues would “hold [him] up if [he] stumbled” (B1E 45) sustained him in the second year when he was overwhelmed and needed to let go of his perfect grade point average. Candy and Emily, on the other hand, never mentioned the support of other Cohort members. Their personal insights originated with the theoretical literature of the coursework. Emily read In a Different Voice (Gilligan, 1982) during the leadership class and realized she had lost her public voice as a young girl. In Adult Development, Candy encountered a theory that explained the continuing effect of her father’s death thirty years earlier. The explanation touched her deeply, “I don’t know how to say how much [Neugarten’s] theory or explanation of timing really

changed me" (CMC 1). Anne's personal changes stand out from the others' because she connected them so directly to the Cohort and because they were "just major, major kinds of life transformations" (A2B 637-638).

Cohorts in graduate programs are meant to be supportive according to Lawrence (1997) who identified varied levels of performance for the graduate cohorts she studied. The minimum level was acceptance of one another and good working relationships. "Beyond that, was empathy, caring, and genuine friendship" (Lawrence, 1998, par. 11). Anne claimed the highest level: "I am sure that the friends I gained will be lifelong. We shared a life-changing experience" (AP 7.1.2). Besides shared experience, Anne attributed the strength of the relationships that allowed her such profound personal change to time, trust, and periods of intense work and togetherness.

Because of the longevity of the program, the [cohort] model lends itself to the development of relationships among members. The relationships increased the trust level among members which in turn reduced the stress and competition level for me as an individual. I definitely felt more comfortable over time. The extended summer session solidified the bonding that occurred among the members, and I was eventually able to totally share myself with the entire group. (AP 7.1.2)

Anne's ability to "totally share herself," to disclose her sexual orientation, with the Cohort was congruent with the relationships she had built and the nature of the graduate program. "Constructivist, active, and experiential forms of teaching and learning marked by high levels of uncertainty, ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox, invite expressions of soul. The wholeness of learners' lives—not just their heads—are brought into the circle, and the group itself comes into being as an entity" (Dirkx, 1997, p. 82). The contradictions Anne experienced in the Cohort helped impel her to come out when she did. Ambiguity was not present a year earlier when she remained silent in a sympathetic group of women community college leaders discussing issues of difference. Moreover, Anne saw the women as "these fifty strangers and me" (A3B 537), not the bonded group of 26 students with whom she had shared so much over nearly two years. The timing for such a personal matter was predictable according to Mennecke,

Hoffer, and Wynne who identified the stage when interpersonal behavior increases over task-related behaviors as the fifth and final phase of group development (as cited in Imel & Tisdell, 1996, p. 17).

Speaking out in the summer of 1996 also made sense to Anne in terms of what she had learned about adult development and the time of her own life: "I mean, this whole life cycle and when do you start — When does life become you individually? You know, 'This is who I am. . . . And the rest of the world, it doesn't matter'" (A3B 305-306). Larry and Roberto had created a situation of heightened trust within the general safety of the Cohort in the counseling/cross cultural communication class. Finally, there was a prod from a video about single parents and Bill's comments "around traditional family values and that lesbians have no business having a family" (A3B 629-630). Anne was moved speak out, "I was compelled. I could not keep my mouth shut any longer" (A3B 602-603).

Dealing with diversity, particularly with tensions around issues of sexual orientation, was one characteristic of cohorts identified by Lawrence (1997), who noted that "Divergent views from different backgrounds opened participants' eyes to new ways of thinking" (par. 10). Anne conjectured that her disclosure had affected some of her fellow participants: "Probably one of the most powerful things any instructor said to me was after that, when both Roberto and Larry came up to me and said, you just moved many people in this room about a million years ahead" (A3B 580-583). Of greater importance to Anne was that her authentic voice be heard "not only as a lesbian" (A3B 313-314). She believed authenticity allowed "a much deeper connection with other participants, because now they know who I am" (A3B 296-297). Her openness also affected her ability to learn. "As I got more comfortable with my Cohort members and what I was doing as a learner, I was freer to be engaged, I guess, and to be there learning" (A3A 175-177).

Anne attributed her other change, "the transformation of [her] educational experience" (A3B 327-328), to working collaboratively with her team. She began the graduate program with fears about her ability to cope academically. A marginal student in high school who had been cautioned against college by the counselor, she was afraid that she had obtained a baccalaureate only because she "chose a very experiential program with several hands-on, practical internships" (AP 7.1.1). From her teammates, she learned "about getting organized, synthesizing information and using

technology as an effective way to share information" (AP 7.1.1). The team also provided an opportunity to "experience the creativity and positive energy created with a group that [knew] and trust[ed] one another" (AP 7.1.2). In the end, despite frustration with being graded by criteria she did not always understand or respect, she wrote with confidence about school, "In this program I learned I am a good student" (AP 7.1.1).

Like Bill and Emily, Anne used the word transformation knowingly, as an outcome of a particular kind of adult learning. According to Mezirow (1991) transformative learning involves critical self-reflection which leads to revision of old or development of new assumptions. When asked, Anne named some of the assumptions she had revised. Some were about coming out, about "my own voice, my own homophobia and how long it took me to get to the point of coming out" (A3B 652-653). Others were about learning. "I think the assumption that I was not necessarily a good student. . . . That perhaps I didn't really fit into this program" (A3B 494-497). The transformation of Anne's assumptions was emancipatory as Mezirow (1991) defined it: "The emancipation in emancipatory learning is emancipation from libidinal, linguistic, epistemic, institutional or environmental forces that limit our options and our rational control over our lives but have been taken for granted or even seen as beyond human control" (p. 87).

Theme Four: Confidence-Wise

I'll tell you what I was going to do for a portfolio presentation. I was going to have my kids draw a flower. . . . Then I was going to buy a Georgia O'Keefe and say, "This is where I was and this is where I am." . . . If you want a visual of where I feel like I came from, at least confidence-wise, — here's where I was and here I am now. (C1B 489-499)

This was Candy's first response when asked what she might use as a visual to represent her experience in the Cohort. Later she actually assembled an elaborate poster in which she used the steps of spinning wool as a metaphor, but she consistently named confidence as "the biggest thing" (C3A 388) she acquired in the master's program. The theme, "Confidence-wise,"

introduces not only the experience of achieving greater confidence, but its limitations as an outcome as well.

Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily all cited confidence as an effect of either what they learned or of simply being in the program. Anne structured her portfolio around her new confidence as an educator in ABE, using her course assignments to document her ability to perform the functions of a hypothetical job description. Emily felt confident enough in the last year of the program to propose new professional leadership roles for herself. Bill noted that his ability to make his case, to support his teaching decisions, had given him more confidence. "I do feel different about teaching and learning after being in the Cohort, and this is what this portfolio is about. *I feel better*" (BP 1.0.1). Candy's growth in confidence was unique because of its scope and because she viewed it as the most important outcome.

When Candy compared her heightened confidence to a Georgia O'Keefe painting, she observed that the change had not been conscious: "I don't know how I got from one to the other. I just know that's where I am now and where I was" (C1B 499-500). One source of heightened confidence was affirmation from the workshops in the first two quarters which introduced some techniques she had already implemented and recommended materials that she already used: "I was excited to see [a book I had ordered last fall] as a resource. It was further confirmation that I'm heading in the right direction with my class" (CP 7.3.4). She was also affirmed by the success she had with her experiments using small groups, peer tutoring, and concrete math strategies during the first quarters.

Another source of confidence was discovering theoretical support for the techniques which worked for her.

[Before] I wrote a lot, "I feel." "I think." At this point, I feel like I know. . . . There was that risk taking [before]—I was trying whole language. I was trying family literacy stuff. I was trying group things before we started. But I didn't have a theoretical background and I didn't have enough — a knowledge base from other people that said, "Yeah, this really does work." C2A 670-676)

Candy benefited from studying professional literature in a different way from Emily, who used it to make meaning of her dissonance. For Candy, the literature provided confirmation of her practice as Brookfield (1995)

suggested: "Seeing a personal insight stated as a theoretical proposition makes us more likely to take seriously our own reasoning and judgments. This does wonders for our morale and self-confidence" (p. 186).

Candy became aware of her greater self-confidence in the fall of the final year when Paul, the program coordinator, came to observe her class. She was puzzled to find that she was not as nervous as her colleagues. "Finally the night before he got there, I thought the reason I'm not nervous about this is I feel like a master teacher. And I need him to come and offer some suggestions. . . as a colleague. Not as an evaluation process" (C2A 585-588). In the next quarter, she was ready to make her load full-time by teaching at the state prison, "I don't think I would have had the confidence to go down into that kind of a setting and teach, because it's really frightening. You walk in and clang go the doors and clang goes another door. . ." (C2A 591-593). She was reminded again of her new confidence when she convinced the college to raise her teaching assistant to full-time, a victory she attributed to her new standing: "I don't know how this has to do with the portfolio, but I think it really does, this whole process, because I have the skills for [the program director] to come to me as an equal. And to be part of making change for our program — There's a lot of credibility. . . . I don't think any of that would have happened without this stuff" (C3A 486-492).

Increased confidence was a somewhat surprising effect for Candy who had not entered the program as a means to improve her teaching practice "partially because [she] felt real confident in her own ability as it was" (C1B 241-242). She believed she had become a good ABE teacher because of her undergraduate training in elementary education, mentoring by the ABE director, and continual experimentation with different strategies during the three years she taught before enrolling the Cohort. "I still firmly believe if you only spark one person's interest, then it was successful, because you've gotten them going. Then what you have to do is keep working until you find what sparks the other persons'. . . . So I try to offer a very eclectic approach in class and try new things and different things" (C2A 112-116). During the first two terms, experimentation was part of the required practicum. She wrote in her journal that she had adopted techniques from the workshops in ESL and math, and extended her use of whole language. When she chose a topic for her action research project, she chose dialogue

journals because she was eager to improve her skills as a writing instructor. At the end of her portfolio, she observed that she was “almost amazed to see how much better [she] facilitate[d] the writing process for [her] students” (CP 10.1.1). She also felt her instruction was more purposeful and integrated, “[Before] a lot of things were done in isolation and there was no — There was — almost disjointed and what’s the purpose here? What’s the long range kind of thing?” (C3A 623-625).

Despite a long list of new strategies, at the end of the program, Candy speculated that she was among the majority of Cohort participants who would probably say, “I really am not doing anything differently. I just now am more confident and know I’m doing it the way — the right way adults learn” (C3A 616-618). Anne, Bill, and Emily all used the word transformation for their experiences of change. Perhaps Candy’s metaphor for her increase in confidence—from a flower drawn by a child to one painted by Georgia O’Keefe—is precise in specifying an absence of transformation; it was still a flower. She had learned, but it was the first of the four processes of learning defined by Mezirow (1997), the elaboration of an existing point of view.

To construct the previous three themes, I asked the awkward but careful question, “What would this not have happened without?” In those themes, I sought to understand the essential elements of Bill, Emily, and Anne’s transformations. In constructing “confidence-wise” as a theme, a complementary question arose: “What would transformation have happened with?” What was missing from Candy’s experience that was present in the others’? Two elements of Bill, Emily, and Anne’s transformations—reflection and peer support—were unavailable to Candy from the beginning. She listed them among her fears after the orientation: “How will I ever be able to work in a group? I’m too self-directed. I’ve never experienced success working in groups; groups are no stronger than their weakest link, and . . . I strongly dislike journal writing” (CP 1.1.1).

Candy’s fear of working in groups was sustained by her experience in the Cohort. She described her geographic team, with whom she was required to complete collaborative assignments routinely for the first six of the ten quarters, as “dysfunctional” (C3A 525) from the outset. It included a replay of her undergraduate experience with a member who had to be “drug along” (C1B 282), another member who alternately berated and praised her

teammates (C1B 288), and Candy herself who “[had] learned very much not to depend on anyone else for anything” (C1B 266). Candy asserted that the program had let the participants down by not preparing them to work in collaborative teams. There had been direction and facilitation for on-site activities during the workshops, but it had not been what either Emily or Candy needed: “They should have talked about if you’re going to be in a group, there’s some group dynamics” (C1B 309-310). Moreover, there had been no intervention or reassignment for the teams who experienced difficulty.

Candy was able and willing to work collaboratively. When instructors encouraged new groupings in the summer and fall of the second year, Candy enjoyed working temporarily with other Cohort members. “When we could split up and work in different groups and different personalities. I’m going, ‘Yes. This is cool. I really like this.’ That was a good learning experience” (C1B 316-319). But when the original team presented their portfolios together and had yet another misunderstanding, Candy’s initial assessment was justified, “I was right. That [group process] was my biggest fear and it still is my biggest headache” (C1B 266-267).

Candy was not alone in having difficulty with the group process. Bill and Emily also reported difficulties doing the collaborative assignments with their teams, but their long-term responses to the teams was very different. For Bill the team blended into the larger Cohort during the first summer. Through reflection, Emily was able to view her team as a sticky place, a way to capture the “experience [she] needed the most” (EP 1.1.2). But reflection was unlikely to be useful to Candy who associated it with painful emotions and risky disclosure: “I wrote that in one of my journal entries, that [journal-writing] is an area that I’m really weak in. Part of it could be when my dad [died], there were some pretty ugly years there for a while. And I tend to block out the bad stuff” (C2A 170-172).

Her fear of reflection did moderate as she used it in varied contexts. During her action research project, she wrote in her own journal while her students wrote in theirs, noting that she was growing at the same time they did: “I saw some things in myself. So there — [reflection is] valuable to me. There is interest — There’s information there. It’s seemingly — The problem is sitting down, putting it into words, and then getting so I can look back at it” (C2A 197-200). Her objections to reflection changed from fear of

writing to fear of reading. In the second summer, assigned to write an autobiography for the counseling/cross-cultural communication class, she resolutely wrote about the painful years after her father's death, hoping to find something positive in her experiences. In the leadership class, she wrote solely for herself, venting her frustration so she could move forward. In the end, her response to reflection had advanced from fear to dislike to procrastination. Finally, she reflected about reflection during a conversation, looking at her readiness to risk and seeing the need for a complement of reflection. "That could be why I am — why I have problems with my colleagues is that I'm willing to take the risk, but I'm not willing to stop and think about what's happened. Or I haven't taken that time" (C2A 250-253). When I asked Candy, just before graduation, if she thought her reluctance to reflect had influenced her learning, her immediate response was that she would have learned a great deal with or without it. Then she said she enjoyed talking about the experience, even looking at the portfolio, but reflection required more analysis than that: "I think that it's a part of me that needs to change and there are some things that are like pulling teeth" (C2A 256-258).

Despite Candy's reluctance to reflect in journals and the brevity of her final reflection in her portfolio, Candy was perhaps the most reflective of the participants during our conversations, sometimes arriving at important insights—for example, the discussion about problems with her colleagues above—and often continuing a conversation over e-mail to change or extend a response. Davies (1988) observed a similar result when he interviewed adult education graduate students: "The interview provided the learners with opportunities to reflect on their learning experience. As a result, new insights, new understanding, and an ability to make sense of the experience developed" (p. 41).

Theme Five: Five Programs for Four Participants

Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's stories and the variations on the themes that connect them attest to the uniqueness of each one's experience in the graduate program. The final theme, five programs for four

participants, summarizes and proposes an explanation for the four participants' varied experiences of specific facets of the program.

This theme is called five programs because for Anne, there were two programs—one that enabled the personal transformations discussed in the third theme, and one that she portrayed in a hypothetical chapter titled, "What's Missing?" In that chapter Anne listed the administrative issues she wished had been addressed in the program, for example, faculty evaluation, program planning, and student recruitment and retention. She also recalled her response to the faculty's failure to recognize the needs and experiences of the five administrators in the Cohort, "It was like, 'How does this fit with me?' All through the program" (A3A 517-519).

Anne was marginalized in so many ways—as a lesbian, as an insecure student, as one of five administrators among 21 teachers. By working hard, taking risks, and building strong, reciprocal relationships with her team and other members of the Cohort, she resolved all the issues of fit but the last one. She had joined the program because she felt it was a better option than an administrative degree, but she had reservations about relevance, "I was kind of like, my eyes are open and 'OK, let's see what happens. . . I can always drop it if I, if it doesn't work'" (A1A 362-364).

She persisted in the program because of the encouragement from her Cohort colleagues and because there were specific courses and periods that seemed to be appropriate. The journal entries in Anne's portfolio almost alternate with content relevance and content irrelevance, faculty consideration and faculty insensitivity. When she used her journal to ask the coordinator for dialogue about whether or not the program was too "teacher-based" for her, he replied by admonishing her about the importance of an instructional point of view: "It will give you the depth and sensitivity that is so much needed in our community colleges" (AP 7.2.10). On the other hand, Anne assembled her portfolio using items from an idealized job description to introduce the sections which contained "many items that demonstrate the knowledge I have gained and how I have applied it" (AP 7.1.2). Her final reflection continued, "I am frequently surprised when issues surface at work that directly relate to something I learned" (AP 7.1.2).

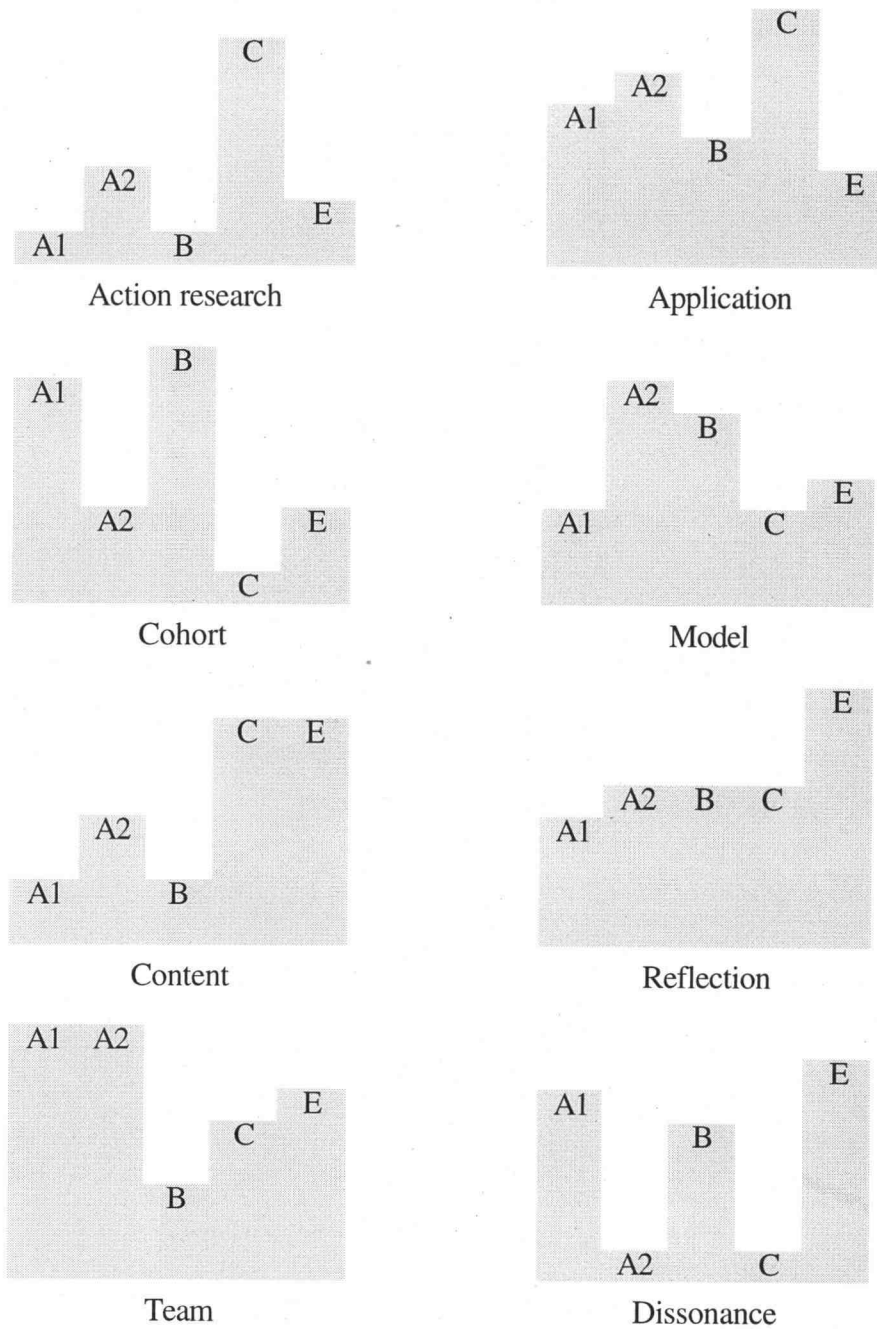
What was missing for Anne was assistance in making consistent, explicit, and immediate connections between teaching and administration. When the final assignment for a class was a lesson plan, no one suggested to

Anne that she could plan for a staff training or any other situation more genuine than “borrowing” one of her teacher’s classes again. It is no surprise that when Anne spoke of profound changes, she specified that they were not “necessarily related to content” (A2B 632). The dichotomy of being in two programs existed for the other participants but in less dramatic ways. Emily only occasionally found herself in the program she had looked forward to when she enrolled. Bill did not reconcile his need for good grades with the actual program until the second year when illness and over-extension forced him drop one class and accept a B in another. Candy at last came upon a “cool” program, a “good learning experience” (C1B 317-319) in the summer and fall of the second year, when the teams were no longer expected to complete assignments together.

The EdM program was designed by OSU and state ABE staff development planners to improve participants’ instructional skills, leadership skills, and knowledge of ABE programs and systems in the state. To accomplish those objectives and to promote program completion, the planners incorporated individual and group learning, reflection, action research, on-the-job applications, distance delivery, and cumulative portfolios as program strategies. Because Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily conceptualized and used them very differently, the effect of the strategies varied greatly.

One of the ways I made sense of the variations in the cross-case analysis was to contrive a visual display like the one on the next page (Figure 7.1). The graph represents how Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily might have ranked each program strategy in terms of its contribution to her or his learning. Though the graph appears precise, the bars indicate only impressionistic, relative rankings. I assigned the highest rank when I answered, “What would this not have happened without?” for each participant, and the lowest when I identified a strategy she or he neglected in her or his chronicle. The last element in the graph, dissonance, is ranked according its positive contribution to learning. If dissonance as discomfort or difficulty detracted from learning, it was assigned a low rank. The contrast among the strategies is striking when displayed this way. No strategy was always ineffective; neither was one consistently powerful.

Figure 7.1 Relative Importance of Program Strategies



A1	Anne of Theme 3	C	Candy
A2	Anne of Theme 5	E	Emily
B	Bill		

The four themes presented earlier set the strategies in the context of one or more participant's experience to illustrate the distinctive ways they were used and suggest their impact on the outcomes. To investigate some of the other dissimilarities, I compared Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's definitions of the strategies. For example, the OSU program as a model for teaching was mentioned only by Bill who assumed it had been a conscious, planned effort on the part of the Cohort coordinator and some of the faculty who were "in on it" (B1A 223). Emily, on the other hand conjectured that the program had no conscious model, "You guys didn't have anything set" (E1B 130). Anne did find models on which to develop standards of excellent teaching, but they came from the other participants, not the program itself.

The various ways in which Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily reflected—or did not reflect—during the coursework are evident in the other themes. After the coursework was completed, the cumulative portfolio became another means of reflection for the Cohort. The requirements stipulated that some sort of final, summary reflection be included, but left the form and focus up to the participant. Consequently, the steps in production of the portfolio itself—selecting the documents, devising a structure, writing an introduction, finding a title—became reflective acts. Anne, Bill, and Emily framed their portfolios with metaphors which aided understanding because they "fit the experience analogically into [their] meaning schemes, theories, belief systems, or self concepts" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 80). Candy did not use a metaphor to frame her portfolio, but for our second interview, she brought a poster on which she had compared her experiences to the stages of turning wool into sweaters. Nearly a year later, when we met to discuss her story, Candy told me that creating the poster made it "all come together" for her, echoing Emily's comment about the leadership class and Bill's about the final winter quarter.

Although both the portfolios and interviews were occasions for reviewing the experience of being in the Cohort, there was a clear pattern of dissimilarity in their representations. Initially, the reports seemed contradictory; the portfolios were positive while the interviews were often ambivalent or negative. This was true for everyone but Bill; the oral depiction contested the Cohort myths and seemed to contradict their portfolios. Anne introduced her portfolio with a statement that suggested she had resolved her ambivalence about the focus on teaching by finding a

name that was neither teacher nor administrator, "I listen, I learn, I lead. I am an educator" (AP 1.1.1). Yet she was definite in our conversations about her dissatisfaction with the course work's emphasis on teaching. Candy's portfolio also belied her interviews, only hinting at the difficulties with her team and beginning with a statement about fundamental change: "These items [from the application for admission] are included to demonstrate a starting point and an explanation of who I was at one time" (CP 1.0.1).

The reason for the contradiction was the participants' distinct purposes for the two accounts. They intended their portfolios to showcase their achievements because, despite the faculty's reassurances otherwise, the participants knew their portfolios would be evaluated. More important, perhaps, the portfolios were opportunities for the participants' demonstrations of accomplishment for themselves. The interviews, on the other hand, had the promise of confidentiality and the likelihood of not being made public until long after graduation. They were an opportunity for Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily to be focused on their own process without regard for product. The conversations were congruent with the goal Lather (1991) identified for emancipatory research: "to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the persons being researched at least as much as it is to generate empirically grounded theoretical knowledge" (p. 266). The participants' divergent portrayals of their Cohort experience do not argue for a determination of truth, but for the maintenance of a framework of reflection that allows multiple interpretations even by the actor of his or her own experience.

It is artificial and somewhat misleading to rank any of the program strategies in isolation. Application is a good example because, considered alone, it ranked high only for Candy. However, when application required connecting past or current experiences with texts, sharing experiences with one another, and reflecting on experiences, as it did in the leadership class, application was one of the most effective strategies. Furthermore, assignments requiring application gave participants an opportunity to try out the content of the courses, but provided a second, perhaps stronger, benefit in helping participants value their own experience when they saw it supported by theory as Candy and Emily did, or resonate with their colleagues' experience as happened for Anne.

The “strategy” which I labeled dissonance was, of course, not a program strategy at all. It only occurred when a combination of participants’ existing meaning systems and any of the program strategies or content produced discomfort. Dissonance can be prerequisite to learning as Mezirow (1997) asserted, “We do not make transformative changes in the way we learn as long as what we learn fits comfortably in our existing frames of reference” (p. 7). Dissonance was apparent in all four participants’ stories; why it prompted learning for some and not others is a question I asked about all of the strategies.

The participants themselves offered some explanations when they described how they learned. Emily was clear about the importance of expert input. Anne outlined her own learning process when she explained why the EDNET courses had worked for her “I’d sit there in those lectures, take those notes. Then I needed to go home and process it, and apply it, and make some sense out of it. And then I would do the lesson” (A2B 512-514). Bill at least began the program with a strong preference for reading a text and taking a test, though he did not specify if that was a method of learning or just of making good grades. Candy characterized herself as a self-directed learner who would learn “no matter what the technology” (C1B 415). Yet preference was not always predictive of learning for the participants in the graduate program.

There are too many factors in Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily’s backgrounds and experiences to claim one as a cause for variation. The explanation to be offered here will only account for the differences by suggesting other differences. However, it is an explanation, a theory, that holds out the possibility of influencing adult learners’ varied conceptualizations and uses of instruction and content. The explanation is simply that Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily entered the program and operated throughout it with powerful and tacit assumptions about learning that inexorably determined their experiences. Claxton (1996) proposed that adults have a stance toward learning opportunities which “determines whether, and if so, when, how and with what intent, learning will proceed” (p. 3). The stances that Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily took were visible in their public and private statements about their purposes for pursuing graduate degrees, their reasons for choosing the OSU program, and their expectations about what the program would be like.

The source of these stances, which can change at any time during the learning opportunity according to Claxton, is a sort of subjective and usually tacit cost-benefit analysis of potential risks and rewards. That analysis in turn is a product of "implicit theories" (p. 46) which "embody assumptions, beliefs, and hypotheses" (p. 47) about the self and the world. In transformative learning theory, these implicit theories would be called epistemic meaning perspectives, the "assumptions within which one's past experience assimilates and transforms new experience" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 42). Because meaning perspectives determine the way we construe the meaning of experience, they "selectively order what we learn and how we learn it" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 44). Meaning perspectives are made up of meaning schemes or points of view which are the specific beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions which constitute meaning perspectives. The stances adult learners bring to the learning situation are meaning schemes.

Meaning perspectives are not fixed, they can be changed in one of two ways. The first is by critical reflection in which underlying assumptions are made explicit, assessed, and revised or replaced by more inclusive and permeable perspectives. (Clark, 1993; Mezirow, 1991). The second way is through an accumulation of changes in meaning schemes or points of view. Thus, transformational learning theory is vital for dealing with stance because it describes processes for changing or influencing adult learners' varied conceptualizations and uses of instruction and content.

Emily and Bill, respectively, exemplify the two ways in which meaning perspectives can change. Emily created a new, more inclusive and permeable paradigm of learning when she became aware, through reflection that her assumptions about learning constrained her experience. She compared the process to her web of meaning:

A break in the fabric of the web causes a disruption in meaning and can be related to cognitive dissonance. Sometimes a break is repaired and the gap is closed. Other times it is not and a new web must be built. New web building represents transformational learning where meaning is made from experiences that cause the learner to reconstruct perceptions.
(EP 1.1.2)

Emily's stance toward the learning situation, her meaning scheme concerning product, changed as a result of her perspective transformation.

Bill's transformation was reversed; it began with a change in stance toward the learning situation: "I recognized that I was going to have to surrender my old, traditional approach to my own learning if I was going to participate meaningfully in the Cohort program" (BP 8.2.2). The series of changes in stance and other meaning schemes that followed culminated in the revision of his assumptions about himself and his students is outlined in the first theme.

Anne's experience of two programs offers a unique contrast between the experiences of revised assumptions—concerning her personal relationships in the Cohort, and unrevised assumptions—concerning the relevance of the program for her as an administrator. In one program, she experienced transformations and personal growth. She completed the other program with a sense of not having achieved what she wanted. Her experience also highlights the stance that faculty took toward the program, as well as some of their unexamined or unrevised assumptions about who the participants were.

Mezirow (1991) asserted that perspective transformation "begins when we encounter experiences, often in an emotionally charged situation, that fail to fit our expectations and consequently lack meaning for us, or we encounter an anomaly that cannot be given coherence either by learning within existing schemes or by learning new schemes" (p. 94). Bill, Emily, and Anne responded to the kind of dissonant experiences Mezirow described by revising their assumptions. Candy did not. Instead, she maintained her original stance, "I was stubborn enough that it didn't matter what they were going to throw at us. If I got accepted I was going to live through it" (C1B 219-220).

It is helpful for adult learners to assess their assumptions about what, why, and how they are learning; but essential for educators because the assumptions that underlie our own learning also underlie our practice. This is the recursive quality of teaching and learning that is so potent for adult learners who are practitioners of adult learning. However, critical reflection of the kind Mezirow (1991) prescribed for transformation of meaning perspectives is demanding, as Cranton (1994) pointed out, "Self-reflection can be rewarding and positive, but it can also be frightening and difficult, even when learners know they are growing from the experience" (p. 210). A

stance which shelters a learner from critical reflection might be a rational choice.

If people are seen as 'self-constructing,' there must be some inner-life, some central tendency or coherent belief system around which their constructions are organised. This means that behaviour (for instance undertaking a learning project, or declining to accept control of a learning situation) must be seen as intentional and logical, at least within the learner's own frame of reference. (P. Candy, 1989, p. 101)

Candy's lack of transformation as an outcome should neither overshadow the multiple differences among the participants' experiences nor obscure how it became both apparent and sensible. Understanding would not have happened without an inquiry method premised on the idiosyncratic nature of learning and the stories that Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily constructed and shared.

8. Implications and Questions

This inquiry used interviews and cumulative portfolios to construct unique accounts of adult literacy practitioners' experiences in a graduate cohort. The individual stories were related at length in narratives which integrated their own words with the metaphors they created to frame their experiences. These stories were the basis of a cross-case analysis which generated five themes around self as learner, the contribution of dissonance to reconstruction of meaning, personal transformations in an academic setting, increased confidence as an outcome of graduate study, and stance as a contributor to the variability and complexity of adults' experiences of a formal learning situation. Although the inquiry was never intended to evaluate the EdM program in which Anne, Bill, Candy and Emily were enrolled, recommendations and questions about program planning and implementation can be inferred. This chapter draws directly on the five themes to offer suggestions for planning and practice, and to pose questions which might focus conversations or frame future research about adult learning, graduate programs, or professional development.

Going Native

Bill consciously revised his own initial stance toward the program from anger to suspended skepticism during the first few weeks of the first quarter, beginning a chain reaction of both explicit and tacit shifts of stance. Ultimately he went native in a dual transformation of his assumptions about himself as a learner and an implied kinship with his Job Corps students. One key to Bill's transformation was the struggle for understanding that compelled discovery of his own identity as a learner—like the learners in his GED classes. Bill's account evinced the power of an authentic learning situation to be, as Brookfield (1995) pointed out, "a visceral rather than an intellectual route into critical reflection" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 50). Several characteristics constituted authenticity for

Bill and the other participants in this study: assessment with consequences they cared about, genuine acquisition of knowledge or skill, reflection on their own learning, attempts to learn collaboratively, and dissonance that led to a construction or reconstruction of meaning. For staff development, the general question of what elements create authentic learning situations needs to be asked, along with specific questions about genuine assessment, time and impetus for reflection, and how to create dissonance within institutional settings. For graduate programs, some of the necessary questions are about integrating grades, authentic assessment, and useful knowledge and skills.

The other key to Bill's transformation was the way he conceptualized instruction in the graduate program as a model to use in his own classroom. The power of the program for Bill lay, not in the content, but in what he referred to as a conspiracy among some of the core faculty to model a new way for him to teach. Graduate school was a site for both modeling and apprenticeship—a "con-fusion" (B2C 832) of learning and teaching that inspired him to teach as he was taught. Supporting the findings of Keir (1991), Bill viewed faculty as the master teachers in a sort of "apprenticeship of observation." This implies that telling practitioners about practice, assigning the right readings about practice, or relying on the participants to model good practice for one another are not as influential as faculty and trainers' own actions. One question is how to make classrooms and workshops into opportunities for "cognitive apprenticeships" in which faculty and trainers model "how to understand and deal with such ill-defined, complex, and risky situations" (Farmer, Buckmaster, & LeGrand, 1992, p. 41). A more fundamental question is whether such modeling is possible or if any learning situation can be authentic without the conviction on the part of faculty and trainers that the practitioners themselves, rather than the practitioners' students or staff, are the real learners. Can learning be authentic or models be effective if we view the primary goal of practitioners' learning as students' learning?

Sticky Places

Reversing the process in which Bill's series of changed stances led to revised assumptions about teaching and learning, Emily's new paradigm of learning led to a revised stance toward the EdM program. She attributed her transformation to dissonance caused by aspects of the program she labeled "sticky places," after the sticky places a spider creates on its web to catch prey. It was a process Mezirow (1997) asserted to be essential to learning, "We do not make transformative changes in the way we learn as long as what we learn fits comfortably in our existing frames of reference" (p. 7). Emily came to view the lack of structure in some of the assignments, the general focus on process over product, and conflict with her team as "strategically placed [on her web of meaning] to effectively capture the experiences [she] needed most" (EP 1.1.2). Both Emily and Bill's experience cautions us against tailoring programs to exactly fit participants' expectations, strengths, and experiences. The question still to be answered is what mixture of comfort and discomfort, with what level and kind of support, will give rise to learning and transformation.

As both Anne and Candy demonstrated, discomfort alone does not lead to engagement. A stance that tolerates—even expects—discomfort, anticipates the benefit, and encourages risk is required. One reason that Emily was able to re-conceptualize sticky places as sites for learning was the readings about transformational learning which brought meaning to her journey through chaos and confusion (EP 5.1.3). These texts were an essential part of her growth process because they provided "the other piece to reflect upon, besides just what [she] brought to it" (E2A 88-89). For Emily literature about adult learning was also an alternative to the support of colleagues. Her experience warns adult educators not to honor practitioners' experiences so exclusively that we deprive them of external explanations which might "name, illuminate or confirm aspects of experience that elude or puzzle [them]" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 186). It also raises questions about how to design and assign reflection that extends beyond personal meaning and technical concerns of practice, to difficult and uncomfortable issues of relationship, power, and hegemony (Brookfield, 1995).

Personal Growth and Transformations

Anne's experience of two programs paralleled her dual stances, one of commitment to relationship with her colleagues and the other of ambivalence about the program so clearly intended for teachers. The first stance, one she grew into during the first six months of the program, facilitated personal transformations by encouraging her to persist and enabling her to trust others with her authentic self. Anne identified several factors which contributed to the strength of the ABE Cohort: time, shared experience, and lack of competition. Focused content, the skill and dedication of a full-time Cohort coordinator, the retreat-like character of Cohort meetings, and the constitution of the Cohort itself also appeared to be significant to cohort development. In turn, what Emily dubbed "cohortness" appeared to be the major factor in the high rate of persistence in the program; 26 of the 29 practitioners who started the program completed it within three and one-half years. Planners must ask themselves if the use of cohorts as scheduling mechanisms, without the kind of intensive resources committed to the first ABE Cohort, can be expected to produce similar outcomes. This is an even more important question if planners also expect the deeper and more participatory learning which other studies (Burnaford & Hobson, 1995; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence & Mealman, 1997) have attributed to cohorts.

A less-explored side of cohortness is a darker one. The perception of the Cohort as a homogenous group by faculty and participants alike contributed to Anne's sense of marginalization and Emily's sense of loss of her own identity in the large group; only Bill was unreserved in his enthusiasm for the Cohort. Dirkx (1997) summarized the contradictory forces of the group for adult learners who "want [it] to hold and support them and to nurture them in their quest for knowledge and understanding. But they also fear the group and are pushed and driven away from the idea and the experience because of its powerful, frightening capacity to obliterate the individual" (p. 84). Planners should reflect on a cohorts' power to act for and against learning as well as to promote persistence, and ask how they will safeguard learners, faculty, and trainers. As adult educators we need to determine how to best prepare faculty, trainers, and participants themselves

to support individuality in a cohort, and resist the tendency of the group to impede independent thinking and shield members from growth. Faculty especially need ask questions about how to maintain their integrity and self-efficacy in the face of powerful cohort solidarity which might exclude or overwhelm them.

Confidence-Wise

Candy's entry stance of being "stubborn enough" to live through whatever was thrown at her (C1B 219-220) remained unchanged. Although she learned new techniques, especially for teaching writing, and made her own instruction more purposeful and integrated, she reported that the most important program outcome for her was that, "confidence-wise," she had gone from a child's drawing to "a Georgia O'Keefe" (C1B 489-499). It is reasonable to label Candy's growth in confidence an elaboration of an existing point of view (Mezirow, 1997) rather than transformation. She supported such an assessment by her contention that she really was not doing anything differently. In fact, except for Anne's new self-efficacy as a student, none of the participants perceived growth in self-confidence as transformational. The connection between Candy's heightened confidence and the confirmation of her instincts and practices was clear; the question is how to regard confidence as an outcome for graduate programs or long-term professional development. Is doing the same things more confidently, as Freeman (1991) concluded, indicative of revised conceptions of practice? Or is increased confidence without concomitant and conscious change in practice a disappointing outcome?

If change is risky and frightening as Daloz (1986) and Brookfield (1994) claimed, the kind of support Emily found in reflection and Anne and Bill found in relationship might be crucial. Initially, Candy and Bill had very similar attitudes about collaborative learning; Bill called it "odious" (B2A 423), and Candy named it as her "biggest fear" (C1B 267). Bill's team soon became one facet of the "something" that transformed his learning, but Candy's team persisted as "her biggest headache" (C1B 267). We cannot know whether a supportive team would have enabled Candy to try out

another stance or perceive the program differently, but her experience does suggest that collaborative learning teams need adequate nurture.

The more intimate portrayal of groups offered in Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's stories should also dissuade us from readily blaming team difficulties on the weakness or resistance of participants. Candy and Emily both contended that teamwork required training, and everyone except Bill was explicit about the constraints to using groups in her own practice. Given the multiple sources (Burnaford & Hobson 1995; Cranton, 1996a; Cranton, 1996b; Imel & Tisdell, 1996; Lawrence, 1996; Lawrence & Mealman, 1996; Mills & Cotrell, 1998; Smith, Johnson & Johnson, 1992) of success stories and recommendations about using learning groups with adults, we need to ask what, besides information, can enable faculty, trainers, and learners to become skilled in using teams to promote more meaningful learning.

On-going reflection, as it was designed for the Cohort, was also not available to challenge or support Candy. She resisted it during the program for reasons that made sense to her. Yet the poster she created to represent her Cohort experiences and insights she reached and shared during our conversations evidenced both her capacity for self-awareness and her grasp of the value of reflection. Furthermore, several of her journal entries seemed to be unacknowledged invitations for dialogue. It is likely that Candy's resistance was to reflective journal writing rather than to all reflection, so alternate modes might have been effective. The in-depth, conversational interviews which were used in this inquiry were an important source of reflection for her and the participants, and might offer one alternative. Questions about interviews and other kinds of reflection, their practicality and efficacy, warrant exploration.

Five Programs for Four Participants

Anne, Bill, Candy, and Emily's accounts of their experiences revealed the singularity and complexity of learners' experiences of the same program taken at the same time. The explanation for those differences seemed to be, at least in part, conscious and unconscious decisions they made about their purposes for and approaches to the program. These decisions, which Claxton

(1996) called stances, can be conceptualized as meaning schemes or points of view grounded in meaning perspectives or assumptions about teaching and learning. Like all assumptions, these are subject to examination and revision through critical reflection or incremental changes in points of view. Traditionally, adult educators have been concerned about only one aspect of stance—motivation, and its impact on one kind of decision—enrollment. The experiences of Anne, Bill, Emily, and Candy demonstrate that, even without purposeful intervention, stances are variable and permeable over time. The potential of on-going reflection and discourse about stance to facilitate meaningful participation in immediate learning situations and provoke examination of epistemic perspectives on teaching and learning needs to be explored and exploited.

Specific Implications

Distance Learning and Professional Networks

An important area of application for these findings is the distance delivery of graduate programs and professional development. While the use of technology and alternative scheduling is increasingly common in university settings, this study suggests their use development of the stronger ties among programs called for in research about adult literacy staff development (Beder, 1996; Fingeret, 1992; Lytle et al, 1992a). Establishment of professional networks was one of the most evident outcomes of the Cohort. Occasional face-to-face gatherings and interim communication via e-mail, fax, Internet, and satellite television were very effective in both linking participants and promoting the use of technology in local programs. Anne and Bill reported that the periods of extended (three to four days) residency on the OSU campus were critical to the building of relationships. Perhaps more essential than the location or even time were the retreat-like arrangements for course delivery. Except for the first quarter when participants attended regional workshops, Cohort gatherings were held away from participants' worksites and families in places designed for communal

living. These arrangements led to intense focus on the content at hand and reliance on one another. Planners and policy makers need to question whether workshops offered in brief weekly sessions or even on weekends with participants commuting from hotels and homes are likely to have the same impact.

Transforming the Deficit Perspective on Adult Literacy

Of all the recommendations and questions about planning professional development, perhaps the most urgent for adult literacy are those inferred from Bill's repudiation of a deficit perspective about his students. Elimination of this perspective is a goal adult literacy experts have long and often identified for practitioner development (Beder, 1991; Fingeret, 1992; Kazemek, 1988). The differences in lifestyle between adult basic education practitioners and their students are sometimes so great that any kinship seems impossible, but Bill's experience tells us that if we look to the special event of learning something that is hard or uncomfortable, the relationship becomes apparent. By recognizing the relationship, we have an opportunity to inform our practice with both empathy and insight. Bill's experience of self as learner was fundamental; his surprising feelings of anger, frustration, and bewilderment in school changed him. The conditions of authentic learning that led to Bill's renunciation were exactly right to "provide a rich vein of experience that can be mined for insights into the power dynamics of teaching" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 50).

Program Evaluation and Research

Although the intent and outcome of this inquiry was not program evaluation, it is useful to contrast these findings with those of an evaluation of the EdM Cohort I conducted with a colleague in 1995. That evaluation, which gathered input from separate focus groups of participants, OSU faculty, and community college basic skills program directors, did result in

useful feedback about the content and structure of the program. However, it was limited in depth and contributed little to understanding the experience of program participants. Comparing the two investigations revealed that when we evaluate a program, we examine a single entity—the program. This study of four learners emphatically denies the existence of that entity. There is no single program; there are at least as many as there are participants, trainers, and planners. We must examine each of those programs if we are to understand how practitioners learn. Doing so will perhaps require us to examine and revise of our own epistemic perspectives about professional development.

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Appendices

Appendix A Course Information

Oregon State University
1994-1996 EdM Cohort Program: Focus on ABE, GED, ESL
Title and Catalog Description* of Courses

ED 521 Selected Topics in Education (3 cr.)

Strategies in Teaching ABE, GED & ESL

ED 510 Internship
Field Visits (2 cr.)

Site visits to various agencies and institutions outside of the community colleges where ABE/GED/ESL and employment skills are taught: social service agencies, prisons, proprietary schools.

Internship (4 cr.)

Individual on-site mentored internships in three areas: ESL, mathematics, and reading.

ED 501 Research (3 cr.)

Applying action research theory and methods to study students' own teaching situations.

ED 531 Instructional System Design (3 cr.) *

Instructional systems theory, conceptual and procedural models. Emphasis on the role of the professional instructional designer in training systems development and instructional project management.

ED 578 Adult Development (3 cr.) *

Social scientific literature contributing to a better understanding of human development during the adult years.

ED 573 Principles and Practices in Developmental Education (3 cr.) *

Analysis of various philosophical and practical aspects surrounding developmental education; current practices of the field conducted both through first-hand on-site observation and through examination of current literature.

ED 553 Learning Theories (3 cr.) *

In-depth study of the major families that describe the learning process: Gagne, Bruner, Piaget, Skinner, Bandura; how learning is related to teaching and how learning theory affects the teaching process. Information theories and learning, memory, learning models, transfer and problem solving and motivation and learning are the major concepts covered in this course.

ED 586 Diagnostic Techniques in Developmental Education (3 cr.) *

Lecture-discussion and laboratory use of standardized tests; construction and use of informal measures for estimating reading achievement. Differential instruction for elementary, secondary and college.

COUN 525 Fundamentals of Counseling (3 cr.) *

A course designed for students planning on working in a human service profession, such as counseling, teaching, nursing, medicine, law. Exploration of basic helping processes appropriate in a variety of settings. Review of ethical standards of conduct. A variety of skills and techniques are demonstrated and practiced through videotape and role play.

ED 599 Cross-Cultural Communications (3 cr.) *

An examination of individual and cultural values, perceptions, and assumptions regarding the foreign born, refugees, American minorities, and undocumented persons existing within society and schools; development of communication skills for negotiating at the individual, group, institutional and cross-cultural level.

ED 567 Leadership Development and Human Relations (3 cr.) *

Adult education and basic career expectations in community based education. Understanding and development of leadership roles in this area of educational planning.

ED 505 Reading & Conference (3 cr.)**ED 555 Integration of the Curriculum (3 cr. - Web-based course)****ED 521 Special Topics in Education: Synthesis (3 cr.)**

Issues confronting adult education and teaching ABE/GED/ESL: diversity, funding, political issues, full-time/part-time positions, professional status.

Program of Studies: ABE Cohort Master's Degree

Winter 1994	ED 521	ST: Strategies in Teaching ABE (3 cr.)
Spring 1994	ED 510	Internship (teaching) (2 cr.)
Summer 1994	ED 501	Research (1 cr.)
	ED 531	Instructional Systems Design (3 cr.)
	ED 578	Adult Development (3 cr.)
Fall 1994	ED 573*	Princ. & Practices of Dev. Ed. (3 cr.)
Winter 1995	ED 553*	Learning Theories (3 cr.)
Spring 1995	ED 586*	Diagnostic Testing in Dev. Educ. (3 cr.)
Summer 1995	ED 510	Internship (filed based) (4 cr.)
	ED 599	Cross Cultural communication (3 cr.)
	CSL 525	Counseling (3 cr.)
Fall 1995	ED 567	Human Relations and Leadership Development (3 cr.)
	ED 507	Seminar (1 cr.)
Winter 1996	ED 521	ST: Issues in Teaching Adult Basic Education (3 cr.)
	ED 507	Seminar (2 cr.)
(Elective)	ED 555**	Integrating the Curriculum (3 cr.) (or transfer from other college work)
Spring 1996	ED 501	Research (1 cr.)
	ED 521	Knowledge Bases in Adult Basic Education (3 cr.)

Total Hours: **47 hours**

Note:

- * EDNET
- ** Modem-based /Worldwide Web

(revised: 8/95)

Appendix B Consent Forms

March 22, 1996

Dear ABE Cohort Class of 1996:

My committee accepted the plan for my dissertation research, so at long last I'm recruiting individuals for in-depth interviews. I want to briefly describe the structure of my project so that you will know what is going on with the research and so that you can decide if you would be willing to participate further.

Problem

Examinations of professional development for adult literacy and Adult Basic Education practitioners have generally been either surveys or program evaluations at national or state level. Individual experiences of professional development have not been described.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of some of the ABE practitioners who are part of the first cohort. The goal is to make visible the meaning that you have made of your own involvement by accessing your "stocks of knowledge" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Participant Selection: Purposive and Serial Sampling

Because the aim of this study is to understand the experiences of individuals, I will be able to involve only three or four people in the in-depth interviews and document analysis. I will use purposive sampling (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) which does not aim for representation of a population, but rather "representativeness of concepts in their varying forms" (p.190). This requires a serial selection of the sample, i.e. choosing participants one after the other rather than all at once. When I know who wants to participate, I will use my observations of you from the past year and a-half and information from the focus groups to make the initial choice, then that information plus what I learn from the first interview to make the next choice, and so on until I have interviewed three or four people.

Data Collection

Data will be primarily of two types: transcripts from group and in-depth interviews and documents which you have created in the course of the program. I expect to interview each of you who participates in the study two or three times for about one to one and a half hours each time. I will ask you to bring to the first interview any materials (application documents,

journals, coursework, parts of portfolios, etc.) which you are willing to allow me to include in the document analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is intended to lead toward grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The analytic method associated with grounded theory is constant-comparative which begins early in the study and is almost complete when data-collection is finished. The steps are:

1. Begin collecting data.
2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become the categories of focus.
3. Collect data that provide incidents of the categories with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.
4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while looking for new incidents.
5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.
6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses of the core categories. (Glaser, 1978 as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, p. 73)

Report

The report will probably attempt to do three things: tell three or four individual stories (description), compare the descriptions for significant similarities and differences (analysis), and relate my understanding of the experiences to adult learning theories (interpretation).

So, if you volunteer, I'd like you to...

- Meet me at a time and place convenient for you for two or three interviews between now and the end of June. Each interview will last 1 - 1¹/₂ hours and will be taped.
- Allow me to read and analyze some of your program materials, and discuss them with you.

- Be quoted anonymously in the report.
- Read or listen to initial analyses and previewing later drafts of portions of the report.

(All of the safeguards we discussed during the focus groups will be maintained.)

If you are willing to do this, please complete the attached info-bit and give it to me. You may also call me (758-5568), or send an e-mail message (fishs@ucs.orst.edu). I will ask you to sign a formal consent at the time of the first interview.

Whether you can do this or not, please know that I have already learned immensely from you and enjoyed working with all of you. Thank you for being so welcoming.

Susan

Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Fax #: _____ E-mail address: _____

Best times and places to reach you by phone:

Best places and times for interviews (i.e. mornings afternoons or evenings of which days):

Any questions you would like me to answer:

Oregon State University**MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION**

Dr. Wayne Haverson, Principal Investigator
Susan Fish, Investigator

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS
AND
RELEASE INFORMATION**

I agree to participate in a series of interviews about my experience in the Master of Education Program in Adult Basic Education and to allow the investigator to use the program documents I give her as data. I understand there will be about three one-hour interviews conducted by Susan Fish.

I will participate in the interviews and document analysis under the following conditions:

- I will allow the interviews to be tape recorded and the tapes transcribed.
 - I agree to allow Susan Fish to use the information from the interviews and the documents in the research project, report, and publications. However, I understand that my privacy and confidentiality will be protected by using a pseudonym and disguising specific information.
 - I understand that all confidential information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Susan's home.
 - I understand that I have a right to receive and review written transcripts of the interviews. After reviewing and discussing the transcripts with Susan, I can suggest modifications for accuracy, clarity, or new information.
 - I can withdraw from the project at any time without repercussion.
-

Appendix C Data Samples and Display

Numbered Table of Contents for Anne's Portfolio

1. Introduction
2. Create a Learning Environment
 - 2.1 How Do I Create a Learning Environment?
 - 2.2 Philosophy of Education
 - 2.3 Philosophy of Leadership
 - 2.4 Action Research: Utilizing Support Services in an ABE Program
3. Identify and Develop Program Objectives
 - 3.1 Using Volunteer Tutors
 - 3.2 Addressing Current Issues from a Theoretical Perspective
 - 3.3 Comprehensive Assessment Plan
 - 3.4 Use of Test Results
 - 3.5 Comparing Standardized and Authentic Assessment
4. Develop, Plan, and Vision
 - 4.1 Quantum Leap 2004: Five Paradigms for Change
 - 4.2 Plan for Placement Testing
 - 4.3 Authentic Assessment System
5. Develop Collaborative Partnerships
 - 5.1 Employment Department
 - 5.2 Housing Authority
 - 5.3 Community Services Consortium
 - 5.4 Adult and Family Services
 - 5.5 JOBS
6. Apply and Integrate Learning
 - 6.1 Lesson Plan
 - 6.2 Life Skills Portfolio Assessment
 - 6.3 Faculty Evaluation Process
7. Reflect
 - 7.1 Critical Reflection Paper
 - 7.2 Various Reflections
8. Learn and Expand As a Leader
 - 8.1 Resume
 - 8.2 Supervisor Feedback Forms
 - 8.3 Leadership Plan
 - 8.4 Letters

Going Native

(Numbered table of contents for Bill's portfolio)

1. Introduction
 - 1.0 Foreword
 - 1.1 Resume
 - 1.2 My Philosophy of Adult Education
2. Praxis Makes Perfect
 - 2.1 An Annotated Reflection Collection
 - 2.2 Militant Math
 - 2.3 Real Praxis and Serious Groping
 - 2.4 My ABE Internship — an Adventure in Mobius Education
3. Safe Cracker — A Lesson Plan
 - 3.1 A Practical Definition of Literacy
 - 3.2 How my Practical Definition of Literacy is Integrated in Safe-Cracker
 - 3.3 Student Work Samples
 - 3.4 Videotape Teaching Demonstration
4. Figuring out Critical Thinking
 - 4.1 Instructional Systems Design: Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills for Job Corps GED Students
 - 4.2 Action Research: Figuring out Critical Thinking in GED — an Object Lesson in Self-Directed Learning
5. The Education-Never-Happens-in-A-Vacuum Department
 - 5.1 Counseling and Cross-Cultural Communication: Citizen Militia Family Members in the Alternative Education Classroom — A Glance at an American Subculture
6. Fractal Rapids — Work in Progress or Just a Big Mess
 - 6.1 Steering with the Current
7. What's Next?
 - 7.0 Post-Script
 - 7.1 Application for Employment: My Change of Behavior
8. Additional Documents
 - 8.1 Program Application
 - 8.2 Comprehensive Examination

Final Reflections and New Beginnings

(Numbered table of contents for Candy's portfolio)

1. The Beginning
 - 1.0 Introduction
 - 1.1 Reflection on Orientation at Canby
 - 1.2 Application for the Graduate Program
 - 1.3 Program Documents
2. Resume and Philosophy
 - 2.1 Resume
 - 2.2 Philosophy
3. Action Research
 - 3.0 Introduction
 - 3.1 Outline
 - 3.2 Journal Writing in Adult Basic Education
 - 3.3 Journal Writing: Critical Reflection Paper
 - 3.4 Dilemma
4. Leadership
 - 4.0 Introduction
 - 4.1 Synopsis
 - 4.2 Leadership Philosophy
5. Work Sample: Lesson Plan
 - 5.0 Introduction
 - 5.1 Definition of Literacy
 - 5.2 Lesson Plan: Black History Month
6. Student Work Samples
 - 6.0 Introduction
 - 6.1 Prison and Campus
7. Journal Entries: My Reflections
 - 7.0 Introduction
 - 7.1 Internship
 - 7.2 Merriam and Knowles
 - 7.3 Journal Entries

8. Other Work Samples

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Reflection: Whole Language and Children's Literature
- 8.2 Team Paper: Whole Language using Thematic Units
- 8.3 Movie Reviews for Instructional Systems Design
- 8.4 Metaphors for Learning
- 8.5 Dog Bones
- 8.6 Tests of General Educational Development
- 8.7 Autobiography, Summer 1995
- 8.8 Home Page for Integration of the Disciplines
- 8.9 Comprehensive Examination

9. Recognitions

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Cohort Article from OSU Newsletter: New Master's Degree
Program Practices What it Preaches
- 9.2 Returning to School
- 9.3 Local Agencies Work Together to Battle Illiteracy
- 9.4 BASIS
- 9.5 Library and Distance Education

10. Final Reflections and New Beginnings

- 10.1 Final Reflections
- 10.2 New Beginnings

A Web of Meaning

(Numbered table of contents for Emily's portfolio)

1. A Web of Meaning
 - 1.1 Metaphor
2. Philosophy of Teaching and Learning
 - 2.1 Philosophy of ABE
 - 2.2 Literacy Definition
3. Philosophy of Leadership
 - 3.1 Leadership Philosophy
 - 3.2 Leadership Activities
4. Application of Learning
 - 4.1 Work Sample (Lesson Plan)
 - 4.2 Operational Definition of Integration
 - 4.3 Action Research
 - 4.4 Systems Design Project
 - 4.5 Diagnostic Techniques
5. Reflection
 - 5.1 Critical Incidents, Readings, Personal Learning
 - 5.2 Written Final
6. My Identity
 - 6.1 Professional Resume
 - 6.2 Letters of Recommendation
 - 6.3 Evaluations

Cohort Application

Sample of Transcripts

First Interview with Bill, April 4, 1996, Side A

1 B1A/R. I was just talking to Mary about this, I
2 marked...anyway, I'm going to...the title of my portfolio is going to
3 be: "I never got suspended from school until I was a teacher."

5 B1A/S. (laugher)

7 B1A/R. And it's really weird because when we started out, and
8 I was just talking to Mary about this, I marked some stuff that I
9 wanted to show you, to say should I include this, should I include
10 this and I realized if I don't think I should, I shouldn't and if I
11 think I should I should. But when we started out, I was the biggest
12 skeptic in the room. I know I was. I know I was.

13 B1A/S. In the cohort?

14 B1A/R. Yea and um I thought this is bullshit, even, you know

15 B1A/S. buncha touchy feelie....?

16 B1A/R. Yea. I really did and then-- in one of my two exam
17 questions, number one is "What was your biggest aha
18 experience?"--and I'm going to tell you what that was in a second.
19 And the second is what are the two most important principles in
20 the program, and how can you demonstrate having grasped them,
21 having mastered them? And it all boils down to this. I started out
22 as a total skeptic, complete and total skeptic. I was mad at my study
23 group, I was mad at everybody. I thought this is really stupid, please
24 let me read the book, take the test, make my A continue to rack up
25 my grade point average like --I used to envision myself in a pool
26 hall, you know, where they have the little beads along the (????
27 score???) I could envision myself with a pool cue, you know, going
whack and another 4.0, you know. Because I got so good at that
kind of thing.

21 B1A/S. So you were a good student in high school and
22 college?

23 B1A/R. No I was a medium student in...I know now that, I
24 suffered from attention deficit disorder, but not with a lot of
25 hyperactivity, in that what hyperactivity I had, has lasted into
26 adulthood (not clear) identifies it as that. I didn't know what when
27 I grew up. But I did have discipline problems, but my schools

Categories and Codes for Data Analysis Phase 1: Creating the stories

Background-All

Brief description of participant
Entry to ABE
Prior Schooling
Prior Staff development
Enrolling in the Cohort

Experiences in the Cohort-Anne

Adjusting to reality
With a little help from my friends
Now I understand
How does this relate to my life?
What's missing?
I now have a high standard
Transformations & personal growth
Glad it's over and preparing for endings

Experiences in Cohort -Bill

Before the first summer
First summer
After the first summer
Second summer
After the second summer

Experiences in Cohort -Candy

The beginning
Washing
Picking
Carding
Spinning
Yarn
Setting the twist
Creativity and boldness

Celebration

Experiences in Cohort -Emily

Reflection
New ideas and knowledge
Cohortness
Demonstrating mastery

Outcomes -Anne

Create a learning environment
Program objectives
Develop, plan, and vision
Develop collaborative partnerships
Apply and integrate learning
Reflect
Learn and expand as a leader

Outcomes -Emily

A web of meaning
Philosophy of teaching and learning
Philosophy of leadership
Application of learning
Reflection

Outcomes -Bill

Going native
Making his case
Con-fusion teaching and learning

Outcomes-Candy

Final reflection
The new beginning

Preliminary Codes for Cross-Case Analysis

1. General description of experience (per quarter)
2. Critical incidents*
3. Statements about change
4. Graduate program requirements/coursework
5. Application*
6. Teaching model* **
7. Reflection (journals & portfolios)*
8. Cohort-whole
9. Cohort-teams
10. Self as learner (identification with students & adult learner)**
11. Self as learner (change in identity)
12. Transformation*
13. Credibility*
14. Teacher v. administrator
15. Family
16. Self-directed Learning* **
17. Theories and theorists**
18. Coming together at end* **
19. Decision to participate
20. What's it all about

*These codes were indigenous to participants' accounts

**These codes were eliminated or combined with others

Sample Page from Bill's Matrix for Cross-Case Analysis

Q	4. Program Req/Coursework	5. Application	6. Teaching model
F 93			294 unique structure of ed
W 94	Freire-math as TRAal 2.2.2 Freire w/humanists B1C 578 TAL powerful	233 Trying SDL: ALs conservative, SDL has to be taught 248 Math manipulatives (2/14)	762 I've begun to see I have capacity to be a great T (2/14)
S 94		2.1.10 Principle of concrete before representational or theor	319 Trust
Su '9 4	ISD not complete as of 10/7/94 350 We got it 390 Worked asses off, Classes as framework for social	B1D 436 Bessey Model in action 2.1.18 I'm 40. Stan would approve re thinking about career	355 content was how to facilitate
F 94	2.1.18 Rdgs re admin, design, & politics 2.1.15AE-- great calling & stupid way to make a living. 463 EDNET stifling	422 Mostly reflecting re his role as T	
W 95	439 When Erica talks 2.1.19 Let Ss wander? 2.1.20 (Position) Soc. learning		451 purpose of presentations
S 95	It wasn't Stan, it was work- load, still had incompletes		
Su 95	509 Knew how it worked 574 deep sense of satisfaction B1C 404 cultural filters Presentation at summer conf B2D 8-15 Can be both T & learner if I am an ARE'er	B2C 470 experiencing counseling All comm is to some extent X- cultural	497 Never seen better team teaching 530 Safety
F 95	591 Couldn't get the LSH part B2C 685 (after difficulties at work) I can't be the general. (This was new to him)...I'm a leader at work because I'm loud & active & got lots of ideas-but not management		
W 96	612 Generally up morale 600 sum of his eval of each 3.1.1 Lit as graphic & social symbols of a culture	614 Meaning something to me in my life	B1C124, B1A 215 principles of AE as being practiced on us 601 Not textbook
S 96		787 Nuts & bolts 729 Feel different	749 L'ing the way my Ss learn 685 taste of own medicine B2B 649 Driver's seat-of own learning (SDL)
G e n			B2C201 Because I feel this way & this is how I was taught & nothing else to account for it. B2C 157 making sense or believe real hard that it would make sense B2C 128 And this is Bandura & this is what's happened in this program demonstrated

Relative Impact of Program Strategies on Participants' Experience

neutral	some impact	most important
<u>Cohortness: Whole Group</u>		
Candy	Emily -	Bill/ Anne
<u>Cohortness: Team</u>		
	Bill± Anne (+)	Emily- Candy-
<u>Reflection: Journals and Portfolio</u>		
	Candy	Anne Bill Emily
<u>Action Research</u>		
Anne	Bill	Emily Candy
<u>Application</u>		
	Emily Bill	Candy Anne ±
<u>Content/Program requirements</u>		
Anne	Bill	Candy Emily
<u>Modeling</u>		
	Candy	Anne (teachers) Emily± Bill

How Participants Might Have Ranked Program Factors (Relative Importance)

	Anne 1	Anne 2	Bill	Candy	Emily
Action Research	8	6	8	2 writing	8 counted as reflection
Application (Assignments)	4 fit her learning style	3± wanted everything to be directly applicable	5	1	5
Cohort	2	8	1 "something"	8 not connected until Su 95	7 the movie
Model	6 design of the program	2 seeing good teaching by participants	3 social learning theory	6 techniques	6 unexpected lack of structure
New Ideas & Knowledge (Content)	7 not about content!	5 too much teaching	7 only as modeled	3 confirmed practices	2
Reflection (including portfolio)	5	4	4*	5*	1
Team	1	1	6	4 -	4 -
Dissonance? (that led to learning)	3 compelled to speak out	7 dis-satisfaction with emphasis on teaching ≠> learning	2 authentic learning	7 not permitted herself	3 conscious

* Importance of portfolio changed ranking

- Negative factor

? Not a planned factor?