COLLEGIATE EDUCATORS: FROM NOVICE TO DISTINCTION

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

Unquestionably this process was a lengthy but enlightening experience. Without the thoughtfulness and continued encouragement of the following individuals success would have never been accomplished!

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore reflective practices of lived experiences of collegiate educators as they progressed from novice to distinction. Specifically, this study investigated how a phenomenon connects to consciousness from lived experiences of teachers who proceeded from novice to a distinguished collegiate educator (DCE).

Through this exploration the researcher recognized perceptions that surfaced as to how educators exercise reflective practices through a reservoir of experiences that were advantageous for professional practice. This study further accentuates how distinguished faculty emphasized the process of reflective practice through their lived experiences.

By means of phenomenology the sample was purposefully selected, which included six collegiate educators from institutions in the North and Southeast regions of the United States. One-on-one structured interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of common themes among participants experiencing this phenomenon and how educators, through reflective practice, made sense of their constructed reality. The data were analyzed with NVivo10 inductive analysis exploring the structures of reflective practice processes in lived experiences.

Key Words: lived experience, reflective practice, distinguished educator, phenomenology
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the past, teachers have been at the center of the pedagogic environment, and traditional lectures were the way in which students learned (Pariseau, 2009; Sorcinelli, 2007). The 21st century educator now recognizes the necessity to redirect the learning experience. This prerequisite supplies a clear direction and enhances clarity of expectation in an educational environment (Crozier & Reay, 2011). When collegiate educators prepare their instructional strategies, especially at the beginning of their working lives, the love of the material and willingness to convey that to students should be at the center of their teaching (Murray & Male, 2005; Weimer, 1993). However, it has been found that adhering only to raw instructional techniques may limit faculty from proceeding from novice to distinguished educator (Banta & Blaich, 2011). Not only does this hinder student learning, but it might stall faculty advancement as well (Fendrich, 2007).

Van Manen (1977) contends in his analysis of the curriculum development process that limitations of teaching can be minimized if there is development of a critical stance by means of reflection. He further expresses that critical reflection has the connotation of sharpness and precision, suggesting an evaluation continuum of the process of reflection which empowers learning through the reflection of experiences. These underlying postulations substantiate why educators, as learners, need to critically self-reflect (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000; Smyth, 1989; Van Manen, 1977; Wildman & Niles, 1987) on various aspects of their processes that leads to “on-the-spot experiments and further thinking that affects what we do” (Schön, 1983, p. 29).

Pletsch (1997) asserts that collegiate faculty pursues advanced knowledge in their field of specialization while less attention is dedicated to reflective practice of lived experiences.
However, little is known as to whether this is the case for collegiate educators who have been elevated to a level of distinction. Therefore, the role of reflection and experience among this distinguished group is unknown. Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore reflective practices of lived experiences of collegiate educators as they progressed from novice to distinguish as recognized by the faculty and students at their respective institutions.

**Significance Statement**

This study is important for educators as little is known about the role of reflection in faculty development about individuals who were recognized as distinguished (Wildman & Niles, 1987). From a practical perspective, it is important to gain further insight because the effects of reflective practice on the educational process are difficult to operationalize and convey to educators, both novice and seasoned, in a formal educational environment (Daloz, 1986; Van Manen, 1990).

From a theoretical perspective, there is a dearth of literature concerning the role of reflective collegiate educators. “The desirability of reflective practice in teaching is assumed in the literature…however, much of the literature is about reflection in student teachers” (Moon, 1999, p.69). It has been difficult to discern the literature concerning development of reflective student teachers from that of seasoned educators (Moon, 1999). The focus on this particular context and the meaning for the participants in these contexts requires careful, thoughtful and constant attention to inner work on parts of both the educator and the educator as a learner (Dirkx, 1998). Dirkx (1998) suggests “through environments that are both supportive and challenging, [learners]… construct visions that are more meaningful and holistic that lead them to deeper engagement with themselves and the world” (p.10). Dirkx’s quote resonates at the intellectual level of the study; when educators, as learners, critically reflect on learned
experiences they widen “plausible images that rationalize” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). From this ongoing retrospective development emerge newly formed experiences, which in turn support one’s ability to learn from reflective practice.

**Research Question**

The following question guides this study:

*What meaning do six distinguished educators ascribe to their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator?*

**Summary of Content and Organization**

To orient the reader, the proposal begins with a description of the theoretical framework which informs this study. After a thorough discussion of reflective practice, the study will flow into review of literature, description of the research design and methodology, results, and concludes with a discussion of the findings as they relate to theory, research, and practice. The review of literature defines learning, reflection, integration of reflection in practice, how educators process reflection, repertoire of experiences, and attributes of distinguished collegiate educators.

The method portion sets in motion the study’s paradigm, phenomenology and qualitative rationale which offers a deeper appreciation for understanding the interpretation of human experiences (Patton, 2002). The methodology section further outlines the role of the researcher, selection of participants, data collection, instrumentation, data storage and management, data analysis, reduction and horizontalization, variation and essences, epoché, trustworthiness, and limitations. Chapter three concludes with ethical challenges as presented to Northeastern University’s Protection of Human Subjects Department (IRB) and attempts to reinforce the
rigorous and scholarly approach needed to create a valid study when investigating a problem of practice in pedagogy.

Chapter four presents findings, which include: individual descriptions of the textures and structures of the experience, composite descriptions, and summary. Finally, the inquiry will conclude with inferences, application to practice and recommendation for future study in Chapter five.

**Smyth’s Reflective Frame**

Reflective practice, a means of coming to know oneself, is a process of self-discovery through sense-making, goal setting, and a search for things in oneself that otherwise one would not be searching for (Shockley, Bond & Rollins, 2008). Schön (1983) suggests that practitioners frequently think about what they are doing while doing it. However, there is little evidence that demonstrate faculty, as learners, have the opportunity or know-how to “reflect in action.” The process of reflection-in-action allows the educator opportunity to think about events in the classroom as they happen and to make immediate adjustments (Schön, 1983). Schön (1983), like Dewey (1933, p.123), saw reflect-in-action central to reflective practice.

When a practitioner makes sense of a situation he perceives to be unique, he sees it as something already present in his repertoire. To see this site as that one is not to subsume the first under a familiar category or rule. It is, rather, to see the unfamiliar, unique situation as both similar to and different from the familiar one, without at first being able to say similar or different with respect to what. The familiar situation functions as a precedent, or a metaphor, or... an exemplar for the unfamiliar one. (p. 138)

Reflection is arguably an opportunity to explore the self; when one regularly/systematically reflects they are exercising reflective practice. Reflective practice affords opportunity for educators to uncover ignorance, change and learn. Smyth’s (1989) reflective framework is one
such process that suggests when teachers take an active reflective stance; they are able to untangle the practices that have been entrenched and not easily dislodged.

Smyth’s (1989) reflective framework (Figure 1.1) is used as the theoretical lens through which to view this study. It has four distinct properties; a) describe b) inform c) confront and d) reconstruct. The first property lends to an educator’s ability to overcome inertia and willingness to examine assumptions embedded in actions or experience. Next, Smyth explains experiences as teachers have meaning; this property resonates in terms of an individual’s historic consciousness; “what we need to do is to work at articulating that consciousness in order to interpret meaning” (p. 5). Thereafter, Smyth contends that educators “are only able to reclaim the power they have lost over their teaching if they place themselves in critical confrontation with their problems” (p.5); in other words, the ability to subject the theories about an educators own practice through interrogation and questioning in a way that establishes their legitimacy. The last property, reconstructing, is the hallmark of Smyth’s reflective frame when, “a teacher who has been able to harness the reflective process and can begin to act on the world in a way that amounts to changing it” (p. 7). This amounts to an educator’s aptitude, skill to view teaching realities not as absolutes, but as being “defined by others, and as essentially contestable” (p.7).
Reflection theory binds this study to gain awareness of how reflective practices are meaningful to distinguished educators. Without acknowledgement of these specific reflective practices many critical events will not surface as to how novice educators transitioned into distinction or, as Loughran (2002) has offered, “rationalization may [even] masquerade as reflection” (p.35). Reflective practices shape the lens through which educators as learners perceive reality and what practices influence classroom teaching. Their perspectives are a result of their own reflective interpretations of lived experiences. “Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning” (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p.43).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relevant literature to develop a theoretical context for the study, and to define the boundaries for exploring reflective practice processes of lived experiences of six collegiate educators. The literature review is divided into two major sections: (1) reflection and (2) collegiate educators.

The reflection section begins with an overview of the theory of reflection, explores the core concepts of reflective practice, and offers a rationale of how collegiate educators integrate reflective practice. The collegiate educator section deals with the repertoire experience, collegiate educators as learners, the platforms of growth educators encounter, and what is currently known about attributes of a distinguished collegiate educator.

The scope of this review has been defined by reviewing literature in the areas of reflective practice of lived experiences and collegiate educators. The databases consulted include ERIC, ABI, UMI, and ProQuest. Search information also included bibliographies, discussions with professionals in both areas of study, and Internet resources such as the United States Professor of the Year Award. Literature was selected based upon its ability to provide insight into how collegiate educators successfully transition from novice to distinction.

Learning

Learning is a core process central to existence as human beings. An individual’s ability to learn, grow, and adapt, is essential to society’s ability to survive and prosper (Dodgson, 1993). Given the importance of learning, it has been of interest to psychologists, educators, politicians
and philosophers for centuries. The hallmark of learning is predicated on experiences and behavioral change (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Potential for change is commonly accepted as the end result of the learning process; while lived experience is considered as the fuel that feeds the learning process.

Humanistic learning theory has five assumptions; among them is how adults learn (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Educators are adults; therefore as adults, their learning may draw from past experience. Learners “are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 272). As such, self-reflection is significant to the learner as indicated by Smyth (1989); a collegiate educator should provide opportunities for self-learning that permits carefully guided reflection about his or her performance (Lieb, 1991). This notion is central to this investigation because all too often it is not well thought out that seasoned college educators are reflective learners.

Reflection

General foundations of reflection. Educators are often asked to reflect on practice, which can be traced to the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Both put forth the notion that reflection is a critical underpinning of growth and learning (Ryan, 2005). It is important to conceptualize how others have perceived reflective practice. As early as 1933, Dewey’s contention was that reflection must be ‘deliberate’, and further defined the term as ‘‘active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends’’ (p. 9). Moon (1999) describes reflection as ‘‘a form of mental processing with a purpose and/or anticipated outcome that is applied to relatively complex or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution’’ (p. 23). Boud et al., (1985) define reflection as ‘‘a generic term for those intellectual
and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation” (p. 19). “All three definitions emphasize purposeful critical analysis of knowledge and experience, in order to achieve deeper meaning and understanding” (Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009, p. 597).

While strengths of previous theories are noted, Smyth’s (1989) work supports understanding reflective practice in an academic environment. Smyth’s (1989) construct of reflective theory accentuates the ability to not only theorize and describe one’s practice, but to have the adeptness to subject those theories to form questioning and examination, helping establish their legitimacy. Further matters of exploration include reflective practices and how faculty gain a deeper, more permanent learning from lived experiences.

Consider self-reflection and how educators connect with their sentiments while re-examining their lived experiences, (Boud et al., 1985) this sort of reflectiveness is described as the invention that precedes interpretation with “roots firmly embedded in both individual and social ideas” (Bocchino, 2004, p. 54).

**Reflective practice.** Reflective practice is often seen as representing a choice for practitioners to be reflective or not about their work but, in reality, all practitioners engage in reflection about the professional service they provide (Bright, 1993). What passes for reflection, however, often is not representative of reflective practice (Dewey, 1933). Although reflective activity happens daily when contemplating experiences or events, these occurrences are not always purposeful and do not necessarily lead to new ways of thinking or behaving in practice, which is the core of effective reflective activity (Andrews, Gidman, & Humphreys, 1998). The
ability to draw on one’s frame of reference (i.e., repertoire), (Smith, 2011) enables fragments of memories to build theories from past experiences offering awareness to the new situation.

Reflective practice, reflective inquiry, reflection, self-reflection, and reflective thinking are often used interchangeably, even though there are slight distinctions. Many models of reflective practice portray reflection as “activated by the awareness of a need or disruption in usual practice” (Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009, p. 597). These models are based in both empirical data (Boud et al., 1985; Hatton & Smith, 1995) and theory (Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1987; Smyth, 1989). The common theme of reflective practice is that of returning to an experience, examining it, and drawing out what was gained in order to guide future situations (Mann et al., 2009). In general, educators understand and practice reflection in their professional lives and careers (Moon, 1999). The term however, is used candidly with incomplete understanding of its course of action never grasping its fullest potential (Mezirow, 1990; Schön, 1987). Smyth’s (1989) continuum of reflective practice suggests expandability leaving out dispensable and everlasting, usable experiences that feed the repertoire of educators that believe in its potential.

**Reflection and collegiate educator.** There are a number of gaps in literature with very little empirical research that has explored reflection concerning the development of practicing teachers. As such, there is a general lack of understanding about how educators’ reflective practices support the transition from novice to that of distinguished educator. Little (1999) wrote: “Because we have not yet made serious comparative and longitudinal studies of schools as learning environments for teachers, we know relatively little about the relative salience of selected workplace features or about their combined effects” (235). Camburn’s (2010) contribution describes the importance of reflection as a process that helps college educators
make sense of their lived experiences and make decisions about future courses of action. As an example, Beecher and colleagues (1997), suggest reflective practice improves relationships between teachers and learners as well as teaching quality. Like-minded, distinguished collegiate educators interviewed by Pinsky and colleagues (1998) found that reflective practices were critical with lesson preparation and supportive with anticipatory techniques that could dynamically change teaching encounters. The most remarkable finding of this study was use of “reflection on success for continuous, incremental, quality improvement of teaching. This finding is at variance with the often observed tendency of faculty members to ignore successes and focus their time and energy on overcoming failures” (p. 214). These perspectives support reflective practice as a “powerful site for adopting new teaching practices” (Camburn, 2010 p. 485), making it critical to understand the importance of reflective practice among college educators.

The challenge of teachers becoming reflective practitioners resides in the resistance of teachers being androids who simply dispense knowledge (Dillard, 1997; Gilgun, 2010; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1996; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Sleeter & Grant, 1999; Snow, 1998). Educators are not the proverbial gatekeepers of facts or the passive recipients of professional knowledge (Zeichner, 1983). In contrast, the critical person examines society’s current cultural, economic, and political dynamics and facilitates the learning experience around which education functions (Apple, 1989; Browne & Keeley, 2004; Gilgun, 2010). Evident over three decades ago, Freire’s (1970a, 1993b) notion of banking exists in our present-day. This notion portrays teachers as sole depositors of information while their inactive students are the depositees. In contrast, reflective intellectuals critically examine the world and its processes, including the political and educational institutions that maintain social inequalities, and
subsequently, transform it (Apple, 1989; Delpit, 1995; Dillard, 1997; Gilgun, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Reflection is a natural human tendency; however, reflection does not always translate into integration.

**Teachers’ integration of reflective practice.** Education can be the catalyst for empowering students to become critical active citizens (Giroux & McLaren, 1996). Transformation begins within the educator, or the “ah-ha moment” and then moves outward as the alteration shifts beyond their personal life into the classroom. Burbules and Berk (1999) contend the critical examination of self and society and action upon the existing “norms are values worthy of pursuit in the foundations of a teacher education program” (p. 51). Teachers have the potential to be what Giroux and McLaren (1996) describe as “transformative intellectuals who combine scholarly reflection and practice in the service of educating students to be thoughtful, active citizens” (Giroux, 1988, p. 122). How educators consciously and willfully attend to the presence of transformative intellectuals is perhaps the greatest challenge faced as educators and learners. The call for teaching reform requires careful, thoughtful, and constant attention to inner work on the parts of both the learner and the educator (Dirkx, 1998). Therefore, merging the intuitive process of reflection with the learned practice of teaching is the primary goal of exploring the journey towards becoming a distinguished educator.

**Repertoire of Experience**

Parallel to a nutritional slogan that describes an individual’s physique—*you are what you eat*—educators “teach who they are” (Joy Banks, personal communication, 2007). This quote resonates because it acknowledges that the experiences of teaching and learning are transmission processes used as building blocks for all learners. Of course, teachers transmit knowledge and information to students but they also transmit an invisible curriculum that includes their own
unique culture, schema, knowledge, experiences, and perspectives (Shockley, Bond, & Rollins, 2008). John Franklin Bobbit’s (1924) work offers an early example of how a holistic view of curriculum accounts for formal education. Bobbit’s (1924) example infers a mastery of a set of skills and life experiences, which generates inner knowledge that affects the way educators view, reflect, and respond to or refuse to grasp their lived experiences.

Experiential learning is premised on three components: “(a) prior knowledge applied to current, ongoing events; (b) knowledge of concepts, facts, information, and experience and (c) reflection with a thoughtful analysis and assessment of learners’ activities that contribute to personal growth” (Cercone, 2008, p.147). According to Brookfield (1995), "adult teaching should be grounded in adults’ experiences, and that these experiences represent a valuable resource", he further outlines “[the former] is currently cited as crucial by adult educators of every conceivable ideological hue” (para. 1). This notion underpins the importance of experience for learners as educators. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), "experiences that provide learning are never just isolated events in time. Rather, learners must connect what they have learned from current experiences to those in the past as well as see possible future implications" (p. 223). Understanding how collegiate educators reflect on their repertoire of experiences is important to consider as to how they proceeded from novice to distinguished collegiate educator.

**Distinguished Collegiate Educator as a Reflector**

The preceding evidence provides a useful backdrop for adult learners as reflective practitioners and how reflection of lived experience is crucial for distinguished educators. However, lacking in the literature are studies that depict how collegiate educators develop from novice to distinction by reflecting on past experiences. A fundamental variation between
distinguished educators and novice teachers resides not with content knowledge, but with their procedural knowledge (Shim & Roth, 2007).

Procedural knowledge exists predominantly as *tacit knowledge*, which is knowledge we possess but cannot easily articulate (Argyris & Schön 1974; Polanyi, 1966). Polanyi (1966) described tacit knowledge as “a certain knowledge that [one] cannot tell” (p. 8). A number of researchers have acknowledged that purposeful reflective practice is an essential facet of teaching in higher education that promotes tacit knowledge (e.g., Biggs, 1999; Brookfield, 1995; Clegg et al., 2002; Kreber, 1999; McAlpine et al., 1999; Shim & Roth, 2007). Day (1999) wrote “it is generally agreed that reflection in, on, and about practice is essential to building, maintaining and further developing the capacities of teachers to think and act professionally over the span of their careers” (p. 222). Shim and Roth (2007) assert, “reflection and practice, novices [educators] can create their own tacit teaching expertise based upon their personality and preference, because teaching is art and the art is personal expression” (p.21). It is implied from the research that purposeful reflective practice is a crucial component in higher education; therefore this study intends to contribute to the existing literature in relation to the process of reflective practice of distinguished collegiate educators.

**Application to Learning**

As learners, to understand what something is or what it means, one must listen to “inner dialogue, purified as much as possible from other voices, opinions, judgments, and values” (Moustakas, 1994, p.62). This is reasonably difficult because too often we are expected to “attend to or repeat what other people think, believe, and say” (Moustakas, 1994, p.62). This perspective is a dominant focus of this inquiry where learners are encouraged to enter into a process of making sense of reality from both personal and social knowledge. Self-presence,
thinking, and choosing as a way of discovery permeated John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1956), published more than 150 years ago.

Nobody denies that people should be so taught and trained…to know and benefit by the ascertained results of human experiences. But it is a privilege and proper condition of a human being to use and interpret experience in his own way. It is for him to find out what part of recorded experience is properly applicable to his own circumstances and character (pp. 70-71).

With respect to the application of reflective learning, Schön (1983) distinguishes two ways of approaching this process: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former is sometimes described as ‘thinking on our feet’ (Smith, 2011). The term requires trained thoughtfulness where individuals look to their experiences, connect with their feelings and attend to the theory in use. It entails “building new understandings to inform actions in the situation that is unfolding” (Smith, 2011, np).

the practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation (Schön, 1983, p.68).

Further, the application of reflection of the learning process requires the individual to devote time to exploring the act that occurred (i.e., reflecting-on-action). The “notion of repertoire is a key aspect of this approach” (Smith, 2011, np). The distinguished educator re-examines the experience after the reflect-on-action occurrence, allowing repertoire to be drawn upon to bring about change. One’s ability to comprehend and recognize when to apply the application of the two processes, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, are central for the collegiate educator to transitioning from novice to distinction (Schön, 1983).

**Platforms of Educator Growth**

Further clarifying how educators progress from novice to distinguished, Berliner’s (1986)
five stages of Development of Teaching Expertise compliments Smyth’s (1989) reflective theoretical frame. Presented as the Presidential Address at the 1986 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), In Pursuit of the Expert Pedagoge (1986), David Berliner addressed the significance of expert teaching investigation and comparing the differences of a novice educator to that of an expert. The “five-stage model of knowledge growth in pedagogy is based on the results of experience; it may be even better to say the results are reflective of experience” (Berliner, 2004 p.208). The platforms follow a general empirical model presented by two Berkeley professors, Hubert Dreyfus, a philosopher, and his brother, Stuart Dreyfus, a computer scientist. Beginning with novice, this stage requires minimal skill, “is very rational, relatively inflexible, and tends to conform to whatever rules and procedures they were told to follow” (Berliner, 2004 p.208). During this particular stage the educator is moldable where world experiences are more impressible to his/her practice than verbal information. As the educator gains experience, novice behavior moves to an advanced beginner. Although there is no concrete timeframe in which an educator travels from one stage to another, it is suggested the novice and advanced beginner are students and entry-level teachers (Berliner, 1986a, 1988b, 2004c). While in this developmental stage, advanced beginners blend lived experiences with theory of practice “what is important is that the experiences of the advanced beginner-cases, incidents, success and failures-are reflected on and turned into something useful to guide their own teaching practice” (Berliner, 2004 p.209). Berliner suggests acquired teaching experience affects behavior, but the advanced beginner has yet to accept and be personally responsible for classroom instruction, which typically occurs in the next stage of development, competence (Berliner, 1986a, 1988b, 2004c).
The third stage concerns competence of performers in their “domain of interest”, such as piloting, litigation, nursing and teaching. “Not all advanced beginners, however, reach this level. Evidence exists that some teachers remain “fixed” at a less than competent level of performance” (Berliner, 2004 p.209; Borko, 1992; Eisenhart & Jones, 1992). Competent educators are more personally in control of the events that surround them; they are confident in their approach and tend to feel responsible for what happens during instruction (Berliner, 1986a, 1988b, 2004c). Although the educator in this stage has approached competence, the educator is still slow to act, rigid and inflexible in behavior. While the first three stages were a progression with identifiable behaviors acquired over a period of time, the final two developmental stages proficient and expert are domains that only a small number of educators will achieve (Berliner, 1986a, 1988b, 2004c). Although only a limited number of educators will transition into the proficient stage of teacher development, it is estimated that this accomplishment will take no less than five years (Berliner, 1986a, 1988b, 2004c). The fourth level is a “stage at which intuition or know-how becomes prominent” (Berliner, 2004 p.210; Borko, 1992; Eisenhart & Jones, 1992). For example, consider the process of tying shoe laces; at some point in the learning process the individual constructs the lace knot easily; they simply develop an intuitive sense of how to tie laces.

“Furthermore, out of the wealth of experience the proficient individual has accumulated a holistic way of viewing the situation they encounter. They recognize similarities among events that the novice fails to see. That is the residue of experience” (Berliner, 2004 p.2102). The proficient educator, however, while intuitive in pattern recognition, lacks decision-making abilities of the expert educator (Berliner, 2004).

*experts* engage in performance in a qualitatively different way than do novice or competent performers. They are more like the race car driver or fighter pilot who talks
of becoming one with their machine, or the science teacher who reports that the lesson just moved along so beautifully today that she never really had to teach. The experts are not consciously choosing what to attend to and what to do. They are acting effortlessly, fluidly, and in a sense this is irrational because it is not easily described as deductive or analytic behavior. Though beyond the usual meaning of rational, since neither calculation nor deliberative thought are involved, the behavior of the expert is certainly not irrational (Berliner, 2004, p.210).

Berliner (2004) implies the most distinctive characteristic of an expert educator is the deliberate analytic processes that are brought to bear when anomalies occur, something does not go as planned or an atypical situation. “But when things are going smoothly experts rarely appear to be reflective about their performance” (Berliner, 2004 p.210).

Attributes of a Distinguished Collegiate Educator

A broad definition of excellent teaching has yet to be accepted (e.g., McLean 2001; Trigwell, 2001). However, subject matter knowledge has long been identified as a prerequisite of effective teaching in both primary and secondary teaching and is a given at the collegiate level where lecturers typically hold a doctorate. By virtue of these higher qualifications, collegiate educators are expected to be knowledgeable in their subject area. This has been acknowledged by many researchers seeking to describe excellence in university teaching (Feldman, 1996; Lowman, 1996; Marsh, 2007). A variety of methods have been employed to investigate excellent collegiate educators such as student and teacher surveys, teaching observations and interviews. Hildebrand (1973) sought to “identify and describe effective teaching so that instructors could be helped to improve” (p.43). Hildebrand’s research implies there are five components describing excellent performance: command of the subject, clarity, instructor-group interaction, enthusiasm, and individual student to instructor interaction (1973). On a self-generated list of characteristics, Sherman et al., (1987) noted five qualities that appeared repeatedly: enthusiasm, clarity, attention to preparation/organization, love of knowledge and
ability to stimulate student interest and content. Furthermore, Feldman’s (1997) research revealed students placed importance on the following characteristics: preparation/organization of content, clarity, and stimulation and motivation of student interest.

Although the attributes acknowledged are needed, central to the educator’s ability to transition effectively is the ability to reflect on lived experiences and implement these processes. Specific to pedagogy reflection, Shockley et al., (2008) reports that the “demands and dynamics of classroom practice do not afford opportunities for reflection because the on-the-job demands can create a mental whirlwind of sorts that can make reflection an extracurricular activity that gets cut” (p.187). Then again, reflexive practice suggests an involuntary action (Valli, 1997), and is related to terms such as routine and habit. A course of habit will ritualize teaching so that it requires progressively less independent thought to execute a teaching action (Snow, 1998). Reflexive practice, the idea of awareness, connotes that educators are reflective when they are aware of the influences they have and how experiences affect them (Gilgun, 2010). Noted in Dewey’s belief (1933) that reflection is in direct opposition to routine thought; routine thought is transferred through external influences and is led by habit, influence, and constraints set by a social reality. Therefore when educators are readily reflective thinkers, use of reflective practice avoids complexities in the classroom environment by placing the educator’s “pedagogy into a repetitive and linear motion. The teacher is essentially on automatic pilot” (Butke, 2006, p.57).

Chapter one introduced the study and provided a brief overview of the problem, research question and the theoretical framework that provides a context for focusing the study of college educators as learners and how it relates to the reflective process. Chapter two presented a review of the literature that serves as a platform for the research. In chapter three, the methodology, will
be explained including the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of the phenomenological method.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Within qualitative research there are several possible approaches to understanding reflective practice through lived experiences. Being that adults are purposeful agents of education resulting in reflection of their own lives (Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009), the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore reflective practices of lived experiences of collegiate educators as they progressed from novice to distinguished as recognized by the faculty and students at their respective institutions. The design of this study followed the research tradition of Phenomenology, rooted in the philosophical perspectives of Husserl (1859-1938). Phenomenological research is characterized by an exploration of the lived experiences among several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Pokinghorne (1989) ascertained that phenomenologists explore the structure of consciousness in human experiences. The research question which guides this study is:

What meaning do six distinguished educators ascribe to their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator?

Paradigm

Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommend a research model that guides a specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon. The foundational properties of this model consist of a description of a paradigmatic lens and constructs. The following presents a discussion of the interpretivist paradigm as well as the constructs that bound this method. This approach gives
clarity to perceptions that surfaced as to how educators reflect on their experiences from novice to distinction.

**Interpretivist Paradigm**

The selected paradigm sets the context for the philosophical assumptions and conceptual framework for this study. The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions behave in the interpretivist approach. There are many interpretivist genres, but central to all has been “the concern with subjects meaning” (Gephart, 2004, p. 457). Reality, according to an interpretivist position, “is subjective and influenced by the context of the situation” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). Furthermore, an interpretivist paradigm advocates that reality is “socially constructed and, therefore, the dynamic interaction between researcher and participant is central to capturing and describing the lived experiences of the participant” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 131). Finally, interpretivists maintain that the researcher’s “values and lived experiences cannot be divorced from the research process” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 131). “The researcher and… participants jointly create (co-construct) findings from their interactive dialogue and interpretation” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129). The role of the researcher guided by the interpretivist paradigm was to describe meanings as they emerged from the data and examined how subjective realities were produced (Ponterotto, 2005).

**Qualitative Research**

Qualitative findings stem from three kinds of data collection: 1) direct observation; 2) written documents; and 3) in-depth, open-ended interviews (Creswell, 2007). Data quality greatly depend on the extent of “methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the research” (p.5) interviews, observations and extensive field notes, which involve far more than just being present and having quaint conversation (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). The voluminous data
collected are “organized into readable narrative descriptions with major themes, categories and illustrative case examples extended through content analysis” (Patton, 2002, p. 5). Core themes, patterns and insights that emerge from fieldwork and subsequent analysis are the “fruit” (p. 5) of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002).

**Phenomenology Overview**

The nature of the research question drove the choice of methodology. For Phenomenological research, the central underlying meaning of the experience is essential; invariant structure (essence) (Moustakas, 1994; Natanson, 1973) emphasizes the intention of consciousness where experiences are transferred upon in-depth reflection, thus bringing about awareness. As stated in Creswell (1998), phenomenological data analysis ultimately searches for all possible meaning. By means of this methodology, specific statements from participants were reduced, concepts analyzed and properties (behaviors, attributes) surfaced, offering awareness of lived experiences.

Phenomenology as a type of approach “tries an incantative, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world” (van Manen, 1990, p. 13). As described by Husserl (1931), the world of natural attitude is transformed when reflection occurs and awareness ensues. Often the in-depth phenomenological interview is the instrument that permits participants to reflect on their experiences offering awareness to their consciousness. For the purpose of this inquiry, the researcher aimed to stay true to the procedures and analysis set forth by Moustakas (1994), while adapting several characteristics cited by van Manen’s (1990) phenomenological research. The following criteria set forth by van Manen (1990), highlights the central elements of phenomenology as they apply to this study:
1. Phenomenological research explores the structures of human experiences. This inquiry gathered a better understanding of day-by-day occurrences. This study sought the understanding of lived experiences that were valued as educators proceeded from a novice educator to distinction.

2. As phenomenological research is the study of essences, this study was conducted at an individual level of analysis attempting to discover the essence or structure from phenomena experienced by the participants.

3. Phenomenological research studies how a phenomenon connects to our thoughtfulness. This study aims to understand how educators made sense of their “conscious self” through language of how she or he perceived experiences. The study did not evaluate whether or not experiences were real or imaginary or measurable, only that the experiences were present in their thoughtfulness.

4. Through phenomenological interviews, this study served as the vehicle by which participants reflected on their lived experiences, as learners, by putting their memories into language, but also reconstructing occurrences that have been forgotten or not revealed to their consciousness.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose qualitative methods have the unique ability to extract intricate details about phenomena such as thought processes, emotions, and reactions that are difficult to extrapolate through conventional research methods. This phenomenological inquiry will follow the empirical psychological method (EPPM), as described by Moustakas (1994, p.13), “that determines what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essence of structure of the
experiences.” Therefore, the research goal of EPPM was to understand common themes among participants experiencing this phenomenon through the interpretation of how faculty, as adult learners, made sense of their constructed reality.

**Role of the Researcher**

One of the most important considerations for the qualitative researcher is the transparency relative to the participants and the collected data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) stressed that: “The problem that arises . . . is how one can immerse oneself in the data and still maintain a balance between objectivity and sensitivity. Objectivity is necessary to arrive at an impartial and accurate interpretation of events. Sensitivity is required to perceive the subtle nuances and meanings in data and to recognize the connections between concepts” (p. 43).

Phenomenological researchers and participants have an interactive relationship; they are involved in searching for the understanding of lived experiences. The researcher had the ability to step back and distance herself as an “active learner, who can tell the story from the participants’ view rather than as an expert who passes judgment” (Creswell, 1994, p.147). That said, in order to comprehend the processes that were influential during a distinguished collegiate educator’s career, the researcher had *epoché*, bracketing the life world, which offers the ability to unfasten social sensitivity and not take for granted the orientation of one’s life world (Moustakas, 1994). This action requires the ability to curtail prejudgments, while at the same time open research interviews with unbiased presence permitting concepts and patterns to surface (Moustakas, 1994). Because there is a personal connection of the researcher as a collegiate educator this experience added understanding to the investigator. Thus the need for inhibiting permeation of untainted meaning bracketing was essential (Patton, 2002). While acknowledging *epoché* is rarely perfectly achieved, the researcher made use of Moustakas’ (1994) insight that
the “energy and attention involved in reflection and self-dialogue, the intention that underlines the process, and the attitude and frame of reference significantly reduce the influence of preconceived thoughts, judgments, and biases.” (p. 90).

**Selection of Participants**

This study illustrates a common qualitative sampling strategy, studying a relatively small number of distinct educators who are successful at something and therefore a good source of lessons learned (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). According to Creswell (2007), the investigator chooses participants based on similar lived experiences. Thus criterion sampling was used to identify a purposeful sample. The criteria used to select participants were as follows:

1. Recipient of a most prestigious honor of ‘Distinguished Collegiate Educator’
2. Professional awards were presented by National Organizations or acknowledged by the university from which the faculty member is employed
3. ‘Distinguished Collegiate Educator’ nominees were submitted by students, peer educators, and administrators

Although the selection criteria for the professional award were diverse, the following criteria are true for the participants in this study.

1. Recipients were characterized by their excellence in teaching, quality of mentoring, and devotion to students
2. Each faculty member was appointed as an educator at a four year institution within their respective field of expertise
3. The professional award was not given to the same faculty member two years in sequence
4. Appropriate balance between research and pedagogy; and the selection committee charged with evaluating each candidate encompassed, but was not limited to the
following: selection committee Chair, student(s), and award recipient(s) from previous years.

All participants had at least twenty years of teaching experience in higher education. Following the identification of initial participants the researcher contacted all potential participants by means of email securing three of the six contributors. The additional three participants were identified through snowball sampling totaling six participants from both public and private institutions from the east coast. Faculty members were asked to volunteer to participate in the study by responding to an e-mail sent by the researcher (Appendix A).

Seidman (2006) suggests maximum variation sampling being the most effective strategy for selecting participants for interview studies. Participants (N=6) were comprised of three men and three women with diverse teaching design of traditional lecture, psychomotor skill application, and hybrid courses. A variety of academic disciplines were represented; four educators were in applied sciences, one in social science, and one in humanities. Faculty content area of expertise was not specific to this study; however the researcher attempted to stay “true to the logic and power of purposeful sampling [which] lie in the information-rich cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Data Collection

Qualitative research gives us a language to understand and interpret human experience (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Procedurally, qualitative research has multiple avenues for data collection, but the method uniquely suited to convey depth and richness for this study is personal narrative and reflective interviews with open-ended questions. Recording a respondent’s story by means of open-ended questions lends “face validity and credibility” to the study (Patton, 2002, p. 20). Open-ended responses permit vibrancy, allowing the investigator opportunity to
understand the world seen by the respondents (Patton, 2002). As Patton notes, “the purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those views through prior selection of questionnaire categories” (Patton, 2002, p. 21). Open-ended question protocols will be utilized offering faculty the ability to identify and articulate experiences as to how they proceeded from novice educator to distinguished collegiate educator within their respective fields. The questions asked of participants identified their professional processes that were influential to their success. The reflective interviewing process requires faculty to articulate not only the path that led to their prestigious recognition, but also the influential experiences that they encountered as an educator.

A review of the literature revealed no instrument specific to measuring how a novice educator proceeds to a distinguished collegiate educator in an academic environment. The researcher created an interview schedule (Appendix B) using previous work by Wood (2007) who employed a matching methodological approach in a similar academic environment. This inquiry followed Seidman (2006) who proposed three-interview series in which “the first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience, the second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs, and the third encourages participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them” (p. 11). Seidman (2006) states “As long as a structure is maintained that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect on their experience within the context of their lives, alternatives to the three-interview structure can be explored” (p. 11). Thus, Seidman's framework was modified into a two interview sequence.
The timeframe between the first and second interview adhered to Seidman’s (2006) guidelines between 4 to 7 days giving the participants opportunity to reflect on the open discussion that influenced their educational career. The goal of the second interview was to “concentrate on the concrete details of the participants’ present lived experience in the topic area of the study” (Seidman, 2006, p.18). As a result, the richest patterns emerged during the final interview when the researcher gained clarity of the interviewees’ responses regarding the reflective properties of their experiences (Seidman, 2006).

This study drew an initial sample from higher educational institutions from the east coast as a way to bind the sample from including all school possibilities. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in a relaxed setting of the interviewee’s choice. Within these parameters, five face-to-face interviews and one Skype® interview were conducted in a 30 to 45 minute timeframe. The second interview was opposite of the first, with five conducted via Skype® and one face-to-face in a 15 to 30 minute timeframe. Participants were informed during initial contact of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Information regarding potential benefits and risks of the study were presented prior to interviewing. Furthermore, participants received information specifically stating how confidentiality will be maintained throughout project. During the initial interview, the researcher re-examined the signed informed consent and audio release form, attended to any questions, and upon satisfactory completion, permission was ascertained for the audio taping of the interview. Institutional review board approval was obtained before any data collection began.

Regardless of the study, it is impossible for the researcher to be completely unbiased during field study projects (Patton, 2002). Because all people are products of their cultures, contexts, genders, experiences, and training (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), it is noteworthy to
mention that the researcher played the role of an active listener during data collection, probing
deepener into the narrative while suppressing beliefs and assumptions about the study.

**Instrumentation**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore reflective practices of lived
experiences of collegiate educators as they progressed from novice to distinction as recognized
by the faculty and students at their respective institutions. The researcher, an active
participant/instrument, “participants jointly [to] create (co-construct) findings from their
interactive dialogue and interpretation” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129). When necessary, the
researcher posed relevant follow-up questions seeking how each participant intended their
responses. The focus of the follow-up questions were guided by the answers given to the initial
questions; this portion of the interview was unstructured and evolved depending upon participant
responses (Seidman, 2006). During the interview, according to Seidman (2006), the interviewer
should listen on “three different levels; to the spoken word internalizing the meaning; hear the
unguarded intent and terminology when describing the experiences; and watch for non-verbal
cues while keeping the participant on schedule for three interviews” (p.78).

**Data Storage and Management**

With the participants’ permission, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.
Every interview was audio recorded using a Sony ICD PX820, digital voice recorder (Sony
Corporation of America, New York, NY) to capture accuracy of the responses. Use of a
recording device is justified because the details of thought and language used by the participants
are critical to data analysis. Since transcribing is a time-consuming process and does not add
value to the research, the interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber; the researcher
also listened to the recordings to verify accuracy. The participants are referred to as, “the
participants” throughout all of the written components of this study. For the data recording, coding, and analysis, participants were provided with pseudonyms to help protect their identity. During the data collection and analysis process, the researcher and professional transcriber were the only persons to have access to this information. Recorded audiotapes, researcher observations, and notes throughout the interviews, were secured by password-protected access only available to the researcher. Data were stored until the analysis was complete. Signed informed consent (Appendix C) and audio release forms, according to the institutional review board (IRB), were maintained in original paper form for three years by the researcher and stored in the researcher’s personal office in a locked file cabinet.

Data Analysis

During each interview, the researcher recorded participant experiences from the interviews and notes, respectively. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and transcriptions were rechecked against the original interview before being imported into NVivo 10 for coding. NVivo 10, a qualitative analysis software package designed by ©QSR International, aids to access, organize and analyze unstructured data. The software does not offer cognitive abilities, but assists with academic rigor that was applied to the research process and assisted in the exploration of information to make new discoveries and better decisions as to how to organize meaning units and extract themes (Bazeley, 2009). The researcher participated in two training workshops which proved to be valuable early in the project to “assist in initial conceptualization and planning” (p.14), but the particular strength of the software is as a means to present conclusions from an analysis (Bazeley, 2009).

Once the interviews were transcribed, Moustakas’ (1994) methods of data analyses were employed. An inductive process was applied to begin to code the data to identify meaning units,
themes, and patterns that helped in refining the data and in creating an explanatory map of the phenomena. Phenomenological scientific investigation is valid when the core principle is sought through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of the experience being explored (Tweedly, 2007). The core processes of this methodology are: Phenomenological Reduction and Horizontalization, Imaginative Variation and Synthesis of Meanings and Essences, and *Epoché* (Moustakas, 1994). They are further represented in Figure 3.1 below.

In order to enact these core processes, this research followed Moustakas’ (1994) modification of van Kaam’s (1959) eight step method analysis recommended for phenomenological research. The following are the steps outlined in this approach:

1. Preliminary grouping (horizontalization) of meaning units
2. Reduction and elimination of redundant meaning units
3. Clustering of meaning units into themes
4. Final identification and validation of themes
5. Textural description (individual)
6. Structural description (individual)
7. Textural-structural description (individual)
8. Composite textural-structural description
Phenomenological Reduction and Horizontalization

In phenomenological reduction the task is to cluster the elements experienced by the participants by seeking the absolute description of the nature and meaning of their experiences. Moustakas (1994) states:

The task requires that I look and describe; look and describe again; look again and describe; always with reference to textural qualities – rough and smooth; small and large; quiet and noisy; colorful and bland; hot and cold; stationary and moving; high and low; squeezed in and expansive; fearful and courageous; angry and calm – descriptions that present varying intensities; ranges of shapes, sizes, and spatial qualities; time references; and colors all within an experiential context... Each angle of perception adds something to one’s knowing of the horizons of a phenomenon. The process involves a pre-reflective description of things just as they appear and a reduction to what is horizontal and thematic (pp. 90-91).
Horizontalization is the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinctive character. Phenomenologists consider each of the horizons and the textural qualities enabling ability to understand an experience. Horizontalizing each phenomenon has equal value as the researcher seeks to disclose its nature and essence (Moustakas, 1994).

**Imaginative Variation and Essence**

Evidence in a phenomenological study is derived from first-person reports of their life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Significant statements and themes from the interviews are used to write a description of what the participants experienced (textural description). They were also used to write a description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon, called imaginative variation or structural description. That said, from the structural and textural descriptions, the researcher then writes a composite description that presents the “essence” of the phenomenon, also called the invariant structure (or essence).

**Epoché**

A final component of phenomenological analysis is the process of *Epoché*. *Epoché* is a Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain and involves the bracketing of personal experiences. Bracketing personal experiences may be difficult for the researcher to implement. An interpretive approach to phenomenology would signal this as an impossibility (van Manen, 1990) for the researcher to become separated from the text or clear of ordinary thought, thus examined naïvely and freshly through a “purified” consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). Recognizing this limitation, the process of bracketing was used to minimize potential researcher bias.
Trustworthiness

To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, multiple procedures were employed. First, as described above, the process of *epoché* was used in order to reduce bias by distancing or minimizing the researcher’s personal and professional experiences. Additionally, objectivity was needed to arrive at an impartial and accurate interpretation of events.

Second, trustworthiness was enhanced by collecting multiple responses from each individual over a period of three days to a week between each meeting (Seidman, 2006). This provides consistency from the participants’ perceptions, thus validating the participants' stories (Seidman, 2006). In addition, follow-up questions were asked to clarify the context, thinking, and perceptions of the participants.

The process of member checking was used to enhance trustworthiness of the data. Following the initial analysis, each participant received their individual textural and structural description to verify precision and allow for clarification where necessary. Member checking is a “way of finding out whether the data analysis is congruent with the participants’ experiences” (Curtin & Fossey, 2007, p.92). During the member checking process two participants opted to modify their transcript; one more editorial in nature and the other to enhance clarity.

Limitations

The intent of qualitative research is not to be generalized to larger populations; this point is particularly relevant to the nature of this inquiry. The small number of participants of this study spanned several university departments and colleges. A possible limitation is whether phenomenology is appropriate for conveying the full perceptions of the collegiate educator. For example, it is possible that the educators chose not to disclose some of the experiences that most influenced their pedagogical career.
Second, the majority of data were collected during the winter months, therefore the participants were required to delicately balance between time management and responsiveness during the interview process. If data collection was initiated after the participants completed the traditional academic year (i.e., spring semester), it is possible that the educators’ experiences would have influenced the data otherwise.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

This study was performed under the guidelines provided by the Internal Review Board of Northeastern University. All conditions to ensure informed consent, confidentiality (Appendix D), and privacy were stringently met. An abiding dedication to ethical considerations was employed at all points during the study. All agreements made with participants were steadfastly honored. The IRB protocols and approvals are attached as Appendix B and C were described in the previous sections.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter four presents the findings of this study. The chapter includes: an abbreviated sketch of the participants, textural and structural descriptions and a composite description presented as three core themes: 1) role of external stimuli on reflective practice; 2) qualities used by distinguished educators; and 3) desire to be an agent of change. The research goal for empirical phenomenology aims to determine what the experience means for the people who have had the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Specific to this study, the research question was:

What meaning do six distinguished educators ascribe to their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator?

Table 4.1 Descriptions of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant &amp; Profession</th>
<th>Academic Discipline, Teaching Experience and Award Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Cortney, Associate Professor Private University | Public Health, Community Medicine & Education  
Thirty-nine years of teaching experience  
| Alexis, Associate Professor Private University | English Literature & Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages  
Twenty-seven years of teaching experience  
Distinction awarded 2005^ |
| Katherine, Professor Private College | Health Education  
Twenty-eight years of teaching experience  
Distinction awarded 2012* |
| Ryan, Professor State University | Health and Physical Education & Adapted Physical Education and Motor Learning  
Thirty-three years of teaching experience  
Distinction awarded 2013* & 2007^ |
| Jacob, Professor Private University | Education & Curriculum and Instruction  
Thirty-five years of teaching experience  
Distinction awarded 2004* |
| Talon, Professor Public University | Sociology & Education  
Twenty-three years of teaching experience  
Distinction awarded 2009^ & 2001* |

*Professional Organization, ^Four year institution
Description of Participant 1: Cortney

Cortney is a seasoned multi-disciplinary educator who has taught in the areas of public health, community medicine and education and has thirty-nine years of teaching experience. She has been honored numerous times (1995, 1999 & 2007) by professional associations in higher education for her innovative work. She is a frequent presenter and speaker nationally and internationally on issues related to teaching and learning in higher education. She presently teaches in the northeastern United States at a private university of approximately 11,000 students.

Textural description. For Cortney, her introduction to the field of education came through a process of elimination based upon limited options at the time. Cortney described her decision in the following way, “Pretty much basically I went into education because at the time I was an undergraduate. There were two choices. You could be a nurse or you could be a teacher. So, you had to go either into nursing or education and since I faint at the sight of blood, I decided education was the place to go.” After graduation, her first professional opportunity began in high school and then junior high where she taught special needs. Taking time away from her career for a number of years, she, “came back [to work] for life reasons” and thought her career decision to be a junior high teacher at 60 was not an option.

Cortney had an “aha” moment when, “I looked into the knowledge of teaching and realized…wow I am not doing things right at all...after reflecting on teaching knowledge it started to change me.” She described her transformation as important to tend to the needs of today’s learners as, “it was more reading about what learning was and how students learn, [and] I’ve changed my teaching because of my experiences and tried to learn to infuse my coursework around its learning environment.”
Early in Cortney’s career an influential educator made a lingering impression by exemplifying student-centered learning. She describes his teaching strategy as simplistic, but engaging:

I think it was the assignments and the activities he used to apply the material to make it real. While he just lectured like everyone else in college for the most part, other people would test you by asking you to reiterate what they said. He did not. His notes, exams, his papers would always reflect back to our life. As I think about it…I believe the assignments gave the best application of his material.

In contrast, regarding an unconstructive educational system:

We haven’t had the balance between teaching and research nor have we looked at lines and ranks. Maybe there needs to be two different tiers and there needs to be different facts that get us to tenure. Yes research is important, there is proven synergy in teaching but at what level and to what degree does research come to in these kinds of institutions. The [education] systems are preventing us from doing the work that really needs to be done. Someone said to me I just tell my new faculty put some lectures together and once they are tenured they can fool around a little bit. I say, by the time you go through tenure you are setting a pattern; you are not going to change.

Cortney further explained that to establish a path towards developing quality teaching, novice educators need to be given ample time, resources, and the freedom to take risks. She stressed that the relationship between research and teaching are at odds:

Having open discussion about teaching is not an awful and or bad thing to say I don’t know what I am doing. We talk about our research all the time and we say I have this problem in research - please help me. Who comes out into the hallway and says I have this problem in teaching - please come help me! As a college educator, you are supposed to be excellent at it.

Assessment is a major emphasis in Cortney’s evaluation method of her teaching, noted by her comment, “I build everything in assessment so I know what they know in the end.”

In addition to her dedication to assessment, Cortney gives careful thought and consideration to learning objectives, which are pivotal in her teaching. She has confidence in her individuality as an educator and considers learning objectives help guide teaching methods and
ultimately, lead to teaching effectiveness. Not every educator will transition into an “expert”, therefore be comfortable in “who you are.” When an educator is content with an approach and nurtures their pedagogy style, the classroom experience “is tranquil and [an] inviting opportunity.”

**Structural description.** Cortney’s intuitive drive for validating educational experiences for herself and ultimately her students is best captured by her ability to ascribe meaning to her life experiences. At first, she did not “sense the field of education,” but rather “the education profession found her.” The reflection structure of this distinguished educator was created from her strong sense of self and internal robustness for educating the educator. Cortney describes how life experiences contributed to her knowledge of teaching. “There were a couple of things,” first of all, “you kind of come in as you always do, naïve and you are going to set the world on fire.” She then describes an encounter early in her career, “I am walking around and find out that the classroom connected to mine, there is a teacher there who is about a year or two from retirement. He is standing at the podium reading from the text book and the students are throwing a basketball against the wall…OK, I never, never want to be that teacher.” Immediately following that pivotal experience she indicates never wanting to be in a position where “I have given up [and] I don’t care”; moreover, acknowledging that she constantly self-reflects “as a teacher [and her] experiences as a professional.”

A memory of a life experience that “really woke [Cortney] up” is when an emotionally disturbed student “picked up a chair and threw it at me and said I am not doing this stuff. This reading stuff is stupid and boring. I was not frightened, but said “whoa.” I thought…ok maybe this stuff is boring.” After the incident, Cortney “really changed how [she] approached her teaching.” “You just can’t deliver what you think is important because if students don’t think it
is important, they are not going to pay attention to you.” She believes student engagement is a hallmark of learning.

Intuition is valued by Cortney. Her “gut feeling” comes from her experiences that she has “yet to process.” She considers how people learn and change, “[it begins with] an experience which obtains knowledge, but we don’t always process it, we don’t know we have it and we don’t deal with it.” Cortney explained the current traditional educational system encourages conformity when preparing educators, highlighting that, “we teach based on two things…the way we were taught and we also teach the way we learn.” She expands her reasoning stating that the traditional approach when preparing educators is needed, but the distinguished educator must deviate from this norm. Cortney strongly believes that colleagues at the university level do not possess the personal skill set to be a “good” teacher because the focus is not on the students, but rather the material. Throughout her collegiate experience Cortney believed that doctoral recipients possess the ability to engage in thoughtful experiments, make sense of problems, and solve problems in sophisticated ways, but their focus and passion tends to be on their material. She described how an excellent educator has the “ability to extend the love for the material to their students. I love my material so much I want you to love it too. That’s very different from I love my material so much and so here it is.” The vigor in her teaching philosophy is not “teaching the same way you were taught, but know your role in the learning process; the importance of assessment and its interpretation.”

Central to Cortney’s experience is constant reflection and a commitment to change that permeates her teaching experience. Courtney places great importance on her own learning and describes this as a central transformative element of her role as an educator.
Acceptance of this realization process created a pedagogical shift in her career. Her discussion of her personal lived experiences brings in a certain sense of tangibility that “just clicked” in the classroom environment, which enabled comprehension and synthesis of content. As a risk-taker, Cortney sensed a need for “…tapping into what they already knew but more so, not just having a discussion and have them tell me, I actually had them translate it…this makes sense for teachers trying to create a community” for learners. Drawing from past experiences, she “recognizes the need for uninterrupted change in the education environment and considers reflective practice as a learning module for educator perceptiveness.” Her inherent “love for her material” exists in such a way that she wants all “to love it; it is in [her] DNA as a teacher.”

**Description of Participant 2: Alexis**

Alexis has East Asian roots and is one of six children. Alexis was born, raised and educated in Taiwan, but has taught in the United States for the past twenty years after starting her teaching career in Taiwan where she taught for seven years. For twenty-seven years her academic expertise has focused on English Literature and teaching English to speakers of other languages. Currently, her research efforts follow methods and effectiveness of incorporating technology in teaching. She received her prestigious teaching award in 2005 from a northeast private institution with an enrollment of approximately 6200 students, where she is presently employed.

**Textural description.** For Alexis, her career goal was not as an educator, but a journalist. She majored in language and her ambition was to be a reporter for the public press. Soon after receiving her baccalaureate degree her introduction to teaching began as a language lab teaching assistant. She worked in the laboratory for a year expressing enjoyment of the experience. Following the lead of her brother, she applied for a teaching position at the American Institute in
Taiwan. To her surprise (and noting her modesty), Alexis passed the test and secured the job. Quickly, she realized she found a job for which she was passionate and enjoyed. Alexis reiterated that she was “lucky” to have had such an opportunity and good fortune.

Early life experiences, such as being selected to represent her school for speech contests afforded her opportunity to develop her academic strength and abilities. Alexis’ choice to become an educator was an inherently natural process, “standard language is part of me and I am proud of that, so when I found this job, teaching US Diplomats, I thought, this is my future.” While she fulfilled her role in teaching US Diplomats, Alexis noted that there was reciprocity of learning experiences in that she gained understanding of politics, economics, and world geography. Moreover, although she was their instructor, she still did not feel secure in her approach to teaching (i.e., methodology). Her experience teaching diplomats was advantageous, but lacked a sound approach to pedagogy as she began to build her knowledge in Chinese grammar.

The development of her relationship with students also evolved. At the beginning of her collegiate career she simply enjoyed the company of her students while sharing her expertise about English pronunciation and listening skills; however, five years later during her second teaching responsibly, a shared community perspective of lived experiences which, “greatly improved [her] capacity for the betterment of both her teaching approach and student progression” developed.

The transition from Taiwan to the teaching philosophy in the United States was a contrast of advantages and benefits versus the challenge for academic poise. “Coming from Taiwan, I could not believe what my colleagues were doing here; they were relying on their peers and collaborating. I had to start doing what they do so I didn’t stand out, so after a while I liked it -
so, I adapted.” One of the most vivid classroom experiences built confidence early in her teaching career.

One summer, I don’t know why, everything just worked perfectly; the students, the drill instructors, my own state of mind and I remember [an individual of expertise in her specific content area] visited the university and sat in on some of my classes and I was a little nervous, but he later on told me that was the best foreign language class he had ever sat in and I was happy about that.

After hearing praise concerning her teaching approach, Alexis was overwhelmed with excitement and became more confident in her method.

Alexis noted work ethic also defined development of her pedagogical approach and methods. To continue professional growth, one must challenge their current teaching practices and integrate their own personality where appropriate.

I think you really have to work and for me, I have trained many younger colleagues here and Taiwan and I think it takes a lot of work to be a better teacher. I also think you can work really hard and get all the knowledge you need and you may still not be a good teacher. I think a person’s personality is important.

Work ethic was a continuous theme for Alexis even prevailing over her own personality. A strong educational background is needed along with a persistent work ethic. Constant improvement through a persistent work ethic was captured in Alexis’ comment, “when I was a student I wish that I would have studied harder, but I think my teaching methods make up for the fact that I am not very well trained in those areas.”

Alexis truly enjoys teaching which helps to validate her career choice. Passion for one’s chosen profession was valued by Alexis and served as a validating force, she notes, “know who you are and have the passion for it.” She went on to note, “You need to have passion for this career”; basic qualifications are important, “but not enough to be successful with the art of teaching.”
**Structural description.** Alexis’ experience as a distinguished educator represents a feeling of turbulent transition and an attempt (or feeling) that she always educated in a different way than her peers. Reflection and intuition both play a significant role in Alexis’ approach to her work. In order to best teach a target audience, one must intuitively deliver content based on the learner’s needs, but also use reflection to validate the intuition. When such issues were discussed with colleagues, whether junior or senior, she found that her methodology was driven by the “sense of the language”, or simply stated: intuition. Because proper dialect is the foundation of her skill set, “the crux is not what is more ‘accurate’, but what is ‘native like’ is important to me.”

Using experience and reflection to draw on one’s strengths and to keep limitations in check, also was noted by Alexis. “I think that a good educator understands where they work best.” In other words, she describes herself as an excellent “first and second year teacher”, but beyond this aptitude she believes that other educators are better suited. Alexis recognizes and accepts her limitations as an educator; by no means does she indicate a lack of teaching ability, but rather, a greater awareness of her exact expertise and boundaries. Students can “sense the confidence you have, I think it is quite interesting that you get questions you can’t answer” as a younger professional, “when that happened I would be very embarrassed,” but these days she really welcomes the inquiry as a “compliment” and states “great question.”

Alexis approaches educating her students via experiences and helping them “see” the “bigger picture.” Because Alexis has no children of her own she embodies a “nurturing or motherly role”, which may correspond to teaching with her experiences in mind.

Actually, the past two or three years I began to realize these students could be my children. I didn’t think I was that old until recently feeling kind of slow - Ha. Yes, these days I do see them as my children somewhat. I want to teach them more than
just my content area. I see some behavioral problems that I think I could provide suggestion to and they would not be offended, in that respect, I feel more fortunate.

Reflecting upon lived experiences in the classroom environment Alexis expanded her approach to “create a classroom where teaching and learning can occur,” this self-identified nurturing role has filled her with a new “sense of anxiety” when teaching, but “it is also a very exciting and rewarding thing to do.”

Alexis subscribes to a more traditional, teacher-centered approach, but has attempted to expand her methods using intuition and reflection. She clearly believes academic success is rooted in a solid work ethic and expects her students to also believe in this process. Validation of her educational practices also captures Alexis’ methods. She plays a nurturing role with her students and desires this role as a source of personal and professional fulfillment.

**Description of Participant 3: Katherine**

Katherine is a single mother raising three biracial children while employed as a professor of health education at a private institution (3500 enrollment) in the northeast region. She began her teaching career at the secondary level advancing into higher education and since, has been educating for a total of twenty-eight years. She serves as a consultant for many private and public health organizations and is currently working as an advocate for health education on state and national committees. She is the recipient of a National Educator of the Year Award in 2012.

**Textural description.** Katherine did not anticipate a career in pedagogy. She noted that her entire family, however, has roots in education. Her father was a teacher in addition to serving as a school principal, her mother also was a teacher, and several other family members had strong educational ties. This educational “pedigree” made it difficult for Katherine to deviate from a career in education, she notes, “I actually never wanted to be a teacher, I went to college
for something different and low and behold I found myself in the field anyway. I guess it is my blood.”

Katherine initially worked as an athletic trainer, but after working 3-4 years in this capacity she got tired of the workload and decided to go back to school. Following in her family’s educational tradition, she began teaching at a public school while attending graduate school at night and soon thereafter landed her first “real” teaching job.

While employed at a public school Katherine found her passion for teaching health education through engagement with fellow educators and professionals. She noted a key experience that influenced her pedagogy in working with these educators in that they helped her reflect on what teaching meant. In doing so, she engaged in co-authoring a 6th grade health curriculum for the district, which eventually was published as her first book.

Katherine also described her on-the-job learning as needing to capture the attention of a student, often resulting in a “song and dance” routine:

one educator who would actually tap dance in front of the class and that made me realize, ok you have do things to get students focused. I am not a tap dancer, but I kept that in the back of my mind knowing that you have to grab their attention somehow. So I absorbed that concept and put it to use.

When establishing her teaching career at a private institution there was only one section of human sexuality per semester, when she transferred employment, there were over four sections of human sexuality each term. When Katherine started teaching human sexuality she connected with the student population in an engaging manner. She advanced her connection with students by means of creative teaching strategies and open discussion of topics “that no one else really talks about.” For example, using active learning assignments, pair and share experiences, and open box “Ask the Expert” sessions, Katherine is able to delve deeper in the topics while assuring student learning and trust concerning a sensitive topic.
Katherine had many fond memories of her teaching career except when awkward discussions arose. She stated, “difficult conversations” in a learning environment “continue to be a challenge for me.” She keeps class continuity by starting out every class with a gentle reminder, “watch what you say because you have no idea what your classmates life is like. You have no idea where people come from and their life story, so you need to be polite,” and if a student “violates the classroom atmosphere, I will ask you to withdraw from the class.” For example, when teaching human sexuality and potentially controversial subject matter, she is mindful of the challenge in keeping a comfortable and respectful atmosphere in the classroom. For Katherine, a challenge is simply turned into a learning opportunity, “in a particular class I have one African-American student, the only student of color, and it just so happens to be a human environmental class where race is typically not introduced.” But because of the “lack of diversity on campus, I introduce a discussion on disparities, issues related to race, socioeconomic status,” and many other “painful issues.” Katherine recognizes through past experiences these topics are sensitive, “but it is our responsibility to shed light on the difficult issues.” This early learning experience reinforced her need to keep her teaching methodology timely and relevant. Additionally, she noted that approaching difficult conversations in the classroom assisted her in leadership roles within her current professional association.

Another facet of academia is a standard teacher assessment by the students. In Katherine’s experience, however, she “does not find them particularly meaningful.” As a tenured faculty member, evaluations are not required of faculty; however, Katherine asserted her value of student feedback. While reflecting on this need, she “created a web link where the students can log-on and give feedback.” In addition to the web link she also uses short term
evaluations so that throughout the semester, students will conduct an evaluation on the information covered in class. This approach has led to productive feedback from her students.

Katherine explained that educators are in a constant process of development such that content knowledge is important to be an expert in their respective subject area, however, varying teaching techniques allows for an effective transference of knowledge and skills to target audiences. One such area to learn these techniques and methods is attending professional conferences and engaging others in best practice pedagogy.

Engaging with other educators was deemed a valued experience by Katherine. She noted that not all teachers have the same ambition and goals. Katherine has set her professional goals and standards to be very high and she uses other peoples’ level of preparation as a constant reminder to reflect on how others view her as an educator.

Although tenured, she is not complacent in her pursuit for excellence, “a department chair said a tenured faculty member that had been around for a while showed movies every day then left for the day…I guess people do get complacent and lazy, but, I can’t see that ever happening to me.” In order not to become complacent, Katherine’s ambition for “curiosity and ability to try new things” instills a drive for teaching excellence. Advancement in technology has challenged seasoned educators, as for Katherine, she sees this as a way to challenge her curiosity “to learn more, do more, and improve student experience in the classroom.” Katherine suggests future obstacles will always occur in education, “unless you sustain curiosity” and “try new things” education will pass you by. She embraces her experiences and values being a life-long learner by learning one, doing one, and teaching one.

**Structural description.** As a distinguished educator, Katherine embraces and advocates her view of the necessity of equality in education. “In human sexuality if you are talking about
homosexuals or health issues among Afro-Americans or Latino people…any kind of minority population, it is a challenge.” Addressing inequality in the classroom is a trial, “the challenge is how you talk about difficult issues without making people you are talking about uncomfortable?” For instance, if there “is one black student in class and you are talking about African-American people and health, how do you make it comfortable enough for that one person so they don’t obviously think…is everyone staring at me?” How do you “ensure the class does not look at that one person” and assume this is the “voice for everyone of that color?” Katherine’s teaching strength incorporates the ability to bring difficult issues into the classroom. Her belief in educational equality has reinforced her character as an instructor as well as positively impacted her growth as a professional educator.

Viewing herself as a life-long learner, Katherine seeks to continuously reflect on the unique educational needs of her students to meet her own high standards of learning. The latter is central to Katherine experience as an educator. She reflects on the millennial student and strives to meet their needs by using technology in the classroom. Katherine is convinced that acceptance of technology in the classroom has been very influential because today’s millennial students are more immersed in technology. As a teacher, “you must speak their language” and obligate oneself to “conform to the student, but obviously not in every situation.” Katherine believes past pedagogical concepts are valuable and realizes the need to capture their attention and make it appealing to the student’s metacognitive needs. Katherine values her experiences as acting as an educational agent of change. Core concepts in higher education provide the framework, “those are the big broad strokes,” the “little tiny details” that each educator provides “are the things that ensure change.” For example, “think…chalk; no one uses chalk anymore, it
is dry erase markers or smart boards, so it’s the same concept, but different ways of implementing them.”

Katherine reflects back to when she was “a new faculty member.” She states “students were like sharks smelling blood; they can smell the weakness in the faculty member.” Those were difficult times, but she realized determination and exuding confidence is really important for keeping the classroom climate positive. There are multiple commonalities between “classroom training” and “lifelong lessons.” Personal growth and using experiential learning is a hallmark trait of Katherine’s approach to education. Adapting to the obstacles of a diverse educational environment also presents challenges that a life-long learner should develop. When the individual “feels there is a weakness, they will push the button.” As with struggles in everyday life, an educator needs to be rigid, “not that you can’t be inflexible, because it is ok to be flexible,” but if students “don’t sense leadership, confidence and composure as a leader of the classroom, then they see the relationship weaken.” Through these experiences Katherine’s teaching strategies have taught her that once respect is absent, interest is no longer relevant.

Katherine rightly “believes that reflection, participation in education training and following role models were what made me a good educator.” Furthermore she feels that continuous practice is limitless when teaching as you develop in the profession. While Katherine acknowledges she is a better educator than before, she continues her journey “to make it to the top.” Her self-recognition was “really an eye opener” implying, “there is always room for improvement, new information, better techniques, and more experimentation to determine what works and doesn’t work.” This continuous practice offers self-reflection and growth to occur both professionally and personally.
Description of Participant 4: Ryan

Ryan was born and raised in Pennsylvania where his pedagogy career began thirty three years ago. He balances his professional responsibilities between fulltime professoriate (health and physical education) at a state institution (enrollment of 12,000) as well as founder and director of an adolescent physical development clinic in the northeast. He has been honored with numerous awards for his contributions to adapted physical education and therapeutic recreation. He is a recipient of both an institutional (2007) and a national consortium teaching award (2013).

Textural description. Ryan started out as a business major. His father was in business and the “talk around the kitchen table was you want to be your own boss someday and not be conforming to the boss’s wishes. You want to be in the driver’s seat and you will be a much happier person.” Following his father advice, Ryan enrolled as a business major in a private university. After struggling with an accounting problem he had an epiphany that he could not do this for the rest of his career. Going against his parent’s wishes, he changed schools and majors and embarked on a journey in education. After some soul searching he decided to go into physical education not knowing what he was going to do, but it was at least something he thought he might enjoy. His first job was at a private school for children with autism,

in the first three months of that job (I don’t know why I took it) but on a whim I guess and I thoroughly hated it. Every day I drove home I would say to myself I am not going back tomorrow, why did I do this; a year wasted! But, I hung in there and when I had to leave to attend graduate school, I didn’t want to leave my work. That’s how much I had changed my perception and my thinking about education.

Growing up with a family of four brothers, one brother with a moderate disability, the career decision to work with children with adaptive needs was “indirectly related to my academically challenged brother.” Referring to his adaptive brother, “when I tell stories about him in class the students are able to see some of the roots I had…and how my thinking changed
towards students with adapted abilities.” Personal experiences influenced Ryan as to how he understood his role as an educator. Through the years Ryan observed how his parents ensured his brother’s success; these experiences had a major impact on how he teaches students when handling their individual disabilities. These experiences impacted Ryan where he viewed his teaching as an agent of change via the growth of others, namely, his students.

By means of course instruction the students need to “embrace their gut-level perception” of what happens outside the comfort of the classroom.

They have a role to play in this game of life and their happiness is dependent upon their achieving good things to enhance their own thinking and well-being and their place in life, and only by their own achievements can they realize their own self-actualization, and when they become self-actualized and therefore being able to master certain things… only then will they be able to really realize their own potential of impacting the lives of others.

Ryan believes it is the responsibility, as an educator, to assist students in the self-actualization process in terms of learning.

Ryan believes that a key experience that influences pedagogy is humor. Humor helps illustrate various examples, it knows no physical bounds, and it helps keep the learning environment light and non-threatening; therefore, if students can see the example from a humorous, non-threatening view, it becomes more “palatable.” Ryan indicated this process is one of trial and error that has allowed him to effectively use it in his teaching methods.

Ryan embraces his experiences as a holistic educator where he attempts to manage knowledge, help develop skills and encourage social skill development. In the simplest sense, “their challenge is to put their best foot forward.” As an educator Ryan has laid out the process for his students, but they must demonstrate “their creativity” in learning it.

Ryan’s experience as an educator is fueled by his passion and engagement with students. The challenges of a novice educator are overcome by the “love for activity, the engagement, and
passion.” Ryan proclaims to “love the challenge of the moment.” He wants his student teachers to succeed and have a similar level of passion, patience, commitment, and creativity with respect to the educational process.

**Structural description.** For Ryan, humor, integrity of behavior and casual story-telling are central to his experience as a distinguished educator.

Along with the behavior and humor, it is story telling. People love to hear stories and life stories are important, but one of the drawbacks of that is sometimes you are forced to tell stories about yourself and I am shy at that to some degree of talking about myself. I would rather hear stories from other people and have them tell funny stories, but not talk about myself, but I have to do that so students can see a bridge between their life and my life and where they will eventually be some day.

Ryan believes educators should pay particular attention to the outcomes when educating students. As an observer of behavior, Ryan voiced to his students “don’t listen to what people say, listen to how they behave.” From behavior you get a sense of who is leading and who are the followers. When “we attribute motives or emotional states to behavior we impose our own interpretation of the situation on those who listen to us because they are exposed only to our interpretation.” In order to change behaviors and/or influence people, one must become “subservient to the people you are working with.” Ryan views his role as residing in the background of the learning environment, he notes, “not wanting the spotlight, I want to put the spotlight on others therefore your energy goes toward those individuals and they get a piece of you.”

Ryan’s experience is one of constant learning, sifting through content, and using current events in society to inform his pedagogy to prompt reflection. For his “own pleasure at times” and literal information for his class notes, Ryan reads four newspapers every day to keep current with issues. This evidence-based strategy offers his students a “sense that they have at least
caught the essence of those certain times in their lives.” Ryan approaches education as helping students integrate current information to impact how they reflect on material and issues; similarly, this active reflective process is how Ryan models his experiences and approaches to learning. He strives for individuals that he instructs to see him as “being aggressive and hungry for information. If they don’t see that, I believe I am just spending time.”

With an emphasis on being an active agent of change and initiator of student learning and growth, Ryan challenges students with his own thoughts at the end of classes. He states, “as you go through life, every second and minute of the day,” you are making a “decision about serving self or serving others.” Certainly there are times to serve self because all have human needs, but he thinks that happiness in life is “serving others.” There is a “way of growing here that is enriching” and part of what an educator should aspire to accomplish. Reflecting on his experiences, Ryan notes that serving others (e.g., through teaching/education) is a pathway to life happiness.

**Description of Participant 5: Jacob**

Ordained a Deacon in 2005, Jacob resides in the southeast with his spouse of 25 years, three children and two grandchildren. Presently he teaches at a private university with an approximate enrollment of 8,900 students. His teaching experience spans nearly thirty-five years and he is considered an authority on education and curriculum instruction. Currently, he is researching changes in spirituality among college student-athletes as part of a five-year longitudinal study. He received a prestigious national teaching award in 2004.

**Textural description.** For Jacob, thirty-seven years ago there were no academic programs for his professional concentration, athletic medicine, so he decided to pursue independent studies and working part-time as an orderly in a hospital to help him pay for school
while teaching a summer term and completing his baccalaureate. Early in his career, practical clinical experiences influenced Jacob’s teaching methods. Coming to “[current institution], I drew constantly from those 13 years and was able take the experiences, slides and snippets of examples of different problems and how it can be handled. All of those direct experiences fall into those teaching moments within an environment of learning.”

As a practitioner and part of the allied health profession, intuitiveness is a manifestation “we need to be a little careful of.” Since the induction of “evidence base into [his] teaching practice” he believes there is continuous flux “between his teaching approach and what is being experienced in the classroom.” Going with his gut instinct, Jacob’s intuition is, “important but you have to have a solid foundation before you introduce intuitiveness in an academic environment.” Whether a medical practitioner or educator, one’s ability “to temper intuition with knowledge of current research” and then make decisions based on “intuitiveness” or “gut feeling” in academia is challenging. The critical mass presents itself when “trying to keep all the balls in the air” trying to impart “intuitive thinking through lived experiences” with hopes to produce a “rapid result.” The flip side to Jacob’s theory is the “weakness it donates” because the approach is mostly “acting on feeling, hunches and can also be guided by emotions.” As a seasoned educator, Jacob struggles with desire to pull more on intuition, but his teaching experience is the need to temper.

Jacob values student course instructor evaluations. As a reflective practitioner, it is important for him to incorporate student feedback and learn from it in the refinement process of his teaching methods. Jacob reflects on these evaluations where he can make meaningful and appropriate adjustments. Instructor evaluation is very helpful and enables him to be adaptive to the needs of the students.
Transitioning from a practitioner to a fulltime educator left a lasting effect on Jacob. Ultimately, Jacob sees himself as a caregiver both within his previous clinical role and his present academic position. Academic responsibilities are “different when you are in the classroom and coordinating a program… [the]change when I left that medical scene and came into a full-time professorial appointment, was [that] I came from being one person caring for one person to one person teaching multiple people.” Having educated over 400 alumni in the professional arena was a “humbling” experience. In viewing his role as an agent of change Jacob notes understanding his experience and impact in education by witnessing the successes of his students in the community. These successes seem to give Jacob a sense of pride that empowers his teaching practice.

**Structural description.** As a distinguished educator, Jacob has a contagious charisma that reflects confidence in the learning environment, “it’s a little bit of an ego thing but then it’s not. I guess I have always looked at myself as a little bit of a servant since participating in choir since high school.” Jacob regards this as a privilege “like a service in the community because it impacted them.” His persistent ability to transition over time was validated when he moved from “meaning perspectives” to that of “personal growth and then progressed to meaning perspectives that are more enabling, inclusive, open and integrating” while in the classroom environment.

Jacob is prideful of his self-awareness and acknowledges that educators cannot know everything there is to know about a subject, “so you can look the student in the eye and say I am not sure about that but I will bring the answer back to you tomorrow.” In addition, he appreciates and acknowledges vulnerability by “being accountable for the information you don’t know in front of students and not let that shake you.” In order to conquer this anxiety, as a novice educator, Jacob recalls “putting an exorbitant amount of time into material preparation
and content knowledge.” He is grateful that he seized “learning opportunities” early as a young educator because “over time these experiences strengthened [his] pedagogical awareness,” that readily transitioned into his current practice.

His ability to transition encourages “insights through personal discovery from life experiences.” Upon reflection, he would “fault-find” always reviewing assumptions or tendencies from prior learning and consequences. This notable proficiency is central to “meaning making and is significant perspective when educators teach [adult] learners.” Grounded with pedagogical knowledge, Jacob has embarked on the international “cross-over”; due to his overwhelming success as a distinguished educator, Jacob was recently notified of a multi-disciplinary teaching opportunity that is both a scholarly and international programming service for the midsummer. Jacob’s willingness to continually explore, take a chance, and reflect on his experiences in education informs his current role(s). He will step on new ground with mixed emotions noting “[it is] scary but really kind of cool I will be stretching my wings like I have never stretched before hoping they won’t break off.”

**Description of Participant 6: Talon**

Talon was raised in the Midwest where he loves to hike, raft and challenge the white water. The child of two blue collar laborers and eldest of their four children, he attended public schools in his hometown, later graduating from a rural university in Pennsylvania with a concentration in sociology. He currently teaches at a private university in the northeast with an enrollment of approximately 33,000 students. With twenty-three years of teaching experience, Talon received his first teaching excellence award in 2001 and the second followed soon after in 2009.
**Textural description.** Talon earned his Ph.D. in sociology with a concentration in education in 1990. With respect to change, he experiences his role as “a connected change agent,” forever challenging students and asking, “What do you want to create today?” Talon devoted most of his teaching career to conducting research on many “diverse features of contemporary education” and striving to “examine the ways in which formal schooling influences individuals and the ways society affects educational institutions.” A central facet of his research and method “is the process by which educational systems contribute to or alleviate social inequality in broader society.”

Following an unconventional educational path, Talon’s experiences have led him to characterize himself as a non-traditional educator. Leaving high school after his sophomore year, Talon desired to travel; however, after a number of years “bouncing around” he came home to begin another journey in education. At twenty-four years old he realized that he missed a vast opportunity when he dropped-out of high school. In order to attend college, Talon actively prepared for taking the GED exam of which, he successfully passed.

With no collegiate advisement and unsure of exactly what major to choose, he selected a few courses that sounded intriguing. His path as an educator was never visible in the early years, but he always felt the desire to enlighten others no matter the circumstance. Pulling from his own experiences, Talon notes, the “road to personal success is always a possibility.” After receiving his graduate degree, Talon soon found that he valued teaching in higher education and more mature learners. He valued the experience of working with younger learners; however, managing classroom issues and student behaviors was off-putting to him. Talon found a level of comfort working with high school students and eventually college students. He states, “They were more interesting and did a little more of substance with more discussions and teaching for me was
more of my passion.” Essentially, Talon found a sense of comfort and belonging in higher education and has been teaching there ever since.

Formal training in educational methods afforded Talon an awareness to explore diverse ways of teaching, such as with active learning assignments. His instructional strategies tap into multiple modes of instruction that focus the responsibility of learning on the learners where he is facilitator. One of the most useful strategies in the classroom that he employs is “learning by teaching”; this strategy affords the student to teach new content to each other. Talon believes students can learn a great deal from each other and views his role as one of active facilitator and guide versus a Socratic teacher.

**Structural description.** Talon’s triumph comes as a distinguished educator by means of reflection and the desire to change. For Talon, the value is “we haven’t really examined what we believe as teachers. I am taking it to a deeper level, so I sit down and say what is my job really?” Being a supporter of “[developing] teaching philosophies, I believe if you do them honestly, truly reflect on what you say and then look at what you do, that’s when you will change.” The challenge is to “continue the passion to be an instrument of change; this will reenergize you as an educator.” He continues with perplexity, what really “blows my mind is how some of my peers have every lesson set and ready to go three weeks prior to the beginning of each semester.” If an educator is a “true instrument of change, we must be willing to adapt and change on a daily basis.”

Talon hopes that he has been able to act as an educational agent of change at the individual level. Self-discovery is another process Talon values and attempts to guide his learners through; this is facilitated by exploration of individual student goals, effort, perseverance, and resilience. Ultimately, Talon supports the notion that teaching and learning is a
process of continuous change, similar to how he pursued his early life experiences (i.e., travel) and education. He highlights the need to adapt and be resilient, but also to nurture one’s sense of limits and capacity. Talon believes it is normal to “continually question one’s teaching methods and approach; through this reflective process”, he has come to know when he is moving in the right direction, but he also notes a level of uncertainty in terms of reaching his students. He supports teaching with one’s “own style and flow” and explores ways to achieve this keeping in mind what may work for some, may fail for others; this is what keeps his “methods fresh and inviting for students.”

**Composite**

The aim of a phenomenological study is to understand what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and to elicit a comprehensive description of it (Moustakas, 1994). The primary research question that guided this study clearly supports that aim:

*What meaning do six distinguished educators ascribe to their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator?*

The findings produced a collaborative description of the experiences complete with an underlying and precipitating factor that accounts for what is experienced. The final step in phenomenology is an intuitive integration of the two descriptions (textural and structural) into a unified statement of the essence of the experience of the phenomena as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). This is known as the “essence” of the experience: that which is universal, the condition or quality that makes the experience what it is (Husserl, 1931). The composite description is presented through the identification of three major themes 1) role of external stimuli on reflective practice; 2) qualities used by distinguished educators; and 3) desire to be an agent of change.
**Role of external stimuli on reflective practice.** External stimuli (i.e., mentors, family, students, community, etc.) played a significant role in assisting these educators in transitioning from novice to distinguished educator. Four participants reported experiencing an influential relationship early on that helped them develop a natural educational perspective over time. Each participant experienced external stimuli differently, which varied their individual approach to reflective practice in education. For example, Jacob experienced a shift in pedagogical practice based on the influence of a mentor relationship; Katherine also valued an early mentor relationship, which left a powerful impression leading to, “[a] shift in practice later in life.” Talon believed that early influential relationships and experiences allowed him to develop a sense of self-awareness, which improved his ability to make better decisions and transfer experiences to practice.

Relationships with mentors followed an unscripted path that “naturally” developed over time. This unprocessed assignment did not ignore the interpersonal aspect (“chemistry”) of the relationship and thus proved most effective offering seamless transition from novice to a lifelong learning track.

All participants indicated various external stimuli (e.g., mentors) greatly influenced their lives and led to reflective practice. “Great role models are wonderful,” (Katherine) and are “extremely influential in shaping who we are” (Alexis). These support relationships and external stimuli reinforced reflective practice and “problem solving” (Alexis), to maximize pedagogical practice. With regard to external stimuli, some were poised in academia, these individuals were resourceful at “syllabus construction, lesson development and teaching evaluations” (Jacob). Another contribution that added to their success was the “insight they bestowed,” and how “practical they were”; their connections between “intuitiveness and self-realization drove the
train” (Jacob). These meaningful relationships were emotional and offered the ability to generate a connection with a sense of reality.

Cortney’s relationship with external stimuli assisted her growth with “expertise and wisdom”. These relationships allow the educator a way to validate their expertise and to pass the torch of their “craft to a new generation” of educators according to Jacob.

A variety of external stimuli greatly impacted all participants’ experiences in transitioning from novice to distinguished educator. Some these stimuli included personal and professional relationships (i.e., mentors), a sense of connection with external stimuli, and the development of a nurturing relationship. “It takes several years of nurtured instruction for relationships to get over the hump” (Jacob). “Patience and courage” are needed to build solid relationships and “face weaknesses to make effective change” (Cortney). When individuals are open to using and learning from external stimuli it helps to initiate a seamless transition on multiple levels towards lifelong learning and reflective practice.

Qualities used by the distinguished educator. The researcher has identified seven self-identifiable qualities that were possessed and experienced by the participants: (1) humor, (2) reflection, (3) persistence, (4) curiosity, (5) sensitivity, (6) creativity and (7) passion. Part of the essence of their experiences was how they brought their unique qualities into the classroom, which influenced how they drew meaning from these experiences as educators to integrate into reflective practice. The unique qualities were specific to every participant, although there were commonalities; each trait had its own role as to the educator’s effortless style. Without question, “teaching with a sense of humor helps shed different colors of light from hues to the example of what you are presenting in class” (Ryan). A sense of humor “helps break down the seriousness” … and keep it light” (Ryan), this lighthearted approach offers a “sense of relaxation
during learning experiences.” Individuals outside of the profession might believe “teaching is a
skill set as opposed to a discipline” (Cortney). Although one “tries to make heads or tails” of a
teaching flair “you always sense a rhythm within the experiences, it’s a constant reflection on
what is happening when an educator facilitates” during the learning experience (Cortney). This
innermost quality is something Talon referred to as “self-esteem” (Talon). During a classroom
experience “you must know if [the student] has confidence [and] learns how to work with a
person less capable” (Talon). Talon relied on his inherent ability to facilitate a profound sense
“of knowing” providing self-assurance through his lived experiences. Whereas Alexis indicated
that persistence and patience were central processes throughout her transition.

“In terms of work,” a noteworthy quality is to “relish the idea of curiosity” (Katherine).
“Curiosity and wanting to be on the cusp of what is coming next,” is synonymous with education
experiences that are being provided (Katherine). The novice, as well as, the seasoned educator
“should always seek out or continuously seek how to become a better teacher. It is a continuum
of experiences and never an end result that is forever in motion” (Katherine).

Yet another quality is that of “being sensitive, not as a developmental therapist, but
realizing other people noticed things in me that I did not see in myself” (Jacob). This participant
became sensitive to his lived experiences,” which gave the ability to “live outside of my own
needs and remain sensitive to the needs of others” (Jacob). It is a challenging quality because
each individual needs something different, but the most successful teachers are a special breed
that plays a multitude of roles in a given day with fluidity and grace, while remaining true to
their own familiarities.

Ryan explains the worth of creativity which serves both the educator and the learner, “it’s
your creativity that is going to flourish lived experiences.” This quality drives an “upward
mobility and advancement of individual skill” (Ryan). It is difficult to assess creativity “a student can show their creativity not only by thinking, but they can put it in writing where I, as the teacher, can understand it” (Ryan). “Creativity is the driving force… it serves as a sense of accomplishment” (Ryan). Curiosity connects with learning experiences in two important ways. “It is a source of motivation and it’s powered by questions” (Ryan). The mundane events that continue day after day tend to weigh down how to approach capabilities, when “they become repetitive and a common place to us; it is the creative juices” that allows an educator to “keep fresh.”

Passion is a desired quality in every profession to achieve success; the ability to transfer “passion through experiences” will allow one to cultivate growth (Alexis). Good teachers will invest what they have experienced in “[what] they are teaching to make things more interesting and advance knowledge” (Cortney). This unique quality “requires a little more work, more imagination, and maybe even a little acting ability” (Talon). The best “teachers love opportunities to help instill and encourage passion” (Alexis). Excitement stirs when watching a “passionate teacher engage students who are eager to learn as a result of that teacher’s enthusiasm sketched from their experiences” (Talon).

The personal and professional strength in the participant’s unique qualities is a gift that comes quite naturally for some, while others have to work to achieve great teacher status. Yet the payoff is enormous, because distinguished educators “are mindful about losing the edge” (Ryan), they must embody and model the spirit of what they teach and rely on their unique qualities and abilities to pave the way.

Katherine suggests that “teachers can see their own work through their students’ eyes.” The ability to recognize their unique qualities supports the notion that the participants have not
lost their “personal connection” (Alexis) to what “it’s like to be a student” (Jacob). When learning goes well, a great educator ensures the students own their success; when teaching or learning fail, a distinguished educator will revisit their unique qualities to be an agent of change.

**Desire to be an agent of change.** Participants experienced their role as agents of change by embracing the interaction between teaching and learning (i.e., pedagogy). Katherine recognized her role as an agent of change through a commitment to her community through her teaching methods. She views the concepts and lessons learned in the classroom as the lifeblood to civic and community engagement. She notes, because of the “lack of diversity on campus, I introduce a discussion on disparities, issues related to race, and socioeconomic status,” and many other “painful issues.” She recognizes through past experiences these topics are sensitive, “but it is our responsibility to shed light on the difficult issues” capturing her perception of being an agent of change. This sentiment also was echoed by other participants. Jacob was able to see, “the bigger picture and beyond,” by empowering his students to carry on the knowledge he imparted to them in classroom into the communities they serve; Cortney embraced her role to “create a community” for learners; while Alexis’ role as an agent of change spawned a shared community perspective of lived experiences which, “greatly improved [her] capacity for the betterment of both her teaching approach and student progression”.

Ryan’s approach to teaching unequivocally originated from his desire to change personally. His sense of “rhythm in class,” was the template used to define his instructional experiences. Ryan’s approach to change is “timing”, this strategy must be appropriate because it reinforces connections that will bring about further development in students. Change is a shared journey of discovery within the participant’s lived experiences and supports the growth of the educator. The ability to change empowers each person to grow, “but one of the drawbacks…is
sometimes you are inclined to reveal something about yourself” leaving a sense of “vulnerability” (Ryan). Change is a continuous process that Ryan sees his role in facilitating.

Change is inevitable, education notwithstanding, the role of the distinguished educator is one that harnesses this concept and empowers students to embrace it. Cortney believes “at least in higher education… characteristics of students today are greatly changing the [teaching methodology] experience” (Cortney). As educators, “we seldom reflect [and ask] why would that have anything to do with my teaching?” (Cortney). This notion is vital as a distinguished educator, as perceptivity to change and adaptation is deep-seated to reflective preparedness. Maintaining this process enables one to “step back and look at [ones] own practice” (Cortney).

As previously indicated in this section, Alexis conformed to a specific teaching style, because she “didn’t want to stand out,” so she changed. In order to effectively act as an agent of change, an educator needs to readily adapt to a multitude of strategies, methodologies, and practices. Although hard work and knowledge (i.e., persistence) are essential, without the willingness to change, the educator will not be on the “cutting edge” (Talon). After a number of years, the study participants, as distinguished educators, have readily adapted, but also realize there is still more to the challenge. They are forever inspired to make adaptations that inspire others to pursue the path of professional growth as an educator and life-long learner.

**Global Perspective**

Meaningful insight was discovered through one-on-one interviews as to how novice educators proceed to distinction. Through textural and structural descriptions, three composite themes emerged informing this study: 1) role of external stimuli on reflective practice; 2) qualities used by distinguished educators; and 3) desire to be an agent of change. These themes
were analyzed under the lens of the theory of reflective practice (Smyth, 1989) and how it relates to the educators lived experiences.

Chapter 4 presented relevant major findings of this study. Chapter 5 will present interpretations of the data to answer the research question and explains how literature supports the conclusions drawn from this study.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Most of the literature concerning collegiate teaching addresses having mastery in the field of inquiry; however, very little research has explored the overall lived experience of distinguished educators as they transitioned from that of a novice teacher. This study does not attempt to resolve the path of how a novice teacher transitions into a distinguished collegiate educator, rather, it describes the experiences as perceived by the participants themselves. It was found that the path from novice instructor to distinguished educator spawns from the intense desire to ‘change’ within each participant. Smyth (1989) noted the need for college faculty to embrace tension, enabling critical confrontation of situations offering a vehicle of contribution of reflectiveness from lived experience. When one surrenders to an uncomfortable experience or allows the ‘dismantling’ of self, personally and professionally, it may incite emotion that can later be analyzed and better understood. Although the career-long evolution was unique to each participant, the self-identified-reflectiveness emerged mutual elements that strengthened the participant’s personal and professional life. From the interpretations of this description, several findings emerged unique to these participants. The findings reflect the literature and theoretical framework upon which it is built (Smyth, 1989).

The research question that guided this study:

What meaning do six distinguished educators ascribe to their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator?
Chapter Five presents the interpretation of the data gathered to answer the research question and explains how the literature supports the conclusion(s) drawn from this study. Implications and limitations are discussed as well as suggestions for practice and further research.

**Interpretations and Findings**

The findings of this study were consistent with Smyth’s (1989) reflective framework; for that reason, the discoveries are regarded as additive to empirical data that support educators aspiring to become distinguished collegiate educators through the process of reflective practice.

The time is upon us, the current model of pedagogy for the 21st century University is becoming obsolete (Tapscott & Williams, 2010). The mode of student mass production where the teacher is the “broadcaster” is increasingly failing to meet the needs of a new generation of students (Tapscott & Williams, 2010, p. 16). In response to a changing educational environment, some educators fear their static approach may not sustain them, therefore it is essential that we understand what will keep them relevant and receptive to change. It has been found that they need to abandon traditional pedagogy practices and discover themselves, engage in reflective practice and tailor their own pedagogical identity (Tapscott & Williams, 2010).

By means of storytelling, participants in this study revealed their struggles, accomplishments and their passion to be an agent of change as they progressed from novice to distinguished educator. The independent journey of discovery for each participant was by no means without trial and tribulation, but their sustaining ability to dismantle, reconstruct and change is significant to the transition process from novice to distinction.
Yet another essential structure of a distinguished educator is to be cognizant of time, but in order to be cognizant, the educator must first become aware of its importance (Riseborough & Poppleton, 1991). Possibly the scariest words uttered by a teacher, ‘I have no time to think’ would have terrified the ivory tower and student of the past. But in today’s pandemonium, the words truly do not scare any longer because the phrase is commonplace and the sensation is all too familiar (Lee, 2005). It is not that educators are unproductive; actually they are astoundingly productive. Educators produce, make decisions, and write proposals. But, in some ways, the productivity is the problem. Something is lost in an environment of manic productivity: learning (Bergman, 2012). It is rare to analyze experiences thoughtfully, contemplate the views of others carefully, and evaluate how the outcomes of decisions should affect future choices. Those processes take time. They require one to slow down, but the way in which the faculty role is structured typically does not build in time for this process (Lee, 2005). As a result, reflectiveness is lost which limits growth of an educator (Banta & Blaich, 2011; Reder, 2007; Sorcinelli, 2007; Schön, 1983; Smyth, 1989; Van Manen, 1977).

Pedagogical individuality is intrinsically connected to the construction of a distinguished educator. This "[personal] framework results from the reflective and meaningful interactions between the individual teacher and the social, cultural and structural working conditions constituting his/her job context(s)” (Kelchtermans, 2009, p.257). The significant themes that the participants describe when discussing their own style in the development as a distinguished educator are related to self-assurance, admitting mistakes, and then learning from them and inspiring confidence and empowering others. The explanations of how literature supports the conclusions drawn from this study are presented through the identification of three major themes 1) vulnerability; 2) time to reflect; 3) owning identity.
Contribution to Theory

Conclusions

“Hard is trying to rebuild yourself, piece by piece, with no instruction book, and no clue as to where all the important bits are supposed to go.” - Nick Hornby

Conclusion 1: Dismantle and rebuild. Distinguished educators do not distress vulnerability, they adapt and unlearn.

Describe. The educators in this study indicated that throughout their careers they continuously unveiled the fullness of who they are, willingly yielding to the reaction of others. One of the most difficult places to dwell is the land of vulnerability. Yet, the most intimate way of thinking became known because they permitted dismantling of self in order to reveal the good, bad and ugly of their teaching ability. Educators, like every other being, long for meaningful friendships and relationships but the fear of judgment, rejection and/or abandonment, many times outweighs the risk of exposure of true connection with oneself.

Inform. Many teachers spend their entire careers building status, tenure, and recognition (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2001), which never justly provide a place of true connection, thus robbing pedagogical harmony. The participants brought to light that most people find it easier to commit to other people and harder to commit to themselves. Riley and Roach (2006) support this notion by implying that every teacher needs to sense growth and feel the excitement of new possibilities.

Confront. The aim of pedagogical dismantling is the attempt to teach oneself new patterns of behavior and social functioning as well as reconstruct learned competence through lived experiences (Russell, Russell, Kaur, Nair, & Darilin, 2012). Society does little to recognize educators are learners as well. In most instances, college faculty are identified as public servants
expected to have advanced knowledge and mastery of content (Shim & Roth, 2007).

Unpretentiously, the participants of this inquiry accept society’s identity; however they erected yet another identity, that of a reflective learner. The confrontation process demonstrated by the participants concurs with Smyth’s (1989) framework suggesting educators that actively reflect enable their ability to sort out practices that have been firmly embedded and not easily dislodged.

**Reconstruct.** Most helpful to the adult learner is the ability to reflect on knowledge gained from past experiences and relate these familiarities to theories and concepts being addressed in the present (Houle, 1996; Jarvis, 2004; Knowles, et al., 2011; Merriam, 2008). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) further accentuate the educator’s ability to focus on planning, whereby, adults, “undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills” (p. 9). Once a learner has engaged in the learning process, it “always leads to relearning, which is often more challenging” than the initial knowledge achieved (Wink, 2005, p. 18). Reflective learners often shift their patterns of thinking (Clark, 1993; Smyth, 1989) in order to connect relearning with past experiences. These educators were far enough along the relearning curve to understand ideas generated are comprehensive and applicable to various aspects of their own world (Jarvis, 2004). Learning and relearning prepared them for unlearning, which is most demanding (Wink, 2005).

**Summary.** The ability for the participant to deconstruct learning patterns is central to one’s ability to transition philosophy, assumptions, and beliefs that have been established to the inner consciousness as real and true (Dede, 2005; Wink, 2005). The educators spoke of the uneasiness of unlearning learned certainties (Dede, 2005; Wink, 2005), but it is this uneasiness that widens plausible “images that rationalize” (Weick, 2005, p.62). Through internal
susceptibility, distinguished educators completely bypass defense mechanisms securing a sense of harmony from self-motivation, self-discipline and personal integrity.

“Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.”
- William Penn

**Conclusion 2: It’s time: Reflectiveness.**

**Describe.** The path to distinction was revealed through reflective stories from the participants. All participants of this inquiry self-identified the exercise of reflective practice throughout their career. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) stated that reflective practice of lived experiences lead to a new conceptual perspective or understanding. The authors discuss the elements of learning, as well as, involvement of the self, by stating, “Reflection is a forum of response of the learner to experience” (Boud et al., 1985, p.18).

**Inform.** Reflection from the perspective of a physicist is the ability to change direction at an interface between two different media so that it can return to the medium from which it originated (Mezirow, 1998). Another mode of reflection is through acoustics when one hears an echo or when a mirror exhibits a specular reflection so an individual can see an image of oneself. In academia, according to Boud (1985), effective learning will not occur unless you reflect. To fully embrace the art of reflection, one must think of a particular moment in time, consider the thought, revisit the thought several times and only then will insight expand into different aspects of that situation (1985). While effective teachers often think about their practice, distinguished educators adapt to the reflective process of their experiences to strengthen their professional and personal life. Similar to metacognition, the word “reflection” implies thinking about thinking.
With regard to the participants, reflection lead to greater self-awareness, this in turn evolved their meaning-making, rendering it absolutely pertinent for the educators to identify areas for improvement and growth both in a personnel and professional context.

**Confront.** The ‘time’ reserved to reflect is most important in terms with identification of applications that have worked well and reinforced good practice (Banta & Blaich, 2011; Boud et al., 1985; Mezirow, 1998; Reder, 2007; Schön, 1983; Smyth, 1989; Sorcinelli, 2007; Van Manen, 1977). How true it is, to wish for more time, but in this instance the participants did not squander the scarcity of time. If time is something to spend, then most likely, spending a lot of it with very little to show lends to frustration. Conversely, one may want to save time instead of spend it, which often denotes rushing through tasks providing the sense of accomplishment in small increments. Unfortunately, if rushed, what is actually accomplished may not truly be the end goal.

**Reconstruct.** This was not true for the participants, instead time was of the essence, and they preferred to invest their time wisely, carefully opting for time to reflect on their lived experiences. By investing time to reflect, an essential facet of Smyth’s (1989) reflection framework, the distinguished educators gave the use of their time a greater long-term value. It is overwhelmingly supported that reflection is an integral part of pedagogical practice, but ‘time’ is necessary to develop this skill (Smyth, 1989).

**Summary.** Reflective practice is not a process that can be rushed, the educators were cognizant that time moves forward and cannot be saved for later use. The long term values of the decisions made by the educators were evident throughout the discussions; they were successful because they understood the precious commodity of ‘time’ which maximized their
reflective investment. Thus the distinguished educators learned from the practice of reflectiveness, willingly setting aside time to engage in the process which was the agent that brought about change.

“Identity is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.”
-Charles Taylor

**Conclusion 3: Identity security: Distinguished educators find comfort by means of owning their identity.**

**Describe.** Distinguished educators found comfort in their independent identity which was generated from lived experiences. Development of their identity originated when the educators, humbled to vulnerability, gave ‘time’ its due process, which enabled transformation. This transformation furnished reassurance that was essential when supporting the educator in the stand of identity independence.

**Inform.** Struggles with personal and professional identity have been explored over the decades (e.g., race, ethnicity, cultural, adolescent and educator). The following premise supports the previous allegation: “good teaching cannot be reduced to techniques; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teachers” (Palmer, 2010, p.10). Dialogue surrounding unique identities unveiled tremendous perseverance and resilience of the participants and was indicated as the foundational strength for teaching excellence.

**Confront.** The challenge described by the participants was that great teaching is not just a deep understanding of content, but an equally deep understanding of students, society and oneself. Their pedagogical styles are far from traditional educators; their methodological
approach is atypical and forever evolving to match the needs of students while staying true to their identity.

Reconstruct. For these participants, traditional teaching practices were not the norm; their aim was not to develop their weaknesses, but to encourage their strengths and talents (Liesveld & Miller, 2005). In fact, the underlying similarity of all great teachers is that they are able to capitalize on their talents and develop their strengths (Liesveld & Miller, 2005). By means of self-security, their uniqueness erected from multiple lived experiences, eventually morphed into their own pedagogical identity. In contrast to society’s pressure to conform to an educational standard of practice, the distinguished educators in this study resisted conformity to stay on the cusp of society while staying true to self.

Summary. The participants exhausted their experiences of living to help create partnerships in the classroom, collaborating with the underlying truth that each student has a naturally effective way of learning which inspires them to find their individuality. Capable of taking a stand, the educators did not emulate or replicate, give-in to pressures of the ivory tower or transition into what others sought of them. Rather, they deciphered their options, risked humiliation, and pursued opportunities to eagerly transition from novice to distinction.

Contribution to Practice

It must be noted that many of the stories are compiled with inferences of the responsibility to build socially responsible thinkers for a world that is constantly changing. Among the many diverse learning methods discussed, at their heart is the philosophy of always learning and learning in all ways; this simple principle embodies and drives the educator as a life-long learner.
In addition to educators as life-long learners, implications for the general population come from this study. How society thinks about learning affects activities of daily living and pose questions of sense-making about routine decisions. When people, regard themselves to be learners, and for all practical purposes ‘the educator’, an ambiance of empowerment through quality questioning and inclusion is undertaken. Society affirms parents and teachers are the shepherds of education and for everyday reality (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). As a result, educators need to recognize and capitalize on this opportunity to ‘live the talk’; there is nothing more powerful than to have others observe an individual’s actions or behaviors and mirror them as their own. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “Become the change you wish to see in the world.” And, it will happen.

Implications for practice not only closely resonate with the researcher, but with society as a whole. Reflective practice should not be a linear path that begins at an elementary stage and ends after postsecondary education. The continuum of reflection is infinite, as educators; the application of this process has the capability to unlock the paradox of distinction. The data revealed the necessity for reflective practice to be implemented as part of teacher training. Reflective practice affords the opportunity in both novice and seasoned educators, as well society as whole, the ability to connect with, make sense, adapt, and transition to distinction.

Findings of this study align with the 2020 presumption that pedagogy will move from a culture of participation to one of creation, where participation is still valued, but roles will have shifted to emphasize a reflective learner. Institutions of higher education are life-affirming organizations for educators, student learners, their families, and the broader community. As an ongoing process, reflective practice engages global society, whereby seasoned and distinguished educators (the “insiders”) and innovators on the periphery, all help to shape the future of
distinctive learning.

**Summary.** Clearly, the findings support the notion that these educators are lifetime learners who are established as the principal agent on a path that builds socially responsible thinkers for a world that is constantly changing. In addition, results of this study dovetail nicely with both empirical data (Boud et al., 1985; Hatton & Smith, 1995) and theory (Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1987; Smyth, 1989) signifying reflection is “activated by the awareness of a need or disruption in usual practice” (Mann, Gordon, MacLeod, 2009, p. 597). Specific to practical application for collegiate educators, the results unite nicely with Smyth’s (1989) reflective frame that indicates, “a teacher who has been able to harness the reflective process…can begin to act on the world in a way that amounts to changing it” (p. 7). As such, the challenge for educators is to recognize their relationship as an agent of change, and apply this "practical knowledge" to design and create learning opportunities. By taking up this challenge, we as educators, reflect on the starting point of the change process and become the agent of change through pedagogical practice.

**Limitations**

A limitation of this inquiry is the ability to generalize results to other populations. However, this was not the intent of this study. This purposeful research was exploratory and tailored to understand the in-depth experience of six collegiate educators who transitioned from novice to distinction. Although this qualitative study provided in-depth insight about their lived experiences, it does not provide assurance that findings can transfer across individuals or groups.

The shear nature of qualitative research has an ineptness component of duplication. Because qualitative research heavily depends on the researcher's knowledge and interpretation, it is uncommon that another researcher replicates the same qualitative study and achieves the same
results. For the reason that different researchers make different decisions about interpretation, another researcher may ask interview questions differently, or might even change the design halfway through the study based on perceptions of the participants' needs. This integral qualitative variation can radically change the results of a study and make study results of collegiate educators’ experiences inconsistent even if the same approach was implemented. Thus, future studies may add to the insight we have gained into educators' experiences, but may not produce the same results.

The final limitation of this study was that it relied on self-description of participants' experiences. While the lived experiences discussed were rich, participants were required to reflect back a number of years to recall aspects of their personal and professional life, thus recall bias is possible. The time allotted between interviews offered ample time to reflect, but it is still possible that participants did not include a description of significant events and reflections either by intent or because they were not able to draw upon those memories and perspectives that existed as they progressed in their teaching.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This exploratory research is only one of many possible approaches to the study of the progression of novice instructor to distinguished collegiate educator. Consideration also should be given to research that investigates relationships among transitions of non-tenured, probationary status and tenured educators. For example, it can be argued that teachers who have received tenure status could lack the motivation to perform well in the classroom (Emmerik & Sanders, 2004). In addition, teachers in probationary status are pressured to achieve institutional requirements (i.e., publications, grants, etc.), which seem to have little emphasis on effective teaching, but rather, weigh heavily on scholarly advancement.
Research also could be restructured longitudinally to study a transition process over a longer period of time. For example, interviewing individuals at the transition point and then following them through the entire transition over several years may provide even deeper insight of lived experiences, the relationship between learning and development, and the adaptation process. A central aspect of reflective practice is reflective journals (Thorpe, 2004). At no time during the interview process did the participants discuss journaling. Journaling, the most accurate method for recording successes and failures, provides valuable insight about actual behavior and emotions (Thorpe, 2004). If the participants would have faithfully written down their lived experiences, their answers would be absolute, without excuses or clever rationalizations clouding their view. This method would have been beneficial in this study because it gives an honest reflection of a direct path while quietly identifying areas for improvements in order to make positive changes.

There are numerous studies on the subject of professional development for pre-professionals and student teachers (Armstrong, 2007; Brookfield, 1995; Yager, 2009). It is arguable, however, that most tertiary systems, which are facing many other challenges, are reluctant to implement complex strategies for seasoned educators. It would be advantageous to seek an institution that has framed a professional development program specifically for seasoned educators and inquire on the subject of sustained success.

The use of a phenomenological approach based on the theory by Moustakas (1994) proved effective in defining the experience of transition in very rich terms. The model demonstrated the use of, and interactions between, different ways of transitioning from novice to distinction. Based on the results and richness of the participants’ stories elicited from this study, it would seem that the phenomenological lens is worth exploring further. For example, future
research in the area of contextualization could shed light on a new vein of inquiry. As mentioned in the limitations, more could be learned from a broader range of participants; specifically, what were the influential transition processes from the perspective of faculty developers? How do lived experiences differ from educators that have received this prestigious award with limited teaching experience? Participants from this inquiry had no less than 23 years of experience in tertiary education. Would research differ if the educators achieved distinction earlier in their career?

**Final Thoughts**

The desire for teaching actually comes before teaching; the illustration that follows is of a young man seeking wisdom from Socrates. It provides an excellent example as to how the genuine desire for teaching is the source of necessity to succeed as a distinguished educator.

A proud young man came to Socrates asking for knowledge; he walked up to the muscular philosopher and said, “O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge.” Socrates recognized a pompous numbskull when he saw one. He led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, “What do you want?” “Knowledge, O wise Socrates,” said the young man with a smile. Socrates put his strong hands on the man’s shoulders and pushed him under. Thirty seconds later Socrates let him up. “What do you want?” he asked again. “Wisdom,” the young man sputtered. “O great and wise Socrates.” Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed, thirty-five, Forty. Socrates let him up. The man was gasping. “What do you want, you man?” Between heavy, heaving breaths the fellow wheezed, “Knowledge, O wise and wonderful...” Socrates slammed him under again Forty seconds passed. Fifty. “What do you want?” “Air!” the young man screeched. “I need air!” “When you want knowledge as you have just wanted air, then you will have knowledge.” (Littleton, 1989)
REFERENCES


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Appendix A

Dear Faculty Member:

You are being invited to participate in a research study about the ability of collegiate educators to make sense and learn from lived classroom experiences. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore reflective practices and pedagogical approaches of collegiate educators who progressed from novice instructors to distinguished educators as recognized by the faculty and students at their respected institutions. Through this exploration, perceptions will surface as to how you, as a learner, made meaning of your experiences from novice to distinction and what learned practices were perceived as advantageous within the classroom environment.

By means of phenomenology, (Moustakas) this inquiry is intended to explore in-depth occurrences in a higher education environment that emerge from one-on-one interviews of faculty using the constructs of reflective theory (Smyth, 1989) which accentuate the ability for one not only to theorize and describe one’s practice, but have the adeptness to subject those theories to form questioning and examination that establishes something about your legitimacy. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education by Mrs. Kimberly Wise from the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a full-time faculty member that was a recipient of prestigious nobility in your respective filed of education from your higher educational institution or national organization.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will clarify how faculty can advance their pedagogy and careers in a higher educational setting. This knowledge will enable educators to better serve their learning needs and narrow the existing gap between distinguished and novice educators.

This study will draw the initial sample from higher educational institutions in the northeastern region as a way to bind the sample from including all school possibilities. Within these parameters, the initial interview with each educator will be face-to-face in a 30 to 45 minute timeframe. As a second means the researcher may use Skype® as an alternative method if face-to-face interviewing is not an option. The second interview will be carried out over the telephone or Skype® and will be approximately 15 to 30 minutes in length. The timeframe between the first and second interview will adhere to Seidman’s guidelines between 4 to 7 days giving the participants the opportunity to reflect on the open discussion that influenced their educational career. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.
The interviews will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed verbatim. Every interview will be audio recorded using a Sony ICD PX820 digital voice recorder to capture accuracy in recording the responses. The use of a recording device is justified in this study because the details of thought and language used by the participants are critical to data analysis.

Finally, each participant will be expected to member check, whereby each participant will receive their individual textural and structural description to verify precision and allow for alteration where necessary.

The data collected will be confidential. I will not collect personal addresses or information; I will guarantee absolute anonymity. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Our Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By responding to this email from wisetrainer@yahoo.com you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason. If you choose to decline participation simply discards the email or feel free to respond notifying me that you are respectfully declining participation in this study.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Kimberly Wise at k.wise@neu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115, Email: irb@neu.edu, Tel. 617-373-7570. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wise MS, LAT
Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Institution: Northeastern University; 360 Huntington Avenue; Boston, Massachusetts 02115

Interviewee: Distinguished Collegiate Educator

Interviewer: Kimberly Wise

Date: December 5, 2012

Location of Interview: TBA

Introductory Protocol

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about an experience of a distinguished educator recipient. My research project focuses on how distinguished educators describe their experiences of transitioning from a novice instructor to a distinguished collegiate educator. Through this study, I hope to gain further insight into the experience of individuals as they have grown as instructors.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio tape our conversation today. I will also be taking written notes during the interview. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only a pseudonym will be used when quoting from the transcripts. With your permission, the tapes will be transcribed by a transcriptionist, but only a pseudonym will be used to label the tapes. I will be the only one privy to data and the tapes will be destroyed after they are transcribed.

To meet our human subject’s requirements at the university, you must sign the form I have with me. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Do you have any questions about the interview process or the consent form?

I have planned this interview to last no longer than 90 minute. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

Interview Introduction

1. Please describe one of your early life experiences that led you to the field of education.
2. Describe a key experience you believe influenced your pedagogy.
3. Please describe as far back as you can remember continuing up until the present time your best classroom experience.
   a. How did this impact your approach to teaching?
4. Reflect back to when you were a student; describe a memorable experience with a college educator.
5. Reconstruct a challenge that you had as an instructor.
   a. Describe, in as much detail as possible, how the challenge impacted your professional career.
6. Describe a successful experience (personal and/or professional) that attributed to the enhancement of your ability to teach.
7. Describe your methods, if any, you use to evaluate your own teaching.
8. Describe, in as much detail as possible, the advice you would give to a novice teacher who is seeking to enhance their instruction.

The second interview questions and additional probing and clarifying questions are based upon the first interview responses.

1. Given what you have re-constructed in these interviews, how do you understand your transition from novice to distinguished collegiate educator?
2. Given what you have re-constructed in these interviews, how do you see yourself as an educator in the future?
3. Where do you see preparation for collegiate educators in the future?
Appendix C

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Kimberly Wise
Title: COLLEGIATE EDUCATORS: FROM NOVICE TO DISTINCTION

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

I am inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a full-time faculty member that was a recipient of prestigious nobility in your respective filed of education from your higher educational institution or national organization.

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore reflective practices and pedagogical approaches of collegiate educators who progressed from novice instructors to distinguished educators as recognized by the faculty and students at their respected institutions. Through this exploration, the principal investigator hopes that perceptions surface as to how educators made meaning of their experiences. Further matters of exploration include reflective practices and how faculty gains a deeper, more permanent learning from their experiences. More specifically, upon self-reflection how faculty, as adult learners, look to their experiences, connect with their feelings and re-examining their lived experiences.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask that you participate in a one-on-one interview. A semi-structured interview process will be employed; each participant will answer the questions of which they will speak about their particular experiences as a collegiate educator. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.

The interviews will be recorded, with your permission, and then transcribed verbatim. Every interview will be audio recorded using a Sony ICD PX820 digital voice recorder to capture accuracy in recording the responses. The use of a recording device is justified in this study because the details of thought and language used by the participants are critical to data analysis.

The audio-tapes will be transcribed to ensure accurate reporting of the information that you provide. The transcriber will sign a form stating that she will not discuss any item on the tape with anyone other than the researcher. No one’s name will be asked or revealed during individual interviews. The audio-tapes will be stored in locked files before and after being transcribed. Tapes will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcriptions.

Finally, each participant will be asked to member check, whereby each participant will receive their individual textural and structural description to verify precision and allow for alteration where necessary.
For this study, participants were strategically and purposefully selected due to the case richness. The researcher selected certain participants to be included in samples, based on study purposes. For example, a researcher selected a panel of experts with particular characteristics that will enhance the understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Where will the study take place and how much time?

Interviews will be conducted in a relaxed setting of the interviewee’s choice. The initial interview with each educator will be face-to-face in a 30 to 45 minute timeframe. As a second means the researcher may use Skype® as an alternative method if face-to-face interviewing is not an option. The second interview will be carried out over the telephone or Skype® and will be approximately 15 to 30 minutes in length.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

Identities will be kept anonymous, so there is very little risk associated with this research. The interview does not ask any personal information that could damage the participant’s social, professional, or financial situation.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

There is no direct benefit from this research. However, the information learned from this study will identify the key challenges and pressures facing faculty members and their institutions, and what is seen as potential new directions for the field of faculty development, is most important. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to have a critical understanding of how their colleagues have advanced their pedagogy and career in a higher educational setting. This knowledge will enable educators to better serve their learning needs and narrow the existing gap between distinguished and novice educators.

Who will see the information about me?

Your identity as a participant in this study will not be known. For data recording, coding, and analysis, participants will be referred to as number one, two etcetera. Although the PI will have access to the participants personal information i.e. first/last name, email, telephone numbers etc. she will restrain from calling participants by their name during interview process.

Recorded audiotapes, researchers’ observations and notes throughout the interviews will be secured with access only available to the researcher and transcriber. Raw data will be kept on my home computer accessible only to me and locked when not in use. Data will be stored until the data analysis is complete, and it is no longer necessary to maintain data files. The signed informed consent according to the institutional review board (IRB) will be maintained in original paper form for three years by the principal investigator and stored in a locked file cabinet located in 480 Log Road, Smithfield, Rhode Island.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as Northeastern University or [FDA, OHRP, sponsor] to see this information.

If I do not want to take part in this study, what choices do I have?

The participant’s option is to not participate.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?

No direct benefit to any participant.
Due to the research content, no special preparation is available if the participants suffer harm from the interviews. In addition, there is no special arrangement made for compensation or for payment for treatment solely because of your participation in this research.

**Can I stop my participation in the study?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have [as a student, employee, etc].

**Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?**

Kimberly Wise, 480 Log Road, Smithfield, RI, 02917 wisetrainer@yahoo.com; Tova Sanders, Northeastern University, Boston, Ma 02115 T.sanders@neu.edu

**Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115 tel. 617-373-7570, email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

**Will I be paid or my participation?**

N/A

**Will it cost me anything to participate?**

This depends on the interviewee’s choice of setting for the interviews. If the participant’s choice is to travel, parking and fuel will be the responsibility of the participant.

**I agree to take part in this research**

__________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part    Date

__________________________________________
Printed name of person above

__________________________________________      _______________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent    Date

__________________________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix D

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Kimberly Wise
Title: COLLEGIATE EDUCATORS: FROM NOVICE TO DISTINCTION

Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

I am asking you [name] to take part in a research study. The research collected will be one-on-one interviews. Every interview will be audio recorded using a Sony ICD PX820 digital voice recorder to capture accuracy in recording the responses. The use of a recording device is justified in this study because the details of thought and language used by the participants are critical to data analysis.

You are responsible to transcribe the audio-tapes to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided. You will not discuss any item on the tape with anyone other than the researcher. No one’s name will be asked or revealed during individual interviews. The audio-tapes will be stored in locked files before and after being transcribed. Tapes will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcriptions.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

Kimberly Wise, 480 Log Road, Smithfield, RI, 02917 wisetrainer@yahoo.com; Tova Sanders, Northeastern University, Boston, Ma 02115 T.sanders@neu.edu

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Will I be paid or my participation?

N/A

I agree to take part in this research

____________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part                  Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of person above