To the Graduate Council:
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Michelle Nicole Anderson entitled: "Thinking Inside the Box ― Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Ralph G. Brockett, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Mary F. Ziegler

Katherine H. Greenberg

John C. Hungerford

Acceptance for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges
Vice Provost and Dean of
Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX – GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON HINDERED CREATIVITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Dr. Ralph G. Brockett, Major Professor

Michelle Nicole Anderson
May 2008

Copyright © 2008 by Michelle Nicole Anderson

All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

For their unconditional love, support, and encouragement,
this dissertation is dedicated to my family:
My mother, Emma L. Anderson
My father, Bruce O. Anderson
My brother, Bryce O. Anderson
and
My love, Tommy A. Taylor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation marks the culmination of an academic journey through the university system that has lasted nine years. My doctoral program has been a life-changing experience that was only made possible by the extraordinary kindness and support of some very special individuals who have helped me reach this point in my life.

First among these wonderful individuals are my mother Emma, my father Bruce, and my brother Bryce. Their constant love, support, and encouragement have been a never-ending source of happiness and comfort. Every day of my childhood my mother reminded me that there were no limits to the objectives I could attain in my life. She is the first woman I ever admired. She is my strength.

My father encouraged my artistic endeavors early in life by allowing me to sit next to him as he worked at his drawing board. He taught me how to see the differences in colors and to appreciate my imagination as only another artist could. He is my creativity.

My brother encouraged me to believe in myself and never give up. Without him, none of this would have been possible. He selflessly contributed countless hours to helping me edit, revise, and reword this dissertation to which I am eternally grateful. He is my inspiration.

I will always be thankful for having each of them in my life and for their love that continues to grow with time. They are truly the best family that God could have blessed me with.

I also owe more kindness than I could ever repay to Dr. Ralph Brockett. Meeting Ralph for the first time was like saying 'hello' again to an old friend. He is the most sincere, honest, and caring professor I have ever had the pleasure of working with. His words of encouragement and concern carried me through this entire process. With Ralph as my major professor, I knew I was never alone. He introduced me to the fascinating field of adult education and his enthusiasm for learning is an inspiration. I will always be grateful for the support and true friendship he has given me.

Dr. Mary Ziegler figures prominently in the completion of my doctoral degree as well. I have never ceased to be amazed at Mary's determination, work ethic, and intelligence. She has guided me through multiple research studies, presentations, and funding concerns for conferences to which I am extremely thankful. Her generosity towards students is unparalleled. I am grateful for the knowledge and guidance that she has shared with me over these past years.

Dr. Katherine Greenberg is also very deserving of much gratitude and recognition in the completion of the research in this dissertation. She offered outstanding advice and insight during this process that sharpened this research into focus. It was through the assistance of Kathy and her husband Neil that my own concept of creativity expanded and developed. Kathy has always impressed me with her directness and ability to communicate effectively. At the same time, she has the remarkable ability to truly listen to students and offer exactly the type of support they need to succeed. I will always admire her and I am grateful for her encouragement and advice.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. John Hungerford and Dr. Josephine Wade for being part of my doctoral committee. Both of these fine individuals have been models of professionalism. John's kindness and understanding during this process has been unforgettable. His friendship and support for my brother and myself is a blessing. Josephine's help and advice during my proposal and comprehensive examination were greatly appreciated.

I owe many thanks to the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy facilitated by Dr. Howard Pollio and Dr. Sandra Thomas. The group's accumulated wisdom, amazing insights, and strong commitment to phenomenology are remarkable. Their help and encouragement cannot be overstated.

I would also like to thank the participants of this study who represent a significant contribution to this research. Their lived experiences offer firsthand insight into the adult learning process of hindered creativity and have contributed so much to future research.

I also owe a sincere debt of gratitude to the Office of Informational Technologies for my graduate assistantship and computer training that will last me throughout my life. My chance to return to graduate school rested on being able to secure a university assistantship. The support and understanding offered by my supervisor, Ashley Barker, is part of the reason I was able to finish this degree. Thank you to everyone at OIT for being there for me.

Many thanks also to my lifelong best friend, Christina Stanhope. Her unconditional friendship and support has been a constant blessing in my life for over twenty years. Through endless emails and phone calls, she has encouraged me to continue and patiently waited for me to finish. She is one of a kind. She is my sister by choice and love.

Finally, I would like to thank many millions of times over, my love and my life partner, Tommy Taylor. His smile warms my heart and his laughter fills my thoughts. He has supported me through this journey with kindness and understanding that makes me believe. During the hard times that threatened my continuation with this program, it was his hours of editing assistance and endless hugs that protected and strengthened my drive to finish. It was the small things that you and Frida, our cat, have done for me that helped maintain my sanity. You are the best of me. I look forward to our life together that we have been waiting for so patiently.

As this passage on acknowledging assistance illustrates, there are many wonderful individuals to whom I owe a solid debt of gratitude for helping me complete this dissertation and the accompanying degree. I sincerely thank each and every one of you from my heart and may the blessing of support be returned twice fold upon you. I could not have done this without all of you, thank you dearly.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of adult graduate students who have had their creativity hindered in an educational context. The phenomenological method developed by Thomas and Pollio (2002) at the University of Tennessee was utilized to understand the essence of meaning and to gain an in-depth awareness into the experience of hindered creativity from an adult learner's perspective.

Participants in this study experienced having their creativity hindered in a variety of ways with a prolonged and multifaceted aftermath. The study was conducted with twelve adult graduate students from a state university. Utilizing phenomenology and transformative learning theory as the conceptual framework for the study, the data revealed three themes that stood out against the ground of the learners' mistrust of authority. A dynamic relationship between the professor and student within the academic box created the ground of the experience. Within the ground of the box participants experienced an initial mistrust of the professor who hindered their creativity. This mistrust dominated their experience and influenced their relationship with the professor and academia.

The mistrust was then interpreted by the participant to be either justified or unjustified depending upon the merit of the explanation provided by the professor upon the time of the hindrance. The outcomes of the hindered creativity were described by the participants through their changed mindsets of acceptance, cautiousness, and loss of confidence. Upon reflection of the experience, each participant offered his or her own

understanding of how the situation could have been handled differently so that the hindering could have been a positive learning experience.

These findings reveal highly individualized adult learning experiences laden with the potential for powerful outcomes and changes to the learner's creativity and identity. The hindrance of creativity brought to the educational setting influenced the future manifestation of creativity by the adult learners. Implications for practice include professors recognizing their implicit assumptions, power, and influence in relation to the adult learner. Careful considerations are required by the professor when creativity is going to be hindered. Further research recommendations are also included.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I 2
INTRODUCTION 2
Adult Learners 3
Creativity Research 5
The Starting Point – Personal Reflection 7
Statement of the Problem 10
Purpose of the Study 13
Research Question 14
Conceptual Framework 15
Qualitative Research Methodology 15
Phenomenology 17
Transformative Learning 23
Significance of the Study 27
Assumptions of the Study 29
Limitations of the Study 30
Definitions 30
Dissertation Synopsis 32

CHAPTER II 33
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 33
Defining Creativity 34
Approaches to Creativity 36
Mystical Approach 36
Psychodynamic Approach 37
Psychometric Approach 38
Cognitive Approach 39
Social-Personality Approach 40
Confluence Approach 41
Factors Influencing Creativity and Adult Education 43
Little 'c' and big 'C' Creativity 44
Comparing and Contrasting Creativity and Critical Thinking 47
Social and Cultural Influences 52
Development and Hindrance of Creativity 55
Identity and Creativity 60
The Environment and Creativity 62
Social Assumptions 65
Age Assumptions 67
The Relationship between Creativity and Transformative Learning 68
Summary 73

CHAPTER III 74
METHOD 74
Research Design 74
Phenomenology 75
Four Attributes of Existential Phenomenology 78
Body 79
Time 81
Others 83
World 85
Research Procedure 88
Opening Research Interview Question 89
Bracketing Interview 90
Analysis of the Bracketing Interview 94
Human Subjects Review Board 96
Pilot Study 97
Participants 97
Interviews 100
Data Analysis 104
Thematization 105
Participant Feedback 110
Data Quality 112
Reliability/Consistency 112
Validity/Trustworthiness 113
Generalizability/Transferability 114
Summary 115

CHAPTER IV 116
FINDINGS 116
Participant Synopses 117
Participant 1 – Eric 118
Participant 2 – Michael 119
Participant 3 – Cedric 120
Participant 4 – Ethan 122
Participant 5 – Christina 122
Participant 6 – Jerome 123
Participant 7 – Samantha 124
Participant 8 – Travis 125
Participant 9 – Krisnah 126
Participant 10 – John 127
Participant 11 – Mariah 127
Participant 12 – Becky 128
Participant Summary 129
The Ground of the Experience 129
The Box – The Ground of the Experience 131

Professors' Conventional Thinking 133
Professors' Control 136
The Box as Ground 140
Thematic Structure 141
Theme 1 – A Hard Thing to Deal With: The Interpretation 141
The Justified Interpretation 141
The Unjustified Interpretation 145
Theme 2 – Drawing a Line: The Outcomes 150
Outcome – Change 151
Outcome – Acceptance 154
Outcome- Cautiousness 156
Outcome – Loss 158
Theme 3 – A Meeting in the Middle: Handle Differently 161
The Overall Structure of Hindered Creativity 165
Participant Feedback to the Overall Structure 167
Summary 169

CHAPTER V 170
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 170
Summary of Findings 171
Discussion of Findings 173
The Ground of the Experience 173
The Box 173
Theme 1 – A Hard Thing to Deal With: The Interpretation 177
The Justified Interpretation 177
The Unjustified Interpretation 179
Theme 2 – Drawing a Line: The Outcomes 181
Outcome – Change 181
Outcome – Acceptance 182
Outcome- Cautiousness 185
Outcome – Loss 186
Theme 3 – A Meeting in the Middle: Handle Differently 187
Phenomenology 189
Transformative Learning Theory 191
Hindered Creativity 197
Implications for Practice 199
Recommendations for Future Research 201
Conclusion 203
Personal Reflection 204

REFERENCES 206

APPENDICES 235
Appendix A: Bracketing Interview 236

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter 247
Appendix C: Informational Flyer 248
Appendix D: Informed Consent Form 249
Appendix E: Demographic Data Form 251
Appendix F: Research Team Member's Pledge of Confidentiality 252
Appendix G: Potential Ground and Themes 253
Appendix H: Original Sketch of Overall Structure 264
Appendix I: Participant Feedback Email 265

VITA 267

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 The "Tool" Skills 51
Table 2 Participant Information 130
Table 3 Creativity and the Brain 183

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The Figure/Ground Relationship 87
Figure 2 Image of Thematization 108
Figure 3 Detail of Thematization 108
Figure 4 Phenomenological Research Process 111
Figure 5 The Overall Structure of Hindered Creativity 166
Figure 6 Creativity Poster Image 184
Figure 7 Detail of Creativity Right Hemisphere 184
Figure 8 Transformation During Interview 195

"This is the secret of helping others…In order to help another effectively I must understand what he understands. If I do not know that, my greater understanding will be of no help to him…Instruction begins when you put yourself in his place so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it."

- Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the field of adult education the growth and development of graduate students' experiences of creativity is recognized because of two reasons: there are more returning non-traditional adults in graduate level programs now than ever before (National Center for Educational Statistics-NCES, 2007) and creativity can be viewed as a way of encouraging new developments, technologies, and progress in society and the world.

Non-traditional, older, returning adult learners are increasing in number in undergraduate and graduate school programs (Kasworm & Wlodkowski, 2003; Kasworm & Hemmingsen, 2007). For example, between the years of 1976-2005 there was a 64% increase in graduate school enrollment overall and an 18% increase during 2000-2005 alone (NCES, 2007). In 2016, it is projected that adult student enrollments will increase 35% in master degrees and 32% in doctoral degrees with a 54% increase of female students (NCES, 2006). If the projected enrollment continues, that would mean that there could be more than 2.6 million graduate students in colleges and universities in the United States by 2016 (NCES, 2007).

This growing adult student population ranges in age from the mid-twenties to early seventies and they bring with them a wide variety of life experiences (Kasworm, 2003; Bash, 2003; Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). Kasworm (2003) posits "These adults are the growing student population of lifelong learners who seek out collegiate institutions

and student services that support learning situated within complex adult lives. Adult students' needs and goals are equally important but somewhat different from their younger colleagues' because they are in a different place in life and view the world and their future differently" (p.4). Therefore, adults often learn by integrating their formal knowledge with their personal experiences.

Adult Learners

In spite of their growing prominence in colleges and universities, non-traditional adult learners are typically underrepresented in educational research (Banta, 1993; Horn, 1996, Broekemier, 2002; Ashburn, 2007). To better understand this concept it is appropriate to define what is meant by adult and adult learners in relation to adult education. Knowles (1984) offers four ways of defining adult [italics in original]:

> First, the *biological* definition: we become adult biologically when we reach the age at which we can reproduce – which at our latitude is early adolescence. Second, the *legal* definition: we become adult legally when we reach the age at which law says we can vote, get a driver's license, marry without consent, and the like. Third, the *social* definition: we become adult socially when we start performing adult roles, such as the role of full-time worker, spouse, parent, voting citizen, and the like. Finally, the *psychological* definition: we become adult psychologically when we arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for our own lives, of being self-directing (p.55).

For the purposes of this study, an adult is defined as one who is responsible for one's own life and is above the age of eighteen years old. Since this study is examining non-traditional adult learners, the participants' ages range from twenty-five years and above. In terms of defining an adult learner, Cranton (1989) suggests "A learner is any

individual who engages in educational activities for the purposes of acquiring knowledge, skills, or values in any area" (p.4). Jarvis (1987) submits that in terms of understanding adult learners [italics in original]:

> …the term *adult* refers to a social status rather than a biological age, since in some countries in the world adulthood is achieved at younger biological ages than others. This point does demonstrate the significance of recognizing that learning does not occur in social isolation and that the occurrence of different learning may be the result of social and cultural pressures rather than biological differences alone (p.11).

In a similar comparison, Kasworm and Marienau (1997) state that adult learners:

> …enter or reenter college anywhere and anytime between their mid-twenties and their seventies. They are likely to have attended two or three other institutions of higher learning, as well as to have participated in varied instructional delivery systems. These adults bring with them a rich tapestry of past schooling, formal learning through work or community, and experiential learning in various settings. Thus, the making of meaning is often interconnected with a sense of themselves as adults, as learners, and as social citizens (p. 6).

Even though there are more non-traditional adult learners in graduate programs, there have only been a limited number of empirical research studies on this demographic. By the word empirical I mean research that is shown to be grounded in some form of data and is not based on theory or considered theoretical (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003). The research in this dissertation specifically addresses this population of adult learners and their experiences of hindered creativity in educational contexts. Since learners bring with them multiple forms of experience that often influence the learner's frame of reference for understanding and comprehension (Knowles, 1980; Dewey, 1938; Stein,

1992), this study will focus on utilizing the experiences of adults for deeper understandings of hindered creativity.

Creativity Research

Within adult education the adult learner's experience can hold great promise for the development of creativity and also according to Torrance (1995), the hindrance of creativity as well. Torrance questioned whether educational systems lower creativity through the use of external evaluation processes. This contrasted with the research of Rodgers (1959) who found that many adult students seek evaluation within themselves and not others. Yet within an educational context, Ochse (1990) perceived Rogers as advocating that education could therefore have a negative influence upon creativity because it imposes external standards and evaluation. In addition, Rogers (1959) states that the educational systems "tend to turn out conformists, stereotypes, individuals whose education is 'completed' rather than freely creative and original thinkers" (p.69). Similarly, Kraft (2005) argues:

> Research suggests that we start our young lives as creativity engines but that our talent is gradually repressed. Schools place overwhelming emphasis on teaching children to solve problems correctly, not creatively. This skewed system dominates our first 20 years of life: tests, grades, college admission, degrees and job placements demand and reward targeted logical thinking, factual competence, and language and math skills – all purviews of the left brain. The propensity for convergent thinking becomes increasingly internalized, at the cost of creative potential. To a degree, the brain is a creature of habit; using well-established neural pathways is more economical than elaborating new or unusual ones. Additionally, failure to rain creative faculties allows those neural connections to wither. Over time it becomes harder for us to overcome thought barriers (p. 19).

Given that educational systems are possibly hindering creativity in adult learners, why should adult educators be concerned? Sternberg (2007) suggests "Our society does not only need people who can analyze and memorize well; even more important are citizens and leaders who are also creative, practical, and wise" (p. 5). Creativity holds potential for new discoveries in multiple domains and could also be considered fundamental for individuals and societies in order to advance and influence the future (Torrance, 1995). Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) assert, "Creativity is an integral part of any understanding of human education and psychology" (p.14). Creativity, however, is difficult to define and often changes within different contexts making it challenging to research effectively.

Vygotsky (1930) wrote that creativity is essential to the very existence of humanity and society, that creativity is necessary for our processes of the consciousness and unconsciousness. By linking creativity and imagination, he posited that every act of imagination begins with the accumulation of experience. This view of creativity corresponds to Guilford's (1968) statement that creativity was "key to education in its fullest sense and to the solution of mankind's most serious problems" (p.147).

Remarkably, creativity has not been clearly defined in most contexts of its use in articles and research journals. Multiple misunderstandings of what topic in relation to creativity (by whom, for whom, and in what context) have developed due to this lack of clarification. Creativity research has given rise to controversy across domains because of this issue (Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999). When creativity is discussed without a definition

provided to help the reader understand the concept, assumptions could be made that may be inaccurate or misleading.

Creativity has been defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "inventive, imaginative; able to create; bring into existence; originate" (Abate, 1998, p.132). It has also been defined as the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (Lubart, 1994; Ochse, 1990; Sternberg, 1988) in a social context (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1995, 1996). For the purpose of this study, creativity is defined as something that is new, novel, or innovative in a social context. The social context for this study will focus on the current educational setting of a state university in the Southeast United States. A more comprehensive definition of creativity will be addressed in Chapter II.

The Starting Point – Personal Reflection

The main starting point for this research developed through reflection on my own experiences with creativity in adult education. For my Master of Fine Arts degree at New York University, I was awarded a teaching assistantship with the painting and drawing department under Maureen Gallace, a well-established artist in the world of fine art. Gallace used an open teaching strategy that allowed students to decide what the subject matter of their paintings would be about, the size of the work, and the critical theory or potential meaning behind it. However, she was traditional in her beliefs of how paint should and should not be mixed, how to apply it, and why a student should be instructed to use certain paints over others depending on their style. Needless to say, I have been

indoctrinated with these same traditions in my undergraduate career and graduate career as well.

As Gallace's assistant teacher, I was able to observe firsthand how students in an undergraduate advanced art class were taught and how they expressed themselves in their own learning and art. As I made my way around the studio room one day, I noticed one of the best students in the class mixing together oil paint and acrylic paint. "Don't!" I said frantically to her. "Don't mix oil and acrylic together. Oil has an oil base to it and acrylic has a plastic base to it and the two chemicals repel each other when mixed and your paintings will eventually crumble off the canvas when it dries."

The student, Sara, froze with fear. I recognize that I assumed it was fear, but it had all the telltale signs- her eyes widened, her paint-covered fingers started to tremble, and her brush slowly slumped downward in depression on her canvas. She had been working on this particular painting for about the last two hours of class and now the teaching assistant had come over and told her to *not* create, to *not* paint in the manner in which she was so happily engaged, and to *not* follow her creativity in the exploration of mixing oil and acrylic paint together.

Immediately I regretted my choice of words and my intonation. Her eyes moved rapidly around the canvas as if searching for a place to hide. The emotion of her embarrassment overpowered my intention to give her guidance. My careless mistake would have lasting consequences for this young learner. As soon as the word "don't" emanated from my lips, I wanted to take it back.

I mumbled something about the importance of research on paint, chemicals, time, and preserving her artwork, but it was too late. She felt lost to me. I could tangibly feel her slipping away from her own desire to paint right before my eyes. I struggled to find the words to convey to her that what I had said did not matter, that her exploration of the mediums was very important to her process as an artist. I wanted to take back that moment of "don't" and to eliminate it from our experience together.

Sara finished up the semester and switched her major from art to medicine. She sent me an email at the end of my Master of Fine Arts program, thanking me for my guidance and help with her art career, but that she and her family had decided it would be more beneficial for her future to major in medicine and that she would always remember me. Remember me as what, I wonder. Perhaps as the teacher who hindered her creativity? Or am I the supportive teacher who tried to help her? Sara taught me more about myself as an educator in that one moment than she will ever know, and I silently thank her each time I facilitate an art class.

The point of this personal reflection on my own experience with creativity and education is to illustrate a scenario that likely occurs within educational settings across universities. There is a need to understand the effect of critical instruction on creativity and the creative process of learning. Studies on hindered creativity have been limited in number due to the increasing demand of studies that examine the promotion of creativity. By addressing the affects of hindered creativity on adult learners and disseminating the new knowledge into the fields of adult education and educational psychology, perhaps we can begin to reverse some of the myths about creativity. Therefore the focus of this

particular study will specifically address what stands out for adult learners who have encountered an educational context where their creativity has been hindered.

Statement of the Problem

Adult learners continue to become a more visible force in the university setting in both undergraduate and graduate programs (Kasworm, 2003; Kasworm & Blowers, 1994). This growing population introduces a new complexity to the educational setting as adult learners engage in the reflective process at a level of life experience different from the traditional university student. The lack of research on hindered creativity in adult education literature is a problem because how are we as adult educators going to become aware of our own assumptions about hindered creativity without understanding what the experience is like for our adult learners? While the experiences of hindered creativity can be difficult to quantify from a positivist perspective, they can be described and therefore studied from a phenomenological perspective. Accordingly, the problem addressed in this study will be the establishment of a better understanding of graduate students' experiences of hindered creativity in an educational context.

When behaviorism held prominence as the basis for research, creativity was rarely explored as evidenced by the lack of articles, books, and journals on the topic during the first few decades of the last century (Sternberg, 1999) Only during the last sixty years has the concept received increasing attention from researchers in educational psychology (Guilford, 1950; Renzulli, 1994; Torrance, 1962; Blicbau & Steiner, 1998; Bloland, 1987; Innamorato, 1998). The research cited above is encouraging, though most rely on a

dominant quantitative research perspective. There is a dearth of research that examines the lived experience of adult learners, specifically graduate students, who have had their creativity hindered in an educational context. The research presented in this dissertation fills this need. This study utilizes the phenomenological method developed by Thomas and Pollio (2002), which places emphasis on the lived experience of the individual and offers an opportunity to understand these experiences from a qualitative research perspective.

In the development of creativity research, theoretical studies indicate that creative ability and creative problem-solving techniques could be fostered within instruction and that programs could be flexible to teach convergent and divergent thinking skills to adult learners (Innamorato, 1998; Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004; Jehn, 1997). Both inquiry-discovery and problem-solving methods should be encouraged in the adult learning experience (Treffinger, 1980). These studies, however, do not address the limitation of what happens when creativity is hindered either consciously or unconsciously by educators.

The hindrance of creativity within the educational context has not been thoroughly researched in adult education. Although there is widespread encouragement to help students be more creative in classrooms, relatively few studies have been conducted to understand what the experience is like for adult learners whose creativity is being hindered. Two research studies, both quantitative in nature, stand out in addressing the hindrance of creativity with a focus on originality being activated by a disorientating dilemma for undergraduate adult students (James, 1995; Kurtzberg & Mueller, 2005).

Both studies reveal that the learner's perception (positive or negative) was dependent on the task and the evaluation of others. Findings indicated that if the creative process was shut down by another instructor or student, the individual was often left with negative perceptions of that particular experience.

Similarly, Jehn (1997) indicated in his qualitative study about conflict types, "it is tremendously difficult for individuals to remain objective about a situation when they feel that others are disagreeing, or even disapproving, of their point of view" (p. 550). These studies highlight the interactions between educators and learners in terms of constructive criticism, feedback, and comments. Mezirow (1995) concluded that "facilitating the kind of learning which views differences as an opportunity, a challenge to our abilities to communicate, understand, and learn, is precisely what adult education is about" (p. 55). In this view, educational institutions need to understand what happens to the learner when creativity is hindered and take into consideration the impact that hindered creativity has on an adult learner's educational experience.

What these aforementioned studies help shed light on and what is lacking in the available published literature, is the clear need for a detailed investigation into the lived experience of adult learners who have encountered a hindrance of their creativity in an educational setting. A study exploring the nature of the experience for the non-traditional adult learner who has had their creativity hindered as understood within a phenomenological approach will likely contribute to diminishing this gap in research by providing a more complete description of the adult learning experience. This research

could also have important implications for practice. Adult education, higher education, creativity research and practice will likely benefit from the findings of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences of adult learners in graduate school who have encountered having their creativity hindered in an educational context. The hindrance of creativity can influence the success and failure of graduate students. Due to most creativity research focusing on the development of creativity in K-12 education, there is a gap in the literature that specifically addresses the concerns of hindering creativity in adult education. By this I mean that researchers have tended to focus on children's creativity and young adults' creativity. The lack of research on adults has not been caused by this, but does illustrate a neglected area of study with adults and creativity in education. In comparing studies that address the development of creativity (Fasko, 2001; Sgori, 1998; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Gates, 2004; Mumford, 1998) with studies that specifically examine the hindrance of creativity (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006; Noppe, 1996; Russ, 1993; Choi, 2004; Hartman, 1961; Domino, Short, Evans, & Romano, 2002; McManus & Furnham, 2006) there exists a gap where neither approach is attempting to understand what hindered creativity is like from the learner's experience. It is important to note that most of the studies dealing with the hindrance of creativity were quantitative and focused on undergraduate students. Therefore they did not focus on the hindrance creativity in an educational context with non-traditional adult learners.

However, almost all of the studies emphasized that creativity could be expressed, encouraged, and some particular aspects could be taught (i.e., divergent thinking skills, tolerance of ambiguity) to individuals to increase potential awareness and use of creativity in education. Due to the lack of research on what this experience is like for a learner, there are a limited number of studies that explicitly address how creativity could be affecting learners. In order to better understand how the development and encouragement of creativity could be affecting learners, it is fundamental to understand the opposite approach as well. An example of this opposite approach would be to examine what the experience is like for learners to have creativity hindered in academia instead of having their creativity promoted by educators.

The focus of this study is to explore what stands out about the hindrance of creativity in the educational experiences of graduate students. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach to derive themes that represent the universal essence of the lived experiences. The ultimate objective of this study is to clarify what happens from the learner's perspective when the creativity is hindered in educational settings and to contribute to a better understanding of educational relationships between educators and students.

Research Question

This study will examine graduate students' experiences of hindered creativity through the following question: What are the shared meanings of hindered creativity as understood by graduate students in an educational setting?

Conceptual Framework

The nature of research is to examine the questions: 'how do we know what we know?' and 'how do we legitimize our knowledge?' (Creswell, 2003). Within this idea lies the basis of research that is to test, to determine, to establish, to believe, to verify, and to reach consensus about a given topic. This study will provide a descriptive image of adult learners and their experience of hindered creativity in an educational context. Conducting a qualitative study with a phenomenological perspective and a transformation learning theory framework allows for the meaning of the lived experiences of participants to emerge from the data and offers a detailed look into the complexity of learners' experiences. The following sections address the decision of a qualitative research methodology, as well as using phenomenology and transformative learning theory as the conceptual framework.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Since there are many techniques for analyzing qualitative research, there is no single method considered preferable for all contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Instead, a decision regarding which method to use should come from the research itself. Phillips (1996) states:

> Methodologies are chosen because they seem appropriate for illuminating the kinds of phenomena that are being dealt with, so that the prior decision about how to conceptualize the phenomena influences, in broad terms, the ways in which these phenomena are subsequently pursued (p. 1006).

Qualitative research focuses on specifically understanding the social phenomenon through a hermeneutical holistic perspective. A qualitative study was selected for the purpose of understanding "people from their own frame of reference" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p.6). Brookfield (1994) stated:

> …the growing recognition accorded to qualitative studies of adult learning should be solidified. In speaking of research that has influenced their practice, adult educators place much greater emphasis on qualitative studies as compared to survey questionnaires or research through experimental designs (p.1178).

The nature of a qualitative paradigm is located in subjective truth where reality is not absolute and can have multiple realities (Merriam, 2002). The relationship between the researcher and what is studied contains intimate direct contact and is not separated from each other (Patton, 2002). The criteria established to legitimize knowledge is based on authenticity and trustworthiness and does not attempt to determine what is right or wrong, but rather if the study is authentic (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The phenomenological method should offer a hermeneutical holistic understanding of the topic and a representation or reconstruction of the personal constructs that each participant holds (e.g., essence of life world). Phillips (1996) reinforces this idea:

> …the hermeneutical or interpretive model refers to meanings, interpretations, beliefs, understandings, social norms, and the like. The essence of the hermeneutical approach is that humans are organisms that act because they have reasons for so doing; that is, humans harbor beliefs, intentions, desires, and soon, and these things lead to human action and are therefore necessary ingredients in any attempt to understand and explain that action (p.1016).

Human action, therefore, can be understood as meaningful and meaning making has shown to have a significant role in the learning process of adults (MacKeracher, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). For Hanson (1989), meaning making is assisted by descriptive research often through the process of looking back at "where we have been, what we have come to know, and where we can go by empowering ourselves…as able meaning makers" (p.273). Studies of meaning making can be informed by phenomenology and transformational learning theory.

A phenomenological perspective and transformative learning theory provide the conceptual framework for this study in complementary ways. Both frameworks emphasize the importance of the individual's experience and place emphasis on how meaning making occurs within the experience. Therefore the conceptual framework will be addressed by phenomenology and transformative learning theory.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology places emphasis on the actual lived experience. In the literature of adult education, Lindeman (1926) states that the "highest value in adult education is the learner's experience" (p.6). Dewey (1938) suggested "there is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education" (p.20). Some researchers, such as Merriam (2002) consider phenomenology to be a type of research that serves as a foundation for all qualitative methods. Similarly, Jarvis (1987) posited that the phenomenological method holds great potential into the adult learning processes. He stated "all learning begins with experience" (p.16). Therefore, the phenomenological

perspective is employed in this study as a theoretical framework to help understand what the lived experience of hindered creativity is like for adult learners in an educational context.

Brookfield (1995) argued that phenomenology has the potential to bring about new understandings of the learner's perspective for educators to critically reflect upon. Brookfield (1994) posits:

> Emotional dimensions to conceptual or instrumental learning, or how adults learn about their own emotional selves are matters that are rarely addressed. More attention is needed to how meaning making, critical thinking, and entering new cognitive and instrumental domains are viscerally experienced processes…adult learning needs to be understood much more as a socially embedded and socially constructed phenomenon (Jarvis, 1987)…a way should be found to grant greater credibility to adults' renderings of the experience of learning from the 'inside'. Most descriptions of how adults experience learning are rendered by researchers' pens, not learners themselves. More phenomenological studies of how adults feel their way through learning episodes, given in their own words and using their own interpretations and constructs, would enrich our understanding of the significance of learning to adults (p.167).

Using a phenomenological approach for the study of creativity allows for both conscious and unconscious experiences to come forth and interplay with the experiences of not only the creative individual but also the life-world surrounding the being as it exists in the world.

Stanage (1987) has written in detail about the importance of phenomenology in learning. He posits that phenomenology is able to elicit the phenomena of meaning and values that are relevant to education. By this he means that learning how to learn is a key component in the adult's life-world (*Lebenswelt*). He proposes that hindrances may be a part of the experience of learning and could be helpful to adult learners. Stanage (1987)

suggests the experiences of individuals confronted with a hindrance could be studied through phenomenology:

> A phenomenological approach to adult education opens up new directions for research and uncovers new layers of clarity in programming, curricula, teaching, and research become manifest con-characteristics of adults. It means, moreover, that the personal ventures of adult self-help, of adult self-willing and self-motivating decisions, plans, and actions, also may come to be seen in clearer focus through phenomenological investigations (p.45).

Since creativity has traditionally been studied as a product, process, or person (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999), the research approach to examining creativity has focused on empirical methods of measuring it. Over the last sixty years, since Guilford (1950) called for further research into creativity at his APA Presidential Address, there has been a steady rise in creativity research. Most of the subsequent studies have been quantitative. Guilford reported that less than 0.2% of the articles in *Psychological Abstracts* focused on creativity before 1950. Sternberg & Lubart (1999) reported that during 1975-1994 there were about 1.5% of journal articles in *Psychological Abstracts* focused on creativity. Two journals, the *Journal of Creative Behavior* (1967) and the *Creativity Research Journal* (1988), have been established specifically to examine creativity in terms of empirical and theoretical research. However, creativity should not be limited to studies that try to measure a product, process, or person's creativity levels. Instead, I propose a need for a phenomenological approach in order to encompass more than just the readily accessible features of the concept.

By uniting phenomenology with creativity research, I believe that the method would allow for a more open approach to overcoming the traditional quantitative

measurement methods. This approach would allow the lived experiences of adult learners to reflect on the conscious and passive experiences of hindered creativity to shed light on the essence of what it is like for them. Creativity is more than just one aspect of its whole (e.g., divergent thinking, problem-solving, and processing); the creative moment encompasses an essence that is derived by actively experiencing creativity. Bindeman (1998) stated "The ultimate meaning of the artwork or scientific work is no longer merely understood as static, predetermined, and formal but as contingent on and correlated with the type of receptivity it generates" (p.69). Not only does phenomenology consider the creative individual, but it also opens up for the exploration of the social domain and the groups that could potentially influence the entire process of creativity because creativity does not happen in a vacuum (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

This is similar to Wittgenstein's (1953/1970) idea that "we must do away with all explanations, and description alone must take its place" (p.47). Many of the existentialists and phenomenologists who have commented on creativity in their theories, articles, and books begin with what was most self-evident to them, and their experience of creativity on a personal level. They related creativity to their body (i.e., person), time (i.e., process), others (i.e., gatekeepers/domain) and the world (i.e., social context).

Phenomenology surfaced in creativity research and literature in the 1970s. Among the first to use phenomenology as a method for studying creativity was Rothenberg (1979, 1990, 1999). Rothenberg conducted phenomenological studies of creativity to understand what the experience was like for an individual to use creativity in the process of art, science and other fields. He later studied what the experience was like for creative

individuals and their mental health in relation to alcoholism. Phenomenology is an established and reliable method for understanding creativity since both approaches focus on the experience of the individual. Negus & Pickering (2004) state:

> Thinking about creativity entails understanding an experience- or range of experiences- as much as engaging with the changing meaning of a concept. The creative experience is something that is intensely felt. It often seems to defy language as if words are incapable of fully capturing the sensation involved, or of explaining what went into the making of a particular artistic form. While we must keep in mind, it remains the case that the creative experience requires a will to expression, and to communication with others. This is evident in numerous narratives and anecdotes through which artists and inventors have sought to provide an account of what their creative efforts have involved and been driven by (p.22).

By viewing hindered creativity as an experience and phenomenology as the method for studying what that experience is like for an individual, the two concepts complement each other. Cannatella (2004) argued for creativity to be linked with the phenomenological. He believes that creativity is less associated with skill and more reliant on thinking both divergently and abstractly. He submits, "Creative practice emphasizes human experiences, our immersion and perceived imminence and transcendences in the world" (p.65). Through this experience of creativity and the world existing at the same moment, something new is created that comments upon that which is the essence of the experience.

Nelson and Rawlings (2007) stated that phenomenology is the key approach to studying creativity. In their study, eleven artists were interviewed about their lived experience of creativity. The findings indicated that creativity functions inside a synthesis of dynamic constituents that have an effect on artists' self empathy, flow, and concept of

freedom. In their argument for utilizing phenomenology for the basis of their research, Nelson and Rawlings (2007) state that "Creativity research has been preoccupied with questions of correspondence, prediction, and exploration and has neglected the 'shape' of the phenomenon of creativity itself. In this sense, it has passed over the first principles- a rigorous investigation and understanding of the experience of creativity" (p.218-219).

It is interesting to note that even the existentialists of the late nineteenth century felt a similar reaction between creativity and art. Kierkegaard believed that true artwork is "the transubstantiation of experience" (Grimsley, 1970, p.19). He felt that creativity in art was able to connect the viewer on all levels of experience through artwork. Nietzsche wrote, "Art and nothing else! Art is the great means of making life possible, the great seducer of life, the great stimulus to life" (Nietzsche, 1886, as described in Larvin, 1971, p.95). In this existential view creativity is considered to be the means of expressing the connectedness of existence. It held importance for many of the writers of existentialism and also significantly influenced phenomenology.

Sartre (1936/2004) also commented on creativity in terms of imagination. He offered the idea that when a person looks at a chair in a room, they perceive it through their experience of it. If the person is asked to close their eyes and imagine the chair, the consciousness imagines the chair, or as he states, "the-chair-as-imagined" (p.6). He notes that our perception and our imagination of the chair are two distinctly different experiences. Our imagination is not limited to the world even if it is derived from the world. Therefore, he suggests that imagination is our greatest source of freedom (Earnshaw, 2006). Through the imagination process, we are no longer limited to realism

or accepting the world as it is before us. Instead we are open to the possibilities for creating a new imagined world that is based on freedom and not confined to material existence.

In terms of linking creativity directly with phenomenology, Arnheim (1971) believed that art should be looked at through the phenomenological world as "an interplay between properties supplied by the object and the nature of the perceiving subject" (p.viii). In this respect, viewing a piece of creative artwork is not just involving the sense of seeing, but rather, the idea is that you experience the artwork and engage in dialogue with the piece. He also believed that this experience was of the conscious and unconscious mind and that through the phenomenological interview, a person could become more aware of his or her own understanding of the experience (Arnheim, 1972). Therefore, phenomenology is utilized as the first part of the conceptual framework for this study.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is presented as the second part of the conceptual framework to help provide access to the adult education literature in reference to meaning making. Constructivism in adult learning focuses on the idea that learning is a process of constructing meaning and providing a way for individuals to make sense of their experiences (Steffe & Gale, 1995). Transformative learning theory is situated within the constructivist viewpoint. Major contributions to constructivist research have been provided by Glaserfeld, Kant, Kuhn, Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Driver, Phillips,

Mezirow, and Wegner (Hergenhahn, 1988). The constructivist's perspective is congruent with much of adult learning and creativity. The process of meaning making is both an individual mental activity and a socially interactive interchange within the constructivist view.

To better understand this concept as it applies to all learners it is useful to briefly review how learning is a developmental and cognitive process. The primary assumption of constructivism focuses on the idea that knowledge is constructed internally by learners through their experiences by means of accommodation and assimilation (Piaget, 1950). By accommodation I mean a reframing of the structure of individual epistemologies due to external events, interactions with others, or experiences that create the need for change. By assimilation I mean an incorporation of an external element brought into the learner's conceptual understanding (Piaget, 1975). Piaget proposed that learning is a process of learners striving for equilibrium through adaptation (Piaget, 1972; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

As a learner becomes aware of new concepts, there is a disequilibrium that must be resolved as new ideas are internalized into the learner's prevailing mental framework. Balance is achieved by the learner either assimilating the new concept into the prevailing mental framework or by making accommodations to the prevailing mental framework for admitting the new concept. Since knowledge is constructed by learners, it includes the past, present, and possible future experiences of the learner. Adaptation then becomes key to learning as a developmental and cognitive process. This concept addresses the

importance of cultural influences and social influences that may have an impact on the learner.

Mezirow (2000) and Brookfield (1986, 1994) have argued for a greater need in adult education to go beyond the normative challenges of helping learners engage in educational learning. By normative they mean conforming to the set standard of what is typically required of a learner and an educator. In adult education research literature, the movement to go beyond the normative challenges includes questioning our assumptions. Adult learning theorists such as Mezirow, Brookfield, Kegan, Stanage, Cranton, and Jarvis have addressed this concept. Mezirow states that the purpose of adult education "is to help learners make explicit, elaborate, and act upon the assumptions and premises…upon which their performance, achievement, and productivity are based" (1985, p.148). His transformative learning theory focuses on the critical reflection of an individual's assumptions in response to a "disorienting dilemma" that leads to a transformation of "taken-for-granted frames of reference…to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p.8).

Therefore the foundation for understanding transformative learning is established by the meaning making of a lived experience generated from a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Freire, 1970). Transformation theory is defined by Mezirow (1991) as an approach "to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what process the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our

experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed" (p.xiii). Mental construction of experience, inner meaning, discourse, and reflection are components of Mezirow's approach to adult education.

Transformative learning theory can also be understood from the constructive-developmental approach fostered by Kegan (2000). This approach studies the epistemological changes learners process as they create and re-create meaning in response to challenges to their own perception of their life experience. Kegan's approach advocates a much needed exploration into the experiences of learners in their learning environments. He states "we will better discern the nature of learners' particular needs for transformational learning by better understanding not only their present epistemologies but the epistemological complexity of the present learning challenges" (p.59). The phenomenological method is able to explore the complexities of what the lived experience is like for adult learners.

Transformative learning theory allows learners to focus on where, how, and why taken-for-granted assumptions exist and how to become more aware of them in the future (Mezirow, 2000). Part of the facilitator's role in education is to help the learner become more aware of how to approach material from multiple perspectives by addressing the importance of understanding a learner's experience, his or her assumptions, and thinking skills. In education, this involves critical reflection, discourse, and opening up the learner's perspective through thinking creatively (Taylor, 2006; Daloz, 1986).

Brookfield opines that critical thinking occurs when people question ideas, information, or behaviors. Critical thinking has many similarities to creativity with

respect to identifying and challenging assumptions, becoming aware of how context influences thoughts and actions, ability to consider different or alternative viewpoints and thinking skills, and being unwilling to accept something as the norm or because it has always been done a certain way. The differences and similarities of creativity and critical thinking are discussed more in-depth in Chapter II.

Transformative learning theory can also serve as a foundation for understanding hindered creativity. In the theory's view, creativity could be researched through a deeper understanding of what the lived experience is like for an individual learner. Transformative learning theory is being used as a framework for this study to possibly address how the meaning making and perception of hindered creativity for individuals is influenced by contextual factors by interviewing participants (graduate students) and examining their own words about their experiences with hindered creativity. This could allow for insight into how the adult learners have possibly changed during their graduate career. By also considering phenomenology as part of the perspective for the theoretical framework, the study may examine what the lived experience is like for graduate students to have their creativity hindered.

Significance of the Study

The intent of this study is to provide information about what the experience is like for a graduate student who has found his or her creativity to be hindered during their educational experience. I anticipate that this study could contribute to the knowledge of adult learning and adult education as it relates to understanding how the hindrance of

creativity may affect students. This study could have an impact on how adult education practitioners respond to adult learners in the instances of feedback and critiques concerning their work. Examining the nature of a learner's experience may allow university professors and administrators to become aware of how their own assumptions and approaches to hindering creativity in the classrooms are influential and may impact the students' epistemology.

In relation to research on creativity, this study may provide insight into the experience of hindered creativity across domains and what that experience is like for adult graduate students. Since creativity research tends to focus on studying only highly creative individuals, there is a lack of research on everyday creativity. Feldhusen (1994) argued the need for more research on creativity that is not domain specific or focused on the 'upper end':

> Much of the research on creativity has been conducted in specific domains with little effort expended on seeking generalities across domains. There is also a broad tendency in the field of creativity research to seek insights about the process of creativity by studying people at the upper end of creative functioning (for example, leaders or eminent individuals in various fields) (p.1178).

Previous research in creativity and learning addressed the practice of promoting creativity in teaching and learning and emphasized less about how to understand what happens to students as they experience creativity or experience the hindrance of creativity (Dalrymple, 1984; Fogarty, 1989). Specifically the dissertation study by Dalrymple (1984) examined how to promote creativity among undergraduate students through

course curriculum changes in the class structure to allow for more open-ended questioning and professor facilitation of helping students generate new ideas.

Dalrymple's study was quantitative in nature and relied upon surveys, questionnaires, and Likert scales to collect data. However, the quantitative approach to studying creativity could also be a limitation to the research of creativity overall since without understanding the essence of the experience of creativity, there could be a perceived loss of information that is either ignored, assumed to be something it is not, or disregarded by researchers. In contrast, this dissertation could allow for the literature of both adult learning and creativity to be enhanced by a deeper understanding of how learners experience such moments of hindrance from a qualitative approach.

The study may also help in the formation of program planning to better meet individual needs with an instructional goal of developing and promoting students' creativity. Awareness of creativity levels, ageism and assumptions all factor into how educators could approach facilitating differently. Findings may offer insight into how the educational experience shapes the learner and continues to influence them throughout their lifetime.

Assumptions of the Study

The main assumptions will be summarized in the following statements:

1. The experiences of graduate students in relation to their creativity are meaningful within the adult learning process.
2. The participants will give honest answers to the questions asked.

3. All research is a product of the cultural, social, and historical contexts of which it exists.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitations will be summarized in the following statements:

1. The sample size will be limited to adult graduate students from one state university in the geographical location of the Southern area within the United States. The study may not be able to take in account different aspects of studying hindered creativity in larger or smaller locations within a different culture or social context.
2. The study will not focus on the generalizability of the findings because of the phenomenological method used. Instead the study will focus on the essence of the lived experience of the participants and the ability to address generalizability through transferability as addressed further in Chapter III under the data analysis section.

Definitions

Adult Education – Planned learning activities for adult learners that can contribute to the individual and society overall. Adult learners can be defined in terms of their social roles, age, or self-perception of being an adult (Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Houle, 1972).

Adult Learner – An individual over the age of 25 engaged in the process of learning (Kasworm, 1997; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). For the purposes of this study, an

adult learner will be any student 25 years or older enrolled in a graduate program at a state university.

Creativity – The formulation of something novel (i.e., new, unexpected) in a social context (Sternberg & Lubart, 1996, Torrance, 1995). For the purposes of this study creativity is trying something new, novel, or innovative in graduate schoolwork.

Hinder- To impede, delay, or prevent (Abate, 1998). For the purposes of this study hinder means to prevent or not allow.

Knowledge – Theoretical and practical facts, information, and skills assimilated by an individual through experience as part of their epistemology (Cranton, 1996).

Learning – An active process or action by which changes in knowledge, skills, and values are acquired that are internalized for the individual learner and can occur in formal or non-formal learning environments (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Marsick & Watkins, 2001; Boyd et al., 1980)

Phenomenology – A method of research to explore the "essence" of a particular lived experience for an individual as experienced in his or her own words (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962).

Transformative Learning Theory – An adult education theory that is established by the meaning making of a lived experience typically generated from a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000).

Dissertation Synopsis

This dissertation will be presented in five chapters. Chapter I provided the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research question, conceptual framework, and previous research. The significance of the study, limitations, definitions and summary are also included. Chapter II will offer a review of the literature concerning creativity, phenomenology, and transformative learning in adult education. Both concepts will be reviewed by examining definitions, theoretical viewpoints, and previous avenues of research. Chapter III will describe the specifics of the qualitative research method, bracketing interview, participants' interviews and process, and data analysis. Chapter IV will present the findings from the participant interviews and data analysis. Chapter V will combine a summary of the study, discussion, implications for education, research recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study will be to understand hindered creativity and the graduate student's experience of it in an educational context. Chapter I contained an introduction, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research question, and the conceptual framework. It also addressed the significance of the study, its limitations, provided definitions for important terms, and included a dissertation synopsis. Chapter II will review and summarize the relevant empirical and theoretical research literature concerning the nature of creativity and the characteristics of adult education as well as the overlap between the concepts of creativity, phenomenology, and transformative learning.

Due to the limited amount of literature available on the topic, this chapter is subdivided into categories that address the topic directly and indirectly. The core elements in the literature are then synthesized into the major idea of linking creativity and adult learning together in an educational context. The decision to include a literature review is grounded in my belief that a researcher needs to know enough about a field to enter into the existing dialogue in order to move it forward and not needlessly replicate research that has already been performed. I have done my best to maintain a balance between 'knowing enough' and 'knowing too much' so that I do not become entrenched and limited in my perception (Frensch & Sternberg, 1989).

Justification for including a review of the literature is also found in research procedures as guided by Thomas and Pollio (2002). They recommend a literature review that encompasses a synthesis of previous research findings in order to evaluate the potential contribution of a study. Thomas and Pollio argue that a saturated literature review does not create biases that will influence research, but rather helps the researcher becomes aware of such biases in conjunction with the bracketing interview and re-bracketing of knowledge during the interviews and data analysis.

The following section about creativity includes a short introduction to creativity research and clearly defines the use of the term creativity in this study. Additionally, different approaches to creativity and factors influencing creativity are reviewed. Transformative learning theory is also addressed in terms of research and a clear definition is provided. A summary is included at the end of the chapter.

Defining Creativity

The transitive verb "create" and associated noun "creativity" come from the Latin *creatus* that means "to make or produce or to grow" (Piirto, 1992). The word create was closely associated with earth and nature to describe the beginning of a development or change in what already existed. The modern use of the term creativity stems from the nineteenth century in the form of a verb "to create" and has since been widely used to describe multiple forms or ways of being creative. However, even though this is the most common semantic definition of creativity, the perspective is limited in scope because it

originates from a Western approach to the idea of creativity and does not address the diversity of other possible understandings.

Kraft (2005) has stated that "the ability to create is one of the outstanding traits of human beings. From harnessing fire to splitting the atom, an inexhaustible stream of innovative flashes has largely driven our social development" (p.16). Because there are numerous ways to define creativity, this topic has caused much debate in the study of creativity. Getzels (1975) claimed that "there is no universal agreed upon definition of creativity" (p.327). He believed that conceptions of creativity were reflected by product, process, or subjective experiences of the person. In comparison, Torrance (1995) defined creativity as the formulation of something new as a constructive response to an existing or new situation. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the definition of creativity builds on the previous idea by Torrance and adds to it the ability to produce work that is novel (i.e., new, unexpected, innovative) (Lubart, 1994; Ochse, 1990; Sternberg, 1988) in a social context (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1995, 1996).

Rhodes (1962) categorized creativity into four aspects: person, process, press (the context or environment), and product. Many other researchers have followed this type of categorization with their research on creativity. This approach, however, can also be limiting because most research is conducted on only one aspect and not all four at the same time. This is due in part to the different theoretical approaches to creativity that typically focus on one of the aforementioned aspects of creativity. Therefore, it is important to examine the various theoretical approaches to creativity in order to understand how and why the definition of creativity can be arduous to define and the

concept can be difficult to study. Failure to recognize the various approaches and definitions over the last sixty years has caused substantial misinterpretations of the literature rooted in creativity research (Barron & Harrington, 1981).

Approaches to Creativity

There are several diverging approaches to the study of creativity that have developed over the last sixty years. The seven most prominent approaches are mystical, psychodynamic, psychometric, cognitive, pragmatic, social-personality, and confluence (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Not all seven are inclusive and most approaches overlap with each other. They are presented here as a way to access the dialogue about creativity research and to aid in the understandings of how creativity can be defined and studied by various research approaches.

Mystical Approach

Research on creativity could be considered to have been hindered by the mystical approach to creativity generated from ideas on divine intervention and creativity arising from an otherworldly source (Ghiselin, 1985). These views are associated with very early accounts of creativity in writing, art, and ideas about inspiration. The mystical approach presumes that creativity is a spiritual or divine process that could be viewed as separate from one's self (Ochse, 1990). This approach is still active in some cultures and societies where creativity is connected with magic, the demonic, and the divine (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1976).

Due to this underlying approach to creativity, there have been assumptions made that creativity is something that cannot be studied or researched because it could be considered a spiritual process. However, creativity remains a prominent goal of rational inquiry among several researchers throughout the twentieth century and beyond (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1976).

Psychodynamic Approach

Viewed as one of the first attempts to research creativity, the psychodynamic approach is based on the work of Freud (1926/1959). In the psychodynamic approach creativity develops from the relationship between the conscious reality and unconscious drives. Within this idea by Freud, artists and writers create as a method to reveal their unconscious desires in an approved, socially acceptable manner. This approach opened up the chance for dialogue among researchers, but was quickly replaced by scientific psychology (e.g., the psychometric approach) because most of the research presented was based on case studies and not theoretical applications (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

Freud's original paradigm of the instinctual conscious and unconscious drives behind the creative process eventually began to be deconstructed in the 1970s (Gedo, 1997). Although the theory that creativity provides a path to fulfill unconscious needs or resolve psychological conflicts continues to exist among some researchers, many agree that the psychodynamic approach is no longer a valid assessment of creativity (Collins & Amabile, 1999).

Psychometric Approach

The study of creativity has been greatly influenced by J. P. Guilford (1950) and E. Paul Torrance (1962, 1974). Both individuals were psychometric theorists and attempted to measure creativity from a psychometric perspective (i.e., paper and pencil tests). The elements that they focused on to define creativity included divergent thinking skills, assessments and instruments used to measure creativity, and other problem-solving skills. This approach was a starting point for a way to access and discuss creativity from a scientific standpoint to help distinguish creative individuals by means of traits and thinking styles.

The introduction of various scientific instruments to objectively quantify creativity and subsequently predict and measure the level of creativity in individuals was viewed at the time as a great scientific development. Although this approach to measuring creativity is still widely used today, there have been challenges made by other researchers with regard to the instruments of measure, such as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), as being obsolete and limited in scope (Kim, 2006; Kaufmann, 2003). Yet the TTCT is still one of the most rigorously used instruments with over forty years of testing behind it. Despite these concerns, the psychometric approach is widely used by researchers who are dependent upon accountability and measurability to their research on creativity.

Cognitive Approach

The psychometric approach did not incorporate the mental representations and brain functions that occur during the creative process. This motivated the development of the cognitive approach as applied to research on creativity. Research from the cognitive approach emphasizes the stages of the creative process and the products of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). An important contribution of this method is the idea that creativity exists on a continuum between every day, ordinary creativity and extraordinary types of creativity (Ward, Smith, & Finke, 1999). This concept is referred to as little 'c' creativity and big 'C' creativity, respectively (Gardner, 1993).

Within the cognitive approach, both human participants and computer simulations have been used to measure creative thought processes. The mental processes that factor into the various phases of creative thought for human participants are retrieval, association, synthesis, transformation, analogical transfer, and categorical reduction (Ward, Smith, & Finke, 1999). The computer simulation research uses stochastic modeling and heuristic guidelines to approximate how a person would help computer programs rediscover basic scientific guidelines in relation to human movements (Boden, 1992, 1994). Both aspects of the cognitive approach assume that the ability to think creatively is the standard rather than the exception in human cognitive function. This is a belief that can be traced back to Gestalt psychology (Dacey, Lennon, & Fiore, 1998).

Social-Personality Approach

The social-personality approach attempts to address the areas of study misrepresented or neglected by the previous approaches. The neglected areas of study that the social-personality approach addresses are personality variables, motivational variables, and the social cultural environment as sources for creativity (Maslow, 1968; Amabile, 1988; Simonton, 1984).

Personality variables related to creativity are included within Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, such as boldness, courage, freedom, spontaneity, and self-acceptance that can lead a person to discover his or her full potential. Rogers' theory (1954) concurs with Maslow about the individual: "He creates primarily because it is satisfying to him, because this behavior is felt to be self-actualizing" (p.73). Motivational variables have been addressed by a number of researchers (Amabile, 1983; Crutchfield, 1962; Golann, 1962; Hennessay & Amabile, 1988), specifically focusing on the idea that intrinsic motivation is more important than extrinsic motivation for the process of creativity, although this depends upon contextual influence as well.

The sociocultural environment had largely been neglected as an area of research for creativity until the early 1980s. Simonton (1984, 1988, 1994a, 1994b) argued for the need to understand creativity within context and within culture, stating that creativity over long spans of time in diverse cultures has been statistically linked to environmental variables such as cultural diversity, war, availability of role models, availability of resources (e.g., financial support, food) and numbers of competitors in a domain. Cross-cultural studies and anthropological case studies have shown that cultures differ in the

value they place on the creative process (Lubart, 1990; Silver, 1981). The social-personality approach has contributed greatly to the research on creativity.

Confluence Approach

It was not long before other researchers challenged the previous approaches to creativity. By synthesizing multiple components of the various approaches, a confluence approach is understood to interpret creativity within a system of social networks, domains, and enterprises (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

Amabile (1983) describes creativity as the confluence of intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant knowledge and abilities, and creativity-relevant skills (e.g., cognitive style of approaching problems differently than others, knowledge of heuristics for generating novel ideas, high energy and ability to set aside issues and stay focused). In essence, this approach does not focus on the individual alone to produce a creative product, but seeks a deeper understanding of the entire thought process and context of the individual.

Another theory within the confluence approach by Gruber and his colleagues (1981, 1988; Gruber & Davis, 1988) addresses the concern for developmental changes within the individual in terms of mood and affect that can occur during the process of creativity. These changes can affect the goals and purposes of an individual's creativity and the continuation or stoppage of the creative process. Such an example could be a student who has been asked to work on a new painting in class, but is unable to focus on being creative because he or she is emotionally preoccupied with the fact that their family

was in car accident the previous week. The change in mood can affect the creativity output for individuals.

Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1996) is another researcher in the confluence approach who studies the systemic procedure of creativity with respect to the individual, domain, and field. Concisely stated, his theory is that an individual is influenced by the domain and transforms it through unique cognitive processes such as the personality traits, motivation, and energy of an artist. According to Csikszentmihalyi, the domain is a culturally defined symbol system that preserves and shares creative products with others (e.g., art world) and the field consists of those who are in control of determining what is creative (e.g., art critics, gallery owners). Therefore his approach posits that one cannot separate out the individual to study, but instead, a researcher needs to consider the whole system as a critical part of the study.

Finally, Sternberg and Lubart (1991, 1992, 1995, 1996) have approached creativity as an enterprise where the individual knowingly enters into a willing pursuit of ideas that could be considered "low" value in order to constantly persist through resistance to help develop something new of "high" value over time. Their concept also acknowledges the ideas of Amabile, Gruber, and Csikszentmihalyi as contributing factors to the overall confluence approach.

One weakness of the confluence approach could be the limitation of only studying the extraordinary creativity or big 'C' creativity and often neglecting the role of everyday creativity. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to be as specific as possible as to which type of creativity is being studied and which approach is being utilized in the study.

Factors Influencing Creativity and Adult Education

Adult learners hold the potential for being more creative in their work if it is encouraged and promoted by those within their social context. A social context is "requisite for determining whether (and how) a person, action, or product will be defined or judged as creative" (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004). In order to link creativity and adult education together, a definition of adult education needs to be reviewed. Merriam and Brockett (2007) define adult education as "activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults" (p.8).

Other influences to this study in terms of understanding adult education include Houle (1972, 1980) who contributed the idea that adult education is a process of planning that improves learners or society overall, and Knowles (1962, 1980, 1986) who encouraged the concept of andragogy as a way of thinking about working with adult learners. This study is not meant to provide a historical background for adult education (see Stubblefield & Keane, 1994; Kett, 1994), but to instead focus on factors that could possibly influence creativity in adult education.

The following sections synthesize some of the most prominent work connecting creativity with adult education through the concepts of little 'c' and big 'C' creativity research, the comparison and contrast of creativity and critical thinking, social and cultural influences on creativity, and the development vs. hindrance of creativity in adult learners. In addition, understanding the identity of adult learners in an educational context is discussed, as well as addressing the concerns for the adult learning environment and

the assumptions that underlie creativity research, most specifically social assumptions and ageism.

Little 'c' and big 'C' Creativity

Creativity has been studied by many different researchers (Lubart, 1994; Ochse, 1990; Sternberg, 1988; Sternberg & Lubart, 1991, 1995, 1996; Fasko, 2001; Sgori, 1998; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Gates, 2004; Mumford, 1998) in various fields, such as psychology, education, adult education, fine arts, performing arts, sports, mathematics, and engineering. Because of the multiple research approaches, misunderstandings arose about what type of creativity was being addressed. Recent research on creativity has focused on the need to differentiate between studying creativity that could be considered 'common' or 'everyday' versus the perceived breakthroughs that awaken the world to something unconsidered before. Gardner (1993) has suggested that the difference be referred to as little 'c' and big 'C' creativity.

Little 'c' creativity focuses on the everyday elements of creativity that nearly everyone exhibits throughout the day. Examples of little 'c' creativity abound in everyday life: having your hands full of groceries and using your hip to close the car door or writing a paper for a history class and using a match to char the edges of the paper to make the document appear aged. It is something that may not be considered profoundly creative but does serve a utilitarian purpose of helping a person with the daily routines of life. Another aspect of creativity and learning that is communicated through adult education is the need to blend and connect various abilities and capacities with each other

(Jackson & Sinclair, 2006). As Jackson and Sinclair state, "The act of blending and utilizing different abilities, knowledge and capacities to achieve a goal is itself a creative act" (p.123). This concept echoes the idea of little 'c' creativity in that creative acts do not stand alone, but are often parts of a whole that could go unnoticed by the individual.

Big 'C' creativity focuses on the major breakthroughs of creativity within a domain or event and is often referred to as being brilliant, extraordinary, or exceptional (Gardner, 1993). Albert Einstein, T. S. Elliot, Pablo Picasso, and others whose work has played a significant role in the development of new ideas and standards of their culture could be considered examples of big 'C' creativity. This type of creativity occurs very rarely and is often viewed as a breakthrough or dramatic change within a given context. It is also the most widely studied approach to creativity. As the bulk of research literature has typically focused on investigating big 'C' creativity and relegating little 'c' creativity to the background.

The link between the two concepts of creativity and learning enter into a dialogue with each other when we think about the need for development and change. For instance, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) stressed that life satisfaction can be derived from being engaged in creative work because "when we are involved in it, we feel that we are living more fully than during the rest of life" (p.2). This directly implies that there is not a choice to be made between little 'c' creativity or big 'C' creativity being more important than the other. Rather, it is a combination of both concepts (i.e., little 'c' & big 'C') synthesizing together for a greater understanding of the potential of knowledge in any given moment or domain. By knowledge, I mean theoretical and practical facts, information, and skills

acquired by an individual through experience as part of their way of knowing or epistemology (Cranton, 1996).

One of the challenges of conceptualizing creativity in this fashion is addressing the relationship the two classifications have to each other. Worth (2001) has stated that creativity exists on a continuum with the middle 'c' creativity level falling between ordinary and extraordinary. This is a sound approach to viewing creativity, since it does not isolate an individual from one side or the other, but rather adds to the idea that a person who experiences everyday creativity could at some point in their life experience a moment of extraordinary creativity. This study will contribute to the idea that little 'c' creativity is as significant as big 'C' creativity and that the entire concept of creativity exists on a continuum. Hofstadter (1985) argued:

> [The] "creative spark" is not the elusive property of just a few rare individuals down the centuries, but quite to the contrary, it is an intrinsic ingredient of the everyday mental activity of everyone, even the most run-of-the-mill people…creativity is part of the very fabric of all human thought, rather than some esoteric, rare, exceptional, and fluky by-product of the ability to think. Which every so often surfaces in places spread far and wide (p.527).

Fostering awareness of the power of education is also significant in understanding creativity and learning. In adult education, systems have been established to help guide learners through a process that will enable them to change, earn a degree, or learn more about something of interest. However, the adult education system has a power over the learner in terms of policies, requirements, political matters, and social and class inequalities (Bailey, Tisdell, & Cervero, 1994; Nesbitt, 2006; Anderson, Taylor, & Ziegler, 2007; Schroeder, 2002). These issues of control, conflict, and even oppression

could have an impact on how an adult learner feels in terms of being creative in learning environments.

Because two types of creativity have been discussed, little ‘c’ and big ‘C’ creativity that refer to everyday creativity and eminent creativity respectfully, there is a need to distinguish which type of creativity is being studied and in what context (Treffinger et al., 1996). Big ‘C’ creativity can have a negative effect on creativity research in education because it implies that only a select few will ever reach an eminent creative thought or event in their lifetime. This idea has been criticized by other researchers who suggest it should be made explicitly clear which type of creativity is being studied (Osborn, 1963; Halpern, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). This study examines the experiences of hindered little ‘c’ creativity as it applies to graduate students in an educational context.

Comparing and Contrasting Creativity and Critical Thinking

The concepts of creativity and critical thinking are similar and should be addressed to avoid confusion and add to the clarity of this study. In order to compare and contrast creativity and critical thinking, defining both terms upfront will help establish a better understanding of the two concepts in relation to each other. The Oxford Dictionary (Abate, 1998) defines creativity as “inventive; imaginative; able to create; bring into existence; originate” (p.132). The term critical is defined as “involving adverse comments; faultfinding; providing textual criticism; of or at crisis; decisive; crucial; judgmental analysis” (p.134). A creator is defined as “a person who creates; God”

(p.132), while a critic is defined as "a person who censures or criticizes; person who reviews literary, artistic, etc. works" (p.134). Thinking is defined as "using thought or rational judgment; opinion or judgment; mediate on a problem" (p.622).

This is only one source of defining the key words in this section, but it presents one of the similarities of the two concepts, which is the difficulty that most research and literature do not provide a clear definition of creativity or critical thinking. Laverty (1998) includes in his definition of critical thinking that it "involves the application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information so it can be used to construct personal meaning" (p.3). Feldhusen (1994) notes that critical thinking involves "judging accuracy and relevant information to refine and/or strengthen ideas or arguments" (p.1179). He suggests that creativity involves "curiosity, openness to paradoxes, dealing with ambiguities, risk-taking, and imagination" (p.1179). This is in contrast to Marzano et al. (1993) that described two of the outcomes of critical thinking as "restraint of impulsivity and taking a position when the situation warrants it" (p.23).

In comparison between the two concepts, both involve open-mindedness, flexibility, reflexive thinking skills, divergent thinking skills, and problem solving skills. By reflexive thinking skills, I mean the ability to question and challenge experiences and opinions with other adults through discourse (Brookfield, 2005; Taylor, 2007). Both creativity and critical thinking may occur in groups of people or on an individual basis. Facilitation of each concept can occur in educational settings, meaning that an educator is able to facilitate and promote critical thinking skills to learners and an educator is able to facilitate and encourage creativity in their classrooms. Individuals working with

creativity and critical thinking can encounter resistance from students learning these concepts. By this I mean that as a student becomes of aware of their creativity or critical thinking abilities, they may reject the process based on personal epistemologies, fear of failure/success, or social/cultural influences (Brookfield, 2005; Ochse, 1990).

Both concepts have been shown to influence the other, meaning that creativity can assist with critical thinking and vice versa (Brookfield, 1987; Marzano et al., 1993; Feldhusen, 1994). These concepts can be time consuming and can occur on an everyday basis, not just with major breakthroughs of thought. What begins to contrast the two concepts with each other is intention. Creativity's intent is to be innovative or new, to create something that has not existed before; whereas, the intent of critical thinking focuses on passing judgments of pre-existing elements in order to present alternatives or evaluations. This is not to say that critical thinking does not lead to new ideas or innovative concepts; however, those new or innovative ideas stemmed from a foundational source that was critiqued and analyzed previously. Brookfield (2005) posits:

> Critical thinking focuses on what's wrong with what currently exists, on illuminating omissions, distortions, and falsities in current thinking…A negative appraisal of "commonsense" reasoning…is the first step in developing a framework for the kind of thought that could replace what now exists. So what in the short term seems negative is in the long term positive (p.206).

In contrast, creativity may occur without a direct pre-existing foundational source or material and without logical analysis. Creativity focuses on what has not been done before and is not necessarily about being positive or negative (Amabile, 1996) and

critical thinking often focuses on disproving or proving an idea (Norris & Ennis, 1989; Brookfield, 2005).

Feldhusen (1994) presents an analysis of the differences between creativity and critical thinking in Table 1. One of the contrasts that stand out between the two is the use of critical thinking to detect fallacies and creativity not attempting to detect or judge anything. In critical thinking, negative or positive evaluation may be made, however it is usually the negative criticism that propels the critical thinking into action (i.e., what is not working, what could be improved) (Brookfield, 2005). In creativity, judgment is not necessarily a factor in being creative, but rather the tolerance of ambiguity and not knowing if it is good or bad is the benchmark of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Although both concepts can be difficult to define and even difficult to test for in research studies, critical thinking and creativity are both key elements in the progress and advancement of arts and sciences and across all fields of study. Greenberg (in press) posits "In today's world, the importance of thinking critically about topics of uncertainty is becoming increasingly necessary for the well being of all humans" (p.21). Likewise, Torrance (1995) suggests that creativity holds potential for new discoveries in multiple domains and could also be considered fundamental for individuals and societies in order to advance and influence the future. Both concepts clearly hold importance among adult education and meaning making for adult learners, however they are focused on different intentions and outcomes.

Table 1 The "Tool" Skills

The "Tool" Skills	
Creative Thinking	Critical Thinking
• Fluency • Flexibility • Originality • Elaboration & Synthesis • Curiosity • Openness to many ideas, paradoxes • Dealing with complexity, tension, & ambiguity • Risk-taking • Imagination & humor • Finding "essences" & constructive resolutions	• Delineate a cognitive task or problem • Understand & interpret information • Judge accuracy & relevance of information • Identify assumptions & biases • Detect fallacies & biases • Derive & evaluate inductive conclusions • Reason deductively & judge validity of conclusions • Apply strategies to compare, contrast, refine, and/or strengthen ideas or arguments

Adapted from: Feldhusen, J.F. (1994) Teaching and testing for creativity. In T. Husen & T.N. Postlethwaithe (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education.* (2nd ed. Vol.2, p. 1179). New York: Pergamon.

Social and Cultural Influences

It has been suggested that culture, one aspect of social environments, can have an effect not only on adult education, but also creativity (Fischer & Nakakoji, 1997, Gates, 2005). Csikszentmihalyi (1999) has proposed that creativity is more dependent on culture and social aspects rather than simply being a process of thinking skills. He suggests that creativity is not the product of an individual, but rather it is the manifestation of social systems making judgments about the individual products within a creative domain or context. Simonton (1975, 1994, 1997) has also suggested that the cultural context (e.g., political, social, economic) can have a significant effect on the contributions and evaluations of a given field.

Creativity does not exist in a vacuum, but rather it draws influence from potentially everything surrounding the individual. Creativity is considered by many to be historically, culturally, and socially bound as well (Amabile, 1996). Several researchers have begun to include context in their studies on creativity (Drazin et al., 1999; Mumford, 2000; Mumford et al., 2002; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Shalley et al., 2000). Yet a clear picture of how context is influencing creativity is still emerging and has not been studied from the learner's perspective on the effects of hindrance. The observation in the following excerpt by Seitz (2003) merits the length:

> The individual is seen as situated within a social matrix and it is the influence of the latter that shapes citizen's unique preferences, personal choices, and individual creative pursuits. Creativity is not posited to be merely the result of intra individual factors, but the consequence of the confluence of cultural domains at social and political institutions that directly and indirectly influence the development of individual creative expression. Human creative identity is thus shaped by "recognition, misrecognition or its absence" in recognition from others. That is to say,

> creativity is distributed. For instance, in terms of formal educational institutions, it resides not exclusively in the individual student but is dispersed among ones classmates, the teacher and professionals that oversee the classroom, the cultural prosthetics that augment creative and intellectual growth and the large school and community (p.388).

Some of the other contextual factors that have been addressed in various studies include time, resource materials, leadership evaluation and support, rewards, and group settings (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Creativity takes time to develop and adult learners who are put under time pressures are significantly less likely to engage in creative processing (Amabile et al., 2003). This time constraint is often accompanied by the unwillingness of educators to allow for the messiness of ideas and the uncertainty of creativity to exist in the classroom. Challenging this conventional form of classroom education is an arduous process at best.

In addition to the time constraints that can hinder creativity, another issue that could potentially impact creativity concerns material resources. Because material resources have been described as important for creativity (Katz & Allan, 1988), it has been suggested that learners can have too many resources available to them and that this plethora of choice can have a negative impact on creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). There exists in adult education a delicate balance of providing enough resources to help learners get started, but not such abundance that they begin to feel they can never accomplish the task and subsequently give up.

Andrews and Gordon (1970) found that negative feedback from leaders could inhibit the creativity of learners. In terms of the evaluation of a learner's creativity, it is important to remember that how feedback is conveyed to the recipient is equally as

important as the type of feedback that is provided. Learners respond better to feedback on creativity that is negative when it is explained in a proficient manner and the student is still encouraged by the leader or educator (Amabile, 1979; Amabile et al., 1990). Another aspect of this topic is to encourage support from educators to learners. If part of the goal of education is to be creative, and it is encouraged by educators, then learners feel free to experiment and share ideas with others (Woodman et al., 1993).

One final aspect to the cultural and social factors associated with creativity is learning in groups. There have been mixed studies about this topic. Some of the studies support group learning as a way to help facilitate creativity (Amabile, 1988; Kanter, 1988; Woodman et al., 1993). In contrast, other studies cite that creativity can be hindered by groups and that individuals need time for personal reflection for creativity to reach its full potential (Mumford et al., 2001). It is important to develop both aspects of learning, in groups and independently, into education because the essence of adult education is to provide a variety of experiences, viewpoints, and knowledge bases together to help promote problem solving skills and foster diverse perspectives that can impact creativity.

It is equally important to note that comparing creativity across cultures underscores the fact that any comparison would require criteria and standards. Runco (1999) found that cultures differ from each other greatly and that comparing creativity is unfair to the cultures being assessed. He offers the example of the difference between the geographic West and East in expressing creativity. The West allows for more individual creative liberty; creativity is encouraged, rewarded and often expected. Yet in the East,

there is pressure to conform, to allow for harmony among all individuals as a collective, and to control emotions at all times. Because different cultures express creativity in different ways, they should not be directly compared, at least in terms of one being superior to the other, because the criteria for passing judgment could be biased or construed.

In order to understand the various factors that can influence creativity, the subsequent sections provide a closer examination of the following: the development and hindrance of creativity, the learner identity as associated with creativity, the learning environments where creativity may occur, and the social and age assumptions that are connected to creativity.

Development and Hindrance of Creativity

The hindrance of creativity within the educational context has not been thoroughly researched in adult education. It has been difficult to locate studies that specifically addressed hindered creativity with adult learners. It is fundamental to understand how creativity is promoted or developed in order to connect creativity with the opposite effect of hindering it. Hanson (2005) discusses creativity in relation to teaching and learning as being attentive and responsive to student's concerns and moments. The moments are defined as events in time that cause us to reflect on our experience and meaning in life. He states:

> Creative teaching-in-the-moment generates countless opportunities for the teacher to discern hitherto hidden or unnoticed aspects of the student's character…both teacher and student fundamentally changes. They no longer perceive one another as they did before. This transformative

> experience, attested to by many teachers at all levels of the educational system, renders the work of teaching that much more meaningful, important, and worthy (Hanson, 2005, p.67).

Hansen's article is reflective of his experience of attempting to be more creative with students in his teaching so that students are more creative in their own facilitation later on.

Cropley (1992) finds that within fostering creativity there are two distinct variations. One variation is context learning that focuses on specific facts that are deemed necessary by those in control. The other variation is process learning that focuses on the ability of students to deal effectively with their present condition through novelty. He argues that the components for creativity can be taught to help foster creativity in classrooms. The components of creativity according to Cropley (1992) are:

1. Sensitivity to problems
2. Redefinition of problems
3. Penetration
4. Analysis and synthesis
5. Ideational fluency
6. Flexibility
7. Originality

These seven steps can be encouraged in education through:

a. Knowledge of the field
b. Talent or skills
c. Expenditure of great effort and motivation
d. Opportunity

Not only are these seven steps and ways of implementing them into adult education helpful, but they could also serve as a guideline for others. Cropley (1992) continues:

> Teachers can offer opportunities for the emergence of creativity in a number of ways: they can help students to produce ideas of an inventive and original kind; they can develop classrooms rich in opportunities for the emergence of creativity, and be willing to tolerate creative behavior; they can buildup pupil's interest in creativity and convince them of their own potential for being creative (p. 30).

The process of promoting creativity involves helping learners come up with new ideas. Conversely, the process of hindering creativity can involve the same ideas being omitted, criticized, or limited. As suggested by Russ (1993), if an individual is overly hindered, a major constriction of thinking can occur with the consequences being a reduction in creativity levels. He studied creativity quantitatively with the TTCT and focused on affect-laden thoughts and openness to affect states in children's play. In another study along the same lines, Hartman (1961) focused on the relationship of art education and creativity from a theoretical perspective. Findings indicated that creativity may be, in his words, "inherent in all of us, but it is hindered by rigid conceptualizations and systems of thought, and by lack of self-confidence developed through persistent failure" (p.50).

Although hindered creativity has not been thoroughly researched in adult education, there are a small number of studies that attempt to address this topic (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006; Noppe, 1996; Russ, 1993; Choi, 2004; Hartman, 1961; Domino, Short, Evans, & Romano, 2002; McManus & Furnham, 2006; Davis, 1999). Choi (2004) presented quantitative research on how contextual factors and psychological processes influence the hindrance of creativity in adult undergraduate business students. Results from their own development of survey questions on creativity and their own

measurement model conducted using principle-component analysis indicated that there were positive significant relationships between psychological processes that mediate the effects of various individual and contextual variables on creative performance. The study did not examine what this experience was like from the learners' perspective and did not offer any results or discussion that addressed anything besides the data analysis. Another limitation to the study is that it did not draw upon participants specifically selected for experiencing hindered creativity, but rather it consisted of a convenience sample of undergraduate students in an introductory business course.

Davis (1999) also described the possible inhibition of rules, traditions, policies, procedures, and regulations from a quantitative perspective. In his work, he referred to the limits of creativity as squelchers. By this he meant actions or speech that caused the squelch or inhibition of creativity in education. This study pointed out the need for educators to be careful when encouraging creativity. It also suggested that educators need to know how to inform the student about discretion and socially acceptable behavior for sharing creativity within a given context. In a similar study, Amabile (1988) articulated that the components that make up individual creativity coexist with external factors such as the social environment, expected evaluation, rewards determined in advance, time pressure, supervision, competition, and restricted choice with projects (e.g., working material or line of approach). These components could also have a negative effect on creativity and called for educators to become more aware of these situations in their teaching.

Two research studies stand out in addressing the hindrance of creativity with a focus on originality being activated by a disorientating dilemma for adult undergraduate students (James, 1995; Kurtzberg & Mueller, 2005). Both studies reveal that the learner's perception (positive or negative) was dependent on the task and the evaluation of others. Findings indicated that if the creative process was shut down by another instructor or student, the individual was often left with negative perceptions of that particular experience. Jehn (1997) indicated in his qualitative study about conflict types, "it is tremendously difficult for individuals to remain objective about a situation when they feel that others are disagreeing, or even disapproving, of their point of view" (p. 550). These studies highlight the interactions between adult educators and learners in terms of constructive criticism, feedback, and comments.

A quantitative study on the importance of creative thinking skills in the prediction of academic performance indicated that creativity was positively related to how well an adult learner performed from the start of a program to the finish (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2006). The higher the level of creativity that was expressed when the learner (i.e., graduate student) first entered the program and maintained throughout the program, strengthened the conclusion (i.e., thesis, dissertation) of the program as also being highly creative. This is in opposition to other students in the study with lower levels of creativity who were not encouraged by their instructors. This study also addressed the importance of providing individual support and positive comments to each learner, not just providing group encouragement**.** The study concluded that academic contexts do not focus on

promoting creativity and students often learn how to develop skills that allow them to imitate others rather than be innovative or creative with their own minds.

Identity and Creativity

A critical aspect of understanding creativity in adult education can be developed through understanding an individual's identity to creativity. Most linkages between creativity and identity have been explored in psychoanalytic (Miliora, 2000) and marketing research (Sethi, Smith, & Park, 2001) and in a number of qualitative dissertations (Edinger, 2002; Hartigan, 2000; Walker, 1999). By identity I mean the structure that makes an individual definable and recognizable as the same or different from others (Külpe, 1897; Taylor, 2007). Locke stated that personal identity is concerned with the characteristics, which arise from an individual's personality that are recognized or known, and how the identity structure is able to preserve itself over time (Locke, 1689). Recognizing the link between creativity and identity within adult education from both empirical and theoretical backgrounds may contribute to a better understanding of the impact of hindered creativity.

Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, and Haslam (2006) focused on the concept of creativity being linked to the social construction of identity in a quantitative study of undergraduate students using a social identity and a personal identity questionnaire. Csikszentmihalyi (1998) was cited as the main theorist behind the research, stating in his words that "what we call creativity is a phenomenon that is constructed through an interaction between the producer and audience…creativity is not the product of single individuals but of social

systems making judgments about individuals' products" (p. 41). The results indicated that although the societal norms influenced perceptions of creativity, there was no significant relationship to suggest that creativity is a social construction of an individual's identity. This research has been included because many of the theoretical articles that were found argued either for or against this very idea. This study defined creativity as being influenced by society, but not controlled by it. In comparison with group projects, the study noted that a group can actually promote creativity as a whole, but can also stifle individual creative efforts.

In comparison, one of the studies that did find a correlation between identity and creativity focused on the use of instruments to measure both levels of creativity and various aspects of identity (Dollinger, Dollinger, & Centro, 2005). A positive correlation between information-seeking style identity and creativity was found to be statistically significant with the greatest creativity potential and number of creative accomplishments among university students, both undergraduate and graduate levels. Those with normative or collective identities were shown to have fewer instances of creative accomplishments and a decreased drive to pursue creativity in their work. Implications for adult education include allowing individual expression of creativity and helping to recognize different personal styles of identity to foster creative growth, as well as being aware of the hindrances for creativity based on identity.

There are multiple studies available from the theoretical perspective on creativity and identity. Most focus on personal reflections of experiencing creativity either firsthand or within a group study (Congdon, 2005; Simpson, 2007; Lones, 1999; Kaufman, 1989).

One study by Radford (2004) emphasized both the personal reflection and the emotional impact of learning from a creative and transformative experience. He states, "Internalized emotional guidance systems are not entirely private subjective states, but are learned within a cultural context that accounts for the ability of one individual to construct an insight, an intelligent event, that is recognized and appreciated by others" (p. 63). This type of co-construction of how creativity is perceived can affect how an individual shapes his or her own identity. Weaknesses in this type of study include the lack of clear method designs, research findings, or implications. The theoretical perspectives tend to focus more on the personal narrative and contribute insight, not necessarily research based findings, to creativity research.

The Environment and Creativity

Through the aforementioned development of understanding how creativity can be influenced by identity and within an adult educational context, examination of how the environment forms a basis for the relationship between the learner and the facilitator comes into context. Although there have been many studies conducted about facilitating within educational environments, few have focused on the impact of creativity within adult education.

To establish a safe environment within the idea of instrumental learning, a facilitator needs to be willing to participate and engage fully with the class. By this I mean that they need to be present to the learners and they need to be open to the transformative learning process themselves. It also means developing an awareness of the

facilitator's culture, privileges, and powers in relation to others (Taylor, 2006 & Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, & Kasl, 2006). The use of multiple perspectives and multiple meanings becomes very important in attempting to assist in this process. To attain multiple perspectives in a classroom, the encouragement and implementation of textbooks and other outside readings was encouraged. Utilizing different textbooks has been an asset to adult learning because texts are viewed as having multiple meanings embedded in them allowing for greater critical reflection (Taylor, 2006). This can also help lead to a greater awareness of transformative learning being present, either as a goal or process to the course. The issue develops as to how a facilitator is able to interconnect creativity to the process of transformative learning either on an individual or group basis.

In an investigation of how creativity was either facilitated or hindered in a college environment, Chambers (1973) discovered that teachers had the largest impact on how creativity was facilitated and hindered with student's creative development. This quantitative study showed that teachers were seen as the critical link in terms of how the student responded to their own creativity on the graduate level. In addition, the most creative students in the study reported being more favorably influenced in terms of their creativity by their teachers outside the classroom in less formal settings, such as the laboratory, the office, or restaurants. Tempering the conclusions of this study, however, were concerns about the basis of the survey questions being on a Likert scale and not allowing for further explanation of the meaning behind the answers from the participants.

The concept of the interaction between facilitators, the environment, and learners has in recent years garnered more attention with creativity researchers. Another

theoretical study supports the idea of the adult educational setting existing beyond the classroom (Edelson, 1999). Edelson points out that "for adult educators the positive contribution of environment to creativity is a very significant line of thought because it can lead to an examination of educational and work settings and how they influence behavior…whimsical places where colleagues can meet, sit down, and exchange information" carry importance in his study (p.7). His study illuminates the value of a safe, concerned, and respectful environment in the learning process.

Support for environmental and social consideration is also found in Csikszentmihalyi (1997) where he discusses a number of general ways creativity can be encouraged (e.g., beautiful surroundings, nature, new wall color) or hindered (older furnishing, cracks in walls) and how it is important for educators to become aware of this influence. Gardner (1997) carries this idea further with his research, indicating that there may be environments that increase the potential for creativity, but it is still up to the facilitator to help encourage the creativity from the students. He states, "there is no absolute divide between the ordinary and the extraordinary" (p.5) and that we all harbor within us the ability to be creative and to flourish within that realm.

Because creativity is influenced by internal and external stimuli, it is essential to address the social climate that exists between the two and how this may play a role in the adult educational environment. Cropley (2006) found in a theoretical study that the climate (i.e., behaviors, attitudes, values, feelings in a classroom) could affect the levels of creativity that a group will promote, tolerate, or place sanctions on. Openness is the most important climate to encourage in a classroom for creativity to take place and a

willingness to allow for mistakes. Along these same lines, another theoretical article argued for the need for messiness in the classroom in order to change or develop creativity (Seal, 1995). Although this article focused mostly on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and ways of learning as applied to children, the same ideas can be applied to university students.

There are many theoretical articles on the importance of creativity in the classroom (Edelson, 1995, La Pierre, 1992, McCormick, 1997). The focus is primarily on case studies of individuals (sometimes the authors themselves) and his or her experiences of being creative. Unfortunately, these articles may contain personal assumptions and are often subjective in their descriptions of creativity. They provide relatively little or no new information about fostering, understanding, or defining creativity in an educational context. Although it is crucial to allow for personal reflection during the learning process, if an article only addresses one side of understanding creativity, then it has not gone far enough to consider other aspects of creativity. In transformative learning, part of the process is to allow for discourse with others in order to help the learner comprehend the changes taking place. The study of creativity is dominated by personal case studies and there is a greater need for objectively addressing creativity within an adult educational context with others.

Social Assumptions

Assumptions are rife in the field of creativity research. In terms of theoretical articles that address issues of creativity and adult education, intrinsic and/or extrinsic

factors help develop creativity by allowing individuals to become aware of their assumptions (Cannatella, 2004). Connecting creativity with transformative learning by forming new syntheses of knowledge based on meaning making (Van der Veen, 2006) is becoming more prevalent in current literature. Researchers are beginning to attempt to establish an understanding of what creativity means in a transformational learning experience. In an article about intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation for stimulating creativity, it has been argued that if a learner is naturally intrinsically motivated to perform a task or come up with an idea, the introduction of an extrinsic reward can actually smother their desire to contribute (Amabile, 1983, 1988)

The other debate occurring in current literature is that there is a need to return and evaluate our previous research for new perspectives. Most research on education has been performed outside the classroom and does not allow for the influence of the context itself to be considered (Greenfield et al., 2006). Cannatella (2004) has gone back to the underlying assumptions and even myths that exist about creativity to re-examine and form new understandings of these ideas in the context of adult education classrooms. The review indicates that society has established many of the pre-existing beliefs about creativity that are not true for everyone who could be considered creative. These assumptions not only hold us back as learners, but also influence how educators attempt to facilitate creative activities in the classroom.

In some cases, researchers and educators assumed that to be creative means that the person needs to be intelligent. Kim (2005), however, recently undertook a quantitative study to examine exactly that premise. Using the Torrance Test of Creative

Thinking (TTCT), she found that IQ scores and creativity had a negligible relationship and results showed that students with very low IQ scores were equally as creative as students with high IQ scores. Her implications for practice included encouraging teachers to see the potential for creativity in each student. One of the strengths of this study was her large number of participants at 45,880 individuals. However, this could also be a potential weakness because the participants were taken from previous research and reanalyzed.

Age Assumptions

Age is also cited as an assumption to creativity in the sense that a person needs to be young or younger in order to reach their full creative potential. There is evidence, however, that youth may not be the only creative peak in an individual's lifetime. Bronte (1997) has studied this with lifelong learning and measures of creativity in age groups. Her research has helped promote the idea that there may be two periods of 'high creativity' in a lifetime. The first occurring between ages twenty to twenty-five and the second occurring between the ages of fifty to fifty-five (Bronte, 1997). In order to create the basis of her article, Bronte argued that the longer human beings live, the greater the potential for a second wind of high creativity. This may suggest that earlier research needs to be revisited with an eye towards resurgent creativity in individuals.

Bronte's study suggests that adults continue to grow and develop into adulthood and beyond. These observations are significant for adult educators so they can become aware of the possibility for high creativity in their older returning adult learners and

support this idea in their classrooms. The study is concluded by stating "youth is the most creative period of life only in a short lifetime" (Bronte, 1997, p.11). Researching creativity and age has become a new development in recent dissertations, most stating that the longer we live, the more this topic needs to be examined because it no longer holds merit (Worth, 2001; Scott, 2002; Bratrud, 1999; Mockros, 1995; Sylcox, 1985; Cohen, 1985).

Another view of this assumption is that age actually enhances creativity with longer lifetimes because it allows for synthesis, reflection, and wisdom to come into play with older adults (Adams-Price, 1998; Kerka, 1999; Paulus & Asuncion, 1995). Hollander (1958) argued that those who are creative again in older age have earned the idiosyncrasy credits to deviate from conventional terms. These findings are significant to adult learning since many adults return to school at a later age. Personal, social, and environmental barriers to creativity can be overcome if popular misconceptions are laid to rest.

The Relationship between Creativity and Transformative Learning

Transformative learning theory is a relatively new concept within adult education. In the field of adult education the proliferation and expansion of transformative learning theory in relation to creativity is growing in research (Taylor, 2006). Over the past thirty years of development within transformative learning theory, two domains have emerged: instrumental learning and communicative learning. Both domains can be considered transformative (Mezirow, 2000; Grabove, 1997). Instrumental learning is connected to

issues of control and/or manipulation of the environment the learner is surrounded by while attempting to solve problems. Communicative learning is understanding what others mean when they engage in discourse.

Transformative learning represents a challenge to become aware of our conscious and unconscious assumptions in relation to our overall experience. One of the less developed views of transformative learning is the need to better understand the role of imagination and creativity in the growth of self-knowledge (Dirkx, 1997). This can be achieved through critical reflection of both the learners and the facilitators. In some ways, both instrumental and communicative learning can influence how creativity is fostered or hindered in adult education**.**

In terms of communicative learning, one problem that arises is how to assess the idea that creativity is being utilized to help foster transformative learning. There can be a holistic change that occurs within the individual learner by means of 'expressive ways of knowing' or forms of learning that engage the learner's imagination (Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, & Kasl, 2006; Hagans, 2005).This directly implies that facilitators need to understand how to communicate more effectively to learners from very diverse backgrounds. Through this understanding, a facilitator could begin to then recognize the potential for creativity to occur in individual and group projects. This form of learning helps the development of creative thinking skills and also promotes identification with others in terms of emotions and feelings. However, for this type of safe environment to exist, it must be co-created between both learners and facilitators.

An example of how transformative learning and creativity can be applied in adult education is found in Clarkson's (2005) article about designing and implementing an undergraduate course on creativity as a requirement for all art majors. The experience of the students indicates that reflective practice played a large role in how the course progressed. Students began to trust their inner voices and take more risks in their artwork. The article concluded by stating "it enhanced the sense of authentic identity and motivation for inner-directed learning" (p.12). Although this article describes the changes teachers viewed in the students, it lacks any actual interviews from the students to better grasp their own understandings of any developmental change that occurred.

This type of personalization of curriculum is often cited as being a necessary construct for incorporating creativity into adult education (Edelson, 1995). However, no research is provided to indicate that this would have any long lasting effects, especially in the realm of transformative learning. Yet, there is an impact on the learner when the facilitator takes the time to get to know the learners and find out what it is they would like to learn, what strengths they offer the group, and what they need to improve on (Von Kotze & Cooper, 2000).

To promote creativity in South Africa, research has shown that project-based learning is key to helping all students construct new knowledge together which is action-oriented and socially relevant (Von Kotze & Cooper, 2000). Project-based learning is defined as the community working with the university to develop a problem and the graduate students working on teams to help solve the project problem. Collaborative learning, creativity, critical reflection, and the idea of promoting an inclusive approach to

knowledge production and dissemination are cited as strengths of the program. Although this article does not address transformative learning directly, it discusses the importance of change, development, and reflection between the individual, the community and the university.

Modern dance and filmmaking are two areas of study for transformative learning and creativity (Sgroi, 1998, Press, 2001; Parr, 2007). The article on modern dance states that the goal of education is the transformation of a being into something that is further developed. "Creativity, in its elemental nature, is transformative" (Press, 2001, p.224). The article is full of rich descriptions of dancers' experiences of entering into a program and feeling not only their bodies change, but also the change of their lived experienced and the meaning of their lives. Filmmaking can also stimulate creative worlds through the use of participatory video work where individuals collaborate on a video together (Parr, 2007). This type of experience was referred to as the "transformative potential" of the art-making context. Although both articles were theoretical in nature, they offered clear examples of how transforming the experience of creativity can be in an educational context.

Another example of creativity and learning coming together for adult education can be found in two recent dissertations (Harrell, 2005; Jongeward, 1995). In Harrell's (2005) study, creative writing in graduate programs and the environment of an educational setting were reviewed for support, evaluation, and life experience. Internal motivation was a key factor and the concept of flow was discussed as a principle effect. Jongeward's (1995) study focused more on the adult education classroom as a place for

creativity to emerge in various projects, group dynamics, and the establishment of a safe place for learning. Both studies discuss the learner's experience in relation to transformative learning within an adult educational context.

Sports, mathematics, and engineering can also be educational contexts where creativity and transformational learning occur. In all three areas, creativity can be a slow process to develop and often takes many years to surface (Livne & Milgram, 2006; Senyshyn, 2006; Christiaans & Venselaar, 2005). For the development of creativity in sports a question that often arises "is technique alone enough for judging a champion or should we base our criteria by shifting to values based on creativity and drama…is accumcy [sic] of techniques as defined by the establishment more important than a technique that is defined and transformed by the creativity, imagination, and subjectivity of the competing individual?" (Senysyn, 2006, p.188). All three studies echo the idea that creativity should be encouraged and not hindered by the system that controls or judges it. The same point for stimulating creativity is presented in studies on technology and workplace (King, 2002; Stenmark, 2000; Fenwick, 2004; Polo, Rotchford, & Setteducatti, 1999; Amabile, 1998).

Overall there is still the need for more research in creativity, especially in an adult educational context. Many quantitative studies have been conducted on creativity types, accessing creativity, and teaching creatively. Likewise there are a growing number of qualitative studies about transformative learning, but not necessarily in relation to creativity. This literature review offers a comprehensive overview of the current trends in

research in creativity and addresses the importance of giving rise to the learner's perspective of creativity in an educational context.

Summary

Chapter II contains a review of the relevant literature concerning the topics of creativity, adult learning, and transformative learning. The chapter started with a clear definition of creativity and focused on the various approaches to researching creativity that include the mystical, psychodynamic, psychometric, cognitive, social-personality, and confluence approaches. Factors that influence creativity and adult learning were addressed and included the development and hindrance of creativity, the comparison and contrast of creativity and critical thinking, the connection between a learner's identity and their creative abilities, the environment for learning, and the social and age assumptions that exist with creativity. The chapter was concluded with a review of the recent research articles concerning creativity and transformative learning of adults. Chapter III will address the specific qualitative method to be used for the study as well as the overall research design and process.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In order to understand the graduate student's experience of hindered creativity in an educational context, the qualitative research method known as phenomenology was selected for the study. Chapter II contained a review and summary of the relevant empirical and theoretical research literature in relation to the nature of creativity and adult learning. Chapter III will describe the specifics of the qualitative phenomenological research method, bracketing interview, participant selection process, participants' interviews and data analysis. A chapter summary will also be included.

Research Design

This study utilized an existential phenomenological research design, as outlined by Thomas and Pollio (2002). My doctoral work at the University of Tennessee provided me the opportunity to study with Dr. Howard Pollio and Dr. Sandra Thomas. The interactive experience of personally studying under Dr. Pollio and Dr. Thomas united the foundations of phenomenology and served as an unparalleled opportunity to tailor an appropriate phenomenological approach to studying my research question. The phenomenology courses and the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy facilitated by Dr. Pollio and Dr. Thomas provided extensive and detailed instruction on phenomenology and presented the theory that grounds their own

approach to the method. This is discussed thoroughly in the research procedure section of this chapter. The Thomas and Pollio (2002) approach to phenomenological research provides an appropriate method for gaining a deeper understanding of the essence within a lived experience. Conducting a qualitative study with a phenomenological design allows for the meaning of the lived experiences of participants to emerge from the data and offers a detailed look into the complexity of learners' experiences.

Phenomenology

The locus of phenomenological research is human experience. By this I mean that phenomenology centers on the lived experience of the participants. To understand phenomenology more clearly, a review of how the method came into existence is provided.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is considered to be the founder of existentialism as it relates to phenomenology. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is considered to be the main proponent of phenomenology as a focus for research (Valle & Halling, 1989; McBride, 1997; Alter & Walter, 2007). Likewise, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) is regarded as the philosopher who bridged the two concepts of existentialism and phenomenology (Priest, 1998).

Kierkegaard was concerned with the philosophy of addressing the concrete experience of the individual. This concept is different from previous philosophies that put the focus on the universal. Since the starting point is the individual's experience, existential philosophy does not try to arrive at general truths or objective understandings

(Earnshaw, 2006). Kierkegaard was able to draw parallels between his life and his philosophy by choosing to focus on the themes of: a) the conflict between intellectual life and spiritual life, b) the individual's relationship to others, c) the question of freedom, d) suffering, e) remaining faithful in spite of change, and f) the search for meaning (Carlisle, 2006). Kierkegaard remained situated within the philosophical realm of existential phenomenology and these ideas were expressed in his book *Either/Or* (1843/1987) that would later carry a large influence upon Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Nietzsche, Franz Kafka, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others.

Husserl took a more academic approach to existential phenomenology and was concerned with how phenomenology could address the core idea, "to the things themselves" (Valle & Halling, 1989, p.9). By this he meant that the researcher should study things as they appear so that a deeper understanding of human consciousness and experience could be brought about. Although this may sound simple, the method to conduct such research is rigorous, time consuming, and often illuminating. He approached the research from the experiences of the individual because of his belief that experience is a reality that results from the openness of human awareness to the world, not from the mind or physical body (Valle & Halling, 1989).

Husserl found that most of the scientific methods available in his time were too limiting when used to study such subjects as love, joy, choice, and freedom. He stated that phenomenology was to be a science of pure essences, devoid of naturalistic prejudices from empirical sciences. Moran (2000) summarized that it must "abstract from the merely contingent, factual features of our experience in order to isolate what is

essential to all experiences of that kind" (p. 132). Husserl referred to this idea of phenomenology as being an eidetic science, meaning it takes on the entire domain of consciousness as its field of research and is concerned with possibilities, not facts (Russell, 2006). Both Kierkegaard and Kant influenced Husserl during this time. Husserl (1982) noted that experience is central to phenomenology when he wrote that "natural cognition begins with experience and remains within experience" (p. 5).

One of the key concepts in Husserl's phenomenology is the study of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. It strives for the root meaning or essence of the things in the world around us from our lived experiences. Descriptions are more important than facts. The "why" of the experience is less significant because it does not allow for a transcendental understanding of the experience but rather focuses on the naturalistic understanding of empirical science (Smith, 2007). By transcendental he means that the experience comes before the essence that comes before the theory. Therefore, the essences of experience come before the theories of science. In this realm of experience lies the life-world or *Lebenswelt*. This is the world of the individual as lived as a unity of body and world and not an external environment that is separate from him or her (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962).

Another key concept in Husserl's approach to the phenomenological method is the idea of bracketing as part of the phenomenological method for allowing researchers to become aware of their biases, assumptions, beliefs, and values through an interview process before the data collection (Earnshaw, 2006). Husserl referred to this concept as the phenomenological reduction of both the researcher's experience and later with the

experience of the participants. The process would allow the researcher to ingress into a new way of viewing the world that pays attention to the phenomena of consciousness and not the habitual manners the research possessed before. This new way of looking at things is necessary if a researcher is attempting to capture the essences of the lived experience of all and not just their experience.

Merleau-Ponty united the two areas of existentialism and phenomenology when he re-examined the ideas of phenomenology through the lens of existentialism in order to create his existential phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The central thesis of his existential phenomenology was the idea that phenomenology is the study of essences, which he wrote about in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962). Merleau-Ponty posited that if one individual experienced the essence of a phenomenon, then there was no reason another individual could not experience the same essence of the same phenomena. By essence, he meant the unchanging and universal patterns of meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Essences are defined, according to Merleau-Ponty, by an individual's lived experiences within their life-world of the body, time, others, and world. These concepts form the four attributes of existential phenomenology and are discussed more in-depth in the following section.

Four Attributes of Existential Phenomenology

Taken together, Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty have helped create a new science of exploration that focuses on the individual's lived experience of the world.

The purpose of existential phenomenological research is to produce clear, precise (i.e., using the participant's language), and organized descriptions of the meaning that constitutes the activity of the consciousness in experience. Existential phenomenology can be understood through the influence of Merleau-Ponty's philosophical aspects of the individual's experience with their life-world: Body, Time, Others, and World (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Each attribute can have an effect upon the individual's experience of consciousness and should be examined closely to better understand phenomenology.

Body

The body in phenomenology can be understood by comparing it to the scientific medical view of the body. The sciences view the body as something that is separate from us, that is to say that there is separation between the mind and body in an objective view. The existential phenomenologist views the body as being-in-the-world and connected to the world around it (Husserl, 1964, Heidegger, 1962). This being-in-the-world, or the lived body as Merleau-Ponty (1962) refers to it, is the wholeness of the being as one and not a sum of parts constituting a whole. The body does not originate as an objective, separate image to the self, but rather as an experience of self and body as one. Merleau-Ponty points out that the child lives the body, develops its capacity for action with the body, and builds up a familiarity with the body over time.

Sartre (1943/1995) describes our bodies as being situated in language. When we discuss our bodies, we think of our inner intuition as being separate from our connection to the physical body due to clinical or biological descriptions. The issue is that the

consciousness exists within the body and an individual is always "in" consciousness. Sartre compares the idea to the notion put forth by August Comte: 'The eye cannot see itself' (Sartre, 1995, p. 316). An individual is unable to see the seeing and the idea of a mind/body duality ceases to exist (Earnshaw, 2006). To address the lived body (i.e., corporeality) is only one part of this attribute. The second part is the lived space (i.e., spatiality).

Within the idea of lived space, human action is said to be lying all about us (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). To be able to fully comprehend the body, the space around the individual must be taken into consideration as well. Again, this is not addressing the scientific concerns of dimensions or directions (e.g., up, down, forward, backward). Instead, the lived space is about the space in which an individual is oriented in a tangible, bodily manner. The space is organized in a form of possible networks for our body to co-exist with. For example, when I wake up in the morning, before I am able to fully comprehend what I am doing, I discover myself in the bathroom, reaching for the toothbrush. My body is orientated toward the sink before I have reflected upon the activity of brushing my teeth; I am already in the process of doing it. I have moved through my lived space as one co-existing with my lived body.

Within both realms of the lived body and lived space lies the idea of perception. Perception is a special kind of experiencing according to Husserl (1913, 1931, 1948). He referred to it as our most original relationship to the world because we experience things in the flesh through our perception of them. In other words, we are present to them. Merleau-Ponty (1962) takes the idea a step further to write that the body is a point of

view on things and is our perception. Our senses give access to the world around us through our perceiving body. This can be limiting since we live to perceive and not the reverse (Valle & Halling, 1989). Therefore, we unknowingly create a division between our lived bodies and our perception of them within our lived space. That is why this is a concern, because there is no separation between the body, mind, space, and world. Part of what generates this perception on separateness becomes apparent in the universal concept of time and our personal experience of time.

Time

Time is closely connected to body, space, others, and world through our perception of it. In understanding the concept of time within phenomenology, it is important to establish a few notions about time. Time can be understood as repetitive and linear. The whole notion of seconds, minutes, hours, days, and months is repetitive, that means it will cycle through again. There will be another Monday; you just have to wait a week. Yet, the essence of a calendar year is that it disappears. Last year, 2007, is gone. Where did it go? If time is linear to our experience, then it must have gone in placement directly after 2006. However, we cannot regain that year or experience that year again in the present. We can only recall our perception of the year as it occurred to us through our experience (Heidegger, 1962).

If time is linear, then there must be a beginning and an end. It is assumed we know the age of the earth through scientific dating, yet we do not really know the exact age or the beginning of time. There are religious interpretations, scientific interpretations,

and there are our own experiences of our time with a beginning (i.e., birth) and end (i.e., death). What is interesting about all of these notions when considered with phenomenology is that they are different from what we have been assuming.

In existential phenomenology, time is understood as having three temporal components: the future, the essence of having been, and the now (Earnshaw, 2006). This is different from the typical conception of time: the future, past, and present. The future is referred to as the potential for being-in-the-world. It is connected to the now of the being-in-the-world because it represents the idea of more experiences to the individual. The now is located between having been and potential being. It is very similar to the idea of the present except that it is connected to the being and not something separate from it. The notion of having been is linked to the idea of the now as being continuous with the essence of having been. It is also not a separate past that is behind an individual, but rather it exists within the now just as the potential being also exists within the now. In this idea of time, everything is connected and does not necessarily repeat or follow a linear path (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Phenomenology does not necessarily recognize a beginning or an end, but rather only a continuum of time. Birth can be viewed as the one end of the continuum and death can be viewed as a being-towards-the beginning again (Heidegger, 1962). Within this idea, an individual is always between the processes of either end or beginning and exists within the continuum as one. Therefore, death is not necessarily a negative, time is not necessarily measured as it is experienced, and the notion of running out of time is non-

existent. This concept of time is not widely accepted and time as measured is seemingly more real than time as lived.

Others

Being-in-the-world is only the start of understanding existential phenomenology. Another aspect could be called being-in-the-world-with-Others (Earnshaw, 2006). This is because the idea of Others is also central to being in the sense that we can either choose to acknowledge or ignore, but the Others are always there just as we are always being. As Heidegger (1964) points out, "the world is always the one I share with others" (p. 155). Within this relationship with the Other, there exists a concern for another's well-being. Only through knowing an Other can an individual become his or her own authentic being as opposed to being part of the "they" (p.164).

In the "they" of the world of Others, the being loses itself into the "they" due to the idea that they dissolve into averages. They are afraid of the same things as the being and they experience a leveling down of all possibilities as a whole. Yet, the being is a part of the "they" when in the presence of Others and must become aware of the possibility of losing their authentic self (Heidegger, 1964). By being with Others, the being becomes the "nobody" because the whole becomes the "they" which are the "who" of the life-world.

Another perspective on the Other is offered by Sartre (1995), where he introduces the notion of self, or rather to become aware of one's self, in the presence of Others. He states, "this means that all of a sudden I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not

in that I am the foundation of my own nothingness but in that I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am pure reference to the Other" (p.260). In this idea the expression of not truly knowing one's self in relation to the Other holds ground; an individual present a face to the world that they can never know. The Other is an object for me and I am an object for the Other to reflect back upon.

Within the idea of the Other being an object for reflection, the final piece to the Other and being is presented as the idea that the Other makes myself and holds the secret knowing of myself as I cannot know and holds a contingence over myself as my foundation with the world (Sartre, 1995). For example, if I choose to love another person (i.e., Other), I truly do not have the control or even the knowledge of that loving because the Other must choose for me and I have lost myself in the process. The experience of the Other is broken down into themes of relationship, comparison, and benefit (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997).

In relationship to Others there exists a full awareness of interactions that impacts the being. In comparison to Others there exists the understanding of how one is similar or different to Others, a group of Others, or a social normality. Finally, in benefit there is the idea of Others being used to fulfill a need or desire. However, the themes are not mutually exclusive and can often overlap in different situations or experiences (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). So our being-in-the-world is closely connected to the world of Others that allows us to reflect off of and understand our own being. Yet all of the connections created within the idea of Others are tightly woven into understanding the world.

World

For both Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Husserl (1964), the world is not separate from the being, but rather the person and the world co-construct each other. There is a fundamental connectedness that is present between the being and the world that encapsulates experience. This idea of the being and world co-constructing each other is referred to as intentionality (Ihde, 1986). Within this configuration, it is important to note that even though the two aspects are co-constructed and connected, the human experience is continually pointed towards the world but never possesses it entirely (Gadamer, 1976). Hence, the being-in-the-world expression.

The intentionality of the being and the world is concerned with action (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). It is through the action of the body interacting with the world where meaning occurs. Therefore, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) states, there is a direct relationship between me being in the world and the idea of the two being together (i.e., not- I am in my body and then the world). For example, when I am in my studio working on a painting, the only experience I have is of me and painting. The action is part of what takes over my own being and I cannot separate the being of myself from the world in that moment.

The world is concerned with scale/power, danger/safety, obstacle/opportunity, beauty/inspiration, change, and connection/alienation in a continuum (Pollio & Thomas, 2002). Within each of these themes of the world there exists the potential for a ground in phenomenology. The ground can also be found in the body, time, and Others as well. To better understand what is meant by ground, let us examine the relationship of

figure/ground from a phenomenologist perspective. The figure can be found in relation to the ground. The ground is that which holds the figures together and connects them with each other. The concept of figure/ground is illustrated in Figure 1.

According to Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) there are four properties to the figure/ground relationship. The properties help define the relationship of the figures emerging from the ground and reiterate the difficulty of locating the ground that is ever-present:

1. The figure appears to have a definite form and a sharp shape boundary: the ground is less defined and appears more diffuse.
2. The figure is experienced as closer than the ground, which is experienced as behind the figure.
3. The figure is more easily named and/or described than the ground.
4. The figure is experienced as in clear focus than the ground (p.12).

The figures are represented by the black areas of the image, labeled 'A'. The ground is represented by the white areas of the image, labeled 'B'. Although the figures can overlap each other or stand alone, the ground always acts as the support for which the figures are located. The ground cannot be separate from the figures because it is the foundation of which the figures emerge from within.

As Pollio, Henley, & Thompson (1997) posited:

> All objects of experience are experienced in relation to some less clear part of the total situation serving to situate the focal object. There are no figures by themselves: All figural aspects of (perceptual) experience always emerge against some ground that serves to delineate its experimental form…it is never experimentally valid to talk of an isolated figure of experience, perceptual or otherwise; rather we must always talk about the figure/ground structure of the experience (note the slash) to emphasize that human experience is a patterned event defined by focal and background aspects (p.13).

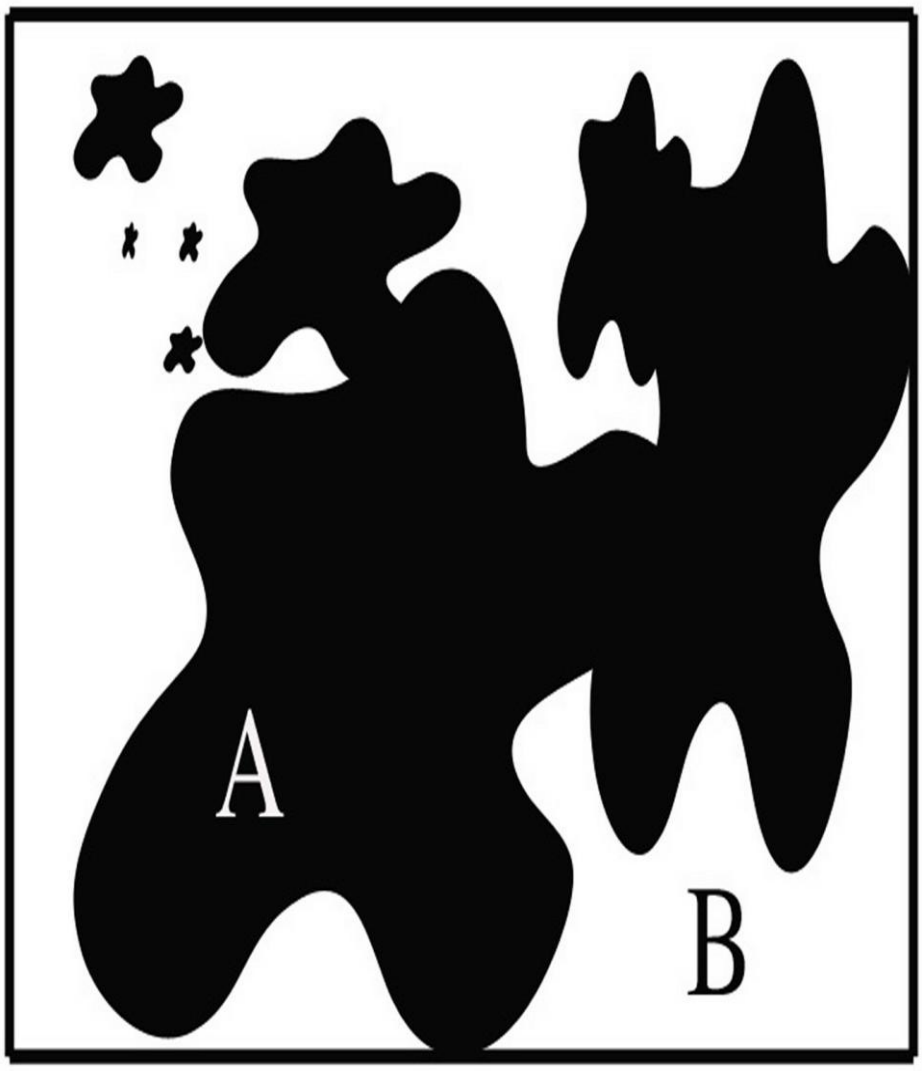


Figure 1 The Figure/Ground Relationship

It is within this figure/ground relationship that an understanding of the essences of the experience comes through. As in the idea of intentionality, the being, experience, world, and figure/ground relationship are all aspects of a single phenomenon. By considering the body, time, others, and world as being attributes to existential phenomenology, the essences of the experience are able to emerge and become known.

Research Procedure

The central research procedure included in this dissertation was outlined by Thomas and Pollio (2002) for an existential phenomenological research study. Since Thomas and Pollio elected to guide their approach of phenomenology through Merleau-Ponty, the four attributes of existential phenomenology were included in the previous section to help assist the reader with the underpinnings of the philosophy.

For the purposes of this study, it is imperative to review Merleau-Ponty's belief that the life-world is central to phenomenology. By definition, essences are patterns of universal meanings that could be considered constant and definite (Jennys, 1986). To research the essence of a life-world, the lived experience must be returned to and re-examined not through theoretical standards, but on the experience's own terms (Thomas & Pollio, 2002).

The existential phenomenology described by Thomas and Pollio emphasize the direct nature of human experience through the participant's perception. As influenced by Merleau-Ponty, Thomas and Pollio (2002) state that the "primacy of perception… provides a direct experience of the events, objects, and phenomena of the world" (p.14).

By the term perception, Merleau-Ponty (1962) meant the uninterrupted undertaking between the being and the world as they co-construct one another. Through this perception arrives the idea of intentionality. As Thomas and Pollio (2002) state, "…intentionality emphasizes the directional nature of human experience – perception included – as it (and we) deal with objects, events, and phenomena *in the world*" (p.14). Therefore the two concepts, perception and intentionality, complement each other and assist with the understanding of lived experiences and essences which are important to the research procedure of Thomas and Pollio.

The following research procedures are guided by Thomas and Pollio's approach and have been employed in this study: the opening research interview question, the bracketing interview, the interpretive research group, participant synopses and their interviews, and the data collection and analysis. To address a specific method, such as phenomenology, within the research procedures it is sometimes beneficial to provide step-by-step guidelines to facilitate the applicability and rationale of the underlying approach. Therefore, each section attempts to provide such guidelines to assist the reader. A summary is also taken into consideration.

Opening Research Interview Question

A qualitative approach expressed through phenomenology is considered appropriate for this study because the research question proposed suggests the desire to understand the meaning of a phenomenon by those that have experienced it (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). According to the authors, the appropriate opening research question "will

enable respondents to talk about something they know and are willing to discuss" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p.24). Likewise, the opening research interview question in a phenomenological study functions as a base from which the participant's experience can emerge through the allowance of thick, rich descriptive responses in the words of the participants.

The exact wording of the opening research interview question is critically important when using phenomenological methods because it sets the background for the answer. The question usually does not begin with "how" or "why" since that would create an innovation for quick short explanations or presumed answers and not allow the participant to reflect and share their lived experience. The opening research interview question is meant to guide the participant to speak freely about what stood out for them to allow for "think descriptions" of their lived experience (Pollio et al., 1997).

Therefore, only one question is asked that will allow for an open interviewing process. The research interview question for the present study is: "As a graduate student, tell me about an experience where you became aware your creativity was being hindered in an educational context".

Bracketing Interview

The idea of bracketing as referenced by Husserl is part of the phenomenological method for allowing researchers to become aware of his or her biases, assumptions, presuppositions, beliefs, values, and *epoché* through an interview process that occurs before the data collection (Earnshaw, 2006). Husserl referred to this concept as the

phenomenological reduction of the researcher's experience and later with the experience of the participants. The process would allow the researcher to enter into a new way of viewing the world that pays attention to the phenomena of consciousness and not the habitual manners the researcher had before. This different approach of looking at things is necessary if a researcher is attempting to comprehend the essences of the lived experience of the participants and not just their experience.

The different approach of looking corresponds to the concept of "suspending" one's assumptions and presuppositions as described by Valle & Halling (1989). In the process of suspending, the researcher puts their biases out front to make them noticeable (Isaacs, 1994). Although this process does not allow the researcher to place their assumptions completely and totally aside, it does provide a space for greater openness to the specific lived experiences of others as described by the participants.

In conjunction to the bracketing interview of the researcher, the interview is presented for review for further interpretation by colleagues familiar with the tenets of phenomenological research such as the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy. The group is composed of members across various disciplines such as Psychology, Nursing, Educational Psychology, Geography, and Political Science that are involved with phenomenological research and data analysis. The group meets every Tuesday for two hours at the University School of Nursing in a private classroom. Dr. Pollio and Dr. Thomas facilitate the analysis of two interviews during this time (one interview the first hour, another interview during the second hour). Approximately ten to twenty members of the group are present at each meeting. The group is able to notice any

theoretical suppositions or assumptions not recognized by the primary researcher, which assists the researcher with avoiding stereotypical interpretations (Pollio et al., 1997).

I participated in a bracketing interview before the collection of data to allow myself to become aware of my own personal biases, assumptions, presuppositions, values, beliefs, and *epoché* in relation to the hindrance of creativity in an educational context (See Appendix A). The interview was conducted with a fellow phenomenological researcher, Michele Williams, on September 18, 2007. The interview lasted approximately one hour and took place on the campus of the University of Tennessee in a private classroom. One question was asked of me during the interview: "As a graduate student, tell me about an experience where you became aware your creativity was being hindered in an educational context".

The interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder and was transcribed by me, photocopied and taken to the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy for further analysis. During this meeting, the researcher was not allowed to talk, but only to listen to the other members of the colloquy to ensure that the process is as objective as possible and not eschewed by the researcher in any way.

Upon completion of the bracketing transcript analysis, I was asked to respond to what assumptions, theories, and biases that stood out for me. The other members were also asked for feedback and notes were taken by me as to what presuppositions and assumptions needed to be bracketed before proceeding with the interviews.

As I became aware of my own personal biases and assumptions during the process of analyzing the interview, it became evident that it is perhaps impossible that all

of these presuppositions can be taken out of the research process. However, I do believe the presuppositions can be objectively identified and made visible to the researcher. The recognition and subsequent suspension of my own presuppositions by myself and other members of the colloquy taught me to become aware of the potential influence the presuppositions could have on the participants during the interview process. The bracketing interview yielded a number of assumptions that are discussed in the next section.

The bracketing process in not composed of one interview and analysis, however. It exists on a continuum with the research being conducted. By this I mean that the researcher must be diligent in going back to the bracketing interview and reviewing what assumptions were discovered as well as allowing for the colloquy to hold the researcher accountable during the analysis of participant interviews. This process has also been supported by using reflective journaling to allow for the on-going bracketing process to continue throughout the study. After each interview I spent about fifteen minutes writing down my thoughts about the experience of the interview and purposefully bracketing any assumptions that took place during the interview. The bracketing interview and reflective journal have helped me to avoid misleading participants during the interview process and to avoid any misinterpretations of the data analysis after all the interviews had been conducted.

Analysis of the Bracketing Interview

The University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy assisted with the analysis of my bracketing interview. Sixteen members of the group were present on the day of the analysis and helped illuminate any assumptions that I had about hindered creativity in an educational context. Some very important concepts were revealed to me during the analysis of the bracketing interview that could have potentially influenced the interview process with the participants and influenced the interpretation of the data analyses overall.

There were numerous assumptions that I became aware of during the analysis. One assumption I bring to this research is that professors care about students' creativity. Specifically, I possessed the notion that a good professor is one who is open-minded and seeks to encourage students to be creative. I also assumed that a professor is observant of their students and wants to encourage them to try new things. This led to an overall belief on my part that professors play a powerful role in shaping students creativity. Because of this belief, I connected the student's creativity with learning and development and correlated it to change with either positive or negative effects (e.g., loss of confidence). I provided an example of what had happened to me as an adult student when a professor had returned a paper of mine with numerous red-inked changes and essentially effected hindrances on my creativity:

> It was in the moment of that experience, I started to become aware that when I first approached the assignment, I felt like I had more freedom and I felt like I could do anything. A lot of that was the environment of the class and how the professor had laid out the assignment. That freedom was taken from me…I felt like I lost that ability to sit down and write a paper. To sit down and express myself. I lost that ability because of what had

> happened. The consequences of getting all the red marks on the paper…that is what changed I think my perception of how I was viewing my ability to write.

The bracketing interview revealed that I had experienced both sides of the study. First, as an adult student having my creativity hindered, and second as an assistant professor facilitating the hindered creativity. In both cases, I assumed there was a change that took place in the adult student and perhaps even in the professor's mindset. The change is life affecting, meaning that it could actually shift the ground of a person's lived experience for them. The shift could occur in a single moment and have lasting effects upon the individual, as illustrated in the example provided in Chapter I:

> …I could feel her changing before me. Everything about her was changing and I was grasping…trying to tell her, you know, why you don't do that. At the same time in my head I am thinking, 'oh my gosh, why did I just say don't'. I am thinking how do I recovery this, what do I do…this is a huge moment. I felt like I was changing her whole being and I was pausing and I looked at her and her eyes were not focusing on anything at that point. She was just in this other place.
>
> So, there's this, um, as an educator and having taught art classes after that…it has made me realize the importance of a single word. One word can change an entire moment and when someone is that, um, this student, when she was in that moment and how my word effected her moment. There's a sensitivity there that I had not been aware of before until that happened.

Overall, I assumed the professor held great power over the adult learner through either verbal or written words. I associated freedom of expression with the ability to be creative. I embraced a fear of changing the student through hindering creativity. In addition, I believed that hindering creativity was a very negative experience and I did not address any potential positives to hindering creativity. I also assumed creativity requires

consideration and thought, and I further assumed that the context in which creativity occurs is equally important in terms of assessing the value of a creative occurrence. It became evident that I linked creativity to either being appropriate or inappropriate in relation to its context. Finally, the bracketing interview also revealed my belief that there may be limits to creativity, depending upon the situation.

Most of the metaphors I used during my interview were related to thinking visually: “it left a scar on me”, “that suits me”, “in my eyes”, and “I can see it in my head”. I also described my experiences as being “in the moment” or “at that moment” referring to a now that I was being present to even though it was in the past. I used powerful words to describe how the hindrance of my creativity felt to me: “my heart hurt”, “stress”, “scar”, and “lost”. Clearly for me, the hindrance of creativity had a significant impact on my graduate experience as an adult learner.

This bracketing interview allowed me an open opportunity to understand the possible assumptions I brought with me to the study. The assistance of the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy provided further validity to the bracketing analysis since many of the same members were later present during the analysis of the participant interviews.

Human Subjects Review Board

Prior to proceeding with the research study of hindered creativity, I obtained the approval of the Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at

the University of Tennessee to collect data on human subjects (See Appendix B) Permission was granted to proceed on October 30, 2007.

Pilot Study

As recommended by Thomas and Pollio (2002) a pilot study was conducted to examine how the opening research interview question would be received by possible participants for phenomenological research. If a participant has any trouble describing their experience then the question perhaps needs to be reviewed again in order to develop a question that would facilitate the interview (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For this study, one pilot interview was conducted and analyzed by the researcher and again by the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy. The participant volunteered on the basis of having experienced the phenomenon and his willingness to discuss their experience. The participant was able to provide thick, rich descriptions of his experience. This confirmed the validity of the carefully worded opening research question and the study proceeded as planned.

Participants

Participants for this phenomenological research were purposefully selected based on two criteria: a) to have experienced the phenomenon of hindered creativity; and b) the willingness to discuss that experience with a researcher (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Thomas and Pollio (2002) state that the sample size should range between six and twelve participants or when saturation has been established within the data collection. Saturation

of the data is established when redundancy occurs in the thematic structures during an interview. Saturation of the data for this study occurred approximately after the seventh interview conducted.

Participants were invited to be a part of this study through the use of informational flyers (See Appendix C) and word-of-mouth or snowball sampling. The decision to include both master and doctoral graduate students in this study was based on the need for participants and the fact that some master degrees, like the M.F.A., are considered a terminal degree within their field. Telephone and email correspondence was limited to the logistics of the meeting in terms of securing places and assisting with directions or times. Of the twelve participants who volunteered for this study, six contacted me via email in response to the informational flyer that was distributed by me around campus on public viewing boards. Two participants contacted me via telephone also in response to the informational flyer. Four of the participants contacted me via email in response to word-of-mouth from other participants in the study.

Two additional perspective volunteers contacted me via email after the sample size had reached the maximum number of participants as approved by the IRB and were informed that the data collection process of interviewing had been closed. All posted informational flyers were retrieved and discarded upon conducting the final interview. Certain measures (such as the participant's requests regarding interview location) were taken to make sure participants were interviewed in a safe and comfortable environment. The sites for the meetings were on campus in graduate student's offices, library meeting

rooms, or private classrooms depending on what was available at the time and what was convenient for the participants.

The anticipated risk of harm to participants by participating in this research study was no greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine psychological examinations or tests. Participants may have benefited from participation in this research study because they had the opportunity to reflect on their experience as a graduate student when responding to the interview question. Responses may have helped illuminate aspects of their experience that the participants had not considered before.

Although the findings cannot be generalized, a description of the participants' experiences may benefit other graduate students who have similar demographic characteristics. The descriptions may benefit educators who are seeking to widen their own understandings of hindered creativity. Considerations and protections for participants were clearly stated in the informed consent form to ensure that no harm was done to the participants and that all benefits and risks were thoroughly explained. The IRB form was submitted after the proposal process for review by the IRB board. The study was approved by the IRB board in late October.

Participants were interviewed individually for approximately forty to sixty minutes depending upon the context. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder for the purposes of transcribing the interview later. This transcription process allowed for the descriptions of the experiences to remain true to the participant's words. All interviews were confidentially reviewed by me through headphones and transcribed into

Microsoft Word documents using a Mac OS X. Each line in the transcript was numbered for referral purposes during the data analysis. The letter 'I' was used in the transcript to represent the interviewer speaking and the letter 'P' was used to represent the participant speaking.

The information in the research study records have been and will continue to be kept strictly confidential. Data were stored securely on my password-protected computer in a locked file and was made available only to persons conducting and assisting with the study (e.g., the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy) unless a participant specifically provided written permission to do otherwise. No reference was made in oral or written reports that could link a participant to the research study. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to preserve anonymity. Only the researcher knows the identity of the participants and which pseudonym was assigned to each participant.

All printed documents from the interviews and all the digital files (e.g., interviews and reflection journal) were destroyed upon completion of the study. The informed consent forms will be kept for three years after the completion of the study as required by the IRB and will be destroyed by the researcher after meeting the established time requirement.

Interviews

Using the Thomas and Pollio (2002) approach, the interview is meant to help another understand what his or her experience is of a phenomenon from their "first-

person world" (p.32). Since phenomenological research is dependent on consistent and rigorous interview techniques, the following detailed descriptions provide an understanding of how the phenomenological method has been facilitated. The objective of the interview process is to understand the meaning of the lived experience of the participant.

At the beginning of the interview process volunteers were informed again about the purpose of the study and asked if they were still willing to participate. It was reaffirmed that each participant was in fact a current adult graduate student and that they also met the requirements of having experienced hindered creativity in an educational context and that they were willing to share their experiences. At that time they were presented with the informed consent form (See Appendix D) and allowed as much time as necessary to read the form, initial the first page, and print their name and provide their signature on the second page. Each participant was given a copy of the informed consent form and consent was given verbally to digitally record the interview.

Next, demographic data were collected on each participant (See Appendix E). The following demographic data was collected: name, age, gender, ethnicity, degree program, and major. The participant's email address was also obtained in order to be able to contact the participants for feedback after the data analysis was completed as outlined in the IRB form B that was approved. The use of this demographic data collection was to aid in the comprehension of the phenomena as not being limited to one age, population, or group with similar backgrounds. Therefore, the demographic data collection was

meant to illustrate the diversity of the sample participants who were interviewed. All demographic data information was destroyed upon completion of the study.

The opening research question was asked of the participants following the demographic data collection, "As a graduate student, tell me about an experience where you became aware your creativity was being hindered in an educational context". Only one opening research question was presented and the participant was given as much time as needed to express their experience of the phenomena. At this point, I entered into a dialogue with the participant where I "assumed a respectful position of vis-à-vis the real expert, the subject" (Pollio et al., 1997, p.29). I was not in control of the direction of the interview, but rather I approached the process from the "humble stance of perpetual learner" (Thomas, 2005, p.73). The participant guided the interview through sharing their lived experience of the phenomena of having their creativity hindered in an educational context.

During this interview process, certain words used by the participants may have not been explained clearly or could be misinterpreted. Therefore, as it became necessary, follow-up questions may have been utilized to help further the understanding of the experience. This process is considered to be "circular rather than linear" as any follow-up questions were derived from the participant's words and not any predetermined set of questions (Thompson et al., 1989, p. 138). For example, during the process it may have become necessary to ask a participant to say more about what they meant by the use of a specific word or phrase. Sometimes during a phenomenological interview it may have

been necessary to summarize the experience of the participant to see if I understood them accurately and if not, to allow them to correct or even add to the experience.

Toward the end of the interview, I asked the participant if there was anything else that came to mind in addition to the experience already shared or if there was anything that the participant may have not included, but wanted to. Completion was reached when the participant had no further information to share. Upon completion of the interview, I shut off the digital tape recorder and thanked the participant again for being a part of the study.

If the participant proceeded to continue the interview unexpectedly, I asked for permission to turn the recorder back on to capture their experience further. This happened twice during the data collection process and both participants agreed to have the recorder turned back on to capture their experience. After the participant left the interview room, I booted up my personal computer and attached the digital recorder via USB cable and downloaded the interview onto my desktop in a locked file. At this time I allowed myself some time to reflect on the interview and record any thoughts to be bracketed in my personal journal.

When I returned home, I listened to the interview through headphones and transcribed the interview in a Microsoft Word document on my computer in great detail. By this I mean that I included every word the participant used and any inflections in their voice were noted as well as any pauses during the interview. Any emotional or physical reactions were also noted, such as laughing or gesturing with hands to illustrate a part of the interview by the participant. Outside noises or interruptions were included to ensure

that an accurate transcribing of the interview was produced. Again, all interviews, personal reflections, digital files, and anything related to the data collection were destroyed upon completion of the study.

Data Analysis

The University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy facilitated by Dr. Howard Pollio and Dr. Sandra Thomas was utilized to ensure rigorous data analysis of the findings in this study. The colloquy is unique because it is comprised of interdisciplinary faculty and students that assist researchers with data analysis and methodology. Feedback was obtained from the participants after the findings had been established by the researcher and reviewed by the colloquy as stated in the previous section.

Miles and Huberman (1994) present thematization as the conceptualization of patterns and ideas that can be used to organize the findings of a study. This method of data analysis was applied in this study. According to Thomas and Pollio (2002) thematizing is aided by the colloquy through each interview being read out loud by members of the group with one being the interviewer (I) and one being the participant (P). Each transcript is read aloud "with frequent pauses to discuss potential meanings and possible interrelationships among meaning" (Pollio et al., 1997, p.50). Hearing the interviews read out loud can help with the thematization process. As the researcher, I organized and thematized the interviews first by myself and then by taking the interviews to the colloquy.

The colloquy offered a collaborative process to help the primary researcher, myself, ensure that my own assumptions were not directing the interview or themes and allowed for other, possibly missed themes to be discovered. Each member of the colloquy was asked to sign a pledge of confidentiality during these meetings (See Appendix F). Since the overall objective of the colloquy is to allow all insights to emerge from the data and be shared, "all proposed thematic interpretations are continuously challenged until group members agree that an interpretation is supported by the text" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p.34). This process also allows for an internal check for validity on the part of the colloquy members. The bracketing interview was analyzed by the colloquy in September 2007. After the pilot interview was analyzed by the colloquy in October 2007, five interviews were reviewed by the colloquy (six total) during November and December 2007 and the remaining six interviews were reviewed by the researcher.

Thematization

The themes emerged from the data in the participants' words. By themes I mean the patterns of descriptions that repeatedly recur as part of the participants' experiences. To improve my interpretative vision, I looked across interviews for consistent themes to recognize the patterns in constant comparative analysis (Merriam, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I also considered the overall coherence of each transcript. I did not use any computer software programs to aid in the data analysis process because I believe there could have been a loss of important data or insight. The participant's words could have also been affected through the use of such software programs and since the

phenomena emerged through the participant's language, I did not want to risk any misunderstandings or confusion.

Instead of using a computer program to aid in the data analysis, I elected to use post-it notes (large sheets and small rectangles of various colors) to identify possible meaning units or descriptive codes as they emerged from the participants' interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, I would print off a transcribed interview, read it out loud to myself and highlight any possible areas of importance to the experience. I would look for a key word from the participants' language in the interview and then write this key word in bold letters next to the highlighted section to remember the essence of the paragraph.

Next I would present a clean copy of the transcript to the colloquy and we would perform a similar process, but as a group. Any copies made of the transcript were returned to me after the analysis and destroyed. After approximately seven interviews, I found redundancy in the data and saturation was reached. I continued to proceed with the other five interviews because they offered different perspectives on the phenomena and the participants had already volunteered and desired to share their experience.

After all the interviews were conducted and transcribed, I read back over each interview using a similar process of highlighting areas of significance or meaning units of the experience and making notes in the margins to help myself remember the possible theme that could be emerging. After reading and re-reading each interview over two dozen times during this process of data analysis, I assigned each participant a pseudonym after the interview and proceed to write their pseudonym on top of a colored post-it note.

Following their pseudonym I wrote out direct quotes on the post-it note that captured the meaning unit of the experience. A large white post-it paper was used to label possible themes that were beginning to stand out.

To keep things in order, I placed the different possible consistent themes on my wall at home in a locked room and placed the corresponding meaning unit quotes from the participants under the possible themes that were developing. As illustrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3, this process allowed me to visually see the possible themes and begin to think about the placement of the meaning units and where they belonged within the structure. After many weeks of thinking, re-analyzing, re-reading interviews, and moving around the meaning units, four clear areas emerged from the interviews that described the experience of hindered creativity.

In phenomenology the researcher seeks to locate meaning units in the data while focusing on the primary language of the participant. This meaning and interpretation process is known as hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1976). The process allows the "transposable" themes to emerge from the data (Ihde, 1986). Although the particulars of the experience may not be identical for each participant, the overall essence of the lived experience is consistent across interviews as described by Valle and Halling (1989).

During this process as the researcher, I continually related parts of the text to the whole of the text in search of meaning units that would transcend the individual and expand out into a larger context found in all the interviews (Thomas & Pollio, 2002).



Figure 2 Image of Thematization



Figure 3 Detail of Thematization

Care was taken to make sure meaning units were obtained from multiple participants under each possible theme.

Next I organized the quotes in the Microsoft Word documents by 'cutting', 'copying' and 'pasting' them into the appropriate possible themes. I printed these off and re-read and re-analyzed them again, discovering some areas that needed further refinement in the process. I printed off the final set of possible themes and spent a substantial amount of time reading the themes to look for possible sub-themes within the major themes. Again, I re-read and re-analyzed all data to make sure nothing was left out or out of place. This process was very rigorous and time consuming. I would take periodic breaks of a few hours to allow myself to gain some distance from the data and reflect on the process.

Once various thematic structures have been synthesized, I presented my findings to the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy in early January 2008. At the meeting I presented four tentative themes to the colloquy: 1) Mistrust of Professors, 2) Justified or Unjustified Actions, 3) Outcomes – Change to Loss, 4) Handle Differently (See Appendix G). The first theme "Mistrust of Professors" was proposed as the ground of the experience. Discussion of the themes by the colloquy provided positive feedback to the data analysis. The group asked multiple questions about the themes and suggested changing "Prof. Mindset" to "Prof. Conventional Thinking" in the ground of "Mistrust of Professors". It was also recommended that "Mistrust of Professors" be renamed "The Box" to better represent the ground as the dynamic relationship between the professors and the adult learners within academia.

The colloquy members offered examples of illustrations as to how the ground and themes were related. However, the images were relatively geometric and flat. An enthusiastic discussion ensued and a three-dimensional image with human figures and a box resulted as the most appropriate way to illustrate the ground and themes (See Chapter IV, Figure 5). The colloquy reached general consensus that the ground "The Box" and the three themes that followed were consistent with their interpretation of the data analysis. After re-reading the themes and adjusting the ground, a summary of the data analysis was created for the purpose of obtaining participant feedback through email as discussed in the following section.

Participant Feedback

Thomas and Pollio (2002) recommend in using the phenomenological method to re-introduce participants back into the process of data analysis. By this they mean sharing the data analysis findings with the participants to gain feedback from them. This allows the participants to "judge whether the thematic structure reflects their own individual experience" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p.38). This process is outlined in Figure 4 (with correction by the authors), which provides an overview of the phenomenological research procedures as recommended by Thomas and Pollio (2002).

Participant feedback was obtained through additional contact with the participants via email (See Appendix I). This correspondence did not proceed until after the data

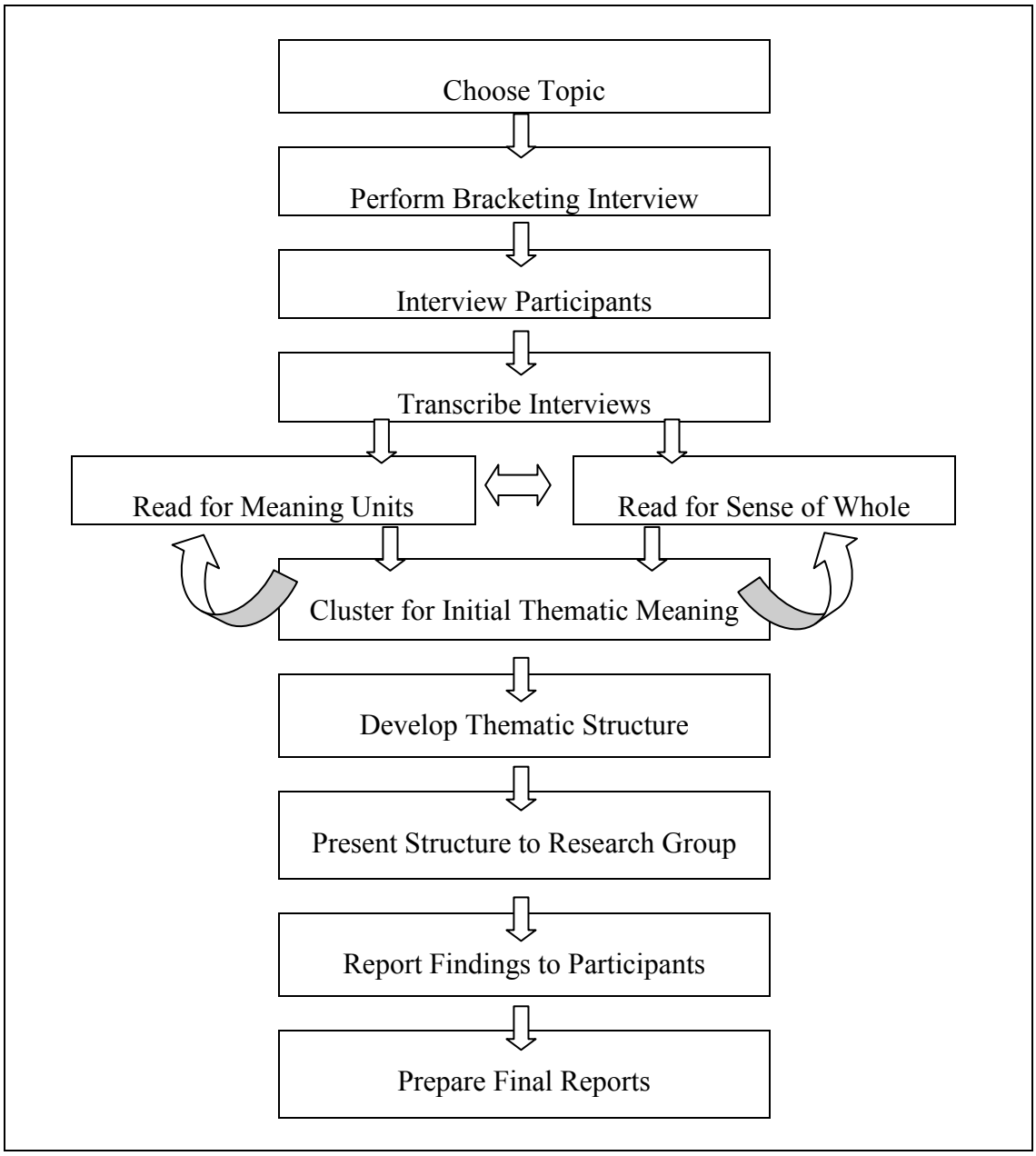


Figure 4 Phenomenological Research Process

Source: Thomas, S. P., & Pollio, H. R. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*. (p.45) New York: Springer Publishing.

collection and data analyses were complete. During this email correspondence a letter via email was sent to each participant asking them to review the study's findings. These documents were included in the email in the form of electronic file attachments labeled 'findings' and included the data analysis of the ground and thematic structure. Participants were encouraged to share their response to the findings to see if the overall findings resonated with their experience. Of the five participants who responded, all provided feedback that the findings resonated with their lived experience. Responses were noted in the data analysis of Chapter IV.

Data Quality

The issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability are addressed in phenomenology in a different way from that of a quantitative research design. Instead of statistical analysis and generalization of the findings, phenomenology is concerned with the consistency of the findings. Although no two interviews will be the same, there should be a consistent theme or essence that is found in the interviews. If the study were to be repeated, similar findings would surface and a consistency of the themes and ground would emerge as well (Valle & Halling, 1989).

Reliability/Consistency

In a phenomenological study, reliability is often addressed by means of consistency. The consistency of data was established through saturation of the data

during the interview process (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Saturation was reached after the seventh interview due to the redundancy of the data collected. Since there were already other participants who had volunteered to be interviewed, I continued to interview the participants until the saturation level would be considered high.

Findings are determined to be reliable if another individual is able to see and understand the recurring themes and the ground of the study, regardless whether the individual agrees with the findings exactly. I presented six participant interview transcripts and the overall themes and ground to the colloquy to address the issue of consistency for this study. The study should be reproducible in the future and yield similar findings in relation to the essences of the experience. Despite slight changes in the reproduction of the research (i.e., interviews, participants, social context) the overall thematic pattern should emerge and retain the essential relevance and value of the original study (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

Validity/Trustworthiness

In terms of addressing the validity of a phenomenological study, it is important to ensure that the methodological issues were thorough and accurate as well as pertinent for the subject (Thomas & Pollio, 2002) and that the findings are both creditable and elucidating to the topic. There should be a clear reciprocal relationship between the method and the findings. The findings, in terms of the descriptions provided, should also be trustworthy and accurate for other readers and the researcher.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider the idea of 'trustworthiness' key to understanding the overall evaluation of a study. After data collection and data analyses were completed with this study, I corresponded with the participants through email to ask them for feedback on the study's findings. This helped ensure that the findings are trustworthy to the participants. I presented this information in the final dissertation to inform the reader about this feedback in Chapter IV.

Generalizability/Transferability

Generalizability is addressed in phenomenology by means of transferability. That is the allowance of thick, rich descriptions that enable the readers to determine if the essence can be transferred to others or not (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Van Maren, 1990). Phenomenology is primarily concerned with the structure of the experience and not the characteristics of the group that has had the experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). Within transferability, it is important to demonstrate that the findings occur across a diverse population and contexts.

This study invited participants from any department to take part as long as they met the requirements of being an adult graduate student, having experienced their creativity being hindered in an educational context, and were willing to share their experiences. A geographical data collection was utilized before the interview process to address each individual's age, gender, ethnicity, and major within the university. As Thomas and Pollio (2002) state, "The point of inviting more than one…participant in a phenomenological study is to produce *variations*" (p.41). By obtaining different

interviews from different graduate students in various departments, the essential structure of the phenomena emerges more clearly. If the phenomenon occurs across a wide variety of individuals, the case can be made for phenomenological generalizability to be present (Thomas & Pollio, 2002).

Summary

Chapter III included an overview of the research design method for the study. Phenomenology was addressed from a historical perspective to provide a background for the methodology. Also included in the chapter were the four attributes to phenomenology: the body, time, others, and world. The discussion of attributes was designed to assist the reader with a deeper understanding of the phenomenological method. The next section addresses the research procedures and included the research interview question, the bracketing interview, participants, and data analysis. Chapter IV will address the findings of the data analysis process.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to further understand the lived experiences of adult students who have had their creativity hindered in an educational context. Twelve adult students from a state university with diverse majors and backgrounds were interviewed about their experience of hindered creativity. As outlined in Chapter III, the research was conducted using the phenomenological method developed at the University of Tennessee by Thomas & Pollio (2002).

All of the participants in this study experienced having their creativity hindered in an educational context. Each participant experienced a hindrance to his or her creativity from a professor. Only two participants commented on experiencing a hindrance of their creativity from a professor and also from another student. As evidenced in Chapter II, there are many other studies that address possible influences to the hindrance of creativity through financial concerns, environmental settings, and other interactions with students, parents, or administration. The overall experience for the participants in this study had their creativity hindered by a professor in their educational field.

Three major themes and one ground emerged from the data analysis, all of which were described by each participant. The participants experienced an initial mistrust of others, specifically academic authority from professors upon being confronted with the situation that hindered their creativity. This mistrust was then understood by the

participant to be either justified or unjustified depending upon the explanation provided (or, in some cases, not provided) by the professor upon the hindrance. The significance of the hindered creativity was described by the participants through outcomes or changes of mindset. Upon reflection of the experience, each participant offered his or her own understanding of how the situation could have been handled differently. The 'handle differently' theme was included because it was expressed by each participant as a practical desire and less as a theoretical position.

The analysis of data begins with a synopsis of each participant's background, a short personal definition of what creativity means to them, and a brief description of the experience that made them aware their creativity was being hindered. The ground of the experience is then discussed to establish the context from which the three themes emerged. Each of the three themes and the single ground are discussed in detail through the appropriate quotes from the participants to remain true to their words (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Findings are presented in the words of the participants and are considered valid and reliable if they express the essence of the lived experience of the research participants.

Participant Synopses

Meaning as discovered through the essence of the experience is the central concept of phenomenology (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). In any phenomenological study two guidelines are used: "attend to the phenomena of the experience as they appear" and "describe, don't explain" (Ihde, 1986, p.34). In following this method, a synopsis has been created for each participant to assist the reader with identifying the lived experience.

With each synopsis a selection of quotes from the participant is provided to assist with the meaning of creativity from their perspective as well as an introduction to their experience with hindered creativity in an educational context.

Participant 1 – Eric

Eric is a 38 year-old Caucasian male majoring in Engineering Science and Mechanics. He is married with no children and works full-time for a private engineering corporation in the Southeast United States. He returned to school for his Ph.D. five years after obtaining his Master of Science degree. He has been in the Ph.D. program for six years and plans to graduate in the spring of 2008. Eric is reflective and enlivened when he speaks of his experiences with hindered creativity. He describes creativity as "something new…like a new creative idea for a design or concept that I haven't had before". He said, "Creativity takes time. You have to spend a lot of time thinking about the project. I may have a novel idea at three a.m. and it gets even better by five, after I spend time on it and give myself over to it."

He has experienced at least three situations where his creativity was hindered in an educational context. The first two experiences centered on a design project that involved the interior and exterior designs of a concept vehicle. From Eric's point of view his creativity was hindered when the professors and one other student team member working on the design informed him that his designs were unusable. The third experience concerned his proposal defense meeting with his professors where he was instructed to

cut back on the scope of his research for his dissertation which meant cutting out sections that Eric considered to be highly creative research.

Eric describes hindered creativity as a challenge that can have lasting effects upon a student. The following quote summarizes his experience:

> And in engineering everything is about efficiency- what is the most efficient way we can do this? And hence, you have literature reviews and you have put solid thought into something before you submit it and I guess, so, maybe in one sense it makes the process more efficient, but in another sense what you are doing is that you are going to kill some creative ideas that would never…or you are going to kill some creative ideas that may have had promise that will never reach the light of day because the person has just been…I don't want to say traumatized, but the person has just been hindered, they have learned that I don't want to be criticized or hindered because it is a personal affront on your creativity when it happens.

Participant 2 – Michael

As a 28 year-old Caucasian male, Michael is majoring in Fine Arts with a painting focus. He returned to school after four years of working to complete his Master of Fine Arts degree. At the time of the interview he had just begun his second year of studies. He is married with two children and is attending school full-time while his wife works full-time to help provide for the family. Michael is a serious, quiet individual who recalls his creativity being hindered three times during his graduate program. The first time centered on a first year review of his work, the second time focused on a paper he was developing into an article, and the third time involved a visiting professor who told him to never use black paint straight from the tube because black could be mixed from other colors and would add more to his paintings.

He views creativity as something new that is closely connected to his identity. He states:

> So, with my history and with my studies and my work and how I identify with myself, it all revolves around creativity. If I don't feel like I am creative, then I don't feel like I am developing as a person. Because I identify myself so much with my work, and my time spent and my lifestyle revolves around development in some sense, even if it isn't initially, um, you know, progress…ah in a very small way, there has to be that air of potential and when that is gone, it just sucks the life out of everything…but when I feel like I have a lot of potential or a lot of freedom, or a lot of support…support is a big one, when I feel like I have those things, creativity is easy and I feel like I can do anything and my life is wonderful. I pretty much *do* do better things. My life does get better and there's a lot tied to creativity.

Michael's major experience with hindered creativity focused on a first year review of his work where he was instructed to stop making the type of work he was comfortable with and to produce a new body of work that demonstrated more diversity. He described his discontent by stating:

> No matter how developed or well you do, most people just don't care and so, although that is good preparation for the outside world, you are in an educational setting to where you are supposed to be constructively supported and um, developing work. A part of your work is meaning or the significance of why you are an art student or why you are making work and that just wasn't encouraged. That wasn't encouraged. I didn't feel like that…it wasn't seen to be a good thing.

Participant 3 – Cedric

Participant three is a 25 year-old German-Filipino male working on his Ph.D. in Physics. Cedric works part-time as a graduate assistant to help cover his tuition expenses. He is single and has continued his education in Physics despite having developed his artistic skills throughout his earlier studies. He has traveled extensively and views his

creativity as “anything that is new or different that I haven’t thought of before”. Cedric is shy and soft spoken and doesn’t feel like he fits in with the other members of his graduate program.

Cedric has experienced his creativity hindered two times, once by his professor and another time by the social dress code of education. During the first instance, he felt his professor was not encouraging him to think creatively and he stated that he could feel a change in his own thinking from being creative to being scientific over time. He also felt hindered by the professor due to the required courses of the program. These required courses consumed much of the time he had previously allocated to research and relaxation. He describes the lack of time as a contributing factor to his shift away from creativity:

> Um, I guess I just…I think I should probably start with having ah… stifled creativity pertains to the workload. There’s certain courses you have to take that have nothing to do with your research. Um, for me at least I um, used to have plenty of time to draw and paint and do some sculpture. Ah, in fact, before I decided to do physics, I was quite the artistic type.

He continues to express his feeling of concern upon reflection of having his creativity hindered:

> One of the things that worried me is that I don’t feel like this utter horror that I can’t draw well anymore. You know, it’s just sort of…ah, I’m trying to phrase this correctly. It feels as though I’m losing my talents and I don’t care. And the scary part is that I don’t care. I feel that I should be more worried about it than I am.

Participant 4 – Ethan

Ethan is a 43 year-old Northern European male majoring in History. He is married and has a six year-old son. Working part-time as a graduate assistant and part-time as a private personal defense trainer, Ethan has struggled to stay in the Ph.D. program. He returned to school after serving in the Special Forces of the United States military with thirteen years of active service. He has a large and commanding presence and is exuberant when he speaks.

He describes his creativity as "thinking on the spot and coming up with new ideas". The majority of his creativity being hindered stems from professors' control over the student's research interests and required courses. He states:

> When you find a professor to work with you, you never find a professor that is exactly in your discipline. They put you with whoever is closest. And that's fine. And I understand that. But when you get with that professor their sole objective is to pull your course of study closer to theirs and away from what you initially tell them you want to study. My initial (pause) study that I desired to do was the Viking age. We didn't have any professors that did that. (Laugh) So, I got stuck with a Romanist. So, that pulled everything that I had studied, the whole focus of it, from that tenth and eleventh century all the way down to the fourth and fifth century because he said I can't oversee something that is in the Viking age when I don't know that much about it. (Pause). And nobody else would take it on. And we actually had students that were invited not to return for their Ph.D. once they finished their masters because of what they were wanting to study wasn't exactly in line with the professor that they were studying with. And he didn't want to take the time to go outside his area of expertise and oversee it.

Participant 5 – Christina

Christina is a 31 year-old Caucasian female majoring in Fine Arts with a focus mixed media. She is married and has a two year-old daughter. Christina has returned to

school for her M.F.A. after working for five years at a local art store. She works part-time in retail and her husband works full-time in retail to support the family. Creativity is "any novel idea or thought" as described by Christina.

Christina experienced her creativity being hindered three times in an educational setting. Overall, Christina's experiences with hindered creativity focus on her painting critiques with professors:

> Sometimes they try to make it sound not so bad, like saying oh, this is an awkward area or you need to re-examine this area, but a lot of times, especially this one professor, he just says this sucks and doesn't even tell you how it sucks or why it sucks or how you could possibly improve it. I mean if I wanted people to tell me my work sucks, I don't need to be paying so much money for that.
>
> It's not enough to tell a student their work sucks and not offer some kind of back up information. Sure, we can recognize the same fact, perhaps it isn't a great piece, but couldn't we also try to put our head together and figure out how it could be better….what is working in the piece and couldn't they use language that you could dive deeper into? Sucks? Vacuums suck. Come on. Give me more here.

Participant 6 – Jerome

As a 45 year-old African-American male, Jerome is majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He has been in the Ph.D. program for six years and is divorced with two children. He works full-time for a major corporation and attends school part-time. Jerome is upbeat and articulate with his words.

He views creativity as "new or novel ideas" and has experienced his own creativity being hindered by the system of graduate school. By this he means the way the program is set up by the professors and the courses that are required and controlled by a

major professor in your field can be hindering to his creativity. He expresses his frustration in the following quote:

> You're not going to make it through the engineering program, the graduate program, by being creative or imaginative cause they already know what they are going to teach you and they know exactly how they are gonna give it to you.
>
> I am the professor. So I am going to teach you the way I know how to do it. And if you can get it, great. If you can't so what…you'll go do something else. You'll live. You know that's the way it is. It isn't about being creative. So they have a system that they are in and they are on rails. And moving outside of that system or box if you will, moving outside the box is not something that they really process.

Participant 7 – Samantha

Samantha is a 25 year-old Caucasian female pursuing her Master of Fine Arts degree in painting. She is in her second year and is single with no children. She considers herself highly creative and has been involved with artistic expression since early childhood. She describes creativity as "new ways of understanding" and "a spin or new take on something". She is passionate about creativity and very open to sharing her experiences of hindered creativity.

Her experiences with hindered creativity focused on the development of her work during the first semester in graduate school in relation to her professors:

> Um, because you are completely…you don't know what the professors are going to say. You don't know whether they are going to come in and love what you are doing or they are going to hate what you are doing and part of that, for me at least, the fear of not getting that approval and not knowing what that approval was going to be based on was really hindering for my creativity.

Participant 8 – Travis

Participant eight is a 34 year-old Caucasian male majoring in Mechanical Engineering. Travis returned to school for his Ph.D. after four years of working full-time for a private corporation. He is married and has a six month-old daughter and a two year old son. He has a part-time assistantship and is hoping to finish his degree this spring 2008.

Travis describes his creativity as "a different idea or direction" and feels most of his creativity has been spent on "writing papers and producing slide lectures". His experiences with hindered creativity stem from the control of professors over his papers and presentations. He states that professors need to lessen their control on the older students who are getting ready to graduate:

> In writing papers, the back and forth with the professor, sometimes what your original idea is changes quite a bit. Um, probably some of that to the good because they have more experience. But sometimes it is a little frustrating at times because the back and forth…it happens so many times.

He continues that the professors also need to let go of their students:

> …a lot of professors do this, they don't want to let you go. At some point I don't think they can't teach you a whole lot more. You really need to go to a different place to learn like a post-doc position or whatever the case may be. I think at some point they have to say I have taught him as much as I can and you really need different influences cause after a while, um, I think it is good to hear another voice and hopefully that'll help you to grow and be creative and help others. But you know, we all have only so much to give.

Participant 9 – Krisnah

Krisnah is a 26 year-old Indian female majoring in Secondary Education. She is engaged to a Ph.D. candidate in Engineering and has expressed interest in pursuing her own Ph.D. in the future after her Master's degree. She is enthusiastic about teaching and learning. She is spirited about her creativity and expresses it as "something unexpected" and "unique, new ideas". Krisnah remembered having her creativity hindered two times in her graduate education. The first time was due to the professor never actually being in the classroom during class and the second time was due to the professor not being able to control another student in the class. Due to this loss of control, the other student was able to hinder Krisnah's creativity because of his dominance over class time. This dominance was not recognized by the professor, even though this problem was elicited by other students.

She describes her concerns with hindered creativity from a personal experience of being in a classroom with graduate students teaching in lieu of the professor. She states:

> In fact, we referred to the class as Charlie and his angels because Dr. Young was never there. He was Charlie and he had these three very well put together graduate students who taught the class. And my creativity was hindered because of this fact that the actual professor was never, and I mean never, in the classroom. So, when I had a question of an idea about how to help make the assignments more meaningful to my research I was never allowed to make any changes because the graduate assistants would tell me that they had no power to make such a change and I'd have to ask Dr. Young. Okay, well he never answered his emails or phone, so I would ask them to talk to him for me and they would forget or say, why don't you just do what the syllabus says. Um, this really upset me because the syllabus should not be a one size fits all done deal. Graduate students come from very diverse backgrounds and are not all the same type of learners to be lumped together under one document.

Participant 10 – John

John is a 33 year-old Caucasian male majoring in Communication and Journalism. He is returning to school for his Ph.D. after teaching at a community college for three years. He is married and they are expecting their first child in the spring. He views his creativity as "putting together new concepts".

John's experiences of hindered creativity have been largely positive. Although he has experienced professors hindering his creativity in his coursework, he has been able to understand their reasoning and thinks it has benefited his education. He expresses this understanding in the following experience of having to take certain courses that did not pertain to his research:

> It was okay because it actually caused me, I mean all the courses I have taken here, they all have kind of expanded my thinking on things and I think they have enhanced my creativity in some ways just in that I have kind of had to think outside the box about my interests and relate them to what I am learning in other courses. Um, so I would say that it has been a good thing.

Participant 11 – Mariah

As a 40 year-old African-American female, Mariah is returning to school to finish her Master of Fine Arts degree in photography. She is married and has three daughters ages two, four, and eight years old. Her husband works full-time and she works part-time as a teaching assistant at a public school. She is direct with her comments and emotionally upset over her experiences with hindered creativity. She views her creativity as "new ways of seeing" and "trying something different".

Mariah's experience with hindered creativity focuses on one event that recently happened to her in the art department. Her artwork was removed from an art show by the department chair because she was not enrolled in general courses, but instead was only taking independent courses. She was told her images were "too good" and would have won all the awards and it would not have been fair to the other students. She states, "Sure, this is one art show, no biggie. It didn't feel like that to me, you know. It felt like I was being judged and not my work." She expresses her understanding of the hindered creativity in the following passage:

> Because when I walked in I expected to see my work with blue ribbons and awards on it. Instead, I didn't even see my work. I saw it leaning up against a wall, you know, like it was supposed to be taken out with the garbage. Just leaning there. It is burned into my memory. No one's work should be treated like that. It sends the wrong message to students. You are not worthy of being on this wall. Great. Then why am I even at this school?

Participant 12 – Becky

Becky is a 30 year-old Caucasian female majoring in Chemical Engineering. She is single with no children but is involved in a committed relationship. She works part-time and has returned to school to complete her doctorate. She describes her creativity as "the ability to think of new research ideas" and "taking a risk to do something different".

Hindered creativity for Becky relates to her experiences of writing research papers and having the professors condition her thinking to be more scientific than creative. She summarizes:

> As an engineer, you are supposed to do it a certain way. It is good to think outside the box as long as you get the right answer. And I have personally struggled with thinking outside the box because I have learned it a certain

> way and that's how I am going to do it. So if the professor tells me to do it a certain way, I will do it that way. And if he tells…if I come up with an idea just based on the way I think, I instantly think, oh well, I am probably wrong because I don't have the experience.

Participant Summary

All of the participants in this study were willing to share their lived experiences of hindered creativity in a variety of educational contexts. The participant information in Table 2 illustrates a basic outline of the members involved with the study. The result is a good representation of graduate students across domains that have experienced the phenomenon of hindered creativity. The gender makeup of the participants (five females, seven males) and the participants' ethnicity diversity (seven Caucasians, two African-Americans, one Indian, one German-Filipino, and one Northern European) and is situated within the graduate population as a whole in the United States (NCES, 2007).

The Ground of the Experience

As described in Chapter III, the concept of the figure/ground relationship is vital to understanding the lived experience of an individual from a phenomenological viewpoint (Pollio et al., 1997; Thomas & Pollio, 2002). The ground exists in a reciprocal relationship with the figures. The ground of the experience in this study has been identified as "the box". This ground of the experience, the box, allows for the figural themes to stand out from it and in relation to it.

Table 2 Participant Information

Participant Information					
Pseudonym	**Age**	**Gender**	**Ethnicity**	**Degree Program**	**Major**
Eric	38	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D.	Engineering Science & Mechanics
Michael	28	Male	Caucasian	M.F.A.	Fine Art - Painting
Cedric	25	Male	German-Filipino	Ph.D.	Physics
Ethan	43	Male	Northern European	Ph.D.	History
Christina	31	Female	Caucasian	M.F.A.	Fine Art – Mixed Media
Jerome	45	Male	African-American	Ph.D.	Mechanical Engineering
Samantha	25	Female	Caucasian	M.F.A.	Fine Art - Painting
Travis	34	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D.	Mechanical Engineering
Krisnah	26	Female	Indian	M.A.	Secondary Education
John	33	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D.	Communication & Journalism
Mariah	40	Female	African-American	M.F.A.	Fine Art - Photography
Becky	30	Female	Caucasian	Ph.D.	Chemical Engineering

The Box – The Ground of the Experience

You have to learn how to think inside the box. (Eric)

Participants' experiences of hindered creativity stand out against a ground of interaction with their professors. A dynamic relationship is created between the professor and the student within the educational setting. The box refers to this dynamic where the professor is in control of the allowance or disallowance of creativity by the students. The box also represents the academic rules, regulations, and guidelines that must be followed by the professor. The ground is understood in terms of the Other within the four attributes of existential phenomenology. By this I mean the Other is represented by a professor (Other) who interacts with an adult learner. It is during this interaction that a dynamic relationship takes place. The study focuses within this relationship where an event of hindered creativity has taken place and the aftermath is prolonged and multifaceted.

Within the ground of the box, participants experienced an initial mistrust of the professor who hindered their creativity. This mistrust dominated their experience and influenced their relationship with the professor. By mistrust, I mean to lack trust, to question, or to lack confidence in (Abate, 1998). Each participant experienced a level of mistrust upon the initial encounter with a professor over his or her creativity being hindered. Participants used powerful and emotional language to describe their experiences: "it was a huge slap in my face", "it took all the wind out of me", "I felt empty inside", "they shot me down", and "it hurt my heart". The initial mistrust against

the professor in Christina's experience illustrates this point: "I'm supposed to trust these professors who are bashing my work to help guide me to being a better artist, but I'm not sure I trust any of them anymore". Eric's experience echoes the same idea. He stated, "Initially I didn't trust what they were telling me and that they were all in agreement that I had done something wrong."

Jerome expresses a similar concern with his experience of mistrusting his professor:

> Um, I just felt like there was a disconnect between what I felt like I needed. I knew I trusted those guys, I trusted my major advisor to let me know what it was that I needed in order to receive the diploma. That was what I trusted him to do. But I also wanted him to tell me what I needed to be prepared to do and still consider what I wanted to do. I knew being creative was a part of that for me and he was not interested in that.

Michael expresses his mistrust for the professor who told him his work had to change, but then ridiculed him for changing his work later on, saying, "It was a huge contradiction. It made me not trust him." Likewise, Mariah sums up her entire college experience from the one experience:

> You know, even though I am in my final year this whole experience has still stayed with me. And the lack of confidence and the lack of trust…mainly the lack of trust in my major professor and many members of the department. It has just been completely gone since that experience. I mean, I trusted them that they would have given me notice or shown me some respect regarding the situation and they didn't so, you know, they are just…they have never redeemed themselves to me after that experience and I'll be very happy to leave.

The ground of mistrust centers on the experience of the participants as students in relation to their professors as the authority figures in an educational setting. Because of

this dynamic the ground of the box is divided into two categories: Professors' Conventional Thinking and Professors' Control.

Professors' Conventional Thinking

Some participants understood the box to be influenced by a development from professors' conventional thinking towards creativity. By conventional thinking I mean the taken-for-granted frames of reference, meaning perspectives, and habits of mind that become expressed as points of view. According to Mezirow (2000):

> A point of view comprises clusters of meaning schemes- sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments- that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects, and attribute causality. Meaning schemes commonly operate outside of our awareness. They arbitrarily determine what we see and how we see it- cause/effect relationships, scenarios of sequences of events, what others will be like, and our idealized self-image. They suggest a line of action that we tend to follow automatically unless brought into critical reflection (p.18).

In a similar tone, one of the participants of this study, Eric, stated that "I think the danger of the hindrance of the creative process coming from a professor or a learned person, is that they are steeped in traditional ways and conventional thinking and it's difficult for them to break out of that box." He had considered himself to be highly creative before his graduate program experience. However over time he began to think differently about expressing his creativity due to the conventional thinking of the professors who hindered his creativity. He found his creativity slipping away:

> In the sciences, you tend to get brow beat. Emotions tend to get beaten out of you. And part of the reason for that is that you don't want somebody taking their toys and going home necessarily or becoming unresponsive

> when they need to learn a new concept. The double edge sword that that is, is that if you box them around in the head too much, you are gonna beat all the creativity out of them and you're gonna beat all that passion out of them that made them become engineers in the first place.

The professor's conventional thinking was understood as an assumption for Michael's experienced with his hindered creativity. By assumptions I mean "broad, generalizing, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 2000, p.17). He felt that the professors would not listen to his reasons for the creativity used and they were not willing to question their own assumptions that might be influencing the way they perceived his creativity and decided to hinder it in the following passages:

> Then you run into presumptions with the people that are assessing you, with the people that hold the keys to your future, the professors. Whether it is in recommendations or trying to get a job, whatever it is, you have to suck it up and ah, you can't question their assumption behind things because frankly they…um, (pause) I don't think honestly they have the education to see past their own assumptions or acknowledge their assumptions and it's just better to not even go there and to address things on a very surface level.
>
> That also made me wonder why this person is presumably more educated than I am or has a right to interpret or to tell me how to interpret myself and my work and develop myself. Whereas, they didn't have, I don't know, they did not seem empathetic themselves.

Ethan had a very interesting take on having his creativity hindered through the professors' conventional thinking. He struggled with trying to understand why certain courses were required that did not have anything to do with his research focus. Although he could understand the value of the diversity to the courses, he found them to take away from his own passion to complete his Ph.D.:

> To me that is a huge hindrance on my creativity. I couldn't study what I wanted to study. Ah, and the narrow mindedness of the professors that make you do that, they say they are giving you a well-rounded education, but isn't your well-rounded education supposed to come as an undergraduate and even in your masters program? And in your Ph.D. program you should be narrowing your study down to what it is you do.
>
> And they create this us and them. You know, we are the professors and you are the lowly slovenly graduate students who are graced with our presence twice a week and once every semester when I make an appointment with you. Beyond that, we'll not be communicating. Just horse crap. If you want to foster somebody you communicate with them. And that really should be what their job is. It shouldn't be punching their own ticket. It should be furthering some student's ability, creative or not.
>
> When I think about dealing with the us and them…I get hostile. And I have to say in all honesty that isn't the case for every student. They treat me different than the average student. Because I'm significantly older and because I think they are scared to death of me. Which they had no reason to be, I'm not gonna do anything to them. Except tell them what I am thinking. And I don't think they want that. I don't think they want me to be creative.

Jerome also found his mistrust to be rooted in the conventional thinking of the professors. He had desired to take an art class to further his creative thinking skills, however he quickly discovered that in engineering his own major advisor could see no value in allowing him to take the class:

> I remember a time where I wanted to take an art class because I knew that it was important for me to be able express an idea by being able to draw it on a piece of paper. So, I fully expected to go over to the art department and have them work that side of my brain for a while, so that I could come back to engineering and do what I needed to do. And you talk about hindering creativity, this particular advisor that I have said, "what would you waste your time on that side of campus for? There is nothing over there. You are wasting your time. You need to be taking this class and that class and this class". No why.
>
> I had the 'privilege' of having a couple of the department heads teach my classes (laugh). They…there was one way to do this problem and that's it.

> Never mind what the problem is about. This is the type of problem that you are supposedly gonna have in the future. This is what's gonna be on the test. Learn this problem, learn how to solve it and you'll do okay. If you don't, see you next semester (laugh). If you make it, you know. What's this problem good for? What is a turbine? What does it look like? What makes it go? Ah, do we have a turbine? Ah, can we see it run, can we hear it? Can we touch it? A turbine was a sideways trapezoid on a sheet of paper for three years for me until I went down in the bowels of an academic building and petted one. And it was a cut away, it didn't even work. Yeah, you learn what the efficiency of one is and the significance of a turbine is that it produces power. How? Where's the fuel go in? That's what I wanted to know. That's why I felt slighted. I really wanted to know this stuff. I wanted to explore and be creative with it.

The conventional thinking by professors proved to be a powerful force behind a student's understanding of the box in relation to hindered creativity. The participants felt that professors were not willing to question their own assumptions as in Michael's case or they simply did not explain themselves clearly to the students. Christina stated that "Well I think when anyone says mean comments to you about something that you have created it hurts. It makes you feel like you aren't good enough. That you haven't learned what they were trying to teach you. Not that you didn't listen, but that you didn't do what they needed to see change in your work. So, you feel like crap." Her comment concisely reflected the observations of the others participants in the study. More specifically, the participants could not understand the professors' conventional thinking of what needed to change (or not change) in each of their experiences.

Professors' Control

Some participants encountered the box in relation to the professor's control of the situation. By control I mean the power of directing, means of regulating, or delegating

authority over a situation (Abate, 1998). The professor's control over the student created a dynamic relationship that resulted in the participants not knowing how their creativity was being judged. By not knowing, I mean the uncertainty of not understanding or the inability to make meaning because of questioning. The type of not knowing affects an individual's meaning-forming or "the activity by which we shape a coherent meaning out of the raw material of our outer and inner experiencing" (Kegan, 2000, p.52). Christina questioned what could have happened had she not changed her work: "They told me to stop all of it. So I did. I wonder now what would have happened if I had just kept on making the same stuff. I wonder what they would have done." Although the questioning pertained to more of what could have happened, there were many occurrences of similar questioning of professor's control over the courses required and of not knowing how the professors were passing judgment upon their creativity.

Samantha commented on her own experience with hindered creativity and not knowing about what professors are thinking:

> You don't know what the professors are going to say. You don't know whether they are going to come in and love what you are doing or they are going to hate what you are doing and part of that, for me at least, the fear of not getting that approval and not knowing what that approval was going to be based on was really hindering for my creativity.
>
> So...it's like…in some ways it's like you have to defend what you think you know, but you know that you don't actually know it, which is a very strange position to be in. And it's almost…I think it's almost sort of like (pause) um, a little bit demeaning in a way. I mean it does make you feel kind of stupid. You know, it's like…or a lot of times I feel very naive.

John's experience was similar in that he wasn't sure how his work would be perceived by the professors within his department. He expressed his concern in the following:

> I remember feeling at the time…not really knowing, it was my first semester, not really knowing my colleges, my cohorts…not really knowing the faculty, my major professor…you know, I wondered how that research would be perceived. I considered it creative research. It was on the silencing of student religious voices in the classroom and how professors do that all the time without realizing it. And I remember thinking, not really being hesitant, but I guess just wondering how will that be perceived. Will they think I am like some religious fanatic or something and worrying about that or thinking that through. It was something that was in the back of my mind. I wasn't as creative as I could have been.

In addition to not knowing how the professors would react to his creativity, John also questioned the control the professors have over the courses that the students are required to take and how those requirements hindered his own ability to be creative:

> It would be simply the confines of the courses I have taken. I do think that you know, being in different courses, um, you know, the course curriculum and the research ideas that are discussed don't always fit into your interest. And you know, sometimes I feel like I want to branch out and do something totally different, but I feel like I shouldn't do that and maybe I should stay within the bounds of the curriculum.

Becky, an engineering student, also struggled with having to take certain courses as required by the professors or the departments because it took time away from her own research. She stated "Even if I don't want to take a course because I can't see the value right way, I'll take it without question because it is what I am supposed to do. But I have taken a few that seemed to have no direct benefit to my course of research. It's hard because I can understand why the professors do that, but it does take time away from

your studies." Ethan added a similar tone in his comments on professors' control of course loads and professors' control of knowledge:

> Probably the biggest hindrance that I have found is that they never let you study what you want to study. And they don't let me delve in creatively and write papers on my topic. So, I found that to be very disheartening.
>
> This idea of I'm gonna teach you everything that you know, but not what I know is bull. I mean it's pathetic. It's a weak ego. You know, it can't be challenged. Which I mean, the adverse…the only way it's gonna change is if those egos go away or they get checked at the door.

Krisnah summed up her experience of the professor's control as being tied directly to her not knowing. She was taking an educational psychology course that was supposed to help students gain background knowledge regarding what it would be like to teach in the secondary educational levels. However she felt her creativity was hindered because the professor was never present. Instead of his personal tutelage, graduate assistants taught the course. Each time she had a new idea about how to engage some of the projects more closely to her own research she felt she could not even ask questions because of the controlled schedule:

> What upset me the most is that this was a class designed to help prepare us for being teachers. But the graduate students teaching us were not effective communicators or role models for us to learn from. They only did what Dr. Young told them to do and no more. There were no question/answer session…there wasn't any interaction with the class as a group, no interaction or chances to even get to know other students. I mean it was very rehearsed. We never got off track. And if we did, if somebody asked something, we'd be pulled back in and told oh the research in our textbook says…you know, we never discussed much at all because then that would mean we were off our unit and that was just not okay. Every section was on target, I mean every day we were on a schedule. And the tests were multiple choice, if you got it or not, it didn't matter…just scantrons. I don't know I mean I feel like in educational psychology you could talk so much about things and we never did.

Not knowing how the professors would react to their creativity and not understanding the reasoning behind the required courses within the departments contributed to feelings of mistrust among the participants. As Ethan surmised, "The amount of politics that play into this are overarching if you are going to chose a category that stymies creativity – it is politics. All the going back and forth and he said, she said, we can, we can't because of this or that…it just kills your creativity."

The Box as Ground

In the phenomenological approach by Thomas & Pollio (2002), an individual's perception of a phenomenon stands out against a particular ground of the experience. In the present study, the students' mistrust for the hindered creativity by the professors is understood within the box of academia and served as a ground for their experiences. Some students located their mistrust of the box and of professors within the professors' conventional thinking about creativity. Other students found that their understanding of the experience was influenced by not knowing how the professors were passing judgment on the student, in addition to the previously mentioned control that the professors exercised over the courses. The ground of the experience, the box, allows for the figural themes to stand out from it and in relation to it. The following section outlines the different themes that stood out against this ground of the box for the participants.

Thematic Structure

According to Thomas & Pollio (2002), themes are "patterns of description that repetitively recur as important aspects of a participant's description of his/her experience" (p.37). Upon completion of the data analysis, there are three themes that emerged from the ground of the box. The themes are: 1) the justified or unjustified interpretation of the hindrance, 2) the changed outcomes for the participants, and 3) how it could have been handled differently.

Theme 1 – A Hard Thing to Deal With: The Interpretation

The point of graduate school is to be hindered which I can see as a good thing as much as it is a hard thing to deal with. (Christina)

For the participants of this study, a very powerful theme emerged from the ground of the box, having an individual's creativity hindered is "a hard thing to deal with" and endure. There are two major sub-themes that stand out regarding this interpretation: the justified interpretation and the unjustified interpretation. By interpretation I mean the process of examining meaning or explaining how one understands (Abate, 1998).

The Justified Interpretation

After the initial mistrust of the experience, some participants understood the professor's hindering of the creativity to be justified. By justified I mean to demonstrate adequate grounds for the hindrance of creativity to take place. Most of the participants who viewed the hindrance as justified cited the professor's willingness to clearly explain

their reasoning. The participants offered examples of how the situation of hindrance could be improved in a co-constructive manner. The following passages demonstrate the justified interpretation of the experience. During Eric's first instance with hindered creativity, he realized the hindrance meant admitting that he did not know enough about what he was trying to be creative with in the design process:

> In some cases it was justified because I was ignorant and I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't understand materials, I didn't understand certain joining techniques, I didn't understand certain other things. I was familiar with the task that we had to accomplish and I designed it for that, but in some cases the criticism was warranted and the hindrance of the creativity, which was, I guess, criticism, was warranted on the interior items.
>
> And I could understand, after getting over my initial emotional reaction, okay, I can see where that is a logical thing to do and it's the correct decision. So, for the interior I could see where the criticism and the hindrance of the creativity process was warranted and it was justified. Uh, because it simply wasn't…we weren't able to do it the other way. And so in that respect, I can see where it is a good thing, that there can be positive aspects to hindering creativity. And this is a learning process for the students, so I had to learn that.

Eric was able to reflect on the experience and see the value of the hindrance for his own future education. During his third experience with hindered creativity, he was not necessarily concerned with the value so much as the relief of not having to take so much more work on for his dissertation and being able to make it a stronger dissertation because he could limit his focus to what was important:

> Uh, that was one part of five that I had proposed to do for dissertation research and going into the proposal meeting, uh, two faculty members, God bless them for doing this now, said 'I think you are biting off more than you can chew and the scope of the research needs to be trimmed down and we don't think that is a necessary part of your dissertation research. If you want to do it later and publish a paper on it, that would be great, but we think you need to focus on getting done instead of trying to

> come up with a panacea of the world's ills'. At the time, you do feel somewhat hindered, like 'oh man, this would have been a great thing to do. Afterwards, when you have time to reflect on it and then you get done with the first part and you go 'oh my God, there's no way I would have gotten done, there's no way I would have gotten done'. I was near broke after part two and they had told me to just do parts two and three.
>
> If anything, during my proposal defense, I felt relieved because even though it was a neat little idea that I had come up with and I considered it to be valuable research, I was relieved that I didn't have to go through that work and so, uh, the initial feeling that I had were more along the lines of surprise because I thought, okay I am really putting the screws to myself on this and I am going to do this work that will merit this degree and then when they said, 'well, we think you are biting off too much'…I didn't have any feelings of oh, they don't think it's a good idea. I just had the feeling of wow, I don't have to do that work now, and I don't have to spend that money and I don't have to put that time in, I can get done sooner and the rest of the research will be a higher quality because I won't be spreading myself so thin.

Christina's interpretation was also justified, although it was more painful for her to experience. She describes the hindrance of her creativity as being a positive experience even if it did not feel that way to her at the time:

> So nothing really feels like it is ever finished. Maybe hindering creativity is all about constant change. Like being in a state of flux. This is not an easy thing to grasp because it can mean that you'll never make THE great piece of art. You'll always be two steps behind and trying to catch up. (Pause). Yeah, hindering creativity for me has been a lot of demanding change and re-examination of the things I thought I knew. I do see this as a positive thing even if at the time it hurts like hell.

In a similar voice, Samantha echoes Christina's words. She felt her experience was also somewhat justified, but it took her till the end of the semester to be able to understand it:

> The professors almost make you feel like you should discount everything you do your first semester. That it's not valid. Um, which is very much

> sort of how they view it. It's like your first semester, they tell you when you come in, your first semester you are going to make crap. Your first year you are going to make stuff that you don't know where it came from, you probably don't ever want to see again, you're embarrassed by, blah, blah, blah. They preface you with this (exhale) and to some degree I think it's true.

Another participant, Travis, was able to view almost all of the hindrance upon his creativity as a positive, justified understanding. His creativity was principally hindered by his professor during his attempts to write papers and create presentations for his classes. Travis found that he simply did not know how to effectively communicate the subject matter he was tasked with conveying and he also learned that he did not understand presentation techniques in PowerPoint slides that are esoteric to his field:

> The first time I wrote a paper, I had completed the whole thing and I thought it was in pretty good shape. And I sent it to him and what I got back was substantially different than what I had originally put together. So, I thought, okay…it's the first paper. It's probably normal. It's the first attempt. I probably made several mistakes. I had put some creative additives in there, quotes…colors…fonts.
>
> And again, I had worked very hard on it and thought okay this is in pretty good shape…I was creative, but reserved. And I went over and spent thirty minutes hearing how wrong I was from this professor. (Laugh) It was okay. That actually was wrong. I did not know enough about what I was doing.
>
> So I think coming out of the presentation and saying okay, he was probably right on several things, that made the initial criticism a little easier to take (laugh). So, yeah…it hasn't been a really negative experience to have my creativity hindered. I would like to see students grow and get further along and maybe he could give them a little more leeway on what they want to say. You know, his way is not always the best way. But I think it is hard probably for a professor who has been doing this for thirty years…it would probably be sort of hard for me too, to have to back off and say; well I need to let them go a little bit.

Becky felt similar to Travis in terms of the hindrance being justified since she could be sure she was doing it correctly:

> It can be positive like with the presentations. I prefer to have a professor go over it with a fine toothcomb because I tend to get nervous and forget what to say. That may limit my creativity, but it makes sure that I am conveying the research.

For John the hindering was beneficial to his research:

> I think some of the classroom boundaries and the curriculum boundaries that are there, um, while they didn't allow me to just go off and do what I wanted I think that was actually helpful in some ways because it channeled my interests in certain ways so I actually probably benefited from that. From looking at my broad area of interest and looking at it from different perspectives, so while it didn't allow me to be creative and just do whatever I wanted to, it did allow me to think through and look at my interest from a different perspective and that's been helpful.

The Unjustified Interpretation

The second sub-theme of interpretation is that of the hindrance of creativity being unjustified. By unjustified I mean the inability to vindicate the grounds by which the professors made their hindrance of the creativity. The impact that these unjustified experiences had on the participants was strikingly powerful. Some of the language used depicts the emotional significance such as "disheartening", "horrible", "hurt", "draining", and "frustrating". Christina commented "I have cried my eyes out after some of these critiques. I have felt like no one understands me." Samantha is still unsure about her experience, stating, "It was really difficult. I think I am still processing it to be honest." For many of the participants the interpretation of the experience left them without an

understanding of the reasoning behind the hindrance of their creativity. Eric points out during his second experience that the hindrance was unjustified:

> Okay, with the external [design], the criticism and the hindrance of the creative process was coming from an unjustified base.
>
> It was unwarranted in my eyes because the criticism came from one of the members who was very difficult to get along with. He did not have a thorough understanding of the fluid dynamics of air going over the exterior car body, but he espoused views that he did and it was quite obvious that he didn't.

For Michael the hindrance of his creativity was a restriction on his freedom to express himself and he had to deal with the contradiction of making new work while retaining something from his older work as encouraged by his professors:

> And so, that's another thing that is very restrictive is because you are expected to develop a body of work that relates and there is this common thread that follows through all of them and that's ideal and um, that's very restrictive because even though you are supposed to be developing work you are supposed to make work that is similar to previous work and I think that is kind of a hypocritical thought. Especially since it is art and a big part of why I went into art was because you have a freedom to develop from whatever is around me.
>
> I loved feeling like I could make what I wanted and that was a big reason I went into art was because I could have more freedom. Then suddenly I was feeling like…um, what I went into…because I went into that, I had no freedom.

Christina found that professors hindered her creativity by not fully explaining themselves to her in order for her to progress as a student:

> So, in art, your creativity is hindered all the time. You make a piece and the professor comes and says, okay, this part works and this works, but this part here is crap and what else do you have to show? It's never enough. You feel like you are making all this work…putting all this time and effort into each piece and some professor comes in and just looks it

> over in like two seconds and cuts you a new asshole. Sorry for the language, but it's true. That's how it feels.

Although most of the interview with Travis was positive toward the hindering of his creativity, he did comment on the lasting effects of hindering a student's creativity and how it pertains to his own feeling of freedom:

> Because it was kind of so harsh and almost like we hadn't done anything right. He said there were not enough images, too many words…um, not clear…not at all what he was expecting. I mean he basically just took the entire presentation and kind of said this is not what I want and specifically called out what he wanted.
>
> I kind of feel like we should be given a little more leeway because now we are almost finished and my feeling is by the time you graduate, you shouldn't have to make many changes on your paper or slides. It's good to have some of you in it. So, if you are wrong, as long as you are not really wrong, he should just let it go and let you learn from that. If you pick a bad color combination in your slides and you can't read them or others can't read them, well…if you do it, you'll learn never to do that again from your experience. But if he just tells you not to use those colors, you end up wondering if it would have been so bad to use them and you may not understand completely the idea behind it all. Sometimes I wish, you know, I had a little bit more freedom.

Mariah's experience with understanding the hindrance was very emotional for her. She describes the process of seeing her work taken out of the art show and the lasting effects it had for not only her, but for her family as well:

> I thought I had followed all the rules as they were laid out. I have three kids at home. I'm an older returning student. We don't have a lot of money. We've got a family to support. I've had to take out loans to pay for this degree. I wanted this opportunity to get myself some scholarships and you know, no matter how small they would be, they would have helped me. And um, (clearing throat) it really left me angry about the whole situation…the whole college experience. Somebody, my major professor should have told me. Should have contacted me. Something should have been done so I didn't have to see it play down like that. Like I

> wasn't important or not fit to be in with all the other students. It was very upsetting.
>
> It's just that I had returned to school as an outlet for my creativity. You know, I had taken pictures my whole life. I loved taking pictures. I loved the freedom of taking pictures of anything I wanted. And you know the fact that it wasn't being validated was just very upsetting. And I felt like I wasn't being respected in the art department and um, that I wasn't treated in an appropriate way.
>
> To be taken out of the show because I didn't meet those requirements is understandable, but the fact that those requirements were not made clear to me when I entered the show and the fact that I was dismissed like she won't care. She won't make a big deal out of this, so we can just take it down because we don't want her in it. You know, that made me very angry because if they had just explained it differently to me and possibly given me some different alternatives. Like well, you can hang your work over there or your work can stay, but can't be included in the judging. Fine. I mean I had to call my family and tell them not to come. That I wasn't in the show after all. I just felt like they didn't care about me. They didn't think about everything else that was going on.

Unjustified interpretation was an important factor in Ethan's understanding of the experience, and it provoked a response from one of his professors that he was not expecting. Ethan's hindrance centered on being required to take too many courses that did not pertain to his research focus. These extraneous courses left him no time to fully develop his creativity in his primary writing and research. Upon discussing this matter with his professor, he describes the following:

> He was teaching one of our classes and we had a discussion and he said it's our job to make sure that we groom you, you in the congregate sense as the whole class, we groom you to become professors. To which I responded in his class, you are not grooming me for anything. You use your graduate students as a dog and pony show to show off for other professors. You make us show up at functions. You don't talk to us. We stand over in a little bunch in the corner while you point at us and say, oh they are my graduate students, but we're not allowed to talk to you. You know, we pick up the trays, we open and close the doors, but we're not

> involved in this. You are not grooming me for anything. You know (pause) so, that's not it. And he said, well, you have a good point and I'll address these, but the bottom line is whether or not we ever produce another Ph.D. from this program it doesn't matter because we had tenure and we're gonna have our jobs anyway. (Pause). And he was being just candid with me. You know, he wasn't being obnoxious. He admitted I had a point, but whether we change it or not, as long as we write our books and our papers…and we give our, our lectures, whether we produce another graduate student or not, it doesn't matter. We're gonna have our jobs.
>
> I told him, I said…I'm not one to keep my tongue in check too much…I told him, I said it's absolutely pathetic. You know, you should be ashamed of yourself. But, I mean he didn't mean it…he was actually just being honest with me. I don't think he was condoning the situation any more than I would, but he was being realistic about it. He knew he could just kind of half step it when it came to the students because it didn't matter. So, in the political atmosphere, I think it likes to treat graduate students like mushrooms. You know, keep 'em in the dark and feed them crap. And they'll be happy. And you know, pull them out whenever you need to dust them off and show them off to somebody else that you have graduate students. But beyond that, there is no atmosphere of creativity. They don't nurture you to have a new idea.
>
> I had a hard time dealing with that because they were making me do something I didn't want to do. All (pause) all under the direction of my professor, it's all paying dues. You have to go pay your dues. You've gotta take this class, you've got to take that class, you have to take that class…you have to pay your dues. You know what? I'm forty-three years old. I have paid more dues in my life than these people will ever think about. You know, so I don't need to pay that kind of dues. And I don't know that any…I don't know that a twenty-two year old student needs to pay that kind of dues.

The interpretation of the ground of mistrust was either justified or unjustified and had a substantial impact on the participants in the study. The communication by some of the professors allowed for the students to fully understand the reasoning behind the decision to hinder their creativity. Yet for others, the hindering of their creativity was

unjustified and created inner turmoil for the students. This turmoil caused the student to wonder what the decision meant and what sort of freedoms were being questioned.

The previous quotes make it clear that these experiences were very powerful for the participants in terms of their understanding and ability to interpret the actions as coming from a justified base or an unjustified base with the professors. The aftereffects of the interpretations can be seen in the changed mindsets of the students in the next section entitled the outcomes.

Theme 2 – Drawing a Line: The Outcomes

I haven't really thought about it. I sort of just decided to draw a line and just do it a certain way. Hence, command myself, no complaining about this. This is something you have to do in order to be professional. (Cedric)

The second theme that emerges from the interviews is the strong influence that the box and the interpretation have upon the outcomes of the students' changed mindsets. By outcomes I mean the result of visible effects of the hindrance of creativity. The outcomes for the participants ranged from acceptance to loss of confidence. Participants described their mindsets as being "conditioned", "trained", "processed", "obeyed", and "shifted". Due to the impact of their experiences, they were not willing to be as creative as they had previously been in regard to writing papers, creating presentations, delivering lectures, or making art. This second major theme of outcomes has four sub-themes. They are: change, acceptance, cautiousness, and loss.

Outcome – Change

The participants in this study questioned their own creativity based on their experience of having it hindered. The outcome of change illustrates their own understanding on how they have changed their approach to being creative. As a result of his experience, Eric noticed an immediate change after his creativity was hindered and how the hindering affected his attempts at creativity in other situations:

> I had conditioned myself to not be as creative and to not try to think outside the box so much. If I had to do something it would be, okay, let's look at something other people have done and maybe branch off of that a little bit, but none of these big grandiose ideas on, well, I think that this really thinking outside the box would work.
>
> I don't have any answers, but I do know I am certainly conditioned now to avoid thinking creatively, having gone through the program for this long.

Samantha offers her own description of what the process is like having had her creativity hindered:

> And so, it's like this constant…it's almost like ah…if you drew a curly 'q'…sort of like this (gesture with circles in the air) you know, it's like you are constantly looping back and learning from what you just did, but then you are coming out of it and learning something else and then you loop back on that and learn what you just did. So in some ways I feel like I am still processing it all.
>
> It's like being sort of broken down and built back up, broken down and built back up over and over and over.

For some of the participants, having their creativity hindered produced a change in their mindset from thinking artistically to thinking scientifically. This change was not easy for the participants to talk about and they struggled with finding the words to express what this difference meant for them. Jerome had his creativity hindered when his

major professor advised him to not take an art course that he was interested in. Although he wanted to respect his professor's advice, he could not help feeling that the class would enrich his engineering experience by allowing him to conceptualize things better. He describes his experience after deciding to take the class against his professor's advice:

> I went ahead and took the class anyway and it was very beneficial. Very beneficial in that…in ways that I didn't even know. Taking an art class when you are immersed in a quote unquote left brain…. I think I had to use all of my brain, all of the time (laugh), but when you are immersed in a left brain type situation all the time, um, that kind of helps open you up.
>
> Taking the art class opened my eyes. There are a lot of smart people in my art class. These kids that had mega talent. And I got to see that for the first time. You really don't get to see any talent…you don't get to see talent in engineering unless you are allowed to produce something or solve a problem. All you know is that were you successful or did you flag it so to speak…fail, flag, fail, you know. And you got to see it over there in arts and sciences.
>
> Really the product that you produce is more important than the process…or whether or not it will break…you can always put in another gusset there or make it thicker or you know try to go back and see why it failed. But without the product, I realized, without the product there is no reason for engineering. If you don't produce anything there is no reason for it. And these folks over in the art department knew that without actually verbalizing that. That the process was equally important. It's just something I saw…kind of a little…no balance over here in the engineering world.

Taking the art class for Jerome "opened his eyes" to the two types of thinking that were occurring within him: one thinking process is artistic and one is scientific. Jerome was not the only participant to feel this pull between thinking processes. Cedric describes his experience:

> There's nothing in my program that encourages me to be creative. I'm encouraged to think scientifically by my professors.

> Like I've completely shifted in terms of creativity from the artistic to the scientific. And you know, partially consensual and partially due to circumstance and due to necessity. Um, but I suppose it's just a matter of sacrificing one thing in terms of another.

In a similar fashion, Becky describes her experience with the change in thinking:

> I think that type of mindset that I have been conditioned to limits my creativity because I am scared to try anything new. If I try something new, I might not get the right answer.
>
> I have always struggled with how to present something in an interesting or creative fashion because it has been taught out of me by the department. I hate reading research papers. I hate reading everybody else's, I mean I hate it. It's just aahhhahhathth, it's very boring. So when I find an author who can actually write well and get the point across, I am in kind of awe because I don't know how they do that. Because my writing style, I've just been trained now to be very dry and I don't particularly enjoy that. So there's a level of a lack of creativity in a way that has occurred.
>
> It's very difficult to be scientific and artistic at the same time. It's hard to explain. I have to think completely differently. When I am thinking scientifically I know I have to focus on details, be precise, get the right answer. I have to think very linearly, point A to point B, if there's a problem- fix it type of process. And if I am doing something more creative, I really have to kind of turn off thinking in a way. I don't know how to describe it. Just go with how it feels. It's difficult to integrate both of them because in science it is not about feeling. It is about the correct answer and logic. That's it. And you can use creativity in science, but it's how to get the right answer or how to prove something is correct. Or you know, in research it is very straightforward. You try something it fails, you try something else and what did you learn from your failure, okay apply it to your next try. So it's very straightforward in a way. It's a struggle sometimes to be creative.

Krisnah found her creativity to be so hindered by her professors that she began to hinder it herself to avoid being hurt. She described her experience:

> The class was over structured. So, I definitely feel that my creativity was hindered because I would have to stop myself from thinking of different possibilities and just do what the professor had asked for.

> I find myself limiting my own creative voice. I think the first few times I would try to come up with things, but after you are challenged over and over again you tend to give up.

The change in mindsets for the participants marked a change in their understanding of their creativity and ability to express themselves. While some participants struggled with the change, others accepted it and reconditioned themselves to hinder their own creativity in the future. The following sub-theme addresses this acceptance of the hindrance to creativity.

Outcome – Acceptance

Some participants in the study were able to accept the hindrance to their creativity as part of an overall learning process. Some accepted it because they wanted the approval from their professors. Others accepted it because they hoped their graduate experience would get better in the long run if they learned how to reduce turbulence or make it smoother. For Eric, he accepted the hindrance to his creativity because it was not the first time his creativity had been hindered in his lifetime and he knew it would not be the last:

> I think one reason is because I was thirty-seven years-old and ah, I had already gone through this process several times as we do as we mature into adults. I think in layman's terms it's called getting your ass handed to you. Pardon my language. That is a sobering experience and after it happens enough times…and the number of times that it occurs could actually be a function of personality, I suppose, but after it happens a couple of times, you kind of step back and say, you know, this isn't fun and I need to figure out a way to come to terms with this. Some people never figure it out, but I can honestly say that to achieve the level of professionalism that a Ph.D. or a graduate degree demands, you have to come to terms with it. You have to learn how to accept it and then come to

> terms with it, that hindrance of creativity. You have to learn how to think inside the box.

Becky's experience centered more on her desire to please her professors. She tried to not to question her acceptance of having her creativity hindered; instead, she adopted the mindset of her professors to get the right answer no matter what:

> I have always been trained to give like the right answer. There's never any gray. It is either right or it is wrong. And I thrive on getting the right answer, so I think I have been taught that way…so when professors say this is the project we want, you know, get the right answer, I will.
>
> As an engineer, you are supposed to do it a certain way. It is good to think outside the box as long as you get the right answer. And I have personally struggled with thinking outside the box because I have learned it a certain way and that's how I am going to do it.
>
> I have always been um, I want to please my professors, so for me, I have never felt completely hindered because I always want to do it correctly and do what the professor wants me to do, so he will give me an A. I mean that's entirely how I think. I don't want to disappoint my boss; I want them to think you know I'm good at what I do. So, I better do it the way they want me to in a timely manner.

Within the acceptance of the hindered creativity lies a sorting through of all the "voices" for Samantha. Although she has accepted that her creativity is going to be hindered, she is still trying to process the acceptance within her own artwork:

> That sort of hinders me a little bit because you have all these voices coming at you at once and it's like, you know, you want to make work that makes you happy and you want to make work that makes your professors happy and you want to make work that makes your parents or your friends happy.
>
> One of the biggest sort of fights I've had with hindered creativity is just like sorting out all the voices of people telling me what's good and what's not good and trying to figure out what I think is good. So, that's huge and that's basically what you are learning to do in grad school. You are not

> learning how to paint better, you are learning how to make artwork in your own voice just by all the other voices and that's a really hard thing to do.

Struggling through the "voices", learning the "correct way", and "thinking inside the box" are all part of the acceptance outcomes to having creativity hindered in an educational context. Not all participants, however, were willing to accept the hindrance of their creativity. These individuals avoided thinking about the hindrance and the unpleasantness that the experience carried with it. They subsequently became very cautious about exercising their creativity and became more guarded in situations requiring creative thought, preferring to protect their creativity from outside judgment. This is addressed in more detail in the following section.

Outcome- Cautiousness

Of the participants who accepted the hindrance to their creativity, Eric also discovered himself protecting his new ideas and keeping them more to himself. He describes his experience as an eventual "killing of the spirit":

> And the more I experienced that the more conditioned I became to avoid those feelings and the way to avoid those feelings is to avoid submitting ideas. Another way to avoid them is to be tactful about the ideas you are going to submit, such as checking with other people first or kind of going behind the scenes or under the radar so to speak.
>
> I can definitely say I am really very cautious about submitting new ideas now in whatever context that I am in. No longer will I have that youthful exuberance of- Hey, let's try to doing it this way, cause you get smacked down enough and even if it's warranted, the way the smacking down process occurs can be hugely devastating to somebody.
>
> And so you run into that problem and what you do is you end up killing the spirit. You know, if this is what it is like, then fine, I'll just do what I

> need to do to get through the day and uh, (deep breath) that's where it is. I think that sadness in my heart comes from that and I think the resistance I have to offering new ideas comes from that now.

For Ethan, he has learned how to be cautious because for him staying in school means learning to adapt to the situation. He describes the pressures of being cautious while dealing with the pressures of school and life:

> To be successful in a graduate program, you have to treat it like a full-time job. You have to give it, you know, absolute concentration and the discipline to do it. You don't have time to work, have a career, and do this. So, then you have the added stress of outside world pushing in, demanding that you meet your financial obligations and you have your professors wanting you to do something you don't want to do anyway that is outside of your course of study which causes you an undo amount of pressure…which creates the setting for an absolute failure. You are not creative anymore because it could cost you your chance. I am extremely cautious about being creative in my classes because I don't want to mess this up.

Another approach is to simply avoid thinking about the hindrance. This is what Cedric is doing so he can get through graduate school:

> How I feel about that isn't even clear to me. I just feel that…that…actually for the most part I have just sort of avoided thinking about it and just treated it like something I had to do whether I liked it or not.

Krisnah has also come to the conclusion that she must avoid her own creativity, and avoid thinking about creativity because of the disappointment she feels as a result of the control that her professor has over the course:

> I have good questions too, but I have raised my hand for five minutes and the teacher just looks at me and moves on and I said hello?…so really…it really pisses me off how that class is just him and I can't even express my creativity because I know it'll be shot down. I was disappointed. This is

> not how education is supposed to be. I find myself telling myself to not think creatively just to make it through.

The decision to avoid thinking creatively, to avoid thinking about the hindering, and the cautiousness to being creative in the future are powerful influences on students' learning. This returns to the question proposed by Torrance (1995) as to whether or not educational systems lower creativity through the use of external evaluation processes. Research has shown that levels of creativity tend to lower as creativity is hindered over time (Rodgers, 1959, Ochse, 1990; Kraft, 2004). In the next section, the final sub-theme of outcomes, the loss of confidence, is discussed.

Outcome – Loss

Some of the participants developed a distinct and pervasive loss of confidence from the hindrance of their creativity. The loss is not only felt in their work, but also in themselves as learners. Michael felt that the hindrance on his creativity was a loss of progress that resulted in him losing a part of himself:

> So, that has held me back a lot and losing that momentum or losing that confidence or losing that permission from those, from 'they', from gatekeepers or from whoever is very debilitating in developing something that you are supposed to be on top of…something that you are supposed to progress or at least develop. So, you lose a lot. You lose a lot of confidence in your field, yourself, your work, your life…you lose a lot and um, you would think in an educational setting that would be the last thing that would happen especially in the art world where you have freedom, um, otherwise I would have been a banker or an engineer (laugh).

> Especially 'cause, because of that, because of the examples that I have given, I have had to distance myself from my work also, which is distancing a big part of myself from me (laugh) from something that could

be called a more enduring part of myself, I have to distance myself from me.

For Mariah, her loss is in her own confidence as an adult student and artist. As she expressed it, she thought she knew what she was doing. She thought she had been in the right. She describes her experience of finding her artwork taken out of the art show by her professors:

> I am not so vocal in my classes anymore. I have lost some confidence in myself as an artist because even though they cited their reasons for removing my work, it still makes you feel like your work isn't good enough. You're not part of that group. You're not important enough to have your work hang with the other work.
>
> You know, because of this experience I lost confidence in my work…in myself as an artist. Here they are saying, oh, your work is too good…but I tell you, all I saw was my work sitting there on the floor like trash waiting to be taken out. Not only was my creativity hindered, but my confidence in the entire art department was lost.

Cedric described his experience as a loss of his talents. He once considered himself to be highly creative, but since going into Physics he has not used many of his artistic abilities and he is starting to feel them slipping away:

> I have become a Physics major since I graduated and ah, came here and started the graduate program, I've just had no spare time to do anything. Um, I am always constantly working and um, when I'm not working, I'm sleeping. So, I don't have the time to do these things that I find creative. I don't have the time to, you know, let my right brain work a little a bit. And I've actually, I'm actually starting to worry that um, maybe um, those abilities stagnate.
>
> For example, I was doing a recitation section and all I had to do was, basically I was discussing, you know, special relativity and rockets and stuff and I couldn't even draw a rocket correctly on the board even though, you know for years I prouded myself on my artistic talents and then here I am. I can't even draw a stick figure because I just…it's a bit frustrating,

> you know to realize that if you don't work at something constantly it begins to stagnate and that includes artistic endeavors and that includes creativity. It's harder for me to visualize things, I think.

Jerome has also felt a loss of his creativity. He describes:

> But there is still not a lot of room for being creative because every design you show them, every new or novel idea you present to the professors usually gets shot down because you do not understand the concept enough. And the way they have the curriculum laid out is very little real world stuff. They put you in a situation and then tell you how to get through the situation. It's not the way it works in real life…not that I have seen. You are in the situation and you have to find your own way out of it. You have to use your own creativity to come up with new ideas to solve the problems, but your creativity has been shot down by the professors over and over and you lose that ability to think creatively.

Becky describes losing her creative "voice":

> When I wrote my master's thesis, my professor would basically tear everything apart and rewrite entire sections based on his words, so I saw how he wrote it and I started to emulate that style. I learned what was acceptable by seeing what was right and copying it that way. There was no creativity or expression in any of it. I learned through experience and I applied all the mistakes that I had made in my thesis and I learned how to write correctly and I would write some papers and I lost my voice and another scientific part of me took over.

The previous section of outcomes shows the significant impact that hindering creativity can have on adult learners. The experience is not one event in time, but rather a prolonged opening of a change within the adult learner in their own approach to creativity in the future. It has rippling effects throughout their mindsets, decisions, and future attempts at expressing their creativity.

Theme 3 – A Meeting in the Middle: Handle Differently

I think you need to look at the constraints and the motivation for the hindrance. Is the person doing it because they feel threatened or is it because we just can't afford to do it that way or is it the technology just doesn't allow us to do it that way? So it's very much a meeting in the middle. Instead of saying oh, hindrance is bad, you have to figure out how to construct or offer the advice such that you are not hindering the creative process, but you are trying to shape the idea. (Eric)

The third major theme to stand out against the ground of mistrust is the participants' willingness to share their thoughts on how it could have been handled differently. Each participant at some point during the interview offered a reflection on how the experience could have been different, and could have helped him or her deal with it in a more positive way. This was a strong personal desire expressed by each participant. All twelve of the participants found themselves at some time in their career on the other side of the table as the professor or as the leader. They have had to hinder the creativity of others and were able to bring that experience into their immediate experience of having their own creativity hindered. This was a surprise theme that emerged from the data for me. In Eric's case, he described his experience as being a challenge:

> I guess what you have to be careful of is when people are being creative, it seems like they are thinking outside the box because they haven't yet been introduced to the box. But you have to be careful because the box exists for a reason. You have to understand where the limits are and certainly not be afraid to go beyond them. But understand that there is a decision that has to be made when you are going to hinder the creativity of the individual. An example would be a young student who comes onto the scene and says I've got all these great ideas and you need to listen to me. And they very well may have great ideas and they very well may be

> merited, but you have to make sure that they understand feasibility. They need that direction. So, you can have the creativity and I think the challenge is encouraging the creativity while making them understand feasibility.

Ethan located his thoughts on handling the experience differently in terms of his own concept of what makes a good teacher and his own experience with one professor who he highly respected:

> What you need is to have somebody actually take an interest in where they are going and help them get there. You know, it's my opinion as a teacher and I've taught a lot over the years, it's not…or as a boss…it's not my job as a teacher or a boss to make your success difficult. It's my job as a teacher or a boss to remove any obstacles out of your way to allow you to be successful. It's not to hinder your success or creativity, but to facilitate it. And if that means me running the interference for you, then that's what I should be doing. They just don't see it that way though.
>
> I think what would improve…ah, now we had one professor there that was just phenomenal. He went to…I think he got his doctorate from Cornell maybe…he's a pretty sharp guy. And he had a theory that he would address us by our first names and we would address him by his first name. The idea being that in theory we are equals. And it's not that he's going to lower himself to our level of work at that time, but rather that we should raise ourselves up to his level of work as colleagues and that was a great idea.
>
> And as a good teacher, his or her goal should be to make a better student then they are. That student should come out better than the teacher is. You know, if I teach martial arts, my goal is to produce a student who can beat me. If I teach history, my goal is to produce a student who has a more brilliant career than I do. I mean, isn't that the theory?

In Jerome's experience he felt that the hindrance to his creativity in terms of the coursework could be handled differently by means of approaching the requirements from a new perspective. He describes his experience:

> But when someone is sitting on the other side of the desk telling you what they want to be and what they want to contribute…if you have the resources you need to find yourself trying to help that person do that.
>
> If you want to be an engineer you need to be in a program that is gonna put you in the field and then put you back in the classroom and then back out in the field and back…the co-op program does that to a certain degree, but not all co-op programs do that. You need to make sure this person is immersed in the side of engineering he wants to do. Because that's the way they did it in the old days. I read Gordon Murray's bio and this guy studied under somebody for awhile. That's the way you learn engineering. You know if you want to learn about internal combustion engines, great. Go get a job. Do that. Understand what it takes to put this thing together and add your creativity to it. Then come back to the table so to speak and get your education on as far as what the theory behind it is. Understand why it works and then go and make it work. There is no making it work if you only know the why.

In a comparable tone, Travis shares his experience of preparing himself to be the professor one day and how the hindrance of his creativity will weight in his mind:

> I think in terms of – if I am a professor one day, I would probably be pretty similar to my professor the first time. Very hard, not harsh, but very um, not holding back my opinion much, but then I would like to see my students grow over time to where I don't have to give my opinion and I could give them more space. By the time they get their Ph.D., they should be on their own and be able to do things on their own. Make decisions on their own about what to include and why. And if they are not, then they probably shouldn't get their Ph.D. yet. So, that's probably…if I was a professor, I would like to think that I would change as they grow and back off a little bit.

For some of the participants the manner in which they were informed about the hindrance to their creativity could be improved through better communication between the professors and the adult students. For Mariah, achieving a more balanced tone to the hindering could have helped her understand the experience differently:

> I think if they would have told me in a more positive way and maybe given me some sort of other opportunities to be in some different shows or you know, just to make me feel like I was still an important part of the department…It would have been a different experience than how it played out.
>
> And I just think that if it would have been done in a more positive way, it would have helped with those feelings.

Christina believed that the communication level could be improved:

> Yeah, like there are so many things I wish were different with this place. How they tell a student to change their artwork could be different.
>
> So, yeah, I think the communication level is a bit off and could use some improving.

In terms of handling the manner in which an adult student is hindered, Eric offers the following:

> And the manner in which you are told can be significant in terms of the reaction and I know that in the sciences, there is no tact. If somebody is criticizing someone else and they are tactful about it, that is not something that is taught and it's going to be endemic to their personality type.

Each participant's experience with hindered creativity led them to reflect on how it could have been handled differently. As some expressed, a "meeting in the middle" would have been ideal. A safe place is needed where the professor can be considerate and critical while being able to communicate effectively to help the adult students understand and learn from the experience in a more positive manner. Ethan's final comment at the end of his interview summed up for him what was most important when thinking about handling the experience differently:

> I can't stand it when there is a caste system. You know, I'm better than you because…And that's just bull. I mean you may be farther along this road than I am, but that doesn't mean one little bit that you are better than I am. The adverse might actually be true. I might be far better than you are at this. We just don't know it yet. Then again, I might be an absolute dismal failure at this. We don't know that either. But until we find that out, it's your job to help me get there. Either in or out. One or the other.

As evidenced by the data, the participants in this study were powerfully impacted by the hindrance of their creativity. Upon the initial ground of the box, mistrust of professors' conventional thinking and control developed and the entire complicated process of sorting through meaning making and interpretations occurred. The outcomes reflect the lasting effects the hindrance to creativity has had on the participants. The theme of handle differently provides insight into the participants' experiences of creativity, learning, and teaching.

The Overall Structure of Hindered Creativity

The data analysis provides the ground of the experience to be understood as the box (the relationship between the professor, student, and academia) that includes the mistrust of authority, the professors' conventional thinking, and the professors' control. The three major themes that stood out from the ground of the box are 1) the justified or unjustified interpretation of the hindrance, 2) the participants' changed outcomes, and 3) how it could have been handled differently. This relationship is represented in Figure 5. In the illustration, the ground of the box is located between the professor and the student,



Figure 5 The Overall Structure of Hindered Creativity

but they are both located within the larger box of academia. The professor is situated on top of the box to illustrate the connection to the academic box, as well as to show that the professor has a different viewpoint to the situation. The professor has been where the adult learner is now and is able to perhaps foresee future issues that the adult learner cannot know yet. The adult learner's creativity is seemingly controlled by the professor as the student moves in and out of the box. The footprints represent the dynamic moving in and out of the box and the adult learner adjusts to having their creativity hindered by the professor. With each movement, the adult learner is experiencing the hindrance of their creativity, which is influencing their interpretation of the box and changing how they approach being creative. At the same time, the adult learner is reflecting on their previous experiences with creativity and thinking about how it could be handled differently so that the creativity was not hindered in a negative fashion.

An alternative two-dimensional illustration that was created during the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy meeting to discuss the ground and themes is found in the Appendices section (Appendix H).

Participant Feedback to the Overall Structure

Phenomenology is a study of the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by the participants. In the previous sections, the participants shared their experiences of hindered creativity. As stated earlier in Chapter III, feedback from participants is crucial in terms of allowing the participants to "judge whether the thematic structure reflects their own individual experience" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p.38). In the final steps of the

data analysis process, each participant was contacted individually via email about the ground and themes of the experience (See Appendix I). Five of the participants responded with positive feedback to the overall structure of the experience. The following comment from Michael illustrates his response to the findings:

> I agree with the findings. The mistrust of the professor is a big reason for me that I wanted to share my story with you for the study. The department that I'm in continues to hinder my creativity even though they tell me it is for my own good. I'm really frustrated with this educational system. I hope your findings will reach the people who need to read them the most – the professors.

Eric also responded with a clear connection to the findings:

> I completely agree with what you sent me. Not only do I see eye to eye with the findings, but I feel like something good may come from all of this. Hindering a person's creativity goes much deeper than just being slapped on the hand.

Christina found the findings to resonate with her experience as well:

> Yeah, I think the findings are accurate with my experience. I am still dealing with my own willingness to share new ideas with other professors because of what happened to me. It's good to hear I'm not alone in this.

Of the twelve participants, five responded within a week with positive and supportive comments concerning the three themes and ground. Michael, Eric, and Christina's feedback reflect similar feedback provided by Ethan and Mariah. The overall feedback provided in response to the findings for the study resonated with the participants and helped to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data.

Summary

Chapter IV presented a brief participant synopsis of each adult learner and an in-depth data analysis of the participants' interviews. The data analysis of the interviews provided the ground of the experience as the box consisting of the professor, the student, and academia. The dynamic relationship between the professor and the student during the hindrance caused an initial mistrust of the professors, exhibiting the two sub-themes of the professors' conventional thinking and the professors' control. From the ground of the box, the thematic structure of the experience stood out to be three major themes of 1) the justified or unjustified interpretation of the hindrance, 2) the participants' changed outcomes, and 3) how it could have been handled differently. The three themes are interconnected to illustrate how each theme directly affects another. Each major theme is composed of sub-themes that directly target the personal experience of the theme in the participant's words.

Upon completion of the data analysis and thematic structure, the participants were contacted via email to provide feedback for the analysis. Five participants responded with supportive feedback and comments. This feedback was discussed in the final section of Chapter IV. Chapter V will provide a summary of the findings, a further discussion of the thematic structure while making connections to literature and research in the discussion section. Recommendations for practice and for future research are also presented.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Søren Kierkegaard (1909/1996) stated that in order to understand another individual, one must put oneself in their place to comprehend what the other experiences. As a young assistant professor, I attempted to follow Kierkegaard's advice by empathizing with the students who were enrolled in the fine art courses I facilitated. My primary concern was how and when they felt their creativity was being hindered. The anecdotal evidence for my concern was clear: in every semester of my teaching career students would share stories with me about a project they had wanted to create but were discouraged or hindered from doing so by someone in their life (parent or professor). Many of the students I worked with were frustrated by time constrains, financial constraints, and an unguided ability to effectively develop their creativity, but the students' desire and passion for art motivated them to continue creating new work. I tried to encourage their creativity because of the experience I had with Sara so many years ago when I told her "don't mix oil and acrylic paint together".

My decision to return to school and further my education was not made lightly. I was intuitively aware of missing a certain 'something' in my facilitation skills. There had to be more for me to learn, especially about teaching adult learners. The experiences I brought with me as an adult learner from my past teaching positions, in conjunction with

my coursework at the University of Tennessee, led me to reflect upon the hindrance of creativity from a research standpoint. I also personally experienced having my own creativity hindered in my graduate program, which left me wondering if I will ever be able to return to the creative levels I displayed in my artwork and teaching prior to attaining this terminal degree. This reflection culminated in the following research question that drove this study: What are the shared meanings of hindered creativity as understood by graduate students in an educational setting?

The following sections of Chapter V provide a summary of the findings from the study, a discussion of the findings, implications for practice, recommendations for future research, conclusions, and a personal reflection of the cumulative experience.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand the lived experience of adult graduate students who have had their creativity hindered in an educational context. The phenomenological method developed by Thomas and Pollio (2002) at the University of Tennessee was utilized to understand the essence of meaning and to gain an in-depth awareness into the experience of hindered creativity from an adult learner's perspective. Twelve adult graduate students from a state university voluntarily participated in the research for this dissertation. Participants ranged in age from twenty-five to forty-five years of age. Eight different majors were represented with seven participants currently enrolled in Ph.D. degree programs and five participants currently enrolled in Master's degree programs.

The participants were interviewed about their experience with hindered creativity in an educational context. The interviews started with the following opening research question: "As a graduate student, tell me about an experience where you became aware your creativity was being hindered in an educational context". The interviews were open-ended without a pre-determined list of questions. Rather, the participant's words guided the interview with follow-up questions being derived during the course of the interview from the language of the participant.

Participants in this study experienced having their creativity hindered in a variety of ways with a prolonged and multifaceted aftermath. Three major themes and one ground were described by each participant that emerged from the data analysis. A dynamic relationship between the professor and student within the academic box created the ground of the experience. The box consists of the relationship between the professor and the adult student where the professor is in control as the authority figure. There exists within this box the relationship between the professor and the academic venue, where the professor is required to follow certain rules, regulations, and guidelines. Within the ground of the box participants experienced an initial mistrust of the professor who hindered their creativity. This mistrust dominated their experience and influenced their relationship with the professor.

Each participant experienced a certain level of mistrust during the initial encounter in which a professor hindered the participant's creativity. The mistrust was then interpreted by the participant to be either justified or unjustified depending upon the explanation provided or not provided by the professor at the time of the hindrance. The

outcomes of the hindered creativity were described by participants through their changed mindset of acceptance, cautiousness, and loss of confidence. Upon reflection of the experience, each participant offered his or her own understanding of how the situation could have been handled differently so that the hindering could have been a positive learning experience.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings presents the current study's findings in relation to the adult education literature on hindered creativity and transformational learning. Specifically, the previously mentioned items of the ground of the experience, Theme 1: The Interpretation, Theme 2: The Outcomes, and Theme 3: Handle Differently are discussed in greater detail.

The Ground of the Experience

The Box

Thinking outside the box has become cliché in terms of creativity simply through overuse of the metaphor. It came as a surprise that the ground of the experience would turn out to be "thinking inside the box". The dynamic relationship between the professor and student within academia created 'the box'. The box consists of the relationship between the professor and the adult student where the professor is in control as the authority figure. There also exists within this box the relationship between the professor and academia where the rules, regulations, and guidelines must be followed by the professor.

Since the ground is vital in order to understand the lived experience of an individual from a phenomenological standpoint (Thomas & Pollio, 2002), it was within the box that participants experienced an initial mistrust of the professor who hindered their creativity. This mistrust dominated their experience and influenced their relationship with the professor. Mistrust is a strong influence on adult students as they make meaning out of their experiences. Mezirow (2000) states "Cognition has strong affective and conative [sic] dimensions; all the sensitivity and responsiveness of the person participates in the invention, discovery, interpretation, and transformation of meaning" (p.6).

The box holds the mistrust of authority as the beginning to a "disorienting dilemma" for the students (Mezirow, 1997). As participants shared their story of the box, it became clear that the professors' control over their education had a huge impact on their abilities to trust the professors, academia, and even themselves. Michael, Mariah, Cedric, Jerome, and Becky all spoke of losing trust within themselves and with their creative ideas. Brookfield (2006) correlates the mistrust of authority with the concealment of agendas:

> Full disclosure refers to the teacher's regularly making public the criteria, expectations, agendas, and assumptions that guide her practice. Students know and expect us to have such an agenda and are usually skeptical of any statement to the contrary…Unless you make your expectations, purposes, and criteria explicit, you will be perceived as holding them close to your chest, being secretive, and therefore not to be trusted (p.8).

Inside the box, professors' conventional thinking was found to dominate the hindrance of creativity. Participants described trying to do something that was new or innovative in their graduate work and in turn, the professor would hinder the creativity

due to the professor's taken-for-granted frames of reference and meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 2000). As the participants became aware of the professor's conventional thinking and assumptions, the participants had to encounter their own assumptions about academia and learning. This disequilibrium that was created for the students within the hindrance of their creativity had lasting effects upon them as adult learners (Jarvis, 2006; Mezirow, 2000). The unease of the experience has been described by Jarvis (2006) as a "disjuncture…when time stops…when our biological repertoire is no longer sufficient to cope automatically with our situation, so that our thinking harmony with the world is disturbed and we feel unease" (p.16). Unease is what caused the mistrust of professors to be intertwined with professor's control as well as the interpretations and outcomes for the participants.

Within Mezirow's (2000) concept of transformative learning, "a disorienting dilemma" can function as the trigger event that leads to self-examination of assumptions and can be accompanied by "feelings of fear, guilt or shame" (p.22). The hindrance of creativity functioned as the trigger event for all the participants with a prolonged and lasting aftermath. Eric and Cedric were fearful of having the experience happen again, and it was those feelings of disappointment that made them avoid being creative, which in turn prevented the subsequent feelings of discouragement and frustration. Michael and Samantha felt guilty for not being able to acquiesce the professors with their artwork because they couldn't understand what it was the professors wanted in the first place due to bad communication. It was also apparent in Ethan and Mariah's interviews that feelings of anger resulted from having their creativity hindered, to the extent that both

participants made comments about “not being able to wait until their graduate experience was over with”.

Brookfield (1987) states that professors may function as “psychological demolition experts” as they work in educational settings that require sensitivity and empathic understanding of their adult learners (p.30). Christina, Samantha, John, Becky, and Krisnah all perceived their professors as having too much control over their education. Krisnah spoke of her professor as being unsupportive and absent because he allowed graduate assistants to teach his course. Anytime Krisnah had a new creative idea and presented it to the assistants, she was shot down and told to “just follow the syllabus” and not to ask so many questions. Michael perceived his professor as contradicting and hypocritical because he wanted him to create new artwork that looked nothing like his older work, but still contained elements of his previous ideas. Yet the professor, according to Michael, would not help him understand this statement and offered no further discussion of the matter. Brookfield (2006) states:

> Congruence here is between words and actions, between what you say you will do and what you actually do. Nothing destroys students' trust in a teacher more quickly than seeing the teacher espouse a set of principles or commitments (for example, to democracy, active, participatory learning, critical thinking, or responsiveness to students' concerns) and then behave in a way that contradicts them. Students usually come to know pretty quickly when they are being manipulated. You may be able to get away with breaking a promise to them once, but that's pretty much it (p.7).

These unexplained hindrances to the participants’ creativity left them confused and questioning the intentions of the professors. Within the questioning of intentions, the justified and unjustified interpretations occurred.

Theme 1 – A Hard Thing to Deal With: The Interpretation

Participants in the study had to interpret the professor's hindrance of their creativity as either justified or unjustified based on any rationale given by the professors. This was a very 'hard thing to deal with' for each participant and the experience was not something they took lightly. Rather, the interpretation was a powerful instrument of meaning making for the adult learner.

The Justified Interpretation

Some participants in the study chose to view their interpretation of the hindrance to their creativity as justified if the professor provided a clear and rational explanation. Eric, in his second story of hindered creativity, referred to the justification as the professor's "wisdom" simply because Eric was aware that the professor had more experience than he did in terms of knowing the content and scope that should be incorporated into a dissertation. Eric had "bitten off more than he could chew" and was relieved to have the professor tell him to reign in the scale of his research proposal so that the work would be stronger and Eric could finish the program.

This justified interpretation is in agreement with Custodero and Neumann's (2005) theoretical research on teaching and learning as being a collaborative process in relation to creativity. They state that creative analysis "invites a drawing together of what we know and what we struggle to know" (p.33). This research also states that professors and students need "to strive to create and discern meaning between established understandings and emerging ideas and images" (p.34).

Travis, Samantha, Christina, Becky, and John all felt the hindrance to their creativity was justified. Travis stated that he had been wrong when he didn't know the proper etiquette about using different fonts and colors on PowerPoint presentations. He could clearly understand why the professor was disappointed with his work and why the professor told him to not use so many colors, fonts, and text on the slides because it was hard to read and distracting. In situations like these, the professor's esoteric knowledge was enough to persuade the student to the justification for the hindrance. It also aided the student by providing a larger and more objective perspective of the creativity they had presented of their graduate work in relation to others.

By citing this experience and taking the time to explain themselves to the students, a justified interpretation of the hindrance of creativity was established. Hansen (2005) states that it is vital "for teachers to be mindful of their own modes of perception, or ways of seeing, as much as they should be alert to those of their students" (p.63). He continues by saying, "A teacher who perceives and attends to the wondering look in a student's eye as the student shares an idea or conjecture has become responsive" (p.66). It is through this responsiveness that adult learners begin to judge the interpretation of the hindrance of creativity as justified or unjustified.

Brookfield argues that it is crucial for educators to develop and communicate a rationale to students. The observation in the following excerpt by Brookfield (2005) merits the length:

> One of the consequences of getting inside students' heads is that you start to realize the horrendous possibilities that exist for miscommunication or noncommunication between teachers and learners…Seeing ourselves through students' eyes often leads to our realizing that we have to pay

> much more attention than we thought was necessary to explaining and justifying our actions. Students can't read our minds. They can't be expected to know what we stand for without our making an explicit and vigorous effort to communicate this. We have to build a continual case for learning, action, and practice, instead of assuming that students see the self-evident value of what we are asking them to do. We have to create windows into our minds so that students can see the workings of our own teaching rationales. Laying bare our pedagogic reasoning helps students understand that our actions are not arbitrary or haphazard. They see that our choices and injunctions spring from our past experiences as teachers, from our convictions about what we're trying to accomplish, and from our knowledge of students' backgrounds, expectations, cultures, and concerns (p.108).

The Unjustified Interpretation

Over half of the participants felt that the hindrance to their creativity was unjustified. Most of the descriptions provided by these students focused on the clarity of why the hindrance had occurred and what rationale was behind the professors' choices. Christina spoke of how no one understood her and no one wanted to take the time to help her understand the reasons for the hindrance. Michael, Travis, Mariah, and Ethan described being confused, upset, and disoriented. Part of the confusion for the participants stemmed from the idea that they were trying to put a part of themselves into their graduate work through their creativity and the professors "shot it down", thus 'shooting them down' in the process.

These types of emotional reactions from students have been researched in educational psychology. The results indicate that adult students are emotionally connected to their learning experiences (Skowron, 2000). Skowron's study illuminates that adult learners who experience a learning situation that causes them emotional

reactivity often leads the students to cut themselves off emotionally. This behavior is, in turn, linked to a decrease in the satisfaction of their relationship with educators.

In order to address these issues in adult education, Brookfield (2006) argues on behalf of authentic teaching. He states:

> Authentic teachers do not go behind a student's back, keep an agenda private, or double-cross students by dropping a new evaluative criterion or assignment into a course halfway through the semester. An authentic teacher is one whom students trust to be honest and helpful. She is seen as a flesh-and-blood human being with passions, enthusiasms, frailties, and emotions, not as someone who hides behind a collection of learned role behaviors appropriate to the title of professor. From a student's viewpoint, credibility and authenticity need to be recognized in a teacher if the person is to be seen as an important enhancer of learning- as an authoritative ally, in other words (p.5-6).

In a similar tone, Cranton (2001) defined authenticity as the process by which teachers come to know themselves and their preferences. Part of being an authentic teacher is admitting that teachers do not have all the answers, that teachers can make mistakes, and that teachers need to be aware of their own limitations as educators (Palmer, 1998; Brookfield, 1991; Jarvis, 1992; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). Through being an authentic teacher, the unjustified interpretations of the adult learner in regard to hindering creativity could diminish if educators are willing to communicate and make clear their own assumptions, preferences, and learning styles.

One of the ways a teacher might not be authentic is if he or she is a counterfeit critical thinker. Brookfield (2006) states:

> Teachers who are *counterfeit* critical thinkers say they welcome a questioning of all viewpoints and assertions but then bristle when this encouragement is applied to their own ideas and make it clear that certain viewpoints (often those the teacher dislikes) are out of bounds. Practicing

> *phony* responsiveness happens when teachers profess to respect students' views and then refuse to negotiate around any concerns students raise. In these instances, students quickly conclude that your word is worthless, that any promise you make cannot be taken seriously, and that you are not to be trusted (p.7).

Theme 2 – Drawing a Line: The Outcomes

One pronounced aspect of the participants' experiences was that they perceived a change within themselves after the professor had hindered their creativity. They were less willing to be creative in their coursework or on their graduate projects, papers, and presentations. The outcomes of change, acceptance, cautiousness, and loss were all powerful experiences for the participants to speak about.

Outcome – Change

The changes that occurred within the participants developed over time. A change in thinking from artistic to scientific occurred for Cedric, Becky, and Jerome. While it was not a quick process, over time each participant began to understand that they were being less and less creative and more and more scientific, but it was difficult for them to explain the shift. This is a figural part of the experiences for Becky and Cedric when they described feeling like they had changed in their thinking skills and were not sure if they would ever be as creative as they had once been. This corresponds with Jarvis (1992) as he states that "People become more experienced as a result of learning; learning is both individual and individuating, and it changes people…people learn to adapt to change" (p.215).

Thinking between scientific and artistic has been researched in relation to creativity and the brain (Heilman, 2005) As Table 3 clarifies, there are two distinct approaches to thinking between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This is further illustrated in Figure 6 and Figure 7, which provide a visual example of the differences in thinking scientifically or artistically in adult education. Although these differences in creative thinking and the brain have been researched from a quantitative viewpoint, there is a lack of qualitative research that allows for the essences of these thinking experiences to be understood and could be examined further.

Outcome – Acceptance

Acceptance also came slowly for the participants. It was difficult for them to let go of being creative, but they were also tired of feeling confused and hurt by the hindrance. By accepting that the professor's way was the correct way to do things in order to complete the graduate program, they described trying to attain professor's approvals, learning to understand feasibility, and learning to "think inside the box". Eric, Becky, and Samantha spoke of pleasing professors to get through the program and trying to sort out all the voices of hindrance without losing their own voice completely. Brookfield (1995) posits that it is important to understand the enormity of influence that an educator can have over a student. He states:

> Seeing situations through their eyes illuminates how power dynamics permeate and structure all their interactions with us. No matter how carefully we monitor our actions, we can never really know their full impact on students. Events, words, and decisions that to us mean very little are taken as highly significant expressions of our power and authority by students (p.94).

Table 3 Creativity and the Brain

Creativity and the Brain in Adult Education	
The Left Hemisphere	**The Right Hemisphere**
• Mediation of speech and other language functions	• Spatial and visuospatial functions
• Reading and writing functions	• Recognition of faces and objects (all angles)
• Focused attention and probabilistic reasoning	• Recognition and expression of emotions
• Mechanical and calculative	• Global attention and deductive reasoning
• Programming skilled movements/memories	• Artistic skills and imagination
• Convergent thinking	• Divergent thinking
• Associated with right handedness	• Associated with left handedness

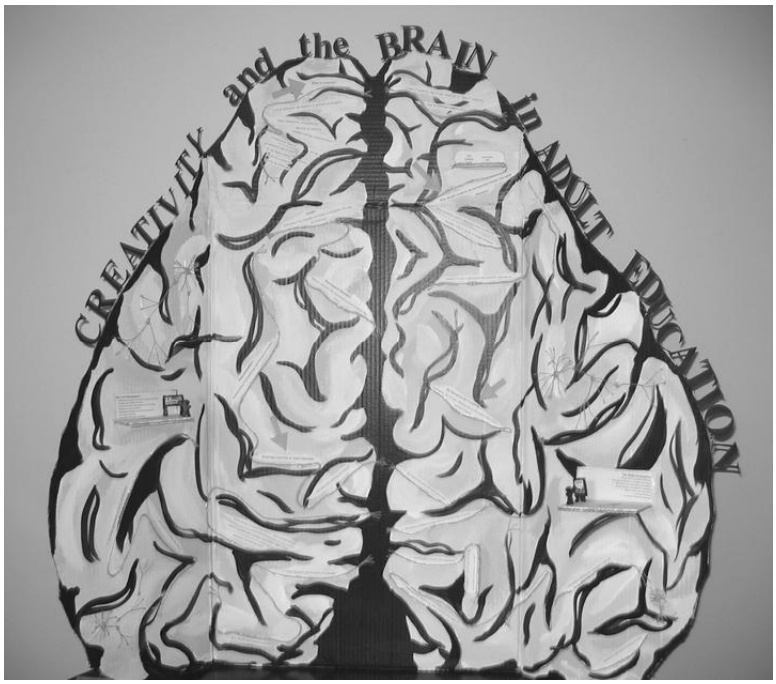


Figure 6 Creativity Poster Image

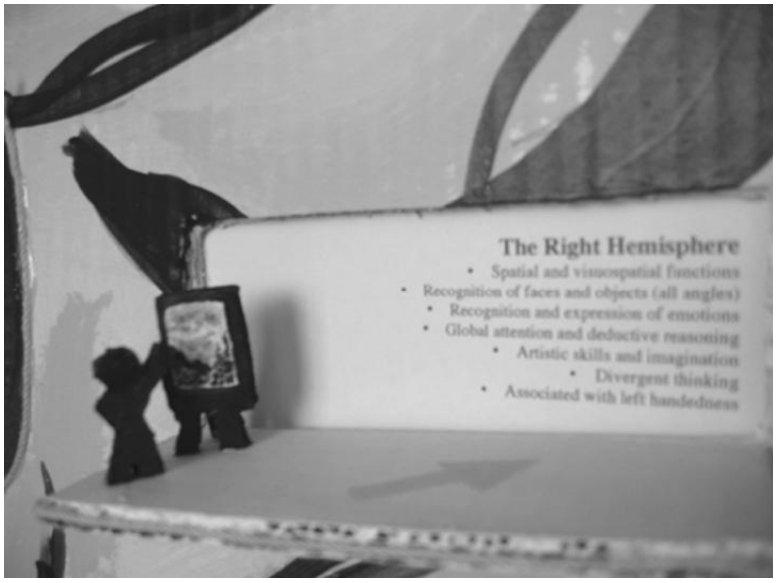


Figure 7 Detail of Creativity Right Hemisphere

Outcome- Cautiousness

As the feelings of hurt, shame, and humiliation subsided for the participants, some like Eric spoke of "killing the spirit" and almost burying his creativity so that he would not have to be wounded by anything like that hindrance again. Krisnah found herself limiting her own creativity inside of herself to avoid feelings of disappointment. Ethan had to restrain himself from rebelling against the professor's rules on hindering his creativity because he believed it would "cost him his chance" for the Ph.D. degree. Research into adult learners' anxiety and avoidance show that as these feelings grow, stress levels increase and can inflict lasting effects upon students (Lopez et al., 2002).

In his attempt to help students deal with these issues of cautiousness and avoidance, Brookfield (2006) states that teachers need to be honest with students and make clear the power that the professor wields in order for the student to be able to feel comfortable in approaching them about questions and concerns. He states "If the teacher is honest with students, she must acknowledge that she has considerable power- the power to define curricula, set evaluative criteria, and then use these criteria to decide the worth of student work" (p.11). In the hindrance of creativity, it can be very difficult for us as researchers to learn that the professors are "killing the spirit", in the tragic eloquence of Eric's words. Perhaps if professors could help ease some of the stress and anxiety by communicating more effectively, some of the cautiousness to creativity could be addressed.

Outcome – Loss

One deeply moving aspect of hindered creativity was the feeling of loss mentioned by many of the participants. They described feeling like the hindrance caused them to lose a certain part of themselves: they lost confidence in themselves and their abilities to submit new ideas, and they lost their ability to think creatively. Michael felt like he had to distance himself from himself in order to finish his degree under the direction of his professors. Cedric found it more arduous to visualize ideas and draw examples in class. The outcomes of change, acceptance, cautiousness, and loss contribute to the participants' emotional connection with education and learning as adults.

Research illustrates the importance that emotions can have on learning. Wei and colleagues (2003) undertook a quantitative study on adult college students to research the effects of assessments on students' well being. Results indicated that depression, anxiety, hopelessness, anger, and interpersonal problems increased with evaluative processes. As Chalmers and Fuller (1996) state:

> Student learning is affected by a number of factors, including the quality of teaching, student approaches to learning, and access to and availability of appropriate resources. However, the most powerful single influence on the quality of student learning is probably the assessment system that is used (p.41).

In order to address assessments in adult education, grades should be accompanied by feedback that helps the adult learner to understand the motivations, reasoning, and rational behind the professor's choices. As Hansen (2005) states:

> …[I]t takes form through attentiveness, a capacity to wait patiently and listen in the very midst of teaching, and then to move accordingly. To suspend action "patiently" does not imply a passive posture. On the

> contrary, this quality of patience functions like a coiled spring charged with more and more potential energy. To "listen" implies far more than just hearing what is said but rather denotes an ongoing attempt to take in, to take seriously, and to take wholly. To listen to a student is to seek understanding of what the student is expressing as well as how and why he or she is expressing it. To "move accordingly" means initiating actions that reflect patience and listening (p.59-60).

Theme 3 – A Meeting in the Middle: Handle Differently

One surprising theme that stood out in each participant interview was their strong desire to offer a suggestion on how the hindrance of creativity could have been handled differently. I had not thought about the graduate students as possibly being professors or instructors themselves and how they perhaps have had to hinder student's creativity from the other side. This insight into what happened to them and how they contrasted their experience with how it could have been handled differently was powerful. Eric spoke of bridging the communication gap by meeting in the middle with students and trying to understand why they were being creative and how to help them understand the feasibility of creative ideas. Ethan and Jerome both indicated that a professor's goal should be to further the development of their students and not to hold them back by obfuscation or lack of clear communication skills. This concept is not new to adult education. As Stephens and Roderick (1974) state:

> In adult education the role of the teacher is to help the students fulfill themselves as human beings. The teacher must, therefore, not only be an expert in his subject or skill, but also have imagination and compassion and the ability to communicate his knowledge (p.13).

Clouston (2005) continues to illustrate the importance of facilitation and teaching. "Therefore, facilitation is person-centered, collaborative, a process of synthesis, of shared

learning and a means of developing critical thinking" (p.51). Jarvis (1986) addressed the role of the facilitator in relation to the importance of teaching:

> The particular function of the facilitator is to challenge learners with alternative ways of interpreting their experience and to present to them ideas and behaviors that cause them to examine critically their values, ways of acting, and the assumptions by which they live (p.23).

All participants commented on how the hindrance was communicated to them as being a significant factor with respect to the meaning they distilled out of the hindrance to their creativity. If students were told by the professors that their creativity was strong and interesting, but perhaps misdirected or out of place, they responded with a more positive way of understanding the situation. If the professor was willing to take the time to explain the "why" of the hindrance and to offer positive constructive comments that built on the creativity rather than just saying no or marking an 'X' through an image, quote, or slide with red ink, the student in return became more open to the hindrance and did not necessarily view the action as negative, but as a learning experience.

Overall, the sharing of experiences in adult education between professors and students needs to be researched more. As Brookfield (1995) states:

> Knowing something of how students experience learning helps us build convincing connections between what we want them to do and their own concerns and expectations…researching students' perceptions of our actions and words alerts us to problems that our behavior is causing and to mistakes that we might otherwise miss. This, in turn, means that we can make more appropriate decisions about how and what to teach (p.93).

The Ground of the Box, Theme 1 - A Hard Thing to Deal With: The Interpretation Theme 2 – Drawing a line: The Outcomes, and Theme 3 – A

Meeting in the Middle: Handle Differently compose the shared meanings of hindered creativity as understood by graduate students in an educational setting. The following section addresses the conceptual frameworks of phenomenology and transformative learning theory in relation to the findings.

Phenomenology

As I researched and assimilated the various studies on creativity and adult education, it became obvious that there was a dearth of research that addressed adult learners' experiences of hindered creativity from their viewpoints and in their own words. This was the primary motivation for the selection of phenomenology as part of the conceptual framework for this study.

I had considered using a quantitative or possibly a mixed method design for this study, but I believed it was important that each graduate student's voice be heard in their own words, without filtering or modification of their original narrative (Wittgenstein, 1953/1970). I felt that any other method might predetermine the direction of the study, to the detriment of the aim of the study. A survey or questionnaire might have directed the participants' answers in such a way that it would not allow the students' experiences to be understood in their own words.

Phenomenological research allows participants to direct the interview based on their experience of the phenomenon (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). This was an integral aspect of the research design in this study. I found it fascinating to listen to the participants describe their experience as I suspended my own comments or thoughts. I

enjoyed hearing about their lived experiences and it was encouraging to observe how willing they were to share their experience in hope that it could help others one day. The most intriguing part of phenomenological research for me is that none of the twelve participants knew each other directly. Yet, in every single interview, each participant shared an "essence" of their experience, which was completely consistent with the experiences described by the other participants. This is a humbling and powerful moment for the researcher because it illustrates firsthand the strength and validity of phenomenological research. Moments such as these helped me to understand from a research perspective how truly wonderful phenomenology is as a method that allows us to communicate and understand each other more completely. Phenomenology also helps us understand from a human perspective how very similar and connected our lives may truly be.

In relation to the four attributes of phenomenology, there are connections that can be made in terms of Body, Time, Others, and World to adult learners' experiences of hindered creativity (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). The Body learns to adapt with the hindrance of creativity and to become one with the situation of the World existing around the participant in order to complete the graduate school program. The Other is the central attribute of this study in the dynamic relationship between the professor and the graduate student. As both individuals become reflections of the Other, a deeper understanding of the experience of hindered creativity was achieved. Time, as an attribute, is present throughout the study especially in the focus of the overall graduate students' experiences of their adult education. It is within the boundaries of Time that the adult learner is able

to begin to grasp how powerful the experience of hindered creativity is, and how it has had an effect on their overall learning experience in graduate school. Most sobering, however, is the realization of the potential influences that the hindrance may continue to have upon them for the rest of their lives.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory was selected for the second part of the conceptual framework in order to address the importance of the potential impact of hindered creativity when viewed as a 'disorienting dilemma' (Mezirow, 2000). In Mezirow's research on transformative learning theory, he comments that the decision to use the theory as a basis for researching artistic experiences holds great promise.

There can be many difficulties in terms of researching concepts like creativity, hope, faith, and happiness from quantitative research perspectives. These difficulties equate to an increased risk of losing information and insight from the adult learners. Transformative learning in this study allows educators to become more aware of their own assumptions about hindered creativity (Mezirow, 1997, 2000). It also provides a platform for educators to question their actions, feedback, and ability to communicate effectively with their students.

Transformation theory is defined by Mezirow (1991) as an approach "to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what process the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed" (p.xiii). Mental construction of experience, inner meaning,

discourse, and reflection are components of Mezirow's approach to adult education and are reflected in the participants' experiences of hindered creativity in this study. The participants constructed their understanding of hindered creativity from the initial situation with the professor, found inner meaning through their interpretations and outcomes, and used discourse in terms of how the hindrance could have been handled differently.

Dirkx (1997) argued for further research using transformative learning to better understand the role of imagination and creativity in the growth of self-knowledge. During the process of this study, I was able to observe some of the challenges participants were confronted with in relation to the assumptions that held influence on their ability to grow and promote self-knowledge. This study supports the views espoused by Dirkx in terms of the transformative learning that occurs within adult learners' experiences of hindered creativity.

Likewise, my own understanding of other researchers that were included in the literature review of Chapter II have developed and changed over the course of this study. Specifically the works of Stephen Brookfield and Peter Jarvis are viewed with a new understanding. Brookfield (1987) stated that professors may function as "psychological demolition experts" as they work in educational settings that require sensitivity and empathic understanding of their adult learners (p.30). The educational environment of the university setting for this study echoes this idea posited by Brookfield. This study found that professors need to be aware of their own assumptions, conventional thinking modes,

and control when hindering the creativity of an adult learner. There is a need for greater sensitivity and an ability to understand the experience from adult learners' points of view.

Jarvis (2006) described the unease of encountering a disorienting dilemma as a "disjuncture…when time stops…when our biological repertoire is no longer sufficient to cope automatically with our situation, so that our thinking harmony with the world is disturbed and we feel unease" (p.16). The participants in this study all encountered a loss of words during the interview process when they attempted to explain how their creativity had changed since the hindrance by the professors. There was a clear and marked distinction between the participants' abilities to communicate their experiences about the hindered creativity and how they came to terms with their creativity being changed. Jarvis' description of "unease" and "when time stops" reflected the participants' inability to capture the exact words to describe their experiences of loss and change in this study.

This study contributes to understanding what happens from the adult learners' perspectives of their experience when their creativity has been hindered. In the second theme, Drawing a Line: The Outcomes, the participants shared their struggles and confusion over having had their creativity hindered. This was a disorienting dilemma for the graduate students because they faced a difficult decision- to adapt and stay in school by conforming their creativity to the professor's recommendation or to drop out and leave the situation behind. Eric, Michael, Samantha, Jerome, Becky, Krisnah, Christina, John, and Travis chose the first option of trying to accept the hindrance and to accept the loss that accompanied the experience. Specifically these losses were identified as loss of their

confidence, loss in their graduate work, and loss of themselves. Ethan, Cedric, and Mariah were at a crossroads in their decision making and were not sure if they could continue to accept the hindrance to their creativity as part of their adult learning experience. Each of these participants expressed the desire to finish the program as quickly as possible and regret at having pursued the graduate degree and the accompanying experiences in the first place.

Over the course of the study, I became aware that another transformation was occurring in these adult learners. During the interview process, the participants were prepared to share their experiences and were ready to describe their understanding without any hesitation. However, about half-way into the interview, their tone would change and the participants found themselves at a loss for words as they attempted to describe the changes in mindset from thinking artistically to scientifically. The participants could feel themselves not thinking creatively anymore in order to avoid another negative experience. For these participants, their mindsets shifted from viewing graduate school as a positive learning experience to a mindset of simply getting through the program. Toward the end of the interview, the pace of their words would increase again, as they shared the possible ways as to how the situation could have been handled differently. It was in these moments where the participants seemed to regain control of their experience and bring to the forefront their new perspective that had come about because of the original hindrance to their creativity. This transformation is illustrated in Figure 8, the transformation during the interview process.

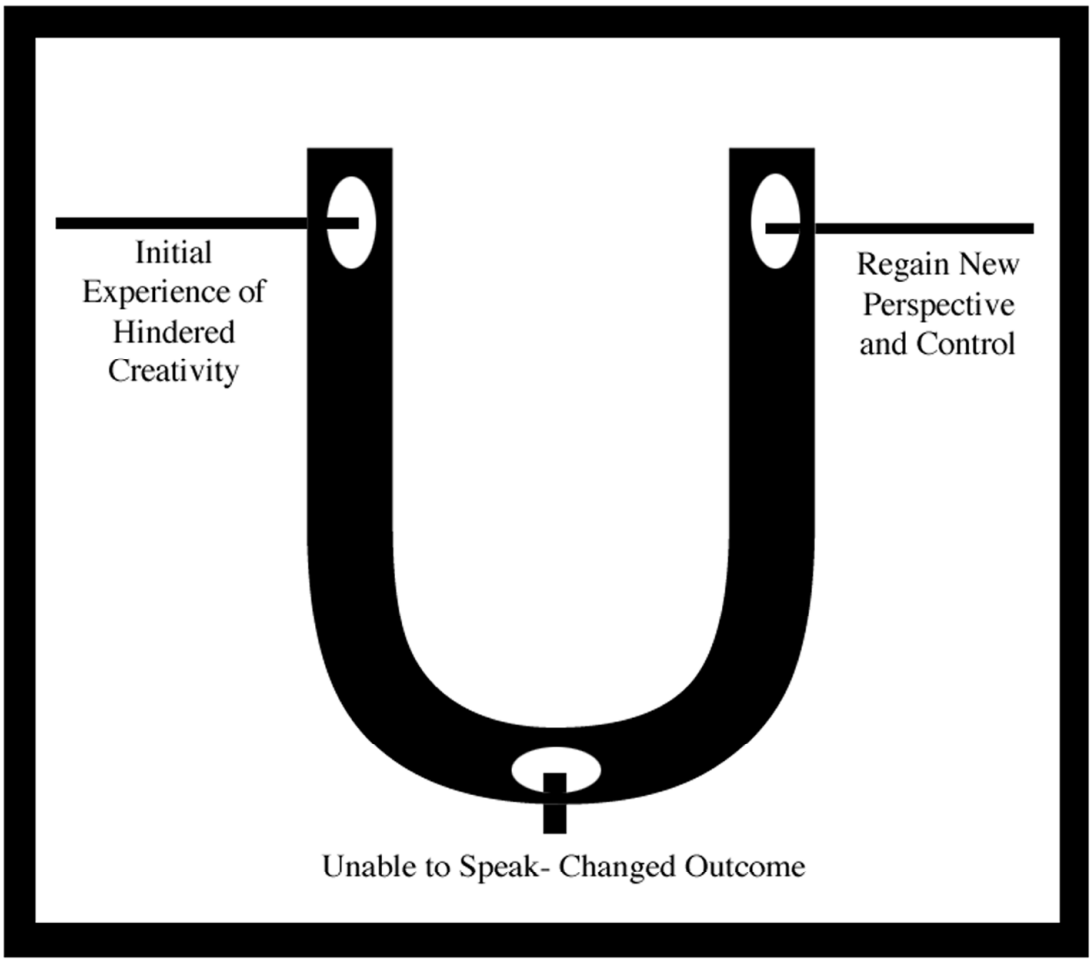


Figure 8 Transformation During Interview

In Figure 8, a curved line represents the participants' overall experiences during the interview process. The starting point reflects the initial enthusiasm and language used to describe the hindrance, as well as the powerful impact the experience has left with the adult learner. As the line curves downward, this illustrates the loss of words by the participant to express how the disorienting dilemma has changed their lived experience. Cedric said he "just could not deal with it right now" and was blocking it from his mind. Likewise, Becky said it was incredibly difficult to put into words the shift from having to shut off your creativity in order to think scientifically to get the graduate work and requirements completed.

In the next aspect of the figure, the line curves back upwards as the participants regained their control and expressed how they would have handled the situation differently and how this new perspective has changed their own understanding of the experience. It is through this overall interview experience that I could see the second transformation in the adult learners developing with their own understanding of the experience.

Davis-Manigaulte, Yorks, and Kasl (2006) view this type of transformation as a holistic change that occurs within the individual learner by means of 'expressive ways of knowing'. Their research and the research presented in this dissertation implies that educators need to understand how to communicate more effectively to adult learners from diverse backgrounds and help create a safe environment between learners and educators. The transformational learning experiences of the participants in this study provide an

insight into graduate students' perspectives of hindered creativity and the long aftermath of the outcomes.

Hindered Creativity

The way I view hindered creativity has changed greatly after completing this dissertation research. Hindered creativity was researched in this study in respect to the little 'c' experience of creativity. Little 'c' creativity focuses on the everyday elements of creativity that almost everyone exhibits throughout the day. It is within this aspect of creativity research and adult education where individuals blend and connect various abilities and capacities together to create something new or innovative (Jackson & Sinclair, 2006). This study also focused on the confluence approach for examining hindered creativity in order to understand the concept from the participant's thought process and their context of the experience (Amabile, 1983).

The literature in Chapter II addressed the idea that creativity can be hindered by the possible rules, traditions, policies, procedures, and regulations of the academic system (Davis, 1999). Davis suggested that educators need to be careful when encouraging creativity. The research presented in this dissertation found that the professor had the greatest control in terms of hindering students' creativity. Within the ground of the experience, the dynamic relationship between the professor and student exists in tandem with the relationship between the professor and the academic rules, regulations, and polices. However, since it is the professor who exhibits the hindering of creativity to the graduate students, the professor needs to be prepared to allow for an ample amount of

time with each student to explain the hindrance and to offer possible alternatives to the situation.

Some of the research on hindered creativity focused on the learner's perception being dependent on the task and the evaluation of others (James, 1995; Kurtzberg & Mueller, 2005; Jehn, 1997). Although these studies commented on the importance of providing constructive criticism, feedback, and comments to adult learners, as a whole the studies left out addressing the importance of providing enough time to each student individually in order to effectively and clearly explain the decision to hinder the creativity. Other studies of hindered creativity focused on quantitative research perspectives on how contextual factors and psychological processes influenced the hindrance of creativity in adult learners (Choi, 2004; Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006; Noppe, 1996; McManus & Furnahm, 2006). Most of these studies relied on predetermined surveys and questionnaires that did not allow for the voices of adult learners' experiences to be heard and understood from their perspective. The research presented in this dissertation has addressed this gap by using a phenomenological method to allow for the "essence" of hindered creativity to be understood through the participants' experiences in their own words.

After completing this research, I have gained a new insight into the experiences of hindered creativity from adult learners' perspectives. As I reflect on the starting point of their dissertation, which was my experience with Sara during my time at NYU, I can see how I would now handle that situation differently. I would not be so forceful in telling her "don't mix oil and acrylic paint together". Instead, I would watch her paint over a

longer time period and slowly begin to observe her intentions with the paint from a new perspective. In an attempt to listen to her voice more clearly, I would approach her, ask for her input of the paint mediums, and find out what she already is aware of from her experience. Perhaps it was her intent to mix the two paints together and to provoke a chemical reaction because she wanted to learn through experience and not theory. By suspending my own assumptions, I would try to hear her experience from her viewpoint and not impinge my own rules upon the student. I would share some books about paint mediums with her and allow her to discover for herself the differing properties of paint.

Although I cannot go back to that moment with Sara and change the outcome of that interaction, I can change my future reactions and teaching methodology with other adult students. By taking the time to listen to student's perspectives, suspending my own assumptions, and communicating effectively, my intentions behind any hindering of their creativity could contribute to a positive learning experience. My experience with Sara has guided this entire dissertation research and I have learned so much information that will hopefully benefit future students and educators.

Implications for Practice

The experiences of students who have had their creativity hindered in an educational setting shed light on the adult learning experience. Overall these experiences are illuminating and informational for practice with both adult and higher education professors.

1. Adult learners bring creativity and life experiences to adult education settings. Educators of adults need to be aware of this desire to be creative and they must be prepared to address the allowance or hindrance of such creativity with the adult learners.
2. Professors bring their own assumptions, conventional thinking, and mindsets into the assessment process of adult learners' graduate work. Presuppositions can have an enormous influence on how educators respond to creativity. Recognizing the potential influence these personal assumptions carry would be beneficial for adult learners and educators to be able to meet on a common ground.
3. The manner in which a professor provides feedback or criticism to adult learners may greatly impact the learning process of students. Taking the time to meet with learners individually, providing explanations for "red ink X's", and assisting the learner with understanding the rules, regulations, and guidelines of the university policy could contribute significantly to the relationship between professors and students.
4. An adult learner's creativity can be hindered by a professor and have an aftermath that is prolonged and multifaceted. Hindering a student's creativity could result in a decrease of creativity levels and/or ability to be creative in certain courses due to self-imposed hindrance to avoid feelings of shame, loss of confidence, and frustration. Careful consideration is needed on the professor's behalf when creativity is going to be hindered.

5. Listening more closely to adult learners' rationale of adult learners that buttress their creative decisions could help a professor assist them with redirecting their creative ideas into another area of research or application and encouraging them to think more critically about their own work. Pointing out that creativity can be viewed as a strength in the graduate students work could help promote the use of creativity in future endeavors. Brookfield (1987) states "When we encourage critical thinking, it is important that we assure people- through our actions and our words- that we respect and value them for their own selves" (p.72).

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has shed light on the experience of adult learners who have had their creativity hindered in an educational setting. After reflecting on the results of this dissertation, the following recommendations for future research could offer further insight into the phenomenon of dealing with hindered creativity with adult learners.

1. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study with professors sharing their experiences of hindering a student's creativity. What is it like for a professor to know that they are about to provide feedback on graduate work that could potentially impact the student's educational career? How do the professors understand the experience from the professor's or student's point of view?
2. Participants in this study were current graduate students at a state university. What would it be like to conduct a phenomenological study with individuals who had graduated and were pursuing their careers? Did they find in their experience

that creativity could return to higher levels after graduating? Do they think predominately in scientific or artistic terms?

3. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study in various countries to compare the hindrance of creativity and the lived experiences of adult learners. What would the experience be like for an adult learner from Denmark compared to an adult learner in China? How do our cultures influence the ways in which we experience hindered creativity?
4. Professors' hindrance of creativity dominated the adult graduate student's experience of it. What are other factors that could be hindering creativity outside of education that could still carry an impact on an adult learner's creativity? What types of environments both in and outside of education influence the creativity or hindrance of creativity with adult learners?
5. The hindrance of creativity for the Master of Fine Art students were remarkably similar in terms of how the hindrance took place during a critique with a professor and how confusing the experience was for the students. By focusing only on the experiences of hindered creativity of M.F.A. students, it would be interesting to investigate further how they continue to produce and create work, what drives them inside as artists, and what hinders them to the point where they change direction or stop making certain artwork.
6. A longitudinal study of the hindrance of creativity and the promotion of creativity could be very beneficial to both creativity research and education in general. What changes occur with an individual's creativity over a lifetime of experiences

in educational settings? What effect do these experiences have on an individual leaner?

Conclusion

Hindered creativity for adult learners is a powerful force in their educational experiences. Professors may bring their own set of assumptions of creativity into the teaching process that could influence the hindrance of creativity. Academic university policies may also contribute to the professor's ability to promote, control, or hinder an adult learner's creativity. The dynamic relationships between the three areas of the box rely on communication. This communication is a multiple lane highway of information, listening skills, comprehension abilities, and effective dialogue.

The aftermath of hindered creativity is prolonged and continues to have influence even after graduation for most adult learners. There is hope that the freedom to be creative will eventually return to the individual and help the progress of diverse fields of study. There is, however, the reality that hindered creativity, at least in an educational setting, may create a self-imposed hindrance and may have lasting effects for the adult learner in terms of loss of confidence, loss of voice, and feelings of shame.

In conclusion, since adult learners make meaning out of their lived experiences, it is important for educators to consider the implications of hindering creativity and what impact this will have on the learning process of the student overall. There is a desire for individuals to have control over their own creativity, in both the ability and expression of it. It can be a very emotional and potentially life-changing event to have someone say

"don't" to creativity. It is my hope that professors will pause and consider the implications of their words, actions, and feedback in relation to not only the student, but also to the student's future creative endeavors. Because the adult learner, the professor, and the academic university are all intertwined, future studies may help shed light on the sensitivity and understanding that is necessary for all three to co-exist with each other.

Personal Reflection

My doctoral experience has been an extremely positive and life-changing event for me. This dissertation is the culmination of years of research, coursework, and thoughtful deliberation. My sincere hope is that this work will make the world a better place in some small way. I am humbled by the amount of research, information, and knowledge that exists in society. There is enormous potential to contribute to something greater than oneself.

As an adult learner simply returning to school after teaching for four years has been a challenging experience. It was not an easy transition from being the assistant professor to being the student again. I have spent countless hours working on this dissertation searching online journals, researching literature, and conducting interviews. Along the way, there were some challenges that seemed insurmountable. However, the support of my professors, my family, and friends helped guide me.

As I progressed through the Ph.D. program, I was offered the advice that I should not view this dissertation as my life's work. Indeed in this vein, I hope that my best work is yet to be produced. However, this dissertation is a cornerstone of my professional

career that has served as a worthy foundation for my doctoral aspiration. The concept of hindered creativity strikes a strong chord in my personal life. During this process, I have had to redirect my creativity in some ways to get to this point.

In my own situation, for the last year and a half I have not allowed myself to express my own creativity as I normally would through activities such as painting. I imposed this restriction on myself as my own hindrance on creativity in order to finish this dissertation. It was arduously difficult for me to switch from thinking artistically to scientifically and back again. I had to choose one mindset in order to complete the research, writing, and thinking necessary for this advanced degree.

At times, I feel I have lost part of myself because of this paradigm shift in my thinking. I view this perceived loss as a positive element in my life because it has allowed me to gain a new perspective on adult learning and education. My new perspective and appreciation for adult education has grown exponentially over the years I have spent in graduate school. I am humbled by the small knowledge I possessed prior to this program. The potential for learning that exists in my life now after completing this degree is astonishing.

This educational endeavor has made me acutely aware of how I live my life and how I interpret my personal experiences. I look forward to fostering my creativity and returning to the creative activities that I dearly love, such as painting. Any written work is not so much finished as it is relinquished. Although I have done my utmost to bring this work to complete closure there will always be a part of it that will continually evolve in my heart.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Abate, F. R. (Ed.). (1998). *The Oxford essential dictionary*. New York: Berkley Books.

Adams-Price, C. E. (Ed.). (1998). *Creativity and successful aging*. New York: Springer.

Adarves-Yorno, I., Postmes, T., & Haslam, S. (2006). Social identity and the recognition of creativity in groups. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45, 479-497.

Albert, A. & Kormos, J. (2004). Creativity and narrative task performance: An exploratory study. *Language Learning*, 554(2), 277-310.

Alexander, P., & Winne, P. H. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of educational psychology* (2nd Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Alter, T. & Walter, S. (2007). *Phenomenal concepts and phenomenal knowledge: New essays on consciousness and physicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Amabile, T. M. (1979). Effects of external evaluation on artistic creativity. *Journal of Personality*, 37, 221-233.

Amabile, T. M. (1983). *The social psychology of creativity*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Amabile, T. M. (1987). The motivation to be creative. In S. G. Isaksen (Ed.), *Frontiers of Creativity Research*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly.

Amabile, T. M. (1988). A model of creativity and innovation in organizations. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior*, 10, 123-167. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in context*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Amabile, T. M. (1998). How to kill creativity. *Harvard Business Review*, 76(5), 76-87.

Amabile, T. M., Goldfarb, P., & Brackfield, S. C. (1990). Social influences on creativity: Evaluation, coaction and surveillance. *Creativity Research Journal*, 3, 6-21.

Amabile, T. M., Conti, R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J., & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the work environment for creativity. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154-1184.

Amabile, T. M., Mueller, J. S., Simpson, W. B., Hadley, C. N., Kramer, S. J., & Fleming, L. (2003). Time pressures and creativity in organizations: A longitudinal field study. *HBS Working Paper*, 02-073.

Anderson, M., Taylor, J., & Ziegler, M. (2007). "I don't know the secret handshake": Making social class visible in an educational context. *Proceedings of the 48th Annual Adult Education Research Conference* (13-18). Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Mount St. Vincent University.

Andrews, F. M. & Gordon, G. (1970). Social and organizational factors affecting innovation research. *Proceedings for the American Psychological Association*, 78, 570-589.

Arnheim, R. (1971). *Art and visual perception*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Arnheim, R. (1972). *Towards a psychology of art*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Auzmendi, E., Villa, A., & Abedi, J. (1996). Reliability and validity of a newly constructed multiple-choice creativity instrument. *Creativity Research Journal*, 9(1), 89-95.

Bailey, J. J., Tisdell, E. J., & Cervero, R. M. (1994). Race, gender, and the politics of professionalism. In E. Hayes & S. A. J. Colin III (Eds.), *Confronting racism and sexism*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.61, 63-76. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bandura, A. (1976). Modeling theory. In W. S. Sahakian (Ed.), *Learning: Systems, models, and theories* (2nd Ed.). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Barnett, R. R. (1998), Children's creativity: Adult's communication. *Montessori Life*, 10, 39-41.

Barron, F. (1988). Putting creativity to work. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*, 76-98. Cambridge University Press.

Barron, F. & Harrington, D. (1981). Creativity, intelligence, and personality. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 32, 439-476.

Beghetto, R. A., Plucker, J. A., & MaKinster, J. G. (2000-2001). Who studies creativity and how do we know?. *Creativity research Journal*, 13(3/4), 351-357.

Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M. (2006). Education for the knowledge age: Design-centered models of teaching and instruction. In P. Alexander & P. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology*, Vol.2, 695-713. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bindeman, S. (1998). Echoes of silence: A phenomenological study of the creative process. *Creativity Research Journal*, 11(1), 69-77.

Blicbau, A. S. & Steiner, J. M. (1998). Fostering creativity through engineering projects. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 23, 55-65.

Bloland, P. A. (1987). Leisure as a campus resource for fostering student development. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 65, 291-294.

Bratrud, S. A. (1999). The lived experience of attending college as an older adult: The phenomenological perspective of students ago 60 and older. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Texas Tech University. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 60 (11-A), 3924.

Brockett, R. G. & Hiemstra, R. (1991). *Self-direction in adult learning: Perspectives on theory, research, and practice*. London & New York: Routledge.

Broekemier, G. M. (2002). A comparison of two year and four year adult students: Motivations to attend college and the importance of choice criteria. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education,* 12(1), 31-48.

Bronte, L. (1997). Learning to change. *Adult Learning*, 8(5/6), 11-14.

Brookfield, S. D. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (1987). *Developing critical thinkers: Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (1991). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom*. San Francisco, VA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (1994). Adult learning: Overview. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaithe (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (2nd Ed.). Vol. 1,163-168. New York: Pergamon.

Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The power of critical theory: Liberating adult learning and teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2006). Authenticity and power. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Authenticity in teaching*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.111, 5-16. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brower, R. (1999). Dangerous minds: Eminently creative people who spent time in jail. *Creativity Research Journal*, 12, 3-13.

Bull, K. S. & Davis, G. A. (1982). Inventory for appraising adult creativity. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 7, 1-8.

Camic, P. M., Rhodes, J. E., & Yardley, L. (2003). *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Capossela, A. (2000). Are children really more creative than adults?: An examination of Lev Vygotsky's theory. *Yearbook*, Claremount Reading Conference, 48-57.

Cannatella, H. (2004). Embedding creativity in teaching and learning. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38(4), 59-70.

Carlisle, C. (2006). *Kierkegaard: A guide for the perplexed*. London: Continuum International.

Cassidy, J. (2000). Adult romantic attachments: A developmental perspective on individual difference. *Review of General Psychology*, 4, 111-131.

Chalmers, D. & Fuller, R. (1996). *Teaching for learning at university: Theory and practice*. London: Kogan Page.

Chambers, J. A. (1973). College teachers: Their effect on creativity of students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 326-334.

Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2006). Creativity versus conscientiousness: Which is a better predictor of student performance? *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 20, 521-531.

Choi, J. N. (2004). Individual and contextual predictors of creative performance: The mediating role of psychological process. *Creativity Research Journal*, 16(2/3), 187-199.

Christiaans, H. & Venselaar, K. (2005). Creativity in design engineering and the role of knowledge: modeling the expert. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 15, 217-236.

Clark, J. (1997). Of writing, imagination, and dialogue: A transformative experience. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.74, 13-22. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Clark, M. C. (2001). Off the beaten path: Some creative approaches to adult learning. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *The new update on adult learning*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.89, 83-91. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Clarkson, A. (2005). Educating the creative imagination: A course design and its consequences. *Jung: the e-journal*, 1(2), 1-13.

Clouston, T. J. (2005). Facilitating tutorials in problem-based learning: Students' perspectives. In P. Hartley, A. Woods, & M. Pill (Eds.), *Enhancing teaching in higher education: New approaches for improving student learning*. London & New York: Routledge.

Cohen, A. (1985). The drama unfolds: Aspects of artistic creativity in the second half of life. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 46 (05-A), 1160.

Congdon, K. (2005). What I have learned from "other" art educators. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research*, 46(2), 138-149.

Cooper, R. B. & Jayatilaka, B. (2006). Group creativity: The effects of extrinsic, intrinsic, and obligation motivations. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(2), 153-172.

Cox, B. F. (2002). The relationship between creativity and self-directed learning among adult community college students. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 63 (07-A), 2433.

Craft, A. (2003). The limits to creativity in education: Dilemmas for the educator. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 51(2), 113-127.

Cranton, P. (1989). *Planning instruction for adult learners*. Toronto, Canada: Wall & Thompson.

Cranton, P. (1996). *Professional development as transformative learning: New perspectives for teachers of adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley& Sons.

Cranton, P. & Carusetta, E. (2004). Perspectives on authenticity in teaching. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55(1), 5-22.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cropley, A. (1992). *More ways than one: Fostering creativity*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Cropley, A. (1999). Creativity and cognition: Producing effective novelty. *Roeper Review*, 21(4), 253-260.

Cropley, A. (2001). *Creativity in education and learning: A guide for teachers and educators*. London: Kogan Page.

Cropley, A. (2006). Creativity: A social approach. *Roeper Review*, 28(3), 125-130.

Cross, J. M. G. (2001). Educating the visual imagination: Paradigm and process. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Dallas. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 61 (10-A), 3936.

Crutchfield, R. (1962). Conformity and creative thinking. In. H. Gruber, G. Terrell, & M. Wertheimer (Eds.), *Contemporary approaches to creative thinking*, 120-140. New York: Atherton.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1988). Society, culture, and person: A systems view of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*, 325-339. Cambridge University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity*. New York: HarperCollins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. London: HarperCollins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998a). Creativity and genius: A system perspective. In A. Steptoe (Ed.), *Genius and the mind: Studies of creativity and temperament.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998b). Society, culture, and person: A systems view of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*, 325-339. Cambridge University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*, 313-335. Cambridge University Press.

Cunningham, P. M. (1989). Making a more significant impact on society. In B. A. Quigley (Ed.), *Fulfilling the promise of adult and continuing education*. New Directions for Continuing Education, no.44, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Custodero, L. A. & Neumann, A. (2005). Symposium: Aesthetic lives: Teaching and learning as creative work. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(2), 33-35.

Dacey, J. S., Lennon, K., & Fiore, L. (1998). *Understanding creativity: The interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Daloz, L. A. (1986). *Effective teaching and mentoring: Realizing the transformational power of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dalrymple, R. G. (1984). Stimulating creativity. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland College Park. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 46 (04-A), 1332.

Darkenwald, G. G. & Merriam, S. B. (1982). *Adult education: Foundations of practice*. New York: HarperCollins.

Davis, G. (1999). Barriers to creativity and creative attitudes. In M. A. Runco & S. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Creativity*, 165-174. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Davis-Manigaulte, J., Yorks, L., & Kasl, E. (2006) Expressive ways of knowing and transformative learning. In E. Taylor (Ed.), *Teaching for change: Fostering transformative learning in the classroom*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.109, 27-35. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Davydov, V. V. & Kerr, S. T. (1995). The influence of L. S. Vygotsky on education theory, research, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 24(3), 12-21.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art and Experience*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. London: Collier-Macmillan.

Dirkx, J. M. (1997) Nurturing soul in adult learning. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.74, 79-88. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dirkx, J. M. (2006). Authenticity and imagination. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Authenticity in teaching*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.111, 27-39. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dollinger, S. J., Dollinger, S. M., & Centeno, L. (2005). Identity and creativity. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 5(4), 315-339.

Domino, G., Short, J., Evans, A., & Romano, P. (2002). Creativity and ego defense mechanisms: Some exploratory empirical evidence. *Creativity Research Journal*, 14(1), 17-25.

Donnelly, R. (2004). Fostering of creativity within an imaginative curriculum in higher education. *The Curriculum Journal*, 15(2), 155-166.

Dorst, K. & Cross, N. (2001). Creativity in the design process: co-evolution of problem–solution. *Design Studies,* 22(5), 425–437.

Drazin, R., Glynn, M. A., & Karanjian, R. K. (1999). Multilevel theorizing about creativity in organizations: A sensemaking perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 24, 286-307.

Earnshaw, S. (2006). *Existentialism: A guide for the perplexed*. London: Continuum International.

Edelson, P. J. (1995). *Self-direction in adult art education*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Adult Education and the Arts (4th, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, July 10-14).

Edelson, P. J. (1999). Creativity and adult education. In P. J. Edelson & P. L. Malone (Eds.), *Enhancing creativity in adult and continuing education*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.81, 3-13. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Edinger, M. (2002). An investigation of creativity: A look at two-dimensional artists. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 63 (1-A), July, 81.

Eisenberger, R. & Shanock, L. (2003). Rewards, intrinsic motivation, and creativity: A case study of conceptual and methodological isolation. *Creativity Research Journal*, 15(2/3), 121-130.

Fasko, D. (2000-2001). Education and creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 13(3/4), 317-327.

Feldhusen, J.F. (1994). Teaching and testing for creativity. In T. Husen & T.N. Postlehwaithe (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education.* (2nd Ed.) Vol.2, 1178-1180. New York: Pergamon.

Feldman, D.H. (1999). The development of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*, Cambridge University Press.

Fenwick, T. (2004). Toward a critical HRD in theory and practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 54(3), 193-209.

Fischer, G. (2000). Symmetry of ignorance, social creativity, and meta-design. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 13, 527-537.

Fischer, G. & Nakakoji, K. (1997). Computational environments supporting creativity in the context of lifelong learning and design. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 10, 21-28.

Fogarty, R. L. (1989). From training to transfer: The role of creativity in the adult learner. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 50 (07-A), 1897.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.

Frensch, P. A. & Sternberg, R. J. (1989). Expertise and intelligent thinking: When is it worse to know better? In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Advances in the psychology of human intelligence*, Vol.5, 157-159. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Freud, A. (1966). *The writings of Anna Freud: The ego and mechanisms of defense*. New York: International Universities Press. (Original work published in 1937).

Freud, S. (1959). Inhibitions, symptoms, and anxiety. In J. Strachey (Ed. And Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, 20, 887-172. London: Hogarth. (Original work published in 1926).

Furman, A. (1998). Teacher and pupil characteristics in the perception of the creativity of classroom climate. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 32, 258-277.

Gadamer, H. G. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics*. (D. E. Linge, Trans). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Creating minds: An anatomy of creativity seen through the lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi*. New York: BasicBooks.

Gardner, H. (1997). *Extraordinary minds: Portraits of exceptional individuals and an examination of our extraordinariness*. New York: BasicBooks.

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligences reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: BasicBooks.

Gates, G. J. (2004). The creativity-diversity link. *Education Canada*, 44(2), 12-14, 53.

Gates, K. M. (2005). Making creativity work: networks that keep creative people creative. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67 (06-A), 2070.

Ghiselin, B. (Ed.). (1985). *The creative process: A symposium*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Getzels, J. W. (1975). Creativity: Prospects and issues. In I. A. Taylor & J. W. Getzels (Eds.), *Perspectives in creativity*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Golann, S. E. (1962). The creativity motive. *Journal of Personality*, 30, 588-600.

Goleman, D., Kaufman, P., & Ray, M. (1992). *The creative spirit*. New York: Penguin/Plume.

Grabove, V. (1997). The many facets of transformative learning theory and practice. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.74, 89-96. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Grattan, C. H. (1955). *In quest of knowledge: A historical perspective on adult education*. New York: Association Press.

Greenberg, K. H. (In Press). Thinking about critical thinking: Disabilities and learner-centered instructional design from the perspective of mediated learning experience theory. (Draft) 1-25. *Inquiry*.

Greenfield, P., Trumbull, E., Keller, H., Rothstein-Fisch, C., Suzuki, L., & Quiroz, B. (2006). Cultural conceptions of learning and development. In P. Alexander & P. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology*, Vol.2, 675-694. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grimsley, R. (1970). *Kierkegaard: A biographical introduction*. London: Studio Vista.

Grippin, P. & Peters, S. (1984). *Learning theory and learning outcomes*. Lanham, MD: University press of America.

Gruber, H. E. (1981). *Darwin on man: A psychological study of scientific creativity* (2nd Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gruber, H. E. (1988). The evolving systems approach to creative work. *Creativity Research Journal*, 1, 27-51.

Gruber, H. E. (1989). The evolving systems approach to creative work. In D. B. Wallace & H. E. Gruber (Eds.), *Creative people at work: Twelve case studies*, 3-24. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gruber, H. E. & Davis, S. N. (1988). Inching our way up Mount Olympus: The evolving-systems approach to creative thinking. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity*, 243-270. Cambridge University Press.

Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*, 105-117. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guilford, J. P. (1950). Creativity. *American Psychologist*, 5, 444-454.

Haanstra, F. (1999). The Dutch experiment in developing adult creativity. In P. J. Edelson & P. L. Malone (Eds.), *Enhancing creativity in adult and continuing education*. New directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.81, 37-45.

Hagans, W. W. (2005). Musicians' learning styles, learning strategies, and perceptions of creativity. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Oklahoma State University. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 66 (01-A), 0664.

Halpern, D. F. (1996). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (3rd Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Hansen, D. (2005). Creativity in teaching and building a meaningful life as a teacher. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(2), 57-68.

Harlan, J. (1993). *Yes we can: Overcoming obstacles to creativity*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association on Mental Retardation (117th, Washington, D.C., June).

Harrell, J. (2005). The adult creative writer: A phenomenological study. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Idaho. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 67 (04-A), 1185.

Hartigan, B. F. (2000). "When I'm ready to perform, my mother is always there": Private school lives of adolescent females. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61 (5-A), 2072.

Hartman, F. R. (1961). The future of research in art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 3(1), 4-8.

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (J. MacQuarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row. (Original work published in 1927).

Heilman, K. (2005). *Creativity and the brain*. New York and Hove: Psychology Press.

Hennessey, B. A. & Amabile, T. M. (1988). The conditions of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*, 11-38. Cambridge University Press.

Henry, J. & Walker, D. (Eds.). (1991). *Managing Innovation*. London: Sage.

Hergenhahn, B. R. (1988). *An introduction to theories of learning* (3rd Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Hofstadter, D. R. (1985). *Metamagical themas: Questing for the essence of mind and pattern*. NY: Basic Books.

Hollander, E. P. (1958). Conformity, status, and idiosyncrasy credit. *Psychological Review*, 65, 117-127.

Horn, L. (1996). *Nontraditional undergraduate: Trends in enrollment from 1986 to 1992 and persistence and attainment among 1989-1990 beginning postsecondary students* (NCES-97-578) Washington, DC: US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Houle, C. O. (1972). *The design of education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Houle, C. O. (1980). *Continuing learning in the professions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. (W. Gibson, Trans.). New York: Collier Books. (Original work published in 1913).

Husserl, E. (1948). *Experience and judgment: Investigations in a genealogy of logic*. (J. S. Churchill & K. Ameriks, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Husserl, E. (1964). *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness.* (J. S. Churchill, Trans.). Bloomington, Indiana: University Press. (Original work published in 1928).

Ihde, D. (1986). *Experimental phenomenology: An introduction*. Albany, NY: State University of New York. (Original work published in 1979).

Innamorato, G. (1998). Creativity in the development of scientific giftedness: Educational implications. *Roeper Review*, 21, 54-59.

Jackson, N., Oliver, M., Shaw, M., & Wisdom, J. (2006). *Developing creativity in higher education: An imaginative curriculum*. London & New York: Routledge.

Jackson, N. & Sinclair, C. (2006). Developing student's creativity: Searching for an appropriate pedagogy. In N. Jackson, M. Oliver, M. Shaw, & J. Wisdom (Eds.), *Developing creativity in higher education: An imaginative curriculum*. London & New York: Routledge.

James, K. (1995). Goal conflict and originality of thinking. *Creativity Research Journal*, 8(3), 285-290.

Jarvis, P. (1987). *Adult learning in the social context*. London, England: Croom Helm.

Jarvis, P. (1992). *Paradoxes of learning: On becoming an individual in society*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Jehn, K. A. (1997). A qualitative analysis of conflict types and dimensions in organizational groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 530-557.

Jongeward, C. (1995). Connecting with creativity: Adult learning through art with a supportive group. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 57 (04-A), 1439.

Kanter, R. M. (1988). When a thousand flowers bloom: Structural, collective, and social conditions for innovation in organizations. In B. M. Straw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 10, 169-211. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Kasworm, C. E. (2003). Setting the stage: Adults in higher education. *New Directions for Student Services*, no.102, 3-10.

Kasworm, C. E. & Blowers, S. (1994). *Adult undergraduate students: Patterns of learning involvement.* Knoxville, TN: College of Education, The University of Tennessee.

Kasworm, C. E. & Marienau, C. A. (1997). Principles for assessment of adult learning. In A. D. Rose & M. A. Leahy (Eds.), *Assessing adult learning in diverse settings*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.75, 5-16. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kasworm, C. E. & Wlodkowski, R. J. (2003). Accelerated learning: Future roles and influences. In C. E. Kasworm & R. J. Wlokowski (Eds.), *Accelerated learning for adults: The promise and practice of intensive educational formats*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.97, 93-97. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kasworm, C. E. & Hemmingsen, L. (2007). Preparing professionals for lifelong learning: Comparative examination of master's education programs. *Higher Education*, 54(3), 449-68.

Katz, R. & Allen, T. J. (1988). Project performance and locus of influence in the R&D matrix. In R. Katz (Ed.), *Managing professionals in innovative organizations. A collection of readings*, 469-484. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Kaufman, I. (1989). The subject is art. *Studies in Art Education*, 30(2), 84-92.

Kaufmann, G. (2003). What to measure: A new look at the concept of creativity. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 47(3), 235-251.

Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kegan, R. (2000). What "form" transforms?: A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In J. Mezirow (Ed.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in practice* (35-69). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kelly, K. E. (2006). Relationship between the five-factor model of personality and the scale of creative attributes and behavior: A validational study. *Individual Differences Research*, 4(5), 299-305.

Kerdeman, D. (2005). Aesthetic experience and education: Themes and questions. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(2), 88-96.

Kerka, S. (1999). Creativity in adulthood. *Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education*, ERIC Digest, 204, 1-7.

Kett, J. F. (1994). *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties: From self-improvement to adult education in America, 1750-1990*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kierkegaard, S. A. (1987). *Either/Or*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (Original work published in 1843).

Kierkegaard, S. A. (1996). *Papers and journals: A selection*. London, England: Penguin Book. (Original work published in 1909).

Kim, K. H. (2005). Can only intelligent people be creative?: A meta-analysis. *The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 16(2/3), 57-66.

Kim, K. H. (2006). Can we trust creativity tests?: A review of the Torrance tests of creative thinking (TTCT). *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(1), 3-14.

King, K. P. (2002). Educational technology professional development as transformative learning opportunities. *Computers & Education*, 39, 283-297.

Knowles, M. S. (1962). *The adult education movement in the United States*. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (Rev. Ed.). New York: Association press.

Knowles, M. S. (1984). *The adult learner: A neglected species* (3rd Ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company.

Kobak, R. R. & Sceery, A. (1988). Attachment in late adolescence: Working models, affect recognition, and representations of self and others. *Child Development*, 59, 35-146.

Koestner, R., Walker, M., & Fichman, L. (1999). Childhood parenting experiences and adult creativity. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33, 92-107.

Kovac, T. (1998). Creativity and prosocial behavior. *Studia Psychologica*, 40, 326-330.

Kraft, U. (2005). Unleashing creativity. *Scientific American Mind,* April, 16(1), 16–23.

Kurtzberg, T. R. & Mueller, J. S. (2005). The influence of daily conflict on perceptions of creativity: A longitudinal study. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 16(4), 335-353.

La Pierre, S. (1992). *The professional artist's thinking style: An in-depth study*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Art Education Association (Phoenix, AZ, April).

Lavrin, J. (1971). *Nietzsche: A biographical introduction*. London: Studio Vista.

LeBoutillier, N. & Marks, D. F. (2003). Mental imagery and creativity: A meta-analytic review study. *British Journal of Psychology*, 94, 29-44.

Lima, M. G. (1995). From aesthetics to psychology: notes on Vygotsky's "psychology of art". *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 26(4), 410-424.

Lindeman, E. C. (1926). *The meaning of adult education*. New York: New Republic Inc.

Lindqvist, G. (2003). Vygotsky's theory of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 15(2/3), 245-251.

Livne, N. L. & Milgram, R. M. (2006). Academic versus creative abilities in mathematics: Two components of the same construct? *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(2), 199-212.

Loewenberg, P. (1969). Emotional problems of graduate education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 40(8), 610-623.

Lones, P. S. (1999). Learning as creativity: Implications for adult learners. *Adult Learning*, 11(4), 9-12.

Lopez, F. G. (2001). Adult attachment orientations, self-other boundary regulation, and splitting tendencies in a collage sample. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48, 440-446.

Lopez, F. G. & Brennan, K. A. (2000). Dynamic process underlying adult attachment organization: Toward an attachment theoretical perspective on healthy and effective self. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 47, 283-301.

Lopez, F. G., Mitchell, P., & Gormlly, B. (2002). Adult attachment and college students' distress: Test of a mediational model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 49, 460-467.

Lubart, T. I. (1990). Creativity and cross-cultural variation. *International Journal of Psychology*, 25, 39-59.

Lubart, T. I. (1994). *Product-centered self-evaluation and the creative process*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Lubart, T. I. (2000-2001). Models of the creative process: Past, present, and future. *Creativity Research Journal*, 13(3/4), 295-308.

Lubart, T. I. & Sternberg, R. J. (1995). An investment approach to creativity: Theory and data. In S. M. Smith, T. B. Ward, & R. A. Finke (Eds.), *The creative cognition approach*, 269-302. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mann, S. J. (2001). Alternative perspectives on the student experience: Alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education*, 26(1), 7-19.

Maples, M. F. & Webster, J. M. (1980). Thorndike's connectionism. In G. M. Gazda & R. J. Corsini (Eds.), *Theories of learning*. Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Marsick, V. J. & Watkins, K. E. (2001). Informal and incidental learning. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *The new update on adult learning*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.89, 25-34. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York: Van Nostrand.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd Ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

Maslow, A. H. (1992). Emotional blocks to creativity. In S. J. Parnes (Ed.), *Source book for creative problem-solving,* 96-105. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation.

Mayer, R. E. (1999). Fifty years of creativity research. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*, 449-460. Cambridge University Press.

McBride, W. L. (1997). *Existentialist background: Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Jaspers, and Heidegger*. New York & London: Garland.

McCormick, D. & Plugge, C. (1997). If I am an artist, what's wrong with my picture: Rediscovering your creativity in a grown-up world. In *Deeply Rooted, Branching Out,* 1972-1997, Annual AEE International Conference Proceedings.

McCracken, J. L. (1991). Creativity and leisure for recovering alcoholics. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 8(3), 83-89.

McManus, I. C. & Furnham, A. (2006). Aesthetic activities and aesthetic attitudes: Influences of education, background and personality on interest and involvement in the arts. *British Journal of Psychology*, 97, 555-587.

Mecacci, L. (1983). *Vygotsky- Anthology of a life*. Bologna, Italy: Mulino.

Melia-Gordon, M. L. (1994). The measurement and meaning of personal creativity. Carleton University, Canada. *Masters Abstract International*. 34, no.01, 0434.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. London & New York: Routledge. (Original work published in 1945).

Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2006). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. & Brockett, R. G. (2007). *The profession and practice of adult education: An introduction*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1985). Concept and action in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 35(3), 142-151.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1995). Transformation theory of adult learning. In M. R. Welton (Ed.), *In Defense of the lifeworld*, 39-70. New York: State University of New York Press.

Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.74, 5-12. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. & Associates. (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. & Associates. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Michalko, M. (2001). *Cracking creativity: The secret of creative genius*. Berkley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Miliora, M. T. (2001). Creativity, "twinning", and self-destruction in the life and work of Tennessee Williams. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 3, 127-148.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mockros, C. A. (1995). The social construction of extraordinary selves: A life span study of creative individuals. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 56 (12-B), 7067.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London & New York: Routledge.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mumford, M. D. (1998). Creative thought: Structure, components, and educational implications. *Roeper Review*, 21(1), 14-19.

Mumford, M. D. (2000). Managing creative people: Strategies and tactics for innovation. *Human Resources Management Review*, 10, 313-351.

Mumford, M. D., Baughman, W. A., Costanza, D. P., Uhlman, C. E., & Connelly, M. S. (1993). Developing creative capacities: Implications of cognitive processing models. *Roeper Review*, 16(1), 16-21.

Mumford, M. D., Feldman, J. M., Hein, M. B., & Nagao, D. J. (2001). Tradeoffs between ideas and structure: Individual versus group performance in creative problem solving. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 35, 1-23.

Mumford, M. D., Scott, G. M., Gaddis, B., & Strange, J. M. (2002). Leading creative people: Orchestrating expertise and relationships. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 705-750.

Nakamura, J. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2001). Catalytic creativity: The case of Linus Pauling. *American Psychologist*, 56, 337-341.

NCES (2006). *National household education surveys program of 2005: Adult education participation in 2004-05*. National Center for Educational Statistics, U. S. Department of Education, NCES2006-077. Retrieved on September 17, 2007 from: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/adulted/index.asp.

NCES (2007). *The condition of education.* National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, NCES2007-064. Retrieved on September 17, 2007 from: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2007/section1.

Negus, K. & Pickering, M. (2004). *Creativity, communication and cultural value*. London: Sage.

Nelson, B. & Rawlings, D. (2007). Its own reward: A phenomenological study of artistic creativity. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 38, 217-255.

Nesbit, T. (2006). What's the matter with social class? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 56(3), 171 – 185.

Newman, F. & Holzman, L. (1993). *Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist*. London & New York: Routledge.

Nickerson, R. S. (1999). Enhancing creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*. Cambridge University Press.

Niu, W. & Sternberg, R. J. (2001). Cultural influences on artistic creativity and its evaluation. *International Journal of Psychology*, 36(4), 225-241.

Noppe, L. D. (1996). Progression in the service of the ego, cognitive styles, and creative thinking. *Creativity Research Journal*, 9(4), 369-383.

Ochse, R. (1990). *Before gates of excellence: The determinants of creative genius*. Cambridge University Press.

Oldham, G. R. & Cummings, A. (1996). Employee creativity: Personal and contextual factors at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 607-634.

Ormond, J. E. (1995). *Human learning* (2nd Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

Osborn, A. (1963). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem-solving* (3rd Ed.). New York: Scribner's.

Osburn, H. & Mumford, M. (2006). Creativity and planning: Training interventions to develop creative problem-solving skills. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(2), 173-190.

Owen, C. L. (1992). Context for creativity. *Design Studies*, 13(3), 216-228.

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pang, L. B. (1997). The psychological meaning of playing: A phenomenological exploration of the subjective experience of adults. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 58 (05-A), 2722.

Parr, H. (2007). Collaborative film-making as process, method and text in mental health research. *Cultural Geographies*, 14, 114-138.

Paulus, P. B. & Asuncion, A. G. (1995). Creativity: Illusion and reality. *Creativity Research Journal*, 8(4), 397-403.

Phillips, D. C. (1996). Philosophical perspectives. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (1st Ed.). 1005-1019. MacMillan Reference Books.

Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. New York: Routledge.

Piaget, J. (1972). Intellectual evolution from adolescent to adulthood. *Human Development*, 16, 346-370.

Piirto, J. (1992). *Understanding those who create*. Dayton, OH: Ohio Psychology Press.

Piper, D. (2004). Transformative practice and the problem of self-thematization. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 38(3), 275-290.

Plucker, J. A. (2000). Positive approaches to violence prevention: Peace building in schools and communities. *NASSP Bulletin*, 84(614), 1-4.

Plucker, J. A, Beghetto, R. A., & Dow, G. T. (2004). Why isn't creativity more important to educational psychologists?: Potentials, pitfalls, and future directions in creativity research. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(2), 83-96.

Polkinghorne, D. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R.S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology*, 41-62. New York: Plenum.

Pollio, H. R., Henley, T. B., & Thompson, C. J. (1997). *The phenomenology of everyday life.* Cambridge University Press.

Polo, J. F., Rotchford, L. M., & Setteducati, P. M. (1999). Creating innovative partnerships. In P. J. Edelson & P. L. Malone (Eds.), *Enhancing creativity in adult and continuing education*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.81, 67-76. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Press, C. M. (2001). Creativity, self psychology, the modern dance choreographer, and transformative education. *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, 6(2), 223-231.

Radford, M. (2004). Emotion and creativity. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38(1), 53-64.

Renzulli, J. S. (1994). *Schools for talent development: A practical plan for total school improvement*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.

Rhodes, M. (1962). An analysis of creativity. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 42, 305-310.

Richards, R. (2001). Creativity and the schizophrenia spectrum: More and more interesting. *Creativity Research Journal*, 13, 111-132.

Ripple, R. E. (1989). Ordinary creativity. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 14, 189-202.

Rogers, C. R. (1954). Toward a theory of creativity. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 11, 249-260.

Rothenberg, A. (1979). *The emerging goddess: The creative process in art, science and other fields*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rothenberg, A. (1990). Creativity, mental health, and alcoholism. *Creativity Research Journal*, 3, 179-201.

Rothenberg, A. (1999). Janusian processes. In M.A. Runco & S. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of creativity*, 103-108. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Rothenberg, A. & Hausman, C. R. (Eds.). (1976). *The creativity question*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Runco, M. A. (1999). The forth-grade slump. In M. A. Runco & S. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of creativity*, 743-744. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Runco, M. A. (2007). *Creativity theories and themes: Research, development, and practice*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Russ, S. (1993). *Affect and creativity: The role of affect and play in the creative process*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Russell, M. (2006). *Husserl: A guide for the perplexed*. London: Continuum International.

Ryhammar, L. & Brolin, C. (1999). Creativity research: Historical considerations and main lines of development. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 43(3), 259-273.

Sartre, J.-P. (1995). *Being and nothingness*. London & New York: Routledge. (Original work published in 1943).

Sartre, J.-P. (2004). *The imaginary*. London & New York: Routledge. (Original work published in 1936).

Schroeder, M. L. (2002). A phenomenological study: Mid-career changer transitions through levels of expertise. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 64 (03-A), 864.

Scott, C. L. (1999). Teachers' biases toward creative children. *Creativity research Journal*, 12, 321-337.

Scott, R. L. (2002). An educated imagination: The phenomenology of creating. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Idaho. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 63 (06-A), 2088.

Seal, D. O. (1995). Creativity, curiosity, exploded chickens. *College Teaching*, 43(1), 3-6.

Seitz, J. (2003). The political economy of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 15, 385-392.

Senyshyn, Y. (2006). Creativity in sport: Originality, transformation, indeterminacy, and new concepts in the arts. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 40(2), 185-196.

Sethi, R., Smith, D.C., & Park, C. W. (2001). Cross-functional product development teams, creativity, and the innovativeness of new consumer products. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 37, 73-85.

Sgroi, A. (1998). Teaching-learning partnerships in the arts. In I. M. Saltiel, Sgroi, A., & R. G. Brockett (Eds.), *Collaborative learning partnerships*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.79, 23-32.

Shalley, C. E., Gilson, L. L., & Blum, T. C. (2000). Matching creativity requirements and the work environment: Effects on satisfaction and intentions to leave. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 215-223.

Shalley, C. E. & Gilson, L. L. (2004). What learners need to know: A review of social and contextual factors that can foster or hinder creativity. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 33-53.

Shaver, P. R. & Mikulincer, M. (2002). Attachment-related psychodynamics. *Attachment and Human Development*, 4, 133-161.

Silver, H. R. (1981). Calculating risks: The socioeconomic foundations of aesthetic innovation in an Ashanti carving community. *Ethnology*, 20(2), 101-114.

Simonton, D. K. (1975). Sociocultural context of individual creativity: A transhistorical time-series analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32(6), 1119-1133.

Simonton, D. K. (1984a). *Genius, creativity, and leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Simonton, D. K. (1984b). Age and outstanding achievement: What do we know after a century of research? *Psychological Bulletin*, 104, 251-267.

Simonton, D. K. (1988). Creativity, leadership, and chance. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*, 386-426. Cambridge University Press.

Simonton, D. K. (1994a). *Greatness*. New York: Guilford.

Simonton, D. K. (1994b). Individual differences, development changes, and social context. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 17, 552-553.

Simonton, D. K. (1999). Creativity from a historical perspective. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*, 116-133. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Simpson, S. (2007). *Dancing all of life: Discovering a new self through creative expression and transformative learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, National-Louis University, Chicago, IL.

Smith, D. W. (2007). *Husserl*. London & New York: Routledge.

Smith, S. M., Ward, T. B., & Finke, R. A. (Eds.) (1995). *The creative cognition approach*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sotto, E. (1999). *When teaching becomes learning: A theory and practice of teaching*. London: Cassell.

Spiegelberg, H. (1975). *Doing phenomenology: Essays on and in phenomenology.* The Hague: Martinus Nijoff.

Stanage, S. M. (1987). *Adult education and phenomenological research: New directions for theory, practice, and research*. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.

Steffe, L. P. & Gale, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Constructivism in education*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stein, J. A. (1992). John Dewey and adult education. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 53, (09-A), 3084.

Stenmark, D. (2000). The role of intrinsic motivation when managing creative work. *ICMIT Sweden*, 310-315.

Stephens, M. D. & Roderick, G. W. (1974). *Teaching techniques in adult education*. London: David & Charles.

Sternberg, R. J. (1985). Implicit theories of intelligence, creativity, and wisdom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 607-627.

Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.). (1988). *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.). (1999). *Handbook of creativity*. Cambridge University Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (2000). Identifying and developing creative giftedness. *Roeper Review*, 23(2), 60-64.

Sternberg, R. J. (2006). The nature of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 18(1), 87-98.

Sternberg, R. J., Ferrari, M., Clinkenbeard, P., & Grigorenko, E. L. (1996). Identification, instruction, and assessment of gifted children: A construct validation of a triarchic model. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 40, 129-137.

Sternberg, R. J., Grigorenko, E. L., & Singer, J. L. (2004). *Creativity: From potential to realization*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sternberg, R. J., Kaufman, J. C., & Pretz, J. E. (2002). *The creativity conundrum: A propulsion model of kinds of creative contributions*. New York: Psychology Press.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1991). An investment theory of creativity and its development. *Human Development*, 34, 1-31.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1992). Buy low and sell high: An investment approach to creativity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1, 1-5.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1993). Investigating creativity. *Jstor Psychological Inquiry*, 4(3), 229-232.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1995). *Defying the crowd: Cultivating creativity in a culture of conformity*. New York: Free Press.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1996). Investing in creativity. *American Psychologist*, 51, 677-688.

Sternberg, R. J. & Lubart, T. I. (1999). The Concept of creativity: Prospects and paradigms. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*. Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stubblefield, H. W. & Keane, P. (1994). *Adult education in the American experience*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Swanson, R. A. & Arnold, D. E. (1996). The purpose of human resource development is to improve organizational performance. In R. W. Rowden (Ed.), Workplace learning: *Debating five critical questions of theory and practice*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.72. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sylcox, K. J. (1985). A study of older creative individuals: Developmental patterns from their perspectives (age, achievement, processes). Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Connecticut. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 46 (07-A), 1811.

Tardif, T. Z. & Sternberg, R. J. (1988). What do we know about creativity? In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *The nature of creativity: Contemporary psychological perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, E. (2006). The challenge of teaching for change. In E. Taylor (Ed.), *Teaching for change: Fostering transformative learning in the classroom*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no.109, 91-95. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Taylor, T. (2007). *Condensed art texts*. Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Valley Publishing.

Terr, L. C. (1992). Mini-marathon groups: Psychological "first-aid" following disasters. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 56, 76-86.

Thomas, A. M. (1991). *Beyond education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Thomas, S. P. & Pollio, H. R. (2002). *Listening to patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*. New York: Springer Publishing.

Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B., & Pollio, H. R. (1989). Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(2), 133-146.

Tierney, P., Farmer, S. M., & Graen, G. B. (1999). An examination of leadership and employee creativity: The relevance of traits and relationships. *Personnel Psychology*, 52, 591-620.

Torrance, E. P. (1962). *Guiding creative talent*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Torrance, E. P. (1968). A longitudinal examination of the fourth grade slump in creativity. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 12, 195-199.

Torrance, E. P. (1974). *Torrance tests of creative thinking: Norms-technical manual*. Lexington, MA: Ginn.

Torrance, E. P. (1979). *The search for Satori and creativity.* Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation.

Torrance, E. P. (1995). Insights about creativity: Questioned, rejected, ridiculed, ignored. *Educational Psychology Review*, 7, 313-322.

Treffinger, D. J. (1980). *Encouraging creative learning for the gifted and talented*. Ventura, CA: Ventura County Schools/LTI.

Treffinger, D. J., Feldhusen, J. F., & Isaksen, S. G. (1990). Organization and structure of productive thinking. *Creative Learning Today Journal*, 4(2), 6-8.

Treffinger, D. J., Isaksen, S. G., & Dorval, B. K. (1996). Creative problem solving: An overview. In M. A. Runco (Ed.), *Problem finding, problem solving, and creativity*, 223-235. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Trusty, J., Ng, K., & Watts, R. E. (2005). Model of effects of adult attachment on emotional empathy of counseling students. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 83, 66-77.

Valle, R. S. & Halling, S. (1989). *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology*. New York and London: Plenum Press.

Van der Veen, R. (2006). Communication and creativity: Methodological shifts in adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 25(3), 231-240.

Van Maren, A. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Vernon, P. E. (1989). The nature-nurture problem in creativity. In J. A. Glover, R. R. Ronning, & C. R. Reynolds (Eds.). *Handbook of creativity*. New York: Plenum Press.

Von Kotze, A. & Cooper, L. (2000). Exploring the transformative potential of project-based learning in university adult education. *Studies in Education of Adults*, no.2, 212-228.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1970). *The psychology of art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Original published in 1930).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *Educational psychology*. Boca Raton, FL: St. Lucia Press. (Original work published in 1926).

Vygotsky, L. S. (2004). Imagination and creativity in childhood. *Journal of Russian and east European Psychology*, 42(1), 7-97. (Original work published in 1926).

Walker, A. (1999). Paula Modersohn-Baker: An exploratory psychobiographic study of creativity, identity, and individualization. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, *Dissertations Abstracts International*, 60 (5-B), 2374.

Ward, T. B., Smith, S. M., & Finke, R. A. (1999). Creative cognition. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity*, 189-212. Cambridge University Press.

Wei, M., Heppner, P. P., & Mallinckrodt, B. (2003). Perceived coping as a mediator between attachment and psychological distress: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50, 438-447.

Wei, M., Vogel, D. L., Ku, T., & Zakalik, R. A. (2005). Adult attachment, affect regulation, negative mood, and interpersonal problems: The mediating roles of emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(1), 14-24.

Wheeler, S., Waite, S. J., & Bromfield, C. (2002). Promoting creative thinking through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 18, 367-378.

Wittgenstein, L. (1970). *Philosophical investigations* (R. Ansombe, Trans.). New York: Macmillan. (Original work published in 1953).

Woodman, R. W., Sawyer, J. E., & Griffen, R. W. (1993). Toward a theory of organizational creativity. *Academy of Management Review*, 18, 293-321.

Worth, P. J. (2001). Localized creativity. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Milton Keynes, The Open University Institute of Educational Technology. *Dissertation Abstract International*. 63 (3-C), 604.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Bracketing Interview

Bracketing interview – September 18, 2007

I- Okay, so this is the bracketing interview and I have a question for you, as a graduate student, tell me about an experience where you became aware your creativity was being hindered in an educational context.

P- The first thing that comes to mind was during my first semester as a returning graduate student for a further advanced degree. It was a paper I had written for a professor who I had perceived as being really open minded…encouraging students to try different things in the class. He never said be creative or express your creativity, but he seemed to be very open to different changes. I wrote the paper and inserted some quotes…more of a creative writing style, I would say, rather than just having it be academic. When I got the paper back, it was, um, full of a lot of red ink. My heart hurt from seeing the comments… "This writing is not academic…this wouldn't pass in a research article…this is not the place for this writing…it is interesting that you wrote this way and that you still covered what was necessary". But that in order to complete the assignment, I needed to redo the paper from a more academic standpoint and perhaps leave out some of the quotes and perhaps leave out some of the creative writing that I had placed in there. And it left me, um… (deep breath) it's actually hard for me to talk about because it…it…it left a scar on me. Ever since then, when I go to write a paper for any class, I am thinking, 'who is this professor, how do they want me to write, what are they looking for and how much freedom do I have'. I don't want to be hurt again like that and so I have this more protective stance to my writing now. I don't express myself like I used to. It has been a challenge to balance that out with professors who encourage your voice and say, "I want to hear exactly what you guys thought about this article. I want you to critique it". Um, that actually causes me to…um, stress when I hear that. Not because I can't do it, but I did do it at one point and then I felt like it was hindered.

I- Okay. You said something earlier about freedom…about feeling free or were you free…can you say a little bit more about freedom?

P- Hmmm…when I was in that moment of that experience I started to become aware that when I first approached the assignment, I felt like I had more freedom and I felt like I could do anything. I lot of that was the environment of the class and how the professor had laid out the assignment. That freedom was taken from me…I felt like I lost that ability to sit down and write a paper. To sit down and express myself. I lost that ability because of what had happened. The consequences of getting all the red marks on the paper…that is what changed I think my perception of how I was viewing my ability to write.

I- Can you say more about that?

P- I'm trying to think of what else I can say. When I think about…when I put myself back in that moment in my head because it has been a couple years now…it changed the whole way I went through my graduate program. And, you know, it was just one paper. It felt like it shouldn't be that significant, but for me, it was. It felt very significant. That paper held this change that happened in me that afterwards, as I have said, I couldn't write a paper the same way after that. In my previous graduate program, that was encouraged. Part of the graduate program I was in before that, the masters, it was encouraged to be as creative as you possibly can. Granted, it was an M.F.A. program, but part of the process for the thesis was don't make this a normal thesis… "yes, we want it to be academic and yes, you have to follow these rules, but we want to have your voice in this thesis and we want to make sure that it is not like all the others…we want it to stand out as being something different". And so, that's sort of the training I was coming from. From the artistic side. It kind of changed drastically for me in the next graduate program.

I- Okay. And your question has to do with that…with the issue of creativity. Can you say a little bit more about creativity?

P- It's an incredibly difficult concept to discuss. Based on a lot of the research I have been doing up to this point, creativity is defined in a broad manner. What I have been finding is the jest of a creativity definition that suits me is something that is appropriate

and something that is novel or new. By using that for myself, it has helped me focus where this research is going to go in terms of creativity. Creativity crosses many domains, at least in my eyes. When you are researching creativity in a context like engineering it may even appear differently than it does in an art field. But I do believe it still exists there. I just think that maybe it does not have similar signs or can stand out as easily. I am not sure what else to say about creativity…

I- Whatever you would like to say about it…

P- There's something pressing in terms of where the study came about for me. Where this idea came about. It actually occurred while I was in my masters program as a teaching assistant. I feel it is important to talk about this because I think there may be assumptions or something really in here that I haven't looked at before.

I- Okay.

P- I was given this wonderful opportunity to teach Painting I and I had a supervising professor. She would instruct the class and I got to be in the room and every once in while I would get to teach a class which was always thrilling. There were about 15 or 20 students in the class and this was in a large metropolitan city where the students are very diverse. The teacher was also from a very diverse background, not a normal…not normal…ack…what's normal? (Laughter) There's no normal teacher. The point is that I was going around the room and it was encouraged to talk to students one-on-one to get to know what their painting style was…what kind of colors they were using and if they are using textures…how they applied the paint to the canvas…all of that is really important for an artist in terms of them getting comfortable with the canvas and wanting to be there and wanting to express themselves. (Pause) This is difficult for me to talk about. I still shake when I think of this conversation because it is…I don't talk about it much. There was a student there who was a young student and was disciplined in terms of always being on time, being very organized…she had the cleanest art box (Laughter)…you don't see that. She never had paint on her clothes, never got paint on her hands or face, anything like that. And I can still see her working on this canvas and I walked up to her. She was painting. She had been painting for about two hours and she was completely

engrossed in this canvas and she was in the moment. I come in and I am standing behind her and she pauses and kind of looks over at me. She asked me, "What do you think?" I paused and I was looking at it and I said, "I am just really watching you paint. I think it is really interesting." She reached down and she squeezed out some more acrylic paint onto her palette. Then she reached down and took out another tube and she squeezed out oil paint. Immediately everything that I had been trained in my undergrad program was yelling at me because you don't mix those two together. So, she starts mixing them together and she starts slapping it onto the canvas where she was working. I was shocked. I said, "Don't!…Don't do that! Oh my gosh, you can't mix oil and acrylic together. One is oil and one is water based and you can't…" I started this long explanation and her brush just sat there on the same place on the canvas. Her eyes started looking around the canvas like she wanted to disappear into it, like she didn't want to be there suddenly. Her body posture…everything started to close in on itself and I stood there behind her and I could feel her changing before me. Everything about her was changing and I was grasping…trying to tell her, you know, why you don't do that. At the same time in my head I am thinking, 'oh my gosh, why did I just say don't'. I am thinking how do I recovery this, what do I do…this is a huge moment. I felt like I was changing her whole being and I was pausing and I looked at her and her eyes were not focusing on anything at that point. She was just in this other place. I told her that, um, regardless of everything I had just said, it was really important to experiment and it's so important to find what you think is going to work and I am sorry I said the word 'don't' and you should experiment and oh my gosh, I feel horrible for what I just said. She looked up at me and said, "No, no, it is very important to know that my oil paint and my acrylic paint would eventually cause a chemical reaction and fall off the canvas. I understand why you are telling me this." (Exhale) Oh my gosh…(pause) Something changed from that moment on and I think that is why in my head I think that is a huge moment. I felt so bad for telling her not…for saying the word "don't". I felt so horrible for telling her to not mix those paints together. You know, this was her painting and she's doing it. She may not even keep the painting. Maybe she didn't even care about it that much. I perceived that

she did cause she spent so much time working on it and then I just stopped it. Ohhh…she still came to class, she still finished all the requirements and she still…she passed with an 'A'. She did a great job. But she was never the same in my eyes, which is not exactly fair to say. Maybe she was the same person. Um, she painted differently after that. She was a lot more restrained in terms of what she was painting. There was almost a loss of interest in what she was painting at that point. She wasn't painting like she did before. I didn't see her for a year after that and I was finishing up, getting ready to graduate myself. I got an email from her. She was expressing that she wanted to thank me for being her TA and that that moment had an impact on her and that she realized there was so much she didn't know about painting that she had taken for granted and that her heart wasn't really in it and that she agreed with her family to go into medicine and she had changed majors and created this whole new path for herself and that she was extremely happy and she just wanted me to know all of that because she had felt that moment had had an impact on me as well. So, there's this, um, as an educator and having taught art classes after that…it has made me realize the importance of a single word. One word can change an entire moment and when someone is that, um, this student, when she was in that moment and how my word effected her moment. There's a sensitivity there that I had not been aware of before until that happened. It's been difficult for me now to come back and be a student again and have a similar thing happen to my own writing and I didn't see that coming…how much of an impact it can have on a person…and so, hmmm, that's where the idea for the study sort of originated and I think it is part of the reason I would like to know what it is like from the student's perspective.

I- Umhun, when you were talking about your own experience with the writing and then, um, your experience as a student and your experience as an instructor with the student, you talked a lot about change…can you say a little bit more about change?

P- From the experience with the student as a TA, I changed my approach when I would talk with future students. The very same thing did happen later on when I was teaching my own painting class. That moment came back to me and I instructed the student completely different than I had the other one. You know, it was so much more subtle. It

was so much more about asking them… 'wow, you're doing this, what is this like for you…what is this experiment going on…what do you know about acrylics and what do you know about oils'. Just a completely different approach than saying the word 'don't'. It still comes back to me every time I teach a painting class or even a drawing class. There are all these do's and don'ts that have been indoctrinated into me as a student in undergrad. I had a very disciplined undergrad… 'you do this when you are drawing the figure and you do this when you are drawing something abstract'…you know, I realized it was this different way of thinking and a different way of teaching. So, that moment, when I say changed, my epistemology really has not been the same since then. And when I reverse it and I think about what about when I was a student and I have had a similar thing happen to me…even in my own mind, it didn't seem as drastic, but realizing that I haven't really written creatively since then…that is a different change…it's almost been a change in the idea that, okay, so this is where my creativity for writing and for painting, this is where I am going to have to channel this. And then I have to channel another side for the academic part. So, I think I sort of have a division on my mind. I think, 'what am I am going to do today? Oh, today I have to go to class and I have to be academic and I have to meet all these requirements'. I can't wait until Saturday when I can wake up and go to my studio and I can be creative and maybe that ties back to that freedom.

I- Okay. I now you are still even deliberating on the words in your question and um, I can tell you are choosing them really really carefully, and so, when I asked you about creativity, you said the definition you had chosen was something appropriate, novel, and new and that was from…was it from a group of definitions and this one rang the most true for you? Is that…you selected this definition?

P- Yes.

I- Okay.

P- It's from researching creativity and finding out that is defined in multiple ways. Some definitions offer a completely different view of it. For me, I would also have to add something that is appropriate or novel in a social context. One of the other things that stood out for me is that you have to consider the context. Something that is creative in

one area may not be as creative in another area. Or something that is creative in one culture may not be creative in another culture. That is something else that stood out to me while I was doing the research.

I- Can you say a little more about your choice of words- appropriate, novel and new?

P- The word appropriate came about because a lot of definitions have a reference to creativity being useful. I would venture to guess that it was being useful in a more abstract term because how do you make a painting and consider it useful? I'm not sure if you can. So, if you consider it more abstractly, then yes, it could have a use to the viewer, it could have a use to the painter, but it's not going to get off the wall and do dishes. (Laughter).

I- What a shame (laughing).

P- I know. So, when I was thinking about what words to use two places mentioned the idea of appropriateness. It was not in reference to the idea of usefulness, but more in terms of 'is it appropriate to that moment' and in a way implying is it appropriate to the context. Because there is creativity that can possibly get out of hand or be inappropriate. You can have too much of a good thing. So, that kind of ventures into that idea of 'do you control your creativity or does it just happen?' I honestly don't know. For myself when I go into my studio, some days are just horrible. Sometimes I make really bad paintings for myself. And then other days I may only work on one piece and it turns out to be something that I didn't even know could come out of me.

I- Wow.

P- Yeah. So, maybe I am too immersed in the creative process to even understand it sometimes. In terms of, ah…I'll digress. In terms of the other two words- new and novel…that is probably the most consistent thing I have found in all the research and even for myself…this idea that novel hasn't been done before or even if it has been done, perhaps it is being tweaked or perhaps it is just enough of a change to where it is something that is different, something that is novel. And again, to the context because that can change immensely how an idea or a discovery comes across. I am thinking of when you teach an art class or perhaps you can apply this to other classes and you give an

assignment out and you encourage your students to be creative or as I like to say, 'think about what the teacher didn't say' or 'think about what the facilitator didn't say you could or could not do' and 'look at what's been left out' and try to go in that direction. In foundation classes, you end up getting a lot of artwork that looks the same to each other and you get a lot of artwork that looks the same as the class you taught last spring and you're teaching the class again in the summer or fall and every time you are trying to encourage your students to think differently about this and you know, you meet with them on-on-one and you say, "yeah, well, that's a great idea and that's a good sketch"…I may have even shown examples of past work and they are coming up with the same thing. I just sit there and I think 'gosh, how do I help this student be more creative?' I mean, as an art teacher, part of it is trying to pull that out. How do you pull that out of someone or how do you even reach that? How do you even help them realize that and is it something you can? I don't know if you can, I am not sure. There's a moment when you are sitting in class and you're about to have critique and all the works are hanging on the wall and you glance at it and there's a piece that you're just…tahhh, where did this come from? What is this? You know. Who did this? And you get so excited and you, um, you, ah, me, I. I went through so many critiques with my students where I just start to shake because I get so excited talking about art. Talking about this moment where I can't sit still. I want to walk around the room and I want to feel the image and I want to feel the painting from far away and from close up. I want to smell it. The smell of paint for me is so much a part of work. And so, there is this whole dynamic to experiencing art that for me encompasses some part of the creative process. That was huge. I don't know if I answered the question.

I- I think you did.

P- Okay. (Laughter).

I- Earlier, you were talking about inappropriate creativity, can you say more about inappropriate creativity?

P- There can be stereotypes that exist about creative individuals. I experienced some of them myself in high school. Because I was always different from my peers…I was the

more artistic student. People would come up to me and assume things about me. They thought I was a non-conformist and they would ask, "hey, do you have a cigarette?" And I was just, 'wow, what is that' and I would tell them, "no, I don't smoke" and they would walk away…almost disappointed or I didn't fit their assumption of me. In some weird way it was almost like they lowered, or I guess I am perceiving that I didn't fit… 'if you are an artist, you smoke' idea. I experienced this in high school and it wasn't just smoking unfortunately, it was many of the negative aspects of growing up. You are influenced with 'oh, if you do art that is abstract, then have you done LSD and would you like to talk about that?' And I would just look at them and I'd be fascinated. In order for me to be creative, it was like I must have an external influence acting upon me or I must be doing something to make myself creative. I wasn't doing any of those things. It changes as you get older. I…maybe other people are like this…I always thought I would be a certain way when I was 18. This is me, I am going to be this artist type and I am going to wear these clothes and I am going to paint all day and then…my world started changing and I moved. So much happened and now when I look at myself, I may be so plan on the outside perhaps…just wear a t-shirt and jeans everyday…something simple, a uniform…if it's even a uniform. Um, but inside in a lot of my classes, it is so difficult for me to remain seated…to not get up and walk around. Part of what I do is being physically active…part of painting is being in front of the canvas and moving…part of teaching for me is walking around the classroom. When I think about inappropriate creativity, I think about those times when I was pigeonholed and I felt people were assuming things about me that were not true. I contrast that with the research I have looked at that says a lot of professors and facilitators are worried about encouraging creativity because it can lead to disruptions in the classroom or it can make the conversation go off topic. There's examples of inappropriate creativity given in those research where perhaps a student talked too much and didn't know when to stop, "Hey guys, what if we did this and then what if we did this and then what if" …and all the other students are sitting there thinking 'oh my gosh, when is he going to quit' and you know, that's difficult because how do you maintain a balance of encouraging your students to be creative and really meaning it, but

at the same time letting them know that there can be, that it can be taken too far. Um, that is incredibly difficult for an art instructor because you are encouraging them to be creative, to grasp something inside of them and to think about something that maybe they hadn't thought about in a while and then make art about it, whatever the assignment is. Some of them, in art, especially at the graduate level, they get very creative. They are like, "Ahh, I know what I am going to do! I am gonna zerox this and I'm gonna take this and I'm gonna poster it all over the side of the school wall and then I'm gonna spray paint it…" And you are sitting there going 'whoa, whoa, well first off, that is school property' and then you are placing restrictions on the student and at the same time, you think, 'wow, that would be a great piece, I can see it in my head. But I can't let you do that, um, I am unable to let you proceed with that because of these policies and I might lose my job'. I guess that is where I would take it for inappropriate creativity and I am probably forgetting other things cause I get so excited when I talk.

I- You were describing inappropriate creativity in terms of your own experiences and talking about the literature but I am not sure what you think about inappropriate creativity…

P- From my view…that's interesting…from my view as a student or teacher…

I- From whatever, or both or…

P- If it's possible at the same moment (laugh). You know, it is a delicate balance of maintaining what one is able to do and what one has the potential of doing. What perhaps could be considered or called inappropriate creativity, perhaps it is not. Perhaps it is really just a limitation of something else acting upon the creativity…financial or environmental or even contextual. Maybe it is not the time or place. Um, I am trying to think if I have experienced…um…You can see it in students when their creativity has gone too far. Sometimes it is in their work. Sometimes it is in their voice when they are speaking in class. Sometimes it is in their body language when they are working on their artwork. Almost like…you feel like…that even though they are working ferociously that they have sort of crossed a line where they are not being as careful in their consideration of what they are doing. They may have lost their intent and gone astray. Not that that is a

bad thing. But you can see it in the work itself… 'this part of the drawing looks great and I'm not sure what happened here…it seems like I remember that day in class and you were working on it and perhaps you had a lot going on and it seems like you became very inspired and you worked really hard on this one area and maybe it became overkill or overworked here'. Um, that's another way of looking at it. I try to…I probably cannot do this, but I try to place myself out of the art context and think of a more general education type of viewpoint…how could you encourage creativity in K-12 and not have it get out of hand? And have it not be stereotyped by having it get out of hand. How do you balance out the messiness of being creative with still getting the point across of what you were trying to teach?

I- That's a good question.

P- I'm not sure I can answer it.

I- Is there anything else that you wanted to say?

P- No, this has been great. Thank you.

I- Sure.

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
1534 White Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865.974.3466
Fax: 865.974.7400

October 30, 2007

IRB#: 7448 B

TITLE: A Graduate Student's Perspective of Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study

Anderson, Michelle
Educational Psychology & Counseling
1631 Laurel Avenue #407
Knoxville, TN 37916

Brockett, Ralph
Educational Psychology & Counseling
A 520 Bailey Complex
Campus - 3452

Your project listed above was reviewed and has been granted IRB approval under Expedited review.

This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice (Form R) prior to the anniversary or your approval date.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lawson
Compliances

Enclosure

Appendix C: Informational Flyer

Have you ever felt like your creativity was being restrained?



Are you interested in participating in a research project?

We are seeking college graduate students who are currently in any graduate program pursuing a degree and who have experienced the following:

Restrained creativity in an educational context

If you meet these criteria your input could be valuable in understanding the experiences of graduate students. We would like to talk with you about your experiences. The conversation would be approximately 45 min to 1 hour.

If you are interested in participating in this study please contact Michelle Anderson in the department of Educational Psychology and Counseling at (865) 274-6962 or mander44@utk.edu.

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Tennessee
Office of Research Compliance Services
Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study

---

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a phenomenological research study. The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of graduate students who have had their creativity hindered in an educational context.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

If you decide to participate in this research study, the researcher will contact you to set up an interview where you will be asked to share your experience about your creativity being hindered in an educational context. This audio taped interview will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. The researcher will send you a summary of the findings to see if you have any modifications or additions pertaining to your experience. There will be no additional time requirements.

RISKS

The anticipated risk of harm to you by participating in this research study is no greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine psychological examinations or tests.

BENEFITS

You may benefit from participation in this research study because you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experience as a graduate student when responding to the interview question. Responses may help illuminate aspects of your experience that you had not considered before. Although the finding cannot be generalized, a description of your experience may benefit other graduate students who have similar demographic characteristics and also educators who are seeking to widen their own understandings of hindered creativity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the research study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting and assisting with the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the research study.

_____ Participants initials, page one

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form (Con't)

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact Michelle Anderson (865) 274-6962 or mander44@utk.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Research Compliance Services of the Office of Research at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form and I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name (print) _____ Date _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E: Demographic Data Form

Demographic Data From for Study Participants

Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study

Name:_____

Email:_____

Age:_____

Gender:_____

Ethnicity:_____

Graduate Program/Major:_____

Appendix F: Research Team Member's Pledge of Confidentiality

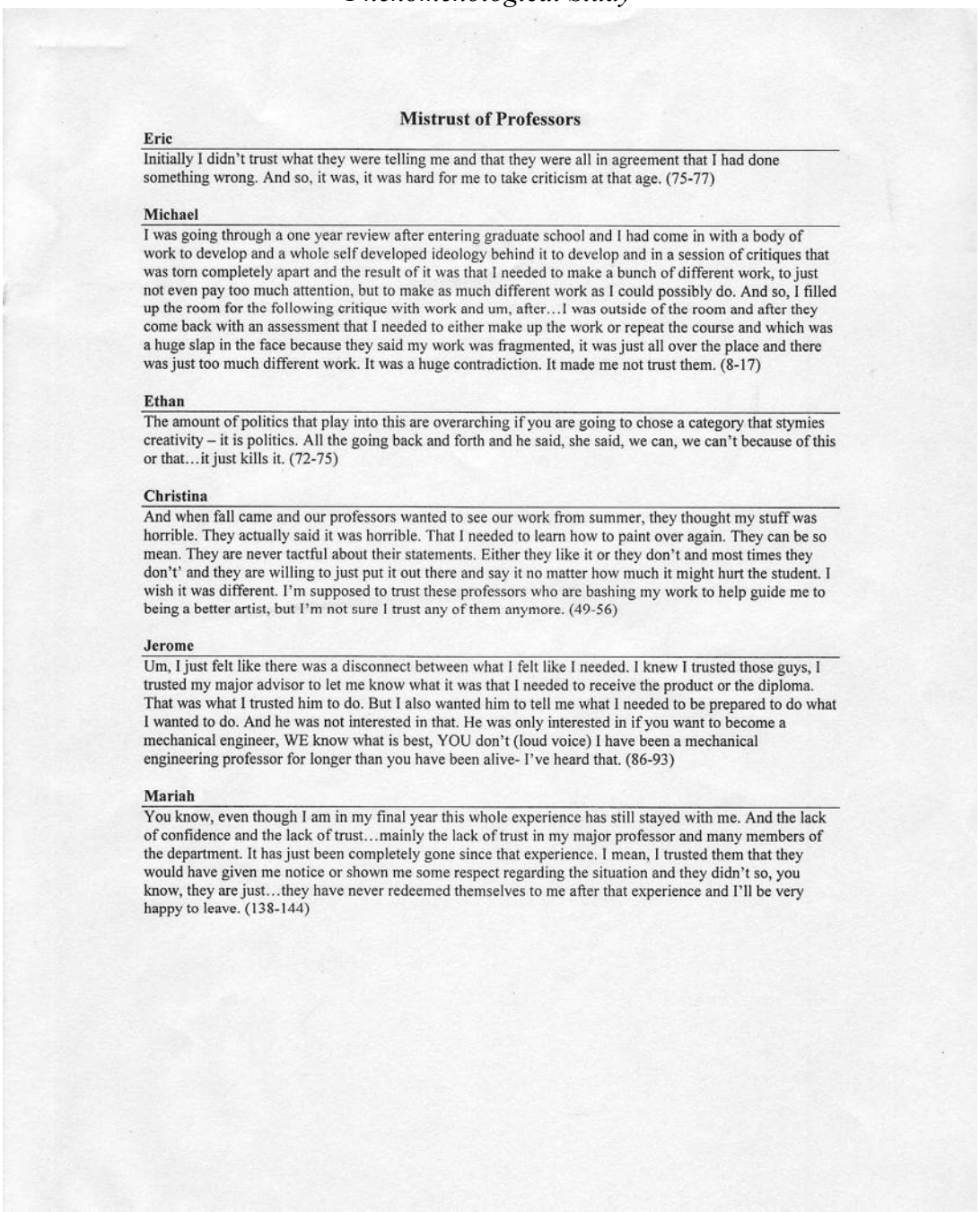
Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study

As a member of this project's research team, I understand that I will be reading transcriptions of confidential interviews. The information in these transcripts has been revealed by research participants who participated in this project on good faith that their interviews would remain confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information in these transcriptions with anyone except the primary researchers of this project, his/her doctoral chair, or other members of this research team. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Research Team Member	Date

Appendix G: Potential Ground and Themes

Presented to the University of Tennessee Applied Phenomenology Studies Colloquy
Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study



Mistrust of Professors

Eric

Initially I didn't trust what they were telling me and that they were all in agreement that I had done something wrong. And so, it was, it was hard for me to take criticism at that age. (75-77)

Michael

I was going through a one year review after entering graduate school and I had come in with a body of work to develop and a whole self developed ideology behind it to develop and in a session of critiques that was torn completely apart and the result of it was that I needed to make a bunch of different work, to just not even pay too much attention, but to make as much different work as I could possibly do. And so, I filled up the room for the following critique with work and um, after…I was outside of the room and after they come back with an assessment that I needed to either make up the work or repeat the course and which was a huge slap in the face because they said my work was fragmented, it was just all over the place and there was just too much different work. It was a huge contradiction. It made me not trust them. (8-17)

Ethan

The amount of politics that play into this are overarching if you are going to chose a category that stymies creativity – it is politics. All the going back and forth and he said, she said, we can, we can't because of this or that…it just kills it. (72-75)

Christina

And when fall came and our professors wanted to see our work from summer, they thought my stuff was horrible. They actually said it was horrible. That I needed to learn how to paint over again. They can be so mean. They are never tactful about their statements. Either they like it or they don't and most times they don't' and they are willing to just put it out there and say it no matter how much it might hurt the student. I wish it was different. I'm supposed to trust these professors who are bashing my work to help guide me to being a better artist, but I'm not sure I trust any of them anymore. (49-56)

Jerome

Um, I just felt like there was a disconnect between what I felt like I needed. I knew I trusted those guys, I trusted my major advisor to let me know what it was that I needed to receive the product or the diploma. That was what I trusted him to do. But I also wanted him to tell me what I needed to be prepared to do what I wanted to do. And he was not interested in that. He was only interested in if you want to become a mechanical engineer, WE know what is best, YOU don't (loud voice) I have been a mechanical engineering professor for longer than you have been alive- I've heard that. (86-93)

Mariah

You know, even though I am in my final year this whole experience has still stayed with me. And the lack of confidence and the lack of trust…mainly the lack of trust in my major professor and many members of the department. It has just been completely gone since that experience. I mean, I trusted them that they would have given me notice or shown me some respect regarding the situation and they didn't so, you know, they are just…they have never redeemed themselves to me after that experience and I'll be very happy to leave. (138-144)

Prof. Control/Questioning

Ethan

One- (pause) probably the biggest hindrance that I have found is that they never let you study what you want to study. If I'm straddling late antiquity, early medieval history, they continually make me take classes on early church development and the renaissance. It does nothing to further my studies. And they don't let me delve in creatively and write papers on my topic. (9-13)

This idea of I'm gonna teach you everything that you know, but not what I know is bull. I mean it's pathetic. It's a weak ego. You know, it can't be challenged. Which I mean, the adverse…the only way it's gonna change is if those egos go away or they get checked at the door and you look at the end result. And that end result being a furthering of professional development of that student. (191-195)

Christina

They told me to stop all of it. So I did. I wonder now what would have happened if I had just kept on making the same stuff. I wonder what they would have done. (12-14)

Jerome

they tell you exactly what to take and when to take it. They being the professors. The other side of that is- you only have enough time to take what they tell you to take. Within those classes that they tell you to take, you only have so much time to grasp a concept because they are not going to go back. If you are fortunate enough to grasp the concept that still doesn't mean you can grasp it well enough to use it laterally. Um, basically the way they teach you or what they teach you is wrote and that's it. (14-20)

Samantha

Not knowing how to judge yourself on what you are doing and also not knowing how they are going to judge you on what you're doing. So it's like you have no sort of compass of what's good and what's not. And basically, no one has told you why directly that you are doing this. I don't know that anyone here has said anything to me. (138-142)

Travis

I'm writing papers, the back and forth with the professor, sometimes what your original idea changes quite a bit. Um, probably some of that to the good because they have more experience. But sometimes it is a little frustrating at times because the back and forth…it happens so many times. (7-10)

John

I did some research my first semester on silencing student voices in a religious context. I remember feeling at the time I was doing that not really knowing, it was my first semester, not really knowing my colleges, my cohorts…not really knowing the faculty, my major professor…you know, I wondered how that research would be perceived. I considered it creative research. It was on the silencing of student religious voices in the classroom and how professors do that all the time without realizing it. And I remember thinking, not really being hesitant, but I guess just wondering how will that be perceived. Will they think I am like some religious fanatic or something and worrying about that or thinking that through. It was something that was in the back of my mind. (47-56)

Becky

Um, (pause) I think the only thing I struggled with besides that is academic writing. Just trying to write something…I know there's a certain way to write scientifically…it's very dull and very boring. You can't use a lot of adjectives, you can't make it interesting to read, and you can't be creative. You can't make it interesting to read where the reader might say, "oh not bad… it's very interesting to read". No, you can't do that. It is very dull. In terms of limiting my creativity this is big. I have to limit the way I write a certain thing…it has to be very dry, you can't go into a lot of description on things, it's very boring. And I have always struggled with that because it is just incredibly dull. I lose my passion and my desire to write. It makes me sad, but it what has to be done. It is how I have been taught to write by my professors for publication. There is no me in the writing. (12-22)

Prof. Mindset

Eric

I think the danger of the hindrance of the creative process coming from a professor or a learned person, is that they are steeped in traditional ways and conventional thinking and it's difficult for them to break out of that box. (95-97)

Michael

then you run into presumptions with um, the people that are assessing you, with the people that hold the keys to your future, the teachers. Whether it is in recommendations or trying to get a job, whatever it is, you have to suck it up and ah, you can't question their assumption behind things because frankly they…um, (Pause) I don't think honestly they have the education to see past their own assumptions or acknowledge their assumptions and it's just better to not even go there. And to address things on a very surface level. And that is frustrating because the most, one of the most important processes in developing your work, you feel like is more or less a formality. (100-107)

Ethan

To me that is a huge hindrance on my creativity. I couldn't study what I wanted to study. Ah, and the narrow mindedness of the professors that make you do that, they say they are giving you a well-rounded education, but isn't your well-rounded education supposed to come as an undergraduate and even in your masters program? And in your PhD program you should be narrowing your study down to what it is you do. (16-21)

They just don't see it that way though. It's just…not that it's all males, but it's a good 'ole boy club, you know, or good 'ole girl club, however you want to put it. You know, we've got ours and now we are gonna be the defender of the sheepskin. And we are gonna make you jump through hoops that we designate, so you can join our club if we like you enough. If we don't like you enough, if you are too far outside the mold, we're gonna make it impossible for you. (126-131)

And they create this us and them. You know, we are the professors and you are the lowly slovenly graduate students who are graced with our presence twice a week and once every semester when I make an appointment with you. Beyond that, we'll not be communicating. Just horse crap. If you want to foster somebody you communicate with them. And that really should be what their job is. It shouldn't be punching their own ticket. It should be furthering some student's ability, creative or not. (180-186)

Jerome

I remember a time where I wanted to take an art class because I knew that it was important for me to be able express an idea by being able to draw it on a piece of paper. So, I fully expected to go over to the art department and have them work that side of my brain for a while, so that I could come back to engineering and do what I needed to do. And you talk about hindering creativity, this particular advisor that I have said, "what would you waste your time on that side of campus for? There is nothing over there. You are wasting your time. You need to be taking this class and that class and this class". No why. (47-54)

Travis

a lot of professors do this, they don't want to let you go. At some point I don't think they can't teach you a whole lot more. You really need to go to a different place to learn like a post-doc position or whatever the case may be. I think at some point they have to say I have taught him as much as I can and you really need different influences cause after a while, um, I think it is good to hear another voice and hopefully that'll help you to grow and be creative and help others. But you know, we all have only so much to give…so, I think it is good to hear multiple voices. (111-118)

Interpretation – Justified

Eric

In some cases it was justified because I was ignorant and I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't understand materials, I didn't understand certain joining techniques, I didn't understand certain other things. I was familiar with the task that we had to accomplish and I designed it for that, but in some cases the criticism was warranted and the hindrance of the creativity which was I guess, criticism, was warranted on the interior items. (16-21)

If anything, during my proposal defense, I felt relieved because even though it was a neat little idea that I had come up with and I considered it to be valuable research, I was relieved that I didn't have to go through that work and so, uh, the initial feeling that I had were more along the lines of surprise because I thought, okay I am really putting the screws to myself on this and I am going to do this work that will merit this degree and then when they said, 'well, we think you are biting off too much'…I didn't have any feelings of oh, they don't think it's a good idea. I just had the feeling of wow, I don't have to do that work now, and I don't have to spend that money and I don't have to put that time, I can get done sooner and the rest of the research will be a higher quality because I won't be spreading myself so thin. (220-229)

Christina

So nothing really feels like it is ever finished. Maybe hindering creativity is all about constant change. Like being in a state of flux. This is not an easy thing to grasp because it can mean that you'll never make THE great piece of art. You'll always be two steps behind and trying to catch up. (Pause). Yeah, hindering creativity for me has been a lot of demanding change and re-examination of the things I thought I knew. I do see this as a positive thing even if at the time it hurts like hell. (130-135)

Samantha

Um, and mostly your first semester it's like you almost wanna…the professors almost make you feel like you should discount everything you do your first semester. That it's not valid. Um, which is very much sort of how they view it. It's like your first semester, they tell you when you come in, your first semester you are going to make crap. Your first year you are going to make stuff that you don't know where it came from, you probably don't ever want to see again, you're embarrassed by, blah, blah, blah. They preface you with this (exhale) and to some degree I think it's true. (125-131)

John

it was okay because it actually caused me, I mean all the courses I have taken here, they all have kind of expanded my thinking on things and I think they have enhanced my creativity in some ways just in that I have kind of had to think outside the box about my interests and relate them to what I am learning in other courses. Um, so I would say that it has been a good thing. (36-40)

Becky

It can be positive like with the presentations. I prefer to have a professor go over it with a fine toothcomb because I tend to get nervous and forget what to say. That may limit my creativity, but it makes sure that I am conveying the research. (55-57)

Interpretation – Unjustified

Eric

It was unwarranted in my eyes because the criticism came from one of the senior student members who was very difficult to get along with. He did not have a thorough understanding of the fluid dynamics of air going over the exterior car body, but he espoused views that he did and it was quite obvious that he didn't. (22-25)

Okay, with the external, the criticism and the hindrance of the creative process was coming from an unjustified base. (88-89)

Michael

And so, that's another thing that is very restrictive is because you are expected to develop a body of work that relates and there is this common thread that follows through all of them and that's ideal and um, that's very restrictive because even though you are supposed to be developing work you are supposed to make work that is similar to previous work and I think that is kind of a hypocritical thought. Especially since it is art and a big part of why I went into art was because you have a freedom to develop from whatever is around me. (128-134)

I loved feeling like I could make what I want and that was a big reason I went into art was because I could have more freedom. Then suddenly I was feeling like…um, what I went into…because I went into that, I had no freedom. (42-44)

Christina

I think about hindering creativity in art is similar to music maybe…like you can have a great free spirit playing on some keyboards and he could be really good, but without direction, well, he may never go anywhere. So, in art, your creativity is hindered all the time. You make a piece and the professor comes and says, okay, this part works and this works, but this part here is crap and what else do you have to show? It's never enough. You feel like you are making all this work…putting all this time and effort into each piece and some professor comes in and just looks it over in like two seconds and cuts you a new asshole. Sorry for the language, but it's true. That's how it feels. (20-28)

Jerome

So, first of all you have the curriculum and the system. And you have the amount of time that you have. That doesn't leave a lot of room for adlib. And that's not to say that it's a bad thing. I think that given the amount of time that you need to spend in school, you know whether or not you have an infinite amount of money, then you might have a little bit more time than the next guy, but you're not going to make it through the engineering program, the graduate program, by being creative or imaginative cause they already know what they are going to teach you and they know exactly how they are gonna give it to you. (30-37)

Travis

I kind of feel like they should be given a little more leeway because now they are almost finished and my feeling is by the time you graduate, you shouldn't have to make many changes on your paper or slides. It's good to have some of you in it. So, if you are wrong, as long as you are not really wrong, he should just let it go and let you learn from that. If you pick a bad color combination in your slides and you can't read them or others can't read them, well…if you do it, you'll learn never to do that again from your experience. But if he just tells you not to use those colors, you end up wondering if it would have been so bad to use them and you may not understand completely the idea behind it all. (33-41)

Mariah

it's just that I had returned to school as an outlet for my creativity. You know, I had taken pictures my whole life. I loved taken pictures. I loved the freedom of taking pictures of anything I wanted. And you know the fact that it wasn't being validated was just very upsetting. And I felt like I wasn't being respected in the art department and um, that I wasn't treated in an appropriate way. (61-65)

Outcomes- Change/Shift

Eric

I had conditioned myself to not be as creative and to not try to think outside the box so much. If I had to do something it would be, okay, let's looks at something other people have done and maybe branch off of that a little bit, but none of these big grandiose ideas on, well, I think that this really thinking outside the box would work. (256-260)

And it's a vicious circle because now that I almost have my PhD, I will be teaching somewhere and that's the way I'll be teaching. (deep breath and long exhale) I don't have any answers, but I do know I am certainly conditioned now to avoid thinking creatively having gone through the program for this long. (284-288)

Cedric

There's nothing in my program that encourages me to be creative. I'm encouraged to think scientifically by my professors. (22-23)

like I've completely shifted in terms of creativity from the artistic to the scientific. And you know, partially consensual and partially do to circumstance and do to necessity. Um, but I suppose it's just a matter of sacrificing one thing in terms of another (53-57)

Jerome

But there is still not a lot of room for being creative because every design you show them, every new or novel idea you present to the professors usually gets shot down because you do not understand the concept enough. And the way they have the curriculum laid out is very little real world stuff. They put you in a situation and then tell you how to get through the situation. It's not the way it works in real life…not that I have seen. You are in the situation and you have to find your own way out of it. You have to use your own creativity to come up with new ideas to solve the problems, but your creativity has been shot down by the professors over and over and you lose that ability to think creatively. (68-77)

Samantha

I think that is sort of what grad school is for MFA students. It's processes…it's going through basically your big change as an artist like getting from point A to point B, but you have to processes it along the way, you can't just do it and you always think that the work you are making is the work that you were meant to make until you start making something else, but then you have to process the work that you made and determine why it isn't what you want to do. And so, it's like this constant…it's almost like ah…if you drew a curly q…sort of like this (gesture with circles in the air) you know, it's like you are constantly looping back and learning from what you just did, but then you are coming out of it and learning something else and then you loop back on that and learn what you just did. So in some ways I feel like I am still processing some jumps I made my first semester here. (114-125)

Krisnah

the class was over structured… So, I definitely feel that my creativity was hindered because I would have to stop myself from thinking of different possibilities and just do what the professor had asked for. (29-32)
I find myself limiting my own creative voice. I think the first few times I would try to come up with things, but after you are challenged over and over again you tend to give up. (48-51)

Becky

It's very difficult to be scientific and artistic at the same time. It's hard to explain. I have to think completely differently. When I am thinking scientifically I know I have to focus on details, be precise, get the right answer. I have to think very linearly, point A to point B, if there's a problem- fix it type of process. And if I am doing something more creative, I really have to kind of turn off thinking in a way. I don't know how to describe it. Just go with how it feels. It's difficult to integrate both of them because in science it is not about feeling. It is about the correct answer and logic. That's it. And you can use creativity in science, but its how to get the right answer or how to prove something is correct. Or you know, in research it is very straightforward. You try something it fails, you try something else and what did you learn from your failure, okay apply it to your next try. So it's very straightforward in a way. I mean there is creativity there because people come up with fabulous ideas and research, but executing that is very logic based. I don't know yet. I am still at the point in my career where I am waiting to be told what to do and at some point I am going to have to think of it myself and come up with the ideas and I don't know about that yet, so (laughing) we'll see. It scares me. It's a struggle sometimes. (99-113)

Outcomes- Accept

Eric

I think one reason is because I was thirty seven years old and ah, I had already gone through this process several times as we do as we mature into adults. I think in layman's terms it's called getting your ass handed to you. Pardon my language. That is a sobering experience and after it happens enough times…and the number of times that it occurs could actually be a function of personality, I suppose, but after it happens a couple of times, you kind step back and say, you know, this isn't fun and I need to figure out a way to come to terms with this. Some people never figure it out, but I can honestly say that to achieve the level of professionalism that a PhD or a graduate degree demands, you have to come to terms with it. You have to learn how to accept it and then come to terms with it, that hindrance of creativity. (208-218)

Cedric

I haven't really thought about it. I sort of just decided to draw a line and just do it a certain way. Hence, command myself, no complaining about this. You know, it's a good job. This is something you have to do in order to be professional in the work place. (84-87)

Christina

It is really hard to listen to other people bash your work. I did cry after many critiques and I thought about quitting because it would be so much easier to not deal with all of this and just go be an artist on my own. But I didn't quit. I keep coming back for more. Its like even though you know the next critique will probably go just as badly as the one before, you keep coming back because there is a chance that this one could be different. That in this one, the professor that hates your work just might say one semi-nice thing. Like, oh I can see you spent a lot of time on this piece. That would be great. That can change your whole entire semester. One kind word or thought and it's not even that kind, but it's enough to make you keep going. (145-155)

Samantha

that sort of hinders me a little bit because you have all these voices coming at you at once and it's like, you know, you want to make work that makes you happy and you want to make work that makes your professors happy and you want to make work that makes your parents or your friends happy. (191-194)

one of the biggest sort of fights I've had with hindered creativity is just like sorting out all the voices of people telling me what's good and what's not good and trying to figure out what I think is good. So, that's huge and that's basically what you are learning to do in grad school. You are not learning to how to paint better, you are learning how to make artwork in your own voice just by all the other voices and that's a really hard thing to do. (198-203)

Becky

As an engineer, I have always been trained to give like the right answer. There's never any grey. It is either right or it is wrong. And I thrive on getting the right answer, so I think I have been taught that way…so when professors say this is the project we want, you know, get the right answer, I will. (7-10)

As an engineer, you are supposed to do it a certain way. It is good to think outside the box as long as you get the right answer. And I have personally struggled with thinking outside the box because I have learned it a certain way and that's how I am going to do it. So if the professor tells me to do it a certain way, I will do it that way. And if he tells…if I come up with an idea just based on the way I think, I instantly think, oh well, I am probably wrong because I don't have the experience. So if the professor says it's right or wrong, I'll go along with it. So I really don't question the authority aspect. (47-54)

I have always been um, I want to please my professors, so for me, I have never felt completely hindered because I always want to do it correctly and do what the professor wants me to do, so he will give me an A. I mean that's entirely how I think. I don't want to disappoint my boss; I want them to think you know I'm good at what I do. So, I better do it the way they want me to in a timely manner. And I know at some point I am gonna have to start thinking on my own in a sense especially if I want to go into academics because then I have to come up with my own research ideas and then I'll have to know what to do. (121-128)

Outcomes – Lose

Michael

So, that has held me back a lot and losing that momentum or losing that confidence or losing that permission from those, form 'they', from gatekeepers or from whoever is very debilitating in developing something that you are supposed to be on top of…something that you are supposed to progress or at least develop. So, you lose a lot. You lose a lot of confidence in your field, yourself, your work, your life…you lose a lot and um, you would think in an educational setting that would be the last thing that would happen especially in the art world where you have freedom, um, otherwise I would have been a banker or an engineer (laugh) (137-144)

Especially 'cause, because of that, because of the examples that I have given, I have had to distance myself from my work also, which is distancing a big part of myself from me (laugh) from something that could be called a more enduring part of myself, I have to distance myself from and if it's not for creativity, then that's kind of the crux behind development and it doesn't have to be such a dire or desperate, I guess would be a better word, dependence upon creativity (188-193)

Cedric

since I have become physics major since I graduated and ah, came here and started the graduate program, I've just had no spare time to do anything. Um, I am always constantly working and um, when I'm not working, I'm sleeping. So, I don't have the time to do these things that I find creative. I don't have the time to, you know, let my right brain work a little a bit. And I've actually, I'm actually starting to worry that um, maybe um, those abilities stagnate. (17-22)

For example, I was doing a resertation section and all I had to do was, basically I was discussing,, you know, special relativity and rockets and stuff and I couldn't even draw a rocket correctly on the board even though, you know for years I prouded myself on my artistic talents and then here I am. I can't even draw a stick figure because I just…it's a bit frustrating, you know to realize that if you don't work at something constantly it begins to stagnate and that includes artistic endeavors and that includes, you know, creative, um, creativity. It's harder for me to visualize things I think. (22-30)

One of the things that worried me is that I don't feel like this utter horror that I can't draw well anymore. You know, it's just sort of…ah, I'm trying to phrase this correctly. It feels as though I'm losing my talents and I don't care. And the scary part is that I don't care. Ah, I feel that I should be more worried about it than I am (43-47)

Mariah

You know, because of this experience I lost confidence in my work…in myself as an artist. Here they are saying, oh, your work is too good…but I tell you, all I saw was my work sitting there on the floor like trash waiting to taken out. Not only was my creativity hindered, but my confidence in the entire art department was lost. (31-34)

I am not so vocal in my classes anymore. I have lost some confidence in myself as an artist because even though they cited their reasons for removing my work, it still makes you feel like your work isn't good enough. You're not part of that group. You're not important enough to have your work hang with the other work. (131-135)

Outcomes – Cautious/Avoid

Eric

And the more I experienced that the more conditioned I became to avoid those feelings and the way to avoid those feelings is to avoid submitting ideas. Another way to avoid them is to be tactful about the ideas you are going to submit, such as checking with other people first or kind of going behind the scenes or under the radar so to speak. (249-253)

I can definitely say I am really very cautious about submitting new ideas now in whatever context that I am in. No longer will I have that youthful exuberance of- hey, let's try to doing it this way, cause you get smacked down enough and even if it's warranted, the way the smacking down process occurs can be hugely devastating to somebody. (275-279)

Cedric

How I feel about that isn't even clear to me. I just feel that…that…actually for the most part I have just sort of avoided thinking about it and just treated it like something I had to do whether I liked it or not. Um, I mean, I'm torn between what I feel is appropriate and professional and what I like to casually wear. (94-97)

Krisnah

I have good questions too, but I have raised my hand for five minutes and the teacher just looks at me and moves on and I said, hello…so really…it really pisses me off how that class is just him and I can even express my creativity because I know it'll be shot down (130-135)

Becky

You know I personally think they are good, but there is no place for my photos in my studies. I have been told- no images. But um, I have had several other people tell me they think my photos are good. I don't want to sound arrogant and say I have an eye for the photo, but you know I can take pretty decent pictures. Um, I enjoy doing that but it never crosses over into my research. (83-87)

Handle Differently – Facilitate

Eric

I guess what you have to be careful of is when people are being creative, it seems like they are thinking outside the box because they haven't yet been introduced to the box. But you have to be careful because the box exists for a reason. You have to understand where the limits are and certainly not be afraid to go beyond them. But understand that there is a decision that has to be made when you are going to hinder the creativity of the individual. An example would be a young student who comes onto the scene and says I've got all these great ideas and you need to listen to me. And they very well may have great ideas and they very well may be merited, but you have to make sure that they understand feasibility. They need that direction. So, you can have the creativity and I think the challenge is encouraging the creativity well making them understand feasibility. (130-140)

Ethan

What you need is to have somebody actually take an interest in where they are going and help them get there. You know, it's my opinion as a teacher and I've taught a lot over the years, it's not…or as a boss…it's not my job as a teacher or a boss to make your success difficult. It's my job as a teacher or a boss to remove any obstacles out of your way to allow you to be successful. It's not to hinder your success or creativity, but to facilitate it. And if that means me running the interference for you, then that's what I should be doing. They just don't see it that way though. (120-126)

I think what would improve…ah, now we had one professor there that was just phenomenal. He went to…I think he got his doctorate from Cornell maybe, I'm he's a pretty sharp guy. And he had a theory that he would address us by our first names and we would address him by his first name. The theory being that in theory we are equals. And it's not that he's going to lower himself to our level of work at that time, but rather that we should raise ourselves up to his level of work as (pause) I don't know, what would you call it…compadres, um, colleagues. Yeah, as colleagues. And that was a great idea. (167-174)

And a good teacher, his or her goal should be to make a better student then they are. That student should come out better than the teacher is. You know, if I teach martial arts, my goal is to produce a student who can beat me. If I teach history, my goal is to produce a student who has a more brilliant career than I do. I mean, isn't that the theory? (187-190)

Jerome

If you want to be an engineer you need to be in a program that is gonna put you in the field and then put you back in the classroom and then back out in the field and back…the co-op program does that to a certain degree, but not all co-op programs do that. You need to make sure this person is immersed in the side of engineering he wants to do. Because that's the way they did it in the old days. I read Gordon Murray's bio and this guy studied under somebody for a while. That's the way you learn engineering. You know if you want to learn about internal combustion engines, great. Go get a job. Do that. Understand what it takes to put this thing together and add your creativity to it. Then come back to the table so to speak and get your education on as far as what the theory behind it is. Understand why it works and then go and make it work. There is no making it work if you only know the why. (199-209)

Travis

I think in terms of – if I am a professor one day, I would probably be pretty similar to my professor the first time. Very hard. Not harsh. But very um, not holding back my opinion much, but then I would like to see my students grow over time to where I don't have to give my opinion and I could give them more space. By the time they get their PhD, they should be on their own and be able to do things on their own. Make decisions on their own about what to include and why. And if they are not, then they probably shouldn't get their PhD yet. So, that's probably…if I was a professor, I would like to think that I would change as they grow and back off a little bit. (45-52)

Handle Differently – How you are told

Eric

And the manner in which you are told can be significant in terms of the reaction and I know that in the sciences, there is no tact. If somebody is criticizing someone else and they are tactful about it, that is not something that is taught and it's going to be endemic to their personality type (164-167)

Christina

Yeah, like there are so many things I wish were different with this place. How they tell a student to change their artwork could be different. (83-84)

So, yeah, I think the communication level is a bit off and could use some improving. (99-100)

Mariah

I think if they would have told me in a more positive way and maybe given me some sort of other opportunities to be in some different shows or you know, just to make me feel like I was still an important part of the department…It would have been a different experience than how it played out. (49-52)

And I just think that if it would have been done in a more positive way, it would have helped with those feelings. (137-138)

Handle Differently – Support

Michael

but when I feel like I have a lot of potential or a lot of freedom, or a lot of support…support is a big one, when I feel like I have those things, creativity is easy and I feel like I can do anything and my life is wonderful. I pretty much *do* do better things. My life does get better and there's a lot tied to creativity (193-197)

Ethan

I can't stand it when there is a cast system. You know, I'm better than you because…And that's just bull. I mean you may be farther along this road than I am, but that doesn't mean one little bit that you are better than I am. The adverse might actually be true. I might be far better than you are at this. We just don't know it yet. Then again, I might be an absolute dismal failure at this. We don't know that either. But until we find that out, it's your job to help me get there. Either in or out. One or the other. (202-208)

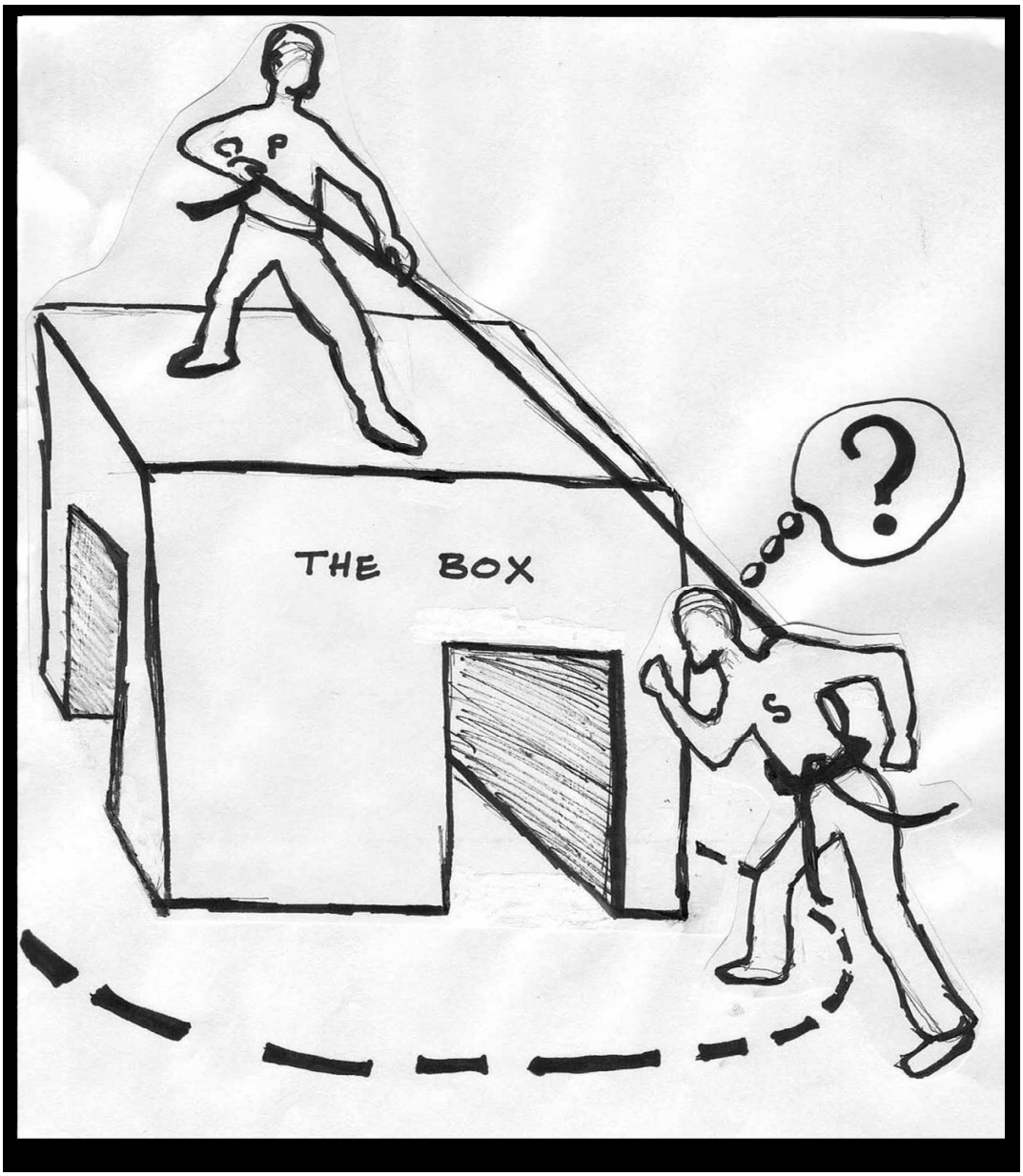
Samantha

Um, I for me, I don't regret going to grad school. I don't think it has been a bad choice. It's just really frustrating the things that you go through in grad school. I wish they would assign us all counselors to be honest (laugh). I think when you come to grad school for art, I think you should be assigned a counselor, I really do. Because it's pretty intense and nobody outside of the disciplines knows, I mean you can't talk to your spouse or your significant other about it, they don't get it. I mean you can talk and they'll listen, but they don't understand it and they don't really have an advice for you. (266-273)

And I know we pretty much all joke about that too, I think everybody feels that way, like yeah, we should all have counselors. (Laugh) Like as many times as we are psychologically sort of messed up, like yeah, we should probably all be in therapy, but…we're not, we're in grad school (laugh). (276-278)

Appendix H: Original Sketch of Overall Structure

Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study



Appendix I: Participant Feedback Email

Thinking Inside the Box - Graduate Students' Perspectives on Hindered Creativity: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Participant,

In the fall of 2007, you volunteered to participate in a research study about graduate students' experiences with hindered creativity in an educational context. At the time of your interview you agreed to be contacted via email about the findings of the study. I have attached a summary of those findings for you to look over. The findings include the themes and the ground of the phenomenological study on hindered creativity. Please read this summary and let me know if it rings true to your experience. Please email me any reactions or feedback you may have to this summary.

I appreciate your continued participation in this study and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Michelle Anderson

Appendix I: Participant Feedback Email (Con't)

Attachment: Summary of Findings

Three major themes and one ground were described by each participant that emerged from the data analysis. The participants experienced an initial mistrust of others, specifically academic authority from professors upon being confronted with the situation that hindered their creativity. This became the ground of the experience and is entitled "The Box" to refer to the overall academic rules, regulations and guidelines the professor must follow as well as the dynamic relationship between the professor and the student. Within this box, the participants found professors' conventional thinking and professors' control to be sub-themes of the mistrust of authority.

The mistrust that takes place within the box hindered creativity was then understood by the participant to be either justified or unjustified depending upon the explanation provided or not provided by the professor. The significance of the hindered creativity was described by the participants through the outcomes or changes of mindset. The outcomes that occurred included changes of mindset from thinking artistically to scientifically, acceptance of the hindrance, rejection of the creativity, and loss of confidence in their creativity and themselves.

Upon reflection of the experience, each participant offered his or her own understanding of how the situation could have been handled differently. The handle differently theme was included because it was expressed by each participant as a desire and less as a theoretical position. Three sub-themes that influenced the handle differently theme were how they were told by the professors about the hindrance, the support of others or the professor in terms of creativity, and the overall facilitation and encouragement of creativity in education.

VITA

Michelle Anderson began her fine arts studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the fall of 1995. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Summa Cum Laude, with a double major in painting and drawing with an accompanying minor in art history and cinematography. After receiving the University of Tennessee's 1999 Outstanding Graduating Senior Award for the School of Fine Arts, she attended New York University and received her Master of Fine Arts degree in 2001. Her major concentration at NYU was studio art painting with a minor in art theory and criticism. She exhibits her artwork both nationally and internationally in group and solo shows. She was included in the Frist Center for the Visual Arts Fragile Species Exhibition in 2005 and received the Tennessee Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship Grant for Visual Art in 2006.

Michelle began her professional teaching career as an adjunct instructor at Watkins College of Art & Design, Middle Tennessee State University, Austin Peay University, and Volunteer Community College. She spent three years as an assistant professor at Middle Tennessee State University in the Fine Arts department with a teaching focus on foundational arts and painting. She returned to school to pursue her Doctor of Philosophy with a concentration in Educational Psychology and Counseling and a major in Adult Education. During her three years of full-time studies, she worked as a graduate assistant in the Office of Informational Technologies as a computer technologist. She divides her time between research, reading good books, and studying the French language.