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It Permeates the Whole Fabric of Your Life': The Experience of Scholars Who Have Studied Self-Directed Learning

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Robert Clark Donaghy entitled "It Permeates the Whole Fabric of Your Life': The Experience of Scholars Who Have Studied Self-Directed Learning." 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:

Howard R. Pollio, Katherine H. Greenberg, Mary F. Ziegler

Accepted for the Council:

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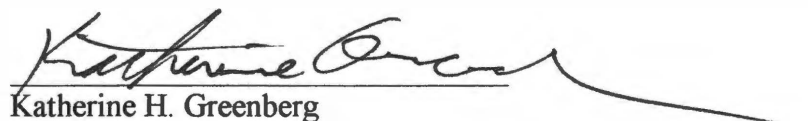
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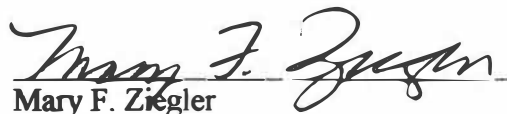
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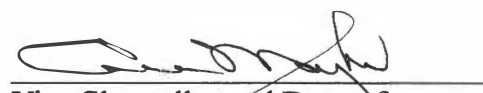
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Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor and Dean of
Graduate Studies

**“IT PERMEATES THE WHOLE FABRIC OF YOUR LIFE”:
THE EXPERIENCE OF SCHOLARS WHO HAVE STUDIED
SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Robert Clark Donaghy
May 2005**

Thesis
2005b
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Sandra Noel Craig Donaghy, my spouse and my partner. Without her love, help, encouragement, and support my doctoral studies would not have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of the collaborative efforts of many individuals. First, I would like to thank my chair and major professor, Dr. Ralph G. Brockett. He has been a mentor, teacher, and friend throughout the greatest experience of my life. The initial idea for this study was conceived by him. His unending desire to help me be the best that I could be is reflected in this study. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Howard R. Pollio for his many hours of hard work, especially during the conceptualization and thematization phases of this study. Without his brilliant insight, devotion to his students, and love of phenomenology, this study would not be what it is. Third, I would like to thank Dr. Katherine H. Greenberg for her unending support during my graduate studies. Without her patience, understanding, and encouragement, I would never have pursued the “messing about” required for a project of this magnitude. Fourth, I would like to thank Dr. Mary F. Ziegler for her persistence in helping me to transform my view of life experiences and for introducing me to the learning organization. I especially want to thank her for encouraging me to pursue the doctoral program.

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mammoth undertaking. I especially want to thank them for their willingness to give their personal time in the interest of research. To Priscilla W. Levasseur, I am appreciative for her assistance in conducting the bracketing interview. Four others need to be recognized. First, I want to thank my transcriber, Whitney D. Dalton, for the countless hours she spent transcribing the audiotapes of the interviews. I am also grateful to my parents, Robert D. and Kate G. Donaghy for their lifelong encouragement of my academic achievement, their faith in me to accomplish this task, and their willingness to accompany me on the data collection trips. Fourth, and most importantly I am deeply grateful to Dr. Sandra N. C. Donaghy, my spouse, for the many, many hours she stayed up at night helping with the editing of this manuscript.

Last, I want to thank the participants. They represent a significant collaborative effort in the making of meaning during this study. Their willingness to meet with me at conferences, in their university offices, and at their homes is appreciated. This community of scholars was willing to take me into their confidence and provide me with astonishing stories of their personal lives and academic careers sufficient to help construct something special about this notion, we call self-directed learning. To them I am indebted.

Above all, I want to give thanks to God for giving me the opportunity, ability, and wisdom for doctoral study at this point in my life.

ABSTRACT

Self-directed learning has been one of the most widely studied topics within the field of adult education over the past three decades. It has gone from being a revelation for some to a topic heavily criticized by others. For those who have studied the concept, it has been a continued area of scholarly writing and research, while for others it is no longer a core area of interest. Some have even suggested this area of study is dead and it is time to move on. Little has been done to investigate how self-directed learning has developed over the years. The purpose of this dissertation is to describe the evolution of scholarship on self-directed learning as experienced by the people who have studied it.

The method consists of interviews with eight scholars who have made major contributions to the literature of self-directed learning since the mid 1960s. Research design and data collection were informed by phenomenology while data were analyzed on the basis of upon hermeneutic interpretation. In addition, the rich nature of data presented an opportunity to talk about personal stories of each expert.

Findings are presented through three lenses. First, results provided insight through a mini-case study of each participant. Second, a content analysis disclosed the data were in four descriptive categories: histories, learning theories, importance of a collaborative approach, and ideas about self-direction's future. Third, the experience of participants with self-directed learning evolved into a thematic structure involving four aspects

defining its meaning for them: lifelong learning, can't do it alone, the critical side, and need for a model/mentor.

This study indicated that participants contributed 200 publications to the literature of self-directed learning and directed 80 doctoral dissertations involving self-direction.

Through a living literature review, the professors provided insight into their histories by how they came to know and understand this topic over the years. Their personal theories of learning were discussed while each person's vision helped divulge new ideas for research and provide an opinion for the future of this topic. Last, the thematic structure of their experiences gives rise to an alternative view of self-directed learning.

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“Self-directed learning is sort of a personal adventure, in some ways. It is about the joy, excitement, and engagement of learners who are learning what they want to learn. Most of us cannot go back once we have experienced it.”

Allen M. Tough

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade research in the area of self-directed learning (SDL) has decreased substantially (Brockett et al., 2001). For some who have studied the concept, it has continued to be an area of scholarly writing and research, while for others it is no longer a core area of interest. The topic has been perceived as a revelation for some to a topic heavily criticized by others. Merriam (2001a), who espouses the importance of the topic, suggests there are “numerous possibilities for how future research on self-directed learning might enrich adult education practice as well as contribute to theory in adult learning” (p. 11). On the side of criticism, some scholars have been suspicious of self-direction’s emphasis on the individual rather than on the community (Alfred, 2002; Brookfield, 1984; Brookfield, 2000; Freire, 1993; Jarvis, 1987; Tisdell et al., 2002). Others have questioned whether this area of study is dead and if it is time to move on (Brockett, 2000).

A firm connection between SDL and adult learning theory can now be recognized through Merriam’s (2001a) scholarship. Regarding importance to the field of adult education, Merriam (2001b) concluded that within the context of adult education, adult learning has been the most studied topic. Recently, scholars have suggested there are opportunities to revitalize the study of self-directed learning (Stockdale, Fogerson, &

Brockett, 2001) and much of the effort has moved from academe to practice (Stockdale, Fogerson, Robinson, & Walker, 2002).

Context for the Problem

For over 30 years, SDL has been one of the most extensively studied topics within the field of adult education (Brockett et al., 2001; Caffarella, 1993). Interest in SDL is generally credited as having originated with Houle's (1961/1993) seminal work, *The Inquiring Mind*. Other significant pieces of literature recognized to have had an early and lasting impact on the topic are Knowles's (1975) *Self-Directed Learning* and Tough's (1971; 1979) *The Adult's Learning Projects*. Since then, many other scholars have also contributed to the literature.

In 1999, a study was conducted on the literature of self-directed learning, which consisted of a quantitative content analysis of the literature on SDL from mainstream periodicals in the field of adult education (Brockett et al., 2001). This research was conducted by a group of researchers at The University of Tennessee. Subsequent to the presentation in 2001, the same research group continued to add to the database, however no additional presentation was made or article published. Two years later, building on the findings of this study, the citations for these same articles (in the database) were analyzed, and the combined findings were used to develop a list of prominent contributors to the literature on self-directed learning (Donaghy, Robinson, Wallace, Walker, & Brockett, 2002). These results were supplemented with a third study by Stockdale et al. (2002),

which led to another ranking of authors perceived to be experts in the process of self-direction. This study by Stockdale et al. also looked at the frequency of contributions to the *International Self-Directed Learning Symposium* (ISDLS) proceedings.

The idea for this dissertation was a natural progression from the earlier work ranking scholars by the quantity of their citations. The concept of studying the experts in SDL parallels my own interest in self-directed learning as a style of learning that I have experienced. It could be construed that this study represents a *living literature review*.

In building on the tradition of other similar studies, where adult educators have been interviewed, the opportunity for studying a group of scholars has been shown to be a valuable way to learn. These experts, identified by citation analysis, have had much experience with the study of self-directed learning over the years. With full knowledge of the criticism for considering quantitative approaches while researching self-direction, it became desirable to not to add one more empirical study to the knowledge base (Brookfield, 1984). While giving consideration to this criticism and the reasons for research and scholarly writing on SDL declining over the past decade, part of the objective for this study is to determine its viability as a future area of study. The framework through which I have considered the future, is Kuhn's (1996) notion of a paradigm shift. It is beyond the scope of this effort to justify self-directed learning as a valid style of learning or to determine if this alternative is or is not appropriate for learners to continue to practice. As a result of these criticisms and the perceived success of previous interviews of adult educators the opportunity to study this group of scholars, in the qualitative tradition, has been conceived.

Problem Statement

Little has been done over the years to tell the story of the ways in which scholarship on self-directed learning has developed. This research offers personal reflections on SDL by those scholars who were *there*; that is, those who have actively contributed to the scholarship in this area and who have been cited during the past two decades as an acknowledgement that these people have been some of the most important writers on self-direction (Brockett et al., 2001). Outcomes of this research are to provide (a) a mini-case study of each participant's life to include her or his contributions to the literature; (b) a summary of the descriptive categories of data that provides an accounting of the evolution of SDL as told from the first person perspective of the major researchers; and (c) an experiential, thematic structure emanating from the participants' own protocols. The thematic structure offers possibilities for new ways to view the definition of SDL. From these descriptive categories and emergent themes, it is possible to speculate about where this line of scholarship may be headed in the future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the evolution of self-directed learning as experienced by the people who have created and studied it. The study consists of interviews with eight scholars who have made major contributions to the literature of self-directed learning over the past four decades.

Research Questions

These research questions will serve as the focus of this study:

1. How has the study of self-directed learning evolved over time?
2. How have scholars who have studied self-directed learning come to understand and make sense of this area of study?
3. How do these scholars experience self-directed learning?

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

There are many styles and techniques for analyzing data grounded in qualitative research efforts. No single method is considered to be preferable for all contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Since the use of qualitative research first became popular in the social sciences during the 1960s, the process has sometimes been described as a “soft” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 2) data collection effort found to be rich in description. According to Bogdan and Biklen, the techniques involved are open ended questions and the interview guide is somewhat unstructured. The sample size usually remains small. Since one of the key features of qualitative research is meaning making, research questions often relate to *what* participants think of some aspect of their life. According to Lofland (1976), one of the important reasons for considering qualitative research is that “the whole [is] more than the [sum of the] parts” (p. 65). He finds benefit in this method since qualitative approaches subscribe to a humanistic style thereby promoting the participant’s action “upon the

world” (p. 321); actions which involve “the possibility of choice” (p. 321); a consideration of “one’s self and one’s actions” (p. 321); and an involvement that seeks “to provide practical guides to action” (p. 322).

Making meaning is assisted by descriptive research through inquiry into historical aspects. Hanson (1989) describes this process as allowing one to look at “where we have been, what we have come to know, and where we can go by empowering ourselves . . . as able meaning makers” (p. 263). Even though this is not a formal piece of historical research, Wiersma (2000) suggests, “historical research can also be useful for predicting future trends . . . [e.g., the] old adage that those who are unfamiliar with the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them” (p. 219-220). Furthermore, studies with historical implications can be informed by existential phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962). Multiple sources of information can be considered or, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, the researcher must consider all “angles simultaneously, [in which] everything has meaning” (p. xix).

A study should inform one’s own personal beliefs and philosophy of teaching. Elias and Merriam (1995) suggest looking to where one’s personal philosophy is grounded. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest when conceptualizing qualitative research, it should incorporate the ideas of colleagues, be based on a review of the literature, and take into account one’s professional experience.

Merriam (2002) has described several commonly utilized designs for completing qualitative research. Two of these are basic: interpretive research and phenomenology. The interpretive process provides an understanding of how the participants make meaning

of a particular phenomenon. On the other hand, phenomenology “underpins all of qualitative research” (p. 7) and focuses on the experience of the participant.

Interpretive Research

An aspect of an interpretive study could be identified as historical in nature through the creation of profiles on the participants, through their histories. This facet could be seen through the lens of a basic, interpretive, qualitative study (Merriam, 2002). Here the data would be analyzed through the use of visual techniques for coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The results of this visual coding technique can produce a content analysis of individual themes (H. R. Pollio, personal communication, February, 18, 2004). To supplement the results of the individual themes, the literature on self-direction might be exploited to uncover those aspects providing an accounting of the history of SDL. According to Glaser (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), the opportunity for a fruitful data analysis is enhanced through a review of literature. Wiersma (2000) goes on to conclude the “knowledge of history, gained through historical research, can provide a perspective for decision making about educational problems” (p. 219).

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) propose that qualitative studies are instrumental in providing an understanding of “people from their own frame of reference” (p. 6). Their perspective on the research design of a qualitative inquiry is that it is an art with a framework to follow but no rules. Analysis methods, according to Taylor and Bogdan, sometimes involve the investigator’s hunch based upon intimacy with data. When reviewing the data, it is suggested that “themes, hunches, interpretations, and ideas”

(p. 131) be identified and tabulated in some way.

Phenomenological Research

This line of philosophical inquiry can go beyond the interpretive phase. Some authors, such as Merriam (2002), consider phenomenology to be a type of research that serves as a foundation for all qualitative methods. The premise made in this discussion of framework is to further the understanding of self-directed learning through qualitative inquiry into the experiences of those scholars identified in the citation analysis as major contributors to this line of inquiry.

It is important to consider a research methodology that has some relationship to learning theory specifically tied to adults. In the search for factors helpful to the adult learning process, meaning making is shown to play a significant role (MacKeracher, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Furthermore, experience is suggested to be a key element in the process of learning that differentiates the process from one in childhood (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Stanage, 1987). Stanage (1987) posits experience facilitates “education (genuine ‘education’)” (p. 5) and considers phenomenology to elicit the phenomena of facts and values relevant to education. Stanage is one of the few adult educators who writes in detail about the importance of phenomenology in learning. His supposition is that the interconnectivity “between feelings, habits, and the will-to-learn constitute an essential structure in all learning” (p. 124), especially that of adults. Stanage also suggests that in his theory of “drawing-out” (p. 165), it is not a question “of what is educed. . . . [but] is a

question of who and whom” (p. p. 165). His emphasis, in this alternative to a pedagogical approach, is on the helping of others.

Other writers such as Polkinghorne (1989), propose that the “purpose of phenomenological research is to describe the structure of an experience, not to describe the characteristics of a group who have had the experience” (p. 48). Rather than describe the statistical nature of the group studied relative to some experience, the purpose is to inquire into the nature of the experience. Furthermore, Collins (1983/1995) suggests the adult’s ability to make meaning, or what he calls “stock of knowledge . . . [is connected] to the way we experience our world” (p. 259). Stanage (1989/1995) concludes any learning theory connected with adults and the promotion of lifelong learning must be engaged through the application of phenomenology.

Stanage (1987) goes further to suggest phenomenology can facilitate an understanding that “leads to new programs of learning for the adult learner, adult educators, and the subject-matter of adult education, and to a new paradigm of research, new research programs, and the subsequent emergence of new problems” (pp. 2-3).

Philosophically, Stanage posits that adult learners should question who they are, what they can know, what they ought to know, and what they can hope for to realize their greatest potential in life. His suggestion is that learning how to learn is a key component in the adult’s life-world. This, according to Stanage, evolves from a phenomenological account of the “everydayness of the . . . [adult’s] life-world” (p. 5) that is the “medium in and through which the continuing learning throughout the adult years must arise and become vital” (p. 5). Spiegelberg (1953/1995) suggests phenomenological methods allow one to

put themselves in the place of others. His supposition considers one's consciousness "in the context of the 'life-world' (*Lebenswelt*) to which they belong" (p. 252) in such a way as to portray the world as one sees, experiences, lives in, and relates to it. Also, when it comes to the study of self-help in the field of adult education, Aker (as cited in Stanage, 1987) suggests that consideration of the hindrances to the self-education process, such as "fears, confusions, boredom, and failures" (p. 3) to the adult learner can be helpful.

Stanage proposes the experiences of the individual persons realizing these obstacles, could be effectively studied through phenomenology. Collins (1983/1995) specifically states "advocates of self-directed learning in adult education can gain theoretical support from further phenomenological investigations" (p. 260). Specifically on research in self-education, Stanage (1987) suggests "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).

The appropriateness of utilizing a phenomenological approach to study the theories of adult learning is perhaps best delineated by Thomas and Pollio (2002). They suggest meaning and understanding are an outcome of this approach and when "meanings are created between people, they tend to emerge in the interview" (p. 26). The phenomenological interview consists of situations that are reconstructions of experiences during ongoing dialogue between the researcher and participant. With my own personal interest in self-directed learning and the appropriateness of utilizing phenomenology to study adult learning theory and avenues involving self-educating activities established, it

seems logical to consider a research philosophy that seeks to get to the experience of those experts who have studied SDL.

Similar Studies

A process of inquiry using detailed interviews of scholars has been successfully utilized in at least seven studies from the adult education literature. In order to provide further context for the present investigation, each of these studies will be introduced.

Joseph W. Jacques (1973)

The earliest of these interview studies looked at the contributions of Robert Blakely, Paul Essert, Wilbur Hallenbeck, Andrew Hendrickson, Howard McClusky, and Ralph Spence (Jacques, 1973). This research had two purposes: (a) to portray the lives of several early scholars of doctoral programs in adult education and (b) to conduct an analysis on a piece of their lives as relevant to a philosophy for adult education. The seven themes evolving from the participants' interviews were that:

1. "Change is a constant" (p. 171);
2. "Values are relative" (p. 172);
3. "Man is a social as well as a biological creature" (p. 172);
4. "Living is concerned with being oneself and becoming oneself" (p. 173);
5. "Each individual is important" (p. 173);
6. "Democracy and learning are inextricably related" (p. 174); and

7. "Human affairs should be conducted with critical intelligence" (p. 175).

Jacques referred to these as belief themes, and considered them as the foundation for the philosophical principles of his participants. In addition, he interpreted nine goals for adult education from the data:

1. Encouraging one's propensity for coping with change;
2. Concluding one's values are a result of social needs;
3. Permitting adults to plan and follow through with learning activities in a collaborative arrangement;
4. A teacher is not a source of knowledge but a participant in the acquisition of knowledge;
5. Configuring social situations where adults can acquire skills to become more productive members of society;
6. Placing an emphasis on lifelong learning objectives and the maintenance of a democracy in our government;
7. Consideration for combining freedom with discipline and responsibility when it comes to becoming a member of society;
8. Individual achievement has to give considerations to emotional and creative expression; and
9. Teaching methodologies need to meet the needs of the individual adult learner.

Jacques classifies his study as an oral history, but I think it has uncovered something of a direct connection to my study in that when referring to his goals (3) and (4), above, he is

talking about self-directed learning requiring the assistance of others and that knowledge is co-constructed.

Ronald J. Hilton (1981)

Another study was a historical piece involving qualitative interviews, which looked at adult education during the depression years (Hilton, 1981). In addition to a review of historical documents and written surveys of 58 participants, this research also included in-depth interviews with the following figures from adult education during the 1930s: Harold Alford, Robert Buerschaper, Herbert Hunsaker, Malcolm Knowles, Ann Koch, Jack London, Howard McClusky, Paul Miller, Bonaro Overstreet, Leo Rosten, and Paul Sheats. The purpose of the study was to portray the atmosphere and essence of the educational activities of adults during the 1930s. A response rate from the written correspondence was 66 percent. Findings revealed that during the depression years:

1. The percentage of participation in adult education activities was at one of the highest rates in recent history;
2. The technological growth in the period positively affected both formal and informal learning;
3. There is no supporting evidence to argue for formal adult education programs or policies requiring any type of adult education;
4. Most adult educators at that time did not receive any formal training and “almost no one entered the field of adult education as a career of first choosing” (p. 277);

5. Adult education activities were separate from a formal public school setting or other credentialing requirement;
6. The terrific unemployment rate of the period enhanced the need for and practice of adult education, as a mechanism to improve the quality of life;
7. The lack of formal initiatives was not the source of success; it was the apparent outcome of the efforts of a few visionaries that reinforce the need to improve the strengths of professional organizations as a mechanism to improve the accessibility to information and individuals;
8. The students in the various programs appeared to be more interested in arts than improving their chances for employment; and
9. The learners were in control of the own learning.

Self-directed learning, per se, did not appear to be mentioned although with comments about “the urgency with which . . . [adults] pursued their learning projects” (p. 206), dialogue about the “drive for self-improvement” (p. 206), a reference to the results of Johnstone and Rivera’s (1965) seminal study, and the comments in item (9), above, there is a strong hinting of SDL influencing the outcomes with regard to how adults approached learning in the depression years.

D. R. Garrison and H. K. Baskett (1987)

In this study Garrison and Baskett (1987) conducted interviews with 17 prominent adult education scholars. The sample chosen was based upon the results of a content analysis of six mainstream journals and a subjective analysis taking into account other

contributions to scholarly work. Names of the participants were not disclosed. The object was to “gain insight into the ‘real-life world’ of the researcher, as perceived and experienced by the individual” (p. 90). The “purpose of the study was to examine how the most successful researchers in adult education actually conduct and publish their research” (p. 90). All interviews were conducted by telephone. From this research, the authors found they were able to:

1. Quantify the published work for each participant;
2. Specify the importance of graduate training in participant’s success conducting research;
3. Assess the value of participants networking through professional organizations;
4. Assess the outcomes of working collaboratively;
5. Determine whether participants had a mentor identify their sources for ideas;
6. Listen to their participant’s advice for getting published; and
7. Relate participants’ graduate school experiences as a motivator in the pursuit of manuscript submissions.

This is similar to my study because the participants were chosen from a content analysis of the literature and were prominent contributors to the field of adult education.

Patricia A. Maher and Colleagues

Three additional research efforts were undertaken that build on the same data. Because of this interrelationship, they are grouped together.

Patricia A. Maher and Denise Passmore (2000)

This research study looked at collecting and analyzing information from a selection of the most senior adult educators (Maher & Passmore, 2000). The 17 anonymous participants included in this study were chosen by their contributions to the literature and any leadership roles they may have held in the field. Data were collected in interviews, written surveys, and documents. The results included six themes:

1. Persons “that have shaped their careers” (p. 7);
2. “Their philosophical perspectives and . . . [whether] they changed” (p. 9);
3. “The changes . . . they [have] seen during their involvement in the field” (p. 12);
4. “Where . . . they feel the field is headed and why” (p. 14);
5. Their “entry into the field of adult education” (p. 16); and
6. “Retirement activities” (p. 17).

This study also disclosed members of the professoriate not entering into the field as a first career. No direct mention was made of SDL however some wording similarities included “helping others develop their own lifelong learning curriculum” (p. 20) and “individuals can choose and develop as they need . . . to live fully each day” (p. 20).

Denise Hensley, Patricia A. Maher, Denise Passmore, and Wayne B. James (2001)

Hensley et al. (2001) presented a continuation of the project started by Maher and Passmore (2000). This phase of the project looked at learning from the “experiences . . . [of long-time adult educators] to ensure the wisdom they have gained throughout their time spent in the field is not lost” (Hensley et al., 2001, p. 179). This iteration included 16

participants and followed up with telephone interviews from the information collected by Maher and Passmore (2000). The names of the participants were disclosed in this phase of the research; however none of the participants was quoted by name. The thematic structure and results were redundant to those disclosed by Maher and Passmore. It is interesting to note that when these findings were presented at *Adult Education Research Conference* (AERC) those listening, including myself, seemed to feel the results section should not have remained anonymous. The audience wanted to know who said what. Since my dissertation was in the early planning stages at the time of this presentation, it became apparent that I did not want to raise the same concern of not being able to quote by name. This issue, and the dilemma it poses, is described in Chapter 6.

Patricia A. Maher (2002)

The next study in this series, which is a continuation of the Maher and Colleagues research effort, is described in two ways: as a dissertation and as a presentation based on that dissertation. The dissertation (Maher, 2002a) evolved out of the earlier two studies and expanded the inquiry to include 52 participants. The names of the participants were divulged but themes and/or quotes were not connected to any specific participant's name. The purpose of Maher's dissertation was to "add to the understanding of the academic field of adult education by examining the reflective wisdom and personal perspectives of those senior members who had developed the foundational theory and practice" (p. 7). Maher's results summarized the experiences of the participants through dialogue on how they interacted with their major professors and other colleagues, the accomplishments of

their students, their disappointments, and their enjoyment out of being interviewed for this research. A family tree evolved from the research that included the interlinking of three generations of scholars. The participants' philosophical perspectives emerged into the following five themes:

1. "Beliefs in each adult learner as an individual" (p.237);
2. "Respect for adult learners as self-directing" (p.237);
3. "Involvement of the learner in goal-setting and program planning" (p.237);
4. "The joint construction of knowledge" (p.237); and
5. "A commitment to enhancing lifelong learning throughout society" (p.237).

It is interesting that SDL emerged as a theme. The concept of self-direction was mentioned several times throughout the dissertation mainly in reference to a learning style. Results of the Maher (2002b) dissertation were presented, by her, at the *American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)* Conference. This discussion was informative in providing an understanding of the lineage of her participants but no additional conclusions appeared to be offered over her dissertation. Three of the participants in this study were also included in mine.

L. Earle Reybold (2002)

A final, more recent, study is Reybold's (2002) presentation on faculty identity. This qualitative inquiry involved interviews with 17 anonymous adult education faculty and graduate students. The purpose of the study was to "describe the development of faculty identity in adult education" (p. 2). Five narrative themes emerged from the research:

1. “Intellectual seduction” (p. 3) signifies the practitioner being satisfied;
2. “I am diversity” (p. 3) summarizes the student’s feeling of diversity being of benefit to the student population, in general;
3. “Inside-out” (p. 3) describes the process of shifting from student to faculty status;
4. “Myths and legends” (p. 3) describe the unwritten laws associated with becoming a part of the professorate; and
5. “Tenure two-step” (p. 3) describes the experience of obtaining tenure.

These “conflict narrative[s]” (p. 6), as Reybold describes them, are best characterized by what she considers as a “balancing act” (p. 7) of becoming a tenured member of the professorate of adult education.

Summing-up

These seven studies are relevant to the current study in several ways. First, they are all qualitative in nature. Second, five of the studies (Hensley et al., 2001; Hilton, 1981; Jacques, 1973; Maher, 2002a; Maher and Passmore, 2000) were all done with purposeful samples of the professoriate. Third, in Garrison and Baskett’s (1987) study the sample was chosen from a content analysis of journal articles.

All of these studies but Reybold’s (2002) involved interviews with experienced scholars in the field of adult education. In addition, Hilton (1981) and Jacques’ (1973) dissertations involved interviews that disclosed the names of the participants as well as permitted quoting them by name. Hilton’s study as well as Jacques’ study included one of

the historical figures mentioned in this study: McClusky. In addition, Hilton interviewed Knowles. Had these individuals been alive and willing to participate, they could have served as participants in this study if they chose.

Significance of the Study

Wiersma (2000) suggests the themes developed from the presentation of a qualitative study, such as this, confirms that new meanings can evolve from the experiences of the participants. An analysis of participant interviews provided insight into: (a) how contributions to scholarship take place, (b) how the study of self-directed learning has evolved over time thereby providing a biographical project, (c) how scholars who have studied self-directed learning have come to understand and make sense of this area of study, and (d) how participants experience self-directed learning.

This dissertation builds on the traditions of the previous studies on long-time adult educators. With the conclusions for this study being arrived at from a co-construction process with each scholar, it becomes possible to understand the personal meaning placed upon self-directed learning by these individuals and the personal history of each professor as impacted by those having an influence on their scholarship over the years. In other words this collaborative process, with the participants, provided a method for developing a living literature review of sorts.

The theoretical framework presents a philosophy for why a hybrid study, in the qualitative tradition, is appropriate to solicit results from these experts, as they have come to know, understand, and experience this topic since the mid 1960s.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are:

1. Because the interviewer was the data collection instrument, the phenomena described may be tainted by the presuppositions of the interviewer (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997; Valle, King, & Halling, 1989).
2. The findings of the research rest on the experiences of the participants interviewed from a purposeful sample and have no inferential value to a larger population (Creswell, 1994).
3. One interview was conducted by telephone, thereby eliminating any insights that might be gained from any use of facial expression or physical posture to guide the tone of the dialogue during the data collection.
4. The selection of participants was subject to the limitations of a citation analysis and results can be biased primarily because of the volume of literature readily available to the researcher, the literature in vogue at the time of manuscript submission, or self-citing (Garfield, 1972; Smith, 1981).

An additional limitation that occurred during this dissertation was that the study was confined to those living scholars cited the most times in 18 mainstream periodicals

(Donaghy et al., 2002). The first seven scholars were chosen, in numerical order, from the list of citations of living professors. An eighth participant, who ranked 21st, was recommended to participate in this study by my dissertation advisor (R.G. Brockett, personal communication, December 13, 2002). This scholar had an early influence on Brockett's research in self-directed learning. During the selection of participants the scope of the study was narrowed to include interviews with only those scholars who have firsthand knowledge of the evolution of SDL and who have contributed to the literature base through research, publishing, and directing dissertations.

Definitions

The following 16 definitions will be helpful in understanding the terminology used throughout this study:

1. Descriptive research. This is a widely diverse concept covering several types or forms of inquiry that explains the meaning of social phenomena, with as little disruption as possible to the natural environment or setting (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam, the product of qualitative study is rich description.
2. Descriptive categories. These evolve from the content of the interviews and are recurring patterns of meaning (Merriam, 1998).
3. Essential structural element. According to van Kaam (as cited in Thomas & Pollio, 2002), "an 'essential structural element' must be present in narratives of 50% of the participants to be considered 'essential'" (p. 37).

4. **Figural.** The term figural evolves from Gestalt psychology and involves the aspect of perceptual experience that emerges against a “ground that serves to delineate its specific experiential form” (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 13) and is synonymous with a theme in phenomenological research. According to Pollio et al., “all objects of experience are experienced only in relation to some less clear part of the total situation serving to situate the focal object” (p. 13). Valle (1978) suggests it has no meaning unless viewed against a ground. Rubin (as cited in Köhler, 1947/1975) suggest the figure appears as a shape which has a solid quality. The figural component, according to Köhler, seems to protrude in space.
5. **Global themes.** Thomas and Pollio (2002) define “global themes [as those] observed across [protocols, which must be annotated as a mechanism for demonstrating] experimental similarity” (p. 37) from one situation to another.
6. **Ground.** Pollio et al. (1997) suggest the ground is what the figural aspect is viewed against to make it stand out. Another way to think about it is that it is the background or context. Valle (1978) suggests the ground has no meaning without a figural component. Köhler (1947/1975) suggests without a background the figural component remains shapeless.
7. **Hermeneutic interpretation.** The process of seeking commonality across interviews is defined as hermeneutic interpretation (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Bleicher (as cited in Pollio et al., 1997) regards the hermeneutic process or circle as the “continuous process of relating of a part of the text to the whole of the text” (p. 49). The goal of hermeneutic interpretation is “to provide an overall

understanding of the text; here, the focus is on meaning rather than implementing a given set of methodological procedures” (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 37).

8. Interpretive research. The process or lived experience with understanding or meaning gained through inductive reasoning is defined as interpretive research (Merriam, 1998).
9. Interview guide. An outline of the question or questions to ask the participants is known as the interview guide.
10. Mini-case study. A mini-case study is synonymous with a case study and is defined by Merriam (1998) as a descriptive analysis of a single unit or “bounded phenomenon such as a . . . person” (p. xiii), which can be combined with other methods.
11. Phenomenology. This is a “rigorous description of human life as it is lived” (p. 5). It is the “study of essences” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. vii). According to Pollio et al. (1997), the goal of phenomenology is to “describe phenomena as they are lived” (p. 46). It is “particular (idiographic) [in] nature” (p. 40).
12. Protocol. The text or transcript that is collected from a phenomenological interview process is defined as the protocol (Polkinghorne, 1989).
13. Self-directed learning. The term self-directed learning, within the literature of adult education, is defined in many different ways. My working definition for SDL is: A self-directed learner is often seen as “one who takes responsibility for his or her own learning” (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991, p. iii). Brockett and

Hiemstra emphasize that SDL “is not a fad; rather . . . [it is] a way of life for adults” (p. 1). These two authors also suggest a distinction between the instructional methodology of the teaching/learning transaction and the psychological construct of the learner.

14. Self-direction. For purposes of this dissertation, the term self-direction will be used synonymously with the term self-directed learning. The process of self-direction often involves another person (for example is collaborative). Knowles (1975), one of the founding leaders of SDL, suggests the role of the mediator in adult learning is one of facilitator, rather than teacher. He posits the facilitator no longer fills the role of the expert but rather becomes a co-learner with the student.
15. Thematic structure. The thematic structure grows from the global themes (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). It is the “commonality running through the many diverse appearances of the phenomenon” (Valle et al., 1989, p. 14) and often appears as a diagram. It may also be considered to disclose the nature of the phenomena in meaning. Sometimes it is synonymous with essence or form and has the same meaning when perceived in time across other situations.
16. Thematizing. This is the process of identifying commonalities across interviews (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). These authors suggest a theme is a pattern of description that repeatedly occurs as an aspect of a participant’s description.

Organization of the Study

This research study is arranged in six chapters. In Chapter 1, an introduction to the study has been presented. The contents included the context for the study, the problem statement, purpose, research questions, theoretical/conceptual framework, discussion of similar studies, significance of the study, limitations, and definitions. Chapter 2 presents the method in detail, including the research design, setting for the study, data collection procedure, and techniques for data analyses. Chapter 3 contains the participant profiles. The findings from any additional documentation provided by participants are presented here. Similarly, in Chapter 4, the stories of the participants are presented through the results of the content analysis and summarized in descriptive categories. Numerous quotations are used to tell each participant's story. Chapter 5 presents the experience of the experts participating in the research. A thematic structure is analyzed using quotations from the participants' protocols. The episodes contained in each transcript are grouped together and examples given of each. Chapter 6 presents the discussion and conclusions of the study. Implications for research and practice emerged while creating a vision for the future of this line of study. My personal reflections on this dissertation have also been included due to the unique nature of this study presenting personal stories that divulge quotes, by name, of the participants.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the design and procedure used in this study. To accomplish this objective, the chapter will be presented in four parts: (a) research design, (b) a rationale for the specific choice of method, (c) discussion concerning the appropriateness of the method for addressing the research questions, and (d) a description of the detailed method utilized for collecting and analyzing data.

Research Design

For this dissertation the method chosen was a personal interview, in the qualitative tradition. This study's design and method for data collection were informed by phenomenology and the resulting data were analyzed based upon hermeneutic interpretation. Each of the participants in this study was chosen from a purposeful sample. Potential participants were identified from a rank order list of those scholars who had the greatest number of citations over the past two decades in mainstream periodicals where the literature of self-directed learning was being published (Donaghy et al., 2002). Eight participants were identified from the citation analysis results and these scholars were deemed the group of experts for purposes of this investigation. All participants consented to be quoted by name. The technique of quoting the scholars provides a unique

opportunity to say who said what and when about this area of study (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). This study's data, which are rich in nature, present an opportunity to look at the participants' contributions to scholarship and tell their personal stories about how they came to know and understand this topic over the years.

Rationale for the Method

When designing a research study, the process typically involves shaping an inquiry around a problem, defining the sample to be studied, and selecting a method to be utilized for data acquisition and analysis (Merriam, 2002). As suggested from the problem statement, little study has been conducted over the years to define the development of scholarship on self-directed learning. According to Merriam (2002) and Lofland (1971), a qualitative methodology is most appropriate to study a problem of this nature.

The research questions for this study focus on (a) how the study of self-directed learning has evolved over time; (b) how the scholars who have studied self-directed learning have come to understand and make sense of this area of study; and (c) how these scholars experience self-directed learning. The first two research questions are best addressed by basic, interpretive, qualitative research; the third question is satisfied by phenomenological analysis. The findings and their implication for each research question, as outlined above, will be presented in Chapter 6. Regarding the phenomenological analysis, all three research questions are impacted by the results presented in Chapter 5 and therefore each of the questions are also discussed in Chapter 5.

Appropriateness of the Phenomenological Method

Pollio et al. (1997) posited the benefits of a phenomenological approach are rooted in experience and consciousness as defined from humanistic psychology. Their paradigm also suggests that inspiration is derived from the “psychology of perception known as Gestalt” (p. 4). This overview of the philosophical grounding of phenomenology will include a brief discussion of the meaning of the fundamental components: experience, consciousness, and hermeneutic interpretation.

Experience

This connection of phenomenology to learning in adulthood is captured well by MacKeracher (1996), in her research, wherein “the activity of learning stems from a need to make sense of experience” (p. 4) and through reference to human beings as “meaning making organisms” (p. 4). When a research question suggests the desire to understand the meaning of a phenomenon, by those who have experienced it, a qualitative approach expressed through phenomenology, is the best approach (Thomas & Pollio, 2002).

The connection of experience to learning is most prominent in Dewey’s (1938/1979) short text on the philosophy of education in which he espouses “there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (p. 20). Why should phenomenology be one of the methods of choice when a researcher interested in experience? Jarvis (1987) notes that phenomenology has much to provide to the thoughtfulness of the adult learning process. Furthermore, he claims, “all learning begins

with experience” (p. 16). Through research, Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Gergen & Gergen, 2000) posit “qualitative methods are more faithful to the social world than quantitative ones and that individual human experiences are important” (p. 1027) to study. Some scholars suggest that although phenomenological research sometimes seems to be descriptive and qualitative its real focus is different, in that it is on “the subject’s experienced meaning instead of on descriptions of their overt actions or behavior” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 44). Ihde (1986) presents the hypothesis that “phenomenology is an examination of experience that deals with and is limited by whatever falls within the correlation of experienced-experiencing” (pp. 53-54). Most importantly, in the literature of adult education, the connection to experience is perhaps most prominent in Lindeman’s (1926/1961) early work wherein he states that the “highest value in adult education is the learner’s experience . . . [,] attractions of experience increase as we grow older . . . [, and] experience is the adult learner’s living textbook” (pp. 6-7).

Thomas and Pollio (2002) refer to the tradition of American phenomenology as one with “lived experiences within the context of culture” (p. 11). Phenomenology, according to Merleau-Ponty (1952-1960/2002a) is a “universal reflection investigation not only in thought, but on lived experience” (p. 15). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) presupposes phenomenology involves a sense where various experiences mesh like gear teeth.

Husserl (1913/1982), in his scholarly writing, introduced the concept of “phenomenological reduction” (p. xix) as a “psychological experience” (p. xix). This ability to have vivid recall, as Husserl might be suggesting when linked with space and time, helps connect some of the key themes which emerge in phenomenological research.

In a more recent translation of *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, Husserl (1907/1999) talks about the acquisition of knowledge. His direct connection back to experience, through the world is captured from the idea of:

to things given us. . . . [with] a thing stands before us. . . . in the midst of other things, both living and lifeless,. . . . it stands before us in the midst of a world, part of which is perceived . . . part of which is given in connection with memory . . . (p. 15)

Consciousness

Thomas and Pollio (2002) suggest the existential grounding for human existence is concerned with the topics of “others, time, body, and world” (p. 4). The search in phenomenology is “for those processes of consciousness that give the objects that appear in awareness meaning, clarity, and discrimination” (p. 51). A suggestion of Pollio et al. (1997) is that meaning is made of the participant’s past through the shaping of the present context.

An important connection between adult learning theory and phenomenology also lies in its cognitive component, which considers the schemas or prior knowledge and experiences of the learner (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Husserl (as cited in Gubrium & Holstein, 2000) would suggest that the “structures of consciousness . . . make it possible to apprehend an empirical world” (p. 488).

James (1890/1952) referred to the importance of perception in his explanation of time, space, things, and reality. As an example, in his treatise on time, research is offered to support the notion that the past is constructed from the present. Furthermore Mill (as

cited in James) suggests, “we would be wholly incapable of acquiring experience” (p. 396) without a stream of consciousness. Mill’s supposition is that consciousness is not a series of event images; it is mixed with the present. James’ hypothesis is “the knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present . . .” (p. 397). Furthermore, in his chapter on things, James suggests that consciousness and perception are one in the same. Meanwhile, Jarvis hypothesizes that “it is possible to experience the world through a number of different senses” (1987, p. 17). Mallin (as cited in Jarvis) suggests that “people relate to the world in a combination of the cognitive, the perceptual, the affective, and the practical” (p. 17). An interesting reflection is discussed on the two ends of intentionality which Zaner (as cited in Valle et al., 1989) presents as the noetic, for example “the subjective, the perceiving . . . [for instance] the seeing-of-tree” (p. 11) and the noematic, for example “the objective, the perceived . . . [for instance] the tree-as-seen” (p. 11). Closure on consciousness can be made through Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) as he offers the connection to other terminology of learning such as “consciousness . . . [cannot be] placed outside of being” (p. 125).

Hermeneutic Interpretation

Regarding the methodology utilized in an analysis of protocols, Moran (as cited in Thomas & Pollio, 2002) saw Husserl’s realm of phenomenology as consciousness utilizing the description of human phenomena. In contrast, Benner and Diekelmann (as cited in

Thomas & Pollio, 2002) saw Heidegger's process as hermeneutic or interpretive in nature. For a definition of hermeneutic interpretation, refer to Chapter 1.

It appears that researchers do not always clarify which approach is being followed and on occasion may chose to combine both the descriptive and interpretive paradigms (Thomas & Pollio). The descriptive analysis offers "immaculate phenomenological description" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p. 24) whereas interpretation "builds abstractions . . . from the data on" (p. 24) the researcher's viewpoint.

A key objective of Merleau-Ponty's (as cited by Thomas & Pollio, 2002) approach is to "describe human experience on its own terms" (p. 13). One consequence of this is that "person and world co-construct one another" (p. 14). The Heideggerian (as cited by Thomas & Pollio, 2002) result of this process is referred to as *Dasein* (being in the world). From his lecture notes from the late 1950s, Merleau-Ponty (1952-1960/2002b) speaks of the importance of language. He posits language as "verflochten" (p. 7) (interwoven) with our world and humanity. "Language is borne by our relation to the world and to others, and language also bears and makes our relation to the world and others" (p. 7). This "language [according to Merleau-Ponty] makes . . . meaning available for everyone" (p. 7). Often mentioned in the literature is Weber's (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) emphasis on the "verstehen, interpretive understanding of human interaction" (p. 23). Heidegger (as cited in Linge, 1997) offers a suggestion that hermeneutics no longer refers to the methodology of interpretation "but rather to the process of interpretation that is an essential characteristic of *Dasein*" (p. xlv).

Of significance is Heidegger's (1926/1962) rationale for his influential work, *Being and Time*, as working "out the question of the meaning of *Being* and to do so concretely. Our provisional aim is the Interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding of *Being*" (p. 1). His work also includes the often mentioned *Dasein*, which Heidegger defines as the "entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, . . . '*Dasein*'" (p. 27).

Research Procedure

The purpose of this section is to describe the procedure that was used in this study. To apply a specific methodology, it is sometimes helpful to have a road map of steps to facilitate the applicability of the philosophy underlying the approach followed for the research. This section provides that road map or guidance. The participants are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, with a presentation of the rationale for choosing each of them. Therefore a detailed discussion of the participants is not presented at the beginning of this section.

Three analyses were conducted for this dissertation: (a) a sequence of mini-case studies, (b) the development of descriptive data categories, and (c) the description of thematic experience. Results for each area are presented in the next three chapters.

Mini-Case Study

This part of the procedure deals with results presented in Chapter 3 and involves collecting background information on each participant. Data for this phase of the study were obtained from Web sites, information requested from each participant during the sharing of the thematic structure (Appendix A), and a citation analysis of expert researchers in SDL (Donaghy et al., 2002). According to Merriam (1998) there is no single best method to follow for data collection and analysis. The objective for this part of the study, however, was to understand the group being studied (Becker as cited in Merriam, 1998). The data collected were as follows: a dissertation abstract, the names of their committee members, the number of dissertations directed, the number of dissertations directed dealing with some aspect of self-direction, the portion of their curriculum vitae dealing with publications, information dealing with awards in the field of adult education available from public Web sites, and other personal correspondence from each participant.

For reporting of data collected in the mini-case study, there was no analysis performed, per se. Information obtained is presented in a logical fashion, breaking it down according to each participant's individual contribution to the scholarship of self-directed learning. In a subsequent section, a summary is provided for the group's accomplishment in total.

Since the intent of this portion of the study was to share these results using each participant's name, all participants were asked to agree to a release of their identity (Appendix B). In addition to this permission, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and my

committee members at The University of Tennessee required me to contact each participant a second time (Appendix C) to share the drafts of the information contained in Chapter 3. This was accomplished on September 24, 2004. Each of the eight participants responded; some added additional information to their story. Each person had to confirm that they consented to the contents of Chapter 3 and the IRB at The University of Tennessee accepted an e-mail as documentation of correspondence. It is important to note that this study, in total, did not unfold initially in the order it is presented in this chapter. The idea for the mini-case study was derived from a review of the rich data obtained from the experiential results. So in some respects, it was to be additional to the data set.

Descriptive Categories

This part of the procedure deals with the results presented in Chapter 4. The best way to describe this portion of the study is that I have followed a “basic or generic qualitative” (Merriam, 1998, p. 11) research procedure. One might also argue that this part is a “case history” (p. 32) and traces the past of each participant. Results in Chapter 4 are presented in narrative form.

The idea for exploring this aspect of the data evolved from the results of the pilot study described in the next section. As data were collected in the initial interviews it became clear that each participant was including a personal history shared through individual stories about their personal experience with self-directed learning. The results reported in Chapter 4 are a by-product of the data collected during these interviews. Conceptually, the identification of the descriptive categories of data was an outgrowth of

the content analysis completed during an early phase of developing the thematic structure. The content analysis essentially required a second and separate review of the transcripts from the hermeneutic interpretation explained in the next section. In essence, the data were analyzed twice.

Unique items to this part of the procedure are two questions asked of the participants. These were incorporated into the interview guide to solicit the participants' thoughts on the evolution of SDL and their view on the future of self-direction. Each participant was asked "how has your thinking on self-direction evolved over time" and "could you describe your future vision for self-directed learning?" All of the questions are described in the interview guide, contained in the next section. Other than discussion about participant feedback, described later in this same section, no other data were collected.

The data analysis phase for this qualitative chapter followed Spradley's (as cited in Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) suggestion to utilize elaborate worksheets and diagrams to help with the visualization of patterns. A coding process involved multiple categories of data, and was refined in multiple steps or iterations (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The first step involved doing a content analysis (Daniels, 1997; Fields, 1988; Giorgi, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that to do this, data are often categorized and conceptualized in a "cognitive map and effects matrix" (p. 101). These two principles, such as a map (e.g., handwritten list of data categories for each transcript) and matrix (e.g., spreadsheet to tabulate results of each participant's map, for all transcripts on one sheet of paper), were utilized as an initial means of developing an overall list of descriptive

categories. In this phase, the content analysis was a byproduct of the larger process since it was completed after the pilot phase data were analyzed by a phenomenological, interpretive research group. This group process is explained in the next section. The only descriptive categories that were used in Chapter 4, were those found in all eight of the transcripts.

Once descriptive categories were identified, transcripts were reviewed to identify each time a participant talked about one or another category during the interview. Multiple quotations were extracted for each scholar to give examples for each category. These examples were grouped by category and by participant. With the use of transitional phrases, a coherent story was developed that defined how each participant came to know and understand self-directed learning.

To summarize most findings for Chapter 6, an interpretive process had to be followed to determine what each person was saying. Merriam (1998) refers to this part as *understanding the meaning*. Regarding the future of SDL, key areas for each participant were grouped together for her or his summary. Examples of this included: how they talked about change, future research agenda, and the implications of technology. In each narrative, items such as scholars who influenced the participants were discussed. When the group spoke of their personal theories of learning, the ways in which the participants made meaning could be discerned. In addition, participants spoke of the importance of collaborative relationships.

Similar to the mini-case study, this portion of the study also produced results on the basis of each participant's name. Therefore, each participant was asked to sign a release of

their identity (Appendix B). As before, the IRB and my committee members also required me to contact each participant a second time (Appendix C) to share the drafts of the information contained in Chapter 4. This was accomplished on September 24, 2004, at the same time as information was shared for Chapter 3 results. Each of the eight participants responded and gave approval for the use of their name in Chapter 4. Upon review, several participants wanted to add information they felt was important to their personal history. This step, though important, added new data to the overall effort. When these new data were received, they had to be reanalyzed to determine if they changed any of my results.

I believe the reason the participants, in several cases, were compelled to request changes was because they could relate better to the narrative provided to them (see Appendix C) rather than when only the abstract portion of the thematic structure was shared (see Appendix A). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest this sharing of feedback be referred to as *formative*. Their conclusion is that qualitative research be considered as an iterative process with participants and that this process include consideration and discussion of any implications for changes to the findings prior to finalizing the report. Merriam (1998) proposes one of the steps to ensure validity is to take data and any preliminary interpretation back to the participants and ask them if the results are honest. Researchers suggest this sharing of results with participants is an ethical responsibility (Stake as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is categorized as a *right to know*. Miles and Huberman (1994) propose an ever increasing trend of this collaborative discussion of findings is becoming a “precondition for access” (p. 275). This process is not without bias, and Miles and Huberman warn that it can change the perspective of the participant. These

authors suggest getting feedback is a crucial step that must be planned for in a study's design. The researcher must also expect participant disagreement during this step.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) also suggest that feedback can be considered *summative* and includes sharing the final report. This method has "traditionally been the most common type" (p. 218) of follow-up. It is the plan of this research effort to provide each participant with a copy of this dissertation. Similar to Miles and Huberman's (1994) comments in the above paragraph, Bogdan and Biklen consider feedback to be "an essential methodological concern" (p 218).

The Experience

The phenomenological results or what is known as the participants' experience with the study of self-directed learning is presented in the last chapter discussing results. Even though the procedure is organized and results are reported as if the phenomenological part is last in the sequence of events, it is important that the research design be kept in mind. This was a qualitative study wherein the conceptualization, data collection, and data analysis were informed by phenomenology and based upon hermeneutic interpretation.

Each of the steps outlined in this discussion is presented in the order a phenomenological study unfolds. The procedure utilized for a phenomenological method is presented in three sections: (a) steps, (b) quality of data, and (c) final thoughts (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). The procedure, when taken in the suggested order, never starts with discussion about the participants; it starts with the question or phenomenon one wishes to know something more about.

Steps

The procedural steps followed for this part of the study are:

The question. As the research project took shape, the initial step was to choose a well thought out question. According to Thomas and Pollio (2002), an appropriate inquiry or question “will enable respondents to talk about something they know and are willing to discuss” (p. 24). Because of my own learning style, I had a vested interest in the question of wanting to know how others experience self-directed learning, and it was a topic area that I wanted to know something more about. I wanted those knowledgeable in the study of SDL to share their experiences with me.

Interview guide. It is suggested to avoid *why* questions and concentrate on *what* questions when planning the question for a phenomenological study (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). The interview guide is an outline of the question or questions to ask participants. The opening question for the participant can be similar to: Think of some times when you remember learning something. Could you describe in however much detail you wish “what you were aware of during that experience?” Or, “what was it like for you?” The interview guide for this study consisted of four questions, as follows:

1. Could you describe the experiences that led you to first get involved with the study of self-directed learning?

2. Could you describe your experiences with self-directed learning over the years?

You might include what you see as trends, current issues, your perspectives, and your frustrations.

3. How has your thinking on self-direction evolved over time?

4. Could you describe your future vision for self-directed learning?

During the asking of questions, the participant is permitted to take the discussion in any direction she or he wishes to. Therefore, in questions such as the fourth one, the participant was not asked to talk about SDL as a research topic or as a way of learning. In addition, it was not the scope of this study to differentiate the future viability of self-direction as an alternative learning style from it as a field of study for research effort.

Bracketing. The bracketing process, first introduced by Husserl (as cited in Thomas & Pollio, 2002), “is an intellectual activity in which one tries to put aside theories, knowledge, and assumptions about a phenomenon” (p. 33). Specifically, on February 1, 2002, a colleague who was experienced in phenomenological research, interviewed me with the same interview guide to be utilized with the participants (Thomas & Pollio). Because the phenomena described are as the participants have lived them any presuppositions that the interviewer may have must be set aside (Pollio et al., 1997; Valle et al., 1989). These assumptions on the part of the interviewer are reconciled through the application of a “bracketing interview” (Pollio et al., p. 48).

My own personal experience was to use the bracketing interview to debug the recording equipment and gain first hand knowledge of other factors that can influence the

collection of quality data. The tape recorder utilized for the bracketing interview had to be exchanged for one of higher quality. Examples of distractions during my bracketing interview were unexpected background noise, an observer disrupting the interview through her presence, not planning for the emotion that can inter into the dialogue, not having a glass of water handy for the participant and interviewer, and being interrupted by someone else, for example a vacant classroom that you thought would be available for the time required, which was not.

Human subjects review board. Prior to beginning the next step in the study I obtained the approval of the Human Subjects Committee of the Institution Review Board (IRB) at The University of Tennessee, to collect data on human subjects (see Appendix D). Permission was granted to proceed on February 6, 2002.

Pilot study. In a qualitative study, some researchers such as Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the last phase of defining the problem to be studied is to conduct a few initial interviews. “This acid test of paying attention to respondents’ concerns is the key to where the focus of a research project should be” (p. 38). During questioning in the pilot study phase, should the participant have difficulty describing her or his experience(s) the wording of the question could be modified. For this study four interviews were conducted during the pilot phase. My committee suggested expanding the quantity to four due to the availability of participants at conferences. The data were collected from February 7 through June 24, 2002. None of the questions utilized in the interview guide

required rewording after this trial period. Data were collected from three participants in person. Two were conducted in person at an international conference in Florida and one at a conference in North Carolina. The fourth interview was obtained by telephone, at the participant's request.

The sample. Participants were selected on the basis of having “experienced the phenomenon and . . . [a] willingness to talk about that experience” (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 30). This “purposeful” sample, as it is often referred to in the literature, simply means participants who satisfy these criteria (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). The list of authors to be considered for this study was modified from the outcome of a citation analysis of ranking obtained in the Donaghy et al. (2002) effort by a subjective modification of the ranking by R. G. Brockett (personal communication, December 13, 2002). In this situation, Brockett suggested that one participant who was lower on the list than some other participants should be included. The rationale for the choice of this participant is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Another appropriate concern is sample size. Generally a range of 6 to 12 participants is considered adequate (Morse and Ray, as cited in Thomas & Pollio, 2002). When redundancy occurs in the theme structure, according to Thomas and Pollio, the researcher may decide how many additional participants to consider, if any. Saturation or redundancy occurred in this study after approximately the fifth interview.

Participants were invited to be a part of this study through e-mail (Appendix E). The telephone was only used to get directions to a participant's home or to verify the time of

an appointment the night before. The sites for data collection were conference centers, hotels, university offices, and the participants' private residences. As mentioned above, data collection required travel to interview the participants. To make the travel costs associated with each interview reasonable, an effort was made to conduct interviews during other planned travels, such as professional conferences. The final phase involved interviews in Tennessee, Ontario, and New York State. The procedure, in other than the pilot phase, consisted of interviews in person rather than by telephone or through written correspondence. Each interview took from one to one and one half hours.

The interview. The interview is the important step whereby I asked "someone to help . . . [me] understand his or her first-person world" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 25) and is the gist of the process. The opening question, as it is referred to, is "worded to allow for a broad range of descriptive responses from each participant" (p. 32). The interpretive research group (IRG) at The University of Tennessee is an integral part of the process. Since the wording of the question is not a task that should be taken lightly, a collaborative process can be invaluable (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). If no group is available, a discussion should be considered with other experienced interviewers with at least one pilot interview undertaken (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). Since a collaborative research group was utilized, a consultant (another experienced interviewer) was not required. The specific suggestions for the wording were covered in the interview guide, described above.

In addition to planning the initial question, consideration for follow up inquiry should be given. The interviewer is the "research tool" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 26) or

instrument (McCracken, 1988). I, as the interviewer had to carefully “track the words of the participant, ensuring that each experience . . . [was] discussed in detail and seeking clarification for any statement not fully understood” (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 26). An appropriate interview technique is to regularly ask the participant to say something more about a particular phenomenon in order to “help the participant focus on unfolding themes and details” (p. 26). I also found it necessary to summarize from time to time during the interview and then ask the participant if “there is anything more they would like to say” (p. 26). This technique was utilized when I sensed that the participant had completed their dialogue. On the other hand, Thomas and Pollio suggest if the participant *did not mention something, I should not ask her or him to say anything about that*. The study’s verification, or additional validity check, was also obtained through this rephrasing of the questions in the protocol to ensure participant agreement during the data collection phase. As the participant is asked to stay with the lived experience and my successive interpretation attempted to remain at that same level of description, a reflective interpretative process helped me arrive at a meaningful understanding of each story.

Pollio et al. (1997) suggest that phenomenology “employs dialogue as its major method of inquiry” (p. vii). This dialogue “describe[s] the first person world of the individuals serving as the co-participants in the research” (p. 343). A preferred method for the data collection process is an extended interview utilizing open-ended questions with each of the participants (McCracken, 1988). An extended, personal interview was utilized as the primary data collection method in this study. Written responses can also be solicited from participants for certain types of studies, when a larger sample size might be desirable

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The written responses utilized for this research effort involved each participant being asked to furnish supplemental information with the mailing of their interview feedback described in Appendix A. The study's verification was supplemented by sharing the typed transcripts and thematization resulting from the review of the protocols with each participant. Each participant's interview was audiotaped and field notes prepared, while each participant's protocol was transcribed from the recording (McCracken, 1988). Each audiotape underwent a final quality audit by me to ensure that the typed transcript precisely matched the tape (McCracken, 1988).

Data analysis. The interpretive research group, as mentioned above, plays a crucial role in the analysis of data both for the bracketing interview (described in a previous section) as well as for the actual protocol (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). The group of 15 to 20 researchers at The University of Tennessee analyzed the themes in a collaborative process. Some, such as Thomas and Pollio, might call this process "respectful but critical" (p. 34). Proposed themes from the protocols are challenged in the group forum until consensus is reached on the themes and "supported by text" (p. 34). Since the possibility existed for me to be consumed by the time involved in digesting hundreds of pages of transcripts, the research group was helpful in sustaining a rigorous, phenomenological approach and helped share the burden of data analysis. The group also assists in acting as a support mechanism for the researcher. This group was also utilized to conduct textual interpretation (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio as cited in Pollio et al., 1997). The collaborative process functions in a "critical, rather than consensual capacity. . . .

[and puts] group members . . . in a position to notice a theoretical supposition not [easily] recognized by the primary interpreter(s)” (p. 49). This “group process provides a public test of whether an interpretation is directly supported by the text” (p. 49). Each IRG member was asked to sign a pledge of confidentiality (see Appendix F) during this phase.

The basic procedure for data analysis requires an “interaction between an outside observer and the person whose language is of interest” (Pollio et al., 1997, p. 341). This mode of inquiry, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), is designed to facilitate an “understanding [of the participant’s] . . . point of view” (p. 24). Phenomenologists such as Pollio et al. (1997) further reinforce the importance of researcher-participant interaction whereby full meaning is only attained on the basis of an engagement between the two. This concept of the co-construction of knowledge binds the researcher and participant together (Mallory, 2001). According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the knowledge created is socially constructed.

Thematization. The thematization process for this dissertation is hermeneutic in nature (Gadamer, 1966/1997; Ihde, 1986) with the resulting interpretation governed by an “everyday” understanding from the perspective of the investigator. Thematizing, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), is the conceptualization of ideas and patterns used to organize the results. Reviewing data and relating them to the entire analysis is a continuous iterative cycle in which there are two parts (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). One phase consists of the research group developing a thematic description. In this procedure, the entire transcript is read aloud by a group member acting as the researcher and a second

acting as the participant. This provided for a “part-to-whole” (p. 35) connection that might be classified as “meaning units” (p. 35). The first four protocols, or in this study the transcripts, were analyzed within the group. During a second phase, the remainder was reviewed by me, alone. I summarized all of the themes and presented my themes to the group for consensus.

For this study, the evolution of the final thematic structure took several iterations. The process began with the research group’s input into the first four protocols. This group phase started on June 5, 2002 and ended on March 13, 2003. The content analysis phase, or individual phase, for thematization began on September 29, 2003 and ended on February 18, 2004. The thematic structure was resolved on May 14, 2004, and was summarized for the IRG on September 1, 2004. Giorgi (1985) suggests in this last step or phase the “meaning units” (p. 11) be broken down into what is manageable. These manageable chunks of each protocol might be called episodes, according to H. R. Pollio (personal communication, February 18, 2004). Once the meaning units are identified and the essential elements identified (that which stands out in each to the researcher) in each episode, a transformational process can occur wherein the synthesis takes place resulting in a “consistent statement” (p. 10) of the experience.

Participant feedback. A final step in the analysis includes the presentation of findings to participants (Thomas & Pollio, 2002). During this phase, at the conclusion of the thematization session, participants were mailed their protocol and emergent themes. Each participant was offered the return of their audiotapes. The participant was generally not

allowed to make changes but was permitted to offer observations on and clarification of themes emerging from their transcripts. In general, each completed transcript was returned to the participant with a summary of the themes, both from the participant's individual protocol and the global themes (Thomas & Pollio). Where the participant disagreed, the participant was allowed to suggest an alternative wording or interpretation. Occasionally the disagreement remained and consideration was given to discarding a portion of the protocol as "theoretically unimportant" (Sandelowski, as cited in Thomas & Pollio, p. 38). The summary was mailed to each participant on May 18, 2004 (see Appendix A).

Quality of Data

The rigor of phenomenological research justifies a few thoughts on the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the results (McCracken, 1988). "Reliability is most often defined in terms of consistency of research findings" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 39). Even though "no two interviews will ever be the same" (p. 39), the "issue of reliability also relates to whether a specific thematic structure would replicate if a new study were to be done" (p. 40) on a similar topic. Some such as Dapkus (as cited in Thomas & Pollio) might propose some type of inter-rater reliability through use of independent coders. Thomas and Pollio propose that most phenomenological researchers think in non-quantitative terms when it comes to reliability and consider the study and "its relevance and value in bringing about new insights regarding the phenomenon being studied" (p. 40). Even though not specifically mentioned by Thomas and Pollio, I think that the use of the

research group was an alternative to the use of an independent raters' review of the protocols.

Validity means "whether or not one has investigated what one wished to investigate" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 40). Polkinghorne (as cited in Thomas & Pollio) posits, "validity resides in the researcher's confidence in the meaning proposed" (p. 41). Thomas and Pollio suggest this issue is one in which there is evidence that the resultant description is supported by the text of the protocol. The validation and reliability processes in a phenomenological study require certain assumptions. Validity according to Pollio et al. (1997) is assumed for phenomenological research when "a reader, adopting a world view articulated by the researcher, would be able to see textual evidence supporting the interpretation" (p. 53). This answers the question, "is there convincing evidence for believing that the thematic description affords insight into the experiential world of the participants" (p. 53)?

Similar to reliability and validity, generalizability in phenomenological research takes on a different meaning than in quantitative research. There is no statistical inference made. "If a description rings true . . . [to each reader] who derives insight from the results of a phenomenological study . . . [it] may be thought to extend its generalizability" (Thomas & Pollio, 2002, p. 42). Also, it is important to keep in mind that a goal of inviting more than one participant to join in "is to introduce variations" (p. 41) in the analyses of narratives.

When data are analyzed and the written process takes place, Polkinghorne (1989) suggests the goal of phenomenological research "is to produce clear and accurate descriptions of a particular aspect of human experience" (p. 44). During the write-up

phase, he believes it is important that findings must be presented in a narrative “geared to the background and vocabulary of the audience” (p. 56). This study is unique, not unlike most qualitative studies, and therefore it is appropriate to offer some concluding thoughts on why the results are required in three ways.

Final Thoughts

Regarding final thoughts on this chapter I have included in the rationale, why the research has been designed with a hybrid procedure. The end result of this mixed methodology is that the research questions are more thoroughly answered than if just a phenomenological procedure were followed. In regard to the literature reviewed for a study of this type, Thomas and Pollio (2002) suggest it should not always evolve out of data analysis. It is proposed by these authors that a thorough review of the literature be made to determine “what is already known, and not yet known, about a phenomenon” (p. 46). The literature reviewed for this study assisted in establishing the theoretical framework through which other scholars might view the phenomenon.

No evidence was found in the literature of adult education that the experience of experts in self-direction had been studied in the past. However, some excerpts from the literature on self-directed learning were used to supplement the thematic structure in Chapter 5. In addition, the similar studies, outlined in Chapter 1, identified how other noteworthy figures in adult education had been previously studied on the basis of

qualitative inquiry. Some of the participants in those studies were overlapped with individuals studied in this research.

CHAPTER 3

STUDYING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the results of this study are presented in three chapters. The first of these chapters consists of a mini-case study containing profiles of each participant, based upon documents shared by the participant and apart from information gleaned in the interview. Information sets the stage for getting to know the people and why their voices are important to a study dealing with self-direction. Discussion will be centered on the contributions each expert has made to the scholarship of self-directed learning. The information included in this investigation was either a product of the citation analysis (Donaghy et al., 2002) discussed earlier, scholarly Web sites, or documents provided by participants as requested in the sharing of the thematic structure (Appendix A).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the people and their qualifications to substantiate being considered an *expert* in self-directed learning. Findings are presented in a format to make this study more accessible to the field of adult education. Credentials for each scholar are discussed in two sections: (a) description of contributors to SDL through individual profiles as the *written record* and (b) the participants' collective contribution to the scholarship of SDL. The second section also contains a recapitulation of select individual contributions mentioned in the first section.

Individual Profiles

For this section of the discussion, the participants are identified by name. As mentioned in Chapter 1, those adult educators listening to a presentation by Hensley et al. (2001) raised questions when the results section remained anonymous, as they wanted to know who said what. One possibility for this being desirable is to make historical connections. For this dissertation, all participants granted permission to quote their names (Appendix B). The Institutional Review Board at the university required me to share the text with each participant to obtain agreement on how their name was to be associated with the findings. Five of the participants made corrections to their individual profiles. These changes and/or quotes are referenced as personal correspondence. The order of presentation is alphabetical.

For reported percentages of publications related to self-directed learning, the amounts were calculated from raw data reported through correspondence with each participant. Similarly, the number of chaired dissertations related to self-directed learning was calculated in percentage form from numbers provided by each participant through personal communications. Thus, these quantitative data are a close approximation, based on information made available to me.

Ralph Brockett

In 1982, Brockett received his doctorate from Syracuse University. His dissertation was completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Brockett, 1982). Currently, he

has 23 years of experience as a university faculty member and his academic affiliation is The University of Tennessee, Knoxville where he has been a member of the faculty since 1988 (Hiemstra, 2004a). He holds the rank of Professor and is Coordinator of the Adult Education Program (Hiemstra, 2004a). Presently Brockett is co-editor of *Adult Learning*.

The decision to utilize Brockett as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, he was cited 65 times for a rank order of six in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, he has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-directed learning over the years and is still active in this line of scholarship.

Brockett received the Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award in 2004 for lifelong contributions to the study of self-directed learning (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, February 12, 2004). The award was presented by the *International Self-Directed Learning Symposium* (ISDLS). In 1998, Brockett started a self-directed learning research group with graduate students at The University of Tennessee to further research in SDL and to facilitate support of doctoral students in the dissertation phase (Canipe et al., 2004). From the information furnished by the participant, Brockett has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. He has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education as noted below. The information was derived from his curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 53 % of the dissertations Brockett has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, May 27, 2004). Overall, approximately 27 % of Brockett's publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, July 6, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Brockett has mentioned that several individuals impacted his academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. His dissertation committee members were Roger Hiemstra (chair), Sidney Micek, Dennis Gooler, Philip Doughty, Linda Sheive, and Neal Bellos (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, May 27, 2004). Brockett regards his mentor to be Roger Hiemstra. In addition, it is interesting to note that he regards two others to be instrumental in his early initiative to pursue scholarship in SDL. These individuals were Rosemary Caffarella and Carol Kasworm, with each of whom he had the chance to spend time dialoguing at a conference in 1981 as he was beginning to conceptualize his dissertation (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, July 9, 2004).

Stephen Brookfield

In 1980, Brookfield received his doctorate from the University of Leicester in Leicester, England. His dissertation was completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1980). At present, he has 25 years of experience as a university faculty member. He has been a member of the faculty at the University of St. Thomas in

Minneapolis, Minnesota since 1991, where he holds the rank of Distinguished Professor (Hiemstra, 2004a).

The decision to utilize Brookfield as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, he was cited 119 times for a rank order of one in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, he has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-directed learning over the years and is currently somewhat active in this line of scholarship. However, his primary writing interests are currently directed toward the study of critical theory (Hiemstra, 2004a). From the information furnished by the participant, Brookfield has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. He has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education as noted below. The information was derived from his curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 10 % of the dissertations Brookfield has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (S. D. Brookfield, personal communication, May 27, 2004). Overall, approximately 8 % of the total publications by Brookfield have dealt with some aspect of SDL (S. D. Brookfield, personal communication, May 27, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Brookfield mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on his academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. His dissertation committee members

were Henry Arthur Jones (chair) and Dick James (outside examiner) (S. D. Brookfield, personal communication, May 27, 2004). Brookfield regards his mentors to be Allen Tough in addition to Henry Arthur Jones.

Rosemary Caffarella

In 1978, Caffarella received her doctorate from Michigan State University. Her dissertation was not completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Caffarella, 1978). She presently has 27 years of experience as a university faculty member. Currently Caffarella is a member of the faculty at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York where she holds the rank of Professor and Chair, Department of Education (R. S. Caffarella, personal communication, June 9, 2004).

The decision to utilize Caffarella as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, she was cited 43 times for a rank order of seven in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, Caffarella has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-directed learning over the years and from time to time is still active in this line of scholarship. From the information furnished by the participant, Caffarella has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications, as noted below. The information was derived from her curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Regarding dissertations involving an aspect of SDL, I was not able to conduct follow-up with Caffarella and therefore am unable to report information about her chairing of dissertations. Overall, approximately 16 % of her total publications dealt with some aspect of SDL (S. McConnell, personal communication, July 16, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

I was not able to conduct a follow-up exchange of information with Caffarella and therefore am unable to report information about her dissertation committee members.

Lucy Guglielmino

In 1977, Guglielmino received her doctorate from the University of Georgia (Guglielmino, 1977). Her dissertation involved “research on self-directed learning, a Delphi survey of experts on the topic, and the development of the *Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale*” (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). She currently has 28 years of experience as a university faculty member and is currently a member of the faculty at Florida Atlantic University, Treasure Coast Campus in Port St. Lucie, Florida where she holds the rank of Professor (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, May 16, 2004).

The decision to utilize Guglielmino as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, she was cited 78 times for a rank order of 4.5 in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, she has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-

directed learning over the years and is currently active in this line of scholarship. A “large body of Dr. Guglielmino’s research has centered on self-direction in learning as a basis for lifelong learning. The *Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale*, which she developed in 1977, has been translated into 14 languages and used in more than 30 countries” (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004).

Together with her husband, Paul, she received the Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award in 2002, for lifelong contributions to the study of self-directed learning (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, February 12, 2004). From information furnished by the participant, Guglielmino has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations, personal publications, “and consulting on research on self-directed learning with other scholars in many countries. Her *Self-directed Learning Readiness Scale*, also referred to as the *Learning Preference Assessment*, is the most widely used instrument in self-directed learning research” (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). She has also been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education, as noted below. The information was derived from her curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 36 % of the dissertations Guglielmino has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, July 6,

2004). Overall, approximately 67 % of her total publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, July 6, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Guglielmino has mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on her academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. First, her dissertation committee members were: Curtis Ulmer (major professor), Huey Long (chair, reading committee), E. Paul Torrance, and John Stauffer (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, July 1, 2004). Similar to the situation Brookfield mentioned, Guglielmino also regards her mentors to be Malcolm Knowles in addition to Huey Long.

Roger Hiemstra

In 1970, Hiemstra received his doctorate from The University of Michigan. His dissertation was not completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Hiemstra, 1970). He currently has 35 years of experience as a university faculty member. Hiemstra is retired from Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York where he holds the rank of Professor Emeritus (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, July 13, 2004). Currently he is a member of the faculty at Elmira College, Elmira, New York (Hiemstra, 2004a). Hiemstra has been at Elmira since 1996 where he holds the rank of Professor and is Chair of the Adult Education Program (Hiemstra, 2004a).

The decision to utilize Hiemstra as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, he was cited 34 times for a rank order of nine in the citation analysis results

(Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, he has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-directed learning over the years and remains somewhat active in this line of academic writing.

Hiemstra (2004b) was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2000 for his leadership in the field and for his contribution to the literature of adult education for over three decades. From the information furnished by the participant, Hiemstra has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. He has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education as noted below. The information was derived from his curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 23 % of the dissertations Hiemstra has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (R. Hiemstra, personal communication, June 19, 2004). Overall, approximately 19 % of his publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (R. Hiemstra, personal communication, June 19, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Hiemstra has mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on his academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. His dissertation committee members were: Gale E. Jensen (chair), Arthur W. Bromage, C. Russell Hill, Lewis H. Hodges, and

William K. Medlin (R. Hiemstra, personal communication, June 19, 2004). Hiemstra regards his mentor to be Howard McClusky.

Carol Kasworm

In 1977 Kasworm received her doctorate from the University of Georgia. Her dissertation was not completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Kasworm, 1977). She currently has 28 years of experience as a university faculty member. Kasworm has been a member of the faculty at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina since 1999 where she holds the rank of Professor and Head, Department of Adult and Community College Education (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, June 14, 2004).

The decision to utilize Kasworm as a participant in this study was not as straightforward as it was for the other participants. For the first seven participants, the decision was more objective based upon their ranking through the number of citations (Donaghy et al., 2002). For those identified, if they were not deceased and were willing to participate, they were interviewed. The eighth, Kasworm, was chosen in a more subjective fashion and the choice was made for several reasons. Even though several authors on the citation ranking list had a greater number of citations than Kasworm, when rank ordering was considered, only five surviving her had more citations (Donaghy et al., 2002). This balance was either co-authored with one already planned for an interview or had only published a small number of manuscripts on SDL. Kasworm was also one of the contributors to the first year of proceedings for the *International Self-Directed Learning*

Symposia (Hiemstra, 2003). The deciding factor was the influence that Kasworm had on Brockett in the early days of his career, to complete research in self-direction (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, July 7, 2004). Regarding actual citations, she was cited 17 times for a rank order of 21 in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). She has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-directed learning from time to time over the years but is currently not active in this line of academic writing.

Kasworm was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame in 2002 for her leadership in the field and for her contribution to the literature of adult education for over two decades (Hiemstra, 2004b). From the information furnished by the participant, Kasworm has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. She has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education, as noted below. The information was derived from her curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 10 % of the dissertations Kasworm has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, June 14, 2004). Overall, approximately 10 % of her publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, June 14, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Kasworm has mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on her academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. Her dissertation committee members were: Curtis Ulmer (chair), Gene Johnson, Tom Mahler, and Louis Bashaw (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, June 14, 2004). Kasworm regards Gene Johnson as her “unofficial chair” and describes him as her “key supporter” (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, June 14, 2004). She did not identify a mentor.

Huey Long

In 1966, Long received his doctorate from The Florida State University (Long, 1966). His “dissertation was not directly related to self-directed learning, but it was concerned with subjects (conformity/dogmatism) that may underlie psychological properties of self-directed learning” (H. B. Long, personal communication, September 30, 2004). Long has 36 years of experience as a university faculty member. At present he is retired from the faculty at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma where he served since 1988 (H. B. Long, personal communication, May 18, 2004). His rank at retirement was Professor of Continuing Professional and Higher Education (H. B. Long, personal communication, May 18, 2004). He currently resides in Melrose, Florida (H. B. Long, personal communication, May 18, 2004).

The decision to utilize Long as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, he was cited 117 times for a rank order of two in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, he has continued to contribute to the scholarship of self-

directed learning over the years and remains active in this line of scholarship. Long has been instrumental in promoting and organizing the *International Self-Directed Learning Symposium* from its inception in 1986 to the present (Hiemstra, 2004b). Through his efforts, 16 edited proceedings have been published, as books and compact discs (CDs), for those conferences (Hiemstra, 2003). He has also been instrumental in arranging for re-publishing out of print, historic works in adult education (H. B. Long, personal communication, July 8, 2004).

In 1996 he was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame for his leadership role in the field and for his contribution to the literature of adult education for almost four decades (Hiemstra, 2004b). Long received the first Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award in 2001 for lifelong contributions to the study of self-directed learning (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, February 12, 2004). From the information furnished by the participant, Long has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. He has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education as noted below. The information was derived from his curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 27 % of the dissertations Long has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (H. B. Long, personal communication, June 16, 2004). Overall,

approximately 24 % of his publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (H. B. Long, personal communications, July 8, 10, 11, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

In addition to his contributions to scholarship, Long has mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on his academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. His dissertation committee members were George Aker and Hugh Stickler (co-chairs), Wayne Schroeder (major professor and director of dissertation), Melvene Hardee, and Willard Nelson (H. B. Long, personal communications, June 2 and 16, 2004).

Allen Tough

In 1966 Tough received his doctorate from The University of Chicago. His dissertation was completed on a topic related to self-directed learning (Tough, 1966). He has 31 years of experience as a university faculty member (Tough, 2003). Tough is currently retired from the faculty at the University of Toronto in Toronto, Ontario where he served since 1966 (Tough, 2003). His current rank is Professor Emeritus (Tough, 2003). He resides in Toronto.

The decision to utilize Tough as a participant in this study was made for two reasons. First, he was cited 81 times for a rank order of three in the citation analysis results (Donaghy et al., 2002). Second, Tough is one of the few surviving students of Cyril Houle (Maher, 2002a). The historical accounts on SDL recognize Houle and two of

his students, Knowles and Tough, as being instrumental in facilitating the scholarship of SDL during the early days of the movement (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

From the information furnished by the participant, Tough has made contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning through chairing dissertations and personal publications. He has been influenced by the efforts of other individuals in the field of adult education as noted below. The information was derived from his curriculum vitae and other correspondence sent by e-mail.

Dissertations and Publications

Over the years, approximately 39 % of the dissertations Tough has chaired have dealt with some aspect of SDL (A. M. Tough, personal communication, June 12, 2004). Overall, approximately 21 % of his publications have dealt with some aspect of SDL (A. M. Tough, personal communication, June 19, 2004).

Others Having an Influence

Tough has mentioned that several individuals have had an impact on his academic life and contributions to the field of adult education. His dissertation committee members were Cyril Houle (chair), Phillip W. Jackson, and Bruce Joyce (A. M. Tough, personal communication, June 12, 2004).

Collective Contribution and Recapitulation

In contrast to the individual profiles section above, the participants' anonymity will be protected in parts of the following discussion dealing with the total number of dissertations chaired and the total number of publications. The objective of this portion is to present the combined influence of these scholars on the scholarship of self-directed learning. This section is primarily based upon the result of the citation analysis (Donaghy et al., 2002) and the documentation furnished by each participant in response to the request for additional information (Appendix A).

Citation Analysis

The above scholars were cited a total of 554 times in the citation analysis (Donaghy et al., 2002). Their individual contributions were: 119 (Brookfield), 117 (Long), 81 (Tough), 78 (Guglielmino), 65 (Brockett), 43 (Caffarella), 34 (Hiemstra), and 17 (Kasworm) (Donaghy et al., 2002). The number of citations for all authors included in the citation analysis is 2,038 indicating that 27 % of the 2,038 citations could be attributable to these eight authors (Donaghy et al., 2002).

Dissertations

Half of the participants' own dissertations were completed on some aspect of self-direction (Brockett, 1982; Brookfield, 1980; Guglielmino, 1977; Tough, 1966). Regarding the number of dissertations chaired, all participants responded with some information to

this question. The numbers provided were a “best guess,” so all results are approximate. Unfortunately, one of the participants could not recall the number of dissertations involving SDL and so the calculations and resulting discussion are based on seven of the eight respondents. The total number of dissertations chaired was 332, yielding a mean per respondent of 42 (personal communications with each respondent). The quantity dealing with some aspect of SDL was 80, equating to a mean per respondent of 11 (personal communications with seven of the eight respondents). Accordingly, 24 % of the 332 dissertations chaired dealt with some aspect of SDL.

Publications

All eight participants responded to the question regarding their contributions to the scholarship of SDL. Two of the respondents could not recall the precise number of publications, as their curriculum vitae were not current. The data were estimated and the results in this section are approximations. The total number of publications was about 963; the mean per respondent was about 120 (personal communications with each respondent). Those publications dealing with some aspect of SDL were approximately 200 in number, yielding a mean per respondent of about 25 publications (personal communications with each respondent). In total, an estimated 21 % of the 963 articles authored by these experts dealt with SDL.

Others Having an Influence

From the information provided by the participants in this study, some genealogical aspects are worthy of notation. As to the participant's relationship to mentors, it appears that some of the information provided may supplement and/or possibly contradict conclusions in Maher's (2002a) previous study. It is also interesting to note that several of the participants are interconnected in some way; for example, Brockett to Hiemstra, Brookfield to Tough, Guglielmino to Long, and Brockett to Caffarella and Kasworm (personal communications with each respondent). Another point worthy of mention is that Kasworm and Guglielmino were fellow students during their studies at the University of Georgia, where Long was a professor (Guglielmino, 1977; Hiemstra, 2004b; Kasworm, 1977). Both of these participants studied under Curtis Ulmer as their major professor (personal communications with each respondent). Similar to the conclusions of Maher's (2002a) dissertation on the field of adult education in general, a lineage exists among those scholars devoting effort to the specialized area of self-direction.

Other Prominent Contributions

In addition to the participants having received numerous individual items of recognition over the years, three of the participants were inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (Hiemstra, 2004b). Furthermore, three of the experts in this study received the Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award for lifelong contributions to the study of self-directed learning (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, February 12, 2004). Most significantly, this group has been

instrumental in the publication of 26 books and CDs, through authoring, co-authoring, or editing of texts and conference proceedings involving self-directed learning (personal communications with each respondent).

Total Years of Experience

Each of the participants in this study has attained the rank of Professor at a University in the United States or Canada (personal communications with each respondent). In addition, their combined years of service are 233 (personal communications with each respondent and on-line Dissertation Abstracts International summary for each). The historical significance of each participant's interview will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Final Thoughts

Regarding concluding thoughts on this chapter, the individual contributions of each participant were presented to establish one's qualifications as expert in SDL. The proportionate share of total scholarship dedicated to publications on SDL provides an indication as to the priority each scholar placed on this line of study. Each professor's percentage of chaired dissertations dealing with some aspect of SDL gives an indication as to the willingness to encourage her or his student's study in and the expansion of her or his own knowledge base in self-directed learning. In addition, the connections made through each scholar's committee members give an indication of genealogical connections

in this specialized area of study. This professoriate's collective contributions create a climate for assessing their impact in total, on the scholarship of SDL since the mid 1960s.

CHAPTER 4

STUDYING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: A LIVING LITERATURE REVIEW THROUGH PERSONAL STORIES

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the results of this study are presented in three chapters. This second chapter in the series presents the results of a descriptive analysis of participant stories evolving from interviews with of each participant; these results are presented in stories of four areas (the process for arriving at the four categories is described in a later section of this chapter):

1. The historical evolution of SDL as seen through the personal descriptions of each participant;
2. Each participant's individual description of her or his style of learning;
3. Individual commentary on the importance of collaborative relationships and/or learning theory; and
4. Expert opinion on the future viability for this area of study.

The results in this chapter build on the information furnished in Chapter 3 and complete the story of getting to know the people and why their voices are important to the study of self-directed learning. Discussion will be centered on the ideas of each of the experts during their contribution to scholarship over the years. The information included in this part of the investigation was a product of the interviews and of subsequent comments provided by the participants (Appendix C). No interpretation was made on any of the four

categories used to present the results. The interpretation of the results or thematic structure, as it is called, will be reported in Chapter 5.

The data to be reported in this chapter derived from two different sources: (a) the participants' comments, requested as feedback to their quotations as presented in the subsequent sections of this chapter and (b) the description of the contributors to SDL through personal stories. Findings in this chapter are important to the field of adult education because they represent:

1. The topics each participant spent most of her or his interview talking about;
2. Information that is considered accessible to most of the field of adult education;
and
3. Answers to two of the three research questions in a form that is accessible to adult educators.

Comments summarized in the current chapter are, for the most part, presented in the same sequence as they unfolded during the course of the interview.

During each interview there was risk of uncovering controversial issues. Since the intent of this chapter was to associate the participants' names with the findings, controversial issues were avoided. I accomplished this in several ways. First, during the interview, I did not ask any participant to say more about a controversial issue. Second, for those instances where the participant volunteered information during the conversation, names are kept anonymous so as to not direct any potentially negative comments toward any particular individual or organization. Third, in some instances, to address this need the tape recorder was stopped (at the participant's request) or the comments were completed

after the interview had officially ended. No notes were taken in either of these circumstances.

Participants' Comments

One of the steps in the process was to share with the participants the drafts of the story to be told in this chapter (Appendix C) and to ask for their approval to use this information. As a result of this process several participants (a) disagreed with some of my observations, (b) made suggestions for corrections to the text, (c) presented me with background information for their story in the transcript, (d) and added information not provided in their interviews. Since participants were asked to give permission to use their names a decision was made to permit insertion of their corrections and respect their requests for deletion of aspects of their stories. All eight scholars agreed to allow me to use their story. Three participants did their own rewrite and three more furnished corrections.

Descriptive Categories

For this section of the discussion, the participants' names will be used. According to Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) it is not possible to talk about concepts such as defining SDL and how it has evolved over time, without considering who said it and when the comment was offered. Similar to the presentation in Chapter 3, all participants granted

permission to use their names (Appendix B). For this section, the names of participants will be discussed in alphabetical order.

As examples are given from each participant in the form of quotations, extraneous words and/or pauses such as “uh” and “uh-huh” are removed from the conversation with ellipsis points in order to facilitate a coherent reading of the text. All participants received copies of their transcripts (Appendix A) and were given an opportunity to correct any spelling errors, correct the names of scholars and literature mentioned, and strike names or other items they did not want mentioned in the findings. This was important step as some portions of the audiotapes were inaudible. As an additional task, each participant saw the drafts for the material included in this chapter and was given the opportunity to comment and/or make corrections (Appendix C). With only a few exceptions, no attempt was made to complete a reference list for literature mentioned during the interview. Attempting to provide a reference list for every piece of literature cited during an interview was felt to place an undue burden on the participant. However, one participant voluntarily did this.

It is also important to mention that several of the participants insisted on seeing the interview guide prior to their interview. I did not keep track of who did and who did not see the questions prior to the interviews. One participant requested to see the entire prospectus for the study, prior to agreeing to be interviewed.

In addition, one of the participants is a member of my doctoral committee. This provided me with more background information than was available for other participants. This committee member also was a co-investigator in the interview with one other participant. As co-investigator the committee member asked a couple of questions during

the interview with this participant.

Of the 39 descriptive categories evolving from the content analysis, the scope of discussion in this chapter is narrowed to those four categories appearing across all of the transcripts. The discussion is wholly independent from the results presented in Chapter 5 to not be in conflict with the thematic structure. For each of these four categories, every participant's viewpoint is provided. These four descriptive categories set the context for the presentation of this chapter's results: (a) personal histories, (b) personal learning theories, (c) personal importance of a collaborative approach, and (d) personal ideas about self-direction's future.

Personal Histories

The idea of developing a history of self-directed learning is an area that has not been fully implemented in the literature. A historical component is significant for two reasons. First, throughout the literature of SDL, only bits and pieces of the history have been described. In a few instances, some effort has been devoted to the historical implications in portions of book chapters (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Cseh, Watkins, & Marsick, 2000; Long, 1991; Piskurich, 1993). Some closely related book chapters have been done over the years on this subject (Brookfield, 1985; Guglielmino, 2002; Sexton, 1989; Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). No books have been written and only one journal article has been specifically dedicated to the history of self-directed learning (Guglielmino, Long, & Hiemstra, 2004). To my knowledge only one paper was presented on the history of the self-learning by Kulich (as cited in Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) in 1970. My review of the

literature pointed out only two book chapters were specifically been prepared, over the years, on the history of SDL (Long, 1976; Rose, 1997). Second, history was a category noted to be present in the pilot study for this dissertation; therefore a historical component was known and mentioned in the problem statement in Chapter 1.

Similar to the way in which participants talked about other categories of data, the discussion of history was not through a recitation of their or anyone else's scholarly work; it was through the telling of personal story related to their own life. Just as the participant's history was interwoven with discussion of learning theory, their history was intermingled with two other categories discussed in this chapter. The participants' stories involved the naming of committee members and included a recollection of other scholars who had a role in inspiring their interest in SDL. Some of the scholars, such as Long, expended considerable effort, without any prompting from me, to talk about the history of SDL. Each participant's contribution was synthesized from a number of pages in her or his transcript, rather than from just one or two example quotations.

Ralph Brockett

From his transcript, Brockett told a unique personal history of self-directed learning. He started, early in his dialogue to talk about those having an influence on him and his interests in SDL. The first he mentioned was Herbert Kohl through whose book he was exposed to the positive outcome of inner city children taking charge of their learning. He also mentioned early in the interview the writings of Knowles and Tough having an influence on early exposure to the scholarly concept of self-directed learning. In addition,

in the beginning of our conversation, Brockett talked about his introduction to Hiemstra's scholarship through an article entitled *The Older Adults Learning Projects*. Most importantly, Brockett said he "knew . . . [I] wanted to work in the area of self-directed learning . . . from the moment . . . [I] walked into graduate school."

Regarding other interests from earlier in his life, he talked about his pursuit of rock music and gave the example of the rock opera *Tommy*. From his fascination with literature, he mentioned *The Grapes of Wrath*. Brockett talked about always being interested in issues of social change and social justice. He said his desire to overcome adversity in his high school years was the "beginning of self-direction for me." In his personal story, Brockett talked of his high school English teacher and her encouragement to write about things he was interested in writing about.

In time, Brockett's interest in self-directed learning emerged when he talked about walking "into Syracuse University as a graduate student in . . . [the] Fall of 1979." At this point he mentioned reading Tough's *The Adult's Learning Projects* and hearing the rumor, for the first time, that Hiemstra might be coming to Syracuse as a faculty member. Brockett's happiness came across clearly as he told about hitting "it off right away" in his relationship with Hiemstra. He talked about the relationship they formed and the chapter they co-authored in *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. Hiemstra's influence on Brockett related the importance of having a philosophy of education "modeled . . . by how he lived, . . . his work, . . . how he practiced, and practices the way he approaches and works with students." He characterized the relationship as being "treated . . . like a colleague" from the onset of their first meeting.

Brockett talked about the experience of being asked to co-author a book chapter with Hiemstra and Patrick Penland. He expressed gratitude for being selected as first author on this piece after originally being invited to be second author. In a commentary to this text, Brockett said Hiemstra “switched the order because I had actually done more with it than originally planned, and giving me first authorship when he did not have to, is the unselfish part” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). To Brockett this act by Hiemstra, was “probably the most unselfish example of . . . an academic person I can think of.” Brockett concluded the story by saying that through this one act of unselfishness Hiemstra helped him understand “the kind of professor . . . [I] wanted to be.” Brockett talked very enthusiastically about the three books and numerous chapters he and Hiemstra co-authored over the years. He mentioned that had it not been for Hiemstra he was doubtful he “would be sitting here . . . 24 years later . . . thinking about work on self-directed learning.”

It was interesting that Brockett mentioned other participants in this study as being among those having an influence on him during his academic career. For example, Brockett mentioned he was influenced by Caffarella. In a first encounter, he spoke of spending time with Caffarella and with Kasworm at the *Lifelong Learning Research Conference* in Maryland in 1981 (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). In commentary to this text, he talked about how good both of them made him feel as he was invited into their informal conversations about their research on self-directed learning (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). He also said “Caffarella was the first person in the field of adult education to invite me to do a

presentation at a conference for the *Commission of Professors of Adult Education* (CPAE) in 1981 and asked me if I would be interested in presenting the following year: 1982” (R.G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004).

Another participant Brockett mentioned was Brookfield, whom he met for the first time in 1981 while Brookfield was at the University of British Columbia. He talked about Brookfield spending several days at his home in Syracuse during the early 1980s. In commentary to the text, Brockett stated “though we did have a fairly close friendship for a while, we actually have moved in different directions over the years” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). He is someone “I still like and respect, but we don’t actually stay in touch or ‘hang out’ together” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). Next he mentioned Guglielmino and how he used her instrument in his dissertation. Long also was mentioned and he pointed out that, other than Hiemstra, Long was the person whose research most closely paralleled his own interests. He also referenced Agyekum for his work with Long. In a commentary to the text, Brockett mentioned “Agyekum was not really an influence on me; his work with Long was helpful, but I think it was Huey who was the influence” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004).

Regarding other scholars in the field of adult education not specifically identified with SDL are Merriam and Sisco. Brockett mentioned Merriam was an influence, but not in regard to SDL (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). Sisco “was in fact an influence and the . . . book [*Individualizing Instruction for Adult Learners*] he and Rog did was a very clear statement of my own philosophy of and approach to

teaching” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). Sisco was a colleague at Syracuse, where they were students together. In commentary to the text, Brockett said he and Sisco spent a year together on the faculty (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). This discussion about colleagues having an influence on him caused Brockett to express concern about leaving someone out of the conversation. He did acknowledge that he had mentioned in our dialogue all of the scholars having an influence on his interest in SDL.

From his time in Montana during 1986 or 1987, Brockett recalled his work on developing the *PRO model* for self-directed in learning. In commentary to the text, Brockett said “Roger and I got our idea about the different aspects of self-directed learning from other authors, especially Long and Kasworm” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). Through his recollections of the scholarly writing on SDL, Brockett mentioned that he and Hiemstra were not the ones “who invented the idea . . . [and acknowledged] there were different ways of thinking about self-directed learning.” In his commentary on the text, Brockett stated “this is where Kasworm and Long come into the picture” (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). From this point Brockett mentioned Candy and Mezirow as two others making a contribution to the study of SDL. He mentioned their concern over the social issues impacted by self-direction and again cited Brookfield for his efforts in writing about the socio-political dimensions of self-directed learning.

Brockett characterized conferences such as AERC as becoming increasingly less likely to offer a voice for those want to present their research and scholarly writing on

SDL. On the other hand, he mentioned ISDLS and AAACE as more likely spots to receive an acceptance for proposals involving self-directed learning. During later discussion on scholarly writing, Brockett mentioned the interruptions that can get in the way of publishing. He specifically mentioned the book he and Hiemstra co-authored on self-directed learning in 1991. He suggested his relocations from Syracuse to Montana and later to Tennessee were obstacles as were Hiemstra's involvement with the Kellogg Grant at Syracuse. In essence for Brockett, it takes "a long time doing books."

Another important milestone in Brockett's personal story was his reminiscence of the SDL research group he started at The University of Tennessee in the Fall of 1998. He spoke about how he invited about 15 people, mostly doctoral students, to the first meeting. Initially the objective was a dissertation support group and "we got a group going" for this purpose. From the amount of time Brockett spent talking about this group during the interview, it was clear that it was important to him. In his commentary to the text, Brockett spoke of this being an experience in scholarship on SDL (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). He talked about the evolution of the group including taking on collaborative research projects and presenting the results at conferences such as at the ISDLS. In a specific example he shared "and that was one of my favorite in many ways, . . . because that was where the group really . . . came together." Brockett stated that "the research group has been really good in terms of getting people excited." He said he has been "influenced by the people that . . . [I have worked] with now and over the years [such] as . . . students, my graduate . . . [student] colleagues, and the sense of what we've been able to build" together.

To Brockett, the history within the field of adult education points out a significant contribution to the literature in three areas: “participation, self-directed learning, and transformative learning.” One might also add critical adult education to be an emerging area of study, in Brockett’s opinion. For Brockett, it was important to mention all of the contributions as “part of the record. . . . [and for me] that’s the nature of the beast,” so to speak. He suggested the way to present scholarship on SDL is to look “for audiences of people who are interested in it . . . [and] not worry about people who are not interested in it.”

A final phase in Brockett’s historical accounting was the expression of disappointment with some of his literature on SDL not being widely accepted. He then acknowledged that not much had been said in the interview about the literature and wanted to say more about this subject. Brockett talked about two articles he had published early in his career. Both were in *Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years*. The first was “Self-Directed Learning in Hard to Reach Adults” while the second was “Facilitator Roles and Skills.” To him it was interesting that the second piece was often cited while the first piece, which Brockett regarded as one of his favorite early pieces, was not cited as frequently. In addition, the book on SDL he published with Hiemstra was mentioned as “a nightmare.” In commentary to the text, Brockett mentioned the book itself wasn’t a nightmare – rather it was the publication process and support of the publisher (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). In a short comparison and contrast to the book he co-authored, he mentioned Candy’s book, which was introduced the same year. He expressed “disappointment that our book didn’t get out . . . [and] didn’t get more

visibility.” He summed this up by saying he does not “have regrets about the book, I have regrets about the process.”

As a closing thought on literature, Brockett mentioned a recent presentation he did in Oklahoma for an adult education class, as a guest speaker. In that lecture, a student asked him “what’s your . . . best . . . your favorite publication on self-direction?” His reaction was “I don’t know if it’s my favorite, but the one that I enjoyed doing the most, probably, is my John Steinbeck piece.” For some reason the struggles Steinbeck went through in writing the *Grapes of Wrath* left a lasting impression on Brockett. He talked for several paragraphs about this book and his article on the subject.

Roger Hiemstra’s influence on Brockett is significant and I think speaks to the mentor-protégé relationship. Brockett said

I’ve had a lot of fun working with Roger over the years. What happens with us is we do our best writing, usually, side by side and we can’t always do that but sometimes we’ll get together and write something.

In the course of the discussion with Brockett it was clear that, due to the number of times mentioned, his relationship with Hiemstra had a significant influence on him personally and on his scholarly contributions.

Stephen Brookfield

Brookfield’s discussion of history began with his first job in 1974 in England. He said

at that time . . . [I] was very interested in non-formal kinds of education . . . [such as] the learning that [goes] on which isn't sponsored by an educational institution, which just seems to happen as . . . part of . . . life's efforts.

At this time he was appointed to an experimental college in the United Kingdom that was designed for adults. The clientele were those considered to be disadvantaged in some way. Also of historical significance to him was his enrollment in graduate studies at Nottingham during 1975. This is when he became interested in Tough's research. He mentioned having personal contact with Tough and helping him do research for *Intentional Changes*.

Brookfield later made a decision to complete a doctorate in adult education and complete a dissertation on independent adult learning. During his undergraduate work, he mentioned not attending lectures and deciding he could pass the examinations because he "could do this just as well . . . [myself]." He explained casually that he does not identify with quantitative research methodology and "will have nothing to do with" it.

He reflectively stated "that the educational system really wasn't organized . . . for people like" me and commented about never doing well on any kind of standardized testing. In his assessment of his own personal experiences with learning over the years, he mentioned his inclination that he requires "external assistance" to learn. These two points helped to define his orientation as being interested in studies involving the education of those populations of lower socio-economic classes. Currently he mentioned having a strong interest "in the area of critical thinking and critical reflection."

In recognizing other scholars having an influence on him, he mentioned Fingeret's research at Syracuse University. He talked of meeting her and cited one example from her

research to describe his interest. He also mentioned Long's work and the options available for someone to learn how to do a specific task. During his doctoral research he talked about being familiar with Tough's work and Knowles' book on *Self-Directed Learning* which came out in 1975. He also mentioned being surprised that one of the themes in his dissertation was the presence of "a social dimension of self-directed learning."

In concluding thoughts about history, Brookfield stated he was amazed that I would consider him to be a major figure in the research on self-directed learning. He did not feel as though he had added much to the literature base in the past 10 to 15 years. He surmised that his earlier work was what was being cited. He reminded me that his writing was primarily about the political process associated with the study of SDL. He closed by saying if you had asked him, he "would [not] have been . . . at the top of the list" of experts on self-directed learning.

Rosemary Caffarella

For this scholar, the history of self-directed learning is interspersed throughout the interview in a powerful way. Something about history is on just about every page and is interwoven with her suggestions for the future of this way of learning. This professor said less about her formal education than did other participants. She began her historical account with mention of her major professor, Russ Kleis. She characterized his teaching style as being one in which a great deal of choice was given. She referred to examples from Knowles' first edition of the *Modern Practice of Adult Education* for the teaching philosophy used. She said adult learning methodology and self-direction in learning was a

critical piece of Kleis' method. Caffarella said that she questioned some of Knowles' assumptions but "didn't have enough guts as a doctoral student to take on Malcolm Knowles . . . which . . . [I] probably could have, knowing Malcolm." To her, Knowles was a "very great mentor and friend . . . but . . . at that point he was really not a mentor." She referred to her use of learning contracts and talked about using the work of Hiemstra and Knowles as examples to follow.

As a model for her teaching philosophy Caffarella talked about using the collaborative traditions she found in Kleis' courses. In the description of her personal life and her experiences with SDL, she referred to Tough's research. As an example of her feelings toward the group some might label as underachievers, she cited the dissertation of one of her students. In this case Caffarella referred to those with less levels of formal schooling as "really [being] very smart."

Caffarella devoted most of her interview to talk about other cultures and issues of learning that are unique to those populations. The first example mentioned was Fingeret's move to a farm in the southern part of the United States, where Fingeret worked with Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Graduation Equivalency Diploma (GED) students. Caffarella characterized this group of students as those who really "don't believe they can do this and yet through ways that are absolutely incredible . . . [they become what I] would call . . . self-directed and very creative." This example referred specifically to the help Fingeret got learning "how to run a farm, how to run a tractor, [and] all of these things that she did not do."

In discussion about how self-directed learning evolved for Caffarella over the years, she mentioned a “questioning of the whole notion of self-directed learning based on . . . Knowles’ notion of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.” She questioned the theory of the adult becoming “more self-directed and more independent” over time. In her work with women, she did not observe that trend. For “the most part [I did not] see independence as the epitome of development.” At this point she seemed to have lost some respect for Knowles’ work and turned to Candy. She mentioned Candy’s work as still having relevance for her as well as that of Pratt. She really questioned Knowles’ notion that “if you’re not self-directed, then you’re not an adult.” She pointed out that beginning when she was a doctoral student, she realized

self-directed learning has a lot of components that have nothing to do with self or directed by self and obviously the writers since then have acknowledged that. You know, Ralph and Roger being two . . . [that have recognized it along with] a number of other ones.

For Caffarella right now, she is

less interested in research . . . in self-directed learning. . . . [and] more interested in taking what . . . [I have] learned from it and actually putting it into practice . . . in . . . [my] classes, . . . into research courses, . . . into dissertation . . . [proposals], [and] seminars.

In subsequent conversation, she talked about the influence of other scholars over the years. She suggested Tough put “a face on [the] self-directed learning, of learners. . . . [and this to me] was really critical.” She suggested that prior to Tough’s work, most

writing was only about the learning process. She mentioned the relevance of Mocker and Spear's work as being the literature that has come "closest . . . [to have] gotten . . . the whole contextual nature of self-directed learning." She again cited Candy, Pratt, and Tough as being "very fundamental and very important" to her understanding. She also referenced the many replications of Tough's research as being worthwhile even though she called it "almost overkill." Caffarella categorized the work of Tough, Knowles, and Houle as elitist. She talked about Houle not mentioning the words self-directed and suggested other writers such as Lindeman also paid attention to the learner. She recognized Houle's work as critical and also cited Knowles as a student of Houle. For her though, it seems the scholarship of Candy and Tough reign supreme. She suggested Candy's "stuff was ground breaking." Caffarella again mentioned the writing of Pratt, Hiemstra, and Brockett as all being "very much influential, with . . . [my] thinking and even the writings that [I have] done." Other writers mentioned by Caffarella were Graeve and Chene. She also mentioned the work of Long and the many "very good papers that came out of that work." She commented that "his contribution was enormous . . . in providing a voice for others." When asked if she had any other things to say about the contextual component of learning, Caffarella mentioned the contributions of Jarvis and others who have talked about the social side.

Caffarella also spent some time talking about other modalities of learning and development. She talked about Erikson and his providing for her a connection to the life situation or what she calls "life context." She also brought up her work with Merriam and referred to their experience working with other cultures. In the conversation about

working with other cultures, Caffarella mentioned Guglielmino's instrument and suggested further research for it to become a "cross cultural instrument." As part of the discussion about culture, she mentioned her collaborative book with Merriam entitled *Learning in Adulthood* as an example of the kind of scholarship she wants to continue to do.

Regarding ways of thinking about critical issues, she mentioned the efforts of Horton and the Highlander School as examples of "how self-directed learning has made a difference in the world." She cited the work of Daloz as some research that should be revisited and even though it "was never called self-directed learning" it was "extraordinarily powerful work." Caffarella mentioned other studies that need to be revisited. In conclusion Caffarella, like Brockett and Long, made an effort to get the history right, when it came to naming colleagues who had contributed to her notion of self-directed learning.

Lucy Guglielmino

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Guglielmino (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). In a story similar to Caffarella's, this professor said less about her formal education and where she currently works than did other participants. During the first part of her interview, Guglielmino started the conversation by talking about the literature of Knowles as her initial inspiration and generator of interest in the methodology of adult education, as a graduate student. For her the interest in Knowles' writings helped her reflect on her own life experiences of learning where there was

frustration. Her frustration was with traditional “memorization and regurgitation” of information in the classroom, especially when contrasted with the type of teaching/learning interaction she had experienced within her family. She described “. . . the incongruity . . . of the learning experiences that I had outside and inside the classroom . . . [as] one of the major triggers” for her interest in SDL. Also instrumental was Alvin Toffler’s writing about the need for different ways of learning in the future to accommodate changes in society. This, for her, was the motivation to find an alternative way and evolved into a dissertation topic idea to “improve readiness for self-directed learning in students in a formal educational setting.” From this point she set out to define self-directed learning in her literature review and at the suggestion of Long, realized that “enhancing readiness for self-directed learning. . . . [was going to involve determining] whether you were successful” through some measurement. According to Guglielmino this led to a two-part dissertation. The first was to form a Delphi panel “of the best minds who were thinking about self-directed learning . . . [to come up with a] definition of what a highly self-directed learner looks like.” A second part was to “develop . . . an assessment instrument.” She stressed she was very fortunate to have Knowles, Tough, and Houle on her panel. The participation of these contributors was a factor in the high reliability of her instrument, the *Self-Directed Learning readiness Scale*, in her opinion.

When Guglielmino was asked to talk about her experience over the years with SDL, including trends, current issues, and perspectives, she said, “I’m really gratified to see more people talking about and thinking about self-directed learning.” She acknowledged that some professors in the field of adult education “feel this whole self-directed learning

emphasis is a little bit passé,” but pointed out that her experiences give her a very different perspective. During her initial dissertation research (in 1975), she shared “it was very hard to find . . . many citations . . . that referred to self-directed learning,” but now there is a plethora of interest and research in a vast array of settings, from “small, rural . . . elementary schools . . . [to] medical schools, . . . [all] the health professions . . . [and] in business and industry.”

During the dialogue with Guglielmino, she talked about her efforts in working with graduate students where she teaches. The program is structured to have the students begin by examining themselves as learners, including their readiness for self-direction and they are not “taught at” but are very “involved in the learning.” She described her delight in their “A-ha’s” as they become more self-directed learners and then realize that the learners in their settings can be energized by the process as well. “That’s why I’m still teaching,” she said, “because it’s wonderful to watch that.” In addition, there was mention of her success in working with teachers during in-service training at schools in the Southeast and her involvement in assisting her graduate students to apply the SDL process in their own settings. She expressed pride in working with one of her students, who was a county staff development specialist, to gain School Board approval for teachers to earn in-service points for self-directed learning projects designed “to make a difference in their classrooms” instead of having to attend mass training sessions on topics chosen by someone else. She noted that Richard Durr, one of her doctoral students who worked at Motorola, built on research she and her husband had conducted at AT&T and used the results to gain support for the development of a consultation and resource center for self-

directed learning that was visited and emulated by companies from all over the country. Another doctoral student developed self-directed teams of teachers in an at-risk school, resulting in improved teacher performance and student achievement as well as in state recognition as a model program. A key part of the process, as mentioned by Guglielmino, was to empower teachers to “design . . . [their] own plan for learning” for addressing their own and their students’ needs. In all of these situations, the positive outcomes were attributable to application of the principles of SDL. It was also interesting to hear her mention some of the studies using the *Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale* (SDLRS). Studies by Brockett and Curry found life satisfaction and intellectual functioning in older adults to be correlated with readiness for self-directed learning, and Kasworm’s and Caffarella’s studies in graduate classes added to the knowledge of ways to enhance readiness for SDL. A series of studies in business and industry consistently showed positive correlations between self-directed learning readiness and job performance and level of management. Guglielmino noted that the highest mean scores on the SDLRS to date were those of the top female executives and the top entrepreneurs in the US. She was gratified by the wide range of populations with which the SDLRS has been used, ranging from elementary students to graduate students in engineering and medical schools, including special populations such as the gifted and the learning disabled as well as workplaces of all types.

When asked to talk about how her thinking on self-direction has evolved over time, Guglielmino stressed that she has become “more convinced than ever” that SDL is “absolutely essential for . . . coping with life in this time of increasing change.” She

mentioned that her notion of SDL had evolved into a “clearer . . . conceptual model” as the result of her reflections on SDL over the years. Guglielmino expressed a concern that Knowles and Tough’s “concepts of the . . . self-directed learning process . . . [were] being [criticized by some as] a linear model and [for being] an unrealistic one.” She suggested that the supposed linearity of these models probably was a limitation “in terms of sophistication of model building or explication” rather than a narrow view of what SDL is. In addition, she mentioned Spear and Mocker’s concept of the organizing circumstance was exciting, despite their overly deterministic conclusions, because it “helped people to understand the process a little bit better and helps us to explain . . . more completely. . . . [the idea that] things might change or things might be interrupted and stop and . . . restart.” She also appreciated Long’s “work in . . . looking at . . . developing . . . [the] quadrant model . . . of self-directed learning as part pedagogical and part psychological and . . . [I thought] that helps to . . . express the complexity of the phenomenon.” In addition, she acknowledged her dissertation Delphi committee was instrumental “in describing the characteristics of a highly self-directed learner . . . [including] a complex of attitudes . . . and behaviors and preferences.” She designed her SDLRS instrument to “mirror that complexity.”

She cited Brockett and Hiemstra’s PRO model and their comprehensive 1991 book as well as Candy’s volume and the compilation of SDL research by Merriam and Caffarella in *Learning in Adulthood* and noted the “inestimable value of the interchange with others who are involved in research on self-directed learning” at the annual *International Symposium on Self-Directed Learning*, begun by Huey Long in 1986 and the two World

Conferences in Montreal and Paris. She also mentioned “the painful, but useful process” of preparing responses to Field’s criticisms of the SDLRS because her analysis of the validity studies, additional item analyses, and the later meta-analysis conducted by McCune, a statistics professor who also responded to Field, made her “even more convinced of the strength of the instrument” (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

In her recollections, she acknowledged Brookfield’s contributions, particularly in emphasizing the frequent collaborative aspect of SDL; she had reviewed one of his books for an SDL volume. She also mentioned remembering him saying “at a presentation that . . . he had to ask his students . . . to remind him . . . sometimes . . . to facilitate learning . . . instead of talking at them.”

She commented that the results of the studies conducted using the SDLRS have added greatly to her understanding of SDL, including the early studies by Torrance that showed correlations with creativity and flexibility and those that showed links between SDL readiness and job performance, life satisfaction, intellectual functioning in older adults, and a variety of other variables. Other variables that were just as important, she said, “were the variables that did not show overall correlations: IQ, gender, ethnicity within the U.S., and age (although age did correlate in some studies).” Also tremendously informative are the results of the large numbers of studies conducted in other countries (14 languages and more than 30 countries), which suggest differences in readiness for SDL across cultures that, interestingly, correlate with economic productivity. She appreciated Grow’s model, which assists those who are working to move students toward a greater

acceptance of responsibility for their own learning. This model also points to those excited about the energizing nature of SDL sometimes expecting their students, who have been trained to be dependent learners, to move toward independence without adequate time or “transition structures” (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

In closing, Guglielmino mentioned the writing of two authors who had meaning for her regarding perspectives on change in education. After asserting that

. . . as educators, . . . it’s our responsibility to make sure that our educational systems promote self-directed learning, . . . [I] mentioned Postman and offered from memory his criticism of the way formal education is conducted: Our children go into schools as question marks and come out as periods.

She then juxtaposed a favorite quote from Eric Hoffer’s writing, which said, “In times of increasing change, the learners inherit the earth while the learned find themselves perfectly suited for a world that no longer exists. And he uses ‘learned,’” Guglielmino explained, to refer to “those [who] think they are ‘periods,’ that they’ve finished learning; we never finish.”

Roger Hiemstra

For this professor, the historical aspect of this interview was extremely important. The very first sentence of his transcript began with a comment about the historical component, where he recognized the contributions of McClusky, Knowles, and Houle to the formation of the Adult Education Association (AEA) between the years of 1949 to 1955 in a recent presentation he did at the Adult Education Hall of Fame in Norman,

Oklahoma. He mentioned that he was “fortunate to have had a relationship with all three of those people very early in” his career. The very first of the group he met was Houle, when he applied for admission to the University of Chicago back in the late 1960s. The first meeting he had with McClusky was at The University of Michigan during his doctoral studies. Knowles came into the picture, for him, during attendance at conferences.

Accordingly, Hiemstra gives credit to Houle as the father of SDL. He clarified his statement a little by saying Houle was the grandparent of all this because of his relationship with people like Allen and Malcolm and all of this “flooded . . . [my] memory back and [I] realized that . . . [I] didn’t know the first thing about self-directed learning or the *Inquiring Mind* . . . but at least . . . [I] had the chance to meet him . . . very early” in his career.

Hiemstra regards his entry into self-directed learning when he developed a relationship with McClusky. Hiemstra referred often to the encouragement he received from McClusky and attributed McClusky’s teaching style to him being an alumnus of the University of Chicago where Houle was also a faculty member. Hiemstra perceived that the teaching philosophy at Chicago as one to encourage “a lot of initiative” in students. Although he did not recall McClusky ever using the “term self-directed learning,” and could not recall McClusky ever stressing students should read the *Inquiring Mind*, for Hiemstra, McClusky was his “only mentor.” I asked Hiemstra if he could say a little more about his relationship with McClusky. He started the next commentary by talking about the information posted on Hiemstra’s Web site, regarding the Hall of Fame Paper, *McClusky’s theory of margin*, and McClusky’s vita. It was interesting that he said he did

not know if McClusky regarded him to be his protégé but that he “never had an instructor like him.” Hiemstra said the very first class he had with McClusky “was just an amazing experience. . . . [and his philosophy was to treat] adults truly as . . . self-directed adults.” McClusky never used the term self-directed, according to Hiemstra’s recollection. The “genuine interest in people” was what stood out for Hiemstra about McClusky. Another significant point was that Hiemstra said that while he was at Michigan he never intended to pursue a career as a professor, at least initially. At this point he talked about wanting to go back to County Extension and pursue his career there.

During the course of Hiemstra’s first teaching position at the University of Nebraska in 1970, he remembered reading the *Inquiring Mind*. However, Hiemstra did recall that while he was at Michigan, students were required to read Knowles’ books: *Informal Adult Education* and the *History of the Adult Education Movement*. During his tenure at Nebraska, Hiemstra recalled being caught in the “publish or perish phenomenon” and he credited McClusky as being the force to help him understand the expectations. When he went looking “to find an area of research that he was really interested in that stimulated him. . . . [I remembered] one independent study research project with Howard on older adults as learners.” This area of interest in older adults “wasn’t clear [to me] that . . . [it] was really the area . . . [on which I] wanted to . . . focus.” He described what he thought as his “entrée [sic] . . . [into] the self-directed learning world” as being sometime in 1972. While he was at Nebraska, Wes Meierhenry (Hiemstra’s chair), was described as “a good guy . . . that was [always] on top of things.” Hiemstra described Knowles’ book, *Modern Practice* as making a hit at the time and suggested it provided the leverage he needed,

which when combined with a personal desire to reassess his “instructional style” provided the impetus to pursue SDL. Hiemstra utilized McClusky as his “model” to follow for what an instructor should be. Another aspect of the background for his initial switch to SDL, was the “didactic . . . instruction and testing . . . Nebraska” expected of their faculty.

Accordingly, Hiemstra started to “buck that system. . . . [and] began to look at *Modern Practice*” for guidance. A milestone in this period was when “Meierhenry decided to bring Malcolm . . . in . . . 1972 . . . to campus.” At that time, the graduate program was about 250 students. He mentioned Meierhenry asking him to videotape an interview with Knowles. An aside was a reference made to his days at Michigan, when he took a course in television production. The show Hiemstra did was on andragogy and it was filmed by the *Nebraska Educational Television Network*. This half hour show, accordingly, was a significant event for Hiemstra and he commented on the impact it had on him. He thought that the show is still available in the archives. As part of Hiemstra’s story he mentioned all of this being documented in the presentation he did at the Hall of Fame in 2003. At about the same time, Hiemstra remembered Tough made a presentation at one of the conferences in 1972. This combination of the interview with Knowles and Tough’s presentation on the *Adult’s Learning Projects*, “had a huge impact on” him. Hiemstra mentioned meeting Tough after the presentation and described it as “an epiphany for” his philosophy. He described having written correspondence with Tough about the interview protocol for *Adult’s Learning Projects*. This was the stage where the meetings with Knowles and Tough began to solidify Hiemstra’s change in instructional method. It began for him with learning contracts and moved to a “kind of self-directed . . . nature . . . [by]

giving responsibility back to the learner.” He mentioned that the whole process is described in the book co-authored with Sisco on individualizing instruction. Hiemstra described the meeting with Tough and the interview guide as resulting in him being able to “say, this is something that I want to do my research on.” In a subsequent statement, after he read Tough’s book, he said “this is an area that I could do long term research on.” This was also a point in time where he started encouraging doctoral students to do their dissertations in this area.

He mentioned one of his students, Dominick Zangari, completed a dissertation using the interview guide from the learning projects. Also touched upon was that a couple of other dissertations were done at the same time on some aspect of SDL. In this time period, he described his journey toward self-direction as “still kind of trying to find . . . [my] way.” A turning point was in 1975 when he went on sabbatical and pulled together a study on older adults, with a group of graduate students. Tough’s protocol was used for part of the research. He commented that he believed he was the first to replicate Tough’s study with older adults. It was interesting as he shared the story of his initial entry into SDL that Hiemstra regarded himself as one of the “old timers who love to talk about the past.” He mentioned some journal articles and one *Educational Resources Information Center* (ERIC) piece coming out of this research but did not give particulars. The next milestone Hiemstra presented was his entry into Iowa State University, as a faculty member, in 1976. By this time, he said he was “fully . . . [in] the self-directed learning camp.”

At this point Hiemstra backed up with his history and talked about his experience as an undergraduate. He talked about his early interest was on “having a lot of fun” rather than academics. During his masters’ experience, he commented that he did very well. This was at Iowa State and his advisor was Roger Lawrence. He talked about Lawrence as “an amazing guy” with whom he still keeps contact. It was very interesting to me that he did not describe Lawrence as a mentor, yet he talked about him in the same way as he did McClusky. What goes around comes around because when Hiemstra went back to Iowa State, Lawrence worked for him. He talked about Lawrence being the force driving him toward a doctoral degree. His original plan was to complete a doctorate and come back to Iowa to work in the State Office of County Extension. During his second year of the doctoral program , he married and started to think about a career as a professor. He basically credits his relationship with McClusky as the model he chose to be like. McClusky was “genuine and loving and caring and personable and . . . [I] developed a . . . reasonably close relationship with him, as close as a student to a faculty” member could be. Hiemstra’s memory of this was fairly vivid as he went on to talk about McClusky lugging up to a third floor classroom “a big container of coffee and fresh cookies that” his wife baked. He also talked about going to McClusky’s house to take the final exam there. What was significant, for me, was Hiemstra’s comment that he did not realize “how important . . . [McClusky] was to the field” until after he graduated. He also said a little about McClusky’s work with AEA and being chair of the founding committee.

Hiemstra talked about his continued relationship with McClusky while he was a faculty member at Nebraska. A comment was made that McClusky had many protégés.

Some frustration presented itself when Hiemstra acknowledged that “unfortunately, he was not my dissertation chair, because he retired in the middle” of the process. The irony is that when McClusky retired at age 69, he stayed out for a year, and then he came back full time “for another 12 years.” Accordingly, Hiemstra used “some other guy that drove me in a completely different direction that I never used again.” The commentary was “he was forcing me to go into there, . . . [and I] wished it had been Howard” leading his dissertation.

In a change of direction, I asked Hiemstra to say more about his masters’ program and work as a county extension agent. He backed up and talked about his shyness in high school days. A turning point was his “involvement with 4-H and . . . county extension as a teen.” His thought was that even though he regarded himself to be an introvert, if you “put me up on a stage with a microphone . . . [I] turned into something different.” The “emceeing of big county events and . . . [discovering I] could take a crowd and make them laugh” was a powerful focus for Hiemstra. To him it was gosh, “4-H had meant a lot to me.” He mentioned times when he did not know what he wanted to do and the 4-H interest steered him to county extension work in Iowa. To Hiemstra this vocation was “very important to” him. He commented that the State Officials over him suggested working on a masters’ degree to advance his career potential. During his masters’ program Hiemstra acknowledged running across some of Knowles’ literature for the first time and during that discovery, became inspired about working with adult learners. He saw in Knowles’ background what he saw in himself. Hiemstra made a connection between Knowles’s efforts with the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and his

own in county extension. In this part of the discussion he commented about meeting his wife's mother and sister, before actually meeting his wife, for the first time. The mother and sister were involved in county extension work. He commented that when he met his wife, he was in the stage of returning to Michigan for his doctorate.

In another shift of direction, Hiemstra moved into dialogue about his decision to attend the University of Michigan. He talked about Lawrence seeing something in him and that Lawrence encouraged him to go to Michigan. Lawrence "wrote a very good letter to get . . . [me] in. . . . [even though I] still wasn't 100% convinced" to go. He talked about the telephone call he received from McClusky "one night at . . . [McClusky's] own expense . . . [when I was] in Ames, Iowa and . . . for an hour talked about the virtues of Michigan and why I should come there." Hiemstra commented that McClusky did "that with a lot of people."

After a short break in the interview, due to an interruption, Hiemstra wanted to back up and correct some dates. He wanted to clarify the study done on older adults in the early 1970s. He could not remember whether it came out in 1974 or 1975. It was interesting that with Hiemstra, similar to the interviews of Brockett, Caffarella, and Long, there was a desire to get the history correct. Hiemstra jumped from this to mentioning his book, *Lifelong Learning*, that came out in 1976. Even though Hiemstra was supposed to be working during his sabbatical in 1975 on research related to Tough's study, his book dates from the leave of absence.

Another aspect important to Hiemstra, was to share some additional tidbits about other colleagues that he had pleasant memories of. During his work at Nebraska, he ran across Janet Poley, a doctoral student who he regarded as a colleague and one of those “young whippersnapper stars that was unbelievable.” She worked for the Nebraska Educational Television as the statewide extension person. Meierhenry was her advisor. He talked about her work at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and his continued connection with her over the years to include the Kellogg project at Syracuse. She also brought him to Tanzania to be an evaluator on an aid project. He also mentioned her recent induction into the Adult Education Hall of Fame. The collaborative work he did with Poley seemed an important aspect of history to Hiemstra. He went on to talk about work he did with her in Tanzania and a couple of other television shows for Nebraska Educational Television. One show was on the community and the other on adults as learners. This was something absent from the balance of his career as he said he no longer had access to a studio at Iowa State or Syracuse.

One of the special parts of this interview was Hiemstra saying this was a “career long forgotten until . . . [you] helped . . . [me] remember it.” He talked about enjoying his “career as a professor. . . . [and described it as] very interesting [and] very stimulating.” Many milestones were accomplished such as consulting and international travel that occurred because of his involvement as a professor of adult education. He mentioned having three loves: teaching, research, and writing. It seems as though writing had him the most excited when he talked about his career. He was not sure how great of an administrator he was, even though he admitted having a lot of energy.

Another of the colleagues specifically mentioned by Hiemstra was Brockett.

Hiemstra mentioned not having a desire to pursue collaborative work until meeting Brockett. He talked about hitting “it off immediately and [that] there was a synergism [that] flowed between . . . [them] right from the beginning.” Hiemstra also talked about his collaborations with Sisco going parallel to those with Brockett.

Others had an influence on Hiemstra over the years. Some of these influences were positive while others negative. The dean at Nebraska was one Hiemstra remembered as one who “saw something in . . . [me] that . . . [I] probably didn’t see in . . . [myself] initially.” Hiemstra talked about this person having confidence in him to write his first book, *Educative Community*, in 1972. He did not mention the name of the dean. During his tenure at Nebraska, he did some co-authoring with other faculty. No mention was made of any of their names. Hiemstra felt having been a protégé of McClusky and publishing a book soon after graduation led to many other kinds of opportunities early in his career. The opposite side of his positive experiences with others was with those having a negative influence on him. This category unfolded with a couple of stories about those who he had co-authored with, stealing work and claiming it as their own. No names were mentioned in this category.

In other aspects of this part of the story, Hiemstra mentioned that the notion of collaborative work came about after reading Knowles’ *Modern Practice of Adult Education* in the early 1970s. During his years at Iowa State, he acknowledged not doing much collaborative work. He did point out his experience with Long on the 1980 *Handbook* series. He talked about his relationship with Long over the years and the many

meetings they had at conferences. Another point Hiemstra raised was that few really understood the power of SDL. His comment suggested only those having done research in self-direction, could understand this notion of *getting it*. He suggested specifically Tough, Guglielmino, and all of the others who have done research in SDL realize the empowerment potential that “is possible in almost any kind of a learner.”

When asked specifically about his experiences over the years with SDL, Hiemstra talked about the ISDLS as being an important thing. He admitted that he had not been to the symposium for three or four years. The first conference was in 1986 at the University of Georgia. His involvement was heavy during the early conferences, and he was involved in the first conference. He acknowledged Kasworm and Brookfield were also at this first conference. Hiemstra went on to continue to talk about the work on books with Brockett on *Self-Direction in Adult Learning* and Sisco on *Individualizing Instruction* as being important milestones. Another aspect of the conversation was Hiemstra mentioning his SDL course at Elmira College in addition to several workshops on self-directed learning, that are offered from time to time. According to Hiemstra, the primary resources used for the class are the two books co-authored with Brockett and Sisco. He mentioned that the very first class on SDL he taught was at Iowa State in 1978. In addition the class was offered several times at Syracuse with a result of several papers ending up being done by students and placed in ERIC.

Hiemstra offered some philosophical viewpoints about how self-directed learning evolved over time for him. According to Hiemstra’s view, if Dewey’s notion of progressivism caught on and Skinner’s notion of behaviorism had not been realized, the

world “might be better off.” He talked about a paper co-authored with Brockett on behaviorism and humanism in self-directed learning and that the manuscript was used for an ISDLS presentation. Hiemstra said that even though there has been change and some new methodologies, his “core beliefs about self-directed learning” have not changed much. He regarded Tough’s *Adult’s Learning Projects*, Houle’s *Inquiring Mind*, Knowles’ *Self-Direction*, *Andragogy in Action*, and the *Modern Practice* as his foundational guides. According to Hiemstra the foundational literature or “knowledge base,” as he called it was complete in 1971, 1972, and 1973. From this point forward, research using the SDLRS instrument combined with the symposium has been used to refine the knowledge base but “it hasn’t changed very much.”

Hiemstra made some interesting concluding comments about the historical category. For him, he felt it was important to capture those individuals who would go down in history to be recognized as the leaders in the self-directed learning movement. The first he named in this group was Long. In fact he said Long “may be . . . [just] as important or may be even more important than” Tough or Knowles. His praise of Long is a result of his work with the symposia, published proceedings, and his dedication to those students that continued to work with him over the years such as the Guglielminos and Confessores. He also commented to the significance of Straka’s books.

Carol Kasworm

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Kasworm (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of

the description is inserted in total in this section (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, September 29, 2004). The history of SDL for Kasworm began with a comment about being exposed to the literature of Knowles while a doctoral student at the University of Georgia in 1977. She suggested that it “was a very hot topic area . . . [and] many people were very . . . excited about the new sets of understandings” it created at that time. She mentioned being a colleague of Guglielmino at the same time Guglielmino was developing her instrument. Kasworm also cited Tough and the replications of his learning projects that scholars were doing in this same time frame. She traced her progress to the University of Texas and mentioned her continued interest in trying to understand SDL, while there.

Her interest in using learning contracts continued in her research efforts at University of Texas, Austin. Kasworm mentioned that her first exposure to applying learning contracts to instructional environments occurred during a presentation at the *Commission of Professors of Adult Education* (CPAE). She could not recall the name of the presenter. As part of her exploration to understanding the application of learning contracts, she visited the adult education program at North Texas State University and talked with several colleagues there about their experiences. After that exercise, she conducted a two-year study applying the learning contract, philosophy, and practices to a graduate course. As part of the data collection, she utilized Guglielmino’s SDLRS for pre and post testing of her students and in addition utilized student and instructor journals (Kasworm, 1984). While at University of Texas, Austin, she mentioned using what she called the CBAM (Concerns-Based Adoption Model) to look at innovation and change from self-directed

learning that evolved from the work of Fuller and was subsequently incorporated into the CBAM model. Kasworm mentioned that at this time the field of adult education really believed adults were self-directed. However, she was critiquing and experiencing negative experiences and outcomes with some of her students when trying to apply learning contracts to her instructional efforts. Her students were having difficulty dealing with anxiety over grades especially when they were expected to define the quality and evaluation requirements of their instructional work. They were having difficulties accepting the responsibility for their own learning.

This particular research effort was presented at the *Lifelong Learning Conference* in Maryland (Kasworm, 1982). At this conference, she, Dr. Caffarella, and Dr. Brockett discussed their mutual interests in self-directed learning. She also mentioned meeting Brockett for the first time. All three talked about self-directed learning at this conference. Kasworm mentioned the publication of the presentation at the *Lifelong Learning Conference in Innovative Higher Education* (Kasworm, 1982). She recalled that she had one doctoral student planning a dissertation on self-directed learning and remembered the student's committee debating "very fundamental issues" about the construct of SDL. For her the debate on this dissertation proposal was a milestone of sorts as it opened the door for her on the "conceptual muddiness" of self-directed learning. She mentioned citation of this dissertation as Tysinger (University of Texas at Austin between 1981-84). At this time she left the University of Texas, Austin and went to University of Houston, Clear Lake where she continued her research on SDL. When she left the University of Houston, Clear Lake in 1988 – that was when she stopped researching SDL after completing her last

study of looking jointly at the University of Houston, Clear Lake and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte's students (Kasworm, 1992).

In her recollection of research done at the University of Houston on adult undergraduate students, she recalled looking at "the nature of these learners' understandings of themselves and their engagement in formal classroom learning experiences . . . 'controlled by teachers' . . . in relationship to what the current literature was discussing." It was interesting that she located this in time by saying it was just "before Spear and Mocker had come up with their matrix."

From this point Kasworm backed up and talked about some of her last work with self-directed learning. While she was a faculty member at The University of Houston at Clear Lake, several studies were conducted where she tried to make "sense of how they saw themselves . . . as self-directed learners and then . . . what was going on in the classroom from a classroom environment" (p. 4). Her recollection was that this research was presented at the earliest of the ISDLS conferences and published in the proceedings. Below is a list of her research/presentations on SDL:

1. Kasworm, C. (1982, February). *An exploratory study of the development of self-directed learning as an instructional/curriculum strategy*. Paper presented at the Fourth Annual Lifelong Learning Research Conference, College Park, MD.
2. Kasworm, C. (1983). Self-directed learning and lifespan development. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 2(1), 29-45.

3. Kasworm, C. (1983). *Towards a paradigm of developmental levels of self-directed learning*. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Quebec. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 230 705)
4. Kasworm, C. (1984). An examination of self-directed contract learning as an instructional strategy. *Innovative Higher Education*, 8(1), 45-54.
5. Kasworm, C. (1988). Self-directed learning in institutional contexts: An exploratory study of adult self-directed learners in higher education. In H. Long (Ed.), *Self-directed learning: Application and theory* (pp. 65-98). Athens, GA: University of Georgia, Department of Adult Education.
6. Kasworm (n.d.). Data collected on SDL students . . . but didn't present or write while at University of Houston, Clear Lake . . . but the 1992 chapter below represents the work from University of Houston, Clear Lake and University of North Carolina, Charlotte studies.

The following was presented when she was at University of Tennessee:

1. Kasworm, C. (1988, October). *Part-time credit learners as full-time workers: The role of self-directed learning in their lives. An exploratory examination*. Paper presented at the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, Tulsa, OK.
2. Kasworm, C. (1992). Adult learners in academic settings: Self-directed learning within the formal learning context. In H. Long and Associates (Eds.), *Self-directed learning: Application and research* (pp. 223-244). Norman, OK:

Oklahoma Research Center for Continuing Professional and Higher Education, University of Oklahoma.

3. Kasworm, C. (1992). *The development of adult learner autonomy and self-directedness in distance education*. Bangkok, Thailand: Paper presented at the 16th World Conference of the International Council on Distance Education. (ERIC Reproduction Document No. ED 355453)
4. Brockett, R., Caffarella, C., Cavaliere, L. Guglielmino, L., Hiemstra, R., Kasworm, C., & Long, H. (1994, May). Self-direction in adult learning: What we have learned and what we need to know. *Proceedings of the Annual Adult Education Research Conference*, 35, 425-430.

She recalled presenting two or three times at ISDLS and specifically said the “final one . . . was the tenth year.” Her last presentation had to do with the adult student being considered the “master planner.”

The conversation moved on to talk about intellectual engagement of the student and while talking about this she referred to Bruner’s writings. From this point, a reference in time was made to the *Self-Directed Learning Conference* and its location in Norman, Oklahoma. She talked about some scholars “from Montreal . . . doing work on metacognitive activity with self-directed learning.” She could not recollect any names [Claudia Danis]. Kasworm seemed to recall something being published on “cognitive complexity. . . . [and] conceptual understanding” while she was at the University of Texas (Kasworm, 1983). According to Kasworm, this may have been published in the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. In her recollection of this writing, she

mentioned a relationship of her interest in the cognitive side to Perry and others' work in "post-formal . . . cognitions." She also mentioned some follow up activity on her work at the University of Houston that she did at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. In addition, she talked about a grant received while at The University of Tennessee from the United States Department of Education to conduct research (Principal Investigator, *Adult Undergraduate Students: Patterns of Learning Involvement*, U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Research Grant Program: Field Initiated Studies, 1993-94, \$72,004). Even though she did not discuss this grant in great detail, she did mention that a portion of it had to do with "the experience of the adult learner at an institution engaged in classroom learning." Three key research objectives included: how does an adult learner engage in the classroom experience in relation to the adult roles of work, family, and community? The experience piece did include a section on self-directed learning and its role in the adult undergraduate's learning efforts. This research noted that adult students were very self-directed but that they did not desire to be self-directed in the programs of undergraduate study. The students in the study valued the structured and predictable nature of courses in relation to planning their time commitments and also in knowing that they were learning the "correct things" as identified by a faculty member. As part of this research she collected data from two community colleges, two universities, and two private liberal arts colleges while altogether she interviewed 96 adult undergraduates in her sample.

When her interest in SDL was waning, Kasworm mentioned that Brockett asked her to be part of a self-directed learning panel discussion at the 1994 *Adult Education*

Research Conference (AERC) held at Knoxville, Tennessee. Even though she “was not on the bandwagon of self-directed learning” at that time, Kasworm did serve on the panel (Brockett et al., 1994). By this time her interests had moved beyond to what she classified as the “surface understanding” of adult learners and their “psychological and cognitive . . . factors in terms of the environment.” Even though she talked about moving toward other research agendas, she continued to mention things like the outcomes of her earlier studies on adult students being “in the best tradition of . . . self-directed learning.” Kasworm mentioned some more recent work that she presented at AERC, the *American Educational Research Association* (AERA), and a manuscript (on these presentations) that she planned to publish in the *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ) wherein she discussed “adult meaning making in the classroom.” To her this “does not speak to self-directed learning . . . it’s going beyond the notion of self-directedness.”

For Kasworm, the shifting of direction “put self-directed learning in the background . . . [and led to me taking a] different move forward, partly because of the qualitative nature of study . . . [and] because . . . [I did not] see self-directed learning as the central, organizer anymore.” She referred to this process of moving on as an “intellectual journey.” It was puzzling for me as to why Kasworm would say she had moved on, so to speak but kept describing the process, for her, in SDL terms. For instance, she mentioned being very much engaged in adult development, but when I asked her to say more about her interest in meaning making, she said it brought about “new understandings of self-directed learning.”

As mentioned earlier in this section she talked again about Perry and Bruner's work as having a significant influence on her shifting of interest along with developments in constructivism. For her this was a kind of a competing of interests between "the nature of real world knowledge versus academic knowledge" and her attempt to "make some sense of what was going on" with adult learners in undergraduate environments. In addition she talked about the influence of Sternberg on her understanding of "the nature of the academic experience." As she continued to talk about constructivism and the making of meaning for the learner, she suggested that the field of adult education has had "blinders on" when it comes to the complexity of the adult learner. She believed that constructivism gives "what . . . [I think] self-directed learning really was intended to do, [through] giving the learner the . . . center stage of understanding, [in] how they engage in a learning process."

Kasworm also talked about the 1970s and early 1980s being a very exciting time of study in adult education. She specifically said "self-directed learning was the . . . mantra for all of us in adult education." It was described as "an exciting . . . time of . . . people coming together, [by] seeing this [area] as a marvelous central organizer for us to differentiate adult learning from child learning." But then, for her, as others started to realize "marvelous and vivid examples of self-directed learning in children and youth . . . [and conclude] this was not a phenomenon of mature adults," a backing away occurred. She said that the assumptions of SDL being associated only with adults "fell apart" and that as Knowles "backed away, . . . we all backed away." Kasworm again referred to the AERC Knoxville symposium on SDL and hinted at the questions raised in

that dialogue suggesting inquiry into “other literature of learning and of . . . ways that people are trying to make sense of . . . learning designs,” and interest in SDL, at least from her perspective, may not have declined.

It was a simple decision for her to explain her current interest in SDL, in that she does not “write about self-directed learning anymore.” This negative reaction to SDL goes deeper for Kasworm. She sees SDL as a helpful concept and values the literature but does not see it as “the central organizer for . . . [me] . . . [or] the field anymore.” Her observation is that the adult education field is no longer focusing “on learning and teaching as a centrality.”

The historical component, for Kasworm, included mention of rejections in publication. She talked about her “first article to the *International Journal of Adult Education* and getting back a note from the editor. . . . [asking me to] make it more adult ed oriented.” Well, for Kasworm, it was very much oriented toward the education of adults. This led the way for her to conclude that the field is not as “interdisciplinary” as it should be. The world for her, includes an interest in “the teaching/learning experience” for adults. This world includes

frustration . . . [because] self-directed learning isn’t moving that agenda ahead . . .
and . . . [there are] few others in adult ed that are moving that agenda ahead . . . [so]
there’s a part of me that would like to be out there banging the drum.

From this point, the later part of the interview moved the agenda of history into a different direction. Kasworm made observations about the field of adult education and where it is headed, in her eyes. According to her, “the focus of the field right now. . . . is

directed towards sociological issues, which are important, . . . [such as] race, class, gender. . . . [and] obviously some of it is . . . critical theory. . . . [while] clearly, some is post-modernism.” She believed these areas to be important “but my world is not a predominant sociological world. It is a psychological world” and my efforts are not recognized.

Huey Long

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Long (Appendix C), he made numerous changes to his story as a condition for approval of its use. His version of the description is inserted in total in this section (H. B. Long, personal communication, October 3, 2004). For Long, his personal history was framed by comments concerning his early days in Florida. He talked about Wayne Schroeder, his major professor, dissertation director, and later colleague at Florida State University. Schroeder acquainted him with Allen Tough’s writing shortly after Long became interested in how public officials learned to do their jobs in Brevard County, Florida. Long also talked about how “Dewey’s use” of the term “problem” helped to frame his interest in SDL. Long’s interest in learning problems faced by city and county officials came about when he was the Director of Florida State University’s Urban Research Center located in Titusville, Florida. He had previously served as Director of Public Relations for the City of Tallahassee, Florida and was thus acquainted with the problem.

Long recalled the history of self-directed learning research started for him in the mid 1960s. He pointed out, however, that when he was “an undergraduate at Florida State

University (1955-57) . . . [I] was impressed by the work of William Heard Kilpatrick. . . . [whose] efforts to apply Dewey's theory. . . . [of] learning from experience" appealed to him. He discussed how he applied some of Kilpatrick's principles of "project learning" in his student teaching in 1957, as an undergraduate student.

The next literature source Long mentioned was Knowles 1971 [1970] book on *Andragogy*, then the 1975 book on *Self-Direction*. Long made a distinction between the work of Knowles and Tough on self-direction. In Long's interpretation, Tough was concerned with "what I call free-learning, autonomous learning, . . . where the learner more or less has complete control over what he or she does." Knowles on the other hand, according to Long, discussed " . . . learning in groups." Knowles' books (1970; 1975) on *Modern Practice* and *Self-Directed Learning*, respectively, were about "learning as a member of a class" according to Long. He recalled " . . . Tough did not use the term self-directed learning until . . . 1978, . . . [and] was rather consistent in the use of the term learning projects." Long suggested Tough's work was "popular in . . . the late '70s, . . . and it had the support of Malcolm's [Knowles] reputation as, . . . an area of, . . . andragogy." It was interesting that Long suggested that "even though Allen was, . . . loudly praised in the mid to late '70s, . . . for his work in learning projects, . . . in the late '60s and early '70s, . . . it was highly suspicious." Many scholars had difficulty with Tough's criteria for defining a learning project and aspects of his interview procedure. But, according to Long, the volume of these criticisms decreased over time. Long talked about the concept of SDL as an "evolvment of an idea into acceptability." For him the journey went from disappointment during early journal submissions to a time in the "mid

to late '70s [when SDL developed into] . . . acceptability." He specifically recalled a rejection by the *Adult Education Journal* where the reviewers were highly critical of Tough's methodology and definition.

He suggested that Guglielmino's (1977) "scale, . . . just as Allen's work, . . . opened up, . . . a variety of studies." Long went on to say that the reason for Tough's work on learning projects not being sustained today was that "they're very little different from what Allen did in 1965." His opinion was that "Allen lost interest in the topic. . . . and it got to be in a cul-de-sac. People [began] repeating the same thing. . . . [with just] a different sample." Guglielmino's instrument, "opened up, . . . a great potential. . . . for additional study. . . . [and it is] . . . a major development that was later followed by Spear and Mocker's' work," which also stimulated research. In addition Long cited Robert Smith's work as another significant milestone in the history of SDL. He also gave credit to the Kellogg Foundation for providing funds "to convene the first symposium on self-directed learning" while he was at the University of Georgia. During that symposium, Long pointed out that several key contributors were present at this first *International Self-Directed Learning Symposium*. At the symposium, he mentioned "the presence of . . . experts . . . who had published . . . in the area" such as Brookfield, Caffarella, the Guglielminos, Hiemstra, Penfield [possibly should be Penland], Spear, Smith, Tremblay, and others.

Long's recollections during the interview suggested that the convening of the symposium was a very important development in self-directed learning as it continues to meet annually after 19 years. His belief was that "it was important to have a platform for,

... presenting work in this area, ... that went beyond the existing associations and organizations, ... where you might have one or two papers, ... on the topic.” Long considered the regular meeting was “important, ... [to the] development in, ... encouraging self-directed learning study.” The symposium “provided the opportunity for people to, ... publish their work ... [in] the annual book.” This annual event, according to Long, has “provided [an] ... opportunity to meet with other people who were engaged in the research to have ... stimulation, ... cross-fertilization ... opportunities, and also a nurturing” effect on those attending. Other attendees Long mentioned as being present at the first symposium were: Agyekum, Bonham, Dejoy, Gerstner, Gross, and Mills. The symposium, according to Long’s view was important in stimulating other convocations on SDL. From this point of view, Long indicated a belief, that in a generic sense, the “*World Congress on Self-Directed Learning*, ... [was encouraged] by, ... Foucher, ... in Canada, and ... Carre in Paris” who often were participants in the *International Self-directed Learning Symposium*. Several comments were offered to imply that some of the work being done in “Europe and ... Canada and Korea” were an important part of the overall communications; Gary Confessore, Ji Woong Cheong, and Chija Kim Cheong played important roles in the Korean efforts.

Long gives credit for his practical interest in SDL to, primarily the writings of, Tough and Knowles. In his explanation of their writings, he is quick to point out that each had a different concept for SDL. Distance education presented Long with a problem in early efforts to classify self-directed learning definitions and approaches. It is obvious to him that distance learning is based on important aspects of self-directed learning, but how

did it fit into his classification scheme? Initially he placed distance education in the technique category along with Knowles' theme. He was dissatisfied with the classification however because distance education seems to contain both sociological elements and technique elements. Upon reflection he later proposed that there might be some similarities to "Verner's method." In 1964 Verner made an effort to distinguish between educational techniques and educational methods. Simply put, the former is concerned with the way a teacher establishes a relationship between the learner and content, while the latter is the means by which an institution establishes a relationship with the learner. Lecture and group work are techniques according to Verner's construct. Correspondence study and classroom instruction are methods according to his definition. Following these ideas Long believed that distance education is more a method of self-directed learning than a technique.

The idea of learner control is an important element in Long's psychological conceptualization of self-directed learning. When it comes to discussion of learner control, Long referenced the writings of Garrison, Candy, and Glasser. Long now prefers to use the term "learner choice" rather than learner control. Long mentioned that in 1966-68 he became aquatinted with the term "communities of learning" (p. 15) through an article published in the *American Sociological Journal* and later by Crane's book, *The Invisible College*. This concept of community provided Long "with the opportunity to enrich . . . [my] own teaching. . . . [through sharing] ideas" with others in the symposia. For me it was interesting that Long concluded his vignette on the history of SDL by suggesting "in the past we've learned by looking backwards . . . but in the future we're going to have to

learn more and more by projecting; that's going to be heuristic learning." It is interesting to me that he used the term heuristic learning and helping to learn, as important concepts in self-education. This commentary on the future will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Allen Tough

The history of SDL for Tough began with mention of his major professor, Houle. In this instance, Tough talked about a program planning class he took where Houle introduced the concept of a "learner learning something on his. . . [or] her own" (p. 1). Tough acknowledged that during this class was when he decided "I want to study that one" for his dissertation. He mentioned, when he made this decision in 1963, there was not much written about the subject apart from Houle's book "which was really not on . . . this topic." Tough's interest was on "people who were eager to learn on their own." In the conversation, Tough mentioned he spent "many years . . . studying self-directed learning." It was interesting hearing him mention the "the biggest thrill of all . . . is doing interviews" on the way people learn, for his dissertation. In his recollections Tough mentioned that Houle

was certainly the right person at that time . . . [and I guessed] what [I] needed was someone who liked conceptual framework and that is exactly what he loved. He was encouraging . . . and . . . [liked] to organize big . . . things and . . . he . . . [had] just done a book, [in] which he . . . too listened to . . . learners talk about their learning, . . . and . . . he had come out with some fascinating results.

Tough also talked about the support he received from Houle during his dissertation and commented that Houle “was generally supportive.” According to Tough, Houle “was very, very smart and of course at that time . . . [in] adult education, he and Roby Kidd were the most famous internationally.”

Tough talked about several of his publications during our interview. The first mentioned was *The Adult's Learning Projects*. He stressed this book covers the whole range of learning, not just self-direction. Tough talked about the need to document the amount of learning occurring with his participants and the training of interviewers to help collect data. At the time he prepared this text, he felt that “nobody had . . . studied it” thoroughly before. He also referred to Johnstone’s [possibly should be Johnstone and Rivera, 1965] work as having similar conclusions. In another comment about Johnstone’s research, Tough suggested that Johnstone “put . . . [the idea of self-directed learning] on the map.” In another publication, the Iceberg Paper, Tough talked about the bulk of adult learning being done under the surface, where “it’s invisible and you don’t notice it.” In the later stages of the interview, Tough talked about his book: *Intentional Changes*. Tough summarized his findings in this book by saying “change itself is not learning. . . . [but I observed] the same patterns, [the] same results in a somewhat different focus.” as when people learned on their own. Toward the end of the conversation with Tough, he talked about *Expand Your Life*. His comments on this booklet summarized eloquently his philosophy of life. Tough suggests everyone has “moments when they think about the world, . . . think about their faith, think about . . . the meaning in life, think about whether they’re getting the sort of life they want.” He knows in the

workplace people are not in it for the money, doing their jobs to get a good pension, and so on . . . ; they want meaning. They want to . . . feel they're making a difference, they're contributing, and [they're in a] personally enriching and rewarding [situation].

To Tough there is "something more to it than . . . material things. . . . [and it is there in] learning and then change." According to him "it's there if you're looking for it."

In another tidbit, Tough talked about his efforts putting together a dissertation committee. One potential committee member, who did not agree to serve, "kept shaking his head and saying this isn't my cup of tea." On the other hand Phillip Jackson, who did stay on his committee, "was just so excited with this topic and he pulled open his bottom drawer and he pulled out some cards and he said: 'I've been making notes on this topic for years.'" Jackson

was very helpful. . . . [and since] he had . . . been engaged in a . . . learning group which . . . was always very important to him, . . . [and even though it was] just a hobby thing . . . [he ended] up having an enormous impact on . . . [my] life.

It was interesting that when Tough gave details of Jackson's encouragement to pursue his interest in self-planned learning, Tough was concerned about breaking the confidence of Houle. Tough referred to SDL as a field of study and as a "strange topic." In continued dialogue about his dissertation, he was excited to talk about it. He referred to adult learning as an "inherently . . . exciting thing whether it's in a course or it's self-directed." To Tough self-directed learning is "more of a personal adventure. . . . [and he mentioned

never having] any regret of choosing this . . . topic or this field. It . . . [has] held up well over the years” for him.

Toward the middle of the interview, Tough shared some comments about the colleagues he was involved with while attending the University of Chicago. He talked about Ginny Griffin being one of the participants in his dissertation. It was also only after being asked to talk about his future vision that he backed up and talked about Knowles, who was also one of Houle’s students at Chicago. He started the conversation by saying “I don’t know what to say about him. . . . I love the guy, we all did. He’s a wonderful man, a very special man and . . . in fact he pioneered self-directed learning.” Tough was not cued to talk about Knowles. Tough said he and Knowles “were very much in sync with each other. We were on different paths but parallel paths. . . . [but] we certainly admired and supported . . . each other.” He also noted Knowles to be “very approachable. . . . [even more so than] Kidd and . . . Houle.” Tough stated “Knowles was on a first name basis with” everyone. He suggested Knowles “had enormous amounts of energy and . . . outgoing warmth, . . . and he attracted an enormous number of . . . students who carry on his work.” He said Knowles documented the accomplishments of his students, in “each one of his books.”

Summing-up

When it comes to summarizing how the participants talked about the history SDL, these are the thoughts I have:

1. Several of the participants really concentrated their story on trying to get the history right, so to speak;
2. Brockett's story was about those who influenced him over the years;
3. Brookfield was very surprised that he would be considered a major figure in the research of self-directed learning;
4. For Caffarella, her history was about putting SDL into practice in the classroom;
5. To Guglielmino, her history was a reflection on her life experiences;
6. Hiemstra felt very fortunate to have had a relationship with Houle, Knowles, and McClusky;
7. The history for Kasworm was a recollection of her research done on the way adults make meaning in the classroom;
8. Long was very intent on his history of the field and desire to give all the players their due place in his accounting; and
9. Tough's recollection of Jackson being helpful on his dissertation.

Personal Learning Theories

This section is about the participant's personal theory of learning. The category emerged as individuals told personal stories of their own learning experiences, learning experiences of their students, learning experiences of colleagues, or learning experiences resulting from research studies. For those espousing some notion of self-directed learning in their personal life or teaching philosophy, I suggest the points mentioned represent key components of the participant's personal definition of self-direction. No questions were

asked of the participants about their theories of learning or about their definition of self-directed learning. I extrapolated the definitions from an examination of the transcripts.

The results reported present examples from each participant's transcript about how each individual makes meaning. Throughout the literature of SDL, there are numerous ways of defining the term self-directed learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) and those same multiple possibilities exist herein. This opportunity for a personal definition of SDL evolving from the data was an item also noticed to be present in the pilot study and was mentioned in the problem statement contained in Chapter 1 as a category that would be present in the overall study.

For all of the participants but one, the way in which they defined self-direction was not through a recitation of their own or anyone else's scholarly work, it was through the telling of personal stories related to either their own or some other person's life experience. Each participant's contribution to this data category was synthesized from a number of pages in their transcript, rather than from just one or two example quotations.

Ralph Brockett

Brockett made a number of observations about what self-directed learning means to and is for him. In a recollection of some past readings, Brockett mentioned the writings of Kohl and the concept of "helping kids . . . take charge of their learning" was one of his first comments during the interview. He also spoke to wanting to "reach learners and . . . help them bring out their potential." In terms of his own learning, he mentioned getting bored if he could not study those issues "where . . . [my] interest was." During

high school, he mentioned knowing he could do it, even though he was discouraged by some. He talked about being “determined to do well” even in the presence of adversity. From time to time he spoke about helping others and shared that it was important for him to look to those who “generally were being ignored . . . [and be] an advocate for understanding . . . and serving older adults.”

Brockett talked about his own life experiences and mentioned that the “influences of . . . [my] past” were significant to his work in self-direction. He mentioned that it is important to have the “freedom to . . . take . . . what . . . [I] was doing outside of the classroom . . . and . . . have a chance to bring that into . . . [and] relate it to what . . . [I] was doing in the classroom.” This conversation on past influences was in the context of those he remembered being a mentors to him, in this case a high school English teacher.

During subsequent conversation about his experiences in graduate school and beyond, Brockett mentioned the importance of perseverance as a learner. He did talk a little about the scholarly aspects in his definition of self-directed learning and was the only participant who did this during the interview. He went on to say he is

always thinking in . . . terms of models . . . and synthesizing. . . . taking different ideas and bringing them together and making sense out of them, and that’s how the PRO Model that . . . [we] presented in . . . [our] 1991 book came about.

Later he injected the writings of another scholar in his definition by including Tough’s steps of “planning and deciding, evaluating . . . [, and] implementing.” Brockett defined this as self-directed learning. Brockett’s conception of SDL also included “making sense of [issues,]. . . . [giving consideration to] the teaching-learning process. . . ., and including]

the social context” as important aspects in the definition of SDL. Later in his commentary to this text, Brockett stressed that it was important to remember that in the book, and PRO Model, the “umbrella” concept is SDIL (self-direction in learning) with the “in” being important because self-directed learning and learner self-direction are two related but different concepts (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004).

In his role as a faculty member, Brockett talked about the personal importance of being “proactive about taking the knowledge that I have in . . . [an] area . . . [and] helping people develop it.” To Brockett, whatever SDL is called, it was always about “people taking responsibility for their own learning and playing the key role in making decisions about what they learn, when they learn, how they learn, and being in control of that” process. For Brockett, it is about focusing “on the individual. . . , the teaching-learning situation, and the social context.” To him these are three important points. It seemed that overall, the most important part of Brockett’s formula for self-directed learning is helping people reach their potential. This was mentioned on numerous occasions throughout his transcript. To him the important “helping skills . . . [are] empathy, respect, genuineness, . . . [and] immediacy.”

Stephen Brookfield

During this interview, Brookfield’s life was interwoven with the concept of self-directed learning. He stated it was no “accident that . . . [I was] interested in this stream of learning.” There was always skepticism for him

of typologies of learning which put people into one or other quadrants or categories

. . . . [but I think] on the whole . . . [I] would say . . . [I am] probably more the self-directed learner than anything else. . . . [and I like] to . . . be . . . in control, of . . . [my] own learning activity.

He also stated “at times . . . [I am] very other directed and can just enjoy enormously being in a tightly controlled structure where others are setting goals and assessing my progress.” At the onset of having to learn something, he asks himself: “How do I teach myself to do this rather than to take a class on it?” SDL is a concept that Brookfield admits identifying with himself. His habits “are to . . . arrange . . . [my] own learning.” He admits some activities such as writing are “lonely, in many ways . . . because you’re on your own.” Brookfield feels his personality leads to situations where he can “decide the structure, rather than others, and . . . [I think] in some ways . . . [I have] a talent for doing that” sort of thing. From a teacher’s perspective, Brookfield suggests he has

to be directive. . . . [and sometimes] force students to take control over learning . . . [because] many times they don’t wish to do this. . . . [and] from the other side of the . . . mirror . . . [when I ask] learners to make decisions and choices and choose directions and . . . resources so on that are open to them . . . when they don’t have a sense of what’s available to them . . . is in many ways doing a real disservice to them.

Occasionally from a practitioner’s point of view, he refuses “to give very much direction.” Sometimes he “pretty much . . . [takes] control and . . . [use my] power and authority to let . . . [the learner] know . . . what’s out there and then after that initial immersion . . . [turns] things over to” the learner. At this point he asks:

On the basis of what you've learned and what you now know . . . in which direction do you think you want to go more deeply, or what . . . parts of what you've just learned and what you've just come to know, do you want to challenge and critique?

He summarizes the above example of self-directed learning as "a kind of weaning process." What is his reaction to what is the best methodology to use, SDL or other directed? To answer this he simply says it depends and for him it is usually a "contextual decision based a lot on a sense of where people were in terms of their current knowledge understanding." He connects strength in SDL skills to be related to those who have an ability to think and reflect in a critical fashion. When critical skills are less, on the part of the learner, he proposes the learning process needs to have "some scaffolding," according to Brookfield. His goal is to move his students to situations where he asks "them to take responsibility for . . . a good part of course planning and syllabus design and . . . towards teaching each other." He summarized the teaching-learning process as "a mixture of other directed and self-directed . . . modalities." Brookfield suggested "one thing . . . [I] realized as a teacher over the years is . . . it's important to context and . . . [I had] skepticism about the feeling that there is . . . one approach [that] fits all" situations. He counts on the learners to provide feedback on "how they were experiencing their own learning" to adjust the balance between other and self-directed methods.

Regarding his own learning experiences, Brookfield shared a couple of personal stories. First, he mentioned becoming skeptical of his belief "that . . . [I] can learn to do anything and . . . [I] can teach . . . [myself] to do anything without . . . external assistance. . . . [I do not] believe that anymore at all." He categorized this discovery as "being a rush

of blood . . . [in which I realized] there are situations . . . that . . . [are] not . . . in my best interest.” For example: he talked about his efforts in learning how to swim were fairly hopeless without the help of someone else. Other examples included medical situations and income tax where, in his words, an expert was needed to help him learn. Second, he mentioned the fact that one’s accomplishments have nothing to do with “who is smart and who is intelligent.” He told a story about a “working class adult” learner being judged poorly by academic standards who was “world renowned in his field” when judged by peer assessment. In another example, he mentioned “non-readers . . . who were very skillful in other areas in which they had educated themselves like car maintenance . . . [where they] would exchange or barter skills . . . with each other.”

Rosemary Caffarella

Caffarella’s definition of SDL was interwoven into her story of the history just as it was for others included in this study. For Caffarella, the first exposure to a class adhering to the principles of SDL was enlightening. As a graduate student her reaction was “where has this class been my whole life.” This comment was made in contrast to the “traditional teacher led learning” situation. Caffarella’s preferred environment involved having an “enormous amount of choice in the way you address problems, how you address them, [and] who you worked with” to work on them. For her, self-directed learning “was a critical part of adult learning.” Her first incorporation of the principles of SDL into her teaching was with the use of learning contracts. She did this for about three years and mentioned that she currently utilizes a modified form of them.

Her philosophy is “related to developing or helping students develop [their] learning plans or learning contracts.” She prefers the term learning plan. Caffarella regards herself to be highly collaborative. For this professor, “self-direction in learning really jumped out because it allowed me to choose to be collaborative as part of my learning process.” For her, being in a “highly directed. . . . [environment signifies] one framework, behaviorism, which . . . [I] found out . . . [I] hated, . . . before . . . [I] even got into it.” Caffarella “had some different ideas about the way things should happen than what . . . [my] professors did and what . . . [I] did to cope with it . . . [was I] went outside our . . . masters’ program and found doctoral courses to take.” She was attracted to “collaborative projects and classes. . . . even though they weren’t designed in a self-directed manner” because they allowed more interaction. The classes were “student centered.”

Her beliefs are similar to the other participants in this study, when discussing learners with lower levels of formal education. She has experienced these learners having “extraordinarily rich self-directed learning experiences and all this notion that learning is defined by formal schooling and grades, to . . . [me], is nonsense.” To her it is all about helping students and her philosophy is that “education is about learning, not education, and that learning very rarely happens in the formal classroom.” To her, all learners are “very bright . . . [and] very articulate, just not in the way we’ve defined formal schooling.” Another facet related to educational level is that of other cultures. For Caffarella, there was considerable dialogue about the fact that SDL does not work in all cultures. Later in this chapter, in the section on the future of self-directed learning, more will be said about the complexities of culture. In this instance, “someone who really is self-directed in terms

of who they are as a person and that can be in [the] collaborative sense . . . can just learn an incredible amount just by listening to someone else” talk about things being “all within their culture.” For Caffarella, “the listening piece to . . . [me] is critical.”

In her personal life, she believes she survived some serious health issues “because . . . [I] was a self-directed learner.” Being able to make “decisions . . . [on] subject matter that . . . [I] didn’t . . . know anything about. . . . [or on] a subject . . . [I] had [not] planned to learn about” was an important aspect of the survival process for her, in this situation. Her opinion is that to make “good decisions [about health care, people] have to become self-directed learners.” In this example, even physicians must “allow . . . [their patients] to be . . . [self-directed even though they may not] think they have enough knowledge to put it together.”

During her interview, Caffarella made connections to SDL in ways other than through collaborative learning. She believes that a connection exists between transformative learning and SDL. Her account is that “transformative learning almost always . . . has something in it that’s self-directed.” In addition, she suggests there are an “enormous amount of connections between a number of . . . research strands.” In another of these connections, Caffarella talked about the Life Sciences Initiative at Cornell University. This initiative started at Cornell in 1966 and involves 10 senior scientists, one of whom is a Nobel laureate. In this example Caffarella talked about the paradigm shift this group has made in research activities on her campus. The graduate student at Cornell studying this group may not “frame it in self-directed learning. . . . [or] even . . . frame it in

transformational learning. . . . but my guess is he's going to tie it back to a lot of this literature.”

Lucy Guglielmino

As commentary on the draft of this chapter furnished to Guglielmino (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). Guglielmino started off the conversation talking about the literature of Knowles. For her, the writings of Knowles “struck a chord . . . and [I] started reflecting more deeply on some of the experiences that had been . . . rather troubling . . . during the process of . . . [my] own education.” She talked about “being tremendously frustrated . . . [at times with the belief and practice that] the way you taught was that you had people memorize . . . isolated facts . . . [and noted that for me this approach] had very little utility.” Even though there is some overlap with the discussion of history in an earlier section, similar to others, her definition of self-direction could not be discussed without talking about history. She began her discussion of the experiences that led her to become involved with the study of self-direction in learning by talking about a project she had undertaken during her masters’ program. According to her, an independent study provided a “wonderful . . . [opportunity] to design” her own learning. For Guglielmino, this was a project that she “had chosen to work on,” giving her the opportunity to choose the topic and “come up with the questions and the research methods.” But when her supervising professor was asked to make a presentation on

Wordsworth, she was forced to abandon her project and conduct the research he needed. Her comment of “I did resent giving up what I had chosen to work on” indicates a belief in the importance of learner choice as a motivating factor in self-direction in learning. She also describes a “natural urge” to seek out learning and the influence of her parents as models and facilitators of self-direction in learning. Self-direction, to her, includes a process of “thinking, reflecting, finding the resources to answer the questions, . . . [and] analyzing in that continuing lifelong learning process;” “self-directed learning is something that . . . permeates the whole fabric of your life.” For her the opposite of SDL in an institutional setting, appears to be straight lecture followed by memorization and a multiple choice test based on recall of isolated facts.

Similar to others, Guglielmino recognized the many ways to define SDL. During the preliminary phase of her dissertation research, she rapidly became aware that “some people have one definition, [while] some people have a totally different definition.” This lack of a common definition led her to conduct a “Delphi survey of the best minds who were thinking about self-directed learning . . . and come up with at least a beginning definition of what a highly self-directed learner looks like.” It was interesting that Guglielmino jumped into a definition of SDL as the first phase of her interview. The framing, however, for Guglielmino’s explanation of what SDL meant for her was uniquely connected to her childhood rearing in rural South Carolina. The story started with parents as models of SDL, facilitators of SDL through questioning, and the providers of resources to learn with. She noted the large number of books and magazines in her home and her parents’ purchase of a set of encyclopedias, despite the fact that “money was very tight,”

because the nearest library was 30 to 40 minutes away. For her, the process of SDL in her childhood often started with a question to her parents. Rather than providing a pat answer, her mother would often say, "That's a really interesting question. Let's go see if we can find out"; or her father would respond, "What do you think?" Books or resources of some type appear to be an important part of Guglielmino's own process of SDL. She mentioned that even for her parents, resources were often required. Her father usually "just figured out how to fix it" (using prior knowledge or experimentation) when something broke down; but if necessary, he would either get a manual, call a friend or "go to the hardware store and . . . talk to somebody." For her SDL was an important part of the reason her family was able to be ". . . so self-sufficient." For her, this "idyllic childhood" existed in a rural environment where financial resources were in short supply. Those in this situation "took pride in the fact that . . . they were able to do things themselves. They enjoyed figuring out how to do things themselves." She described becoming "self-sufficient, being able to figure out what you need to figure out, do what you need to do" as "one of the greatest gifts" her parents could ever have given her.

Another key aspect of Guglielmino's definition involves taking responsibility for something. She talked about the need to have responsibilities or chores to do at home. She implied that her parents created an environment where "things were expected of me," which contributed to her development as a self-directed learner. She reported feeling "a lot more alive when I was doing things and feeling responsible for things, and I think it was a much better preparation for life." Being a self-directed learner for her appears to mean being

. . . able to take care of yourself and have that sense that you are resourceful . . . [so] you can figure out . . . solutions to problems and I think a lot of that comes from . . . being asked to take responsibility and figure things out early.

The role of a parent in the process is to show how learning works, can work, and to show the value in perseverance. Guglielmino called her father “a wonderful model because he would keep going back and trying something else.” She also mentioned this same trait in her mother, noting that “she would experiment . . . [creating] different recipes” with some turning out well and some not so well. Even into her 80’s, she continued to “give talks about . . . herbs and flower arranging . . . , gardening, [and] history.” Being a highly self-directed learner, according to Guglielmino, leads to an adult being able to “tend to everything. . . . ; [it is] incredibly satisfying. . . . [and results in a person being] still interested and engaged . . . in life” as a lifelong learner.

This parental or facilitative role is “to create self-directed learners. . . . [and] to focus on helping people . . . learn to scan the environment and think and evolve the learning questions that they have and find a way to answer them.” The role extends to her teaching, wherein students are expected to become more responsible for their own learning and to begin “to see themselves as valued . . . possessors and facilitators of learning.” This approach of facilitating learning rather than delivering didactic instruction is reflected in the quote from Plutarch that she included in her e-mail signatures: “A learner is not a vessel to be filled, but a lamp to be lighted.” The key to Guglielmino’s definition appears to be an “empowerment process of taking charge . . . of your own learning and figuring out what you need to do and figuring out how to get there.”

Hiemstra's comments on learning style started with recollections of a recent historical writing project. He suggested you start the process by "getting your thought processes going and your . . . memories flooding up." Self-directed learning begins with an "approach of individualization and . . . [an] encouraging [of my] . . . students to take a lot of initiative." SDL also begins with being "goal directed . . . [and] really . . . [knuckling] down." For Hiemstra there appears to be a visionary component he considers important as he mentioned his memory of Wes Meierhenry, some years back. In this case Hiemstra talked about Meierhenry knowing "trends and [having an ability to] see things coming." The reason he mentioned these visionary points was they provide him an opportunity "to assess . . . [my] own instructional style, . . . [and] teaching methods." Being cognizant of the learner's needs is important to Hiemstra's teaching style, as he talked about "beginning to . . . seriously analyze . . . [my] teaching and . . . [beginning] to change . . . [my] teaching and eventually . . . incorporating learning contracts . . . and giving responsibility back to the learner."

Hiemstra's self-directed teaching philosophy is modeled after McClusky wherein Hiemstra observed an expectation of the student should be the taking of "responsibility for . . . [their] own learning, . . . [being] collaborative in what you're doing, that . . . [the facilitator] would be engaging, and then . . . [McClusky] modeled all these good qualities of patience and genuineness, and interest in whatever you were doing." His recollection of McClusky's process is that it was "very participatory. . . . [where a] small group . . . [worked with] stimulator questions . . . [and] groups of . . . learners would in a

collaboratory [sic] kind of way get together and discuss topics and . . . [McClusky] encouraged” this process. Hiemstra also mentioned his undergraduate course work where he remembered being “very goal directed.” He talked about wanting to do “a good job being . . . [the] first born. . . . and . . . having good leadership skills” and that this may have been dormant while he was involved in the 4-H organization as a youth. He also raised a question that there might be a psychological or sociological component implied in these early observations.

In his early days as a county extension agent, Hiemstra pointed out the tremendous devotion in time to his job and in his competitive nature of wanting to be “number one.” Hiemstra wanted to expend the time and energy to follow up “on what had been done before . . . [because I] could see that there were additional things that could be done to improve” the program. He spoke to introducing “some new initiatives [and] got kids involved in some new ways” of doing things. Hiemstra “quickly found within a few months that . . . [I] enjoyed working with adults as volunteer leaders even more . . . [than I] enjoyed working with the kids.”

During his career as a professor, his notion of being the protégé in a mentoring relationship is about taking “on responsibilities.” Interestingly enough, Hiemstra said “I’m not quite sure how . . . [this] ties into self-directed learning, but it probably does when you . . . think about it.” For him, assuming “more responsibility . . . is empowering.” In his teaching, he stresses the importance of “assessing learning needs and . . . objectives and instructional processes and techniques” that can facilitate evaluation. Empowerment of the student and helping people to accept responsibility seem to be two of the most significant

components of SDL for Hiemstra. To him an important aspect is to help other colleagues – who are less familiar with the notion of SDL – better understand the process and its importance. His preference is that the student's "learning style" must enter into the curriculum.

Hiemstra believes strongly that an important relationship rests in a "teaching/learning process" and that there are ways to build on that empowerment. He believes that for some, the process of SDL can be discovered "out of the blue, on . . . [your] own." This discovery was categorized by Hiemstra, as *getting it*. For him, there is also a connection between the preference for SDL and the success of students. He also mentions that "learning contracts" are sometimes a concept that students need extra help in understanding. His philosophy is to give "more power back to . . . the learners. . . . and [realize that] the facilitator. . . . [is not] going to work" oneself out of a job when this happens. Hiemstra believes a highly structured teaching style creates a "very frustrated" learner. He called this "stepping back to . . . the old process."

Similar to what was discovered in Tough's interview, Hiemstra felt once a faculty member has discovered the benefits of teaching in this way, they will "never treat their own learners in quite the same way" again. Hiemstra also suggests there can be a benefit to "individualizing instruction," especially in a cross-cultural learning experience. For him students that are "self-directed will . . . over time . . . become more self-directed." To Hiemstra, the students that have difficulty picking up the concept, require the facilitator "to work a little harder."

Hiemstra noted other factors in his personal theory of learning. He mentions that

humanism is directly related to self-directed learning and that behaviorism is related to didacticism. This professor mentioned some of Tough's work relating to "learners . . . [preferring] themselves as the guide," being helpful to him. For Hiemstra, SDL works in other cultures. His statement on SDL working in other cultures is somewhat in conflict with the conclusion of another participant in this study. Hiemstra points out other problem areas, however, and these are discussed in his comments on the future of SDL.

Carol Kasworm

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Kasworm (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in toto in this section (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, September 29, 2004). Through the telling of their story, many of the participants gave their definition of SDL. Kasworm was no different in that regard; however, her take on this involves a different twist. The items included in her definition mainly include those that have been problematic over the course of her teaching and research experience. Perhaps for Kasworm, more than anyone else interviewed in this study, her definition is how self-directed learning evolved for her, over time. Her first introduction to the components related to self-directed learning, was through the use of learning contracts. She mentioned her personal commitment to include at least one class with the concept of a contract included. To her, the student was responsible for defining "their quality and evaluation to a set of experiences in the learning." Similar to Guglielmino's perspective, Kasworm believed the concept of SDL involved some very complex issues from both the

learner and instructor's points of view and this also included complexity in the instructional design arena. Her understanding of SDL includes an incorporation of learned experience into the classroom environment. She considers self-directed learning to be a construct. Her ideas include a need for scholars utilizing the method to comprehend the "nature of these learners' understandings of themselves and their engagement in formal classroom learning experiences, with grades . . . 'controlled by teachers' . . . in relationship to what the current literature was discussing" about SDL. The inquiry into self-direction for her included "some sense of how . . . [learners see] themselves . . . as self-directed learners and then kind of what is going on in the classroom from a classroom environment." A key ingredient for Kasworm was "how . . . [the students] made meaning." To have SDL work in a classroom, she described the student as "a master planner," and the teacher could only encourage students to stay

within the boundaries and the expectations and the understanding of the class . . . [and be] very much engaged in learning a content . . . [or stimulate an environment where students are] looking at . . . [learning] in relationship to their . . . ongoing lives of work, family, [and] community.

Kasworm's (1988) "master planning model was . . . [similar to] a newspaper . . . [where] we pick and choose what we spend more time reading and understanding." Her concept of the formal classroom, where SDL is implemented, is similar in that the class is . . . a set of resources and intellectual engagement but it doesn't bound the individual and . . . constrict them . . . in terms of . . . them selecting or not selecting to engage in those understandings or questioning and critiquing those understandings

or going beyond the information given.

Her model includes a consideration of metacognitive activity in SDL, and her supposition of learning in the self-directed context is that it does not “have the same quality and texture for everybody but there are clearly differences in terms of cognitive complexity.”

When Kasworm talked about her own experiences of research on SDL over the years, she mentioned what she classifies as “conflictual self-directed learners . . . [who] could construct their own programs . . . [where some were] pains in the asses of their faculty . . . because they would continually negotiate . . . their engagement with papers and assignments.” In this study, I had four patterns: conflict, transformative, accommodation, and withdrawal (Kasworm, 1992).

This observation of self-directed learners occurred in the study of learners in undergraduate curriculums. Kasworm proposed that she did not expect to find this group of aggressive or what she also called “dominant self-directed learners” in her research. She mentioned that her real interest was “in the subtleties of their engagement and . . . [I] really kind of shifted . . . [my] orientation more to seeing then how they engaged and make meaning.”

At this point in the conversation, Kasworm reoriented her dialogue toward the adult learner in more general terms and said little more about her experiences with what she considers to be the characteristics of a self-directed learner. She did however say that “the notion of self-direction presumed that the learner always actively pursues that self-directedness. . . . However, [I] did not, see that. . . . [I] did not hear that in . . . [my] research studies.” When she conducted research and asked adult undergraduates if they

were given a “choice of designing their own program . . . or following a curricula, these students would purposefully choose to participate in a curriculum that was somewhat defined.” What she noticed was that students could be “highly self-directed in certain other areas of their lives,” rather than also seeking out and pursuing self-directed activities in an academic environment. Her research also talked about discovering learners

were very skillful in crafting what . . . [I called] ‘self-directed learning experiences’ that complemented, supplemented, or enhanced what they were doing in the classroom . . . and so that self-directedness was not the . . . organizing core, it rather was their way of using the source and engagement in . . . formal learning, to really move and create those connections, . . . create those meanings, and bring in their particular agendas into what was going on . . . beyond the classroom.

For Kasworm being in the “best tradition of . . . self-directed learning” means a student goes “far beyond what the expectations were of the course . . . [because they were] trying to make it profoundly meaningful . . . in terms of . . . [their] own agenda.”

Huey Long

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Long (Appendix C), he made numerous changes to his story as a condition for approval of its use. His version of the description is inserted in total in this section (H. B. Long, personal communication, October 3, 2004). During his interview Long talked about his interest in how elected public officials learned to function effectively and suggested these individuals be labeled as “independent learners . . . who learned independent of . . . any kind of formal preparation

for their political positions.” Long suggested that this learning problem required a different kind of structure to understand learning problems when “people basically learn on their own.” According to Long, this kind of learning process was originally referred to as “the concept of the autodidact.” His interest in the learning problem faced by elected public officials began with the “question as to how did . . . this real estate person, farmer, electrician, etc. . . . learn [what he/she] needed to know to be a city council person.” He stressed “a variety of sources . . . [must be used] for their . . . learning activities.”

With regard to Long’s personal learning theory, and its implications for practice, he provided an example from his teaching experience. In the early days of Long’s teaching, he was “impressed . . . that students could take control over their own . . . learning . . . if we would give them the opportunity to do so.” For Long SDL starts with a question and accordingly, a student must first be given an opportunity to learn (question) before a teacher supplies the answer.

It is very interesting, but not surprising, that Long’s view of SDL is influenced by his personal history and early research. This scholar enriched the interpretation of his research, deepened his understanding of how public officials learn, and enriched his understanding of self-direction in learning after reading Tough’s “*Learning Without a Teacher*.” When “[I] read . . . [Tough’s] book, . . . [I] saw that . . . this is really what these commissioners . . . were dealing with.” At about the same time he also encountered a newspaper article on autodidacts that introduced additional ideas. In discussing the learning activities of the elected officials he noted that they used a variety of sources and forms of collaboration. Long’s research indicated that collaboration included

. . . spouses, . . . a clique, . . . a coffee group that would meet once a week and discuss . . . government problems, community problems, and those kinds of things, and, . . . then what they read . . . the material from newspapers to special . . . publications.

Long's definition of self-directed learning seems to be summarized by the notion that the person who is self-directed is the person who has "control in all areas or most areas of their lives. . . . [versus] those . . . whose lives control them." He cited some research reported by Claire Stubblefield to support his view. He is also quick to point out that "we don't always agree on how to define it (SDL). . . . [I observed that the literature defines] self-directed learning in [at least] fifteen ways." To simplify discussion of the variously reported SDL definitions Long often employs what he refers to as conceptual baskets. He believes that most of the numerous definitions fall into one of the following conceptual frameworks: sociological based on Tough's work, technique based on Knowles' ideas, methodological based on distance learning programs, and psychological based on his work and that of Candy and Garrison. Long also suggests that the "learner can hire and fire. . . . the teacher whenever [she or] he wants to in [a learning] relationship." Long believed the "psychological . . . [component to provide the] underpinning of the learner to engage in learning . . . in a self-directed way." Long's philosophy of self-direction was centered on the notion of the "learner . . . [taking] control of the learning."

Allen Tough

This scholar began his definition of SDL in the opening paragraph. For him it began with a doctoral class assignment on program planning. Tough was asked to apply program planning steps to several situations. One of those situations was a “learner learning something on his . . . [or her] own . . . [and I] thought well that’s intriguing.” Other thoughts that excited Tough about this assignment, were “the situation of [the] learner learning alone. . . . [and that] they do it for themselves.” As he said a little more about his initial interest, Tough said the steps in the process are “setting the learning goals or objectives and then . . . finding [the] resources . . . , choosing a method and . . . evaluating [the] progress.” For him,

those were the four . . . steps and . . . it turned out . . . that’s exactly what learners did. They set their own goals. They . . . figured out how to learn as they went along, they went and got resources, and they evaluated [their] progress.

Tough was impressed by people being “confident . . . in designing [their own] learning.” His observations were individuals “want more help and they want to become even more confident . . . [and that] people just seem to have a . . . knack to . . . plan their own learning and . . . carry it off successfully.” To him this was one “of the fascinating things about this phenomenon. It’s a normal thing that [they] do. We all do it. We don’t do it with much awareness that we’re being learners . . . but in fact we’re doing it very well.” Tough said he feels “a lot of affection for people. . . . because you’re listening to a very positive side of people” when he talked to individuals about their learning experiences. To him the process is about “change, growing, [and] trying new things.” He

also mentioned being “confused by all the definitions, all the words ‘self-directed’ and . . . ‘self-planned’ . . . so . . . [I] wanted to . . . be very precise” about the definition he used in his book. His observation during his research was that “something like 70% of adult learning is . . . self-directed.”

In study about his philosophy of teaching, he suggested that he does not expect students to have a plan for where they are going to end up. He suggested they only need a plan for their next step. He said when it comes to learning and change, it is acceptable to “change your mind or your destination before you get there.” For him, part of the excitement is that “self-planned learning is constantly changing as you go along.” To him, the learner does not have to be an educated person for the process to work. These learners “manage an education process really well.” They also tell us they can benefit from help. To me they are “setting the goals, . . . planning the methods, [and] finding the particular resources” they need. However, Tough acknowledged the learners wanted more help “particularly with setting goals and with . . . finding resources.” In one of his comments, Tough talked about the process of seeing your students learning on their own can be “very rewarding.” He brought up one comical example where the class decided it was not “going to meet the next day and . . . [I] was devastated. . . . [because] they didn’t need me.” To Tough the learner, not the teacher, “is . . . the center of the universe.” In his recollections of his undergraduate training as a high school teacher, Tough mentioned that the teacher must give up control and quiet in the classroom, in favor of letting students “learn what they want to learn and talk about their own learning and then [when] things start to bubble up . . . [I observed,] it gets pretty noisy.” Eventually, he suggests, “you

come to realize that this is [a] good . . . [sign] and you're happy about it." Interestingly enough, he suggests you cannot "go back once . . . you've experienced it."

When talking about the process of learning, he mentioned that his focus has always been concerned with the "total range of adult learning." Tough insists that is why he is enthusiastic about SDL and suggests it is "not . . . a thing by itself but . . . just one of the ways that people learn and . . . [emphasizes] too often [we] miss that." He considers self-directed learning to be "part of the . . . whole picture of adult learning" and suggests it is important, but just one facet of learning. Tough says SDL is "highly intentional, adult learning. . . . [and thinks] we are wrong if we focus on it and ignore the other ways people learn." For him, for example, these other ways include "groups of . . . peers, . . . book clubs, investment groups, . . . groups on . . . health issues, or groups on . . . [helping] each other with practical everyday management . . . [for] parents whose . . . kids have the same problem."

Summing-up

When it comes to summarizing how participants talked about their personal theory of learning, their definition of SDL, or the way in which they make meaning, several points surfaced:

1. To Brockett, the key aspect was helping people reach their full potential;
2. For Brookfield the most important aspects seemed to be that you have to have the help of another from time to time and the teacher's role is one of a weaning process of turning responsibility over to the learner;

3. Caffarella emphasized that all learners are bright irrespective of their formal level of education. In addition, she expressed caution about trying to utilize SDL in other cultures;
4. In Guglielmino's personal theory, the process begins with a really interesting question. Furthermore for her, the process must have a parental role model to follow;
5. Hiemstra's teaching philosophy suggests an instructor who is patient and genuine, gives power back to the learner. He also mentioned the importance of being goal directed. Learner empowerment is the single most important key concept, according to Hiemstra;
6. For Kasworm the self-directed learner is more highly directed in other areas of life than in an academic environment. Students go far beyond the expectations of a course because they were trying to make meaning on their own agenda;
7. Long's notion is based upon an independent learner who can learn independent of any formal training. A key objective in the process is to give control of the learning back to the learner; and
8. Finally for Tough the most important facet is for the teacher to give up control and make the learner the center of the universe.

Personal Importance of a Collaborative Approach

One surprising outcome of the present analysis was the need to have others involved in the learning process. This category existed in the very first interview and could be noted

in all eight transcripts. It was very interesting to me that those participants I would have expected to talk a great deal about this factor (e.g., Brockett, Brookfield, and Kasworm), said less. On the other hand, those who I would have thought would not mention it (e.g., Guglielmino, Hiemstra, and Long), said some powerful things about the importance of collaborative environments. The context for collaboration is not necessarily the contributions of a teacher; it is the recognition of needing another resource to help in the learning process. Collaboration is utilized as a possible component of SDL by the participants, in their own individualized description of the learning process, to convey an important part in the way they accomplish things and learn. Some participants may have used different words, such as the “social aspect,” “working as a group,” “someone having influence on them,” or “communities of learners” to describe this category. Similar to other categories, no question was directed toward participants asking them to talk about collaborative relationships or collaborative learning, or to define it as a component of self-directed learning. The participants did not state, or hint, that self-directed learning was a prerequisite for collaborative learning to take place, nor did they say the opposite. However, the participants offered the position that collaborative learning was a component of or resource necessary for SDL. As in the discussion on personal learning theories, the connection to collaborative learning was extrapolated from the transcripts. Each participant’s contribution to this category was synthesized from a number of pages in their transcript, rather than from just one or two example quotations.

In the discussion of this scholar's own style of leaning, the collaborative component did not represent a major portion of his commentary. In the historical section of this chapter, Brockett talked about the scholars who had an influence on him over the years. In some of those relationships, there appears to be a collaborative component. Examples of comments on these collaborative ventures, are discussions of co-authoring with others in the field of adult education such as Merriam and his co-teaching experiences with Sisco. Brockett did not call these experiences collaborative; he referred to them as having an influence on him "in terms of self-directedness."

Brockett also mentioned the efforts of the SDL research group at The University of Tennessee and the experience of trying "to do a research project together as a group." Brockett also talked about his enthusiasm for collaborations by saying "when this group clicked it . . . gave me a shot in the arm." Another example of the positive aspects of working together was his reference to graduate students as "colleagues." In conclusion, Brockett's connection to collaborative work arrangements and collaborative learning was more indirect than for some of the other scholars participating in this study. In commentary on the fact, Brockett said to remember the second myth about SDL, discussed in the first chapter of the 1991 book, is that SDL takes place in isolation (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004). Brockett stressed that Hiemstra and he suggested in their book, that self-direction does not necessarily mean the learner is independent of any outside resource. Working together, learning from each other, and

sharing ideas and resources, are *very important* in SDL; I just did not call it collaborative (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004).

Stephen Brookfield

During my discussion with Brookfield, he made reference to a collaborative component in self-directed learning but emphasized it from personal stories of his own learning experiences. I would have thought he would have mentioned the collaborative component in the early stage of his interview but he did not. In fact, he was about one third of the way through before there was any mention of it.

In discussing his personal experiences with SDL, Brookfield mentioned how his attempts to learn how to swim on his own were “pretty hopeless.” He suggested that he needed the “assistance of experts” to learn to use computers, deal with medical situations, and file income tax.

During one of his first instances as a teacher, Brookfield talked about encouraging his students to work “towards teaching each other.” He also talked about his experiences working with those learners who did not do well when judged by traditional educational measures of success. In this instance, he talked about communities of learners being involved in “peer assessment of someone’s relative expertise.”

From a research perspective, he talked about being surprised about the findings of his dissertation showing a “social dimension of self-directed learning.” Brookfield mentioned these learners in his study, on being embedded in networks of learning. In another example he brought up Fingeret’s research pointing out how members of a

community might barter skills to help each other out, such as in repairing cars or in doing income tax.

The last item this scholar mentioned in the interview commented about his more recent experiences as a faculty member. In this instance, he referred to his interest in the “co-creation and constructing [of] knowledge.” His background in this area has resulted in being asked to assist in the design of two doctoral programs in which communities of learning and a cohort based approach were emphasized that included co-written assignments and co-written dissertations.

Rosemary Caffarella

The notion of a collaborative component in SDL is significant for Caffarella. In fact, she, Hiemstra, and Long were the only persons participating in this study that specifically used the term collaborative in their dialogue. Other participants in this study mentioned words like the social side or getting help from others to describe collaborative activities. Caffarella considers herself to be “a highly collaborative person and so the notion of self-direction in learning really jumped out because it allowed . . . [me] to choose to be collaborative as part of . . . [my] learning process.” Similar to Tough, Caffarella has the “notion that self-directed learning doesn’t mean alone.”

In her comments about choices for healthcare, Caffarella suggested a collaboration when her “medical team . . . allowed . . . [me] to be a part of it.” She also talked about one of her colleagues, Fingeret, learning how to farm, and Caffarella referenced this person getting help from neighbors to learn how to do things with which she was unfamiliar. In

conversation about feminist literature, she commented that learning connected to “interdependence, collaboration, [and] working together was really fundamental” to the process and in, which people learn. In dialogue about her experiences as a teacher furnishing education for school administrators, a popular topic for those students was to talk about collaborations and building learning communities. Her opinion is that she would base less of our educational system on individualism and more on collaborative communities. To her, less emphasis placed on the competitive nature and more on the collaborative nature, would work better in our schools. Her model is to work toward “collaborative ways for faculty and students to learn together.”

Caffarella also talked about instances where she does not “want to be self-directed.” I bring this reference up in this section because Brookfield talked about needing the help of experts, in the context of a collaborative process. Caffarella referred to this style as “being directed. . . . [or] the knowledge base we have about novice and expert learners.” Novice learners “want more direction” and expert learners “don’t even know how they learn, they just do it.” These experts “make incredible decisions based on vast areas and push fields forward . . . and they’re not even quite sure, unless somebody watches them, how they do it.” Caffarella referred to studies in this area as being “really fun” but made no citations. She talked about a

disservice . . . in the field which continues today, especially in HRD [Human Resource Development], that this notion of self-direction is still the most critical, that you have to teach employees to be self-directed. Well there are times . . . [I do not] want . . . [my] employees to be self-directed.

In this instance, she is referring to a response to a hospital “code red [where I do not] want somebody to think about whether or not they should respond and how they should do it.” She wants this group to be “highly directed.”

Regarding other cultures, Caffarella suggested “there are learners who are highly self-directed, even within these collaborative cultures that work with others but they’re still self-directed in terms of learning, absolutely.” Caffarella used another example where she spoke of Aboriginal women in the outback teaching their children “their ways and their language.” These women, who were repressed by a state that was trying to eliminate their history, their culture, and even their population, took their children into the forest every Sunday and taught them the culture so that it could be maintained. She referred to this learning as: “it was all within their culture.” This scholar also mentioned there is an opportunity to look at using SDL to serve the “societal good and public good.”

Lucy Guglielmino

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Guglielmino (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). Discussion of the collaborative component of self-directed learning was apparent in the early portion of the conversation with Guglielmino. For her, parents represented the encouragement “and help [for] me [to] find some of the resources. . . . [to] get me started . . . in the right direction.” She told stories of her father needing to “get some help with the electrical system. . . . [in the house he built almost

entirely by himself] because he didn't have formal training as an electrician."

Regarding learning in a formal setting, she regards herself as a facilitator of learning. Guglielmino derives great satisfaction from mentoring her students and facilitating and leading them to take a more active role in their own learning. "I get to see [the] transformation . . . and the 'A-ha's' . . . , she says. "It's wonderful to watch that." When working with school administrators in an adult learning course required for the educational leadership graduate program where she is a professor, she suggests each student be asked "who they will be working with . . . in learning situations." When the words "teachers, parents, the community . . . [and] a student. . . . [come up as answers] that's the first A-Ha" for them. Her methods include the involvement of learners in their own learning, not in the role of telling them what they need to know. She enjoys

watching them evolve and grow [as they] get excited about what they're doing and find some new ways of interacting with people in learning situations and hopefully [they can] take that out into the schools or . . . training organizations or wherever they're going to go.

One of Guglielmino's students, who was also a K-12 inservice director, became very excited when they discussed self-directed learning in class and with great enthusiasm the student said, "You've got to help me!" Guglielmino said, "What are we going to do" together? The student continued, "Do you know what we're doing to our teachers? Exactly what you said. . . . We're not treating them like self-directed learners. We are giving them Shake and Bake instruction, and it's not working." As an outgrowth of that initial discussion, she and Guglielmino worked with groups of teachers, the union, district

personnel, and the School Board to change inservice policies in the county. She also mentioned working with a doctoral student who became a principal at an at-risk school and implemented teacher focus groups to work on problems together. She cited regular meetings teachers would hold to design

. . . new strategies. . . [and] share strategies, [and] they [would] talk about what worked and what didn't work. They . . . [would] tell each other very honestly, well, you can't do that. . . [and] this is what you need to do. And they'll take it from each other but they wouldn't take it from an outsider.

Guglielmino's assessment is that this process of empowering teachers to figure out what they need to know, with the help of one another, has led to a learning community within this particular school. Another example of her awareness of collaborative learning is her use of a Delphi committee during her dissertation. She said, "They gave me" what I needed to consider when defining a self-directed learner. During the course of the conversation with Guglielmino, her family was mentioned many times as an integral part of her learning process. Her parents represented a resource or the collaboration required to accomplish something.

Guglielmino also commented on her "exceptionally fruitful collaboration with Paul" [her husband], who initiated the stream of research on SDL in business and industry – "it has been so valuable to be able to discuss SDL with an informed colleague at all hours of the day and night" (Personal communication, October 4, 2004).

Roger Hiemstra

Similar to others in this study, Hiemstra specifically talked about the importance of collaborative efforts to him. He first talked about this concept when recollecting his experiences in McClusky's classes at Michigan. As he reminisced about his professor's teaching philosophy, he indicated that McClusky practiced SDL in his classes, even though McClusky did not use the term. Hiemstra went on to say McClusky's students took responsibility for their own learning and that they "would be collaborative in what . . . [they were] doing." Perhaps an important observation by Hiemstra was that McClusky's teaching style was engaging and that this professor showed a genuine interest in his students.

Hiemstra also talked about his own teaching philosophy and relationship to students. He acknowledged that it was important to "help adults . . . improve their leadership skills as volunteer leaders in ways that they hadn't been helped before." To Hiemstra an important aspect of collaboration was his work co-authoring publications with fellow scholars and students. An interesting aspect was that Hiemstra strongly associated collaboration with specific individuals such as McClusky or Brockett. He also mentioned a collaborative venture as being more than just effective; for Hiemstra it has "synergism." Hiemstra also talked about the down side of collaboration. He was the only scholar in this study to mention a negative side to collaboration. He suggested that a young faculty member may not want to pursue co-authorships because they might be frowned upon for tenure. He also told a couple of stories about others he co-authored with claiming his work to be their own, although he did not say very much about this negative experience.

As a responsibility of teaching, his philosophy involved a change of teaching techniques in the early 1970s to involve “more collaborative kinds of things and getting students to do collaborative stuff themselves.” He believes mentorship and collaboration go together, as I see it. His advice is simply “try to find someone in your career, your life, who will be a good mentor.” Hiemstra’s conclusion is that the responsibility of a mentor is immense. He states it is “a 10, 12, [or] 15 year process.”

Regarding the question of students coming from other cultures, Hiemstra had more favorable things to say than others in this study about the potential for SDL in other cultures. Contrary to Caffarella’s conclusions that SDL does not always work in other cultures, Hiemstra believes it does work well in such settings. Caffarella was the only other participant vocal about this connection, or lack of it, to other cultures although Brookfield and Tough hinted at the implications. He acknowledged a time commitment of at least two semesters to help students from other cultures understand the benefits of SDL. At the conclusion of this extra preparation, his opinion was that people from other cultures could be very self-directed. To Hiemstra, this was true because most of his foreign students come from cultures where the student was more highly dependent on the teacher.

Carol Kasworm

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Kasworm (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (C. E. Kasworm, personal

communication, September 29, 2004). Issues of SDL related to having a collaborative component were much less for Kasworm than for some of the other participants in the study. While she was at the University of Texas, she mentioned some of her colleagues taking the concept of learning contracts to “healthcare settings working with . . . preceptorship.” She did not give any details about the circumstances but hints at collaboration between healthcare professional and their teacher. Kasworm also talked several times about the notion of constructivism being important to her understanding of what SDL was intended to be. She used this in the context of meaning making and there again could be some relationship involved in giving the “learner . . . [a] center stage of understanding.” This process of putting the learner in the center, rather than the teacher, is one of the tenets of collaborative learning and was also mentioned in Tough’s interview. It was also interesting when Kasworm talked about SDL being a “marvelous central organizer” during the 1970s and 1980s and that “it was an exciting time of . . . people coming together.” This coming together hints at collaborations among those studying self-directed learning. Toward the end of her interview she talked about relationships of SDL to communities of practice, learning organizations, learning in the workplace, and group learning because of her belief that learners never have “total control over what they want to learn . . . [and] how they want to learn it.” For Kasworm the collaborative issue was related to SDL but was not stressed as strongly as in other transcripts.

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Long (Appendix C), he made numerous changes to his story as a condition for approval of its use. His version of the description is inserted in total in this section (H. B. Long, personal communication, October 3, 2004). For Long the connotation of SDL having a collaborative component was interlaced throughout his transcript. It was first presented as a theme when discussion was presented about government officials learning through spouses and coffee groups. As mentioned above in the section dealing with personal learning theories, collaboration was a category that often was discussed in concert with the way participants discussed learning. The two themes frequently were interwoven by Long. Another example of the collaborative component occurred, when Long talked about the first symposium. It was described as a “kind . . . [of] collaborative meeting” by him. In commentary about the international aspects of SDL, Long suggested that individuals working in “Europe, . . . Canada and Korea . . . began to . . . work together . . . to communicate. . . . [and try] several different . . . tacks with the symposium to . . . meet [the] needs of . . . people.” The symposia were also utilized to provide an outlet for students to present their dissertations, and it was stressed that it was the goal of the group to keep the “organization or meeting [to one] where there’s dialogue. . . . [and] there . . . are no recriminations.”

In Long’s definition of SDL, he stressed that learning is not limited to a classroom environment. This seemed to be significant to Long, as noticed through inflection in his voice, when he talked about “emphasis has been on the . . . learner who learns in a group setting . . . [and it is] the learner that I come into contact with.” In other words, Long

does not discount the importance of isolated autodidacts, but usually he has no working relationship or responsibility for their learning whereas he does have contact and responsibility for students who enroll in his courses. In his explanation, Long ensured he distinguished between students working on their dissertations from the collaborative (classroom) group. This does not mean, however, that dissertation research and writing are not collaborative acts. Elsewhere he also goes to some length to discuss collaboration with his doctoral candidates. The importance Long placed on collaborative learning, or what he more often called a “group environment . . . [is not] the most and only important area . . . of self-directed learning.” In a comment about the significance of technological change in our society, Long stressed that “we need more study . . . more attention, . . . to this . . . isolated learner.”

Another facet of the collaborative strategy mentioned by Long was in the area of publications. In this area, he stressed the number of his publications that were co-authored. According to Long,

this is not happenstance. . . . [it] is by, again, a reflection of my philosophy, . . . that I think . . . [is] part of, . . . my role as a professor . . . [and] I have certain responsibilities then to those students that I . . . am responsible for teaching.

His individual philosophy on this is that “we develop, . . . a knowledge that . . . enables . . . me to be of help to . . . the student . . . not necessarily to direct the student, but to . . . find out what turns the student on.” This philosophy also includes an “expectation that they would engage in research with me . . . before entering their dissertation.” Long considers collaboration an important forum within which to contribute to the development

of students. It was interesting that Long stressed several times that collaboration was an important aspect of his philosophy.

Allen Tough

The idea of SDL having a collaborative component has different connotations for Tough, and in some places he left me confused about his interpretation of others being involved in the learning process. In some places, he implied there is a separate type of learning called group learning and then there are other instances where he implies SDL is in some way collaborative. Tough summarized this by saying “self-directed learning is not a lonely thing. . . . It’s . . . a very social thing.” To Tough, social often means getting some type of external help from other individuals. Unfortunately, Tough did not delineate the difference between group learning and getting help from others. However it can also mean utilizing a manual, of some sort. He suggests that SDL implies something “isolated and individual. . . . but [acknowledges it] also involves a lot of interaction.” His research has shown that learners “want more help and they want to become even more confident” in planning and carrying out their own learning activities.

Tough mentioned the gist of his dissertation was the “help that people get from other people doing self-directed learning.” He suggested that to Houle, the concept of getting help “just didn’t make sense to him at first.” What Tough found “was that if people got help . . . an average of 10 or 11 different people [were involved] with each thing you learn.” He suggested this was “the opposite of what we thought.” Tough thinks being “a self-directed learner is actually more social than . . . [in] many classroom [experiences] and

... [that it] does not appear to be a private or individualistic kind of thing.” In *Learning Projects*, Tough pointed out he was amazed

at how well ... [learners] find human resources. It’s almost as if we have a ... computer databank in our heads of all of the people we know at work, ... in our neighborhood, ... [of our] friends and family, and we sort of know their interests.

To Tough, individuals “just seem [to] have a knack for finding ... people” to act as a resource.

The socio-political implications of self-directed learning were also pointed out by Tough. He briefly mentioned he feels it is “intricately connected to society” and acknowledged teaching a course on this. He also mentioned that it is connected to how politicians learn.

In a later part of Tough’s conversation about research, involving early levels of education, he mentioned that such individuals managed the learning process well. However, Tough felt “they could benefit from help ... and that’s what they” also told us. The kind of help desired by these participants was help “with setting goals, [priorities], and with ... finding resources.” Tough suggested it is important for learners to remain confident and retain their power but “they are hopeless without help.”

When talking about the research of his students, Tough mentioned “very powerful” learning can occur when peer groups get together to discuss a common interest for the group. For him “it really makes sense, ... [to have] the ... sharing of emotions, the sharing of a bond, and the sharing of practicality” that a group process brings. In discussing a graduate course he taught, he mentioned the spiritual implications. In this

example he suggested students wanted to know “what . . . [they could] contribute to the world,” to the social good.

Summing-up

When it comes to summarizing how participants talked about the collaborative component of SDL, each participant had a few key thoughts:

1. Brockett’s thought on collaborative efforts mainly pertained to co-authorships and co-teaching experiences. To him, however, collaborations with his students at conferences was an important facet of his story;
2. For Brookfield, the learner needs the assistance of experts. He feels the goal should be to work toward students teaching each other;
3. Caffarella felt self-directed learning does not mean learning alone;
4. In Guglielmino’s world, the process is about how her father got help learning to fix things;
5. Hiemstra firmly believes students must be collaborative in what they are doing;
6. For Kasworm, the concept of putting the learner in the center is the way she referred to collaboration;
7. Long talked and talked about the importance of the collaborative efforts with students and colleagues involved in his symposia on self-directed learning; and
8. Tough’s summary is that SDL is a social thing.

Personal Ideas About Self-Direction's Future

In this last section, the projections for where this line of study is headed will be discussed. Implications for the future of SDL were the only categories specifically solicited by a question in the interview guide. Prior to cueing for this question, participants in most cases had already said something about their vision for self-directed learning. Some participants openly mentioned technology and its association with the personal computer/Internet as a strong catalyst for sustaining and even increasing the level of activity in SDL. Again, participants were not asked to talk about technology; however they did.

Any inquiry into the future of SDL speaks to the criticism this area of study has encountered for not considering the social implications. Gelpi, Griffin, Candy, and Hammond and Collins (as cited in Brookfield, 2000) all consider the effect or lack thereof for self-directed learning to consider "the political context, cultural contingency and social construction" (p. 9). Some of the participants considered this criticism during their interviews and made suggestions for what must be included if self-directed learning is going to receive a fresh reception within the field of adult education. Brookfield suggests the field of adult education will continue to see SDL in a negative vein, so long as research centers on quantitative measures. Brookfield (2000) acknowledges that even though Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) recognized a gap in the issues of power and control, the apparent neglect of these implications over the past decade is broadening the gap in the field.

This category divulges more than does the participant see a future in SDL and in what is the nature of that future. It also covers related areas such as how the participant talks about change, future research needed, modifications to or new emphasis on teaching philosophy, and any negative side of SDL that might require attention or at least consideration. Each participant's contribution to this data category was synthesized from a number of pages in their transcript, rather than from just one or two example quotations.

Ralph Brockett

The future implications of SDL were significant as Brockett interjected suggestions about future research when he talked about how he has come to know and understand SDL over the years. He first mentioned some of the questions raised by Brookfield with regard to the social considerations not always being a part of SDL. Brockett suggested that this is an area "where we need future work." Another significant part of the discourse on the future of SDL is change. He mentioned "that the work on self-directed learning is changing." This scholar referenced qualitative studies as one of the different lenses through which SDL is now being viewed. In commentary to the text, Brockett asked

did I give the impression that this is a *recent* thing? That was not my intent. The Gibbons et al. study was in 1980, as was Brookfield's dissertation; Mocker and Spear were 1984, and so on. Qualitative research on SDL is not new, but it is becoming more frequent and even predominate, I think. (R. G. Brockett, personal communication, October 2, 2004)

When Brockett was specifically asked to talk about his future vision for self-directed learning, he was caught a little off guard. He started by mentioning “that it’s not a fad.” However, he asked to stop the interview so he could get his thoughts together. Brockett stated “we need to continue working this area. . . . [and mentioned] as educators we can do things to help people develop.” He called this being less “lock step.” With the changing demographics of our society, Brockett emphasized the importance of SDL to our aging population. He said there is “a lot to be . . . done. . . . [and hinted this is like] filling in the pieces [to a puzzle] and we’re never going to finish the puzzle, but . . . we keep working on it.” He also spoke to “getting [it] out to different groups. . . . [such as] publishing [in] business journals.” Brockett was one of the few who mentioned the connection to technology. He suggested that even though “technology has taken us to such a better place” we may be focusing too much on it. He did not suggest that because of technology, SDL would be invigorated in some fashion.

Stephen Brookfield

Similar to Kasworm, Brookfield talked about some negative aspects of self-directed learning and felt that the future of SDL will be enhanced if these aspects are taken into consideration. First, Brookfield pointed out the “real traps in following your own dispositions and at times as a learner . . . [I] found . . . [myself] at a distinct disadvantage trying to [learn on my own].” He also suggested that future considerations take into account the needs of disadvantaged adult learners by considering issues of power and control. Brookfield believes there are “strong reasons why self-directed learning has

become such a . . . major idea in the field, so . . . [I think research is needed in] understanding what self-direction is and why it's important." Most of all, he sees and suggested a need to do more than just empirical studies. His proposal was to consider the value in and philosophy behind the process of self-directed learning when doing research in the future.

When he was specifically asked about the future of SDL, Brookfield said he "never . . . [knows] how to answer anything with regard to the future. . . . [and I] always . . . [refuse] to be on any panel." Even though he did not have much to say about where this line of research is going, he did talk about "cyber learning . . . [and the] digital era." He talked about the electronic issues opening up "new forms of . . . learner control and learner access to information." Regarding the viability of self-direction, and how it might be integrated with on-line learning, Brookfield suggested that one of the options for learning in this environment is to learn how to how to work on and interact with the Internet, by yourself. His observation is that on-line learning "is not going to go away" and neither are the cultural or personality issues "which predisposes . . . [some learners] to try and learn this on their own." His assessment was "that this way of learning probably is . . . going to be just as strong in the future as . . . its been in the past."

Rosemary Caffarella

Caffarella had many things to say about the future of self-directed learning. Her framing of the discussion was similar to others in that there was mention of cautions and a need for future research. It was interesting that she did not mention technology.

Regarding the areas of cautions or instances where it might not work Caffarella suggested that one not consider SDL as the “epitome . . . of adult learning.” For her, independence . . . [is] not the epitome of development” either. In another example, Caffarella said self-direction in adolescents might not be so good because it tends to speak to teachers not wanting parents to be part of the process and involved in decisions. In her opinion, it “is a crazy time of life of life to think a kid [at] that age can be self-autonomous.”

Possibly the greatest quantity of conversation was in regard to other cultures and the thought that SDL might not work in these cultures. Through her international experience, she spoke of her work in Malaysia. She admitted their systems are ones she did not know and there was “no way that . . . [I] could work those systems. The Malaysians have to work them,” according to Caffarella. For her, “no matter how self-directed . . . [I was] going to be, . . . [I was] never going to be Malaysian in that way, ever.” She referred to it as “a whole different way. . . . [the] Malaysian way.” In this case, she said she “couldn’t do it. So . . . [I needed] to be directed by them in order for the project to be successful.” It is a matter of “how things get done in the culture.” She summarizes all of this by saying there is a problem with “the word self . . . [because] they don’t have a word for ‘I.’ So if you put self-directed learning . . . [into an] individual ‘I,’ it doesn’t work.” The Malaysian culture is collective and so is the culture in New Zealand. In addition, she was critical of utilizing any instrument developed in the United States to assess SDL in another culture. Caffarella was not at all optimistic about thinking an instrument can be cross-cultural.

Regarding a future research agenda, Caffarella pointed to her interest in indigenous

peoples, where she suggested that their teachings look at “what you think about seven . . . [generations ahead] and it’s an incredible way of thinking that is just very . . . different.” According to her, “you never make a decision based on today and you never think about just today.” In some American tribal cultures that same idea is “very definitely engrained.” With “what’s going on in our world today, . . . [I] really . . . [wish] somebody would think one generation away.” Another suggestion dealt with a person “who really is self-directed in terms of who they [sic] are as a person and that can be . . . collaborative, . . . can just learn an incredible amount just by listening to someone else . . . [while she or he] can make an enormous amount of difference.” In other words, she is suggesting that in other cultures we need to do “listening . . . [and] observing, . . . [while] taking . . . [our] experiences and sharing them to see if others have had similar . . . [or] different” experiences.

With numerous examples of philosophical differences of opinion by Caffarella as to where our formal educational systems are headed in this country, there were instances mentioned that might lend themselves to other methodologies. For instance Caffarella said the experiment in cooperative learning might have been more successful had it been properly implemented. What she saw was “teachers who just put kids into groups and that was about it and then one of the kids would usually take over because they . . . wanted to get an A.” She “didn’t have a whole lot of respect for what was going on, even though the name was there.” In other instances through her working with foreign graduate students, she was cautious of

imposing self-directed learning without helping someone understand it and assuming

that their culture thinks that this is what it is, . . . when they don't buy it [because] it's not part of their thinking and . . . you . . . [are] trying to tell them that this is the best way to do it, to . . . [me this] is so antithetical.

With another foreign graduate student who tried to use SDL in a different situation, the participants in her study were “totally turned off . . . [because] they were going against almost every cultural tradition” they had. Another suggestion that Caffarella has made, deals with her role as professor. In this instance, she proposes that she use the listening and observing role mentioned in an above paragraph to “introduce [my] students to alternative ways of thinking, and . . . [I] can't do that unless . . . [I listen].”

When Caffarella was specifically asked about the future vision for SDL, she added several thoughts even though she had already said a great deal about the implications of continued efforts in this area. First, she emphasized that “we must truly move to different ways of thinking about studying self-directed learning, [as to me] there won't be a whole lot of interest in it in terms of . . . empirical work.” An example of a way to study this would be in Tough's tradition. Second, she mentioned looking “for ways of doing and thinking about really critical issues. . . . and . . . [I am] guessing that there's extraordinarily rich material out there that has never been mined related to how self-directed learning has made a difference in the world.” Her example here is to look at Highlander. A little later in the interview, she talked again about doing things for “societal good and public good” and stressed the rich opportunity to connect SDL to public good. Third, Caffarella mentioned she thought that the qualitative methodology utilized in this study will help getting at the “essence and meaning . . . [while] trying to get out of the traditional paradigm” of SDL.

Fourth, she mentioned testing some of the models such as Brockett and Hiemstra's, Spear and Mocker's, and Garrison's. Accordingly, Caffarella suggests "they're not the way they're written." It is a little confusing what she is questioning here, but it appears the dilemma exists with the use of the word "model" and its connotations of theory building. It is also noteworthy that she says on one hand the "models of self-directed learning have never been tested" but on the other hand "they can't be tested." All of the balance of comments in this paragraph refer to research that is needed. These are very "rich sources of ideas [that] are not followed up on . . . which . . . [I think] is . . . [a] real problem." She emphasized that she is not referring to quantitative validations for this verification of the models. Tough's research is another area that should be revisited. In her opinion, there is a "whole set of stuff in the back of that [first] book . . . that . . . no one has touched." Her opinion is that if students and faculty went back and reviewed the research recommendations "of the major writers . . . 80 % of them haven't been addressed." This is an area where she was critical of the field. Her comment was

people say there's no research agenda, well there's a research agenda but people don't want to pick it up. They want to stay within the same way of thinking and build more models. . . . versus trying to actually get . . . a different sense of what it's about."

She also mentioned the "enormous amount of connections between a number of . . . research strands." For example, "transformational learning almost always . . . has something in it that's self-directed." This has never been looked at, according to Caffarella. It is important in her opinion to take "that literature and self-directed literature

and see where they match.” Matching SDL to other research strands, which have a long standing history within adult education, “would be really powerful” in her judgment.

Another suggestion was made to study our own research group at The University of Tennessee “in the paradigm of self-directed learning.” She thinks it “would be [a] fascinating [study] because that’s what you all are doing. . . . something that is fairly rare, . . . [I think] in higher ed.” There is a lot of “new learning. . . . and how are you learning?” In this example, Caffarella was referring to the work of the research group started by Brockett in 1998. The group has made numerous collaborative presentations at conferences and this has not gone unnoticed by other professors in the field of adult education.

She also cited the paradigm shift that has occurred within the scientific community at Cornell. It is an “enormous example of self-directed learning, transformational learning, and a number of other things.” The last concept she talked about, was the “different ways . . . to conceptualize self-directed learning, which . . . in the beginning . . . grew out of a humanistic or hermeneutic or interpretive paradigm . . . and some . . . [a] positivist paradigm.” She suggested throwing in the feminist or black feminist or post-modern paradigms for a comparison and contrast. It would “be explained totally differently and . . . no one has ever, ever taken that on.” SDL goes back to “humanistic roots and we don’t really use humanistic anymore.” It goes back to “deeper roots, which are interpretist and hermeneutic.” So, to Caffarella, all “this epistemological stuff would be. . . . interesting.” She has “no clue how to write it. . . . but framing self-directed learning from different epistemological stances. . . . would be fascinating.” In her dialogue about moving

out of “our traditional paradigms . . . to other ways of thinking about” learning, she suggested that if “you ask people about their powerful learning experiences, it’s very rarely . . . Physics 101.”

Lucy Guglielmino

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Guglielmino (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (L. M. Guglielmino, personal communication, October 7, 2004). Discussion of the future role of SDL started early in the conversation with Guglielmino. Even though she had not been prompted to talk about the future vision for SDL, she had much to say about the world’s rate of change. She said, “We are not even able to predict what it’s going to be like . . . in the next 10 to 20 years, . . . [and suggested that] if we’re not self-directed learners, we’re in big trouble.” She was the only participant who mentioned September 11, 2001. Guglielmino suggested, “if you’re going to have a successful democratic society, you have to have . . . thinking, reflecting, . . . self-directed learners as far as . . . [I am] concerned.” Guglielmino also raised questions about the philosophy and practices of our current and future educational systems, which often promote “memorization and regurgitation” as opposed to those concepts more promotive of a lifelong learning process.

Similar to the conversation with Long, Guglielmino talked about change and the favorable outcomes of SDL being “absolutely essential . . . for coping with life in this time of increasing change.” Her supposition is that a “self-directed learner is more resourceful

... and more able to face those challenges” of life. When specifically asked about the future of SDL, toward the end of the interview, Guglielmino responded with

what I hope to see and I think I’m seeing movement toward ... is an even broader recognition of the need to promote self-directed learning in everyone. ... starting from the family unit ... which is ... where it all started for me. ... Self-directed learners are better parents, they’re better contributors to the organizations that they are a part of and ... they’re better citizens. They’re better ... members of the larger society.

Guglielmino did not specifically mention the implications of technology on SDL in her conversation, but that concept appears to have been included in her references to change, since she has written a number of book chapters on the importance of SDL readiness for success in e-learning. Her main emphasis did not hint at SDL being any less important in the coming years. Conversely, the perspective taken suggests the process of SDL is essential for coping with our society’s increasing rate of change.

Roger Hiemstra

Most of what Hiemstra talked about affected his career as a professor, at least in his initial comments. The first note about change had to deal with his own commitment “to change ... [my] instructional approaches ... [to involve] more collaborative kinds of things” in the early 1970s. Hiemstra says his foundational views have not changed much over the years but his methodologies have, especially because of the technology that is now available to students. To Hiemstra, society has changed in today’s world in such a

way that it has affected collaboration and the relationship he has had with his advisees in earlier days. He used to have them to his house for entertainment and he seemed to miss that camaraderie. His comment was my wife and I “just don’t do that” anymore. Hiemstra felt there was a downside to change when it involved moving from an academic to administrative role. In some of his commentary on administrative roles he held in the past, Hiemstra just said, he “enjoyed more the teaching side of it.” He was just not willing to “pay a price for” financial gain. His summation of feelings was he “would have changed into something that . . . [I] wouldn’t have liked” had he pursued an administrative career.

Regarding our entry into the information age, Hiemstra suggested there is “so much literature out there” that students have “to do stuff for themselves now and that ties in to kind of my instructional philosophy of it being very self-directed and highly individualized.” His students are encouraged to do activities in class that “contributes some knowledge in some way . . . that typically goes on . . . [my] Web page.” He also commented on the amount of information that is available through his Web site on self-directed learning through a link called “self-directed learning tools.” Hiemstra talked about the challenges of teaching in an on-line environment and its impact on the facilitator. He suggested the facilitator in an on-line environment has to be much cleverer about empowerment but that 75 to 80% of his students are still able to grasp the concept of being in control of their learning. Hiemstra called this process of getting it, becoming “a different kind of learner.” Another of the challenges in on-line environments is the student taking advantage of the facilitator. The student may cheat, hire others to write their papers, or not do their fare share when it comes to a collaborative assignment. Overall,

Hiemstra believes “it’s an exciting time today” with all of the technology and the World Wide Web. He sees “the future [as] very exciting in terms of where some of the research is . . . going.”

Hiemstra deals with those colleagues who are critical of SDL, by suggesting that if you accept the premise of “the notion . . . [of] self-directed learning . . . [being] a viable concept,” you believe in helping individuals accept more responsibility for their own learning. He says he does not get taken in by the critics and believes “the whole thing [can] hang together.” Hiemstra believes it is the duty of those *who get it* to help learners “get an epiphany [and] to say oh yes, . . . I can assume more responsibility . . . [and] that is empowering to me,” as the learner. So, this is the “way of countering that argument or that criticism from some people.”

In regard to how SDL might be utilized to help the common good, Hiemstra suggests our public school administrators might consider the possibilities of encouraging teachers to permit students to be more independent and empowered to learn. He believes that it is unfortunate for “those people that go through life never having been exposed to the potentiality of the . . . self-directed learning phenomenon.”

When specifically asked to comment on the future of SDL, Hiemstra immediately pointed out that within his lifetime, the Federal or State Governments will not understand the power of the self-directed learning movement and fund research. He said the window of opportunity was lost for this in the 1960s under Johnson’s administration. He feels the field of adult education needs another Lifelong Learning Act similar to the 1970s.

Hiemstra feels the move toward SDL is slow and will stay slow. His opinion was that it is

difficult to cause change and he was not confident at all that SDL will move into the prominence some might like to see. Hiemstra said it's a "gloomier future than you might have heard . . . or expected" from him. He believes everyone must do their "own little bit" to keep it alive.

Regarding technology and the Internet, he believes there is some hope for SDL as it is an important resource for learning. His opinion is that the Internet comes close to "emphasizing self-directed learning . . . and so there's a big role for adult educators in the future." Hiemstra calls this new role "information counseling. . . . [to help] people . . . wade through all the crud that's out there, make sense of it, [and] learn good search techniques [to] learn how to utilize all that information for your learning or for whatever purpose" one has in mind. He believes technology will continue to increase and provide some exciting new tools. Hiemstra calls it a move toward "idealistic [sic] self-directed learning." His belief is this will have an impact in many ways such as home schooling. Hiemstra insists there is a right way to do it and that "information acquisition" as he calls it, is tied to learning.

In some ideas for future research Hiemstra suggested several things. First, he suggested that a historical content analysis of literature from 1900 to 1950 could be helpful in determining the predecessors of self-directed learning. Someone also needs to analyze Straka's books. Another idea could be to look at the work of Houle, Knowles, and McClusky to determine their sources of information. Does it trace back to Lindeman? In addition, one should ask the question, were there some scholars contributing before Lindeman? Other ideas might be to look for the linkages self-directed learning has to other

streams of learning theory. Hiemstra believes we need to understand all of the lineage to self-directed learning. It is also interesting to think about all of the people outside of academe doing research on self-directed learning. This could be accomplished from looking at the symposia proceedings.

Carol Kasworm

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Kasworm (Appendix C), she made numerous changes to her story as a condition for approval of its use. Her version of the description is inserted in total in this section (C. E. Kasworm, personal communication, September 29, 2004). The future of self-directed learning and where this line of study might be headed was not a focal point for Dr. Kasworm. She did offer some interesting observations about the future of SDL and issues of learning theory related to self-direction. Prior to being asked to talk about the future, Kasworm mentioned that what she sees happening is the continued effort by those in the field of adult education to do what she calls “bifurcated studies” wherein adult learners are alienated from studies involving youth. In this case she proposed future research to investigate “adult engagement in the learning [process] . . . and the complexity of that and how [it] is . . . different and similar to [those involving] children and youth.” She suggests those wanting to deviate from the current mainstream direction of the field of adult education should do that. Kasworm refers to this deviation as “everybody . . . [being] their own passionate scholar . . . [and encourages scholars] to study what they wish to study.” Kasworm suggested those interested in SDL do the same thing. She referred to “Lave and Wenger’s

work . . . on situated learning and communities of . . . [practice]” as a source to encourage those espousing self-directed learning to move from individual learner autonomy toward communities of practice.

When Kasworm was asked about her future vision for SDL, she said “I have no future vision for self-directed learning.” Her comment was that she felt “distant and detached from those who are pursuing” self-directed learning. She pointed out that she did not “predict what will happen in the future. . . . and . . . [said] it’s foolish for us in the research world to assume that we can do that.” Kasworm did say it was acceptable to “have dreams and hopes. . . . [and suggested] we really know so very little about the adult learning process.” This scholar referred to Dewey’s work in the 1930s and suggested its relevance to today’s research.

Toward the conclusion of her interview, the conversation shifted to what was felt to be the current and future focus of adult education. This current focus is on transformative learning and it was suggested to be “where the wildfire . . . of interest is.” She suggested the passion over transformative learning is similar to where SDL was, in its day, 10 to 20 years ago. One of the most interesting observations was the caution that transformative learning can be, just as SDL was, “a powerful difference in learner’s lives. . . . and that scares” her. For her, the conclusion is that the field has an “ethical . . . responsibility to think very carefully about what we do know in relationship to structuring . . . [environments] where we engage adults . . . [such as in] crafting self-directed learning experiences.” She said her experience with learning contracts over the years “was not just frightening [for me]. . . . it was beyond frightening for” the learner. Her suggestion is that

for the future we must not only “see the good of what’s happening . . . [but] look at, perhaps, the dark side.” For Kasworm the awareness of the positive aspects of self-directed learning needed to be considered alongside the negative aspects. For her “new understandings of caution” were created when the negative side was considered. She concluded by suggesting these same cautious need to be considered for transformative learning. During the course of the conversation, Kasworm did not touch upon the implications of technology for self-directed learning.

Huey Long

As commentary to the draft of this chapter furnished to Long (Appendix C), he made numerous changes to his story as a condition for approval of its use. His version of the description is inserted in total in this section (H. B. Long, personal communication, October 3, 2004). For Long, the conversation about future of SDL begins with an expression that it is fine to challenge his point of view or that of any of his students. To him the “dogma . . . [is] that self-directed learning is to be valued.” This strong belief in the importance of SDL, and open acknowledgement of those challenging the concept appears to set the stage for some concern. Yet it appears Long’s greatest concern about future practice is related to technological advances.

Long noted that “changes in technology” increase the requirement for more research concerning SDL. The common connection with the future role of SDL, for Long, is change and the rapid rate of its occurrence in modern society. Long points out that we must “get away from the industrial model of efficiency” in education, and technology can

help us do that. He believes effective learning is at least as important as efficient learning. He suggests all that technology currently has to offer is “cascading on us today. . . . [and] that this requires self-direction. . . . [in our world so] we can survive.” He then asks, “who wants to just survive?” He says, “I want to overcome. . . . and . . . so . . . we can do that . . . [by] knowing how people learn.” It appears Long is concerned that he and his generation may be displaced in this effort. He specifically raised the question by asking “is there a role for me [a metaphor for his generation] as an educator in helping people to learn in . . . environments that I have no ‘input’ to. . . . [or] control over?” For example, Long thinks advances in the computer generated virtual realities will have a tremendous impact on learning. These electronic developments will increase opportunities for practicing important applications to acute problems with very limited danger to anyone. Engineering, environmental, health, interpersonal, and transportation issues can be addressed without deleterious effects. These developments may require educators to rethink many of the current positions concerning learning and education. He asks, “what kind of knowledge will be required to develop these technologies so that they are effective means of learning?” “Furthermore, he adds, who will be the developers of these learning scenarios? How will learner choice be addressed in them? Will creative solutions be possible?”

When specifically asked about his view of the future for self-direction, Long said “this problem that I have mentioned that . . . all of western society faces. . . . relates to the . . . over abundance of information.” The information explosion, according to him presents the “challenge . . . [of how do we translate] information into knowledge.” He observes,

“being skillful data base searchers is important, but it is also important that individuals possess analytic, interpretative and synthetic skills.” He believes understanding how people learn is critical to the successful use of the “communication methodologies that are . . . available . . . I don’t think we can do that very well if we don’t understand how people learn.”

Long seemed to be visionary about this subject and suggested that schools as we know them today will be transformed into something radically different from what we have come to know in this country. He referenced the writings of Kaku, who suggested, “change in society will come about driven by three areas . . . : computer power, . . . the laws of thermodynamics. . . . [related to] the . . . energy aspects. . . . and . . . in the medical, biological . . . areas.” Furthermore, Long suggested futuristic literature and writings such as *The Third Wave* and *Megatrends* are consistent in projecting the information explosion and the “important adjustments that we’re going to have to make, . . . in terms of our concepts of learning and education.” Long hinted at his difficulty in preparing for the future by saying, “I’m not sufficiently prescient” to predict the learning and educational reform that will be brought about by change. Long was particularly innovative in his description of future challenges by asking how do we “have people undertaking jobs and tasks that we haven’t even envisioned yet?” Long rephrased this question as: “one of the scary things in terms of looking into the future, [is the unknown] . . . [because] how do we learn about things that we don’t know that we need to know about?” He proposed that it is not overly complicated to determine what a person knows or does not know about a topic once we identify the topic. It is more difficult for people

to know what they do not know, and what and why they should know, about something that has yet to be identified. He implies that problem-posing skills will need to be developed to a greater degree. Unfortunately, he thinks, such skills are more difficult to develop than problem solving skills. It was clear that Long had some important conclusions to offer about the “uncertain future” of learning. He did not specifically say *self-directed learning* was the solution to learning in the future. Instead he used the term “heuristic learning” to describe some type of self-education activity as being the answer.

Allen Tough

For Tough, the future has some special connotations and he has much to say about its implications to SDL. Tough suggested that one of the outcomes of his dissertation is that it can help teachers and suggests that teachers should listen to their students talk about learning. Most of what Tough talked about, however, was the connection to technology. For Tough, the World Wide Web “seems to embody the kind of things that . . . we have always talked about with self-directed learning.” The Web is a “natural . . . foundation for adult learning.” Even though Tough hinted at the Web losing some ground due to commercialism, “I don’t think it’s ever going to lose it” completely.

Tough also has a strong opinion on the viability of the Internet. The analogy he uses for the Web is a “gigantic library. . . . [and] you . . . [don’t] even have to go outside your front door to do it.” It “boggles . . . [my] mind” to read “almost any topic you can imagine” in just a minute or two. To Tough it is just not the speed “of getting what you want. . . . [it also offers] adult learners [a chance to] explore to get what you want.” You

also do not have to wait until the library opens to get something. Everything disappears with the “Web, once you have a computer.” It is free and only takes an instant, according to Tough.

Regarding implications for practice, effort must be expended to “help learners set their goals and . . . choose their resources . . . but not actually provide the learning for them.” Tough says his “biggest disappointment” was that the field of adult education never picked up on suggestions to help people make their own learning choices such as “choosing your [own] path for learning [and] choosing your learning goals.” In addition, he would like to see “centers, . . . programs, workshops, and . . . individual companies help people set their learning goals [because] that’s where most people have the most trouble.” Tough’s experience is that “most adults who . . . [I have] come across have far more learning goals than they can ever accomplish.” According to him, adults “may not want to . . . learn what we want them to learn, but they are [still highly] motivated to learn.” Another item requiring consideration for study is the concept of futures in adult education. Tough includes the concept of change in this need, not only for individuals but on the global and social level. For Tough “future study looks at what we, to some extent, . . . can control and plan [for] what happens.”

On the cautious side, to Tough, there is “danger in . . . educators trying to help . . . take control of the process.” Educators “should keep their hands off this process. . . . [and] they should not be in control and they should not figure themselves as the center of the universe.” According to Tough, the “learner and the learning . . . are the center of the universe.”

For Tough, change is also an important aspect of the future role of SDL. He suggests “your path is going to change as you go along.” When it comes to dealing with change, “it does not make sense to plan far ahead in life . . . but when it comes to learning and change, it seems to make more sense to try . . . [and plan] your next step.” According to him, “you may change your mind . . . [on] your destination before you get there.”

Summing-up

The speculation on where this line of scholarship is headed is apparent in this section:

1. Even though Brockett had little to say about the future, than others like him who regularly attend the conferences specifically related to SDL. Brockett did talk about change and that SDL was not a fad;
2. Brookfield on the other hand who does not attend the conferences on SDL anymore, said that self-direction had a strong future;
3. For Caffarella, commentary centered around suggestions for communal learning and a rich research agenda;
4. To Guglielmino, SDL is essential for coping in our society of ever increasing change;
5. Hiemstra sees the future as “gloomier . . . than you might have heard . . . or expected”;
6. In the opinion of Kasworm, one must consider the good with the negative, when looking at the implications of SDL for future use with the learners;

7. Long was eloquent about the future challenges for learning but was concerned there may not be a place for him and others of his generation; and
8. In Tough's world, the Internet and associated World Wide Web embodied those kinds of things we have always talked about with self-directed learning.

Final Thoughts

Regarding some concluding thoughts on this chapter, the findings presented herein are unique in that they tell personal stories by name for each of the eight scholars represented in the sample chosen for this study. The essence of this chapter is that through a living literature review a unique opportunity is presented to say who said what and when about self-directed learning. The stories talk about the interrelation between the eight participants studied, who the major influences were on their scholarship, their suggestions to improve the practice of teaching, their thoughts on learning theory, and what they see as important agenda for the future of self-directed learning. I think the manner in which the findings were presented in this chapter will help make the study accessible to a large audience within the field of adult education.

CHAPTER 5

STUDYING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING AN EXPERT IN SELF-DIRECTION

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the results of this study are presented in three chapters. This third and final chapter presents results through a phenomenological lens and will discuss the thematic structure of participant experiences. The analyses of data are based on hermeneutic interpretation of participant transcripts. From this type of analysis, one is able to learn about the themes defining their philosophies of life, mentoring, and their philosophies of teaching. In addition, the thematic structure of participant experiences takes the meaning to a level that discloses the interrelationship of the themes. The data included in this part of the investigation are a product of the interviews and feedback received from participants on her or his individual thematic structure (Appendix A). As part of the analysis, each participant's data had its own thematic structure. The results here do not build on the findings of Chapters 3 and 4 but were derived independent of previous analyses.

The purpose of this part of the investigation is to describe how experts in their field experience self-directed learning. It was left to the discretion of the participant whether they wanted to talk about their experience with the study of SDL or their personal learning experiences with using self-directed learning in practice. In most cases, the participants told about their experience from both perspectives. This chapter is primarily devoted to

research question number three. Findings are presented to make them as accessible as possible to the field of adult education. A thematic structure also speaks to how these scholars have come to understand and make sense of this area of study and how the study of self-directed learning evolved for them over time.

Each participant was interviewed with the same four questions in the interview guide. Traditionally a phenomenological interview only asks one question; in this case a decision was made to deviate to give me flexibility in guiding the participant through conversation to ensure the participant's ability to take the conversation in their own direction. The following four questions were asked:

1. Could you describe the experiences that led you to first get involved with the study of self-directed learning?
2. Could you describe your experiences with self-directed learning over the years?
3. How has your thinking on self-direction evolved over time?
4. Could you describe your future vision for self-directed learning?

It is interesting to note participants answered the second, third, and fourth questions without being cued. Their description of a experience, in response to the first question, led them to discuss the other areas of interest on their own. This observation is not a result specifically, but I think it is an important one to document about the phenomenological process and its effectiveness in facilitating a participant's description of her or his experience.

This chapter has four sections: (a) bracketing interview, (b) thematic structure, (c) participant feedback, and (e) addressing research questions.

Bracketing Interview

To minimize my risk of asking *leading questions* during the interview, a bracketing interview was conducted. This interview was recorded, transcribed, and presented to the interpretive research group (IRG) for identification of themes I needed to try to set aside during the actual interviews. For a sample of data and an actual protocol, the bracketing interview is included as Appendix G. The interpretation of the interview assisted me to set aside some of my pre-judgments about self-directed learning to allow me to practice items that could go wrong during the actual interview, for example, a tape recorder running out of tape. The items identified by the IRG to be considered by me during each of the interviews were:

1. Not to use the term self-directed as synonymous with self-directed learning;
2. Not coercing the participant to answer questions about my themes;
3. Concentrating on the experience, not traits;
4. Taking risks in the interview; and
5. Realizing there is no certainty in the process and a need to be open to my participants.

Thematic Structure

This study included interviews with the same eight participants discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The names of participants in this chapter are not mentioned to keep thematic

findings anonymous¹. Results are presented in terms of: (a) a summary of each participant's protocol, (b) a description of essential themes, (c) an exhibit of the viewer's context serving to ground her or his experiences, and (d) an investigation of individual episodes. Quotes from each participant used as examples, have been edited to delete extraneous words and/or pauses (such as "uh" and "uh-huh") with ellipsis points in order to facilitate a coherent reading of the text.

Overall Summary of Each Participant's Protocol

During the course of the interviews, each participant used wording that described what their individual story was about and each participant used very precise words to tell their story. The words are presented here as the *title* of each individual story. These quotes or paraphrased versions are presented as follows:

1. The process a person follows to take control over their life;
2. Becoming a productive member of society;
3. The "ethical . . . responsibility . . . we . . . [have in] structuring environment[s] where we engage adults";
4. "The serendipitous way that people, . . . learn, to become experts in their own field, and the importance of participating in communities of practice, through that process";

¹ Reasonable effort has been made to protect the anonymity of the participants in this chapter. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the identity of a participant could not be determined if the reader has personal knowledge of the participant in conjunction with a detailed reading of Chapter 4.

5. Knowing “the kind of professor I wanted to be”;
6. Amazement at how well people “find [the] human resources” they need;
7. Surviving “because I was a self-directed learner”; and
8. A “career long forgotten.”

Each of the phrases was noted while reading through the protocol, and I felt this was an excellent way to summarize the protocol. I noted several quotations in each protocol and then narrowed them to one single quote for each, which best characterized the essence of that protocol. These quotes were shared with the IRG for consensus on March 3, 2004. The IRG thought, in the context of the study, these overall summaries are important because each sets the framework within which each participant shared her or his personal experiences with SDL.

When the results of these summaries were shared with the IRG, the group recognized and suggested that they could be thematized. The interpretation of these one-line summaries is an emphasis on process and becoming (IRG, personal communication, March 3, 2004). Themes related to the overall summary in this section are (a) that the process described is a coming or moving into the future, (b) is an enriching process, (c) involves a looking for, (d) is related to time, (e) and involves a wanting to accomplish something (IRG).

Essential Themes

When summarizing themes, as viewed across all protocols, the concept of essential elements might be useful (Butcher, Holkup, & Buckwalter, as cited in Thomas & Pollio,

2002). According to van Kaam (as cited in Thomas & Pollio), an *essential structural element* must be present in one half of the participants' narratives. According to Thomas and Pollio, the thematization process goes within and across protocols. The *global themes* observed across protocols must be annotated as a mechanism for demonstrating "experimental similarity" (p. 37) from one situation to another.

It is appropriate to note that the process of interpretation necessary to arrive at the essential themes required iterations. Results of this process were shared with the phenomenological interpretive research group on several occasions. Separate discussions were held with the committee member leading the data analysis to arrive at a consensus for the thematic structure of the overall study. Each iteration in the process involved Bleicher's (as cited in Pollio et al., 1997) suggestion of linking a "part of the text to the whole of the text" (p. 49). During this process of narrowing themes to a reasonable number, I had to determine if any portion of an individual's theme was violated (H.R. Pollio, personal communication, March 3, 2004). To complete this process, the original 39 categories of data discussed in Chapter 4 were reduced to 12, then to nine, and finally combined to result in four essential elements or themes.

These themes, derived from the very personal stories shared by seven of the eight participants, were about how they and/or others with whom the participant had knowledge, learn. The eighth story was told from a researcher's perspective regarding information from that participant's research studies. This interview also yielded equally rich data. These eight stories yielded four themes:

1. "Lifelong Learning";

2. “Can’t Do It Alone”;
3. “Some Get It”: “A-Ha”; and
4. “Need for a Model”/“Mentor.”

“Lifelong Learning”

Within the context of self-directed learning, Knowles (1975) suggests individuals must “become ready to learn what is required to perform their . . . life tasks or to cope more adequately with their life problems” (p. 20). Furthermore, Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) emphasize the importance of SDL being viewed from the perspective of lifelong learning.

This theme is about more than just being an essential element in the analysis of these data. In the field of adult education, the notion of lifelong learning is an important tenant. Lifelong learning, in the context of adult education, is the investment in and commitment to both formal and informal learning activities a person makes over her or his lifetime.

This is a recurrent theme in participant protocols. Several participants discussed this theme in multiple instances. It represents a style extending through the whole of life. The theme consists of ethical, cognitive, and spiritual components.

For example, one participant discussed an *ethical* component of the future of our educational system in the United States in the context of change:

The increasing . . . rate of change and to me, it was totally clear that if the world is changing so rapidly that we are not even able to predict what it’s going to be like . . . in the next 10 or 20 years, then if we’re not self-directed learners, we’re in big

trouble. So, why is our educational system . . . still promoting this other kind of memorization and regurgitation as opposed to thinking, reflecting, finding the resources to answer questions, . . . [and] analyzing in that continuing lifelong learning process?

The *cognitive* component of lifelong learning is exemplified by the participants. As an example this, one participant referred to a justification, for requiring a class, communicated to a younger adult student population in a community college. In this situation, students questioned why they were required to take a course with seemingly little relevancy:

I can't actually apply this on a . . . day-to-day basis, and that was one of the questions I was asking. That this is really important grounding information . . . and as I am building on it, more will be revealed . . . you know, and I will be able to make sense of it and apply it to . . . my life."

Another participant also spoke to self-directed learning as being "a marvelous central organizer for us to differentiate adult learning from child learning." For this participant,

it's not the central organizer anymore for me, and I think it's not a central organizer for the field anymore, and part of this for me is, . . . as you can hear . . . and I think it's the nature of where we go intellectually . . .

A third example of this cognitive aspect includes a discussion about SDL playing a key role in the individual's choice for the type of and location of healthcare for a serious illness.

Regarding *spirituality*, a participant related discussions with students about their soul and “re-examining their belief in God because” of the status of the world. To some of these students

it was something different. . . . we obviously as a society, we don’t talk about this kind of thing, but we have language and . . . religion . . . [to help us] talk about meaning and purpose and some of the . . . core elements of our lives.

“Can’t Do It Alone”

Scholars such as Slusarski (1994) see the self-directed learning process as one that requires “learners to relate to peers collaboratively” (p. 73). Brockett (1994) reminds us that the second myth of SDL is that learning takes place (or occurs) in isolation. According to him SDL is characterized by interaction with others, which facilitates “new insights and growth” (p. 7) for the learner.

This second theme is one that had an element of surprise in it for me. Similar to the lifelong style of learning, this theme is global and went across all eight participant interviews. A concept of needing to collaborate in some way with another person or group of persons played a key role in the participant’s sharing of their experiences. This theme involves the collaborative aspects of learning and/or need for resources. Although this theme has similarities, in name, to the last theme of a “Need for a Model”/“Mentor,” it is different in context.

Conceptually, not being able to do something alone implies the need for a resource to help in accomplishing the learning task. A resource may consist of a *how to* manual or

turning to the help of a colleague for assistance. Learning with the help of another or acquiring resources is a social process. In the discussion, a participant shares the outcome of K-12 teachers being able to apply self-directed learning principles in the organization of their classroom activities. Cited as an example, one teacher said:

Your class did better . . . [than] the rest of our classes, so what are you doing that we're not doing? Here's what we're doing. What are you doing? And they . . . strategize . . . to . . . become a learning community.

Another participant shares that in the 1970s and early 1980s, SDL was the “mantra for all of us in adult education. . . . [and that] it was an exciting . . . time of . . . people coming together.” A third participant explained that he skipped lectures and studied for examinations on his own. To this he said:

So my own . . . orientation, I think, is toward self-directed learning [and it] is probably one of the reasons why it's continued to interest me . . . over the years but I have found that there are real traps in following your own dispositions and at times as a learner I found myself at a distinct disadvantage trying to learn . . . in a . . . way in which I was setting the agenda.

A fourth participant suggested that his research reveals social aspects of learning. When a person talks about a learning experience and you ask them:

Tell me about learning something? Tell me your stories. . . . What I noticed was they all told the story in terms of people. . . . So, people tell their story in terms of . . . other people and how they helped. That's what tipped me off . . . [that] self-directed

learning is not a lonely thing. . . . not . . . an isolated thing, but a very social thing.”

“Some Get It”: “A-Ha”

Brookfield (2000) points out that the criticism of SDL comes into play when the process becomes “detached from the social, cultural, and political formations” (p. 11). Through his efforts working to train facilitators for taking on the practice of SDL, Hiemstra (1994) comments that he often hears “why they cannot move to self-directed learning or individualized instruction” (p. 82). Slusarski (1994) emphasizes the “rewards for moving from teacher to facilitator of self-direction in learning are great” (p. 73).

Discussion surrounding this theme captures on one hand some of the criticism of self-directed learning and on the other hand, the joy of seeing a student experience self-direction. As an example of where the name for this theme came from, one participant talked about a professor from a large university discovering the benefits of self-directed learning. This same participant, in his transcript and in personal communication, referred to his impressions of that other professor as “he’s the one who got it . . . and my guess is his students come out of that learning experience very empowered . . . feeling very good about it.”

Conceptually, the theme involves one’s critics being in some important relationship with the participant; for example, students, teachers, or colleagues. The criticism felt and expressed by participants seems to be a mechanism to constantly protect themselves. This theme also incorporates the satisfaction felt by the participants, in seeing SDL function

successfully, through their lens, with learners. Another aspect involves the frustration felt by the participant with SDL in some way. Seven of the eight participants talked about some aspect of this theme. Over half of the participants talked several times about this aspect during the course of their interview.

As an example of the criticism those studying self-directed learning experience, another participant talked about

One of which is a concern for social justice paired with an interest in individual human potential, helping individuals reach their fullest potential and you know what, . . . that's probably been one of the biggest points of contention as I interpret our field today, it's probably a place where I think some of our work on self-direction has been criticized. . . . it's usually because of the individual focus.

On the other hand, the satisfaction with SDL was talked about just as often as the negative side. When a participant experiences satisfaction with an outcome of SDL, they are intrinsically motivated. An example of the satisfaction is conveyed by a participant sharing a parable "of a guy driving his own sports car, driving his own carrot," which this scholar uses in her classes as an analogy for SDL. A carrot is occasionally used as a connotation for an extrinsic reward for doing something. The other facet of the story involves this extrinsic motivation:

All of these people . . . are walking along with their heads . . . bowed down and there's this stick that's attached to their back[s] and it goes up over their head and then there's a string that comes down in front of these bowed head[s] and there's a carrot on the stick[s].

The conclusion of this parable is:

Look what I did with this! And look how exciting it is and I'm moving in a direction that I choose and that's important to me. *Investigator*: Wow! What a neat analogy. I . . . sense the same . . . feeling of . . . self-fulfillment, enthusiasm, emotion, all those wonderful things that are tied up in your . . . description of your teaching experiences as you described to me a minute ago with childhood experiences. . . . Could you maybe say a little bit more about the . . . teaching . . . and your sense of self-fulfillment as . . . the facilitator and seeing what happens in others? Because that seems to be where you have a great . . . sense of self-satisfaction, even though you didn't mention that word, . . . it's the only way I can think of it for the moment.

Participant: Oh, it is! It is. . . . It's . . . a tremendous satisfaction when . . . I see that 'a-ha' take place.

In this participant's example the satisfaction comes from promoting perspective transformation and SDL in students (e-mail communication, June 14, 2004). Regarding frustration in dealing with colleagues who have not practiced self-directed learning in the classroom, another participant summarized this nicely by saying this other colleague said "you sure can't do it in my area." To this comment, he would say "you don't understand the process."

“Need for a Model”/“Mentor”

Slusarski (1994) suggested the teacher’s role “as a content expert” (p. 72) changes when placed in the context of a self-directed learning environment. Her concept is that the role of the content expert moves into the realm of a facilitator or guide. Among other things, this shift involves a sharing of control in the classroom with the student. Hiemstra (1994) believes it is the facilitator’s role to help the learner take more responsibility for her or his learning.

Throughout the course of the interviews, it was interesting to see how this theme came up in the dialogue. Seven of the eight participants talked about the importance of having a facilitator of some sort, involved in the learning process. Examples of the essential aspect of a model to follow are given by several participants.

The first participant says that as a professor in adult education he has certain responsibilities . . . to those students that I . . . am responsible for teaching. . . . [and] they . . . learn in concert with my activities in some way. . . . not necessarily directly to . . . the student, but to . . . find out what turns the student on.

A second participant suggested it is the parent’s responsibility to teach their children how to do things rather than to protect them (e-mail communication, June 14, 2004). Similarly, she suggests it is the parent’s responsibility to pass on the legacy of SDL to their children (e-mail communication, June 14, 2004).

In a third example, a participant proposed that it is the teacher’s responsibility to be directive and to “force students to take control over learning . . . [because] many time[s] they don’t wish to do this.” He referred to his

approach as . . . a practitioner around self-direction . . . is somewhat contextual and at times I would go into a situation and . . . refuse to give very much direction. At other times, I've gone into a situation and . . . you know, say . . . 'for the first quarter or third of our time together, I'm pretty much going to take control and use my power and authority to let you know . . . what's out there' and then after that initial immersion, which I've been the director of then . . . I'm going to turn things over to you. . . . So, the self-direction . . . for me has been kind of a weaning process.

Ground of the Experience

In the literature of self-direction, Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) suggest SDL "is a "way of life" (p. 1) for adults. Caffarella (1993) suggests being self-directed is "critical to survival and prosperity in a world of continuous personal, community, and societal changes" (p. 32).

The experience of being an expert in self-directed learning emerges from a ground or context of a continuing change. Each of the themes emerged as figural against the ground of a developing adjustment to the world. It is a story of a life unfolding in time. Self-directed learning means a developmental adjustment to change. This adjustment to change has a global as well as a personal aspect.

From a global perspective, self-directed learning involved being self-sufficient, surviving, and coping with change. The personal aspect involved being told one is an underachiever or bad student or that one has a serious illness. In summary, "it's absolutely

essential for coping with life,” according to one participant. In another story, this participant suggested that SDL “just seems to happen as, . . . part of, . . . life’s efforts.” All eight participants talked about SDL being connected, in some way, to their own life. To continue with the interpretation of the experiences of these eight scholars over the years with SDL each transcript was divided into episodes or stories, within the text.

Individual Episodes

In the effort to identify the thematic structure of this study, it became necessary to break each protocol into manageable meaning units. For purposes of this study, the manageable pieces of each transcript were called episodes. Meaning units or episodes and the associated rationale for using them are explained in Chapter 2. Against all transcripts there were a minimum of two to a maximum of six episodes. Once the episodes were identified, the next step was to summarize each episode and to identify what stood out for me (as figural). Each episode was characterized by a short paragraph. For the eight transcripts, 35 episodes were identified. Do not confuse the episodes with the content analysis categories mentioned above. These episodes were sorted into groups, which set the stage for developing the essential themes for the study.

Separate from the use of the episodes to arrive at a thematic structure, it seemed possible to conduct two different types of sorts. One sort was set up to verify how many and which episodes sorted against each theme. This is somewhat of an indication as to how much each participant talked about a particular theme. A second sort was done on

the story emphasized in each episode. This sort yielded information concerning the components of self-directed learning which was important to each participant.

Sorted Against Themes

The result of this partitioning process will be used to tell the participants' stories in a discernible way. The breakdown is as follows: 12 episodes sorted against the theme of "Some Get It": "A-Ha," nine episodes sorted against the theme of a "Need for a Model"/"Mentor" to follow, seven episodes sorted against the theme of "Can't Do It Alone," and five episodes sorted against the theme of a "Lifelong Learning" style. The result suggested that participants shared more stories about the theme, "Some Get It": "A-Ha" and fewer stories about the theme "Lifelong Learning."

It is interesting to note that out of this set of themes, an individual concern evolved to identify *limitations* of self-direction: here two of the 35 episodes were connected to this issue. One participant went so far as to call this concern, the "dark side," and her stories suggested that some learners have negative experiences with SDL or in some cultures self-direction doesn't work. In the interpretation of this negative experience, if self-directed learning is forced on learners or misused by teachers and employers, the experience may not always turn out to be a helpful experience for learners. This participant said that the practice of self-directed learning gave them "a set of new understandings of caution."

Similarly, another participant suggested that self-direction doesn't always work in other cultures. The example used by her was that some languages do not have a word for the "self." In this case, the example was that for the culture she was talking about, there

was no “word for I . . . so if you put self-directed learning in [an] individual ‘I’ . . . [context] it doesn’t work.” This participant went on to say that “because their systems [e.g. the other culture’s] are ones that I don’t . . . know, I know overall how they work but there is no way that I could work those systems. The . . . [other country’s people] have to work them.” For this effort to be successful, the facilitator needed “to be directed by . . . [the indigenous group] in order for the project to be successful.” This notion of some type of other directedness might also have loose connections to the essential themes of a need for an example (model) to follow and you can’t do it alone. Although the concept of SDL not working in other cultures could be construed to be in the same context as the themes of an example to follow and you can’t do it alone, it still should be kept as an additional concern, separate from the essential themes.

Sorted Against the Stories

When each episode was sorted against the story that it was about, a different result occurred. In every category below, the number of episodes in which each was discussed is in parentheses. The components of the participants’ personal theories of learning that resulted from this inquiry are:

1. There is a parental/teacher/mentor responsibility for learning (8);
2. SDL is a process that is satisfying to the facilitator (6);
3. Learning is collaborative (6);
4. There might be no place in the future, for some of the participants (5);
5. SDL is essential in life (4);

6. A facilitator's responsibility is to help the learner (3); and
7. SDL works for underachievers (3).

Summing-up

This sorting of individual episodes provided another way in through which to determine the context for each participant's story. The first analysis of episodes was to break a total of 221 pages of transcripts into similar pieces consisting of a few pages per participant. Second, after the thematic structure evolved, episodes were sorted against themes. This sort included that most of the episodes comment about the theme of "Some Get It": "A-Ha." It also yielded a third concern: that SDL does not always work. Fourth, when stories were sorted, the component of learning theory that most episodes identified was the parental/teacher/mentor responsibility for learning.

Participant Feedback

Several key points were noted during interaction with the participants involved in this study. First, during the closing comments of the interview, for example while audiotaping, two participants openly acknowledged they enjoyed the interview. One commented it has "been good," while another said it "was fun." Such a positive reaction on the part of the participant is significant since it suggests that the participant is openly acknowledging something has been discussed that they have enjoyed talking about and are interested in. In addition to what was captured on tape, at least one additional participant

said afterwards that they enjoyed the process and wanted their tape returned because of the memories embraced during the interview.

When the thematic structure was mailed to the participants for their comment, six out of the eight asked for their tapes to be returned. Regarding subsequent conversation, one participant said in written correspondence that he “enjoyed all aspects of the process” (Personal communication, June 20, 2004).

In several cases there has been considerable conversation with participants, even after the interview process was completed. Almost exclusively, electronic mail was used to solicit, coordinate, and follow-up on the interview process. A total of 129 e-mails were exchanged to coordinate feedback with all participants for the results of this chapter. This number of e-mails is large because feedback also included the request for curriculum vitae (Appendix A). In the case of the retired professors, current vitae did not exist. In additional correspondence, one of the participants wanted to use some of the data from the citation analysis and cite this dissertation as work in progress for a book chapter they were preparing.

As a final step in this study, each participant was mailed a copy of their transcript, thematic structure, and diagram of the thematic structure (Appendix A). Only three participants responded with suggested modifications to their thematic structure, while others responded as follows: three participants, no response; one participant, no comment; one participant, concurrence; one participant, suggested adding one episode; while two participants suggested alternative interpretations of the thematic structure for their transcript. Each of the comments from these last three participants was incorporated into

the findings of this chapter. When results of each participant's thematic structure were shared (Appendix A), none of the participants responded with a glowing "yes that is it." The discussion and conclusions in Chapter 6 contain a detailed accounting of my reflections during the process of completing this investigation, especially on my experience of interacting with participants.

Addressing the Research Questions

So what do all of these discussions of the experience of experts in the study of self-directed learning have to do with the research questions for this dissertation? The results presented in this chapter primarily address the second and third research questions. However, to a certain extent, portions of the participants' thematic structure address the first question as described below. All three research questions are discussed in additional detail in Chapter 6, to include the contributions of Chapter 4.

Question Number 1

For information on how the study of self-directed learning has evolved over time for the scholars, one could look at several of the episodes in each of the eight interviews. One participant described their process of coming to know SDL, as an "intellectual journey." Another participant talked about the early days of self-directed learning and that it "wasn't something that people had on their radar at that time." This same participant talked about the early days being "more of a personal adventure." The World Wide Web played out as

this participant's notion of embodying "the kinds of things we . . . have always talked about with self-directed learning." Another participant talked about his recollections, over the years, as "a lot of fun." This participant also shared recollections as a "career long forgotten," through stories of people in adult education. It was interesting that a fourth participant shared an evolution through personal frustration as a learner and acknowledged the history, for him, started in the seventies. He talked about the need to be critically reflective in life and about practice. . . . [as] we are all caught in our own . . . histories, and . . . we need some external perspectives and some different structures at times to . . . give us . . . a little bit of balance and to help us be sure that when we are following our instincts and intuitions and organizing our own learning that that's a . . . good decision.

Perhaps another way to view this question of how SDL evolved over time, is that the experiences were all really about the evolution of each participant's philosophies of life, the importance of mentoring, and their personal philosophy of teaching.

Question Number 2

Regarding how scholars who have studied self-directed learning have come to understand and make sense of this area of study, each participant framed their overall interview in a unique way. The gist of the response to this second question is that each participant's interview had an underlying theme that set the stage, if you will, for how each went about sharing her or his experiences with SDL. For example a participant talked about the process a person follows to take control over their life. One of the key elements

in this story centered on how an electrician learns to be mayor of a city, when no formal training is available to help them acquire the skills they need. Another participant centered the overall presentation on knowing “the kind of professor . . . [I] wanted to be.” In this example, the scholar talked about “helping people reach their fullest potential and do things to the best of their ability and. . . . that . . . is what brought me into the adult ed field.” As a related point, it was interesting that a third participant specifically mentioned they observed their students utilizing self-directed learning to “make sense of . . . [their learning needs] and apply . . . [them] to . . . their life.” As was described above in the overall summary of each participant’s protocol, the thematizing of the process tells how scholars who have studied self-directed learning have come to understand and make sense of this area of study. The themes related to this question are a coming or moving into the future, an enriching process, a looking for, and a wanting to (IRG, personal communication, March 3, 2004).

Question Number 3

Specifically, with regard to how scholars experience self-directed learning, each shared a unique set of stories in their individual protocols that built an overall thematic structure. This structure consisted of four themes that were contextualized against the ground of a person’s developmental adjustment to the world. For the process of SDL to work satisfactorily for each of the eight participants, it appears the four figural components all need to exist (see Figure 1). Each of the themes, including “Lifelong Learning”, “Can’t Do It Alone”, “Some Get It”: “A-Ha”, and a “Need for a

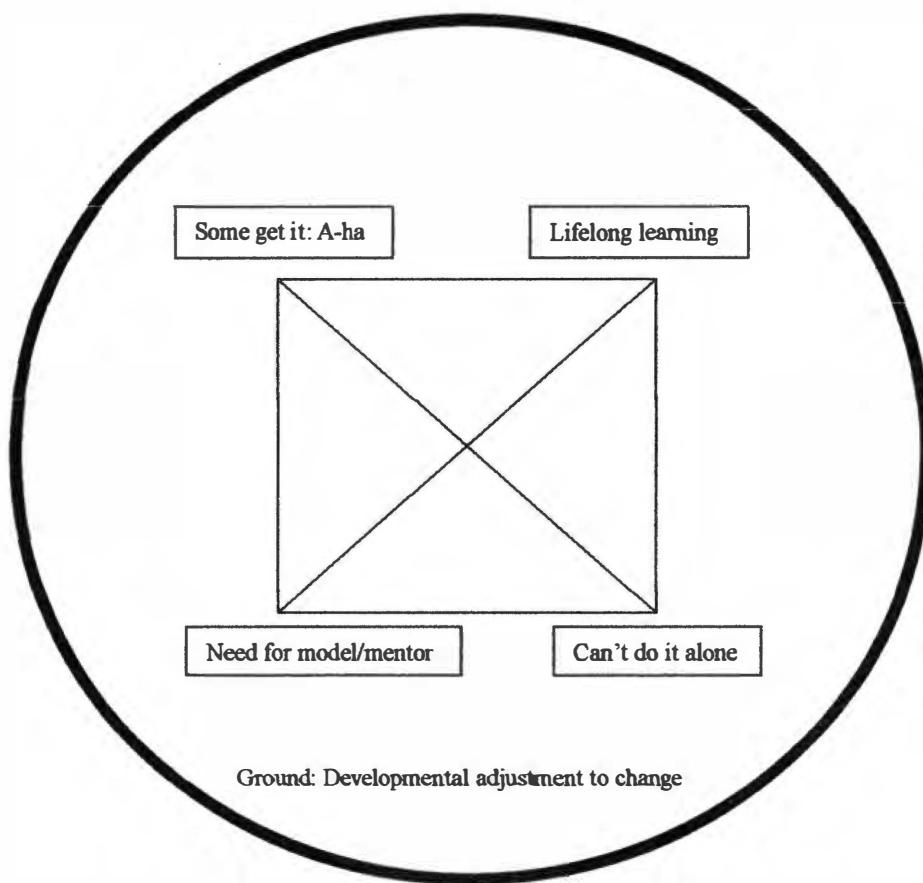


Figure 1. Theme structure of experts' perception of self-directed learning.

Model”/“Mentor,” exhibit an interaction, producing a theme structure of the expert’s perception of SDL. In essence, the elements described in Figure 1 represent a definition of SDL emanating from participant protocols.

Some participants believed that SDL is weighted more to the left hand side, yielding directed knowledge/pedagogical instruction. Others participants noted more weighting to the right hand side, resulting in constructed knowledge/collaborative learning, construed as a community of learners. It seems to me, the left hand side has primary ownership with the facilitator while the right hand side rests with the learner. The horizontal axis represents the individual-social side. Another way of viewing this diagram is to consider more individual learning toward the left and more social learning toward the right.

Each of the diagonal axes represent first, the parent or mentor being involved in a passing of the legacy of SDL, and second, the learner having a need for a book, manual, or advice of a colleague that is an expert in the subject the learner desires to know more about. If the diagonal is down and to the right, it represents the need for something – a resource or person. Should the diagonal be down and to the left, it represents a family situation – a parent or major professor.

Should the process become too lopsided into one of the four quadrants, as several of the participants noted, SDL might not work or even discourage the learner in some way. This concern of SDL not being appropriate might represent the process of it not working in another culture; learners having a bad experience with some facet of SDL, such as a learning contract, or even abuse by an employer, trying to use SDL in a way that does not benefit the learner.

Final Thoughts

Regarding some concluding thoughts, the four essential themes disclosed in this chapter offer insight into the way this sample of experts have come to know and understand this notion we call self-directed learning. The thematic structure divulges a symmetry existing between the four components. It is interesting that this diagram has the flexibility to explain self-direction in a learning environment requiring more “other directed” or pedagogic situations balanced with an alternative environment that is more collaborative or involving “constructed knowledge.”

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter brings the study to a close: Its purpose is to summarize the findings, present implications for research and practice, share personal reflections, and discuss the potential for the continued use of this line of study. The chapter is organized in three sections: (a) summary of study, (b) discussion, and (c) conclusions.

Summary of Study

The study of self-directed learning over the past three decades has been one of the most important topics within the field of adult education (Brockett et al., 2001; Caffarella, 1993). During this period, it has gone from being an important area for some to a topic criticized by others (Merriam, 2001a; Brookfield, 2000). For those experts who participated in this study the concept is equally diverse. Some regard it as an area for continued scholarly writing and research whereas others no longer consider it a core area of personal interest. Little has been done to study how self-directed learning has developed over the years, and it was the intention of this study to describe the evolution of self-directed learning as experienced by the people who have devoted much of their lives to scholarship in this area. Eight interviews were conducted with selected experts who have made major contributions to the literature of self-directed learning since the mid 1960s (Donaghy et al., 2002).

The research design and data collection were informed by phenomenology whereas data were analyzed on the basis of hermeneutic interpretation. In addition, such data presented an opportunity to look at the contributions of each person through a mini-case study and through descriptive categories of qualitative results reported as personal stories.

The findings are described in three different ways: First, participant profiles provide insight for the qualifications of each scholar to be considered an expert in self-directed learning. Second, personal stories led to four basic qualitative, descriptive categories: histories, personal theories of learning, the importance of collaborative learning, and ideas about the future of self-direction. Third, the experience of the participants evolves in a thematic structure consisting of four components:

1. "Lifelong Learning";
2. "Can't Do It Alone";
3. "Some Get It": "A-ha"; and
4. "Need for a Model"/"Mentor."

This study created a rare opportunity to reveal the individual viewpoints of the experts studied because their names were associated with most of the results. The study documents the volume of publications and leadership in the field evidenced by their chairing of doctoral dissertations. Each participant provided a rich personal history as they disclosed how they have come to know and understand this topic. Through personal stories, the professors shared insight into their own ways of learning and thoughts about the future of self-direction. These stories divulge new ideas for research, controversial topics, the impact of change, and the relationship of SDL to technology. The thematic

structure of the experience provides an alternative way to view their work and how it permeates their understanding of the topic called self-directed learning.

Discussion

This section presents a summary of the major findings followed by a discussion of final synthesis, the implications for research and practice, and my personal reflections on the study. The quotes used as examples in this chapter have been slightly edited for readability. They do not include ellipsis points for omitted pauses and/or words. Occasionally some paraphrased material from the transcripts is italicized to add emphasis. Three *research questions* were associated with this study. The questions were presented in the same order as the results chapters that best answer them. Question number one is best answered by Chapter 4. Both Chapters 4 and 5 are used to answer the second question. The last question is best answered by Chapter 5, which also addressed the first question but in a more abstract way.

Discussion of Research Question 1

How has the study of self-directed learning evolved over time? This question was explored through the personal history of each participant and was presented in detail in Chapter 4. The gist of this section is who influenced whom. The study of self-directed learning evolves over time as a personal history for each scholar and each of the eight had much to say about this topic. The evolution over time is presented in three parts. First it was told through the lens of these scholars; second, it involved an evolution of ideas for

some, but not all, of the participants; and third, it was presented through the ground of the experience.

History Through the Lens of Scholars

When the history was told through the lens of scholars, what stood out was who had an influence on whom. Six of the eight talked about the influence of their major professor or other faculty member at their alma mater, as having an impact on their views toward or initial interest in self-directed learning. Next I noticed that three of the group mentioned the ISDLS meeting every year as significant to their personal history. For the most part, a good bit of the discussion was about the scholarly influence of others. Three of the participants expended some effort in trying to mention everyone in the field over the years. These individuals kept adding people over the course of the interview, in what appears to be an *effort to get the history right*.

Who came out number one, as the most influential of the experts? The results were tied. Three mentioned Tough and three mentioned Knowles as *having the most influence* on their scholarly pursuit of SDL. One person mentioned Spear and Mocker. I should mention that three participants had two in their grouping. One put Johnstone and Knowles together, a second put Hiemstra and Long together, while the third put Candy and Tough together, as having the most profound influence in their scholarly interest of self-direction. Other scholars mentioned as being significant to the group interviewed, were (in alphabetical order): Brookfield, Houle, Jackson (one of Tough's committee members), Kidd, Kleis (one of Caffarella's committee members), and McClusky. Even

though some of these individuals were also mentioned as being mentors, this list of names is only intended to identify the influence of scholarship.

When it came to the concept of mentors, two of the participants were mentioned as being a mentor to two of the people who were interviewed. I thought it was very interesting that the protégés gave credit to the mentors, but neither of the two mentors recognized their protégés, as such. The protégés were just called a colleague or student. In one case, the name of the protégé was not mentioned at all by the person regarded to be the mentor.

History as an Evolution of Ideas

As an evolution of ideas, the history contained several key points. First, four of the eight specifically talked about the notion of self-directed learning evolving in meaning or definition for them. One was blunt in saying that SDL was “not the organizing core” for her anymore. Another suggested his writing on SDL was primarily about political implications. A third proposed that SDL is “just one of the ways that people learn.” The last individual in this group noted that *self-direction does not always work in all cultures*.

Second, the balance of the group of eight did not hint that their personal definition evolved over time, for them. One of this group of four suggested foundational “knowledge base” of literature was complete in the early 1970s and “it hasn’t changed very much” since.

As a Ground of the Experience

Chapter 5 also partially answers this question, as the ground for the experience is time. The ground represents a person's continuing on-going adjustment to change. It is personal as well as developmental. Participants talked about being "self-sufficient," "surviving," and "coping with change" because they were self-directed so one participant summed it up well by saying, "it's absolutely essential for coping with life."

Discussion of Research Question 2

How have scholars who have studied self-directed learning come to understand and make sense of this area of study? The response to this question involves a summary of two descriptive categories in Chapter 4 and one experiential component in Chapter 5.

Descriptive Categories

The descriptive categories unique to this question are each participant's personal learning theory and their personal importance of a collaborative approach in learning. Both of these aspects are talked about in Chapter 4. Regarding their *personal learning theory*, each scholar engaged learning and made meaning out of personal experiences they shared during the course of their interview. Examples of these personal experiences given by each may have been one of their own learning experiences, one of a colleague or student, or something that has evolved from research they have done or are familiar with. With all but one exception, participants implied that aspects of self-direction were important if not integral to their own personal way of learning. I submit that the adjectives used to describe these episodes define some of the components of each

participant's own working definition of self-directed learning. An important note is that none of the participants were asked to define SDL during their interview and their perspectives are extrapolated from their interviews. One of the interesting aspects of this descriptive category is that, just as in the literature, these scholars did not reach a consensus for the components of SDL. There was some agreement in two areas on some of the more common components of self-directed learning. These areas were learner control and the learner taking responsibility for their learning. Six of the eight participants mentioned these aspects, five talked about the learner being in control. Participants utilized phrases like the following to describe learner control: "students take control over their learning if we would give them the opportunity to do so"; "the student is in charge"; "I like to be in control of my own learning activity"; "I force students to take control over their learning because many times they do not wish to do this"; "they do it for themselves"; "the teacher must give up control"; and "learners prefer themselves as the guide."

Three participants talked about the learner being responsible for her or his learning. Participants used terms such as: "it involves taking responsibility"; "it involves having responsibility or chores to do and things must be expected of a person"; "feeling responsible is a much better preparation for life"; "the learner takes responsibility for their own learning and plays a key role in making decisions about what they learn, when they learn, how they learn and being in control of that process"; "the student is expected to take responsibility for their own learning"; "being the protégé in a mentoring relationship is about taking on responsibilities"; and "assuming more responsibility is empowering."

One participant did speak to instances when self-directed learning may not be desirable. In this case, the example given was in regard to issues like emergency health care. This scholar said she would not want a self-directed medical staff treating her.

Regarding a *collaborative approach in learning*, the participant views on the idea of this being a key component of self-direction, had a mixed review. Five of the eight participants specifically talked about the importance of learning collaboratively. Three of the eight hinted at its importance. One in this latter group used another word that is often synonymous (e.g., “community”) with collaboration. A second in this group talked about the *learner being given a center stage* while this concept of the learner being at the center, was also embraced by one other participant. The last in this group of three had little to say about collaborations, per se. Regarding the group of five, one called the process “social.” One in this category expressed concern that at times being collaborative can have its problems. In this example, the participant suggested that in collaborative work projects, there is risk of one party stealing the work of the other party.

Experiential Component

As discussed in Chapter 5, each participant had an underlying theme for her or his sharing of the experience with self-directed learning. For instance, participants talked about taking control over their lives and making sense of their learning needs. The themes related to this question involve a coming or moving into the future, an enriching process, a looking for, and a wanting to.

Discussion of Research Question 3

How do these scholars experience self-directed learning? Because this study was informed by phenomenology, each participant was permitted to take the conversation in any direction she or he wished to. Some participants said a little about how they experienced SDL in the descriptive category of their personal learning theory, but it will not be discussed here.

The data analysis unfolds into four essential themes:

1. “Lifelong Learning”;
2. “Can’t Do It Alone”;
3. “Some Get It”: “A-ha”; and
4. “Need for a Model”/“Mentor.”

These four themes together give a collective picture of how the participants view the process of self-directed learning. It is not a synthesis from the literature; rather it is the thematic structure evolving from the essence of participant description of her or his experiences.

The theme “Lifelong Learning” is used to indicate that learning on one’s own extends through the whole of life. This term, which is a basic tenant of adult education, was present in all protocols. Each participant talked about this having ethical, cognitive, and spiritual connections for them. It was talked about as a way to “make sense of it and apply it to their life.”

In the theme of you “Can’t Do It Alone,” a surprise evolved for me. This surprise concerns the idea of needing some type of resource to assist with the learning process. I did not expect the participants to speak up so powerfully about the need to have others

involved in the learning process. As this theme crosses all protocols, it was global in nature. The need for a resource might be as simple as a manual or it might involve another person. In the event another person was involved, it might be a friend, a colleague, or some type of expert. It does not necessarily mean the teacher is the resource. The key to this theme is the notion that “self-directed learning is not a lonely thing, not an isolated thing, but a very social thing.”

Another aspect of the thematic structure is “Some Get It”: “A-ha,” which deals with the satisfaction of the facilitator when they see self-direction take place (e.g., “when I see the a-ha take place”). Conversely this theme is related to the critical side involving disagreement with learners, teachers, and colleagues. For those who support the notion of SDL, they are “the one who got it.” Those who disagree with the process of self-direction, from the perspectives of these eight participants, are the ones who do not get it. The criticism goes two ways: it can be directed toward the SDL movement by an outsider or it can be directed by someone within the movement, toward an outsider. The theme is present in seven of the eight participants.

The last theme evolves from the “Need for a Model”/“Mentor” and is present in seven of the eight participants. This theme describes the role of a facilitator in the learning process. Often it is the parent, teacher, or mentor that provides this component. This is not to be confused with the need for collaborative efforts of some sort. The process covered in this thematic category could be called the “forcing of students to take control over learning.” It is also described in this study as a “weaning process.”

Final Synthesis

Overall, this dissertation offers a summary of findings in six broad categories:

1. Through discussion on why this sample was chosen to participate in the study, results in Chapter 3 disclosed quantitative contributions to the scholarship of self-directed learning. This sample of eight authors contributed 554 of the 2,038 citations over the last two decades of mainstream journal articles on self-directed learning (Donaghy et al., 2002). In other words, 27% of the total citations belong to this group of eight scholars.
2. Regarding total published manuscripts, this group has contributed an estimated 963 items (personal correspondence with each participant). Of this number, 200 or 21% deal with some aspect of SDL. Guglielmino had the greatest percentage of her total publications dedicated to SDL, or 67%. Brookfield had the least at 8%.
3. These eight scholars have worked with, as dissertation chairs, approximately 332 doctoral students. Regarding dissertations involving some facet of self-direction, 80 or 24% of these dissertations dealt with some aspect of self-direction. Brockett had the highest proportion of SDL dissertations at 53%. Kasworm and Brookfield were tied for the least, with 10%.
4. Regarding how participants have come to know and understand the topic, the results in Chapter 4 presented four findings: (a) how each has talked about those scholars who have personally influenced them and their interest in self-directed learning; (b) how some discussed their mentors; (c) how each discussed their individual styles of learning; and (d) what is the importance of collaborative

relationships in their learning experiences, work relationships, and in the accomplishment of scholarly activities.

5. Through hermeneutic interpretation of each participant's experience in Chapter 5, a thematic structure evolved that presents the essence of their philosophy of life, the importance of mentoring, and their philosophy of teaching. The thematic structure in Figure 1 (Chapter 5), presents an alternative way of viewing self-directed learning. This diagram was not synthesized from the literature; rather, it evolved from personal experiences described by participants.
6. During the interview, participants were specifically asked about their future vision of self-directed learning. Six of the eight spoke to SDL having a future while five of the eight spoke to a favorable impact of technology on ensuring the future of SDL.

Implications for Research and Practice

Many items in this study stood out for me as implications for the field of adult education. This section summarizes those findings that speak to potential topics for future research and the numerous suggestions made that impact philosophies of teaching and the learning styles of adult learners, wherever they are, and in whatever capacity they are learning.

Research

During the course of the interviews many topics were discussed with each participant that impact research associated with self-directed learning. This material will be discussed first from the perspective of the participants' ideas, then from my own perspective.

Participant perspectives. It was interesting to me that participants saw SDL as a viable area on which to continue expending research effort. During the interviews, participants were not asked to talk about suggestions for future research agenda on self-directed learning. This information was volunteered by each participant and is reflected in the transcripts.

The main points are summarized from the five participants making suggestions; for details, see Chapter 4. Four areas of research are proposed:

1. **Historical.** One of the suggestions was to conduct a historical content analysis of the literature from 1900 to 1950 as a mechanism for determining the predecessors of SDL. Another suggestion was made to look at examples like the Highlander Research and Education Center and determine how self-directed behavior has made a difference in the world.
2. **Follow-up on previous research.** One proposal was made to test some of the models, such as Brockett and Hiemstra's (1991) PRO Model. Follow-up is also needed on the social considerations suggested by Brookfield's work. Additionally, replications on Tough's (1971; 1979) *Adult's Learning Projects* should also be considered.

3. Common areas. Two participants spoke to investigating the linkages of SDL to other streams of learning theory.
4. Other areas. A suggestion was made to look at the philosophical implications behind the process of self-directed learning. In another idea, investigating the implications of learner control and learner access to information as a result of the Internet was presented. A third idea stemmed from the prospect of looking at indigenous populations and the way in which they learn.

My perspective. My observation is that all of the agenda items suggested by the participants lie primarily in the realm of qualitative research. No specific suggestions were made to conduct quantitative inquiries, as future agenda topics. All of the suggestions made above by the participants are items that I personally endorse as suggestions for future research agenda.

But what are my own recommendations for future research that I gleaned from doing this study? First, I suggest looking at all of Tough's literature to identify the context for how he has commented on group learning. This review could help clarify the distinction he appears to make between "social" and "group learning."

Second, regarding my own notion for future research, I think the relationship of the mentor to the protégé needs to be studied. The research question I have and would want to understand better is: What role does the mentor, employer, or teacher play in creating an environment conducive to a protégé, employee, or student taking the initiative to learn something? This point is something that has sparked my curiosity from the very start of this research project. It appears there is a condition or environment created by the mentor

that mediates an individual *to be more* or in some cases *less self-directed*. Relationships could also be investigated between an employer and employee or a teacher and a student. I believe this could be studied through conducting phenomenological interviews of individuals who consider a mentor, employer, or teacher to be part of their life at some time in the past. A question that might be asked is: Could you describe for me a time when you felt you learned something you wanted to learn? This question could also cover the negative impact by asking: Could you describe for me a time when you were not able to learn, what you wanted to learn?

Practice

This study has much to say about personal philosophies dealing with teaching styles, learning styles, and the importance of mentoring. Similar to the above section on implications for research, the ideas will be presented first from the participants' perspectives and then from my own.

Participant perspectives. The comments in this section are derived from the section in Chapter 4 dealing with opinion on the future of SDL. During the interviews, participants were not asked to talk about their suggestions for the practitioner, when it comes to self-directed learning. This information was volunteered by each participant and is reflected in the transcripts. Seven of the eight participants had comments on the implications for the practice of adult education. The five categories resulting from these comments are:

1. **Effect of technology.** One participant commented to the necessity of students having “to do stuff for themselves” due in part, to the tremendous amount of information available today. To accomplish this, the instructional philosophy of the teacher must include “highly individualized instruction.” Another participant specifically spoke to the implications for practice. This scholar suggested we must separate the “industrial model of efficiency” from the “effectiveness” of learning and concentrate on understand how people learn to fully harness what is available through technology.
2. **In the classroom.** Facilitators must “help learners set their goals and choose their resources but not actually provide the learning for them.”
3. **Socio-economic.** The issues of power and control must be considered by facilitators when working with disadvantaged adult learners.
4. **Dealing with change and life.** A participant suggested being self-directed was “absolutely essential for coping with life in this time of increasing change.”
5. **Common areas.** Four of the participants shared cautions related to the practice of SDL. Comments were presented about self-direction not always working: with graduate students coming from other cultures, in situations where educators are trying to keep control of the learning process, in certain situations when the learner is trying to learn on her or his own but really should consider using a resource for their own good, and about how the facilitator should weigh the bad with the good before considering SDL’s applicability to a learning situation.

My perspective. All participant observations and/or suggestions mentioned above are valid considerations for the practitioner in adult education. But what are my own ideas that have evolved during the course of this investigation?

First, I think in practice one may need to consider the context for the learning environment based upon what the learner wants to or hopes to accomplish. This could help with the consideration which should be given to fitting the facilitation technique to the learner's individual learning style and the material to be learned. As was mentioned several times during the interviews, SDL may not always be appropriate.

Second, I think a balance of all four themes discussed in the diagram of the thematic structure (Figure 1) needs to be considered. I believe placing emphasis on any one of the four essential elements or themes can run a risk of an unpleasant learning experience for the learner. Regarding these four themes, I suggest:

1. "Lifelong Learning." This theme is sort of the empowerment piece that involves the learners trying to make sense of something such that they can apply it universally through the whole of their life's circumstances. It is likely ownership of this theme falls more to the learner.
2. "Can't Do It Alone." In this theme, resources are required. The resource can come in several forms and without consideration for it or them, the learning outcome may not be what is desired by the learner or facilitator. A facilitator could help the learner identify them as part of the "Need for a Model"/"Mentor." It is likely ownership of this theme falls more to the learner.
3. "Some Get It": "A-ha." Regarding this theme, which is primarily owned by the facilitator, one may need to be cautious about forcing self-directed learning on

anyone. Even though the facilitator can derive satisfaction through the implementation of SDL, if it is forced the outcome may be unpleasant for the learner.

4. “Need for a Model”/“Mentor.” This is another theme primarily owned by the facilitator. It involves a perception that a facilitator or preceptor of some type is required for the process to work with a satisfactory outcome for the learner. This theme might also be considered to involve a weaning process necessary to prepare the learner for learning less through formal teaching and more through collaborations. It is noteworthy that this theme would apply to the learner who is afraid to learn on their own or in some way finds it unusual to learn on their own. In this case, it is the responsibility of the preceptor to show the learner what is out there and provide help in setting goals and identification of resources so that the learner can work toward accepting more responsibility for their learning and to prepare them to be more productive members of society.

In order to complete my own perspectives on this study, I believe it is necessary to say more about my own reflections on the process followed, than other qualitative dissertations might have done. I think this is especially important because of the unique nature of the interviews and that I mentioned the names of participants during the discussion of the results.

Personal Reflections

This section is perhaps the most exciting of the dissertation for me. It is not exciting because of nearing the end of the process. Instead, it is a place where I can share some of

my experiences about the process followed over the course of this study. What I hope to accomplish is the sharing of those things that stood out for me during the three years this project required. For me, a logical way to tell my story is to stay within the chronological order of how it unfolded.

Conceptualization Phase

This was the “getting started” phase of the research agenda involved in this study. What stood out for me is a conference presentation that took place in June 2001. This was the Hensley et al. (2001) discussion at AERC on long time adult educators. Even though my study was just an idea at that time, it became clear that if a study were to be completed it had to contain quotations from the participants, by name. I sensed during this presentation some discontentment from the audience over not being able to say who said what. However, for me, seeing the excitement and enthusiasm in the graduate students who did this presentation opened my eyes to the possibilities of doing something similar for my study. The idea that comes to my mind, when I first considered the possibility of interviewing scholars, is that you are doing “a living literature review.” Another area that stood out during the process was the timely support of committee members assisting me in meeting standards for approval, by the university’s Internal Review Board’s Human Subjects Committee, to conduct a pilot study. I received IRB approval and obtained participant agreement at a February, 2002 conference in Florida. My last thought that comes to mind during this initial part of the process was seeing my major professor genuinely excited about the concept for a study of this type.

Data Collection

This was by and large the most invigorating yet exciting phase of the study for me. I would call it the “having fun phase.” The inspiration I got from conducting the interviews was significant. Somehow all the frustration involved in trying to arrange and coordinate the interviews was made up for once I conducted the interview. It took 13 months to coordinate and complete the interviews. I made automobile trips to Florida, New York, North Carolina, and Ontario to collect the data. Even though I thought it would be impossible to get the last three participants interviewed in one trip, it all worked out. The joy of meeting with each participant is beyond words for me. Each interview presented a unique experience. I cannot say which one was my favorite, but I can say I really enjoyed the second and sixth. It was amazing how gracious each was to me, especially those I had to interview in their homes. As the data were taken for each interview, I recognized the participants were all saying more about the topic of self-directed learning than I ever expected. The importance of a collaborative component, the amount the participants had to say about SDL who were no longer involved in conference presentations on the subject, and the degree with which stories were told about their own learning styles were findings unique to my method of inquiry. When the eighth was complete, I was ready to continue with more and was not prepared to have them end.

Analysis

This was the “tedious phase.” It took 26 months to complete this phase of the study. This was a time of perseverance as the first five interviews were analyzed in a group process through the IRG. The scheduling of the group’s time has to take into account that

other members of the group were trying to present their protocols for analysis, just as I was. It was exciting time for me when the thematic structure unfolded and yielded a relationship of themes I just did not expect to see. In this instance, I believed that it would not be possible to have a thematic structure with a ground and diagram depicting the interrelationships of the essential components. My most sincere wish came true and that was for a clear, coherent diagram of the thematic structure of how self-directed learning was experienced by the scholars who have studied it. When this diagram evolved and the committee member directing the analysis said “start writing,” I had renewed enthusiasm for the huge task that lay before me.

Writing Phase

Even though I had looked forward to this phase, I had “grossly underestimated” the time it would take. So what got me through this part? I think it was the continued contact I had with the participants. Over 215 e-mails were required along with several telephone calls to discuss the findings and to clarify the details of information to be quoted. There is nothing that can describe the feeling that I had one Saturday evening, as I was sitting by my personal computer, and the telephone rang. When I answered, it was one of the participants wanting to talk more about my study. These phone conversations did not happen just once, they happened several times. Hearing the participants’ enthusiasm for what I was doing provided all the energy I needed. I think when the participants saw the results in narrative form, they recognized the importance of what they were saying about SDL. In total, over 400 e-mails were exchanged with the participants from the initial coordination through the completion of this study.

As the last step in this chapter and my personal reflections, it is important to say what caused me to initially be interested in this topic of study and what my own personal experiences have been with self-directed learning. Both of these will be covered in the conclusions.

Conclusions

There are two areas that must be discussed before closure can be brought to this study. The first area deals with the question of what has caused me to be interested in this topic of study. In a second part of this section I will share my own personal experience with self-directed learning.

What Has Caused Me to be Interested in this Topic?

The answer to this question lies in where this line of study might be headed. This is the primary reason I was interested in the participants' comments on their vision for the future of SDL. Discussion here answers my own personal question about whether this line of study is dead, and is it time to move on (Brockett, 2000). Kuhn (1996) might refer to the issue as a paradigm shift. For me, this is the essence of what I really want to know, and it is important because of my own personal style of learning and interest in research on self-directed learning. It provides for me the answer to the question suggested by Thomas and Pollio (2002) regarding: "What about the topic was important enough for me to make it the major concern of an investigation" (p. 44)?

To answer the question of is it time to move on, my suggestion is to look at it through two lenses: (a) those who are still active in this line of research and (b) those who have moved on and in some respects are critical of SDL. In other words to accomplish this task of determining if self-directed learning has a future, I want to do this through the eyes of those scholars who were there.

Currently Still Active

This group consists of half of the participants. The group has been identified from the results of the participants' profiles chapter. These are the authors who are still active or somewhat active in this line of scholarship and, with the exception of one, still making conference presentations on SDL.

In this group, four scholars made comments about the future of SDL and talked about where it might be headed. The assumption that I made prior to conducting this study was that this group would have much to say especially when it comes to the implications of technology. Therefore it was interesting that only three of the four mentioned technology in their assessment of the future. Two of the four agreed that technology would be an exciting tool for the future and that SDL would play a role. One of the participants suggested the implications of technology and all that it represents is a move in the direction of *ideal self-directed learning*. This same participant suggested that the SDL may have a "gloomier future than you might have heard." Another participant posited the field was "focusing too much" on technology. As a concluding thought to this group, I thought it was significant that only one of this group thought that SDL was "absolutely essential for coping with life in this time of increasing change."

Moved On

Four of the eight scholars reside in this category. The group has been identified from the results of the participants' profiles chapter. These are the authors who are somewhat active in this line of scholarship or have moved into other areas of scholarship and are not active in making conference presentations on SDL.

I thought it was interesting that only one of the participants in this category had anything to say about technology. This was also the group that had the most to say about the future, the impact of change, and "new understandings of caution" that must be considered when it comes to this topic. One of the three in this group proposed that the World Wide Web "seems to embody the kinds of things that have always been talked about with self-directed learning." Three in this group were consistent in their presentation of the "danger" in the use of SDL. Perhaps a better way to express this concern is to say, cautions exist in the abuse of self-direction. Last, one of the scholars suggested that SDL had a *bright future for research*. This person made many suggestions in that category. For one individual who has a reputation of being critical of the notion of SDL, it was surprising that on one hand, this scholar said he "did not have much to say about where this line of research is going" while on the other hand, after some reflection, this participant talked about "cyber learning" and went on to suggest that an option in this environment is to "learn it yourself." This participant's assessment was that SDL was going to be "just as strong in the future as it's been in the past."

Overall

Six of the eight scholars conclude that self-directed learning has a future and spoke to that possibility. Two of the scholars spoke up strongly about the positive future SDL will have. It was interesting that these were the two participants I would have not expected to say this, as both have moved on to other areas of research. Regarding technology, five of the eight mentioned the impact of technology in their dialogue as potentially having a positive impact on self-directed learning and giving it a place in the future. From all that the participants have said, I have to conclude that the study of self-directed learning is still an important topic for scholarly study. In addition the tremendous rate of technological growth and corresponding rate of change that has occurred over the past decade, especially with the internet, will be a catalyst to help invigorate the continued study of this topic. It is important to note that I have not tried to make a distinction that alienates research on SDL from self-direction as a learning style. When the question of SDL being dead is posed, it is not to imply that SDL is being kept from the learner, it is to ask if SDL is worthy of continued scholarly effort.

My Experience with the Phenomenon

Another question raised by Thomas and Pollio (2002) is “In what ways and situations have I experienced the phenomenon” (p. 44)? This question has much to do with the way I think and learn. To me there are three components in self-directed learning that are of personal interest. First, there is the taking of initiative to learn something. Second, there is the issue of planning how to learn. Third, there is the issue of not facilitating SDL in a formal, pedagogical way, when helping students to experience the

empowerment associated with this alternative. In summary, the component that is most exciting to me is when you have a say in what and how you learn, I think this results in a *buy in* of the learner which results in the learner working harder to achieve the end goal of learning in whatever is to be learned. This area of interest goes back to the relationship between the mentor and protégé or the environment created by the facilitator of the learning. Both of these are a form of pedagogy and were discussed in an earlier section of this chapter.

Similar to the participants, my own personal style of learning is discussed in detail in my bracketing interview (Appendix G). The bracketing process did much to bring out how I have personally experienced SDL. My bracketing interview told stories such as:

1. Learning to ski downhill, on my own as a teenager, and
2. In later years, learning German on my own as an adult so that I could be more effective in my job as a liaison with the German office of my employer.

Because of this learning style having personal significance in my own life I felt that getting to know more about what the experts have experienced with SDL would provide the insight I wanted. I especially wanted to include in the sample, what some of those are saying who have been critical of the subject. Because I was interested in the experience, I felt the only way to approach this study was to have the process of inquiry informed by phenomenology. With the data collected on the experience of the experts, I surmised I would be in a much more informed position to assess if this subject has been caught in a paradigm shift (Kuhn, 1996). My overall conclusions as to whether or not there is a future to SDL are covered in the next and last section.

Final Thoughts

What about my reason for wanting to study this topic and my question of whether the notion of SDL is dead and it is time to move on? With regard to the insight these eight scholars have shared over the future of self-directed learning, I have to conclude the same thing as one of them said: SDL will be “just as strong in the future as it’s been in the past.” The primary reason I conclude the study of self-directed learning to have a bright future is due the mix of participants interviewed. Only three of the participants are still actively involved in conference presentations, and I would expect them to speak to a future because they might be biased. On the other hand, four of the scholars have moved on in some way to other scholarly efforts. In this case, the four who have moved on and are not actively attending conferences, are the ones who spoke most strongly of its impact on their life and to a sound future for this line of study. The eighth scholar, though not actively presenting at conferences, is placed in the same camp as the first four.

An important question I want to answer at this point in the dissertation is: If I had it to do over, what would I do differently? I would have stayed with only one question in the interview guide: Could you describe the experiences that led you to first get involved with the study of self-directed learning? In this situation, I would not have asked the three follow-up questions listed in the interview guide, described in Chapter 2. Each of the participants, for the most part, answered the other questions as part of their description for the first question. I think asking them to speak to three additional questions, may have caused them to deviate from some aspect of a story they wanted to share. Unfortunately, I will never know if the quality of data would have been any different. However, I would

have kept all three parts of the analysis: mini-case study (Chapter 3, participant profiles), descriptive categories (Chapter 4, participant stories), and the experience (Chapter 5, experience of experts) just as they unfolded in the current study. I think the first two items (see Chapters 3 and 4) add something significant, as they accomplished four things:

1. Made the study more accessible to the field of adult education;
2. Provided a more direct answer to the first two research questions;
3. Summarized, in four categories, what most of the interviews (in length) were about; and
4. Got the attention of all eight participants, the second time they were furnished copies of their narrative for the story to be utilized (see Appendix C). When asked to provide additional information, each person was more engaged than the first time they were asked to provide feedback (see Appendix A), on the phenomenological results to determine if they represented them accurately. Participants were more excited about seeing the history in narrative form than they were over seeing the thematic structure of their experience in an abstract depiction.

This last chapter conveys how this study, in its entirety, has opened my eyes to the contributions these eight scholars have made to the scholarship of SDL and to the common bond they share, which we call self-directed learning. It is not the topic of self-directed learning nor the conclusions drawn that provides the excitement for me; it is the personal bond that I am now able to feel with these professors as they took me into their confidence and shared their personal stories.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A**FIRST FEEDBACK LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

Robert C. Donaghy

May 18, 2004

Dr. Participant X
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Participant X:

As you may recall when I conducted your interview on March 18, 2003, I mentioned I would be sharing the thematic structure with you. Giving you the opportunity to review the results of your data analyses is an important part of the procedure for this study. To facilitate this process, I am enclosing:

- 1) Your protocol
- 2) A summary of your thematic structure
- 3) The tentative model resulting from the thematic structure
- 4) Your audiotape
- 5) A summary of the items included in my dissertation prospectus

As you review the information I have provided, please keep in mind this is a qualitative study informed by phenomenology and that my thematic analyses are based on hermeneutic interpretation.

Regarding any comment, you can reference the line number of the transcript by e-mail if that is the most manageable way for you to reply.

You might be interested to know that in addition to yourself the participants, in alphabetical order, have been: Ralph Brockett, Stephen Brookfield, Rosemary Caffarella, Lucy Guglielmino, Roger Hiemstra, Carol Kasworm, Huey Long, and Allen Tough.

In addition to the phenomenological results chapter covering the above items, I will develop a participant profile chapter. To accomplish this, I have some questions to ask. The answers will be helpful in facilitating my understanding of how the study of self-directed learning has evolved over time for you, as follows:

- 1) Please take a moment and review the names of other colleagues you referred to in the interview, I may have the names misspelled. Should you want me to strike a name, just let me know. Reply by line no.
- 2) Could you provide the names of your dissertation committee members and clarify the name of your major (chair) professor? Some may regard their mentor as a different person; if so, please mention.
- 3) Could you provide the quantity of dissertations directed and committees served on that involved some aspect of self-directed learning, if known?
- 4) Could you include the total number of dissertations directed and committees served on, if known?
- 5) Could you provide the portion of your curriculum vitae dealing with your publications (total, not just those related to SDL)?
- 6) Please feel free to include any other information that you believe helpful to my understanding of the subject or your story.

Because the historical significance of your protocol could be jeopardized, I have not changed the names of anyone mentioned in your transcript, nor have I omitted any institutional names and/or geographic locations. However, should you wish that I not refer to someone or someplace by name, just reference the line number of your protocol, in your response to me.

Please note that to date, I have made one presentation on this study at AAACE/Detroit. It was considered as a work in progress. No quotes from any participant were provided during that presentation. I may do something at AAACE/Louisville this year, as well as make a proposal for ISDLS/2005 and AERC/2005. Should it be desirable to make some quotations at one or more of those conferences, I may need to have additional conversation with you.

Since some of the participants have asked about the disposition of their audiotapes and because they represent a historic artifact of sorts, I am returning the tape to you. My only other option is to destroy it. However, I didn't feel it was in the best interest of this study to do that. I have received permission of the IRB at the University of Tennessee to return them to the participants.

I shall look forward to hearing from you in the near future. It is my intention to defend this summer and would appreciate your consideration of my plan, by responding by June 4, 2004.

Page 3, Donaghy Dissertation

Sincerely,

Robert C. Donaghy

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The University of Tennessee

Code No. _____

Office of Research Compliance Services

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

for interviews of the Contributors to the Study of Self-Direction

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research will be to conduct a qualitative study of the key contributors to the study of self-directed learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

You will participate in a study that will be used to thematize the description of your experiences as a major contributor to the field of self-directed learning.

The research method utilized will be a descriptive interview. This interview will ask you to describe aspects of your experiences related to self-directed learning.

The interview will require approximately one to two hours of your time and requires no preparation. Participants have been chosen from a citation analysis completed on published literature in the field of self-direction.

Your interview will be audiotaped. This tape recording of the interview will be utilized to prepare a written transcript of the interview. The tapes will be stored in a locked container and destroyed once the transcripts have been prepared.

RISKS

There should be no stress placed on you. The process to be followed will consist of a qualitative approach to research and will not utilize any manipulations, tests, control group, or other type of statistical sample. Each interview will begin with four research questions.

BENEFITS

The risks to each participant in this study are minimal. In contrast, the benefits are significant to the body of literature surrounding the field of self-direction. The results of this study will provide a foundation on which to conduct further research on the practice of self-directed learning. The thematization of the insights of the leading researchers in the field of self-direction will not only provide a historical context but also provide a firm footing for future research in this important area.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Audiotapes and the names of participants will be stored securely in a locked container. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link the participants to the study unless written permission is granted at the end of this form.

_____ Participant's initials

Code No. _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Robert C. Donaghy, at A525 Claxton Complex, Knoxville, TN 37996-3400, or at (865) 974-8145. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact 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 anytime without penalty. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

CONSENT TO RELEASE OF IDENTITY

I agree to having my name associated with any published, orally presented, or other written accounts of this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

APPROVED
By Linda Lawton
Date 2-6-02

APPENDIX C

SECOND FEEDBACK LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Robert or Sandra Donaghy

From: Robert or Sandra Donaghy
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2004 6:40 PM
To:
Subject: Participant A Correspondence

Dear Participant:

I am nearing the completion of my dissertation and am very excited about the results. At this time I need to ask for your help one more time. I have been requested by our IRB at the university to re-contact you to clarify, more precisely, how you are to be quoted in my dissertation. This is, in part, because the IRB is concerned about your rights as a participant.

In two chapters that have evolved since contacting you in May, I find it necessary to quote you more extensively than I had originally planned in order to tell your story. The "experience chapter," communicated to you on May 18, 2004, remains entirely anonymous. Your comments, if any, have been taken into account.

I am under very strict time constraints in order to finish this semester. Therefore, it is critical that I have your response by 10/1/04. I cannot include any information, pertaining to quotations by name in the dissertation, if consent is not received.

To give permission, please respond to this e-mail by saying:

"You have my permission to utilize the quotations indicated in the e-mail correspondence dated 9/24/04."

Attached to this e-mail are rough drafts of the sections I intend to use, where I am quoting you by name. While there will be some changes in the editing process, this is the essence of what I will be saying. I have tried to be sensitive to your feelings while preserving the thematic structure. I feel the story is incomplete without quoting how you came to know and understand the topic. Since I have sent only the pages with your quotes, the context for that portion of your story may be missing. I have done this to minimize the volume of information I am sending to you.

I apologize for asking so much of you during the process of completing this study. I want it to be accurate and complete, and I believe the findings will have a favorable impact on our field's view of SDL. This study should be an important contribution to the literature and your participation is crucial to this study.

Thank you again for your willingness to help me with this undertaking. Should you have any questions or further comments please feel free to return them to me or to Ralph Brockett, my chair, by phone or e-mail. I have listed our phone numbers and Ralph's e-mail address below.

Sincerely,

Bob

APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE



02/06/02

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
865-974-3466
Fax: 865-974-2805

IRB#: 6163 B

TITLE: Contributors to the Study of Self-Direction

Donaghy, Robert C.
Educational Psychology
A525 Claxton Complex
Campus

Brockett, Ralph, Co-PI
Educational Psychology
A520 Claxton Complex
Campus

Your project listed above was reviewed. It qualified for expedited review and has been approved.

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) on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Lawson'.

Brenda Lawson
Compliances

APPENDIX E**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY****Robert or Sandra Donaghy**

From: Robert or Sandra Donaghy
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2002 11:30 PM
To:
Subject: AAACE Help Needed

Dear Dr. Participant:

I will be one of the attendees at the AAACE Conference next week in St. Louis. Ralph Brockett, my major professor, suggested that I contact you prior to the meeting. I am in the process of doing a study on the leading contributors to research on self-directed learning.

If you are available for about an hour and a half some time during the meeting, I would appreciate the privilege of talking with you at your convenience. My schedule is to arrive Sunday evening (11/17) and depart on Sunday afternoon (11/24). I will be present for ISCAE, AAACE, and CPAE.

Should you be willing to participate, I would appreciate a return e-mail as a confirmation. We can work out a convenient time for you at the conference unless you wish to schedule something in advance.

The study will be utilized in my dissertation; the topic is entitled: "What Has Happened to the Study of Self-Directed Learning as Seen by the People Who Have Studied It."

I shall look forward to meeting you again and will be glad to talk with you further about this topic at the conference.

Sincerely,

BOB DONAGHY
Graduate Assistant, Univ. of Tennessee

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER'S PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

IRB 6163B

DATA REVIEW DATE: _____

Participant's Code: _____

Form B / Contributors to the Study of Self-Direction

Principal Investigator: Robert C. Donaghy

Research Team Member's Pledge of Confidentiality

As a member of this project's research team, I understand that I will be reading transcriptions of confidential interviews. The information in these transcriptions has been revealed by research participants who participated in this project on good faith that their interviews would remain strictly 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 researcher of this project, his 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 Roster for Specific Date Noted Above:

APPENDIX G

BRACKETING INTERVIEW

Data Taken February 1, 2002:

I: Uh, today is February the 1st and I'm the investigator. I'm conducting an interview with Participant Bob, and, uh, at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. Bob, I'm going to ask you a few questions.

P: Sure.

I: And please be at your ease and feel free to express whatever you choose to express during the course of this interview, and we'll take as much time as you like.

P: Okay. Thank you.

I: Until we finish. Okay. Uh, I have four questions, and I'll ask you one and then let you answer and when you feel as though you've finished, then we'll go to the next one.

P: Great.

I: The first question is: Could you describe the experiences that led you to first get involved with the study of self-directed learning?

P: Sure. Uh, I think probably the thing that's most important is, it's an area that I've always been interested in, probably for many, many years, primarily based on my experiences in the workplace. Uh, and to explain that perhaps a little bit, uh, deeper, uh, I often, I've always assumed that other people will behave and do things just as I have. That others will, will, uh, exhibit similar behavioral traits, uh, to what I do, and it's always kind of puzzled me as to why they don't, and, and maybe I should explain that a little bit more. I guess, uh, experiences that have caused me to get involved. Uh, as I have worked on many, many projects over the years, some of which are quite complex, uh, a lot of the work depends on whoever's involved to take a sense of initiative, which is one of the, the, the, uh, uh, foundational points, if not the single most important point in self-directed learning. By that I mean that each person, regardless of how or where they fit into the organization, needs to take a sense of initiative for their work. They have to be a self-starter. They have to be self-motivated. And uh has always been interesting to me as to why certain people will so to speak, pick up the ball and run with it, and others won't, because to me, it's important for everybody, everybody, to me, uh, knows what has to be done, and I will just assume that they know it has to be done and they will do it without having being prodded every minute, or told what to do every minute, uh, because it's the way I like to be treated. I, I, like to, to, to, uh, uh, because I, I know what has to be done, I just like to take that, organize it, and do it, and uh, do it on schedule, or, or whatever. On time. And so, to me, what has caused me to get interested in this and, this, uh, in terms of, of, uh, uh, I think goes back to frustrations I have had as to why certain people will not do that. That they want to be told everything to do. Uh, they won't, they won't, uh, take any action until they're told and reminded on numerous occasions. And,

so, I think that's what's caused me to personally get very much interested in this from a research and for a scholarly point of view as to what causes certain people to do things and in contrast, you know, why certain people don't do those things. Because I guess what it all boils down to me is this: that if people have to be, if people will not take action until they're asked to do it on repeated occasions, it's usually too late. Especially in a business-type mode . . . Uh, if certain, if, if a person has to be reminded over and over again to do something, uh, and, and they have to wait on some, uh, facilitator to do that, usually the opportunity has been missed by that point in time and so that's what's caused me to really get interested in this subject area and this research area in terms of, of having opportunities to do in depth research, whether it's working on a quantitative basis trying to measure, uh, uh, uh, these, uh, behaviors in a person in whatever kind of environment that it's in, or to study it philosophically [sic], uh, that's, that's, uh, pretty much the long and short of it. Most of it has evolved from my experiences in business and industry because that's where I've spent, you know, 25 years, or the bulk of my profession. My, my, my, uh, uh, uh, professional background, I guess I should say.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And that's, that's pretty much it, I think.

I: Let's make sure this is recording.

P: Yes, looks like it is.

I: Okay. Do you want to check it?

P: Yeah.

I: To be sure it's something (tape is stopped) (tape begins) Bob, I've heard you say that, uh, your experience and interest in this comes out of your background in business, and you've answered the question in a broad way, but can you give some specific examples of when you've experienced self-directed learning, uh, or when, when you've been with others, a particular experience when they have not demonstrated self-directed learning? Instead of being general, be, give, give a specific example of when this has happened with you.

P: Yeah, let me; let me give the negative part first, cause that's what comes to my mind, uh, the quickest. Uh, in terms of those times when there hasn't been a degree of, uh, self-direction exhibited, and I will use the term, I think, self-directed learning and self-direction pretty much synonymously, to maybe minimize confusion on your part, uh, but, uh, uh, recently we had a research project that was collaborative in nature where we had, uh, five, five, uh, colleagues contributing to the research and, uh, it was very much a part of, of digging into some literature and digesting that, conveying the data, and, uh, in this time, in this connotation exhibiting, uh, uh, uh, a sense of, of, uh, of initiative for a particular project, uh, that had to be done and, and the learning that goes along with that in terms of, you know, if they have to learn how to, to use a particular type of software or go to the library and find something, what was, uh, uh, frustrating in that experience was that, uh, two of the participants, colleagues, co-colleagues, co-participants, I guess I should call them, uh, would, uh, exhibited very little, uh, very little or no initiative for, uh, going to the library and, and getting the literature that they needed to review, uh, in terms of taking general guidance and turning that into specifics, uh, in doing the experimentation required, uh, and then once that process was, uh, overcome, through

others having to, to pick up the ball, so to speak, or pick up the load, uh, when it came time to, uh, do the, the data part and learn how to operate the software and record data...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...and, and learn how to do that on their own, uh, uh, the data was entered, but when there were errors made, there was, uh, little sense of initiative in trying to learn how to fix, fix the errors to where, again, others had to pick up and uh, uh, and, and, and cover for that. And then lastly, uh, as it became time to, uh, learn how to do, uh, graphing and charting and, and, and basic, uh, uh, things on, on software like, uh, Excel or I guess it could be done in SPSS graphing type of software, uh, there seemed to be, uh, less of a sense of initiative for wanting to, uh, to again, uh, learn how to do that. Although there was more, I would say of the three categories, the initial, uh, search for the data, learning how to do that...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... uh, the data entry, there seemed to be more of a sense of initiative when it came to doing the graphing. Maybe not as much as, uh, one would like, but there was, you know, there was, uh, a sense of initiative there...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... and self-direction, and, and, and, and, with, with, uh, uh, the colleagues, uh, learning how to do that, and so I would say that was moderately more, uh, successful, so to speak, and so, that, that gives an example of, of a, a, a, maybe a recent, uh, experience that comes to my immediate mind, uh, maybe some others will come to me...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... in a minute, but, uh, so I'll share that with the negative experience if that helps...

I: Yeah.

P: ... establish...

I: What was that like for you? (pause) I gather you were one of the self-directed.

P: It was very, very frustrating...

I: (i/a) more self-directed than the others.

P: It was frustrating because of what I mentioned earlier and that is I, I assume that others will exhibit similar behavioral tendencies as to what I exhibit and so I just, I just automatically assume that others will do that without having to be prodded and others, uh, uh, uh, I, I think aren't always, don't have the same, uh, uh, the motivations or the same needs and, and so that, that to me can become very frustrating. Especially if it's a task that has to be done on, uh, time-constraints, uh, uh, it, it, just, it's just, uh (pause) what's it like for me? I, I think it's a borderline, uh, somewhere in between being very frustrated and being very irritated. Uh, I, I don't think it, it gets to the point of being really, really mad or really, really angry...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... but certainly in the frustrated, irritated mode, uh, of that process. Uh, and, uh, sometimes I feel like, why did, why did I ever try and delegate part of this, or why did I ever try, why did I ever get others involved, or why did even agree to make it a collaborative process, uh, and, uh, uh, so that, that's what it's like for me.

I: Why did you choose to do this as a collaborative process? This example.

P: I, I think, uh, because in the real world of research or real world of the workplace, and many of the parallels I will draw, again, will be related to the workplace and learning in

the workplace, uh, because no one person is, is, uh, I want to say smart enough, but that's not the right word I want to use. No one person has enough time in the day or enough time in the week or time in the year to take on a massive project. Uh, it takes, uh, in some cases, uh, several, and in, and in other cases it might take twenty or thirty people to pull off some of the projects, so they have to be collaborative. They're so complex, they're so time consuming, they're so big that, uh, they have to be collaborative. And in this case of this example that I've given you, of, of most recent frustration, uh, uh, many hundreds of person hours went into that to where the project could not be accomplished unless it were, realistically accomplished unless it were a collaborative type of, of research effort.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, and so it, it's, uh, by nature of the task, has to be, uh, collaborative if it's going to be brought to any reasonable type of closure. That, does that help a little bit?

I: Yeah. Yeah.

P: Yeah.

I: You've used the word, uh; assume, assumption, a couple of times already.

P: Yeah.

I: And, when, uh, when you answered the first question broadly and then in the specific example...

P: Yeah.

I: that you assumed that others, let me see if I can word this kind of close...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ... uh, function like you do in situations that require self-directed learning.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Could you talk about that some more? What, what you mean by that?

P: In terms of trying to...

I: The assumptions.

P: Yeah.

I: The assumption about others.

P: Humm. I think it goes to this: I believe in my heart that if a person, that everybody has a degree of self-directedness in them. Everybody wants to do things on their own. Some maybe have lesser of that and others may have a great deal. And, and I think the, the research that's, that's been done, will, will support that, that everyone has some degree of self-direction in their, in them as a, as a, as a, as obviously a trait. And so what I believe is that everyone basically "knows what to do" in a particular situation, knows what they want, knows what interests them, whether it's a hobby or whether it's something job related or educationally related, and that they know how to accomplish that better than anyone else, and so what I believe is that if that person in, in an environment where they're learning, has some say in how they can go about that, that when the process actually starts to materialize that if they've had a say in what they believe needs to be done and how they believe it needs, what they believe needs to be done and how it needs to be done, that if they can be given the opportunity to do that along their own lines of discretion, that it will not only get done, uh, period, but it will probably be get, it will probably be accomplished better. Uh, a higher level of enthusiasm will go into it, a better quality product will be obtained because it's basically

that person's idea and how they want, uh, how they see that it should be done and accomplished. And so that's the assumption that I make based on how I personally like to be treated and so how I react to this and how I assume others might like to be treated and have a say in things speaks to that.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, does that maybe help clarify it a little bit? And, and so that's why I call it an assumption.

I: Yeah.

P: Cause it, uh, I, I'm assuming that another party would like to go about this as I would like to go about it if, if I were doing it and so that's, I think that, that speaks better than anything else I can think of at the moment.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, about this.

I: And you said that those persons, uh, would want, would have a better product. Was that the word you used?

P: Yeah. Better end product.

I: And, uh, are you, so are you also assuming that those are their goals? That their goals are the same as yours? I mean, I'm trying to understand...

P: Yeah...

I: ... what you mean by that.

P: I think that's, that's where I think it gets to be, uh, a risky proposition. Uh, let me maybe put an extreme twist on this, and that if when a person, from a behavioristic point of view and, and could imagine for a moment someone holding a gun at your head, ready to pull the trigger, and saying, "You will learn this" or "You will do this" and, and, and the, uh, you know, the, the stimulus and the motivation is not, not pulling the trigger.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, so, uh, I think that the, if one approached it from a behavioristic point of view, then that response that would occur is, the person may do the task, but they may not be very happy about it in the end. I mean, they may do it because they know if they don't do it, they're going to be shot, uh, or some other grave consequence, you know, be fired from their job, or, or, fail the course, or, or whatever. Uh, that they may do it, but it'll, if it's done at all it will be to the bare minimum standing, standard. Or it may even be sabotaged. It may be done, but it may be sabotaged, uh, in some covert way such that at the end, uh, the person that's holding the gun to their head may not know that it's been sabotaged, uh, uh, at all or until a much later stage. That's kind of a game playing type of thing.

I: Okay.

P: But that would be one extreme. Uh, if that kind of helps put it in perspective. I've kind of deviated explaining the...

I: (laughter)

P: ... extreme that I, I, I know I've deviated from, from your question.

I: No, let's, let's, uh, let's go back to the frustration and irritation.

P: Yeah.

I: With these negatives as you used the word "negative" experiences. Talk some more about that.

P: Uh.

I: If you would.

P: I think for, for, uh, a teacher, uh, (pause), we'll just use that term in general for the moment, someone who's trying to facilitate things, I think, uh, frustration can come about, uh, (pause), by, uh, and, and I think this speaks to the question you just asked a minute ago, by assuming that your, your motivation, that your agenda is the same as the other person, uh, I think, uh, that, that's where risk comes into place, especially if it's in an educational type role, and especially if it's in a role where the, the learning process needs, uh, some external mediator or some external facilitator to help bring it about where a person can't learn it totally on their own that, uh, uh, the agendas may differ and, and I think that, to talk a little bit more about the frustrations, I think when it's in a mode of having a task to accomplish with a particular group that, uh, one could, uh, make some mistakes if they always, uh, uh, uh, uh, the only word I can think of is, is again assume, uh, that everybody's agenda is the same. And then I think then that can lead to, uh, frustration on, on the part of the facilitator. Because what really this all boils down to is, and, in a self-directed situation, uh, the key question that needs to be asked to the learner is, "What would you like to learn?" "What would you like to learn today?" Uh, even to, certainly in a classroom type environment.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And then the facilitator's job is to help them learn that, and so, where this can become, uh, difficult is when, uh, the task is, when, when, when the learning is more task oriented, uh, uh, the, the agendas can be different. But, uh, and I, and I think that's where some of this frustration comes into place, uh, when, when the, and, and we touched upon this earlier, I think, when agendas are not the same.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, when the facilitator assumes that the student's agenda is the same as theirs. And then I think, uh, that's when, uh, the end product turns out to be, uh, either not there, or less than there or something different from what everybody, uh, believes it should be. Does that help a little bit?

I: Yes. Uh, and you're speaking in general of facilitators.

P: Yeah.

I: And are, you are including yourself?

P: Yeah.

I: When you are talking about facilitators?

P: I think I'm a facilitator. Yeah.

I: But can you be more specific? That you yourself, what that experience of being frustrated is like.

P: Oooh. It's, it's like, uh, what can I do differently? What have, what have I done wrong? Uh, what do I need to do, uh, how can I approach the, the, uh, student or colleague differently? Uh, what can I do to, uh, uh, help them, uh, accomplish what, what they think needs to be accomplished, uh, or get out of this what they think needs to be gotten out of it. Uh, and I guess from a learning point of view, uh, it's very, very, it's very, very hard as a, as a, as a teacher to have someone that you, you offered, uh, spent extra time, uh, outside of class, uh, with, uh, mentoring or with tutoring, whatever one wants to call that, giving them adequate opportunity for extra credit, uh, letting them turn

in assignments later that what they're, what they're due. Letting them take, retake tests that have been, uh, uh, missed, uh, you know, like a final exam. If they missed a final exam.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, letting them reschedule that.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And then still not having them, uh, uh, like maybe offering a chance to retake a final exam and, and them not showing up for that opportunity or giving them an incomplete, uh, trying to, to get them to a higher level of, of achievement than what they would otherwise and then not having them complete the work. It's very, very frustrating. And it's really hard to, to, uh, to fail the student or to give them, uh, you know, a lower grade. Uh, and, and trying to, uh, figure out how can I do things differently? What, what could I have done differently? Or, uh, you know, could I, if I had done, if I had just done something differently what, would there have been a better outcome? So that, that, uh, you know, that is really very hard from a teacher's point of view when it comes to this frustration issue. I think I've deviated a little bit from the question.

I: No, you answered it very well. So you, you turn inward and ask yourself, "What have I done wrong?" That was the first thing you said.

P: Yeah.

I: What have I done wrong.

P: Yeah.

I: If the person in, the group with you, is not showing inclinations to be self-directed.

P: Yeah, or having, having students with, uh, some real, most of my students have been, uh, adults, uh, although I have had some right out of high school, uh, but I would say the average age has been, you know, mature adults with, with, with work obligations and family obligations and so on, and I can remember, uh, one husband and wife team in one of my classes where the wife was really the bright one. I mean, "really, really bright," and, uh, but they had a lot of family issues, and, you know, they were just trying to, to come and take some extra courses. They needed better paying jobs. And in this case I was teaching a technical course in, in engineering and trying to help them, equip them to be, to get a better paying job. And, uh, uh, the wife just dropped out from coming.

I: Mmm.

P: And, and, I, I said, you know, how can this be?

I: Uh-huh.

P: You know, why?

I: Mmm.

P: Why? Why? Uh, and, uh, and then, then the husband, uh, the night, let's see if I can remember the day. The night before the final exam, his father died. And so, you know. What better reason or excuse for him missing a final exam but then I was stuck with, "What do I do?" You know, because the grade, I mean, uh, you know, you miss a final exam and it's pretty, pretty significant. And so, you know, do I fail the student, uh, do I, you know, I thought, well, this person has a life changing event and so, giving him an incomplete probably isn't going to be the answer. They're probably not going to make the work up. Uh, so what do I do?

I: Uh-huh.

P: And in, in doing the soul searching and in terms of what is the right thing to do for that student, and, uh, really struggling with that in terms of, you know, working around some, some really, uh, significant issues. Uh, and, and in this case they way it was resolved, to probably finish the story was to just take their grades to date and averaging and giving them zero, B or whatever they got, but I...

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, I just thought that was the only reasonable thing to do and, uh, so that, that's part of this, this, really struggling with, you know, is, what is, what is the human thing to do when you're in the facilitators roll, uh, and not feeling comfortable at all with taking a straight behavioristic approach. "Well, here's your grade and that's what you earned and that's it."

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, uh.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, so that's, that's, that's why I share a struggle with these frustrations.

I: You've used the words "struggle with" three or four times.

P: Yeah.

I: In talking about the frustrations.

P: Yeah.

I: In working with people in negative situations. Now take time if you would and tell me about what you experience when you have a positive situation.

P: Yeah. (i/a) Probably, uh, several situations come to my mind, but probably the one that stands out for the most is the area that's most rewarding to me, and that is when I'm working with someone that's definitely in the category of an underachiever. Uh, one of the classes that I had was a fairly technical class. It was, it was a class in, in applying math to solve, uh, business related problems, and some of the math was, uh, was fairly advanced algebra, trigonometry, uh, but certainly more than just adding and subtracting.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And more than just accounting type of things. Uh, uh, and so there, there was some fairly, uh, abstract principles that the students had to, to grasp, and some fairly advanced, uh, techniques in, in algebra and, and trigonometry. Uh, and I had most of the class was, uh, of an older age. Most were returning students and I had several that were in certificate programs where they would come, take night classes for a year, and they wouldn't get an associate degree because that took maybe three years, but they did get a certificate that says, I completed, you know, one year of study in a certified and, uh, to be a, uh, an electronic technician. And, kind of like a step below an associate degree. But certainly something much more valuable than just, uh, a high school diploma. And, and so this, this was a program that, that I kind of got in on the ground floor of, and so, in this class I had several students that had just recently obtained their GED's.

I: Hmm.

P: And there were maybe like, late 30's. And I had two brothers, that both of them were in the same category. Uh, I think one was a truck driver and one was a carpenter, but it, it doesn't really matter what they were, but they had just gotten their GED. And so here they are in a college classroom trying to learn, uh, things that were not covered in their GED, and, you know, the first struggle that we went through is trying to learn how to use

a scientific calculator. And, uh, working with them “hours” after class. I think one night we worked ‘til like three in the morning.

I: Hmm.

P: Trying to learn, so that they could learn and feel comfortable with it. With a calculator. And I guess the greatest reward to me was to see them “being so excited about learning” how to solve surveying problems...

I: Uh, huh.

P: ...when they had to use trigonometry.

I: Wow.

P: How they, I guess one of the examples, and, I showed ‘em how to do was to lay floor tile.

I: (laughter)

P: And, and I said, “Now”

I: Uh-huh.

P: “If you’re laying floor tile in a house, better start out square or when you get to the other end of the house...

I: (laughter)

P: ... you’re going to be in big trouble. (laughter)

I: Uh-huh.

P: So I showed ‘em how to use, uh, basic trigonometry...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... to start their first tiles straight and if they started those straight, everything else would fall into place.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And I can remember their being really excited about how to do that. Uh, showing them how to lay out a foundation for a house, if they were going to build a house. Uh, showing them how to calculate how many two by four’s they needed if they wanted to frame a wall.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, uh, and then I guess the most exciting part was to take, and, take these two brothers, and, and, I think it was the third or fourth group, but they are the one’s that stand out for me. And, uh, that obviously were working with things that were not covered when they were in high school. That were not covered on their GED exam. And “they really wanted to learn how to solve trigonometric problems with a calculator.”

I: Uh-huh.

P: And so what I told them was that there was only two ways out of my class. That they could do whatever it took to learn how to use that calculator to solve the problems and pass the tests or we carry them out on a stretcher. (laughter)

I: (laughter)

P: Those were the only two options. And I said, “What’s your choice? You want to go out on a stretcher bed...

I: (laughter)

P: ...or do you want to learn how to use the calculator...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...uh, and solve these problems?” And they said, “We’d rather learn...

I: (laughter)

P: ...how to use the calculator.” So literally several nights we stayed up ‘til like two or three in the morning in the classroom working trigonometric problems and they learned how to work it, sufficient enough to pass the tests. And so that was the most rewarding experience. And I believe they really wanted to learn how to do it. Otherwise they wouldn’t have stayed there all night long, or the better part of the night. And so, to me, that’s, I don’t know, it’s something that really touches me emotionally. Uh, and, and something that has touched me so much that it’s not just self-direction issue. I’ve said, “That’s the kind of student I want to work with.” And, uh, and it’s, to me, it’s pretty touching.

I: And that’s obvious. It shows.

P: Yeah.

I: You smiled and laughed.

P: Yeah.

I: And, you know, just had full bodily...

P: Yeah.

I: ... response.

P: Almost brings, yeah.

I: ...in just remembering this experience.

P: And I, and I’ve had, I had one other student, uh, that was a, uh, maybe early fifties. Her and her husband had a business in town and she wanted to learn how to, uh, design things better, to make them work better. And she was the kind of student that would ask the stump, the instructor questions.

I: (laughter)

P: Would ask the kind of questions, just make you look bad.

I: (laughter)

P: And, and this went on for like six weeks or seven weeks to where I almost wanted to ask them to leave.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, I mean, it was that bad. And then I realized that she really wanted to express her opinion and so what I did was to say, I’m going to try something pretty different. And that is, give everybody a chance. You know, somebody speaking in class, it doesn’t matter who it is or what they want to talk about. If they want to tell a joke, that’s okay, but they’ve got to tell it to the whole class. They can’t just kind of whisper it under their breath.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And so on a couple of occasions I let that student, uh, say what they wanted to say and express their ideas and they took something that I had tried over and over and over again to explain, put it in their words, and I said, “That’s the best explanation I ever heard. That’s the way I’m going to teach this, uh, from now on.”

I: Hmm.

P: And she came back later to take another class with me. (laughter)

I: Yeah.

P: And uh, uh, so to me that’s another example. And I guess what I would just close it with by saying when a student comes up to you at the end of the semester and says, “I

signed up for your class next semester, cause you teach this different from anybody else.” And, and that, to me, is all that’s needed in the way of a reward. So, uh...

I: So you’re linking self-directed learning, negative or positive, to use...

P: Yeah.

I: ...you word, experiences, with your own experience of, of frustration, uh, or excitement...

P: Yeah.

I: ...and you also, talking, uh, about cooperative learning groups and teacher-student relationships too.

P: Yeah.

I: And, so, uh, I’m asking, clarify a little bit, because you’ve also been, uh, referring sometimes to workplace groups...

P: Yeah.

I: ...student groups...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...doing research together, yourself, even, as a participant.

P: Yeah.

I: And student-teacher relationships. Could you kind of shown me how the self-directed learning fits with you with the different sorts of contexts?

P: Uh, I had my train of thought, I lost it now. I’m trying to regain it.

I: I’m sorry.

P: Uh, (pause)

I: Take your time.

P: Uh, let me, (pause)

I: Or just go with whatever you’re thinking now.

P: Well, I had my train of thought and I lost it. Uh.

I: It’ll come.

P: Let’s stop this for just a second.

(tape is stopped)

I: Okay.

P: I, I guess what I would like to, uh, do, if, if you could, cause I lost my train of thought...

I: Kind of rephrase?

P: Yeah, could you rephrase that question?

I: Okay.

P: I really need for you to, to, to rephrase that question.

I: Well, it was a long...

P: Cause I think we were on to something...

I: (laughter)

P: ...and then when you said the work, then I started thinking work and I lost my whole train of thought.

I: Okay, so picking up, uh, with negative and positive experiences...

P: Uh-huh.

I: Did you have frustration and excitement and the emotions that go with the excitement of the, uh, successful or positive experiences...

P: Yeah.

I: ...as you call them, but, when, in talking about that, you jumped into a teacher-student relationship.

P: Yeah.

I: And I sense that you've been going from teacher-student to, to workplace workgroups and to, uh, research workgroups...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...which is more education based on some things.

P: Yeah.

I: So, and how do these different contexts tie in with your study and your interest in self-directed learning?

P: Yeah.

I: If you could sort of...

P: Yeah.

I: ...clarify that for me.

P: And, and I got my train of thought back, so, uh, here's what I think it boils down to. I think, uh, with a teacher-student relationship or with a workplace relationship, uh, superior-subordinate type of relationship, uh, that I would hope all would somehow be on, on a collegial type of basis, uh, rather than one's better than the other, you know, superior and subordinating in a teacher-student relationship. What I believe in the component, and this an area of research that I don't think has been done too much, though quite a bit has been done studying, you know, what motivates, uh, students, primarily graduate students to do things like get through their dissertation, uh, there's quite a bit has been done on there. Quite a bit spent on looking at people pursuing uh, uh, extra-curricular type things like to go to the, uh, art museum and learn about art because they want to do that and they'll, so they go to some sort of an evening school course, or older adults and what motivates them to do things to participate in, uh, uh, travel-types of things or, or, uh, things, uh, to just, uh, you know, take up their time in a productive way. Uh, that's where most of the research has been done in terms of, and we've got, you know, uh, a lot of quantitative type of stuff that's been done, some instruments have been developed to measure all of this and, uh, and it's been correlate, correlated to all sorts of other types of activities. But to me, uh, and this comes back to how I think it's best to answer your questions in terms of the good and the bad and the experiences and what causes me to be interest in this. I have to believe that there's somewhat of a connection between the behavior of the teacher or facilitator or behavior of the boss or work colleague in terms of how that person behaves, I think has quite a bit to do with how, uh, the other person reacts in terms of their level of initiative of self-direction. And, you know, so I think that's an area that, that some additional research could be done in because I think it's, if we use the anal..., if we, we talked about a teacher-student relationship. I think a teacher that approaches things, uh, as, uh, as a, uh, you know, it can't be completely on a peer relationship, but it certainly moves away from the behavioristic approach of thou shalt do this, uh, and do it on a particular frame or thou shalt go home and memorize all of this and you're going to be tested on it tomorrow. If one can approach that, uh, differently, uh, be a good mentor, if you will, then I think it will bring out a greater degree of, of self-directedness on the part of the learner. You

know, it's like if a teacher is happy and enthusiastic and, and, and fun, and, uh, to be around in class, I think the student will be much more motivated to learn the task at hand rather than if the teacher is an, uh, S.O.B., so to speak, uh, uh, the student might be motivated, uh, uh, and, and use a much lower degree of self-directedness. I suppose there's always going to be the exception to that where the person is purely grade motivated and will do whatever it takes in whatever kind of environment to get an A, uh, with whatever kind of abuse that they have to suffer. But I have to believe, in terms of, to go back to what you were asking a minute ago, that to me this connection between motivation, whether it's the negative one, experience or the positive experience, that there's an important connection with, with, uh, the significant other that's the facilitator, uh, and so, when it's in a, uh, academic role, or a workplace learning role, I think that facilitator becomes an important part of the quest..., equation. And then I think when it's a situation where a person is purely on their own recognizance wants to learn something, uh, taking a new course or whatever, or, uh, sit down, learn to use a PC, uh, uh, just cause they want to learn it, I mean, they really want to learn it, uh, it's like, the kid that learns to play Nint, Nintendo game, uh, they really want to learn it, so they learn it. "I mean, they learn it on their own." And, so, I think that's, that's part of this...

I: Uh-uh.

P: ...this equation. And there was a second component to your question (laughter) and I've forgotten it, so could you rephrase that?

I: Uh, no you did pretty well, mostly you, you've talked about your experience in these different roles.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Uh, in, in workgroups and as facilitator, instructor, teacher and as student, fellow, and uh, fellow worker, I'm assuming as an employee, and, and, and so you've experienced self-directed learning.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Or the lack of it.

P: Uh-huh.

I: In other, from many different positions.

P: Yeah.

I: And many different roles in different situations and environments.

P: Yeah.

I: And, uh, what, what is that like for you? I mean, is there, the, the self-directed learning seems to be the central issue for you in all these contexts. Is that right? I...

P: Yeah. Yeah. And, and that's what has really caused me to want to do research in that area because the way, I guess the way I look at it is that all of the sudden now I have got, uh, uh, this exposure to the, uh, the, uh, the literature and all of the research that's been done to help study this, help document it, uh, help, uh, uh, predict certain types of behavior related to it, and to me now this is, has, has been instrumental in, in equipping me to, uh, answer those research questions, that I had. You know, it doesn't give me the, the answers, per se, but it equips me now with how to, uh, begin to do the research that I need to, to answer those questions that I've got. And so, you know, from a, from a scholarly point of view, that's what's moved me very strongly in that direction to say all these frustrations and, and good and bad experiences I've had over the years now, here is,

uh, here's this wonderful field of research that helps me, uh, zero in on, on my question. And, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: So that's what, where the beauty is. That's what, uh, uh, really is so significant to this, this area of study.

I: One other, uh, observation I'd like to reflect a little bit on and if you'd like to say something about that...

P: Yeah.

I: ...would be helpful. You've used the word "behavior, behavioral approach, behaviors", uh, in the members of the workgroup.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, teacher as facilitator for certain behaviors and responsibilities related to that and students as recipients so, uh, these were just different ways in which you seem to use the word "behavior".

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, and on that was, on one hand, and then on the other hand when you talk about the frustrations, the irritability, um, or the excitement, these are all your words, of the experience of a positive, uh, self-directed learning experience. That's a different type of experience than just the behaviors.

P: Yeah.

I: Would you like to address that?

P: It's more of emotional (pause) to a certain extent.

I: To you? You've used that word, yeah.

P: Yeah. I guess, uh, to talk more about, uh, the issue of behavior, uh, the reason I think I tend to stay solely with that word choice is that, uh, the actions that one takes in this process, whether it is, uh, the initial interest that they show, whether it is the planning that they do to pursue that interest, whether it is identifying, uh, and coming up with all of the things that they have to do to accomplish it, maybe, uh, how are they going to monitor their progress, uh, maybe how they're going to access that, maybe, uh, the enthusiasm that they show for it. You know, those all to me are behavioral types of tendencies. And, uh, rather than, uh, uh, things that are, uh, uh, emotional traits. You know, will depend on just how they feel that particular day. Uh, or, or, things like a mood. Uh, and, and so that's why I've, I've, I've stayed with the term "behavior", uh, uh, for that purpose.

Because I, I believe, it's, it's not a mood. It's not a trait. It's not an emotion. It's, it's, uh, it's, uh, uh, let's say, it, it, it's a, it's a process that is, uh, associated with some type of behavioral type of tendency. And so that, that's why I have purposely stayed with that word. Uh, and I think it's, it's also important if one wanted to, uh, approach, uh, the study, the, uh, study of self-direction from a quantitative point of view, and they were to look at scales to measure those tendencies, one, uh, would need to probably stick with trying to, to measure things that are behaviorally oriented rather than trying to measure, uh, mood swings or emotions as being, uh, somewhat difficult to, to, uh, to, to measure in a, in a repeatable way or, uh, uh, that might not, uh, be a very, make the instrument very reliable. So that's why I stayed with behaviorism. Does, does that help a little bit?

I: Yeah. And what is your experience, uh, of self-directed learning in relation to that? I mean, can you kind of...

P: Uh, I think that's where it gets on my part as the, as the, uh, researcher or as the facilitator, uh, whether the facilitation be done in a, in a work mode or uh, uh, in a, in an academic role. I think that's where on that person's part, the facilitator's part, that to me is where the, uh, where, uh, the emotional gratification enters into it. Uh, to where, uh, you, uh, are a part of accomplishing something that, uh, say it's a, it's a, a task that you are trying to help some other one person do, like that, learning how to use the scientific calculator and solve some trigonometric problems and being able to pass the test. When that person accomplishes that, it's pretty darn rewarding and it, and it, it's an emotional uh, uh, extreme or in, in that, uh, uh, uh, uh, that uh, uh, uh, uh, aura, if you will. For, I can't think of a word to describe it.

I: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

P: Uh, and so then the other, other side of it is when something happens less than what you would like to have happen if one is a facilitator, then, uh, there's that frustration. And again, it's emotional. So I think that's an interesting thing that we've, we've raised here in terms of...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...what's the experience of the significant other, the facilitator in a self-directed learning experience. And some might call that outside directed, uh, there's, there's several terms and a lot of argument and debate over when another person is part of the self-directed process. Uh, and so I, I think that's something that we need to uh, to make a special note of, uh, because, uh, I guess I never, as I get into this more and more, uh, to me the role of the facilitator is something that needs to be studied more. Uh, and, and so that is something that, uh, I think is evolving out of this, uh, that, uh, has some real emotion tied to it in terms of causing that facilitator to say, "I want to know more about that." I want, I want to do some research in that area. In terms of that, uh, that initial need or, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...uh, motivation (i/a) that, uh, does that kind of answer?

I: Yeah.

P: Yeah.

I: So let me read the, this question again and then briefly summarize.

P: Yeah.

I: Some of the high points.

P: Sure.

I: What we talked about and then we'll go on.

P: Yeah.

I: Um, first question was: Could you describe the experiences that lead you to first get involved with the study of self-directed learning? And you talked about what played, uh, academic as student and academic as teacher.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Situations in which self-directed learning has been important to you.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And you talked about negative experiences and positive experiences. You talked about behaviors and the emotions, that are involved. Uh, frustrations in your inability on one hand, and excitement...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...on the other and satis, deep satisfaction, I think.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, is there anything, and this is just briefly...

P: Yeah.

I: ...just kind of hitting, is there anything else you'd like to add, maybe that we've omitted, or

P: Uh, the only other thing that I can, uh, think of is when the, uh, when it's a self-directed, uh, activity that a person seeks on it's own merits and, uh, does that without the facilitation of another. Uh, I, even though I didn't, uh, when you said that you wanted to interview me, I did not, uh, make any notes or give any thoughts to how it was going to go or try and have any preplanned agenda...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...because I just didn't think that was really appropriate, but one thought did occur to me and that is when I was eleven or twelve years old and I wanted to go downhill skiing and I wanted to learn how to be a downhill skier. And I was, remember watching, being obsessed with watching the Olympics, uh, and, and in this period, I think the 1960 Olympics in Lake Placid.

I: Um.

P: ...and uh, my next door neighbors were quite good skiers and we lived in the northeast where we had a lot of snow and I can remember, uh, my neighbors called up one day, and this is a mom and dad that were quite good skiers and their children were quite good skiers and they just had like a nature knack for this and they called me up and said, "How would you like to go skiing this weekend?"

I: (Laughter)

P: And I was, like, "Let's go!" (loudly)

I: (Laughter)

P: And, but I was determined to learn how to ski if it killed me. If I had a broken leg, it didn't matter. And I can remember going down what's called the bunny hill.

I: Uh-huh.

P: You may not have any idea what that is,

I: (laughter)

P: but that's the little hill that you learn on. Went down the bunny hill two or three times and they said, "Aw, you got the knack of this. Let's get on the chair lift and go to the top of the mountain."

I: Um.

P: And got up to the top of the mountain and getting off that chair lift and "it was straight down" and, but I was determined to it on my own, with, and I was a kid, I couldn't really afford lessons or anything. I mean, it was all I could do to muster up the money to rent the skis and pay for a lift ticket. And being determined to learn how to do that. And each time I went skiing I was determined to learn how to do it a little better.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And I did. And I learned. And I never got hurt. And, uh, so that, that's an example of wanting to learn how to do something on my own. Uh, and doing whatever it took to learn how to do that and, uh, all the satisfaction I needed was to get down to the bottom

of the hill in one piece, and get up and do it again. And, so that, that was something that just, out of the clear blue just came to my mind that I...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...thought, Yeah, this is a self-directed learning experience, uh, that I did without, with very little help from any, uh, type of facilitator. And then I can remember fifteen or twenty years ago, uh, as, as an adult, and I really hadn't skied from the time I was maybe a freshman in college or a sophomore in college 'til, 'til, I was an adult. And, and the church was going to take the kids skiing and they said, you know, "We need some chaperones. Does anybody here, ski?"

I: (laughter)

P: And I said, "I do." They said, (laughter) "Well, well, how'd you like to be a chaperone for the teenagers from church? We're going to go away for three or four days. You'll have to take some vacation." And, and, and I can remember getting up skiing and one of the other adults said to me, said, "You, you know Bob, you do pretty good, but you'd be a whole lot better skier..."

I: (laughter)

P: ... if you took some lessons." And so, uh, I said, "Well, you know, I'm kind of divorced and I really don't have too much money." And they said, "But you don't understand. You're a chaperone. The kids are paying for the trip. Your lessons are free." (laughter)

I: Oh.

P: And better yet, it's a private tutor.

I: Wow.

P: And that young kid that was maybe nineteen or twenty years old that the female chaperones fell in love with cause he looked like a model off the Chippendales or whatever, uh, but anyway, this, this young kid said, uh, "You've learned how to ski on bad habits, and if you work with me for a couple of hours and learn how to break those bad habits, you'll be an exceptional skier." And he said, but you got, you've built on bad habits, and, and you need to have someone help you facilitate." And this kid was maybe nineteen or twenty years old. And he said, you know, "Go up to the top of the hill and I want to watch you come down." And then you get down. And he was really a, a motivational type person. I mean he was just, you know, 'here's what you need to try and do'. And he had all these tricks.

I: Umm.

P: And I remember those tricks. He said, "If you want to go in a straight line, pretend you're carrying a tray load of cokes to the table. You're a waiter and you're carrying a tray load of cokes to the table. And that's all you need to remember." And when you want to turn, you need to do this. And when you want to turn, went you want to do this, you need to do that. And it was like magic. And so, you know, that, again, was something that I really wanted to learn how to do, be a better skier, and so I agreed to take those lessons, let somebody else help facilitate it, and followed their guidance and direction, and so I guess those would be two things in terms of my own personal experiences that, uh, doing very little in the way of, uh, of no facilitation, to some facilitation as kind of contrasting the two. And so that to me...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...is, is a really important part of this process in terms of, of ones, uh, reason for wanting to do something. And, and following through and doing it because you really wanted to do it.

I: Yeah. And both of these experiences were examples of that.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, the, the first experience you talked about as being a young child.

P: Yeah.

I: Eleven?

P: Yeah.

I: Um, you got excited physically when...

P: Yeah.

I: ...you were demonstrating that childishly...

P: Yeah.

I: ...enthusiasm again as you're telling me about that experience.

P: Yeah.

I: And you used the word determined. "I was so determined." Over and over.

P: Yeah.

I: And committed.

P: Yeah.

I: ... uh, to do it or be killed.

P: Yeah. (Laughter)

I: ... or to die (laughter) Uh, and you didn't, and, and you didn't have a clear understanding of where that came from.

P: Yeah.

I: So, so that self-directed learning experience just happened...

P: Yeah, just happened.

I: ...to you, and was very powerful in your life.

P: Yeah.

I: The second experience happened to you ... (laughter)

P: Yeah.

I: ...with facilitation and that was a different type of experience...

P: Yeah.

I: For you. Not just because of the facilitator but I sensed bodily, uh, in your telling me about it was a different type of narrative.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Expressing, you know, your expressing.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, and yet those seem important and valuable to you...

P: Yeah.

I: ...as examples of self-directed learning in your own life.

P: Uh-huh.

I: So, I think we've covered a lot of stuff in this first question.

P: Yeah.

I: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

P: Well, I could probably share with you twenty more experiences, but, I mean, I think it would be similar outcomes...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...in terms of, of talking about your, my own experiences as a self-directed learner rather than someone who's trying to help facilitate, uh, people, uh, to learn things that, that they want to learn. Uh, so I, I can't, uh, can't really think of anything else that I'd, I'd like to say, uh...

I: Okay.

P: We could sit here for three more hours if you'd like...

I: (laughter) yeah.

P: ...but I don't know that, that the outcome...

I: Yeah.

P: ...would be any different. I think those are good examples.

I: And both of these experiences that you've just talked about, uh, are full of actions that you took...

P: Yeah.

I: ...thoughts that you had, emotions that you experiences before, during, and after taking the action in, in both cases.

P: Yeah.

I: So I sensed that there were a lot of aspects to the experience.

P: Uh-huh.

I: That, uh, made it a full experience for you.

P: Yeah.

I: Okay.

P: Yeah.

I: Let's go to the second question. Do we need to check the tape recorder, if it's all right?

(Tape recorder is turned off.) (changed sides on tape)

P: I guess we, we were just, just starting to, uh, uh, talk about a funny experience that it's, it's also self-directed. Uh, about ten years ago I was working on, as a, I got the assignment of being a liaison for a European office in Germany, and, uh, as a result of those trips, which were pretty regular, I was determined to learn German. And the, I was in exposure to, uh, French; uh, in elementary school that I just did a terrible job of. Uh, and Latin in high school. I had not taken any formal foreign language courses. And so, uh, I became determined to learn German. And so, uh, I bought a, uh, uh, Berlitz, uh, uh, German, uh, uh, travel guide. I don't know whether you are familiar with those or not, but it's like a, a book of German phrases and everything you need to know to get into trouble traveling abroad.

I: (laughter)

P: Probably is a better way of describing it. And so on my first trip I can remember going into a restaurant and trying to order my meal in German, and ending up with something that was unbelievably awful.

I: (laughter)

P: Or I can remember struggling, let's see, seven or eight nights, and it got to the point where I only felt comfortable going in one or two places so I kept going in the same place

over and over again and this one place I went to probably five or six times and got the same waitress every night and she pretended she didn't know one word of English, struggling through, uh, the menu night after night, ending up with something that was unbelievable every time and then on the very night, last night that I was there, somehow she knew it was my last night, let me struggle with the meal, and when I was getting my check, she spoke to me in perfect English!

I: (laughter)

P: (laughter) I could have killed her. But, uh, so, anyway, that experience was, you know, trying to do things with a *Berlitz* guide and then realizing that I probably needed some formal facilitation. And I took two night school courses, one at the local junior college and one at one of the four year schools, uh, uh, you know, trying to, to, uh, do a little better job of learning things, uh, with some degree of facilitation. So, uh, I guess that's just something else that came into my mind as you were asking.

I: That is...

P: Asking for additional experiences.

I: And it's a different type of experience.

P: Yeah.

I: Cause this time there was the frustration with the outcome that was going in a successful, uh, direction.

P: Yeah.

I: And yet you still pursued and continued.

P: Yeah, with a great frustration.

I: Yeah.

P: And, and, and I, and I can remember being, because I was single and divorced at the time, uh, the first time I tried to ask somebody out on a date, uh, that was a bit of a disaster (laughter) but we won't go into details there! (laughter)

I: (Laughter) that was in German you're talking about?

P: In German, yeah, and, uh, so, uh, that was another reason I realized I need some, uh, formal lessons, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: But, uh, uh, so that's another exper, kind of a funny experience in terms of, of starting out trying to do it on your own and realizing that you just can't, and, and, uh, do it very successfully, uh, because I'm not the kind of person that has a knack for picking up foreign languages, uh, uh, as some people do. Totally on their own. So, uh, anyway.

I: So you were self-directed in that experience.

P: Yeah.

I: And the waitress acts as facilitator and you didn't realize she was doing that until the end.

P: Yeah. Yeah.

I: And then that was frustrating. You used the word again. (laughter)

P: Yeah. (laughter) Lot of frustration...

I: And kill. You used that word again too.

P: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, anyway.

I: But it still stuck in your mind

P: Yeah.

I: ...as, as part of the experience.

P: Yeah.

I: And you've been talking, already answering some of the parts of the second question, which is, 'Could you describe your experiences of self-directed learning over the years?' You might include what you see as trends, current issues, your perspectives, and your frustrations.

P: Uh, we need to back up and let you, let you rephrase that again. Uh...

I: Okay.

P: My mind was drifting.

I: Uh, could you describe your experiences with self-directed learning over the years? You might include what you see as trends, current issues, your perspectives, and your frustrations.

P: I think, umh, let's just kind of, uh, take your parts there in terms of trends, uh, current issues, uh...

I: Perspectives.

P: Perspectives, and there was third or fourth one.

I: Frustrations.

P: Frustrations, yeah. I guess, uh, as a, uh, researcher, uh, in this area, maybe we talk about some of the, uh, trends that, that have been experienced in, in the research area in the literature. I think what's happened, there was a great deal of interest in this area in the, uh, uh, I think, uh later, 1970's, uh, maybe starting about 1975. Uh, some of the seminal, uh, pieces of literature were published, uh, there was a book published in '61 by uh, Cy Houle, called *The Inquiring Mind* that started taking people in this direction. And then there was some additional work done in the, uh, early 1970's by, uh, a fellow by the name of, of Malcolm Knowles both of those parties have, have passed away, but he published a book on self-directed learning in, I think around '75 and that started a lot, because those, those were two leading, uh, scholars in the field of adult education, uh, it started getting a lot of people thinking. Uh, uh, about this topic area in, in this part of the fact that the needs of an adult learner are different, uh, than the needs of a, uh, of a, uh, uh, a uh, uh, uh, uh, a learner that, uh, a child, uh.

I: Uh-huh.

P: In no uncertain terms. And, and it's difficult to make the distinction of does the person become an adult at the age of eighteen or do they exhibit some of these tendencies at the age of fourteen or maybe, maybe it doesn't occur until twenty-five or thirty, and maybe never occurs. So there, there's no age, uh, uh, break that says one is, is an adult learner. But in terms of people recognizing that, uh, a person is motivated to learn for different reasons as they become, uh, an adult, and, and, uh, uh, start to, uh, uh, have other things drawing upon their time, whether it's their family commitments or, uh, work related commitments, or whatever. They have all these things demanding on their time and so, uh, uh, some of this research started to look into that. You know, what, what, what's really needed to work with an adult learner. A lot of the work was done in, uh, with agricultural cooperatives, uh, uh, the county agents, quite a bit of the early research was done in that area. Quite a bit of it was done in, uh, in the areas of, uh, uh, libraries or, uh, I'm at a blank for the word I want to use. Uh, uh, I can't get a word I want to use in terms, uh, Lyceums, that's it.

I: Uh-huh.

P: In terms of, uh, things that occurred at the turn of the century in America, uh, and so the result is interest in this, you know, what causes people to want to do this. What causes people to want to go away and take a vacation, uh, uh, to learn classical music or take a vacation to uh, uh, to learn a foreign language or whatever? Uh, uh, what motivates people, uh, to come back to graduate school? All of these kinds of things started to become very much of interest and so, uh, all of the sudden, uh, a number of, of people in the field started, uh, uh, doing research in this area and, and looking into it. And quite a bit was done in the later 1970's. A lot more in the, uh, 1980's. And then all of the sudden, things started to kind of fizzle. Uh, maybe early 1990's. Uh, and so, you know, in terms of the trends, uh, what's kind of happened is, people have made their contribution and kind of moved on, and to other areas of research. And so that, that's kind of, uh, I guess what I, what I see as, as, as trends. And now, uh, where those that are still doing work, most of it appears to be more workplace oriented. A lot of work still being done in, uh, in human resource development, uh, training areas, uh, things that are primarily oriented toward the workplace. Although there is a strong, uh, interest in, uh, continuing ed, uh, the nursing area is still doing quite a bit of work to this, uh, work in the medical profession in terms of, of, uh, continuing education. So that, that's kind of the trend. That's kind of, uh, what's happening with, uh, in, in the field in general. And when I say the field, it's, it's the field of adult education. As far as the current things, uh, what we're seeing is a large number of the scholars that have worked in this area have, have moved on to something else and, but we still have a core of maybe, oh, I would say a core or something more than fifty, something less than a hundred...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ... of, of scholars that are continuing to do research in this area and, uh, have continued to, to publish papers. There's still quite a bit going on in Germany, uh, is still, uh, uh, publishing books on the topic. Uh, less, I, I would say probably nothing has been published in the way of a text for almost ten years now. Uh, in, in the United States. Uh, but we've got a book just published this past year in Germany, uh, that some, uh, American scholars have contributed to...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...uh, but the editor is, is German. Uh, and, uh, so that's, that's kind of what's going on here in terms of, of, uh, uh, the current, current situation. Uh, stop me anytime you just want information. Yeah.

I: I do have one question.

P: Yeah.

I: Were you aware of this all along or when did you become aware...

P: Well, I think...

I: ...of the research?

P: Personally I've become aware of the detailed research maybe in the, over the past two or three years, in terms of what the trends are, as being a researcher that recently has come into this. Uh, and, uh, that, uh, in terms of my, uh, interest in the area and, and digging into the, uh, to the, uh, the, uh, literature, uh, uh, I've, you know, become aware just in recent times personally. And, uh...

I: To the term self-directed learning?

P: Oh, I,

I: (i/a) or were you familiar with that too? Well!

P: No, that's a very good question. The term 'self-directed learning' and 'self-direction' has probably been a term that I have only become aware of maybe three years ago, uh, it, uh, and its connection, uh, it's scholarly connection back to initiative, self-motivation, uh, self, uh, yeah, probably should say self-motivation initiative...

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, you know, those are the terms that have always been with me.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, but as far as their connection to the scholarly term, the academic term 'self-direction', uh, or 'self-directed learning' that's only been in the past three years or so. As I have been introduced to the bulk of the scholarly literature in the field.

I: Okay.

P: Uh, to move on to...

I: Do you want to talk about that?

P: Uh, perspect...

I: The subtopic to habit...

P: Yeah, what I was going to do is just come on...

I: Okay. Sure. Go ahead.

P: ...talk a little bit more about the perspectives and the frustrations. As far as my own, uh, uh, perspective, what I believe and believe very strongly is that even though some have moved on to other, uh, agendas...

I: Some of whom?

P: Some of the, uh, contributing scholars.

I: Okay.

P: There's, to, to, to maybe talk a little bit about the field of adult education. There are, adult education is a pretty unique entity that covers everything from a to z. It covers those working in a academic environment, uh, training other educators working with adults, as we might do here at the university. Uh, that's one extreme. It covers people working in the workplace, uh, in a professional training mode. It covers those adults working at the, uh, library trying to teach adults how to use the library or working in the museum trying to teach adults how to, uh, better understand, uh, what the museum has to offer. It covers those adults working in a, in a, uh, in a, uh, uh, church related mode or religious mode, uh, whether it's learning Bible study in the evening or, uh, uh, some facet related to an interest in a, in a, in a...

I: Uh-huh.

P: In a, learning more about some religious activity. It covers those that are working with, uh, uh, adults trying to get a GED or literacy type situations. Uh, and so it covers a big, huge, broad range of agenda. Like the county extension agent trying to teach farmers how to get more yield out of their crop. Uh, and everything in between. Uh, and so it's a very wide field. Uh, it, it also encompasses those working with issues of social change, union organization, uh, some don't know this, but, uh, uh, uh, the uh, uh, the training of the leaders of the civil rights movement was done here locally in Tennessee, uh, Martin Luther King, uh, Rosa Parks, did the demonstration in, in the bus demonstration in, in, uh, Montgomery.

I: I've read about her.

P: Uh, Miles Horton was a white, red-neck farmer who trained them. Actually training them and had his school burned down, uh, uh, as a result of him working with the civil rights movement. So, some don't know that, but that's all adult education. Uh, those that have, uh, worked with, uh, training union, uh, uh, leadership, how to strike...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...and be successful at it. That's all adult education. So there's some social, uh, uh, activist type roles there.

I: Uh-huh.

P: That are all mixed in with it. So anyway, that whole thing boils down to right now today there are probably six to seven hundred uh, uh, scholars involved in that, in that broad field...

I: Uh.

P: ...of research. And at one time, maybe a third of those people were working and doing research in self-direction and today probably only ten percent or maybe sixty or seventy of those people are working actively and have an active research interest or agenda in self-directed learning. If that helps, you know put...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...put this into perspective today.

I: Yeah.

P: And so to me, "what is critically important" is to look at what our technology has done since the early 1990's. You know once we go back and say when the PC was discovered and invented in 1981 in a garage out in California. Whether it was the work that, uh, uh, Bill Gates did or, or Stephen Jobs at Apple.

I: Uh-huh.

P: When they invented these things basically, almost as peers, uh, uh, and look at how the PC has evolved and today with the Internet and now the technology increasing at a pace that is astronomically, uh, increasing, you know, it's increasing almost exponentially every year in terms of all this, this, uh, uh, knowledge that has to be acquired to learn how to harness this technology, that, to me, is happening at such a rapid rate "it has to be done in a self-directed mode" and, and, uh, you know, some of the industrial leadership is recognizing that, that technological pace is increasing, increasing at such a rapid mode that "the only way to digest it" is through each participant doing it on their own 'cause they know it has to be done. That there's this tool out there that help me do whatever better. Either game playing better, or Internet surfing better, or triple x.com stuff better, but if I, if I learn how to harness the technology, I can do it. I can be more efficient at it. You know, whether it's a kid trying to learn how use a PC or an adult has to learn how to use it, generally they learn how to use it – "on their own." And so, to me, our technological development is going to cause this to resurface in a way in which it was never dreamed possible before. So that's my current perspective on it. My other current perspective is that if we can move away from the realm that it was once approached as purely a quantitative measure, you know, if a person self-directed or aren't they? And, uh, measuring it with all kinds of scales, and bringing into it, uh, uh, an aura of, of consideration for maybe some of the post-modern, uh, types of trends that it will be better accepted by those that have moved onto something else because some of the

scholars will say it's dead. It's time to move on to something else. Just put it to bed and move on to something else, and, because I, I just think that they've, they've missed what really is going on there. That if it's looked at through different lenses, uh, that if more qualitative studies are done, and I think if one looks at all the literature, maybe forty percent of the studies are qualitative. I looked at those numbers the other day, but I've forgotten. About forty percent of the studies are now qualitative, uh, maybe sixty percent are, are quantitative, and so I think that if one looks at better ways, uh, and looks at, uh, uh, doing more qualitative work, because of that being perhaps what is more in vogue now...

I: Uh-huh.

P: For lack of a better way to describe it, then I think it will help re, uh, re-interest some of those that have moved on to something else, in terms of saying, "Wait a minute. I think we've, we've, uh, we've missed some things that I think we need to look at this different. I think we need to take a second look at it. It's really more important than what we, uh, initially thought, uh, and, and what caused us to move on to other things."

I, I think that, that's my current perspective on it.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh.

I: The sixty or seventy you mentioned, researchers are writing...

P: Yeah.

I: ...are still writing about it, uh, you, you talk about a current time interest...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...being expressed in the self-directed learning as a topic.

P: Yeah.

I: But you also talked about self-directed learning as being sort of outmoded. Dead in the water, whatever...

P: Yeah.

I: ...exactly you used. I'm not sure of the right word. So how are the sixty or seventy who are still doing it...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...not put by you into the category of, uh, previous research that's come to an end?

P: Yeah, what, what they're doing almost exclusively is writing about it as it's oriented towards to workplace. Whether it's continuing education in the medical field or ...

I: ...Oh, I see

P: ... uh, uh, how a company should go about better training their employees. But their all, they've all kind of stayed in that arena of, of, of moving in, into from purely an academic interest to something that's, uh, being, uh, put into practice in, uh, in terms of a, uh, transfer of the, of the, uh, uh, scholarly research into, uh, uh, practical applications. And so, they, they're doing their research in that area and their scholarly writing in that area. Almost, almost exclusively. There are probably less than ten that are still writing about it, uh, in purely an academic role. In terms of, uh, you know, the number of dissertations being done, uh, the number of professors that are keeping that as, as their, uh, primary research agenda. The number is really low. I mean, you can almost count on a couple hands. And, uh...

I: Uh, well, let me just restate this and turn around and close this

P: Yeah.

I: So that the, mostly, the most of the, uh, researchers are academically oriented.

P: Yeah.

I: Are no longer pursuing that research.

P: That's correct.

I: The current researchers who are...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...uh, are, are interested in the self-directed learning in relation to the workplace.

P: Yeah.

I: And you personally, your experience of this is that something's missing. Something's been left out.

P: Yeah.

I: And do you think that's in relation to self-directed learning being brought into the field of, of technology and learning Is that...

P: Yeah, I think that...

I: ...technology and work.

P: Yeah, I think, well, it's technology and learning, uh, whether it's, uh, academic oriented, extra curricular, or work related.

I: Oh.

P: I think that's...

I: Okay.

P: ...that's the part of the connection that will, will, will give us a mechanism, uh, to renew our research agenda in an academic role in terms of, of coming back and taking a second look at it. Because of what has happened, uh, in the past ten years in terms of the Internet being relatively, uh, you know, it was a research tool in the late 1980's, uh, early 1990's versus, say after about '94 or '95 when the academic research in self-direction was dying off, uh, that's when the technology just, uh, uh, opened up at an exponential rate. You know, if you look at what's happened with the personal computer, uh, in the past, uh, uh, five to ten years, it's a much greater growth rate than what happened in the earlier years. And, to where, you know, almost every home has one. Every child is on it. Every school has dozens of them. Uh, and, uh, and, and look at what's happened to the Internet and what's available over the Internet. Good, bad, or indifferent. You know, and so to me, I think that's, that's something that needs to be re-evaluated and reconsidered in terms of, uh, the way our knowledge, uh, base is increasing at a phenomenal rate. One, one article, one research article I read said that knowledge is doubling every seventy days, or some unbelievable rate. I mean, it was just like, scary at what someone was saying. Here's how fast our, our total, our total, uh, uh, knowledge base is increasing. And, uh, and, and, and, you know...

I: Mmm.

P: ...in terms of trying to, to portray how we are going to have to approach this a lot differently. And the other thing is, the, the CEO of a large company said that technology was increasing at such a rapid rate that if his employees, and this is a, a businessman speaking, not an educator, said that if his employees were not self-directed in pursuit of their learning in the workplace that the company could never put together the training fast

enough to keep up with technology. Because by the time they put together a program, some new technology was already invented.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And they needed to be working on that, so it was like...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...you know, a day late and a dollar short. Uh, so that a, an "employee had to be self-directed" and learn it and "learn it quickly on their own." And if they had to wait for the company to put together a formal training program, "it was too late!" And so, you know, that, to me, is, is another example of, of why I think, uh, uh, academically, uh, uh, it, it's time for a, a second look at this. A fresh look, uh, uh, and a renewed interest in it as an area of research, academic research, rather than being just oriented just toward the workplace.

I: What has been your experience of self-directed learning, uh, with technology? Did you, for example, I mean, use that as an example.

P: Yeah. Well, I think it, it, it's, uh, goes right back to my, uh, example of learning how to ski, 'cause that was another example I could have talked about. I can remember, because I had a second career in the military in the Army Reserve, uh, one of a handful of Army Reservists sent out to Fort Lewis, Washington, to learn this fancy new computer system that the Army had. And we were like, you know, hand selected to go out there and learn this system. And I can remember going, and, and at that time, in the job, in the, in my, in my normal day to day 8-5 job, uh, you were only, only the privileged few got a personal computer or even had access to one.

I: Uh-huh.

P: It was a privileged deal. It was like a top-secret thing. It was like, whoever had one wasn't going to say anything about it because it was protecting your job, so to speak. And so I remember going out there and learning this system and saying "I wish I had this at work."

I: Uh-huh.

P: And this was some time just shortly after personal computers were invented, thinking, 'I wish I had this at work. I could be so much more efficient. I could get so much more done.' And I can remember coming back and, uh, saying to my boss, "Can I please have a personal computer?" He said, "No, it costs", that was when even a, a basic personal computer was somewhere between maybe seven and ten thousand dollars, and he said, "No." He said, "That's not going to happen." And, uh, I said, you know, "We could do so much more if we had this computer." And so I quit being a pest 'cause I knew I wasn't going to get one. So about a year later I got assigned to this European job and my boss, my new boss said, "How are we going to get all this work done?" And I said, "You could let me have a personal computer and I could do it." And he said, "You, you're willing to, to, uh, stake that claim and live up to it?" And I said, "You buy me one of those things and I'll guarantee we'll be able to do it." And, uh, I didn't have a clue what I had signed up for.

I: Programming, etc. (laughter)

P: Yeah, just, I didn't have a clue what I had signed up for, but "I just knew there was a way to do my job better" and so, uh, uh, I had seen some person demonstrate something and I said, "If I that, I could do my job a whole lot better."

I: Uh-huh.

P: In terms of planning all these crazy commitments. Uh, and so he said, "Well, I can't get approval to buy one, but I think I can get approval to rent one. If we rented you one, would that be okay?" And I said, "Yep." And he said, "Well, go down and tell the IS people what you want..."

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...and they'll spec it out and they'll order it." And I said, "No, you don't understand. This is a personal computer, isn't it?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, "I think I'd kind of like to spec it out." And, uh, and he said, "Okay. Well, I'll back you up on that." So I can remember going down to the information, the IS people and them saying, "No, we're going to spec it out." And I said, "You don't understand. This is a personal computer, and, uh, I really would like to do this myself, so that I learn something." And they, so finally agreed to that. Well, the computer came in and they said, "We'll set it up for you." And I said, "No, you don't understand. I'm not going to learn anything if I don't set this up myself." And I can remember a horrible mess, you know, formatting the (laughter) hard drive and installing all this software and I installed it on top of each other and, oh, God, what a nightmare. But, I finally "struggled through this thing on my own," uh, uh, and all the frustration of it not working, and not working, and stay up, staying at work 'til midnight trying to get this damn thing to work and, uh, so, and struggling with it, struggling with it, struggling with it, and getting it to do what I promised that I could do, and being determined to, to do that, and, uh, and doing it, and accomplishing it, and showing that it could work, and, and doing that about the time when, you know, very few were trying to do that, and also doing it because that was back when everything was DOS, there was no Windows and so I felt I could best do it with a Macintosh and nobody had Macintoshes so I had to fight that battle, uh, to do it with an Apple system.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, uh, and, and showing that it would work and being productive and you could do it. And, uh, so that, that's, that's why I said that technology to me is a really important thing, and, and then or course, fighting for things like e-mail with a boss that just wasn't going to listen to it. All, everything was, "No, you can't do that because you're going to open us up to a virus. You can't have a network because you're going to get a virus. You'll put the whole system down." 'Cause one of our office got a virus and it took the server down. And I said, "Well, wait a minute now. You", I said, "You've got to take some risks here and, and, and you mean to tell me we're not going to learn, we're not going to benefit from the 99.9 percent of the good because somebody's afraid to do the 1/10th risk that we're going to get a virus?" I said, "Give me break." And, uh, uh, and then, you know, fighting that battle of getting them to put in a, a wide area network, and...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...showing them what that could do.

I: Uh-huh.

P: That it could make everybody so much more efficient. All the offices could exchange data electronically rather than, uh, uh, doing everything the old fashioned way. So, uh, yeah, yeah, that's, that's part of my reason for saying that technology's so, so terribly

important. And that to me, that, that maybe, uh, one of the important missing links. Uh

...

I: Some of the words that stand out to me when you're talking about this experience, uh, are that you are alone without support from the people you worked with a lot of times.

P: Yeah.

I: There was risk taking. You used...

P: Yeah.

I: ...that word...

P: Yeah.

I: ...by you and your company, uh, I gather there were financial considerations.

P: Yeah.

I: So there, these, these you might list under frustrations, but you all, could cause the risk taking, there are a lot of, um, places where you put yourself in relation to technology before it was the norm...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...to do. So, um, so being a self-directed learner might also involve these kinds of things.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Risk taking is another word you used.

P: Maybe it's overcoming adversity or...

I: Yeah.

P: ...even though I didn't say that.

I: Yeah.

P: ...that's kind of what it is.

I: And, uh, and so in this case you were doing something with very little or no support.

P: Yeah.

I: Even discouragement about e-mail.

P: Well, because you know you...

I: And fear.

P: Yeah.

I: And you used the word afraid because he was afraid.

P: Yeah, cause you know in your heart, "it's like you have a vision." You know in your heart that it's going to bear fruit even though you've got to overcome significant obstacles to, uh, make it happen. It's like when you, when you're trying to set up, uh, like I can remember the first time trying to, uh, uh, set the computer up to do something, or you, it's not like today where everything's plug and play where it's almost foolproof that the first time you say I've got to have, like uh, uh, I saw the benefit of running two monitors side by side...

I: Uh-huh.

P: So you could open different windows on each monitor, and I can remember saying if I, oh, this would, this would be great. If we could open, I could, I could, I could have two separate programs running at the same time on two different monitors running on the same machine and the frustration of getting that to work electronically. I mean, it was like the "worst nightmare" and Mac's are usually pretty easy to set up but that was not

easy to a Mac to do that, and, uh, but I had seen it demonstrated so "I knew it could be done."

I: That was where I was going next.

P: Yeah.

I: You, you, the, the military paid for you to go to have the special training...

P: Yeah.

I: ...and this experience...

P: Yeah.

I: ... then you, that, that experience and that vision and that understanding...

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, you brought with you when you came out of that situation into a work situation.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, and tried to bring what you had learned and what you had experienced into this new, uh, environment...

P: Yeah.

I: ...this new context.

P: Yeah.

I: And that's when some of these other, the risk and other things came up, but you carried within you division and experiment. The experience of what you...

P: Yeah.

I: ...uh, had done and what you could see was possible in your company.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, and you were, and you, and you were direct, you directed yourself to pursue this.

P: Yeah, because...

I: You talked about him being a pest at one time and decided not to do that and then got into a new situation with a new boss and...

P: Yeah.

I: Uh...

P: Well, because I think at any...

I: And then you picked it up again.

P: ... at any one point in time the boss would have been just as happy if you'd just forget about it and go on to something else that was maybe on their agenda. But you, you stayed with it.

I: So, uh, so communication is a big part.

P: Yeah.

I: Both ways.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And, and both parties consenting or not. So there are a lot of things, by you talking about this experience, bringing the history of self-directed learning...

P: Yeah.

I: Into a contemporary setting...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...through your own experiences.

P: Yeah.

I: Adds a lot of insight into that experience.

P: Yeah. I guess the, the only other thing I wanted to talk about is the frustration issue. Uh, it's kind of, I think, with your, with your question, uh, uh, that the last thing...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...that was in the question. To me, uh, as a researcher, uh, part of the frustration is when you, uh, publish something that you really feel is important to the, the body of the literature, to the overall, uh, field, you know as, as one, one additional piece, uh, additional piece to the puzzle, and then, uh, when, when your colleagues criticize you for doing that, uh, and, and, and sometimes, uh, really openly criticize you. You know, tell you that, you know, it's dead, move on to something else, or, uh, humanism is dead, uh, move on to something else. Uh, and, uh, and, and being very critical of that, you know, that's been something that, that's, uh, that's, uh, you know, makes it kind of hard in terms of overcoming that adversity and objection of your colleagues. And, and it's, it's frustrating because you want to hang on because you believe in it cause you have a vision that it's, that there's something out there that's important that should cause you to stay in that area, but then some of your fellow colleagues get so frustrated that they do move on to something else, you know, that they just, they just get, uh, so much criticism that they, they just move on to something else that's, that's fun for them. Uh, and it's, you know, important research but they, they leave, uh, maybe what their initial, uh, interest is in and they do something that, that should have been continued on and...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...and they became so frustrated with this criticism that they just, they couldn't fight the battle anymore. They just moved on and, and in some cases moved way off to the right or to the left, uh, you know, completely out of the mainstream, uh, uh, uh, and, and some have even quit coming to the conferences and that's, that's frustrating.

I: What conferences are you...

P: Well, we have, we have, uh, several major conferences but the, the two biggest ones...

I: Within your profession?

P: Within our profession.

I: Okay.

P: Yeah, we have, we have a conference that's, uh, oriented toward the profession in general, uh, which is our Adult Education and Continuing Ed Conference that, uh, basically encompasses the whole field, whether it's literacy or, or, uh, academic research. And, uh, and quite a few have stopped coming to that conference, stopped being active, stopped participating. And then we have, and, and that could be for, for many reasons.

I: And these are academic...

P: Yeah academic based.

I: I mean, not work, but...

P: No, academic based. Uh, although, uh, the practitioner side, like if some, someone is like a professional military trainer...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...uh, they'll come to the, the, uh, AAACE conference that's once a year. Then our other, we have a research conference that, uh, uh, a university hosts once a year, usually in the spring, then a conference is in the fall, that's our adult ed research conference where basically it's a time for those purely in the academic arena and the graduate

students that are actively involved to, to present their research. And, uh, uh, that has become, which was originally twenty years ago, was the smallest conference of the two, now has become the biggest, and, because of the agenda being off in the direction of, uh, uh, uh, social related issues, you know, feminist type issues, uh, gay-lesbian rights type issues, uh, and other things that are, uh, more, uh, of, of, uh, uh, uh, uh, social issues right now, uh, have kind of come, uh, to the forefront of the stage in terms of the, a lot of it's the cutting edge type research. Uh, and, and so now that has become the, the larger of the two conferences.

I: I almost sense a paradox here. In your talking about these experiences and when we were talking in answer to the first question.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Um, and, and the most, and the more recent exper, your experience with technology and...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...and bringing that from your military training into a workplace...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...and having the difficulties of doing that.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Uh, and in the first question in answering to that, you were talking about cooperative groups...

P: Yeah.

I: ...Um, and facilitating those and have everyone be productive towards the same...

P: Yeah.

I: ...goal or outcomes or whatever.

P: Yeah.

I: The one, and in the second case that your experience, you were a learner,

P: Um-huh.

I: breaking away from the norm of the cooperative group of the work environment.

P: Yeah.

I: So, um, um, as facilitator in the earlier instances,

P: Uh-huh.

I: you were looking towards the groups,

P: Uh-huh.

I: I'm using the word cohesiveness.

P: No, we'll take about that in a few seconds

I: Uh, and then later when you talk about your own experience of taking risk and asking others...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...to, uh, support you...

P: uh-huh.

I: ...into that self-directed learning and technology...

P: Yeah.

I: ...you're breaking out, of that workplace where there's a certain standard and cooperativeness,

P: Uh-huh.

I: and going against that.

P: Uh-huh.

I: So how would you see, I mean, if you were the, the, your boss,

P: Mmm.

I: who was tired of your pest, I mean,

P: Mmm.

I: if, if you were he, and someone were pestering you to be self-directed in learning

P: Uh-huh.

I: but in a direction different from the group...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...uh, product.

P: Uh-huh.

I: How would you think about that if you were the, well, I mean, I just, I'm picking out. There are two different...

P: Well, and I need to...

I: ...ways to talk about self-directed.

P: ...we need to come back to, uh, I'm making a note so I can remember to come back to the specific example. Uh, a couple things you need to know about me professionally that I think will help put this into better perspective. With my first experiences, uh, the first question we talked about and, and those things that I was sharing with you, whether being a, a teacher or a, uh, practicing, uh, person in industry, uh, you know, that's where I spent twenty-five of my years.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And as a facilitator in the workplace what I had to do most of the time, was to inherit a big mess that someone created and couldn't finish, but that was important to the company and so somehow I would always manage to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and someone say "Could you help with this big mess?" And it was not an individual project. It was something that took, uh, a, uh, a, uh, uh, I use a buzzword, a cross-functional team...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...to pull together..

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...where we had to have. Uh, team members from all facets of the organization to pull together, uh, this project. And, uh, most of my projects were oriented toward bringing out new products for the company to where someone said, you know, this is an important prod, new product for the company or a redoing of an existing product, you know, we need this product. It's important. It's going to be profitable, uh, we know we need it, uh, but the project is way behind schedule and it's way overspent and we're so frustrated that we know we need it but no one, we, we, we can't, uh, it's, it's just not happening.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, and could you, could you help with this?

I: Okay.

P: And so what one quickly recognizes in that mode is that no one person is smart enough to do it. That it can't be dictated,

I: Uh-huh.

P: because that's what was tried before. "It did not work!"

I: Uh-huh.

P: And so what I basically would say is, we need, uh, representatives at a low level, from several facets of the organization, the people that can speak for their department and we've got to give them the authority to act on this thing and so therefore, uh, that group, uh, if everyone can learn to treat everyone somewhat equally and not pull, pull, uh, weight, because maybe their, their ranking in the company is higher or lower, "you know, that we can do this." And so that basically was the job that I got thrown into time after time again and, and they were all oriented toward bringing out new products, fixing existing products, uh, a lot of them quality issues, uh, in fact, very, very many of them were quality issues, but they were all in that arena, and, uh, and so somehow I managed to always to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, but also come out of it with a reward, very rewarding experience by seeing a group of people that could not even work together before, uh, pull something off, successfully.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, and so that would be the workplace, uh, setting.

I: Successfully

P: And then talking about the teaching...

I: Uh-huh.

P: To be, uh, uh, a teacher in junior college, working with students that, uh, no one really ever cared about before, in most cases, and trying to help them successfully get through. Uh, and, and so, those would be the, uh, the, in terms of the direction I was coming from with the first question,

I: Okay.

P: that would be the foundation for it.

I: Okay.

P: Now to go back to this issue of things being more individual oriented, I shared my frustration with the computer where you've got a task that you can do as an individual that you feel so strongly about that you're going to damn the torpedoes, I'm going to do this thing, uh, 'cause "I know" it has to be done. "I know" it will be better if we just do it. That's where I was coming from there. But now talking about, uh, those that have a vision. About ten years ago I had a young engineer that was incredibly bright and he had this scatterbrained idea, and that's, I'll just say "scatterbrained," uh, where we had a major problem to overcome and he said, "I think if you let it, if we did it this way, it would work." And I can remember thinking, "This is the dumbest idea I've ever heard." Uh, I had one of my, uh, retired engineers, uh, I said that I wanted to talk about this idea and he said, "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard." And we both thought about it and we said, "But it might work." (laughter) And so we agreed to fund this guy on a project, uh, and there were a couple facets of it, uh, both of them were kind of technology oriented, uh, and it worked, and it solved the problem that no one had been able to figure out how to solve. And so, uh, you know, that's an idea of saying lets let somebody try something even though in our hearts we know (laughter) this probably isn't going to work based on our own experiences but, uh, there's some spark that says that it might work. Let's let him try.

I: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

P: And let's let him go through all his frustration of, of, of "doing it on their own" and letting them, uh, there were a couple of facets to it. One was this test that we had to perform to comply with the government regulation and we didn't know how in the world we could do the test cause nobody had a test. So he can up with a scatterbrained idea, uh, and we let him do it, and it worked. Gave him money to do it and it worked. And then the other thing was this, uh, wide area network when nobody had wide area networks and he said, "You know, if you just give me the money to hire some programmers, uh, we can make this work." He says, "I know that it will work, but I don't know how to do it myself but I need, you know, twenty or thirty thousand dollars to hire a programmer up at Oak Ridge that I know can make this work. Would you want to do that?" And, and we said, uh, let's give it a try, and it worked. And we had a Windows NT network when people were just kind of thinking about...

I: Mmm.

P: network.

I: Uh-huh. I'm hearing about the self-directed learning experiences as being, uh, the different types of those experiences for you through the group, with the group's goal.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, where the members are self-directed...

P: Yeah.

I: ...to do that, um, then there are other experiences where you are facilitator, are encouraging someone else...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...to be self-directed in their learning and then their doing so or not doing so.

P: Yeah.

I: With different outcomes, um, then there's the self-directed learning, experience that goes, uh, in a creative direction...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ... that breaks out of those...

P: Yeah.

I: ...you know that makes me think, when you were talking about your experience of the 11 year old child, um, and, and watching the down slope skier, the, the down hill skiers.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And then you wanted to do it and you were very determined at the risk of being, you know, being killed. (laughter)

P: Yeah.

I: Um.

P: And it was close a couple times (laughter)

I: Yeah, so you have that vision, and you did it.

P: Yeah.

I: uh, and then, but then as an older person, and that's similar to your...

P: Yeah.

I: ...experience in technology and similar to the experience you were just telling me about, the engineer...

P: Yeah.

I: ...with his harebrained idea (laughter)

P: Yeah.

I: And that it worked.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And you were supportive of that.

P: Yeah.

I: So there's, there are lots of different experiences in self-directed learning in your own life.

P: Yeah.

I: In different contexts, in different, umm, in different relationship with other people, whether it's group members or you a teacher, or you a student, or you with a vision at risk of death...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...and going it alone.

P: Yeah.

I: Um, so, and, and it sounds like the frustrations in each of these situations is a little different.

P: Yeah, I think...

I: And the satisfaction...

P: ...yeah.

I: ...and excitement and the emotions...

P: Yeah...

I: ...behaviors they

P: ...are all, all a little bit different depending on which perspective you are coming from.

I: Yeah.

P: Or what context you are coming from.

I: Yeah, so, uh, so there are a lot of different qualities involved with self-directed learning, talk, from your talking about your experiences. Different, uh, different products and goals.

P: Yeah.

I: Uh, and some more tangible than others maybe

P: Yeah.

I: Immediately when you...

P: Yeah.

I: ...beginning to do, on, on this, a new project with self-directed learning would be involved.

P: Yeah.

I: And I guess this is a good place to move on. I think you might have already talked about the third question a little bit. How has your thinking on self-direction evolved over time? So we, we kind of looked at it a little bit.

P: Yeah.

I: Do you have any...

P: Well, I, I just, just thinking about that for a moment in, in terms of, uh, uh, you know taking myself through a journey. I think my journey has been, and how it has evolved over time, and I think journey is a good way to describe it, uh, has gone from purely thinking about things from initiative or, uh, being self-motivated or self-starter, I think

that's another term, uh, I haven't used it tonight I don't think, but, but I've used it in the past, in terms of the importance of being a self-starter, because of my point of almost being obsessed with, uh, "people that are so dictatorial in their behavior that they scare people off" from wanting to do anything, and it's like nobody will do anything in the organization until the boss tells them what to do, and so the whole place just starts to fall apart. And, and, and I've "seen some horrible, horrible examples" of that occur over the years and, uh, uh, and, and so my journey has been from initiative, uh, being a self-starter, uh, in a, in a work related mode to, uh, evolving into, you know, the academic arena and then through being exposed to the in depth research that's going on in this area, you find out, my gosh, there is a whole research agenda in this area that I didn't even know existed, uh, and, uh, becoming, uh, very, uh, engaged in that interest in that research and the recognizing that there were many, many more researchers that, uh, uh, moved on to something else...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...and that there are still more that are saying this is a dead agenda, move on to something else.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And then, uh, being fortunate enough to still have a strong vision and saying, "Wait a minute. There's still, there's still a component that's really important and, and, and what do we have to do to, to get that back, uh, in the limelight, because it is very still important. And, and, how to, how to, I guess, how to look at it differently. And I guess that's the thing that is the journey that I'm in right now and believing that there is something there, "having the vision," but knowing there are a lot of obstacles I've got to overcome in academic arena and that if I can approach it with some of the methodologies that I think the critics are using to cause them to move off to a different agenda,

I: Uh-huh.

P: that if I can, if I can look, "look at it through that different lens."

I: Uh-huh.

P: If I can "look at it through their lens," you know, from say, a, a post, uh, modernist framework,

I: Uh-huh.

P: that I will have, better have, what might be needed to overcome some of these obstacles. You know, and, and, and, and what I might have that will help me as a researcher, uh, uh, accomplish my vision. And so that's kind of the journey that I've been through, and...

I: You talked about looking through the lenses

P: Yeah.

I: and others looking through lenses and your trying to look through their look their lenses.

P: I'm trying to look through their lenses, yeah.

I: That's very convoluted but I think I see what you're trying to say.

P: Yeah.

I: So that you can, uh, overcome the obstacles.

P: Yeah.

I: And what, what, uh, that might, uh, connect with the way I wanted to go with my question about, with your fourth question. Could you describe your future vision for self-directed learning? So is your vision having to do with looking through these different lenses and...

P: Yeah, I, I think that...

I: ...trying to solidify your...

P: That's what I, uh, I believe is, is, is the first and, and maybe the immediate need, is to try and look at it through the lenses of others, uh, uh, uh, maybe some of them that have, those that have been the biggest critics or maybe through the lenses of some that have moved on to different agendas.

I: Uh-huh.

P: You know, I've tried to uh, uh, look at this, uh, uh, you know, some of the techniques that I've used just to do research in the area of, uh, social construction of knowledge, and, and trying really to look at that literature and say is there something, uh, here. If I look through that lens, uh, will that help me, uh, uh, uh, better achieve my vision. If I look at, uh, you know, dwell on the, on the side of, of the post modernists, uh, uh, viewpoint, uh, will, will that help give me, uh, a better lens with which to focus. Uh, I've dabbled around, you know, with looking at it through the phenomenological side and trying to figure out, uh, how that may or may not help me, uh, look at it through a different lens.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And, and so, uh, I think that's the first priority. And then I think the second, third, and fourth, and fifth priorities are to use those same lenses with which to go back and, and, and broaden, uh, uh, some of the research agendas. In other words, to take maybe some studies that twenty years ago or ten years ago or maybe five years ago would have been approached purely quantitatively and say, if I approach that phenomenologically, uh, could I, could I better, uh, answer that, that question rather than just looking at it purely quantitatively. And I, I think the other part of this is that, uh, I still have a, a very strong quantitative component and some, some, uh, some, uh, uh, research questions I think that have to be done quantitatively and think if I deviate from that traditional way, a quantitative way of looking at things and put on the lenses of the qualitative researcher, and approach it in, in, uh, you know, from an epistemological way from, from maybe a post modernist perspective, this earlier agenda, that it will better equip me to come back and do some of these other studies, some of which will be quantitative. I think my, my, uh, my, I will have broadened my horizons...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...to the point where I can better approach some of those more traditional studies that I want to do that if I did today without broadening my horizons first, I, I would have missed something really important. And so I think it will better equip me, uh, in, in the long range as well. And so that, that's, that's kind of, uh, how I see the vision and that's, that's kind of what I've tried to do. Now, will it work or not? You know, who knows? Uh, but I think if you don't try, uh, you'll never know. And, uh, and, and, and so I guess that's, that's...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...why I'm willing to, uh, to, uh, to take that risk and why I'm willing to continue to dabble in an area that some would say "dead, move onto something else."

I: I think I understand what you mean about looking through the lens of a phenomenologist and a quantitative researcher, uh, and about the social construction of the knowledge.

I: Uh-huh.

P: But what particular knowledge? Could you expand a little bit on that, about what you mean by that social construction part? And also what do you mean, I, I understand a little bit about post modernist theory, but I'd like to hear your view of that so I can understand more what you're saying about those two fields.

P: Uh, well let, uh, let me just say it the only way I can say it. I think if one, uh, uh, considers, uh, you know, this idea of, of truth and reality and, and looks at it from the standpoint of, uh, that there, accepts the fact that there may not be any single truth, but there may be alternatives, and, uh, is willing to consider the fact, it's like that old cliché that "there's ten different ways to skin the cat". Or if you're working in a work related environment, being willing to give up and let someone take some risk because that's you would like to do,

I: Uh-huh.

P: And to say, "Well, if I were the one deciding, I'd do it this way. I'd do it 'a' but an employee wants to do it 'b' ", to say, "It may not get there exactly the same way, but it will work, so let'em do it." You know it's, it's like learning how to delegate, uh, and so I guess that's what I, what I see that's so important in, in this postmodern approach. If of saying there's alternatives, there is no single truth.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Uh, there's multiple ways, uh, uh, there is no single reality and, uh, and you see what becomes of that in terms of, of this lens. Does, does that help with that part of the...

I: Yes, I just wanted to know what you meant.

P: And you had one more...

I: I do. In relation to the self-directed learning.

P: Yeah. Yeah.

I: Uh-huh.

P: Did, I believe you had a second component thought, uh, I kind of forgotten...

I: No that was, that was social construction of knowledge.

P: Yeah.

I: And specifically how that related to the self-directed learning.

P: Yeah.

I: And then, um, the, the post modernist, and you, you kind of talked about it broadly, but in your experience, can you relate to that in any specific experiences as well...

P: Well, the, the...

I: that influenced ...

P: The social constructive knowledge is one that, that I haven't completely sorted out yet because there's two components, that is the constructivist viewpoint or the, the self coming out and learning, uh, and then you've got the constructionist viewpoint, which is that it's being out there in the world.

I: Uh-huh.

P: That, that, that it, it's out there and it comes in and the knowledge is created, uh, based on the experiences of, of a group, uh, of, of a culture, of a world.

I: Uh-huh.

P: And so, you know, I, I think when one, uh, starts talking about, you know, the construction of knowledge from a, from a self point a view, a constructivist point of view, I think there's, there's some pretty good connections there and you stop to think about it, you know, the self-directed learning, uh, you know, it's plain it's coming from the self, and so I think that's, that's the relatively, you know, I, I think there's some, some connections that are already inherently made there.

I: Uh-huh.

P: But when one starts talking about being in a world of constructionists', uh, uh, position, the collaborative position, now I think there's, there's a lot of unanswered questions there. There's a lot of gray in terms of, of, can "one, uh, make than connection back," to, uh, something that's inherently part of the self. Now one could maybe argue that, uh, uh, that, uh, you, it's out there first, and, and, and you recognize something and then you pull it in and work on it. Uh, you know there's, there's...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...there's not that good, you know, there's only maybe the potential for something there, uh, rather than seeing some good solid connections. So, uh, when looking at it through a social constructionists, uh, lens, uh, there may or may not be a real solid connection.

I: Uh-huh.

P: That's, that's an area that I haven't really been able to really, uh, uh, uh, connect to any to be able to all bring in, all bring, you know, convincing argument or viewpoints, uh, if that kind of helps.

I: Yeah.

P: I think that was kind of the second component.

I: And you saying that made me think that even with the phenomenology there's the self-directed learners experience...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...of being a self-directed learner.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And then there's, uh, (pause) the researcher...

P: mmm

I: experience of researching self-directed learning. I think that your interested in that.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Uh, and your (pause) trying to pull out from all the things you said about all, in answering all these questions that your, you see your role as a multiple role...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...in studying self-directed learning and this might be a good place to talk about that in recapping some of what you've said across the questions, uh, your own experiences in self-directed learning.

P: Uh-huh.

I: So there's the role of your personal experiences with that.

P: Uh-huh.

I: That's, uh, a fellow work person in a workgroup or the supervisor of a workgroup.

P: Yeah. Facilitator.

I: The decision maker.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Yeah. Uh, and then in the academic world as student, uh, or as teacher/facilitator.

P: Teacher, yeah.

I: So you've got the multiple roles there.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Uh, and in the academic world as an educator and as a researcher.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Then within the researching there are the roles of, uh, self-directed learning, uh, as, as the topic considered historically, self-directed learning as a current, ongoing topic of research in the workgroup...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...and self-directed learning, uh, in a cutting edge, that's my word, sort of...

P: Yeah (i/a) cutting edge, yeah.

I: (i/a) ...working into where you're going off alone in new areas with a vision...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...from experiences you've drawn from to bring you to this point.

P: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

I: Uh, and then going into the, into your visions of the future, you also bring in the roles of self-directed learning, uh, as, as looking at it through the different...

(Side of tape ends)

I:(i/a) time

P: (i/a)

I: Oh, we're back on? Okay.

P: We're back on the air.

I: (laughter) Okay, I was, uh, I think where we stopped on the other side was and, your questions talk about, uh, the experience of self-directed learning over time for you, past, present, and future. Uh, you've got current issues, what lead you to first get involved with, so that's going back to the past, the self-directed learning. Current issues, evolution over time, and the future vision of self-directed learning.

P: Uh-huh.

I: So you see that development...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...uh, as being, being very temporal.

P: Uh-huh.

I: And so we bring your many roles of experience in self-directed learning into that perspective to self-directed learning personally as an experience, uh, in work groups, academically and you do have a future vision which will encompass understanding the last thing that we talked about, uh, talked about observing self-directed learning and, and thinking about it through the eyes...

P: Umm...

I: ...of all the different approaches that you think are relevant and important to this phenomenology quantitative, uh, research, psychology, or education. I mean, you can put it in any...

P: Uh-huh.

I: Uh, the post-modernist view.

P: Yeah.

I: And the post post-modernist view maybe too (laughter)

P: Uh-huh (laughter)

I: Cause I think you were kind of getting into that, uh, and the social construction of knowledge.

P: Uh-huh.

I: Past, present, and where that might be leading in the future.

P: Yeah.

I: And I think in consolidating your roles and experiences with this and tapping into other experiences in and roles and the research itself that you will come to, uh, an understanding of some, that something that's missing for you

P: Uh-huh.

I: Yeah and that you will, through this research, find it.

P: Yeah.

I: Is there anything that you'd like to add that will, that you, that you think, that I might have missed in asking you, or in, that you might have wanted to say earlier. I might, that, if I interrupted or, is there anything else you'd like...

P: No, I don't, I don't think, uh, there's anything that, that's been missed and I don't think, I mean we could tell stories, you know, success stories and failure stories, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: Well, I don't think there's really been any failure stories but there's been, uh, uh, you know, a lot of good stories and then there's been some not so good stories, but I don't think, uh, and we could tell those all night long. I don't know that, uh, that would be, uh, would, would, uh, add anymore, uh, uh, to this in terms of, of, uh, uh, uh, you know, foundational types of, of things. Uh, I, I think, uh, what has been interesting to me is, uh, in, in the course of what we've discussed, uh, I've, some links have been identified that I guess I just hadn't thought about before in terms of whether they be the links on the part of the facilitator or the, all of the components or, uh, different sides that need to be considered here versus just looking at, uh, at the learner, just looking at the student as, uh, in trying to, uh, assess that part. I, I think, uh, it all has to go together. And I think, uh, this multifaceted thing that we were talking about or that you brought up, I think that was your word, uh, uh, is, is surfacing as a, uh, as an important part of this. That, that needs to be looked at, uh, specifically in terms of, of, of how to connect it all together, cause, uh, to me as I was looking at it, and, and saying, well, what might be some of the outcomes, uh, uh, one of pieces, I think that's been missing is, is the role of the facilitator in the good or bad outcome and, and what is that connection, uh, how, how are those two interrelated. Uh, if, if they're, if it's a quantitative study, how, how might they be correlated and in terms of the facilitators behavior versus the, uh, outcomes of, of the student. But I think there's far more to it than that and I guess that's what I was just kind of just scribbling some notes on here.

I: Yeah, yeah.

P: To say that, uh, it's, it's a mul, multi, uh, echelon type of thing and, uh...

I: And more than just behavior

P: Yeah, more than behavior.

I: I neglected to include in the summary, but there's a frustration, irritation, excitement, satisfaction, the emotions...

P: Yeah.

I: ...too that are a part of the, the experience.

P: Yeah, and so that's, that's...

I: As student, uh, participator, facilitator, whatever, you discussed ...

P: Yeah.

I: ...that in all parts, so there, the different d, the different types of experiences within...

P: Yeah, precisely.

I: ...the multiple roles...

P: Precisely.

I: ...of the experience in self-directed learning.

P: Precisely, and, uh, and, and so that, that's what has been, uh, uh, you know, the outcome for me. And, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...so, and, and I think that's very significant, uh, and, and I don't think, uh, those things, uh, these are the types of things that aren't going to come out in a quantitative study, or these are the types of things that...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...if you just have somebody to talk about self-direction, uh, uh, I don't, I don't think they're going to come out.

I: Uh-huh.

P: So I, I guess I appreciate the, the, uh, uh, the uh, uh, approach that you've used, and, and, uh, cause they, they sure made me think about some things I hadn't thought about before.

I: That's good.

P: Yeah.

I: That happens often, uh, and I've found it interesting and yet difficult at times to do, to try to stay with this phenomenological...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...view of questioning and conducting this interview and still going with your series of questions...

P: Uh-huh...

I: ...uh, and one of the things that, that I felt like I was going back and forth with was staying, uh, with, with, with you and with your experiences and then with the questions that were more cognitive than experiential sometimes.

P: Uh-huh. Yeah.

I: So I tried to bridge and do both of those, so it, it got complicated there too. (Laughter)

P: Yeah.

I: So if you sensed different types of questions, I was, you know, some of those were staying focused as experience and some...

P: Uh-huh.

I: ...would, would, your specific...

P: Uh-huh.

I: (i/a) and that took different views from me

P: Uh-huh.

I: Is there anything else you'd like to add? Comments? Questions?

P: Hmm. No, I, I don't...

I: (i/a) (laughter)

P: No, I don't think so. I, I think, uh, it's, it's been, uh, interesting for me as you've taken me through the process. Uh, it's, it's cause me to reflect in a way, uh, uh, that I haven't just thought about before and so I think that's very significant. Uh, and, uh, because one has their, uh, their, their suppositions at the onset as to what's going to happen or not happen, and, uh, uh...

I: Uh-huh.

P: ...the outcome has not been, I, I wouldn't have predicted this at, at the onset, so, I think that's, that makes it uh, uh, a, uh, uh, certainly a very, pleasant experience for me and even on a couple of times a little bit emotional there as...

I: Yeah.

P: ...you had me describe a couple of things, so, uh, so from that standpoint, I think its, uh, I think "it's a good process."

I: And I've learned a lot too.

P: Yeah.

I: And I thank you for open, being open and disclosing with me.

P: Yeah. Well, I really appreciate you, investigator, taking me through the process and, and giving of your, your time that's, that's important and especially doing it here...

I: (laughter)

P: ...late on a Friday night with uh, with uh, sidekick, Lady X, at hand.

I: (laughter)

P: (laughter)

Lady X: Are you recording still?

P: Yes, absolutely (laughter)

I: We can turn it off.

P: Yeah, we need...

(end of tape)

VITA

Robert Clark Donaghy was born in Bryn Mawr, PA in 1949, and graduated from Conestoga Senior High School in Berwyn, PA in 1967. He completed an Associate in Engineering degree at The Pennsylvania State University in 1969, a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree at Auburn University in 1973, and a Master of Science degree in Educational Psychology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2000.

He was commissioned an officer in the United States Army Reserve in 1973 and served 28 years in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. In addition, he worked as an engineer in industry from 1973 until 1997. His primary area of expertise was in new product development for on and off-road vehicles. Robert is a registered professional engineer and served as an adjunct instructor at a local junior college from 1997 until 2000. During his doctoral studies, he served as a graduate assistant at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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