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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

REFIGURING TECHNOLOGY:
EMERGING UNDERSTANDINGS IN ADULT LEARNING

A Dissertation

Presented to

Department of Leadership Studies
Organization and Leadership Program
School of Education

In partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

BY

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

March 30, 2008

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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-Scott

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

Introduction

Adult learning sits on the forefront of new frontiers, as rapid changes in digital technology revolutionize modern pedagogy. The purpose of this research is to explore the question as to how the individual adult learner creates meaning and identity in a technology-based learning context. This exploration is an attempt to envision possibilities for the future that comes from re-interpreting ourselves and others through cultural interaction with technology in adult learning.

Technology can be transformed into a medium of support for meaningful pedagogy, which can dramatically increase learning potential for adult learners. Challenges to traditional systems of learning have given us the opportunity to rethink how knowledge is acquired and disseminated; additionally, technology-based learning contexts provide the framework to reconstruct learning systems. The technological revolution gives traditional institutions an opportunity to reconsider old pedagogies. Peter Senge (1994: 25) attests to the importance of a shift in the traditional pedagogical paradigm when he exclaims, “looking toward the future, it appears that networked learning needs to be part of a larger strategy to reconceptualize education and to rebuild learning organizations in the knowledge society.”

This research concentrates on existing technological pedagogical methods, such as distance learning, simulation technology, and other modern instruction

techniques. The focus of the research does not concentrate on the specific technology, curriculum development or student performance. Instead, the research interprets the stories of the adult learner, instructor, expert and administrator, who reveal experiences of participating in modern technological pedagogy through various learning modalities, such as simulation, on-line learning, and both synchronous and asynchronous online learning environments.

This study attempts to shed understanding through the process of participatory hermeneutic inquiry about how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context. Several research questions propose to explore the interaction of adult learners, instructors, professionals and administrators within this setting. Conversation partners are asked to investigate the ways they see themselves participating in a learning community and share their understandings about their sense of identity in a technological learning context. Additionally, the phenomenon of how learners interact with each other using typed messages as the primary means of communication will be explored. The specific questions posed of participants are designed to guide conversations; the questions are organized into three research categories: narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story.

Background and Significance of the Issue

The need for understanding how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context represents a significant challenge in this area of learning. Suddenly, the traditional and contextual thinking of learning within the physical space and time confines of a classroom

take on a blurred reality in the virtual world of technology-based learning. Those who participate in or administer adult distance learning, computer-based training (CBT), and simulation may benefit from this exploration.

It remains to be seen how other primary roles of the academic institution, including teaching students how to learn, providing professional, moral, and developmental socialization, and certifying professional skills and knowledge, will be managed in a technology-based learning context. What seems certain is that some amalgam between the traditional academic pedagogy and technology-based learning contexts will survive. On this note, Burbules and Callister (2000: 271) contend that “on campus, face-to-face learning is not the solution for all students, and that consideration needs to be given to what method of teaching is best for what type of student under what circumstances.” The types of integration may include the use of small network groups operating from workstations, large groups attending to a video screen, distance learning settings, individual students working alone using electronic library resources, and virtual physical environments, such as flight simulators. To this point, Creighton and Buchanan (2001: 12) assert, “Certainly there are many appropriate times to combine the use of the Internet with classroom-based education. For example, lectures may still be advantageous to provide an understanding of foundational concepts. They can be transmitted via streaming video over an Internet system, allowing students to revisit difficult segments of the lecture at their convenience.” The Horizon Report (2007) states, “There is a skills gap between understanding how to use tools for media creation and how to create meaningful content” and additionally asserts,

“The renewed emphasis on collaborative learning is pushing the educational community to develop new forms of interaction and assessment.” As well as holding the possibility of influencing educational policy, the study may be most beneficial in envisioning possibilities for the future that may come from online cultural interaction through modern pedagogy.

By exploring the technology-based learning context through the theories of narrative identity, language and stories, it may be possible to imagine new uses of modern technology in the educational environment that may advance learning into a new paradigm that moves pedagogy from classroom-centered learning to learner-centered learning.

In Chapter Two the Review of Literature, I discuss the research categories and posit the proposed inquiry in the context of supporting philosophical, social, technological, and educational theories. The research process itself is based in hermeneutic participatory inquiry; particularly grounded, in the areas of Paul Ricoeur’s Narrative Identity, Gadamer’s Language and Richard Kearney’s post-modern philosophy of Imagination and Storytelling.

In Chapter Three Research Protocol/Process, the participatory hermeneutic inquiry process is investigated. The major source of data is derived from research conversations with adult learning practitioners, administrators, and instructors. The purpose of these conversations is to enable the researcher to collect and interpret data that holds the ideas and the social imagery of both participant and researcher. Although the research conversations can be boundless in scope, several primary questions have been identified in an effort to allow the topic of

adult learning and technology to guide the discussions. These primary questions are organized under the three research categories: narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story. Within these three categories there are three points of interest that I explore: how adult learner identity is re-figured within a technology-based learning context; how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology; and finally how adult learners interact with the text as the dialogue in the virtual classroom. The questions used during the research conversation are a guideline designed to provoke exploration, and need not necessarily be answered in their entirety during the course of the conversation.

In Chapter Four Data Presentation and Analysis, I give a voice to conversation partners in the technology-based learning context and attempt to match hermeneutic theory with themes developed from conversation narrative around the topics of adult learner identity. Their stories are revealed through descriptions of their experiences, including perceptions and dynamics of participating in a technology-based learning context. The issues, problems and suggestions of phenomenon coming from conversations with research partners will be analyzed, in an attempt to re-figure technology and gain new understandings in adult learning.

Chapter Five presents implications and recommendations derived from the research conversations with college faculty and administrators, and suggests how critical hermeneutic theory might transform adult learning in a technology-based learning context.

Summary

In summary, this research is an exploration of the individual's experiences and expectations in the context of adult learning, which are posited within the framework of narrative identity, language and story in order to explore the question as to how the individual adult learner creates meaning and identity in a technology-based learning context.

Through this exploration, an attempt is made to envision possibilities for the future that may come from re-interpreting ourselves and others through a cultural interaction with technology in adult learning. Critical hermeneutic theory asserts that identity is revealed through and in language, and our relationships with ourselves and others are essential to our being. The technology-based learning context may provide an enhanced ability for participants to not only reveal a deeper identity but also to create a shared reality in which adult learners can thrive.

The next Chapter, Review of Literature, posits the proposed inquiry in the context of supporting philosophical, social, technological, and educational theories and provides a theoretical foundation for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Under the categories of narrative identity, language and the poetics of story, three primary points of interest have been selected for exploration: how adult learner identity is re-figured within a technology-based learning context; how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology; and finally how adult learners interact with the text as the dialogue in the virtual classroom. The review of literature will cover the following topics: the adult learner, the theory of transformative learning, the technology-based learning context, the building of culture and community, generations and the adult learner, The 2007 Horizon Report, mimesis, narrative identity, and the poetics of story. The philosophical orientation for this research and subsequent data collection analysis process is grounded in critical hermeneutics. The review of literature reflects this orientation and sets the context for interpretive-based research and analysis.

The Adult Learner

Educational institutions are reaching out as never before to adult learners. J. Green (2000: 35) asserts “most current online students are adult professionals looking for additional training.” The growth in adults entering school is staggering. From 1991 to 1999, attendance increased dramatically. According to a 1999 survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (2000), just over

50% of 45 to 54-year-olds, 37% of 55 to 65-year-olds and 20% of adults aged 65 years or over are taking classes in distance learning. Continuing education is the fastest area of growth within the educational marketplace. The term “lifelong learning” has become a catchphrase to include the need and desire for ongoing personal growth and academic learning. The surge in continuing education throughout the lifespan is a function not only of increasing longevity and vitality, but also of the explosion of knowledge and accelerating need for new and increased professional skills during times of rapid and turbulent change. This suggests that formal education is no longer solely the province of the young. Higher education is increasingly adult-centered; and if it is to be successful, must incorporate an understanding of adult development.

Brookfield explains the benefits of adult learning, stating “when adults teach and learn in one another's company, they find themselves engaging in a challenging, passionate, and creative activity” (1986: 1). In this assertion, Brookfield explains how the acts of teaching and learning, and the creation and alteration of our beliefs, values, actions, relationships, and social forms that result from this, are ways in which one realizes his/her humanity. The qualities of education that seem to accommodate the developmental needs of adult students may be well captured by the technological learning environment. It is in this spirit that Mezirow’s Theory of Transformative Learning is invoked.

Mezirow - Theory of Transformative Learning

Mezirow (1991), explains, perspective transformation is the process of “becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to

constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings."

Mezirow's theory posits that for learners to change their *meaning structures* - that is, beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions - they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a transformation of perspective.

Meaning structures are frames of reference that are based on a person's cultural and contextual experiences, and which influence how s/he behaves and interprets events. Meaning structures are made up of *meaning schemes*. Meaning schemes may change as a person adds to or integrates ideas within an existing scheme and, in fact, this transformation of meaning schemes occurs routinely through learning.

In his theory of transformative learning, Mezirow suggests that individuals can be transformed through a process of critical reflection. Transformative learning involves becoming more reflective and critical, being more open to the perspectives of others; and being less defensive and more accepting of new ideas. Catalysts for transformative learning are "disorienting dilemmas," situations that do not fit one's preconceived notions. These dilemmas prompt critical reflection and the development of new ways of interpreting experiences. In this way, "transformative learning involves reflectively transforming the beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotional reactions that constitute our meaning schemes" (Mezirow

1991: 4).

According to Mezirow, the role of the educator is to help the learner focus on and examine the assumptions that underlie their beliefs, feelings and actions; assess the consequences of these assumptions; identify and explore alternative sets of assumptions; and test the validity of assumptions through effective participation in reflective dialogue. Mezirow (1991: 5) states that transformative educators "may help others, and perhaps ourselves, move toward a fuller and more dependable understanding of the meaning of our mutual experience." Mezirow's theory of transformative learning provides a unique opportunity to engage students working in the technology-based learning context, and also provides a unique opportunity to study multiple intelligences.

Gardner - Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner (1993) has identified seven distinct intelligences. This theory has emerged from recent cognitive research and "documents the extent to which students possess different kinds of minds and therefore learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways." According to this theory, "we are all able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves" (Gardner 1993: 3). Where individuals differ is in the strength of these intelligences - the so-called profile of intelligences -and in the ways in which such intelligences are invoked and combined to carry out different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains."

Gardner says that these differences "challenge an educational system that assumes that everyone can learn the same materials in the same way and that a uniform, universal measure suffices to test student learning. Indeed, as currently constituted, our educational system is heavily biased toward linguistic modes of instruction and assessment and, to a somewhat lesser degree, toward logical-quantitative modes as well." Gardner argues that "a contrasting set of assumptions is more likely to be educationally effective. Students learn in ways that are identifiably distinctive. The broad spectrum of students - and perhaps the society as a whole - would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a numbers of ways and learning could be accessed through a variety of means." The theory of multiple intelligences can provide insight into the identities of Millennial generation students who are entering our colleges and universities now.

Adult Learning and Generations

Strauss and Howe (1991) provide the theoretical framework for studying the phenomenon of generational history of America as a succession of generational biographies circa 1584 to present. Straus and Howe assert, "Every living generation therefore shows a remarkable parallel in character with generations of the same type throughout history" (Strauss and Howe 1991: 1). Their work plots a recurring cycle of spiritual awakenings and secular crises in American history, from the founding colonials through the present day. This research provides critical insight into the emplotment of generations in the world and attempts to interpret events that have happened and the effects on the generations that lived during those events. Strauss and Howe present the current generations alive

today:

Generations – Strauss and Howe (1991)

- The G.I. Generation – born 1901 – 1924 (current age 83 to 106)
- The Silent Generation - born 1925 – 1942 (current age 65 to 82)
- The Baby Boomers – born 1943 – 1960 (current age 47 to 64)
- Generation X - born 1961 – 1981 (current age 26 to 46)
- The Millennial Generation – born 1982 – 2002 (current age 5 to 25)
- The Homeland Generation – born 2003 – (current ages four and under)

Strauss and Howe (2000: 3) describe the Millennial student (currently aged 18 – 25) who is entering our colleges and universities now. The authors state, “Millennials are held to higher standards than adults apply to themselves; they're a lot less violent, vulgar, and sexually charged than the previous generations. Over the next decade, they'll entirely recast what it means to be young.” According to the authors, Millennials could emerge as the next great generation. The Millennial generation is the first generation to have grown up with ubiquitous computer communications technology. It is important to note that not all adult learners neatly fit into their respective generational characteristics. When used as a framework Oblinger's research provides insight into students and the impact of this technology on their lives.

Oblinger - Educating the Net Generation

Oblinger (2005) describes how the Millennial generation has grown up with information technology. The aptitudes, attitudes, expectations, and learning styles of Millennial students reflect the environment in which they were raised, one that is decidedly different from that which existed when faculty and administrators were growing up. Oblinger (2005: 5) asserts, “The ultimate learning

environment is the Internet itself.” Digital media are helping educators and students “shift from linear to hypermedia learning; from instruction to construction and discovery; from teacher- to learner-centered education; from absorbing to synthesizing material; and from school-time to customized lifelong learning.” In order to interpret Millennial identity and the identity of older generations of adult learners, it is important to understand the technological world in which they are immersed. The following section describes the technology-based learning context.

The Technology-based Learning Context

The technology-based learning context represents the shift in paradigm from traditional pedagogical methods, such as in-classroom face-to-face teaching, to a learning environment independent of time and space. In this world, students and professors may never physically meet each other, but share the opportunity of creating culture and community with technological assistance.

Technology can be applied to adult learning in several meaningful ways. This research will focus on simulation, on-line learning, and both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments. Rudestam and Shoeholz-Read (2002: 18) assert, “Technology-based learning presents one of the greatest opportunities and most important challenges faced by educational institutions.” Computers have been used in the classroom for decades, and educational software has become a staple ancillary; however, the possibility of delivering coursework, and the sheer number and availability of programs over the Internet are relatively new developments. More significantly, like any paradigmatic change, the early initiatives in technology-based learning have more in common with past practice

than with new practice. Rudestam and Shoeholz-Read (2002: 15) explain, “Electronic teaching developed from advances in communication technology, not from innovative changes in pedagogy.” In the case of technology-based learning contexts, this is particularly true. As learning technologies continue to evolve, The 2007 Horizon Report provides a snapshot in time and provides information on current and forthcoming trends in technology-based adult learning.

The 2007 Horizon Report

The annual Horizon Report (New Media Consortium 2007) describes the continuing work of the new Media Consortium’s Horizon Project, “a research-oriented effort that seeks to identify and describe emerging technologies likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning, or creative expression within higher education” (New Media Consortium: 2007). The report describes six areas of emerging technology that will impact higher education within three adoption horizons over the next one to five years. To identify these areas, the project draws on an ongoing conversation among knowledgeable persons in the fields of business, industry, and education; on published resources, current research and practice.

The focus of the Horizon Project centers on the applications of emerging technologies to teaching, learning, and creative expression, and examples of how the technology is being or could be applied. One of the major areas of focus in the 2007 Horizon Report is the Web 2.0 concept.

Web 2.0

A major component of the new technology learning environment is the

Web 2.0 concept which, “refers to a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted services — such as social-networking sites, and wikis, which aim to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing between users” (Dictionary.com: 2007). This new virtual environment is important to understand as it is the medium of expression of our Millennial students. The following describe a sample of the technologies involved and will be elaborated on in Chapter Four, Data Presentation and Analysis.

Podcasting

In recent years podcasting has been used as a medium for professors to share their lecture materials with students— “A podcast is a collection of digital media files which is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers” (Dictionary.com: 2007). Screencasting takes this concept one step further. A screencast is a digital recording of computer screen output, also known as a video screen capture, often containing audio narration. Screencasts are especially useful for demonstrating software features, as well as excellent tools for learning how to use computers.

Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a phenomenon that has caught academia by storm, “a multilingual, open content, free encyclopedia, it is the largest, fastest growing and most popular general reference work currently available on the Internet” (Wikipedia.com: 2007). Due to fact that anyone can update topics on this Web encyclopedia, and the un-refereed nature of Wikipedia as a source of information the site has become a controversial phenomenon in academic settings.

Course Management Systems (CMS)

The Course Management System (CMS) is a virtual learning environment designed to help teachers by facilitating the management of online learning courses for their students, especially by helping teachers and learners with course administration. The system can often track the learners' progress, which can be monitored by both teachers and learners. While frequently thought of as primarily tools for distance education, they are most often used to supplement the face-to-face classroom.

Social Networking

Increasingly, social networking is becoming the primary reason students log on to the Web. These sites allow users to create an online identity; and connect this identity with friends, family, co-workers, and even total strangers. MySpace.com and FaceBook.com are social networking websites offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos internationally. Social networking may represent a key way to increase student access to and participation in course activities. It is more than just a friends list; truly engaging social networking offers an opportunity to contribute, share, communicate, and collaborate:

The expectation that a website will remember the user is well established. Social networking takes this several steps further; the website knows who the user's friends are, and may also know people that the user would like to meet or things the user would like to do. Even beyond that, social networking sites facilitate introduction and communication by providing a space for people to connect around a topic of common interest. These sites are fundamentally about community—communities of practice as well as social communities. (The Horizon Report 2007)

RateMyProfessor.com

RateMyProfessor.com is the Internet's largest listing of collegiate professor ratings. Each year, millions of college students use the site to help plan their class schedules and rate current and past professors on attributes such as helpfulness and clarity:

The convergence of ubiquitous broadband, portable devices, and tiny computers has changed our concept of what a phone is meant to be. A pocket-sized connection to the digital world, the mobile phone keeps us in touch with our families, friends, and colleagues by more than just voice. Our phones are address books, file storage devices, cameras, video recorders, wayfinders, and hand-held portals to the Internet—and they don't stop there. The ubiquity of mobile phones, combined with their many capabilities, makes them an ideal platform for educational content and activities. We are only just beginning to take advantage of the possibilities they will offer. (The Horizon Report 2007)

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are fast becoming the gateway to our digital lives. Feeding our need for instant access, mobile phones are our constant companions and offer a connection to friends, information, favorite websites, music, movies, and more. From applications for personal safety, to scheduling, to GIS, photos, and video, the capabilities of mobile phones are increasing rapidly, and the time is approaching when these little devices will be as much a part of education as a book bag.

Text Messaging

Text messaging or texting is the common term for the sending of "short" (160 characters or fewer) text messages from mobile phones using the Short Message Service (SMS). It is available on most digital mobile phones and some

personal digital assistants with on-board wireless telecommunications. The individual messages which are sent are called text messages, or in the more colloquial text speak texts.

Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds are literally like they sound, these are places (servers) on the Internet that mirror the real world, or diverge wildly from it. These worlds present the chance to collaborate, explore, role-play, and experience other situations in a safe but compelling way. These spaces offer opportunities for education that are almost limitless, bound only by our ability to imagine and create them. Campuses, businesses, and other organizations increasingly have a presence in the virtual world, and the trend is likely to take off in a way that will echo the rise of the web in the mid-1990s.

In the last year, interest in virtual worlds has grown considerably, fueled in no small part by the tremendous press coverage of examples like Second Life. Campuses and businesses have established locations in these worlds, much as they were creating websites a dozen years ago. In the same way that the number and sophistication of websites grew very quickly as more people began to browse, virtual locations will become more common and more mature as the trend continues. Virtual worlds offer flexible spaces for learning and exploration—educational use of these spaces is already underway and growing. (The Horizon Report 2007)

Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication

The following definitions of synchronous and asynchronous communication are provided as these terms are often misunderstood. I provide these definitions because it is important for the reader to be familiar with the terminology. Asynchronous communication – Asynchronous environments incorporate techniques whereby the time interval between characters may be of

variable or unequal length. In these formats, communication takes place at different times and often at the convenience of the user. Synchronous Communication– Synchronous transmissions refer to the information flow that is dependent on continuous real-time communication. These include real-time video, audio, and data between two or more participant locations.

The Web 2.0 concept provides adult learners new freedoms for learning and the expression of identity. One of the goals of this study is to suggest how some of these tools may be applied in the learning setting to build online community.

Building Online Community

Community takes on new meaning in technology-based learning contexts; for example, in distance learning communication often takes the form of text typed on a computer and displayed on an electronic message board. It is often the case that students never actually meet each other in person. Additionally, distance-learning environments do not provide the visual communication cues that are often taken for granted in face-to-face settings. This becomes a challenge when trying to develop a sense of online community. Shapiro and Hughes describe the phenomenon, “In a social world increasingly shaped by algorithms, and mechanical procedures that computers are so good at carrying out, there is no algorithm for building... community in online academic and educational environments” (2001: 93). The building of community in a technology-based learning context requires the ongoing monitoring and analysis of the fabric of institutional life in which social, ethical, and technological threats are woven

together in complex, changing, unrepeatable, and sometimes confusing and contradictory ways. Community must develop not simply in one mechanistic manipulation, but as an ongoing process of interpretation and re-figuration. Schapiro and Hughes (2001:94) assert, “There is no value neutral or purely administrative or technical way of building culture and community.”

Online community is composed of individuals who have an identity and a unique story. These stories contribute to the richness of the online learning environment. As the challenges of building online community are addressed here, Gadamer’s theory of language sets the foundation for interpreting identity in the virtual community.

Gadamer – Language

Language in this research will be examined as a medium of the expression of the world it creates. Gadamer (1960) asserts that language is a medium that represents the world, it is historical in nature. Gadamer asserts that language and history make us who we are. Language formulates new ideas and allows us to communicate old ones.

Language reflects social norms, the audience, and beliefs. Verbal communication relies on language to reach understanding, but people also readily employed body language and tone to enrich understanding or to emphasize a point. The dimension of the written text in distance learning does not have the advantage of face-to-face communication. While the study of language as a world creating medium is explored, Paul Ricoeur’s theory of narrative identity provides the medium for the cultivation and analysis of the created world’s inhabitants, and is

most useful in interpreting the identity of adult learners in a technology-based learning community and is discussed in the following section.

Paul Ricoeur – Narrative Identity

A key to critical hermeneutics is the attaining of new understandings.

Ricoeur asserts that our social life takes place in a context that can be interpreted in order to generate shared meaning. This shared meaning unfolds through this interpretation. Gadamer (1975: 230-248) asserts, “Application, interpretation, and understanding are actually three elements of the same entity.”

In the creation of a public space, it is possible to propose an imagined world “to see ourselves and others in different capacities, creating a self enlarged by the appropriation of a proposed world” (Herda 1999: 48). Ricoeur brings us to the discovery that our being emphasizes the nature of our actions, and therefore lays the ground for imagination. It is in this narrative that research on technology-based learning contexts may lead to rich discoveries of adult learner identity.

Polkinghorne (1988) writes “the concept of human action proposed by a narrative approach, is that action is an expression of existence and that its organization manifests the narrative organization of human experience.” Ricoeur (1994) describes narrative identity as “...a structure of experience in time. In this emergence of narrative identity as a structure of experience in time, it is an integration of a historical narrative and a fictional narrative.” The historical narrative, although based on incidents that have actually already happened, has a deep fictional component. This fictional component is based in the value-laden experience of the narrator. Narrative identity is opened by the richness of

interpretation and deeper meaning.

Ricoeur (1992: 1-25) explains that the fictional story is more “true” because it has the expression of the self in it. The evolving of an identity is the unfolding of new understandings of the self. This understanding manifests itself as reflective moment, and represents a back-and-forth dialectic dynamic between the idea and the ethical aim. The anticipation of the good life; and its moral interpretation provides meaning for someone in action. This meaning is revealed to the participant through the process of interpreting his or her actions.

Ricoeur’s sense of solicitude (caring for the other) is an innate quality of humanity; this quality suggests the need for an ethical aim of imagination, and is based on a movement toward a certain goal. This aim might manifest itself as a promise, or the anticipation of something: the imagination of a shared present. Ricoeur (1992: 172) states, “The process of this interpretation gives meaning to our everyday actions.”

Online discourse and virtual learning are manifestations of rapidly changing technologies and are serving to re-define adult learning. When looking at distance education from a technology-based learning perspective, it becomes clear that the issues of ethics in online learning often go beyond questions of right and wrong and address far more than ethical dilemmas. Ethical choices form the basis of our actions and become silently embedded in our culture. Rapid technological changes fuel explosive scenarios that deeply challenge our comfortable ways of understanding ethical choices. Fischer and Wright (2001: 7) assert “by ignoring the ethical dimensions of online learning, we become more vulnerable to the

unintended consequences of our choices that may impact social values cultural norms, and dominant rule sets of learning.”

Narrative identity is opened by the act of imagining. It is through this imagination, mediating between discordance and concordance that our narrative moves toward an ethical aim. In anticipation of ethical consideration one is called to meet “the good life.” Ricoeur describes the ethical perspective that arises from this view of the subject as "aiming at the good life with and for others, in just institutions" (1992: 172). Moral reflection provokes a crisis within selfhood, where narrative theory explores through imagination common boundaries of ethical action.

An online conversation is quite different from discussions found in traditional classrooms or problem-solving teams in the workplace. The limited field of a computer screen can actually deepen the focus of concentration and the power of imagination. Hudson (2002: 77) describes a phenomenon that often happens in online asynchronous communication that he refers to as candlepower: “Candlepower is shorthand for a surprising quality of online dialogue - the intimacy it creates among participants... Like a small candlelit table at a restaurant, asynchronous communication creates a time and space of your own choosing.”

Ricoeur (1988: 248) notes that “narrative identity is not a stable and seamless identity, just as it is possible to compose several plots on the subject of the incidents...so it is always possible to weave different, even opposed, plots about our lives.” According to Ricoeur, “there is a core aspect to identity which

does not change; yet, there is simultaneously another part of our identity which is malleable” (Ricoeur 1992: 116). Through this dialectic, our identity is ultimately moved toward an ethical aim. Narrative identity thus holds both change and permanence.

Ricoeur’s concept of mimesis (imitating action in a poetic way) suggests that time has to do with the configuration of the present, the remembering of the past, and the imagining of the future. Our narrative in conversation holds time in a manageable way. Time is not linear. The narrative holds time in present-past, present-present, and present-future. There is only one time which is the present. Ricoeur asserts that time is a three-fold mimesis, where the present also contains the past and future; a concept that Ricoeur refers to as mimesis ₁, ₂, and ₃.

Mimesis₁ (m₁) is our temporal present of the past. M₁ includes our sense of context, culture, and pre-understanding, and provides us with a reference or mediation between ourselves and the world. It is our reference that determines who we are. Mimesis₂ (m₂) refers to Ricoeur’s *kingdom of as if*, the idea that configuration, or the understanding of one’s present reality, releases the past in order to imagine a future of new possibilities. Mimesis₃ (m₃) refers to the idea of reconfiguration or re-figuration that provides insight into the future through the narration of our present and past. This understanding of mimesis provides us with the awareness that identity is a process of mediation, where the significance of a story comes about in the intersection of the text and the reader.

By placing narrative theory at the dialectic crossroads of action and moral theory, Ricoeur (1992: 169–172) shows that actions refigured in narrative fiction

promise anticipation of an ethical nature. In this assertion, there is still a necessity for the ethical aim to pass through the sieve of the norm; otherwise, the ethical aim would never be realized. Together, the self-esteem and our ethical aims represent the most advanced stages of ourselves. If the aim, or *ought*, does not pass through moral reflection, there can be an absence of self-respect. Self-esteem is that promise, where self-respect is the reality or everydayness. It is called an ethical aim because one never reaches that ideal; however, it is something one is moving toward. There is the promise, the anticipation, of something greater.

As Ricoeur sets up a framework for the study of identity and narrative, Richard Kearney, one of Ricoeur's pupils, contributes to the research by providing a method of analyzing the richness of narrative through the poetics of story.

Richard Kearney – The Poetics of Story

Richard Kearney contrasts the phenomenon of narrative in our new cyber and media culture when he states “the post-modern paradox of imagination is . . . to know that one is dreaming and yet continue to dream” (1998: 191). On one side is the pessimistic view of storytelling: those who believe that we have reached the end of story itself, where the medium will kill the media. On the other side is the idea that post-modernism does not spell the end of the story, but rather the opening up of alternative possibilities of narration. Kearney speaks of stories as a method for making sense of time, of history, and of our lives. How do we react to a story as a listener? What is our reaction once we have listened? Are we still listening to these stories?

Kearney explains that it is storytelling that gives us a shareable world.

“The process of recounting our present condition in light of past memories and future anticipations gives us a sense of our own ‘narrative identity’” (Kearney 2001: 3). Kearney, learning from his teacher Ricoeur, emphasizes that every life seeks narrative, in that we all seek to introduce some kind of order into the everyday discord and dispersal we find about us. In this way, it is the narrative that fortifies us against confusion.

In his book, *On Stories*, Kearney (2001) examines the origins of storytelling and explains that myth was the most common form of early narrative. Mythic narrative evolved over time into two main branches: historical and fictional. Historical narrative modified the traditional *mythos* with a growing allegiance to the reality of past events, while fictional narratives aimed to re-describe events in terms of some ideal standard of beauty, goodness, or nobility. “Telling stories is as basic to human beings as eating. More so, in fact, for while food makes us live, stories are what make our lives worth living. They are what make our condition human” writes Kearney (2001: 214).

Kearney (2001: 214) helps us understand the relationship between solicitude and imagination when he asserts “If the postmodern wake of imagination is to mark the passage to other ways of imagining, rather than a dead end, our culture must devise means of reaching through the labyrinth of depth images to the other.” Understanding this relationship helps us interpret the meaning of the emplotted experience of the learner in the technology-based learning context.

Summary

Critical hermeneutics in participatory research is a narrative and interpretive approach that takes into account the beliefs and the traditions of cultures; participatory research also brings hope and encourages movement toward action. Herda (1999: 86) states, "learning here entails entering into moral and political discourse with a historical understanding of the issues at hand; risking part of one's traditions and current prejudices; and, at times, seeing the importance of community and social cohesiveness over specific desires of the individual." This research will ask participants questions to bring forth their orientation to the world, their beliefs, their learning traditions, and their definition of identity. The interaction between researcher and participants is a part of the research protocol; there is a mutual engagement, in other words, there is a conversation. This interaction between researcher and participant produces a dynamic text that can potentially reveal truths, shared meaning, and encourage understanding. The transcribed text of the conversation and the subsequent distanciation, analysis, and interpretation also encourages new understanding and re-appropriation of information.

Chapter Three describes the research process, which includes the conceptual background, research guidelines, data collection, data analysis, text creation, a description of the field study, the research categories and questions, and the background of the researcher.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH PROTOCOL / PROCESS

Introduction

This research follows a participatory research protocol grounded in the interpretive tradition. Critical hermeneutic research is an interpretive approach to field research that provides direction to data collection and data analysis, in which the researcher "searches for meanings and engages in critical discourse characterized by ethical considerations" (Herda 1999: 31).

This research has abided by the Human Subjects regulations of the University of San Francisco (Appendix A). The boundaries of this research were created by the people who have agreed to participate within the selected categories for data collection and analysis. How the data are understood and interpreted by each reader depended on what each reader has brought to this text.

Narrative and conversation-based research allows the researcher to engage in a textual analysis, in which the appropriation of new ideas is possible and through subsequent action and policy suggestions. Research participants participated in this research by engaging in conversation, and the transcribed conversations of their stories became the primary data for textual analysis. Included in Chapter Three are the following: conceptual background, research guidelines, data collection and analysis, text creation, the field study, research categories, and questions. In addition, a background of the researcher and conversation partners is provided.

Transcriptions and preliminary analysis notes have been sent to each conversation partner. Each participant has had the opportunity to read his/her own transcript, reflect upon the transcript and the preliminary analysis. Upon reflection, each partner has had the opportunity to delete, add, or change the transcript of what he/she said in the recorded conversation.

Conceptual Background

The major focus of this study is an attempt to shed light on how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context. The primary sources of data are research conversations with adult learning practitioners, administrators, and instructors. The purpose of these conversations is to enable the research to reflect the voice of the participants in the study. Several primary questions have been identified in an effort to allow the topic of adult learning and technology to guide the conversation. These primary questions are organized under the three research questions: how adult learner identity is re-figured within a technology-based learning context; how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology; and finally how adult learners interact with type-written text as the dialogue in the virtual classroom. The specific questions posed of participants are designed to guide the conversations, and are organized into three research categories: narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story.

The participatory nature of hermeneutic research calls for the researchers to identify their role in the research protocol. Herda (1999: 86) explains, "in field-based hermeneutic research, the object is to create collaboratively a text that

allows us to carry out the integrative act of reading, interpreting, and critiquing our understandings. Narrative interpretation “provides a 'figureable' character of the individual which has for its results, that the self, narratively interpreted, is itself a figured self—a self which figures itself as this or that” (Ricoeur 1991: 247). This act is a grounding for our actions. The medium of this collaborative act is language.” The researcher interacted, participated, and collaborated with adult learners, and practitioners through conversation and narration as a part of the research protocol.

The following sections outline the research guidelines used in participatory hermeneutic inquiry. The sections describe the entrée and research sites, the process used to identify participants, a brief introduction to research participants and the invitation letters that have been sent to research participants.

From an ontological perspective, words have meaning, as well as temporal, creative, and historical components. Language is a reservoir of tradition and the medium we use to exist in and understand our world. When examining language from an ontological standpoint, it is possible to experience the real value of language as a life-changing medium. The words we use have meaning, and the key components of language are its temporal, historical, and creative elements.

Viewing language as a medium, and not just as a tool for communication, enables the representation of a proposed world. It is in this spirit that Heidegger (1971: 5) states, “language... the house of being.” Language holds the possibility for value-laden conversations, which are crucial to reach understanding. As an interpretive event, it is language that enables us to move from information and

knowledge to understanding; it allows us to create our own personal interpretation of a shared world. This constant state of creation of our own meaning in the world is created through language, and all language is metaphorical and symbolic. Metaphor is a juxtaposition of what is and what is not. As humans, we are constantly creating new meanings and interpretations of our world. As Herda (1999: 22) asserts, "We cannot separate our basic ontological nature from our research as social scientists." It is within the above context that the above data will be analyzed.

Research Guidelines

This section describes the guidelines for the research. Participatory hermeneutic research involves the researcher in the process, it is not a linear, stagnant, or pre-conceived research methodology; rather, it is alive and open to interpretation. Herda (1999: 85) explains, "Each researcher has to create a personal way to do hermeneutic participatory research." Herda expresses that a key element of participatory hermeneutic research is that the research itself can practically take on a life of its own. The following sections provide a description of the entrée and research sites, the identification and description of conversation partners, and a description of the invitation letters sent to the potential research conversation partners.

Entrée and Research Sites

Ten research partners had been identified from two major populations: community college administrators, as well as instructors and practitioners. All of the participants reside in the Northern San Francisco Bay area, and have a

connection to Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), a Northern California community college with a student headcount of about 40,000. Conversations have taken place at a mutually agreed upon place in an informal setting.

Identifying Participants

Great care was taken in selecting the conversation partners for this research. Some have extensive knowledge in this field and are currently immersed in technology-based learning contexts on a daily basis. Other participants were selected because they represent an administrative perspective on adult learning and technology. Participants were selected in an effort to provide an interpretive analysis of how the use of technology is dramatically different amongst older and younger adult learners. The following table lists conversation partners by name, job title and organization. Research participants were selected based on their experience with technological pedagogy.

Table A: Conversation Partners

<i>Educators and Practitioners</i>			
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organization</i>
1	Ellindale Wells	Computer and Information Science Instructor and Department Chair	Santa Rosa Junior College
2	Mat Pamatmat	Articulation Coordinator / Tutor	Santa Rosa Junior College
3	Breck Withers	Business and Office Technology Instructor and Department Chair	Santa Rosa Junior College
4	Norman Rosen	Flight Instructor	Boeing - Alteon
5	Sherri Forkum	Professor of English	William Jessup University
6	Michael Starkey	Computer and Information Science Instructor	Santa Rosa Junior College
<i>Administrators and Experts</i>			
7	Will Baty	Dean of Learning Resources and Educational Technology	Santa Rosa Junior College
8	Robert Chudnofsky	Dean of Instruction and Technical Services	Santa Rosa Junior College- Petaluma Campus
9	James Forkum	Dean of P.E. Dance and Athletics	Santa Rosa Junior College
10	Pat James	Dean of Academic Success and Technology	Mt. San Jacinto College

Introduction to Conversation Partners

Matt Pamatmat is an articulation coordinator at Santa Rosa Junior College. He works with high school students interested in transferring into college vocational programs. A published Sonoma County journalist, Matt also works in the Philosophy Department as a tutor working with students in critical thinking classes. Matt has recently finished his masters degree in a primarily distance education program. Of particular interest, is how Matt interpretation of

Millennial adult learners. Matt is working with high school students creating bridges and successful pathways between high school and college.

Mike Starkey is an instructor of multimedia at Santa Rosa Junior College. He owns a multimedia studio that specializes in sound, video and multimedia production. His work empowers his students to tell their own story and chronicle it onto video.

Breck Withers is the department chair of the Business Office Technology department Santa Rosa Junior College. He also teaches business math, and accounting using “Quick Books” software. Breck has been teaching online for the past few years. Brecks comments speak to instructor perceptions of adult learner identity in the technological learning context.

Pat James is currently the dean of Academic Success and Technology at Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC). She is an instructor of multimedia, and she is taught online since 2000. Pat has served as the technology committee chair for the Senate Executive Committee for the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges.

Ellindale Wells is the department chair of the Computer and Information Sciences department at Santa Rosa Junior College. She is a veteran instructor of technology, and a published author of several getting started in technology books. Our conversation revolved around the current state of online instruction and professionalism.

Sherry Forkum is a Professor of Composition and Writing at William Jessup University, and Jim Forkum is the Dean of Physical Education Dance and

Athletics at Santa Rosa Junior College. Jim and Sherry are both currently working on their doctoral dissertations. Jim is focusing on applied learning and generation differences between students in a community college classroom. Sherry is focusing on generations and their use of technology in learning.

Will Baty (pilot study) designed and presided over the construction of the Frank P. Doyle Library at Santa Rosa Junior College. Will was chosen as a conversation partner because he is an administrative practitioner of education and technology in a technology-based learning context.

Norman Rosen (my father) is a retired United Airlines pilot and instructor, He now is a flight instructor for Boeing Alteon. A futurist and master instructor, Norm adds an interesting perspective into the areas of flight simulation and using technology as a medium of adult learner instruction.

Invitation Letters

Letters of Invitation were sent by the researcher to the participants in order to introduce the research topic and the researcher (Appendix B). Additionally the invitation letter included sample of research questions to help guide or direct the conversation. Once the participants agreed to participate in the research, a Letter of Confirmation (Appendix C) was sent to each conversation partner explaining the subject of the research and the details of his/her role as a participant. Additionally, this letter confirmed the dates and times established and reaffirm the non-confidential nature of this research.

Data Collection

The data have been collected through the recording and transcription of

conversations with research participants. The collection of the data itself is hermeneutic in nature. The researcher and the participants have collaborated by coming together in conversation in order to create a text which has been transcribed and reviewed. Through critique and interpretation of the transcribed text, the generations of new understandings are realized. Herda (1999: 86) states that the transcribed text of a conversation allows "us to recognize, challenge, and evaluate our worlds of action, as well as to envision new possible worlds."

Conversations

With the prior consent of each participant, each conversation has been digitally tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were sent back to each participant for their review. Accompanying these transcriptions, the researcher provided a brief overview of the conversation that took place. The review of the transcript gave research participants an opportunity to read over what was said, and to amend, delete, clarify, or add to the transcription. Once the participant had reviewed the transcribed conversation and all suggested modifications had been made, the text of the transcript was used as the data for analysis. All reviewed and approved transcripts have been included in the final dissertation for analysis.

After each conversation, a transcribed conversation in verbatim along with preliminary analysis had been sent to each conversation partner, thereby giving each partner the opportunity to read and reflect on the transcription and preliminary analysis. Conversation partners had the opportunity to delete, add, or change what they said in the conversation. Additionally, a thank you letter was sent to each of

the partners acknowledging their contribution, time and assistance in this research.

Research timeline

Data was collected between May and November of 2007. As most of the conversation partners are located within the San Francisco Bay Area, it was not necessary for the researcher to travel extensively. Data analysis has taken place during the period of November through December 2007. A final draft of the dissertation was given to the committee in February 2008.

Text Creation

The creation of a text in participatory hermeneutic research is threefold. The first textual creation occurs when the recorded conversation is transcribed. Herda (1999: 127) states that in the process of transcribing "the discourse is fixed in writing; the speakers are separated from what they said. This is part of the distancing process. The meaning of what is said surpasses the event of saying." The second textual creation occurs when the researcher interprets from the text of the transcribed conversations, creates a narrative of the research conversations, and unravels the plot that links these conversations together into a coherent and cohesive story. Herda (1999: 127) explains that the second textual creation occurs, "when the researcher selectively presents from the transcription texts a story about the issue at hand, drawing quotes to ground the narrative." The third textual creation occurs as the researcher explores the intersection between the plot of the conversation narratives and the critical hermeneutic literature. Herda (1999: 127) states, "a deeper plot is discovered in a third text utilizing the second text and the critical hermeneutic literature in which narration reveals an order that is more than

the actual events and conversations in the research." Drawing from Ricoeur (1992: 140), philosophy helps to expand upon this concept of the intersection of literary narratives and life histories; he states, "literary narratives and life histories, far from being mutually exclusive, are complementary, despite, or even because of, their contrast. This dialectic reminds us that the narrative is part of life before being exiled from life in writing; it returns to life along the multiple paths of appropriation."

Data analysis and text creation are two of the most critical components in participatory hermeneutic research. The depth, interpretation, and appropriation of meaning all occur through the fixation of the text through writing, the distancing of the researcher from the text, the analysis of the data, and the creation of a new text where the appropriation of new meaning is possible.

Data Analysis

Critical hermeneutics promotes a world of understanding and interpretation in the realm of language through the analysis of a text. The data sources consist of the transcribed conversation texts (Samples in Appendix E, F and G), journal entries (Samples in Appendix H) and selected documents (Sample in Appendix I). The relationship of the researcher to the text traverses a variety of dimensions in the appropriation of new knowledge, information, and ideas, in the context of this research. Paul Ricoeur (1981: 143) states, "to begin with, appropriation is dialectically linked to the distancing characteristic of writing... Thanks to distancing by writing, appropriation no longer has any trace of affective affinity with the intention of the author." In other words, as the researcher fixes the text

through writing, distanciation occurs. The act of crystallizing the spoken conversation into text allows the researcher some distance from the conversation so that new understanding or meanings may be appropriated. When the conversation is recorded as text, it no longer belongs exclusively to the researcher and the research participant. As a text, it is open and available to anyone. After the text has been transcribed, a subsequent analysis, and perhaps a re-appropriation can be carried out. Herda (1999: 86) states "the task remains to make the text one's own after the act of distanciation takes place. This subsequent act is one of appropriation—an interpretive event." In other words, the researcher may see the topic at hand or the issue under investigation differently than before the research was conducted. Gadamer (1998: 390) posits, "Written texts present the real hermeneutic task. Writing is self-alienation. Overcoming it, reading the text, is thus the highest task of understanding." Thus, as the researcher moves from the conversation to the written text, understanding and interpretation are possible. Textual data analysis is critical for successful participatory hermeneutic research design. The next section explores the creation of the text.

Research Categories and Research Questions

Three research categories emerge as areas of interest worth exploring in this research: narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story. Within these two categories there are three points of interest: re-figuring adult learner identity within a technology-based learning context; how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology; and finally; how adult learners interact with the text as the dialogue in the virtual

classroom. The categories and questions were designed to guide the research conversation.

Category I: Narrative Identity

In this research, identity has been examined linguistically. How participants utilize language to define their identity and give meaning to their lives, as well as what it is that gives them purpose and identity, will also be examined through narrative identity, as defined by Paul Ricoeur (1992). The following questions were used in conversations with research participants as a method to allow the topic at hand to guide the conversation.

Questions:

- How do you express who you are in an online learning environment vs. a face to face learning environment?
- How can technology assist adult learners as a medium for the expression of identity?
- In what way does the use of technology enhance the expression of identity?
- In what way does the use of technology prohibit the expression of identity?
- How do you interpret the difference between the way the traditional college student (age 18 - 25) and older adult learners use technology?

Category II: Language

According to Ricoeur (1992), "language is crucial, because man is language." Ricoeur states, "Through the capacity of language to create and re-create, we discover reality itself in the process of being created ... Language in the making creates reality in the making" (1992: 56). We create our sense of self through language; it is our work, our promise, which ensures our identity through time, although the physical self may change significantly.

Questions:

- Has communicating exclusively in writing changed the way you interact or learn? Why or why not?
- In what way is synchronous versus asynchronous communication in an educational context better or worse?
- How can text messaging (SMS) be used as a medium of expression of identity?

Category III: The Poetics of Story

Both narrative identity and the poetics of story in this research are closely related in the way that narrative identity provides the framework to analyze and interpret the conversations with the research participants. It is the poetics of story, the art of storytelling, in which this analysis is manifest. Herda (1992: 44) explains, "Language and the text, in critical hermeneutic inquiry, move beyond epistemological and representational meanings; instead, language and the associated text in an interpretive paradigm, encourages language as the source for critique, interpretation, meaning and action in life" (Herda 1999: 10-11). In an

effort to further emphasize the value of the poetics of story, the following questions have been asked during research conversations in the field.

Questions:

- What is your learning tradition? How has the way you learn changed as a result of technology?
- How do you see your learning in a technology-based learning context different or similar to that of the traditional college student (age 18 - 25)?
- What would a day be like without technology?

Background of researcher

I have a master's degree in information sciences from the University of San Francisco, and I am a full-time tenured faculty member in the computer and information science (CIS) department at Santa Rosa Junior College. In addition, I am an adjunct instructor at the University of San Francisco, in both the School of Education and the College of Professional Studies. I am currently a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. Prior to this teaching career, I worked as an Internet program manager, a website manager, a software developer and a quality assurance analyst in the private sector. The next section will discuss a field study that was conducted to field research concepts and describes how data will be analyzed, drawing from critical hermeneutic theory for the participatory research inquiry.

Field Study

The field study explored the question of how the individual adult learner creates meaning and identity in a technology-based learning context. Specifically, the role of refiguring the modern library as the hub of imagination and technology in adult learning was explored. The field study conversation was conducted at a restaurant near Santa Rosa Junior College with Will Baty, the Dean of Learning Resources and Educational Technology at Santa Rosa Junior College. A sample of the transcribed conversation is provided in Appendix E.

Conversation Partner

Will Baty designed and presided over the construction of the Frank P. Doyle Library at Santa Rosa Junior College. Will was chosen as a conversation partner because he is an administrative practitioner of education and technology in a technology-based learning context. Will has a wonderful sense of humor and a wide ranging intellect, which makes him a great conversationalist on just about any topic. He demonstrates integrity and commitment to high standards in all areas of endeavor, and his support for the staff with whom he works is impressive.

Learning Environment

The Santa Rosa Junior College Frank P. Doyle Library, fifteen years in the making, was planned around its users and its uses, not its books. The library is Santa Rosa Junior College's largest building, at 145,000 square feet; its most expensive, at \$45 million with furnishings; and will be its most used, with 500,000 students, faculty, staff and public visitors expected this year.

From iPod-guided tours to a stately brick facade, Santa Rosa Junior College's new library combines the latest in high-tech gadgets with hallmarks of ivy league architecture. It has 282 computer workstations, some that allow a person to sit, some on raised desks for standing, and others with bigger monitors and wider desks that accommodate side-by-side chairs for two people. There are even overstuffed chairs with trays for students with laptops. Will said “the library was designed around how students and faculty access and use information, rather than around its collection of 123,400 books and periodicals, 10,500 DVDs, CDs and tapes, and 26 databases.” There are computer stations designated for multimedia lessons, two classrooms to broadcast and receive online courses, six teleconferencing facilities and a high definition TV production studio.

Theory

The research started from the theory that identity is revealed through and in language, and the relationships that we have with others and ourselves are essential to our being. The exploration of the individual’s experiences and expectations in the context of adult learning have been placed within the framework of narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story, as discussed above.

Analysis of Text

On Thursday, November 16, 2006, a beautiful Sonoma county afternoon, I had a conversation with Will Baty over lunch at a local Thai restaurant. I started the conversation with an open-ended question about his thoughts on the philosophy of adult learning and technology.

Our conversation started with a discussion with the following question; how is the library a technology-based learning context? To which Will replied, “Libraries have kind of been, from my perspective, probably more affected by computers and information technology than any other institution in the college. Not only are you using the technology, but the technology itself is a format.” Richard Kearney states “the post-modern paradox of imagination is . . . to know that one is dreaming and yet continue to dream” (1998: 191). Baty demonstrates this trend in thinking as he explained his personal philosophy about learning. “From early on I have always been interested in technology and how we can use it to do things, to open things up and make it more accessible to people.” Will asserted that, “information wants to be free! Our job, [as librarians] is not to channel the information or say this or that point of view is correct. Our job is to make everything as available as we possibly can.”

I am attracted to this kind of utopian ideal that seems to be a persistent theme amongst librarians. Will remarks on the pseudo-democratic process on the library’s building plan, “The original programming for the building had 78 individual faculty members helping define what they wanted in a library.” Will placed these definitions, ideas and specifications into a set of binders. “I synthesized all that. I had to find out what was in common. What they really were talking about was they needed a teaching classroom.” Will brings up an interesting paradox, “one of the advantages we had was that it kept getting stalled at funding. It meant that every time it got stalled I got to go back and rethink what we were doing.” Schon describes the activities in the process of design of a

workspace:

Activities in this process need not occur in sequence, and frequently the process is iterative and messy. Nevertheless the term workplace making connotes the idea of unfolding in time, with a beginning, (the design problem) and an end (the design product). Of course, the end of such a process characteristically generates a new beginning, because new problems or new opportunities arise out of the solutions of old ones (Schon et al.: 7).

Schon brings up a temporal hermeneutic moment about this design process, an “unfolding in time.” It is not a deliberate or forced action, but an iterative process that provokes a reflective moment. Having a chance to go back and reflect or re-figure his planning allowed Will to fine-tune his vision and guide the creation of a nationally acclaimed community college library. Will Baty’s ability to re-figure potentially upsetting setbacks and emplot them as opportunities is a necessary skill in developing technology-based learning contexts.

Implications

As our conversation continued about the library’s adult learning facilities and technology, Will provided an interesting insight to the many types of adult learners and how they use similar technologies in different ways: “an appealing part of working at a community college is dealing with a lot of varieties and types of users, disciplines, etc.” Will explains that most of the community college students are adult learners. “We have adult learners who come in the morning that tend to be 18-24, somewhere in that range. It really accelerates from 5 p.m. with the people who are truly working adults, community members who aren’t the

traditional college student but they make up over 50% of our student population.”

Will describes a duality that exists between the “young” college students, otherwise known as Millennials, and adult learners of older generations. He said, specifically:

The younger adult learners are into social networking like MySpace. They do it in a social context. When we opened the library, six out of 10 machines were doing some sort of social networking early in the semester. Now you walk through seven or eight of the machines are doing research because its midterm time and term paper time. Older students because they are not into social networking want more quiet. They want more discrete, quiet spaces, etc. Older people who have limited amounts of time want to focus. It’s noisy at home, it’s noisy at work, they could come here and work. The adult learner is such a huge spectrum.

These students were born between 1980 and 1999, and were literally raised on technology.” Will explained, “Our average student age is 34, they are busy with jobs, careers, families, over and above what they are doing at school. They need a place from their busy life to study, be quiet, and work their way through issues. The library is that place.”

Lessons and Summary

From the field study, I learned how research topics and categories can come more clearly into view. For example, the part of the conversation about the planning and design steps involved in the creation of a modern technological learning environment was helpful in the understanding that the design process takes on a story of its own. Additionally, Will provided a glimpse into the identity of adult learners using the library and provided good data on how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology. This subject has since prompted me to look into this area as a point of

interest in my research.

The pilot study demonstrated the importance of making greater use of the focus questions in an effort to steer the topic, in order to provide data that address the research categories; namely, narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story. This exploration has enabled the envisioning of possibilities for future research mainly in the narrowing of research questions and categories.

The next Chapter, Data Presentation and Analysis gives a voice to conversation partners in the technology-based learning context and attempts to match hermeneutic theory with themes developed from conversation narrative around the topics of adult learner identity. The issues, problems and suggestions of phenomenon coming from conversations with research partners will be analyzed, in an attempt to re-figure technology and gain new understandings in adult learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This Chapter gives a voice to conversation partners and attempts to match hermeneutic theory with themes developed from conversation narrative around the topics of adult learner identity. Participant's stories are revealed through descriptions of their experiences, including the perceptions and dynamics of participating in a technology-based learning context. Herda (1999: 86) explains, "In field-based hermeneutic research, the object is to create collaboratively a text that allows us to carry out the integrative act *of* reading, interpreting, and critiquing our understandings. This act is a grounding for our actions... The medium *of* this collaborative act is language." This Chapter introduces the text as the collaborative voice of the research participants and introduces interpretations of the researcher in an attempt to reach understanding. Herda (1999: 127) states, "Another text is created when the reader selectively presents from the transcription texts a story about the issue at hand..."

Research participants took part by engaging in conversation. The transcribed conversations of their stories became the primary data for textual analysis; the participants in the study are adult learners, community college instructors and administrators.

A theoretical approach based in critical hermeneutics is used to analyze our conversation texts in the categories of language, identity and story; selecting

a few topics for in-depth analysis, with the intent of understanding how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context. In this manner, both the ideas that came from research conversations, and the understanding of those topics derived from my experience, are described.

Narrative Identity

Ricoeur's (1984) theory of memory and the relationship between time and narrative helps to explain the importance of participants, historicity in learning. Ricoeur (1988: 247) notes that narrative identity "...constructs a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character in the plot of the story a person tells about him- or herself; the story becomes that person's actual history." Past experiences, the interpretation of these experiences, and imagination of future experiences combined in the interdependency of plot to move through time. It is through narrative, that the durable character of an individual is constructed.

For adult learners engaged in the technological learning environment, the narratives of past learning unravel memories and expectations of current and future learning experiences. The telling of previous experiences brings to the present each individual's traditions and history. Bringing these memories forth in conversation allows students to appropriate a new or different understanding of the past (their traditional learning experience), in relation to the present, so that they can imagine the future.

The discussion of adult learner identity began with a research question asked of my conversation partners in order to create understanding of how the adult learner identity re-figured within a technology-based learning context. I

asked conversation partners, how they saw the Millennial learning style as different from older students, the concept of fragmentation often revealed itself.

Identity: Fragmentation

The current state of technological learning has allowed the tech savvy Millennials to create a learning narrative by collecting disparate multimedia snippets of information, and piecing them together in an effort to emplot a learning narrative. Ricoeur (1988: 247) states, “. . . individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history.” Due to the fragmented style of Millennial learning, it is becoming increasingly important to find a way to bridge these learning disparities and find better methods to reach these students. Part of the challenge is to provide a solid learning foundation while keeping the attention of our new Millennial students.

Jim Forkum is the dean of Physical Education, Dance and Athletics at Santa Rosa Junior College. His wife Sherry Forkum is a professor of English at William Jessup University. Jim and Sherry are experts on the Millennial generation. Their knowledge of the Millennial learning culture was particularly helpful in discovering who these students are, and how their identity is revealed in the technology-based learning context. My conversation with the Forkum’s revealed a deeper understanding of these young adult learners by examining their culture.

Sherry Forkum commented on the pervasive use of technology by this generation. “The Millennials can tap into anything so much easier than the other generations. They’re right here, right now!” Jim Forkum added, “Millennials seem

to be multi-tasking at a level that is just unheard of, but we give them too much credit for that.” Jim provided a description of the dorm room setting of the semi-multi-tasking Millennial:

These kids in their room have their headphones on, the TV’s on, the stereo is on, they’re on the cell phone text messaging, and it appears almost supernatural. “Ah, look at this perfect student that can do these nine different things at one time.” Recent research indicates that they’re not multi-tasking at a very cognitive level. They aren’t retaining it; they can’t really recall everything and use it in a way that’s productive and meaningful. And so yeah, sure, they can be tied into seven different electronic devices to save time, but they didn’t necessarily get anything out of it.

Will Baty is the Dean of Learning Resources and Educational Technology at Santa Rosa Junior College. He describes a duality that exists between Millennials, He said, specifically:

The younger adult learners are into social networking like MySpace. They do it in a social context. When we opened the library, six out of 10 machines were doing some sort of social networking early in the semester. Now you walk through seven or eight of the machines are doing research because its midterm time and term paper time.

My conversation with Matt Pamatmat provided a student perspective on Millennial identity. His understandings may explain why these students, although literate in communications technology, are in need of remediation in other areas. Matt described the Millennial learning experience as a fragmented learning narrative:

The Millennials are technological natives. They’ve grown up with technology, it’s been around and it’s been part of the infrastructure and the day-to-day experience of being alive... the problem is, the Millennial generation doesn’t have the life experience that the older generations have. So there’s this technological knowledge, but also a kind of immaturity and lack of knowledge as far as having gone through life. This young

generation is much more used to having their senses stimulated by audio and video. It is a very fragmentary post-modern experience. The Millennials are the first generation to really be the recipients of this post-modern post-modernity, a kind of fragmented hyper-fast non-linear type of learning and also thinking and being. It's a consciousness issue.

Matt's description of the fragmented hyper-fast, post-modern Millennials brought up an example of my experience working with these students. I have found that those of us, who belong to older generations, have had to go through a steep learning curve to master computer technology, "Most of the new technology for distance learning was not yet invented when I was in school. There were computers, but I did not have any contact with them until I was in junior high school." In juxtaposition, our new Millennial students literally grew up with a mouse in their hands. This group does not see the computer as technology, but as a tool; a means to an end. Matt commented, "The Millennial generation are technological natives. They've grown up and it's been around, it's been part of the infrastructure and the day-to-day experience of being alive, whereas every generation before that had to immigrate to it to some extent." Matt described these students as guinea pigs:

I also can't help but think that those in the Millennial generation are somewhat guinea pigs. They're growing up in this environment of technology that is largely in a state of anarchy, but that's not necessarily bad, there's a frontier aspect to it; the rules are evolving organically, they're not always well defined.

Matt mentioned a quasi-schizophrenia in which Millennial adult learners today are immersed. Ricoeur defines narrative as the "capacity to redescribe reality by combining elements dispersed in time and space into some kind of coherent pattern" Kearny (1988: 242). The adult learner in a technology-based

learning context is actually living in two worlds at once. Their identity is shifted between these two very real realities; one which is *actual* and the other *virtual*.

Matt elaborated:

The Millennial generation is really growing up in two worlds simultaneously. There's also a certain schizophrenia to it. What is that going to do to person-to-person social skills and how we act in society and how we connect and disconnect with each other? There's this whole second life that is going on and it's just kind of getting bigger and bigger. I think we need to keep a balance between those two worlds. Some people can get imbalanced and be too much in one world or the other. There's a hypocrisy, it's a weird kind of contradiction we find ourselves in because we are incredibly connected through technology and through the new frontier that is the Internet and the online world. The rules have not all been written yet. There's an incredible amount of innovation and kind of positive anarchy. But at the same time we are isolated because when we're in that world—the online world—communicating, we're basically alone with the mouse in front of a computer at a little station. We're kind of drowning out the physical world around us and so we're not connected to both worlds at the same time.

Matt revealed an interesting paradox of the modern educational experience. We are all connected, yet we are alone. Ricoeur (1991) states, “Do not human lives become more readable when they are interpreted in function of the stories people tell about themselves? And with these life stories, are they not rendered more intelligible when they are applied to narrative models-plots-borrowed from history and fiction?” Ricoeur assertion helps us realize that continuity can be realized through the emplotment of a life in the text.

Conversation partners in the study often referred to a fragmentation or imbalance in which the Millennials are immersed. This imbalance could be an opportunity for college instructors and administrators to address this “quasi-schizophrenia” with curriculum designed to engage both the real and virtual

lifeworld of the Millennial adult learner.

Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity holds that knowledge of the self is an interpretation. This interpretation of the self, in turn, finds narrative, among other signs and symbols, to be a privileged mediation. "This mediation borrows from history as much as fiction, making the life stories a fictive history or, if you prefer, an historical fiction" (Ricoeur 1991). The adult learner in a technology-based learning context is actually living in two worlds at once. Ricoeur defines narrative as the "capacity to redescribe reality by combining elements dispersed in time and space into some kind of coherent pattern" Richard Kearney elaborates on this opportunity. " In contemporary discussion of identity, the problem comes from the fact that there is confusion about interpretations of permanence over time, however the concept of narrative identity can offer a solution to the aporias concerning personal identity" (Kearny 1988: 242). Narrative has strong implications for the construction of curriculum that will engage these young adult learners and allow them to emplot a lifeworld that will enable them to make sense of their learning in their lives.

Mike Starkey is a multimedia instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College, when answering the research question, "How do you think technology assists adult learners as a medium for learning?" Mike replied:

I think in what I'm teaching the best use of technology has been a visual presentation; a lot more detail, for example, if you were trying to learn about anything from a book versus what you can do visually with a movie, a video, a DVD. You can provide a lot more information with a lot more detail and accuracy than you can by reading a book. For example, a guy who just hired me – he builds hotrods – he's a car guy, he's world renown and he runs an incredible shop where he builds dragsters, funny cars,

NASCAR's, the whole gamut of cars; he has put his entire teaching experience onto DVD because he realizes everybody who's 30 and younger, maybe 35 and younger, certainly are not really reading books like we used to. One of the commercials that I made for him showed a picture, a sketch, of a piston in a book versus him holding it in his hands rotating it showing all the details pulling things out and then actually placing it in the engine rather than just a written description. And, so as far as people learning especially the younger, like I said these 30's and below, they're expecting things to be on a CD/DVD, projected, visual.

Mike's explanation revealed the notion that Millennial students already live in a technological world that their instructors are only beginning to appropriate.

Millennials expect a learning presentation that includes multi-media in addition to and sometimes instead of the traditional text-based presentation.

Identity: Solitude

In our conversation, Sherry Forkum elaborated on several characteristics of Millennial culture "They belong to clubs and groups... they crave balance in their life's work... they're optimistic... they're conventional, they do not look at race." Sherry explained, "It's important that they know they're understood and cared for." These disparate examples of their identity led me to interpret that these students are group oriented, optimistic, and tolerant.

Jim explained, "It's difficult to keep motivated if no one else understands you." Sherry added, "It is more important to understand their strengths and play to those strengths rather than focusing on those weaknesses and shortcomings. We need to work to understand our Millennial adult learners." Sherry and Jim's comments brought to mind Ricoeur's concept of solitude and the notion of developing an orientation toward the other. Ricoeur speaks to the importance of the critical nature of solitude and solitude:

Similitude is the fruit of the exchange between esteem for oneself and solicitude for others. This exchange authorizes us to say that I cannot myself have self-esteem unless I esteem others as myself. As myself means that you too are capable of starting something in the world (Ricoeur 1992: 193).

Ricoeur's sense of solicitude (caring for the other) is an innate quality of humanity; this quality suggests the need for an ethical aim of imagination, and is based on a movement toward a certain goal. This aim might manifest itself as a promise, or the anticipation of something: the imagination of a shared present. Ricoeur's emphasis on solicitude and understanding might bring about new understandings of Millennial culture and help cultivate a meaningful methods for reaching Millennial students.

Jim Forkum made an important statement about working with these young adult learners, "To understand our Millennial students, we must get to know them on more than just a surface level."

Breck Withers provided another perspective on Millennial online identity. Breck is an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College, he teaches online business and accounting. He added an insightful view on how a "Baby-Boomer" instructor perceives his Millennial students in the distance learning environment.

Breck described Millennial students as having technology skills but often lack discipline and formality. When I asked the question, "How do you see the way our Millennial students learn compared to our older students? Breck asserted, "The younger students have more computer skills – that's the main difference. Older students tend to be a little more serious about doing their homework on time, and keeping up, and they're more likely to ask questions in class." Breck

elaborated on the younger Millennial students, “The younger students – the young guys with the hat turned backwards – they want to sit in the back row – maybe doze off. I wake them up of course, but they’re not nearly as likely to do their homework, and read the text.”

Breck’s comments about Millennial identity are worthy of consideration. Kearney suggests, “. . . our existence is already to some extent pre-plotted before we ever consciously seek out a narrative in which to reinscribe our life as life-history. (Kearney 2001: 129) Breck’s view of Millennial students is drastically different from the description of the Millennials as enlightened beings provided by Jim and Sherry Forkum. Perhaps an opportunity exists for instructors in the technology-based learning context to help adult learners reinscribe their narrative identity.

Breck and I spoke about the level of readiness that some of the students experience at the start of his online courses. “I teach online business math and of course the highest level student can be successful in any format but the average student that’s in my online math class would be better off in a lecture class probably.” His comments reminded me of an unfortunate reality that is often difficult in the distance learning venue. Because of lack of self motivation, preparation, and familiarity with technology, some students are not geared toward online learning. Breck elaborated:

Students who are more self-motivated with good reading skills and the ability to follow directions – basically students that have better self-discipline and can follow a written structure carefully on a step-by-step basis will be more successful in an online format. A lot of the Millennial students have to drop the class and take it again the next semester because

they weren't successful the first time around.

Brecks assertion brings up the idea that technology, which is often perceived as a barrier to successful online learning is a secondary problem. The primary deterrent seems to be lack of self motivation and poor reading and writing skills exhibited by Millennial students.

The example of the seemingly contradictory views of Breck Withers and Jim and Sherry Forkum illustrate an important point. In order to truly see these individuals, it is important to create learning opportunities that foster identity. Through this narrative there exists possibility of creating new understandings.

Herda (1999: 131) asserts, "Learning takes place because someone risks prejudices with the consequence of one's history including something new, yet it is not in an individualistic mode that such a change takes place." To this assertion, Ricoeur points out, ". . . individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history" (Ricoeur 1988: 247). As learning professionals, it might behoove us to learn about the identity, history and language of our students, in order to understand their identity in the world, and the culture that will influence who they will become.

When looking at the identity of the other it is important to recognize your own biases. This recognition allows one to suspend their discomfort, in an effort come into conversation with an orientation to reach understanding. Herda (1999: 7) emphasizes the recognition of the importance of authentic motivation. "Instead, it is important to recognize authentic motivations [even] of those with whom you disagree, opening oneself therefore to "the possibility of seeing and understanding

the world, and therefore one's self, differently." This description of the authentic motivation transcends the boundaries of dialogue and allows one to inherit the opportunity of moving beyond the shallowness of most everyday interactions while opening a possibility to engage the other in solicitude.

Identity: Danger in the Virtual World

The next passage describes some of the opportunities and danger involved in the virtual world. Ricoeur explains the theory of Narrative Identity, "Knowledge of the self is an interpretation...The interpretation of the self, in turn, finds narrative, among other signs and symbols, to be a privileged mediation...This mediation borrows from history as much as fiction, making the life story a fictive history or, if you prefer, an historical fiction" (Ricoeur 1991: 237). I asked conversation partners how they thought technology might enhance or prohibit the expression of identity. Matt Pamatmat explained:

As far as identity it's really interesting! In the online world you can be anybody. But be careful! There is a certain skepticism you have to approach the online world with. Impersonation is very easy to do. There's a freedom to that because you don't have to be the person you are in the physical world, you can look different, you can speak different. There are incredible opportunities online to be imaginative and be creative. This fun house mirror world is both a fictional and a non-fictional world. It's strange, but they kind of are strange bedfellows. You have this kind of what Werner Herzog (2007) calls an ecstatic truth online. Herzog is a filmmaker who doesn't distinguish differences between his documentaries and his fiction film. He says that you can take documentaries and add fiction into them and take and create this new level that he calls the ecstatic truth. It's not the old fashioned documentary truth, and it's not a completely fiction movie; it's blending the two. It's rapacious.

Breck Withers brought up the potential dangers of online identity. Breck stated, "The thing that comes to mind immediately is you don't want to give up

too much personal information. I wouldn't tell them [students] exactly where you live ...you don't know in the online environment who's out there. I mean somebody could be taking a class from prison or something and they get paroled next week.”

I asked Breck if he found himself being more careful in the online environment versus face to face. He replied, “The only thing is, I just have to choose my words more carefully because you don't have the body language and the tone of voice. You have to be more careful using sarcasm and stuff. People can think you're insulting them when you're really just joking around.” Breck referred to a problem of expressing intention while teaching in the online environment. The phenomenon of intention will be elaborated on in the section on Language.

Jim Forkum described another danger of the online world. Social networking allows students to create their own 'space' on the Web. Social networking sites like MySpace.com provide a medium for its users to express their identity in the virtual world. Ricoeur asserts, “It is the task of narrative... to provide us with specific ways of imagining how the moral aspects of human behavior may be linked with happiness and unhappiness” (1998: 240).

In this virtual world, identity is a public commodity. Because of this users should have a sense of social responsibility. Unfortunately this responsibility is often recklessly discarded by our Millennial students. Jim explained:

You see one of our athletes in an SRJC athletic shirt and they've got two beers in their hand and they're obviously in some kind of a bad situation or worse. Then it gets posted by someone they don't even know who may

have a cell camera. They don't even know their picture is being taken and all of a sudden here it is up on YouTube.com. And once it's on there they can't get it back--very difficult. We had to let them know they're going to be held responsible, whether they did it or not.

Jim alluded to an issue of responsibility, "...calling us back to an understanding of what it means to be finite historical beings who are always on the way and who must assume... responsibility for our decisions and choices" (Bernstein 1983: 1666). In the online world, it is becoming increasingly important to safeguard your identity. In true hermeneutic fashion, once the writer puts the text online, it becomes public.

Identity: The Human Presence

The 2007 Horizon Report (New Media Consortium 2007) states, "Biases against distant learning programs are still very much in evidence, and skeptics abound. Nonetheless, distance learning technologies are growing at a rate that outpaces our ability to develop sufficient guidelines. The challenges are enormous ones, and very real – so are the opportunities. There has been little examination of the "art of the possible." Currently distance learning consists of online materials, a convenient method of submitting and grading assignments, audio and video clips of lectures and interaction with students via e-mail, bulletin boards, and list-servs. However, online education creates a novel instructional environment with its own particular advantages, limitations, and challenges.

One of the issues encountered in learning environments is the problem that instructors are often lacking presence in their own class. This becomes especially apparent in distance learning. Instructors often use the course management system

(CMS) as a cyber textbook. Instructors' often present text copied from a book as the primary means of presenting the course, in order to get something up on the CMS. Additionally and unfortunately, the only contact the student has with the instructor and classmates is through email. The student sends an e-mail that goes off into this black hole and they don't necessarily know when the instructor is going to get their answer back to them. In the study I asked conversation partners about the importance of the human presence in online learning environments.

During our conversation Matt Pamatmat and I mused on his experience participating in an unnamed online masters' degree program. Matt explained that this particular program worked well for him as a working adult with a brand new baby, working full time, and having to commute an hour each way to work. He notes that it was nice to have the spare moments on the weekends to read and to write. Our conversation was particularly useful in setting the tone of this research because his experience largely reflects the experience of our adult learners in the technology-based learning context. Matt described his learning experience:

My program had a huge distance learning component, but, it was kind of old fashioned in that it was largely about getting books, writing papers and sending them in. So it was incredibly textual, but it was all done through distance learning. There was no real instructor contact unless the student made a phone call or an email. The main thing was to send the papers in and just absorb the text.

I have found that as an online learner, I have often felt the lack of instructor presence in the course, I remarked, "I have a tendency to feel kind of alone, out there." I asked Matt if there were times where he felt like that. He explained:

I had a great masters' experience for the core class part of it, but when it came time to write the thesis, it felt like I was out at a remote outpost. I had

to do my coursework based only on written instruction, along with a few phone calls and emails to the school – that was the difficult part because the thesis is such a precise and involved process, and to do that through distance learning was difficult. There was no guru there to hold your hand, and yet you were being held to these high standards and requirements. But it was good to see, because it was all about getting through it, sticking with it, and eventually getting the degree.

Matt mentions a common problem in distance learning. All too often, distance education classes are run more like correspondence courses. Most student contact with the professor and classmates happens via asynchronous communication. This type of learning takes a certain kind of discipline; the ability to be able to read through dense materials, follow instructions, and provide written communication to classmates and the instructor. In my research I am finding that this pedagogy works for the most disciplined of students who are adept at using distance education technology and have great reading and writing skills, but alas, this is not our average community college student. This might suggest that the opportunity exists to create technology-based learning environments that address Gardner's (1993) theory of Multiple Intelligences. Modern telecommunications technology and advances in computer hardware and software have provided new opportunities for the expression of adult learner identity through narrative and imagination.

Ellindale Wells is the department chair of the Computer and Information Sciences Department at Santa Rosa Junior College. She is a veteran instructor who spoke to the lack of professionalism in online teaching. Ellindale explained that online classes often look like thrown together bits of text, links to videos and meaningless graphical images. She asserted, "All of the presentation technologies

are great if they're well done, but I think that what happens is the course curriculum is lacking professionalism." I commented that this indeed is negative training. But what does this mean? Could it be that our online instructors need to be remediated into the distance education environment? Again, this is another area of opportunity for online instructors to create a learning text that is conducive to creating solicitude in the virtual environment.

Ellindale added, "The student only contacts the instructor when a problem or emergency comes up, so if you're a student, this might seem as if you were playing the role of the little residual kid in the back of the elementary school classroom. You know you don't get any attention unless you have problems." Ellindale asserted, "Good online classes allow and encourage students to participate, but with all the questions and maintenance, I can understand how the instructors would not want to do that because it's a heck of a lot more work to ask everybody to interact and then you have to respond to everybody!" I had to comment on some of the typical remarks of my colleagues who do not teach online, "Oh online, you can do that just anywhere, whenever, it doesn't take much time right?" I often remark, "What I find is that it actually takes more time especially if you want to connect with your students." Creating an online setting that engenders identity takes thought and effort.

Mike Starkey brought up the importance of the human touch in online learning programs and suggested that the learner's experience is incomplete:

I think my feeling in doing both in person and online for example is that I think really we need to do a combination of both, I think working online in a classroom environment with a virtual community of your other

classmates, where you can look at the galleries of other people's work, you can communicate through like a chat room or a email list or whatever it is. I also think you have to get together once in a while. That's what's missing. And, it could even be done sort of like we do with the meetings ...The fact that you can do your entire college degree without ever dealing with people worries me because that is not the real world. You can get the degree, but that is only part of the story-you have to still get through the day. You still have to communicate. You have to understand all the little weird nuances that happen in human relations.

Mike remarked on the lack of physical connection with students, as well as some of the problems encountered when working with adult learners over distance, he examined the phenomenon of the distance learner not having to be at a certain place or time to experience the learning activity:

Online learning has many advantages as far as availability of course material, convenience, not having to physically be somewhere. However, you do lose some students. In online classes students tend to need to be more self-reliant, and they need to stay on top of things, because they have to. It's easy to get behind. There's nobody on top of you. The thing that's missing is the interaction, you know, the being able to be face-to-face with people and go over their problems.

Mike's comment suggests that that the lack of human presence limits success in online learning to the most self reliant and diligent of students, who also have great written communication skills

Pat James is currently the dean of academic success and technology at Mt. San Jacinto College. She is an advocate and evangelist of effective distance learning pedagogy. Pat insisted that a distance learning class should not attempt to replicate what happens in the face-to-face classroom. She explained, "By evaluating and assessing distance education with the criteria from traditional education models, we perpetuate doing what we've always done. Our evaluation criteria shape the learning experiences, we create. When we strive to re-create the

classroom experience, we limit teaching and learning to what works best in face-to-face situations.”

Pat stated, “Teaching in the online/distance learning environment provides new opportunities to create learning in the face-to-face classroom.” That is challenging traditional education. “Too often we try to emulate the classroom... the fact is, online learning is affecting how we teach in traditional classrooms.” Distance learning environments should not attempt to replicate what happens in the classroom. Teaching in the online/distance learning environment provides new opportunities to create learning in the face-to-face classroom, Pat pointed out, “its own pedagogy!”

Pat James made the important point about *regular affective contact*. She suggested “using discussion forums and making regular announcements. Make sure you are conducting instructor initiated interaction.” Many instructors use e-mail to connect students. It’s good for interaction between the teacher and the student, but it’s usually student initiated, which means that some students will participate. Accommodation of discussion forums, e-mail, regular announcements using an online or phone conferencing, as well as text messaging will ensure that effective communication is happening.

Pat suggested keeping the best part of *you* in the course, “Be there! Be welcoming, be honest.” Create your own e-lectures and materials that are in your voice; save the academic speak for the textbook. Tell stories – you have experiences – tell about them. Avoid the PowerPoint shallowness. Again, it’s the human element which behooves, the importance of identity and story.

It's not about the technology... Learning how to teach well online has very little to do with learning to use technical tools. While it's nice to know how to make a Webpage or create a screen capture video, that's not what makes a good online teacher. Learning how to teach at a distance means shifting your focus to being heard rather than seen. Courses in a box provided by publishers are tempting, but injecting your own personal style is more likely to make you a successful teacher.

Ricoeur (1981: 221) states that the, "dialectic of interpretive stance as text- ultimately the correlation between explanation and understanding an explanation, is the hermeneutic cycle." This implication leads to opportunity for the instructor to create a world in the text. There is no other way to engage students, other than through meaningful contact with the other. The world of the online classroom can be filled with meaning or despair.

Language

Language is a medium in which the world is created and interpreted, it is historical in nature. Gadamer (1960) asserts that language and history make us who we are. Language formulates new ideas and allows us to communicate old ones. In this research conversation partners spoke to language and identity as almost an intertwined phenomenon. Language is a medium of understanding.

Unfortunately many of my conversation partners alluded to the fact that online courses are not *speaking* to adult learners, especially Millennials who might be comfortable with the learning technology, but struggle with reading and writing. This again might be seen as an opportunity to reach out to online adult learners in a possible language that could be more conducive to the creation of understanding in new adult learners.

Language: A Crisis of Basic Skills

The Horizon Report (2007) states, “Information literacy increasingly should not be considered a given. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the information literacy skills of new students are not improving.” At the same time, in a sea of user-created content, collaborative work, and instant access to information of varying quality, the skills of critical thinking, research, and evaluation are increasingly required to make sense of the world, “For Gadamer, both language and history make an integral part of who we are. There is not a method to find the truth; rather, we need to expose ourselves to the truth, much the same way as we expose ourselves to art” Herda (1999: 64).

When examining language from a critical hermeneutic perspective, it is important to understand that language is a medium for living and holds possibility in conversations. In this way language is interpretive, it has action, motion and morality. It is language that holds the possibility for story which interprets human life and allows for new understanding.

Mike Starkey elaborated on an important aspect of adult learning, the basics. Reading and writing are always going to be important whether you are using technology or not, Mike explained:

I’m concerned about the lack of writing skills; the lack of reading skills. Even though we need to address this new technology in a sense that it’s what people are doing now, I also think we need to find a way to preserve good writing skills and good reading skills. I see it slipping. I think that’s worrisome. I’m afraid if we’re not careful we’re going to lose some of the core skills of communication that go back to reading and writing – the basic skills.

I am a member of the State Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. The state senate is concerned with our student's ability to read and write and has influenced policy makers at the state capitol in Sacramento to raise the bar for the associate's degree requirements in Math and English. I also facilitate the Santa Rosa Junior College Computer and Information Sciences (CIS) Advisory Committee, which is the advisory committee to the CIS department at Santa Rosa Junior College. This committee provides an opportunity for the CIS department to consult with local and national business and educational organizations in an effort to steer occupational curriculum development. The members of the committee have expressed concern with a lack of basic skills of students entering the workplace; in particular, the ability to think critically and express themselves with written and oral communication. I provided an example from one of our members, Gary Serby, Chief Information Officer for Sonoma Counties Exchange Bank. Serby stated, "I can get someone to fix my network or set up my network, but I can't get somebody to fix my network and then write a paragraph about it." Interestingly enough, under the guidance of the CIS Advisory Committee, I recently put together a program for the school called the Computer Help Desk Certificate. Almost half of the certificate courses are basic skills courses.

Mike described one of his Millennial students who demonstrates the lack of basic skills, and lack of formality that we are seeing in our young adult learners:

I had one student in a class that started five weeks ago who is, as best I can tell is probably an 18 year old. I don't know-I haven't met him, but the first thing in the email was, "Hey man blah, blah, blah." I was offended, it wasn't that it came across mean spirited in anyway, it was just sloppy. I wrote back and I said I answered his question, "In addition, I would like to point out that you should not address your instructors as "Hey Man." I said it should be a little more formal like Mr. Starkey. And so he wrote back and said, "My bad Mr. Starkey," which I had to laugh at.

To emphasize his point, Mike described a recent conference that he attended with members of the video game industry, where basic skills became the impetus of the discussions:

I went to this symposium for the video game industry in April 2007. It was one of the best things that happened this year. There were instructors from all over the state just like myself who were trying to figure out the best way to create meaningful and relevant curriculum for students wanting to enter this industry. There were six or eight presidents of video game companies in attendance. The most consistent thing that they said was that they require their programmers to write proper English, have excellent mathematical and problem solving skills, good communication skills, good creative writing skills, and the ability to work in teams. This one person in particular, the president of a large software company, said they would not hire somebody if they couldn't write a proper paragraph. They are very turned off by how sloppy writing skills have become.

I remarked on the fact that most Millennial students need to be remediated in writing and mathematics. "It's like we're shooting at a moving target really, because on one hand we have these students that really thrive on being able to see this visual and audio information, but at the same time, what's not catching up is their ability to communicate orally or with writing as well as critical thinking, mathematics and problem solving."

Sherry Forkum talked about this alarming problem and suggested, "Maybe it is the fault of technology that Millennial students are struggling with Math and English skills." Sherry explained:

50 percent of students coming in to the community colleges in California are at remedial level of math, writing and reading. Computer programs like accelerated math are not causing them to journal and think about the process of the problem. It's only the immediate answer that's important... Some students cannot read cursive writing. Handwriting is becoming less and less used at the elementary levels. Now they're putting them on computers.

Sherry's assertion brings up the interesting potential problem of the use of technology in the modern learning setting. The potential to misuse technology may be potentially damaging. Gadamer (1976: 15) states, "... Understanding is language-bound." Gadamer reminds us that if we are not fluent in language we will not appropriate understanding.

Language: Text Messaging

The phenomenon of text messaging as a means of communication provides a great example of the 'quasi-schizophrenic' identity of the Millennial adult learner. These students have literally created their own pigeon language. Text messages are formulated using little acronyms, with little punctuation.

Millennial students use text-messaging as the primary means of technology-based communication, even more than the telephone. Gadamer states, "Each time will have to understand transmitting text in its own way; for the text belongs in the whole of the tradition that is of substantive interest to the age. And in which it tries to understand itself" Gadamer (1975: 277). In the study, conversation partners were asked, how communicating exclusively in writing changed the way they interacted in the learning environment.

Sherry Forkum mentioned that there are actual lesson plans now written on how to use text messaging within your classroom. I commented on the nature of

textual communication or text messaging among the Millennial group, and provided a teaching scenario from one of my computer literacy classes. I often ask, “How many in here text message?” half of the class’s hands go up and they’re all the younger groups of students, the Millennials. I remarked that I did not use text messaging myself. For me, “it’s like why type when you can talk.”

Apparently, there’s this real appeal to be able to send this message instantaneously – synchronous.

Mike Starkey commented on the Millennial students experience in the dorm room as a digital communication center, library and entertainment hub:

If you look at younger student’s bedrooms or dorm rooms or wherever, you will see that the number of books is a lot less than it used to be. There are stacks of CDs. There are stacks of DVDs. There are i-pods. There are podcasts. There are videos online. There’s all this other stuff that’s going on... that is how they really communicate. In fact they consider email slow. Remember when we started using email we referred to snail mail at the regular mail at the post office? These students now consider email to be snail mail because it’s too slow. It’s all instant messaging; text messaging.

Mike referred to the Millennials linguistic creation, “They’ve also created their own language, and, it’s not that different from what generations have done historically, but they have built a language that a lot of older people including their parents don’t understand.” I mentioned that I once wrote a paper on the meaning of text messages. In this creation, I asserted that these short bursts of text as an utterance can be meaningful, as long as there is some background and understanding between the dialogue partners.








Language reflects social norms, the audience, and beliefs. Verbal communication relies on language to reach understanding, but people also readily

employed body language and tone to enrich understanding or to emphasize a point. The dimension of the written text in distance learning does not have the advantage of face-to-face communication. Ricoeur (1991) asserts, "the self does not know itself or create its identity immediately, only indirectly, through the detour of cultural signs of all sorts, which articulate the self in symbolic mediations" can knowledge of the self come about through interpretation." Figure 1, provides a translation of a subset of the text messaging language.

Figure 1: Example of Text Messaging

EMOTICONS 101

What they really mean.

-  **Smiley face.** The mother of all emoticons. It's the oldest, the most tired and certainly the most used, but this happy face isn't going anywhere. Use it to dull the edge of your sarcasm or just let people know you're A-OK!
-  **The wink.** Oh, you sneaky devil. Although this looks very similar to the smiley face, it's actually loaded with meaning and innuendo. That means you probably shouldn't use it with your mom or your poker buddies.
-  **Sticking out tongue.** No, this is not sexual. It means that you or someone else is being silly. Use sparingly; it's kind of lame.
-  **Laugh.** Hmmm...a laughing emoticon. Wonder what that means? Seriously though, use this guy to take some pressure off your LOLs. They can really get old after a while.
-  **Money mouth.** Nobody knows what this one means. When you talk, does money spill out? Are your words worth their weight in collectible coins? Or, are you flashing some virtual gold teeth? Our money is on leaving this one alone.
-  **Frown.** Aw...you're sad. Use this emoticon to wield your sorrow like a passive-aggressive switchblade. Or, if you're the one who's ruining the plan, just throw it out there to prep him/her for the bad news.
-  **Cry.** Well, if you're actually crying over an IM, then you either have emotional problems or you're a cowardly relationship-breaker-offer. But barring that, the crying face is mostly used as a funny way to say that you were hoping for a different answer. However deep that tear goes, only you will know.

TOP THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT EMOTICONS:

1. Guys shouldn't send other guys emoticons. Unless they like the other guy. A lot.
2. No emoticons until you've met the person face to face or at least sent a picture. Unless of course, your face actually resembles a semicolon.
3. Never use the "cool" emoticon (i.e., the one with the sunglasses). It's the virtual equivalent of a fanny pack.

Of particular interest is the ability to express tone through symbolism. Matt Pamatmat described emoticons or 'smileys'. These are textual symbols that can be typed into a digital message to convey intention. Matt described emoticons:

Emoticons give something very crucial that is missing in an email which is a tone and facial expression. There's almost a certain type of autism online, there's a blindness. It's called mind blindness. This is where someone with autism can't understand the facial expressions or the tone and can't empathize with the other person's point of view or perspective. You have that in emails because you get these words that are on a screen and you don't really know how to interpret them or what the intention was. You can do things in email with emoticons and graphics and sounds and things like that, it's the clunky recreation of face-to-face interaction. Emoticons help avoid misinterpretation.

I remarked on the usefulness of emoticons, especially if you want to make a joke. Humor in the online environment is an important element in creating identity. Sometimes these jokes can be misinterpreted, but if you put that little wink ;-) or whatever on there then they can kind of interpret it." Smileys can be used in email and are especially useful in suggesting intent in the online learning environment, although it can be noted that emoticons are rather non academic in nature.

The Poetics of Story

Story came to life as a major theme in the research. Conversation participants provided examples of how communications technology enhanced the ability to reveal to tell story. Instructors spoke of using story as a method of connecting with students. Students spoke to the ability of story to express identity. Kearney (2001: 3) examines the origins of storytelling and explains that myth was the most common form of early narrative. Mythic narrative mutated over time into two main branches, historical and fictional. Historical narrative modified traditional mythos with a growing allegiance to the reality of past events, while fictional narratives aimed to re-describe events in terms of some ideal standard of

beauty, goodness, or nobility. Story telling goes back to the dawn of time where people sat around campfires and told stories to each other. By our nature we are social beings.

Story is the result of the fusion of identity in language

Mike Starkey explained the video technology used by his students and examined the possibilities for adult learning. Mike explained, “In non-linear video production you have the ability to stop it and rewind it and go back through it, so it’s kind of codified in time.” I asked Mike, “What methods he used to address this new style of learning?” Mike remarked on his online teaching experience and the advantages and disadvantages of teaching his Photoshop class in face-to-face verses online delivery:

I have been teaching online for about two years now in a Photoshop class that I’ve done the last six years in person. I find it a little difficult. I think it has advantages and disadvantages. I think the advantage is you can reach anybody anywhere. I had a student in my class last semester, she was in South Africa, in addition to students that were all across the country. So, I think that’s pretty cool. People who are in remote places can actually just log on and be a part of a virtual classroom. The downside is I don’t have my weekly lecture in person. I can’t talk to people face-to-face. I’m about to replace all of this with video, because I think this is completely backward to have an online technology class and be reading. I know the older people in the class would just read through it because they’re used to just reading things, but I think a movie would be just so much more effective.

Mike alludes to the possibility that the use of video is more effective method of teaching software applications than a book. With video, the story of the learning topic can be literally brought to life. Ricoeur (1988: 248) notes that “narrative identity is not a stable and seamless identity, just as it is possible to

compose several plots on the subject of the incidents...so it is always possible to weave different, even opposed, plots about our lives.” According to Ricoeur, “there is a core aspect to identity which does not change; yet, there is simultaneously another part of our identity which is malleable” (Ricoeur 1992: 116). Through this dialectic, our identity is ultimately moved toward an ethical aim. Narrative identity thus holds both change and permanence. Ricoeur’s concept of mimesis (imitating action in a poetic way) suggests that time has to do with the configuration of the present, the remembering of the past, and the imagining of the future. Our narrative in conversation holds time in a manageable way. Time is not linear. The narrative holds time in present-past, present-present, and present-future. There is only one time which is the present.

Digital Storytelling

Kearney (2001: 5) states, “... every story shares the common function of someone telling something to someone about something.” In this way, the unfolding of a conversation text becomes enlivened by the nuances of the topic at hand. In the online world adult learners do not have the face-to-face contact with the instructor and other students. This lack of presence must be overcome by creating a world in a mostly text based virtual environment. Kearney emphasizes that every life seeks narrative, in that we all seek to introduce some kind of order into the everyday discord and dispersal we find about us. In this way, it is the narrative that fortifies us against confusion.

In our conversation, Ellindale Wells mentioned a critical point about being and identity. She explained how she uses her story to teach a beginning computer

student how to click a mouse, “It starts with who I’m being. Who I am in the world really proves that anybody can learn to use a computer and have fun doing it. That’s where I come from. And then being kind and non-threatening and acknowledging their anxiety by talking about when I was learning.” Ellindale’s example provides an intriguing look at telling story in the physical technology environment. She states, “It starts with who I’m being.” This utterance in itself opens the world of identity. She goes on telling her story as an opportunity to invite the student into her narrative. In this interaction the opportunity of language and identity can weave together a learning plot which engenders hope in students. The student might be thinking, “I hope that I can learn to double click this mouse, If Ellindale can do it, and I know she struggled, maybe I might be able to master this skill.” Kearney (1998) describes the human precondition of *freedom* as essential to imagine and project new possibilities. Without freedom to imagine we cannot imagine how things might be or envision new possibilities of a world from grounded in our past and inclusive of our present.

Mike Starkey spoke about the practice of storytelling as a medium of expression with adult learners:

There’s something very endearing about these old handwritten letters that went back and forth between soldiers and their family back at home; things like that. Now, even that stuff all is done with email. And it’s not as simple as good or bad or right or wrong; it’s just that there are trade-offs.

Mikes remark makes the important point that the story transcends the medium in which it was delivered. He continued:

If you think about your family heritage, you’re sitting on the couch and looking at a photo album with your grandparents. They tell you the stories

of a certain photograph or people over the generations write on the back of a photograph. You know this is who this was; sometimes that kind of falls apart in that it was incomplete stories. A nice thing to do with video one of the things that I show people because they get it right away, if you take your old family photos and your old family movies and you transfer them and now you're working in a video editing environment, digital video, non-linear editing, which is what digital is you can easily move it around; you do not take the tape. What you can do is arrange those photos those 8 mm movies, edit them down so they're nice and clean, add your photos and then you sit your parents or your grandparents in front of your computer and just give them a microphone and they can now describe in words— they can just talk. And now what you have is their voice as a voice over with those pictures with those movies and with music underneath that you've got a completely different thing than a photo album with stuff written on the back.

Kearney (2001) explains that it is storytelling that gives us a shareable world, “The process of recounting our present condition in light of past memories and future anticipations gives us a sense of our own ‘narrative identity’” (Kearney 2001: 3). The implications of the use of video in the technology-based learning environment might provide a way for instructors and students to tell their story. This pedagogy allows one to gather themselves in narrative and project a possible world. It is in this tradition that Kearney (2001: 156) exclaims, “Storytelling invites us to become not just agents of our own lives, but narrators and readers as well. It shows us that the untold life is not worth living.

Mike reminded me that the richness of the multimedia content adds to the learner's experience:

There's a lot more emotion too. The story is preserved over time and so, you know the next generation will be able to sit down and watch the DVD at grandma and grandpa's talking about the past generations. It's way different than looking through a photo album.

Digital storytelling can be an extremely effective way of creating meaningful adult learning. Additionally, the non-linear format reminds me of the Hermeneutic narrative cycle of emplotment. “The dialectic of interpretive stance as text- ultimately the correlation between explanation and understanding an explanation, is the hermeneutic cycle” Ricoeur (1981: 221).

Visual Learning with Screencasting

Breck Withers was excited to tell me about the technology he was using with his online students. He uses a type of screencasting software called Camtasia that allows the instructor to put together an online animation, with a narrative that can be used to demonstrate how to use a particular software product. Breck mentions, “One of the things that I just started incorporating in my online classes is the use of Camtasia to illustrate techniques in QuickBooks.” Breck explains, “It can be cumbersome to write these instructions up.” It can also be difficult for the adult learner to understand. However, when presented as a video were the learner can play the animation again and again and rewind the parts that were not understood. It has been a wonderful benefit to online pedagogy.” This technology is engaging because it is a virtual simulation of the actual learning environment. This software works particularly well in teaching software applications. Screencasting might be used as a medium of expressing Identity, the narrated simulation adds a human touch to the technology.

Story in action

Ellindale Wells brought up how she uses story in her instruction. She

mentioned that adult learners these days need reassurance. “One of my big jobs is to be reassuring. In the 1980’s I didn’t need to reassure anybody. They were all excited and happy and they knew they could do it they just wanted to know what *it* was. And now it’s not like that.” This prompted me to ask Ellindale how to create a reassuring environment of adult learners who are really new to or just not used to technology. I asked, “What are some things you have set up that allow them to be successful?” Ellindale mentioned a critical point about being and identity. She explained how she uses her story to teach a beginning computer student how to click a mouse:

It starts with who I’m being. Who I am in the world really proves that anybody can learn to use a computer and have fun doing it. That’s where I come from. And then being kind and non-threatening and acknowledging their anxiety and talking about when I was learning it and I know I can do it fast, but I’ve been doing it since 1980...

I remember trying to learn how to double-click. I can remember that feeling of “my gosh! I’m never going to learn this.”

Ellindale takes it one step further and describes a personal narrative emplotted in a story. One of her techniques is to use a metaphor from her childhood about practicing roping a stick on her bicycle.

I’d tell different stories about the role of doing things over and over and over like roping. I decided I wanted to learn how to rope so I had...I lived in the city, I had a bicycle and I had a stick in the ground and I was riding my bicycle and I roped, but I did it over and over and over for hours and hours. It was really fun and I enjoyed it. And this was magic. Get people back to that.

Conclusion

My research conversations with adult learners, community college instructors and administrators helped me gain valuable insight in the areas of language, identity and story. Identity in particular seems to be a large area of opportunity. Ricoeur's emphasis on solicitude and understanding becomes increasingly important when working with adult learners in the online learning environment. I believe that the areas of understanding how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context might be analyzed in an effort to gain understanding of our students and creating a learning text that will elicit solicitude.

The next Chapter presents implications and a recommendation derived from the research conversations with faculty and administrators, and suggests how critical hermeneutic theory might transform adult learning in a technology-based learning context.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Rapid acceleration in the area of communications technologies have forced our current model of adult learning to take on new modalities. Computing technology and the Internet are now ubiquitous. Online classes are commonplace, and our new students are experiencing technology-based virtual environments as a medium of expressing identity.

This Chapter presents implications and recommendations derived from the research conversations with college students, faculty and administrators, and suggests how critical hermeneutic theory might transform adult learning in a technology-based learning context. The research uncovers the notion that the evocative implementation of technology in adult learning may lead to a means of cultivating a meaningful learning environment, through the application of critical hermeneutic theory in the modern technology-based curriculum.

Unfortunately more effective applications of these technologies are not embraced by many educators. Instead these technologies become an underemployed novelty, often used as an attempt to replicate the face-to-face learning environment. Learning professionals, are for the most part, not aware of how to apply these methods as a possible way to create meaningful learning environments.

Learning technology never stands on its own. The human presence must

be cultivated in these environments in order for this learning technology to be meaningful and effective. This research suggests that the application of the theories of narrative identity, language and story can be cleverly introduced to the modern curriculum as a method of humanizing technology-based adult learning.

The purpose of this study is to attempt to re-figuring adult learner identity within a technology-based learning context and understand how disparate types of adult learners (younger, born 1980 – 1990; and older, born prior to 1980) use technology; and finally how adult learners interact with the text as the dialogue in the virtual classroom. The categories of narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story are used as a foundation to guide the research conversations.

Overview of the Study

The major focus of this study was an attempt to interpret how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context. The primary sources of data were research conversations with adult learning instructors and administrators. The research portion of the study began with a conceptual background, the purpose of which is to introduce participatory research and hermeneutic theory as a conceptual foundation for the study.

The purpose of these conversations is to enable the research to reflect the voice of the participants. Although the conversations may be boundless in scope, several primary questions have been identified in an effort to allow the topic of adult learning and technology to guide the conversation. These questions revolved around the themes of: how adult learner identity is re-figured within a technology-based learning context; how Millennial students use technology; and

finally, how adult learners interact with the text as the dialogue in the virtual classroom. The specific questions posed of participants are designed to guide the conversations, and are organized into three research categories: narrative identity, language, and the poetics of story.

Conversation partners were carefully selected based on their unique experiences in the technology-based learning context. These partners included online as well as face-to-face students, who use technology as a learning medium. Instructors and technology experts were selected and carefully chosen for their unique individual experiences in working with technology as a medium of instruction. Administrators who participated in this research have experiences with the management and administration of instructors who work in the technology-based learning context. These administrators were particularly useful in the research due to the scope and tenure of their experience working with faculty and students.

Research conversations took place at mutually convenient times, mostly at restaurants and coffee shops in and around Santa Rosa Junior College. These conversations were transcribed verbatim in an effort to produce a text that could be analyzed and interpreted according to themes and subjects guided by the research questions.

It is important to point out that the data is conversational in nature and not an interview. Conversations with research partners created an opportunity to be guided by the topic at hand.

I entered conversations with a few research questions to set the foundation

for the exploration of the study. Conversation partners were generally excited to talk about technology in adult learning and contributed valuable insight into the research themes. Quite often these conversations took on a life of their own, again guided by topic at hand, and not a simple question/answer format.

Through this process the research participants and I have engendered these conversations to move beyond the boundaries of my research questions and encourage what Gadamer (1960) refers to as play. A conversation is not just the back-and-forth utterances of persons; the idea of play is important. In conversational play, the topic at hand becomes the object, not the persons involved. In this way, conversation leads to understanding. Through the dialogue, a truth is revealed, only if the participants submit themselves to the play of question and answer. Gadamer asserts that the nature of understanding is historical. Therefore the fusion of object and the person becomes 'effective history'. By using Gadamer's concept of play, I believe that I was able to achieve a rich conversation text in which research topics could be analyzed.

Most research participants contributed to the conversation adding meaningful insight into the topic at hand. I did however find that exchanges with a few of the research partners were not as conversational as I would have liked. In these conversations, I was able to encourage play by elaborating on the use of technology and explaining relevant themes in the area of critical hermeneutics.

In light of these themes, conversation texts have been analyzed and re-analyzed to produce an interpretive text that speaks to the hermeneutic themes of language, identity and story. These stories of conversation partners are

compelling enough to promote action. Their insights and narratives guide and sustain the recommendations and implications of this research.

Findings

The literature of adult education supports the use of interactive learning environments as contributing to self-direction and critical thinking. Some educators have made great strides in applying these concepts to their face-to-face teaching. However, many classes still exist which are based on boring lectures and rote memorization of material. The nature of the semi-autonomous and self-directed world of the Virtual Classroom makes innovative and creative approaches to instruction even more important. In the online environment, the facilitator and student collaborate to create a dynamic learning experience. The occasion of a shift in technology creates the hope that those who move into the new technology will also leave behind bad habits as they adopt this new paradigm of teaching. As educators redesign their course materials to fit the online format, they must reflect on their course objectives and teaching style and find that many of the qualities that make a successful online facilitator are also tremendously effective in the traditional classroom as well.

Thorough analysis of conversation texts revealed several topics that are interrelated within the hermeneutic themes of narrative identity, language and the poetics of story. The findings of this study have strong curricular implications and will be presented as a set of best practices for adult learning in a technology-based learning context. Those who participate in or administer adult distance learning, computer-based training (CBT), and simulation may benefit from this

exploration.

Address the skills gap

Meaningful interactions can be accomplished through the use of technologies that add to the ability to express identity. The Horizon Report (2007) states, “There is a skills gap between understanding how to use tools for media creation and how to create meaningful content.” Although new tools make it increasingly easy to produce multimedia works, students and their instructors lack essential skills in composition, storytelling, and design. In addition, faculty need curricula that adapt to the pace of change and that teach the skills that will be needed—even though it is not clear what all those skills may be. Whether technology is driven by students, administrators, or instructors, technology based pedagogy must be attuned to the adult learner.

Create community through identity

Due to the nature of distance learning it is especially difficult to create meaningful interplay between students and their instructor. This is often exacerbated by the perceived differences in generational learning modalities. The Millennial generation in particular is often misunderstood by their instructors and classroom peers. In the study, conversation partners often referred to Millennial students as not caring and disengaged. Other conversation partners referred to Millennials as group oriented, optimistic, tolerant and caring. The research illuminates possibilities, technologies and techniques that can encourage understanding, and break through these learning barriers.

Use language to construct identity

Our Millennial students want to be understood. We must get to know them on more than just a surface level. As instructors we should learn their history and language, in order to understand their identity in the world and the culture that will influence who they will become. Herda (1999: 25) explains, “Language plays a crucial role in constructing identity. Our biases represent our openness to the world. They are the conditions under which we experience something, and whereby will be encountered says something to us.”

Unlike previous generations, most of our Millennial students do not even view computers as technology, but more as a medium of communication and expression. “Students today experience technology very differently than faculty do, and the gap between students’ view of technology and that of faculty is growing rapidly” Horizon Report (2007).

Cultivate human presence in the technology-based learning environment

Conversation partners articulated the importance of communication in the distance learning environment. All too often instructor presence in the online classroom is limited to posting weekly memos and instructions to the class along with sending the occasional email to the confused and often frustrated adult learner.

Don’t try to replicate the Face-to-Face Classroom in a virtual Learning Environment

Another counter-productive myth is the idea that the distance learning environment should replicate what happens in the classroom. Lack of the human

element limits success in online learning to only the most self-reliant and diligent students, who have great written communication skills. Online instructors have a responsibility to go beyond the intermittent interactions with adult learners in the online classroom and use the technology in an effort to create meaning and identity.

Encourage storytelling

Participation and imagination are essential in the development of a sense of community. Of all the powers of humankind, imagination is one of the most powerful to envision something that does not exist. Telling a story is an engaging method of gaining valuable insight into the identity of the other. “Storytelling invites us to become not just agents of our own lives, but narrators and readers as well, it shows us that the untold life is not worth living” (2001: 156). Kearney stresses the importance of story as the primary source of meaning in our lives.

Implications and Recommendations

The implications and recommendations of this study emerge from the narratives and their interpretation as told by conversation partners. As well as holding the possibility of influencing educational policy, the study may be most beneficial in envisioning possibilities for the future that may come from online cultural interaction through modern pedagogy. The qualities of education that seem to accommodate the developmental needs of adult students may be well captured by the technological learning environment.

Distance learning instructors should be educated not only on the use of technology in the learning environment, but the appropriate and engendering use

of this technology to promote solicitude. In the online world identity can be expressed in many ways. Whether through text, video, multimedia, sound or synchronous learning, the distance education instructor must use technology to cultivate a relationship with online adult learners.

Through the exploration of the language and identity of adult learners, more meaningful online interactions between student-student and student-instructor may lead to greater success and retention in the virtual classroom. The research suggests that this is especially true in the multi-generational learning environment.

Conversation partners often brought up problems with Millennial Identity in the virtual classroom. Conversation data suggests there exists an imbalance in the virtual and real elements of technology-based learning which creates an opportunity for college instructors and administrators to address this disparity with curriculum designed to engage both the real and virtual lifeworld of the Millennial adult learner.

Adult learners will benefit greatly in the recognition of themselves and others as individuals within a learning community. The use of story in the technology-based curriculum engenders this community's narrative foundation, manifesting a world conducive to meaningful interaction. The use of story might be a way to engage adult learners as a way to develop adult learner identity and promote solicitude.

Instructors should allow adult learners to use technology to express their identity with sound clips, textual anecdotes and multimedia. A simple example

might be the posting of a video introduction of the instructor, not only explaining class expectations, but using this engagement as an opportunity to grasp the learner with a story.

One of the primary concerns raised in this research is the emulation of a traditional face-to-face classroom which exacerbates the identity crisis in the online learning environment. Conversation partners suggest that distance learning environments should not attempt to replicate what happens in the classroom.

Finally, the research suggests that the human presence in the technology-based learning context is primary. To understand our virtual adult learners we must get to know them on more than just a surface level. As instructors, we must learn their history and language in order to understand their identity in the world, and the culture that will influence who they will become.

Suggestions for Further Research

Conversation partners in the study often referred to a fragmentation or imbalance in which the Millennials are immersed. Due to the fragmented style of Millennial learning, it is becoming increasingly important to find a way to bridge these learning disparities and find better methods to reach these students. Part of the challenge is to provide a solid learning foundation while keeping the attention of our new Millennial students.

This imbalance could be an opportunity for college instructors and administrators to address this “quasi-schizophrenia” with curriculum designed to engage both the real and virtual lifeworld of the Millennial adult learner. This might suggest that the opportunity exists to create technology-based learning

environments that address Gardner's (1993) theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Modern telecommunications technology and advances in computer hardware and software have provided new opportunities for the expression of adult learner identity through narrative and imagination. I believe that the areas of understanding how the adult learner creates meaning and identity in the technology-based learning context might be analyzed in an effort to gain understanding of our students and creating a learning text that will elicit solicitude. Ricoeur's emphasis on solicitude and understanding might bring about new understandings of adult learner culture, and help cultivate meaningful methods for reaching students.

Narrative has strong implications for the construction of curriculum that will engage these young adult learners and allow them to emplot a lifeworld that will enable them to make sense of their learning in their lives. In order to truly see these individuals, it is important to create learning opportunities that foster identity. Through this narrative there exists possibility of creating new understandings. As learning professionals, it might behoove us to learn about the identity, history and language of our students, in order to understand their identity in the world, and the culture that will influence who they will become.

Conclusion

Research in critical hermeneutics allows the voice of conversation participants to be expressed as a living text. This interpretive approach plays with themes in individual and collective narratives to identify emerging and repeating patterns of understanding. Unlike qualitative and quantitative research designs, the

strength of critical hermeneutic research lies in the interplay of the experiences of the research participants and the interpretive analysis performed by the researcher.

If we take seriously the act of reinterpreting our world and our past activities, we will realize that we are not simply reviewing and analyzing past theories, policies, or assuming the role of the advocate. Rather we are using our knowledge and understandings to aid in shaping the future and interpreting the past with a pre-orientation that we will use this knowledge to create new possibilities for the future.' (Herda 1999: 33).

Conversation partners were asked to investigate the ways they see themselves participating in a community/culture and share their understandings about their sense of identity in a technological learning context. Additionally, the phenomenon of how learners interact with each other using typed messages as the primary means of communication was explored. It is the hope of this research that college students, instructors and administrators might see the benefits of the use of narrative identity, language and story and weave these concepts into their professional practice.

Of all the powers of humankind, imagination is one of the most powerful to envision something that does not exist. It is part of our existence, open ended, pictorial, and metaphorical. Imagination is a cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility grounded from our past.

Language is not just symbolic expression. Music, art, culture are also symbolic expressions each expression has a horizon. Ricoeur states that narrative identity, "...constructs a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character in the plot of the story a person tells about him or herself. The story becomes that person's actual history." (Ricoeur 1988, 247). Ricoeur (1981: 221) states that the,

“dialectic of interpretive stance as text- ultimately the correlation between explanation and understanding an explanation, is the hermeneutic cycle.” This implication leads to opportunity for the instructor to create a world in the text. There is no other way to engage students, other than through meaningful contact with the other. The world of the online classroom can be filled with meaning or despair.

We find ourselves continuously in a changing world. What if we could alter our perspective to see the potential in the other, what Gadamer (1960) calls the ‘kingdom of as if’? We might realize that everything comes back to understanding and a self, our being in the world and our relationship to the other.

Personal Reflections

The entire research process led to new understandings. During research conversations I felt moments of illumination and deeper understanding. It was however the opportunity to set these conversations into a written text by transcribing the recorded conversations word by word and carefully parsing every nuance which led to fusion of horizons.

I sat with this text, engaged in the conversation data, carefully pulling out ideas and themes that came from conversations. I organized these themes and re-organized them, carefully considering how each conversation topic related to hermeneutic theory. Finally I became so familiar with the conversation data that I started to dream about meeting with conversation partners.

Gadamer (1960) describes a fusion of horizons, as the process of expanding our horizons. We live in a world of changing horizons and this very

nature allows for its fusion. Our interpretations are grounded in understanding and manifest in self-realization through understanding. Our horizon is the range of vision from a particular vantage point. A fusion of horizons involves change happening in an individual in conversation, but also can be between person and text. Our worlds are our perspectives and our horizons can be different. A fusion of horizons leads the person to new understandings that did not exist before the event.

New learning and understanding expands our horizons, our horizon, helps us understand who we are in relationship to the other. In conversation, we come to fusion of horizons, when we reconfigure the past to rethink the future and it is through fusion of horizons, we come to the truth of hermeneutic understanding. Our horizons of present and past fuse into one great horizon. We do not disconnect from the past. This fusion is universal, and nothing in principle is beyond the possibility of understanding. In this way, real conversations lead to an understanding that transcends the protocol in which it is revealed. Our new understanding leads to change actions, behavior, and reasoning. Gadamer asserts that the interpreter's past and prejudices are necessary conditions for understanding. With that a-ha moment our horizons change. In conversation, we move from "my world", "the world", "to our world". The 'ah ha' comes when we reach real understanding.

This extraordinary process has enriched my life in many areas. I now have a deeper understanding of my Millennial students, I have had the opportunity to envision how technology can be used to enhance adult learning, and gain clarity

on how this technology can be used to foster real community in distance education. Ricoeur's theory of Narrative Identity has provided me with a foundation through which meaningful curriculum and pedagogy can be implemented in the technology-based learning context. Finally and most important, I have had an opportunity to gain a profound understanding of my conversation partners and experienced the true nature of solicitude. Everything comes back to understanding the self and our being in the world in relationship to the other.

Afterword

Art and Play in Technology Based Curriculum

“... what does the concept of play, have to do with the ontology of a work of art, truth and with hermeneutical understanding? It has to answer in a word, I think Gadamer would say “everything” Bernstein (1983: 22).

As instructors in the technology-based learning context, we might look to identity, imagination, story and play to create meaningful learning environments. Why not try and break out of our traditional modes of being and look at the potential of story and play within our learning environments.

A story interprets human life and allows for new understanding; Language is not just symbolic expression. Music, art, culture are also symbolic expressions each expression has a horizon. When interpreting art, there is a freedom that exists in that it can be interpreted in a multitude of ways such that there cannot be a misunderstanding. The work of art and the reader, partners in a dialogue whereby the art, as play, mediates a subject.

There is a dynamic interaction or transaction between a work of art in the spectator who shares in it. The arts as a narrative are rich in meaning and values. In our current era of television and video games, the arts are a sanctuary, which must be preserved and nurtured. The arts are a tool for creating identity, community, and culture. The arts keep our imagination alive, and create future possibilities for our world.

Play leads to deeper meaning and understanding your imagination and improvisation. Bernstein sees the being of a work of art as play, "...the being of a work of art is play, which needs to be perceived by the spectator in order to be completed" Bernstein (1983: 24).

Additionally play allows you to create understanding through conversation, and interpretation, as Gadamer says, "it is thus the nature of dramatic or musical words that their performance at different times and on different occasions is, and must be different... the viewer of today not only sees in a different way, but sees different things" Gadamer (1989:130).

Our students might realize their own possibilities when we help them imagine a possible world that could exist. It is in narrative identity that we might help them accomplish greatness.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Acceptance Letter

May 3, 2007

Dear Mr. Rosen:

Thank you for sending in the requested revision. It was rec'd by the IRB office assistant today. The following is your approval:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #07-024). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.
2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.
3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

IRBPHS University of San Francisco
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2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117-1080
(415) 422-6091 (Message)
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irbphs@usfca.edu

<http://www.usfca.edu/humansubjects/>

APPENDIX B

Letter of Participation in Research

Scott Rosen

Date
Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization (if applicable)
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms.:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research. My research explores the role of technology in adult learning. I am hopeful that the data of this research will be analyzed to better understand the phenomena of technology and the adult learner. I am inviting technology experts, students, administrators, and faculty practitioners to participate in this research and to discuss their experiences.

In addition to agreeing to have a conversation with me, I am also seeking your permission to both record and transcribe our conversation. In doing so, our conversation will act as data for the analysis of the context I have described. Once transcribed, I will provide you a copy of our conversation for your review. You may add or delete any section of the conversation at that time. Once I receive your approval, I will use our conversation to support my analysis. Data that you contribute, your name, and your position will not be held confidential.

Your participation in this research is contingent upon your signing a consent form, a copy of which you will keep. By signing, you will be granting me permission to audio record and transcribe our conversation(s). In this way, our conversation(s) will provide data for the analysis of the subject I have described. Once transcribed, I will provide you with a copy of our conversation for your review, comments, and editing. You may add to or delete any section of the conversation at that time. Once I have received your approval of the transcript, I will proceed with the work of analyzing our conversation. Your name and affiliation, the data you contribute, and the date of our conversation will not be held confidential.

While the conversations and transcripts in this research are collaborative, the writing that comes from them will be my product, and may include some of your editing. You therefore consent to forgo anonymity under these conditions. You acknowledge that you have been given complete and clear information about this research, and it is your option to make the decision at the outset about whether to participate or not, and can withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.

Below you will find a series of proposed questions. These questions are intended

as guidelines to direct our conversation(s). I would like to emphasize that I am seeking stories that reflect your personal history and experience with the topic at hand. My hope is that our conversation will provide an opportunity for us both to reach new understandings.

Please consider these questions in light of your experiences:

- How do you express who you are in an online learning environment vs. face to face learning environment?
- How can technology assist adult learners as a medium for the expression of identity?
- In what way does the use of technology prohibit the expression of identity?
- How do you interpret the difference between the way the traditional college student (age 18 - 25) and older adult learners use technology?

Again, thank you for your willingness to meet with me. I look forward to our conversation.

Sincerely,

Scott Rosen
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco School of Education

APPENDIX C

Confirmation Letter to Participate in Research

Scott Rosen

Date

Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization (if
applicable)
Address

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research. I am interested in hearing your experiences of technology and emerging understandings in adult learning. I am hopeful that the data of this research will be analyzed to better understand the phenomena of technology and the adult learner.

I am confirming our meeting on _____ . Please let me know if you need to change our arranged place, time or date.

With your permission, I will record our conversation, transcribe the tapes into a written text, and submit the text for your review. After your review, I would like to discuss the conversation we had and review your changes (if needed). Please remember that the data for this research are not confidential.

The exchange of ideas in conversation is the format for my participatory research. It allows you to comment, add, or delete the transcript. This process will not only allow you to correct anything stated in our conversation but it also allows you the opportunity to reflect on our conversation. Only after your approval will I look at the text of the conversation that we had, gather new ideas, and possibly adjust my area under investigation and continue my research.

Once again, thank you and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Scott Rosen
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco School of Education

APPENDIX D

Sample Thank You Letter

Scott Rosen

Date

Participant's Name and Title
Company or Organization (if applicable)
Address

Dear Mr./Ms.:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on _____. I appreciate your willingness to participate in my research project. I am grateful for the insights you provided me.

Please take a moment to glance through the attached transcript and to add the changes or clarifying comments you feel are appropriate. I will contact you in two weeks to discuss any changes that you might have made. As a reminder, I will be using the attached transcript as data in my analysis for Refiguring Technology: Emerging Understandings in Adult Learning

Again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Scott Rosen
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco School of Education

APPENDIX E

Copy of Pilot Study Transcription: Will Baty

Conversation with Will Baty November 17, 2006

SR: The dissertation title I'm still trying to craft right now and is interesting because one of the things my dissertation chair said is the title of it is going to be something like refiguring technology, emerging understandings in technology among adult learners. And she doesn't want me to reuse technology again. I will have to think of some kind of term other than using technology again among adult learners. Basically the idea is to have a conversation. Let me tell you a little bit about what I know about your background and you can fill in. The nice thing you said is we're colleagues and we work together. Right now you are the Dean of Learning Resources and Educational Technology. One of the interesting things about you is that you have been planning out this super high tech learning library for the last 20 years and this has been a dream of yours. It's been awesome to see it all come together the way it is. One of the things I'm interested in talking to you about is the philosophy of adult learning and technology. I believe the learning environment and yourself is the perfect combination of phenomena that I'm trying to study for this dissertation. Do you want to give some background about yourself?

WB: I have been at the college since 1978. When I came here I was the youngest faculty member they ever hired. I was 27 years old. Now I'm clearly one of the gray beards. My orientation has always been that libraries are about learning. They have been about collective learning, traditional learning, collecting resources and they have been repository. The big shift occurred with the computer that it wasn't just about collecting and storing, it was collecting, storing and making things accessible. Particularly making things accessible in a completely different method than the old traditional method which was the analog method, the card catalog. The card catalog had the beginnings of the web at see references and see also a subject structure of codification and classification and overlaying everything. You could look up a particular book and then all the other books on the subject of deforestation in the US.... With the advent of the computer two things happened. Access technology radically changed and the physical format of information fundamentally changed. We were no longer talking about print collections that were just book and journal titles. We were talking about media, the internet, data bases, the web. All of that offered a variety of formats that become available for people to use for research just multiplied in a phenomenal way. The power of technology to store those, access them

and organize them also radically changed. Libraries have kind of been from my perspective probably more effected by computers and information technology than any other institution in the college. Not only are you using the technology but the technology itself is a format.

SR: Would you say there has been a major shift in paradigm?

WB: Yes, completely. I think that shift has been away from a repository to essentially a repository portal teaching environment. Particularly what I like about Community Colleges is have a lot more flexibility both in their mission is so broad and the types of learners we deal with is so broad. There are some advantages to that because it lets you try out a lot of different things. There were three community colleges in the state to offer the internet. We were one of the three. I read about the grant. I didn't know much about the internet but I knew it was something we should be looking at. I went over to computing services at that time it was Bob Schooling. He didn't know much about it either but he said if you want to do this, we'll support it. This was in the 80's. It was a scholarly network. We wanted to see what applications would occur that people might use at a community college. We did a lot of trainings, went around statewide and trained other libraries at other colleges. From early on I have always been interested in technology and how we can use it to do things to open things up and make it more accessible to people. One of the fundamental things of being a librarian, there's a saying I know you've heard that information wants to be free. Librarians are about making information free. One of the things I always enjoyed about librarians is that there is kind of a subversive quality in our professional because we think information will change. Our job is not to say channel the information or say this point of view is correct. Our job is to make everything available as we possibly can. That part of the profession has always been appealing to me and being at a community college dealing with a lot of varieties and types of users, disciplines, etc. That is some background of this project. One of the advantages we had was that it kept getting stalled at funding. It meant that every time it got stalled I got to go back and rethink what we were doing. We developed 8 or 9 fundamental principles of design or concept that drove our building program. All buildings have a program which have nothing to do necessarily with what the architects do until you've designed what it is. So, our very first thing was that libraries should be and are the commons of the campus. It is one of the few places that students, faculty and staff come into a building that is dedicated to learning or information and it's a non graded environment. It's kind of a free zone. It's a place they all hold in common and use in common. There's the idea that libraries are about learning and learning is a social phenomenon. It's always an individual in response to an environment and the environment is primarily human created or natural. We then looked at the fact that our particular library has a real connection to instruction.

We're not a research library. We were interested in having our focus shift to having everything designed around our users. Everything we knew, everything we observed, etc. in terms of the library itself. Its massing, its organization, its structure and at the next level down floor by floor what learning spaces needed to be designed and what kinds of learning would they be supporting. Once you are on a floor and in an individual space I can show you the technology, the building technology, the finishes, the furniture, etc. are all part of articulating that general vision about focusing on learning. What does a student need to be successful? We talked about the library carrels. There were three different structures. They all looked the same. We wanted the ADA terminals or handicapped terminals not to feel like they were something separate. We didn't want the whole thing about ghettoizing, separated. Let's just integrate it so we designed our own carrels. We couldn't find anything on the market that did that. It turned out it was cheaper than buying premade furniture. We got a much nicer looking product and at the same time when you look at something like that we were looking at the focus of the user. The second key element was using technology as the solution to the ongoing problem that libraries have which is our information base is growing at an exponential rate. What humans know is expanding and expanding. It is estimated that everything we know doubles every six years. Everything we know in all the sciences is documented. It's either in journal proceedings, it's in books, it's in databases. How do libraries as a challenge take that information, make it available, organize it, index it, catalog it and store it. What I was interested in was exploring how we would use technology to not only provide access but it would solve our storage conundrum. We currently have 26 on-line data bases that you can search remotely or within the building or anywhere on our campus 24/7. We don't have to store journals because InfoTrack stores over 5,000 journals on line full text. We're storing them at a vendor but the technology allows us to not only have access to it but to have everything organized in the Library of Congress and show our local holdings as well as the remote holdings. We're going to use the network and leverage the network's ability to store as opposed to store physical formats. That is a fundamental shift. We jumped into that right off the bat. A lot of libraries are still struggling with that concept. They want to keep building and it is very hard to do and it's not cost effective. The other thing that was really reinforced is the library as a place. Part of the college experience has always been you have your student interaction, dining hall, student unions and libraries. Most people who do a 4 year or graduate program spend a lot of time at some point using library resources. It's part of the experience of being at a college. Our average student age is 34. They are busy with jobs, careers, families over and above what they are doing at school. They need a place from their busy life to study, be quiet, and work their way through issues. The library is that place. When you take all that, the commons, the focus of learning, learning is social, whereabouts instruction, library is place and using technology. These

were our fundamental principles that was used when we met with the architects. Every time something would come up I would say how does that relate to this. Often they would not know. If you articulate and I would what we need. All of our library carrels are 42 and oversized are 64. I always go back and focus on the user. Is there a technological solution and integration I needed to be looking at. The building itself reflects that. The other element that I wanted the building to do. Is the library is about learning I wanted to also learn about sustainable architecture and green architecture. I wanted the building to teach him that there is a better way to build these buildings than what we have been doing in the past. More energy efficient, more healthy, more conducive to learning.

SR: How many people attended the opening/dedication of the library?

WB: Between 1200 and 1400 people.

SR: My wife and baby attended the dedication. She commented that this place inspires me to want to learn. I can't express that enough.

WB: I gave this long introduction because the realization that everything that people experience when they go in that building is a reflection essentially of the application of rationality or ideas and how they expressed themselves in a physical manifestation. In this case, as a building. Maggini Hall was a last minute decision to do health sciences and health occupations. They shifted their focus in mid flight and added another floor and they ended up with a much less functional building for computing. That's a case instead of taking the time to do it right it could have been so much better. We could have had a focus on a computing commons. We could have had much better technical support, we could have an infrastructure that was designed to be segmental and added on. That wasn't how that building was put together. When you do that you end up with buildings that doesn't accomplish their purpose partly because the purpose wasn't clearly articulated. One of the things we are finding is that the behavior of our students is much better than it was in the old building. They are more courteous and more quiet. We know that colors and other kinds of things influence peoples' moods. I looked at the student from MIT. It talked about office designs and how do you encourage among faculty collaboration, interaction, etc. What you do is design your offices in a number of ways but you make each individual office by maximizing daylight, people are healthier, show up to work more often, they have a higher level of motivation, they have natural light available. We put all of those factors to work with 99% of the offices are on the edge of the building benefiting from daylight. You layout offices in such a way so that people walk by each other. I also put glass doors on most of the offices and lots of interior windows for transparency. If you are going to go collegiality you can't have people hole up which is what most people want. Those are the

kind of things we applies to staff space. We have 27 group study rooms in the library because one of the most highly requested types of study that people want to do is group or collaborative learning. Given that collaborative learning is such a focus on work of group projects. They are almost in constant use. Some of the carrols are oversized that are in our reference area so two to three students can sit around one machine. Not only are they working on projects they can talk about it. We really emphasized it in the Center for New Media which is our Faculty and Staff Development area. We have a section where we demo and then you can go to the machines and work individually or collaboratively. Plus we have the individual design studios which are all checked out to faculty working on projects. We've got different kinds of learning going on in that one space. I made that space completely transparent because I wanted students to see their teachers as students, learning. Learning is the fundamental reason the building is there. Those are examples of how the principles played to it.

SR: The entire building whether it's hard wire or wireless there is the ability to get on line or onto the network anywhere in that building. On the first floor you have a TV studio and work stations for films and high def. How did this come about in your philosophy? If you were to imagine this space ten years from now and put yourself ten years into the future?

WB: The activity you are trying to support is not going to change at all. You are still trying to learn. The forms, the formats, the technology is going to change. One of the things you want to do knowing that it's going to change is design spaces that are really flexible. Which means you don't have a lot of interior walls. It has big open spaces. You design this structure so it can carry any load within the four walls. Inner walls can be changed around because they are not load bearing. Part of thinking about the future was thinking about what is it people are going to do in this space. The other thing is that you have to design your technology in such a way that it's really flexible because wireless was new when we started designing this building and we said we wanted a wireless building. The electrical engineer said why. 10 megabytes is fast enough for most of the library applications. Where we need the real speed is on the third floor in the Center for New Media and in Media Services where you are using really large files.

SR: You are talking about these kinds of files not being text files anymore but you are talking about live high def video, audio/video conversations over teleconferencing, etc. The ability for the student to internet instantaneously access these files and be able to participate.

WB Where we knew there would be high bandwidth demands we went as high as we could with latest cap 6 knowing fundamentally that we'd be switching all that out as it gets faster, quicker, better. That's a given. In the meantime we

have the spaces set up so they can receive those change ups very easily. We put in double the amount of conduit so we have all these open runs where we can bring all the new stuff in. That was an expense we took on. That was one of our focuses. To use building technologies to give us more flexibility when we actually apply different and new learning technologies that we couldn't imagine. While the library is very open media is the exact opposite. These are all very confined, closed, discrete spaces. Partly because there is very expensive equipment in there so it has to be controlled, partly because a lot of what goes on needs to be either mediated with a technician or you need a quiet space with no distraction. There you don't want the flexibility of space you want discrete confined spaces. That was what we did in media as much as we could and then we have for flexibility production suites that are meant to be used by the faculty member and we have production suites that are meant to be used by media services producing things. Staff driven function versus individual function. The other thing we did from an infrastructure view point is the television studio. It is commonly the singularly most high density of technology of anywhere in the building. The television stuff is really technology intensive and staff intensive. We did not isolate that we made the television studio and put its own fiber backbone in and we piped that fiber backbone up to the third floor to the center for the media. We can tape your lecture in a really high quality environment. You can come up on the third floor, the signals there on a hard drive and you can edit and do all the things you need to do there on machines that are bi-platform so we don't care if you are a PC user, window user or an apple user. It doesn't matter because the machine supports both.

SR: One of the themes I hear coming up is this whole idea of transparency. Not only with the walls and so forth but the technology is transparent. I noticed that the computers in the Media Center are both Mac and PC. All of the technology in there is transparent and its functional.

WB: That's part of the goal. When you say you want to make a building flexible and transparent. It isn't just the building. That's the point I would make over and over. You have these ideas, you have the overall building, you have individual spaces, you have furniture. Is it all directed back to the idea-it won't work. You are making a connection that I haven't verbalized and it's a good one. Is that the transparency applies across the board. Open spaces, open access, open visual, open technology and trying not to channel it one way or the other.

SR: Is this a phenomena that occurring throughout the country right now. This is one of the most state of the art situations that exist maybe in the world.

WB: There are other libraries like this. I've toured a ton of libraries and picked up my ideas from other places. You see that learning is social. We all learn from

somebody else or something. What I think that makes this project unique is that we really stayed focused on our principles. Part of that is basically it was my project and I didn't have to consult with anybody. When you do everything by committee, so much is tied up in the politics. That was an advantage to me that I really did have a free reign. The other thing was that and I didn't have to compromise. There are lots of compromises in the building. None of them in anyway compromised our vision overall. We were able to do all the things we needed to do. When we did the original programming for the building, I had 78 individual faculty members helping define what they wanted in a library. I had these all in binders. I synthesized all that. I had to find out what was in common. What they really were talking about was they needed a teaching classroom. We have three different types of teaching classrooms in the building. Ones that are demo, others that are a computer lab, others like the center for media where you can do 4 or 5 different teaching modalities in that room. We knew that that was critical. The thing that will really make a library work is to get the faculty as much as you can back into the building. Faculty tend to be discipline specific. They tend to come and go. Some are like independent subcontractors they come do their hours and they go. What we are really seeing and I'm happy about is that the number of faculty in the building has more than quadrupled on a daily basis. The Math department comes in everyday in different groups. People like the space and they realize this space was designed for me. I can use this space. The laptop checkout program has been a massive success.

SR: I have done that and it was so easy. All I had to do was push the on button. It was a wonderful experience. When I was finished I just gave it back and see you later.

WB: That comes out of this whole idea of digital divide. I wanted us to be able to say I don't care what your economic status is you have access to a laptop. It also came out of the idea that if learning is social and people need to get together laptops and wireless to create on the fly. It's instant labs. We have three math students everyday who go into the coffee house. They get the laptops out and run their software programs they have to do for assignments. They love it. The other thing students are doing is we know that technology, laptops as an example are very portable so we had Dell design all of our machines with US feed ports right on the monitor. The reason is so they can put their thumb?? drive and flash drives in there, download their data and off they go. We now subscribe to a lot of databases and one of our requirements with that database manufacturer is to allow students to email articles.

SR: That whole phenomena about using these databases is so wonderful and that has actually got me through all of my master's degree and bachelor's degree. Being able to go to the library, find the articles and not have to sit right there. Not have to make a copy of them but just email them to yourself. Then you

get on the email letter and here you go with your five or six articles that you spent time finding that day.

WB: All of these things come together in a way. The building just expresses it well.

SR: One of the things I'm interested in is identity. We've been talking a lot about the identity of the community college student. My focus is especially on adult learners. Can you talk to me about who an adult learner is and any identity issues that you are seeing. You mentioned that community colleges get to serve everybody in the community. How does that play out?

WB: Essentially, most of our students are adult learners. We have adult learners who come in the morning that tend to be 18-24 somewhere in that range. They are the standard college student. From noon on and it really accelerates from 5pm on are the people who are truly working adults, community members who aren't the traditional college student and they make up over 50% of our student population. One thing I recommend is looking at the JC Fact Book. It's got some good demographics in it. Those folks have a different set of needs. The younger part of the adult learning are into social networking like MySpace. They do it in a social context. When we opened the library six out of 10 machines were doing some sort of social networking early in the semester. Now you walk through seven or eight of the machines are doing research because its midterm time and term paper time. One of the things is the modality of their focus changes throughout the semester. Because we built spaces and access stations that you can just use certain things. Not all the stations have Microsoft Word on them but a significant portion of them do. Those are our most heavily used. We want to change our machines so that Microsoft Suite is on every machine. Older people because they are not into social networking want more quiet. They want more discrete, quiet spaces, etc. Older people who have limited amounts of time want to focus. It's noisy at home, it's noisy at work they could come here and work. The adult learner is such a huge spectrum. You've got to focus. There's a discrete group of people who only use the library for course assignments like their instructor put an article on reserve. They are very focused because they have limited time. They want to get in and get out. Part of the reason we made the building the way we did is for people when they come into the rotunda they can see all the service points immediately. If you're in a hurry everything is around the hub the rotunda. That was another conscious decision to make it east to find things.

SR: Do you see a lot of adult learners. You mentioned the digital divide and that's something I'm also very interested in with my topic is technology in adult learning especially adults that weren't necessarily exposed technology when they were younger. The younger college kids kind of grew up with a

mouse in their hands. It's not even technology to them. It's just part of learning. For the older students I'm finding that technology, computer technology, the internet and networking is becoming fairly widely known through the adult community. However, do you ever notice that folks come in and actually traverse that digital divide and know that space that you are talking about and enable someone who really doesn't have any computer experience or even really know what a network is. To be able to go in and fairly easily feel comfortable enough to sit down and try it.

WB: You can tie that fact to your notion of transparency. If you do it right, you could in many cases you don't have to know anything about a network. It's like knowing how to use an electrical circuit. You don't need to know anything about it. Learning technologies to be successful need to be constantly moving in that direction. One of the reasons the iPod is so phenomenally successful is that the interface is just about idiot proof. That's a good combination of a physical interface as well as a textual software interface. They are both layered on top of each other. When the design is good it's ??? integrated and whether its immediately transparent to the user.

SR: That's another phenomena that I've been studying as well. Before I became a faculty member at the college I worked at Hewlett-Packard now its called Agilent. The department I worked in was Engineering Services. We specifically did ability engineering. We did spec analyzing figuring out where to put the button or how the software should look, feel and act. That whole idea of transparency is going to a major theme here in this paper. We're having a dialogue. I wanted to ask you about books you have read that inspired you. Is there anything in particular that you can think of that got you thinking about this idea? What are your inspirational sources?

WB: My background is philosophy. I'm interested in ideas fundamentally. Early on I think one of the things that was really influential in my way of thinking was Plato and the allegory of the Cave. It's one of the first depictions I ever ran into as a young person about how reality or consciousness works. You make this journey out to the light through rationality. I was very interested in that. It was a very essential thing. The other two things for me personally. I spent a lot of time in college studying Nietzsche. I was very interested in the idea of a passionate life. To be engaged in life so passionately and calls it the love of your faith. Your love of faith means not only you love all the great things you love all the bad things because its all part of life. That was very fundamental. The other thing that I think about where I made the shift professionally. The whole earth catalog was one of the greatest thing I had ever seen even though it was in a print format that integrated multimedia types of things and linked everything together. The emphasis in the Whole Earth Catalog over and over again was tools for living. It was really about technology but technology is defined as the Greek's would define in technos.

Technos is much more than an individual tool, it is an entire approach to life. I always see it fundamentally as the application of the mind to reality and the synthesis that occurs that results in how reality itself gets molded and changed. There is a synthetic quality to both our consciousness and our reality that I find really fascinating. I see it in myself and I see it in lots of other people. Where the project you are doing is going to change you. You are starting out as one person by the time you are done using the tools you are going to come out of this a different person.

SR: There's a couple of philosophers I've been interested in Heidegger and LaCore and it's all about being and change and dosiyn???

WB: I've read a fair amount of Heidegger and always found him to be just wonderful because his stuff is dense. You have to really work for it but when you do the reward is good.

SR: This is kind of philosophical under opinions that I'm going to tie in to the kind of things that you are talking on in pulling out these different themes. Transparency will definitely be a theme. We can tie that in philosophically.

WB: One of the things I'm interested in doing with the new library and we started a lecture series and we did our first one. This donor gave us a pretty valuable collection on Lewis and Clark and so he wanted to be the first, because he was underwriting to be discussed. What was fascinating is we brought in a scholar on Lewis and Clark who did all the editing of the 13 volumes of the journals and they're called the Molten Edition. His name is Gary Molten. You always have a worry when you bring a scholar because a scholar can be brilliant but cannot be able to speak worth a damn. This guy was a storyteller. He had a southern accent tempered by 30 years at the University of Nebraska. He had this Midwestern overlay and his voice was like being on the Missouri River. It just rolled and flowed. The speaker series is part of the programming we're going to start doing. I want to run a film series. One of the great things about Mary going to Florence is that we spent an entire year doing nothing but reading about the Renaissance. I read incredible scholarly tones on the architecture of Florence and all the famous thinkers so we would love to do an Italian Film Series. I idea would be to have a faculty member introduce in 5 or 10 minutes one film. What did you get out of this, when did you see it, what did you like about it? We'd watch the film and then have a little discussion afterwards. I also want to integrate during the day activities at lunch and call them brown bag sessions. We would do things like you sitting down and talking to people to come together as faculty and talk. One of the down sides of being at the JC is that you don't get the kind of intellectual stimulation you might like from colleagues all the time. I want to use the building as a focal point to get faculty conversations going on. One of the reasons I wanted to put a coffee house in the library was for

this reason.

SR: Starbucks is not just selling coffee. They're selling a space, a place to hang, a place to be.

WB: Spaces where we hang out whether they are public, private, etc. where people have a chance to interact. It used to be the town square. Venturi's work on Las Vegas and Robert Metris book Learning from Las Vegas. Las Vegas is the ultimate manifestation of the car culture. Everything is designed to be viewed from a car. This guy is right on the money about how this has manifested itself in Las Vegas and for that matter many communities that are car communities. You look at that. What does it mean for the quality of life, it has all sorts of positive and negatives. The best thing about academia is that there are a lot of smart people in academia. You got to get them out of their office or on campus.

SR: When two people come together with an orientation to meet to reach some kind of understanding or a conversation one of those people can leave with the way they see things fundamentally changes. One of the wonderful things you talked about is that you were analyzing or viewing movies and looking at a movie as a text and what the meaning of that is. This is so exciting because our world can change as a result of interactions.

WB: It's totally a library because the old libraries in Alexandria and throughout the ancient world were gathering places. To me, this is a real library and trying to get back to the roots of what a library was. Not just a place to store things. What you realize when you walk through Michelangelo's library in Florence there is individual spaces and there's all these root spaces. There's a perfectly balanced round rotunda room.
Mary and I recently went to Japan. Tokyo Station moves 7-8 million people everyday through the train station. Greater Tokyo consists of over 30 million people. We went into the train station at rush hour. It's quiet. What is it about their culture that allows that kind of respect in a public space? I've always been interested in Buddhism and Zen. We looked at a lot of temples and started to look at how the spaces there were designed. (Description of hedges to temple and moss garden)

APPENDIX F

Matt Pamatmat: Copy of Transcription

**Conversation with Matt Pamatmat
Café Hip, Santa Rosa**

October 19, 2007

Scott Okay, so we're recording and I'm here with Matt Pamatmat and we are at Café Hip. Matt how do you describe your role here at the Junior College and what you're doing and a little background maybe.

Matt Sure. It's 80 percent with a tech-prep program which is working with the vocational class occupational program and connecting local high schools with what is going on at the JC to try and address that gap between the end of a high school experience for a student and then the entering into SRJC and then the second part is 20 percent is in the Philosophy Department as a tutor mainly with critical thinking classes which is kind of the general education; entry level bread and butter of the department.

Scott Right. And so you're also probably hopefully soon going to be coming aboard as one of our instructors at some point, right?

Matt Oh, that would be great.

Scott Right on. That's awesome. One of the other things we had talked about is that you had just finished your masters degree with a program that was had a huge online component if not all online right?

Matt Well, it had a huge distance learning component. There were only actually a few classes that had the online and kind of were up to speed with today's technology, but it was a traditional program that had been going on for 30 years and it was actually kind of old fashioned in that it was largely about getting books and writing papers and sending those papers in. So, it was incredibly textual but it was all done distance and in a way kind of asynchronous as we were talking about because there was no real instructor contact unless the student made a phone call or made an email and that was always kind of optional because the main thing was to send the papers in and just absorb the text.

Scott Yeah, wouldn't that something you found worked really well for you?

Matt It did because I was a working adult with a brand new baby working full time and having to commute an hour each way to work. So, it was nice to have the weekends to have the spare moments to read and to write and that's what the

program is designed for.

Scott Oftentimes, you find that some at least in some of the classes that I teach where if I don't keep enough contact with my students online that sometimes the students have a tendency to feel kind of like alone and out there and maybe in their own vacuum and so forth. But, were there times where you felt like that?

Matt Yeah, I had a great masters experience for the core class part of it when it came time for the writing the thesis the kind of being out at an outpost and on one zone and having to do this based on written instruction with the few phone calls and emails sometimes almost kind of panicky to the school – that was the difficult part because the thesis is such a precise and involved process and to do that distance learning was difficult. There was no guru there with hand holding and yet you were being held to these standards and to these requirements. So that was the unfun part of it. But it was good to see that because it was about getting through it and sticking with it and eventually getting the degree.

Scott Wow. That's amazing. I hate to see well you must be a really great student to be able to be able to navigate that without too much help from your professors and things like that. Just to be able to kind of grab onto it and navigate your way through it. We've talked about this a little bit but, before but one of the interesting things is you're working with these new students that are coming in what they see high school aged students but also that are becoming the traditional policy students. It ranges from 17 through say 25. Right. How old are you if you don't mind me asking?

Matt Sure, no I'm 34.

Scott 34 yeah

Matt I'm in Generation X

Scott Yeah, myself as well. And so here's something interesting and you're right there in the trenches because part of your job is to create these bridges and pathways between college and high school and so forth for these students and to create not only just the pathway but a successful pathway. How do you see the way these students learn compared to the way you and I learn and kind of what I'm getting at is even I know I struggle and I've taken online courses that are more like correspondence courses where you have mostly asynchronous and you rarely if ever have to be anywhere you just kind of turn in your papers and so forth. And that takes a certain kind of discipline; that takes a certain kind of learning style to be able to first of all to read through the dense materials, follow those instructions, and they're not trying to allude to the fact that these younger students you know the traditional age Generation Y now or Millennials or Gen-Next they call them and so forth. It seems to me that they're interested in a different kind of

presentation of the material. What's your take on that?

Matt I think absolutely they're interested in different take on the material and a big part of the Millennial generation that people talk about and think of them in terms of is technology and it's interesting because the Millennial generation are technological natives. They've grown up and it's been around and it's been part of the infrastructure and the day-to-day experience of being alive. Whereas every generation before that had to emigrate to it to some extent and there's a learning curve there and maybe this is a generalization, but Generation X has been fairly comfortable with technology, the Baby Boomers have had to do a little bit of an adjustment, and then you sometimes see with the Silent Generation that there's sometimes a reluctance to adopting the technology or give it a try and if it's not a good experience. But the Millennial generation it's very second nature. The problem is that the Millennial generation it doesn't have the life experience that the other generations have and so there's this technological knowledge but a kind of somewhat immaturity and lack of knowledge as far as having gone through life and those two are kind of meeting at this crossroad and the other thing education-wise is that I think that a lot of educators are kind of solid Baby Boomers. I know the average age of the teacher at SRJC is 52 or 53 and so their experiences tend to shape how they teach and they kind of came of age in this in this culture of really strong activism and social change which is largely reflected in a lot of what they teach and that has kind of worn off on the Millennial generation but I think that traditional linear book learning or sitting in a classroom absorbing the wisdom from a guru figure of the teacher the Millennial generation is much more used to being stimulated with different senses and kind of having audio and video and a very fragmentary post-modern experience too that is they're the first generation to really be the recipients of this post-modern post-modernity and a kind of fragmented hyper-fast non-linear type of way of learning and also thinking and being. It's a consciousness issue.

Scott Right. You know that's really interesting and again one of things he said was fragmented and you know it's kind of interesting because the fragmentation and so forth we're so...our generation, the Generation Xers sometimes they refer to us as the Sesame Street Generation as well because we were raised with Sesame Street or whatever, but having said that you know this next generation that we see coming in here have been you know they've grown up with a mouse in their hands, they have a pretty good idea of how to use technology to the fact that they can get on the Internet and they can do My Space and a few things, but having said that for example they're knowledge of technology itself is also fragmented as well because these students they don't necessarily look at the computer as technology. I mean they've just kind of grown up with it. Having said that they've never really had to take the time to learn it, the computer's place in society like you say, or how the inputs and the outputs come together to make this system. You know they're not necessarily thinking about the computer as a system per se but more as a means to an end. You know this is my ability to communicate with

people. This is my way to type a term paper. This is my...I'm noticing that a lot of these students are very task oriented when it comes to the computer whether its communication or whether its just a term paper there's not necessarily that appreciation for this is a bigger picture.

For example, I teach CIS 5 I have mostly new students coming in mostly during the day 'cause during the day you get the traditional age students basically 18-25 year olds or what we're calling the Millennial and I notice that they're all very sharp with the technology and they're all very good at learning these things. One of the things is that because I'm teaching a computer class I'm able to design presentations in PowerPoint and so forth that have the big graphics and I can shift gears and I can do bullet points and then I can expand on them give them a variety of lectures, but I do find that when you say fragmented again that these students have a certain understanding you know kind of a, I won't even call it a literacy, but kind of a ability to communicate and utilize the technology but without the maturity to have understanding technology's place in society for example. And you see this a lot with the kind of communications that are happening across these social networking systems like *My Space* and but the interesting thing is have you noticed that this kind of carries over into the academic world. I mean are they using the same type of messagery you know I was talking with another one of my colleagues as an example and he was saying he got an email from a student, "Dude, sorry I turned in the paper late man," anyway it was this very, very informal and so the professor answered his question, but then he kind of you know, "Dude might be the most appropriate way to address your instructor," anyway just to throw that out there and get your musings on that.

Matt I think that like the Sesame Street generation that Generation X is often called Echo Generation because there was this certain echo of the Baby Boomers and there wasn't a radical shift between generations. There was enough connective tissue between those two but by the time you get to the Millennials you've got a really significant increase in technology and society and you've got a new breed and a new strain of people that are showing you significant differences from the Baby Boomer generation. And I was at a work conference where it was largely kind of a gripe session of Baby Boomer educators really trying to figure out their Millennial students. And it wasn't so much the task it was more of this social code and the behaviors and some of that informality and I was in the Philosophy Department yesterday where there was one of the senior instructors kind of probably a Silent Generation teacher talking with the student and the student saw the teacher and said, "What up?"

Scott And the Silent Generation folks that are like 60 and older?

Matt Yeah right. And this guy is kind of has a William S. Burroughs like impeccably dressed and that old school where he's doing things and the juxtaposition of this guy with this old school approach and then this student who was also saying, "Oh sweet." It was pretty wild just to be a fly-on-the-wall for

that. But I think at the same time every generation is perceived by previous generations as “oh, these kids, their language. They don’t understand the history that preceded them. They’re not getting it. They’ve got strength in some areas but like what’s up their social skills.” And I guess the thing I worry about or wonder about with the Millennials is they’ve come of age and they’re so used to this second world that we have online this virtual world that is somewhat of a mirror of the actual physical world we live in but it’s a strange mirror; it’s a fun house mirror.

Scott It’s a fun house mirror. Good.

Matt And like this is the generation that is really growing up in two worlds simultaneously. There’s also a certain not a schizophrenia to it, but you know you can break up with someone on a text message rather in person. What is that going to do to person-to-person social skills and how we kind of act in society and how we connect and disconnect with each other? There’s this whole second life that is going on and it’s just kind of getting bigger and bigger. I think we need to keep a balance between those two worlds and that some people can get imbalanced and be too much in one world or the other.

Scott Yeah, it’s delicate. I mean for example you know what you’re talking about you know these kids and I love your analogy the two old men talking on the park bench, these kids not understanding and so forth these days, so you know it is interesting because we see a lot of junior high school boys as an example and I don’t know one junior high school boy that is not addicted to video games right? He’s kind of growing up in that world there. Interestingly enough, one of things I really like about what you said was the ability to break up with somebody over a text message and one of the things I’m very interested in is the pervasive meaning in a message. And of course we know that story telling goes back to the dawn of time where people sat around campfires and told stories to each other about and so forth...and by our nature we are social beings having said that now we have these other ways to destantiate ourselves from the message and so forth so when you break up with somebody over a text message does that have the same meaning as – you know, what are the connotations with that? Well, I’ll just leave it there.

Matt Yeah, that’s a good question and there’s definitely not a hypocrisy but it’s a weird kind of contradiction we find ourselves in because we are incredibly connected through technology and through the new frontier that is the Internet and the online world. The rules have not all been written yet. There’s an incredible amount of innovation and kind of positive anarchy. But at the same time we are isolated because when we’re in that world, the online world, communicating we’re basically alone with the mouse in front of a computer at a little station and then we’re kind of drowning out the physical world around us and so we’re not connected to both worlds at the same time. You kind of have to be in one or the other and if you go out into nature and you take a hike and connect with that

world you're probably not going to have your little earpiece in and your Blackberry. But it's an interesting place to be in and another thing about the Millennial generation and perhaps actually the generation that succeeds them is this controversial diagnosis of nature deficiency disorder and might make the DSM 5 and it's certainly a controversial one, but as we transform the physical world and make it just a very completely human place for human habitation how does that affect our evolution and like you said our roots in sitting around the campfire and telling stories in that way which is face-to-face, somewhat linear and it involves one person speaking and a group of people or a person listening and you know there are traditional cultures in the world that have that oral kind of communication culture where things are passed on orally. And then I guess it goes back to the Millennial generation not learning linearly but learning piecemeal and going to where they need to find information and also kind of Wikipedia which I've heard a lot of Millennial students do. I recently spoke at the SRJC Journalism class about my journalism experiences in writing and I just kind of said beware Wikipedia. And I wasn't putting it down because it's an amazing platform of leveling the playing field and allowed a breakdown between experts and the common person, but at the same time it opens the floodgates for misinformation and for propaganda and for rumor and for unverified knowledge so and I've heard that Wikipedia is the second most visited site on the Web which is a major trend going on.

Scott Oh, it's amazing you know and as an example I teach research at USF and with these things we're always talking about refereed journals and scholarly forces and so forth and now as an example say my favorite literacy course I have my students go and do a research paper on technology in some way and I like you say really do you know they're going to look at Wikipedia, and I introduce Wikipedia to them, but you know like you say, "Beware of Wikipedia." I always say maybe Wikipedia is a good place to start but never cite Wikipedia you know. It's so interesting I wanted to go back to one of the things that you said and I'm just gonna step back for a second because I think I lost my train of thought. This is excellent stuff; I love this whole concept of fragmentation. This is like popping right out at maybe one of the themes that we're talking about. One of the things that is interesting and I'm trying to think of the quote from Gadamer, it says basically that we belong to history before it belongs to us. I mean we kind of when we're born we're born into this historical setting and we belong to that historical setting, but we don't necessarily take ownership of it. Like you say the fragmented style of learning allows students to learn a little bit about these specific things, but where's the foundation. I mean where is that foundation coming from which is the interesting thing. I mean if we don't read books anymore and we're so used to reading little blips on screen on paragraphs that are shorter than half a page for example and we're more tuned into watching videos; and not that videos are necessarily bad information, but there's something to be said about the style of watching a video versus reading a paragraph. I mean there are some different types of brain activity happening there. And especially with interpretation and so

forth. Matt, I think what I'm really trying to do is and I get what you're saying. It's not that necessarily that the new generation bad or it's different but as educators, you and I, basically try to meet or find the way to bridge these gaps and to find the best presentation for the deliverance of this knowledge and find a way that we can actually have that foundation while keeping the attention span and allowing for this to happen. And I think one of the things that I'm really – the goal of what I'm trying to do with this research work – is to maybe you know the fun thing about this research is so conversational I'm getting so much out of talking with you; thank you for this, you're like the perfect guy to talk to about this. So thank you for that. One of the things I'm kind of hoping for is to take folks like you and glean some of this knowledge and to maybe come up with a set or a couple best practices for addressing adult learning and technology. And one of the things that is coming out with this talk that we're having is the difference between how you know the Millennial generation learns versus the way say Generation X or ourselves learns. One of the interesting things he said was that as Gen-Xers have had to go through this learning curve to learn the technology because it wasn't necessarily invented when we younger. There were computers but it took us till about junior high school to actually get exposed to it and so forth. And we didn't necessarily grow up with a mouse in our hands. We had this learning curve which these younger students they don't even see the computer as technology you know, interestingly enough. What do you think what ways do you think technology prohibits the expression of identity or in what ways does it enhance the expression of identity? And there's a lot of ways we could go with this, but I just want to get your musings on that.

Matt Remember that question in your notes and just back up for one second, yeah I definitely don't want to do the grumpy old men on the bench thing and kind of talk about the dangers or the negative aspects because we live in a really exciting time right now and actually think that Generation X can be a great rich generation between the Millennials and the Baby Boomers and their incredible learning opportunities there. For example, I have a DVD of the band Nine Inch Nails and there are philosophic themes in Nine Inch Nail songs that, and this is a generalization but maybe the Baby Boomer generation wouldn't really be keyed into because they have their own type of music and were steeped in a separate tradition but this is something that could be a bridge of learning; there's a Nine Inch Nails song that is absolutely about solecism which is philosophical. It's a question of whether there's a world outside of our own minds and so you can read that in this dry linear ancient piece of paper or book a professor hands you or a teacher can show a video from the DHD/the DVD which is pretty amazing because its oral you can get the subtitles going on the screen and view the words and when the band plays it they do these images which are also from PowerPoint so you are stimulating a lot of brain areas which I think the Millennial generation is used to is kind of having the brain areas being stimulated simultaneously in a fast pace; maybe a faster pace than previous generations.

As far as identity it's really interesting because in the online world you can kind of be anybody and there is a certain skepticism you have to approach the online world with because impersonation is very easy to do but there's a freedom to that because you don't have to be the person you are in the physical world; you can look different, you can speak different, there's incredible opportunities online to be imaginative and be creative and this mirror fun house world of the online world is kind of both a fictional and a non-fictional world and those two things it's strange but they kind of are strange bedfellows. They sometimes bump into each other to go back to the Wikipedia example what is solid information and what is not? But you have this kind of what Werner Herzog calls an ecstatic truth online and Herzog was saying he's a filmmaker who doesn't distinguish differences between his documentaries and his fiction film. He says that you can take documentaries and add fiction into them and take and create this new level that he calls the ecstatic truth. It's not the documentary truth; the old fashioned documentary truth and it's not a completely fiction movie; it's blending the two. It's rapacious.

Typist's Note: Song: All the Love in the World, From the Album: With Teeth

Scott Right.

Matt And I think that we've got that ecstatic truth going on online and that's interesting because the Millennial generation is going to be steeped in that whereas in previous generations we often made this real strong distinction between fiction and non-fiction; and between like you said scholarly resources and pop culture and just on personal note I really benefit from the mixing of pop culture with traditional themes. And a couple of things I brought today: one is a book is called *Plato and the Internet* so you're taking a philosopher from three hundred B.C. and mixing it with the Internet; *Heidegger Habermoth and the Mobile Phone* it's almost like one of those questions which one doesn't belong in this group? This is taking things and putting them together and it's especially these two books that kind of address these issues that we're talking about and I think this is what the Millennial generation really benefits from is having something ancient and traditional and historical but also relevant to the world they are that live in and that they wake up to and they look around at because I think they're having this happen at SRJC a little bit they live in one world when they're off the campus and then they go to the campus and they're getting this knowledge in a certain medium and the medium is largely the message and they're getting this traditional kind of book learning depending on the teacher. And they're trying to figure out how to make it connect with their actual world of everyday and their concerns and their fears and their hopes. And there's sometimes a disconnect between those two and so they're focusing on what grade am I gonna get, or oh, I don't like this class, but I need it for my GE or I'm just here to transfer. Then it's like they're going through the motions and the learning is not really happening or the learning opportunity is not really happening as well as it could happen depending on the teacher.

Scott Yeah. And you say depending on the teacher. First of all I have to get these books because these are great. *Heidegger Habermoth and the Mobile Phone* and *Plato and the Internet*. This is fantastic! I'll have to write down the ISBN numbers.

Matt They're short but they're dense. They're written, it's a British company that puts these out and there's also an interesting difference between American English and British English and I've noticed that these they have a clarity to them and a precision and ease with the language that I sometimes find lacking in American academia and I know that the Brits are very proud of their language and there are these subtle differences between American English and British English and it also kind of touches on European education and education in the rest of the world versus American culture education; and it touches on maturity levels and how the education system is set up and what the age of consent is and what the drinking age is and all of those things kind of swirled together and I think that best practices wise we can look toward other cultures and learn from the fact that students in Belgium are reading some of these French philosophers that you've got in your dissertation. They're getting exposed to them at the post-secondary level and sometimes even secondary level.

Scott wow

Matt And we have our students reading traditional texts that have been read for a long time, but the students don't get to those levels until the junior college or four-year level and then it's kind of optional whether they want to pursue that or not. It's not really woven into the curriculum.

Scott Yeah, I think the only philosophy course that's required for an associate's degree is critical thinking which is a completely important class, but having said that they're not necessarily exposed to Plato in that class. You know we're talking about *Slippery Slopes and Straw Men* and ...

Matt But Plato is that history we inherit that you were talking about.

Scott From whence it all comes from? I mean the folks from where it comes.

Matt So, I don't know how to address identity...

Scott No, you are the guy to talk to about this. You have done your homework obviously and I can speak to you, not only as a teacher but also as a student because you've been through this before and you're also in the same age group that I am – I'm 37. Definitely what they would call the Generation X and the interesting thing is going back to the Nine Inch Nails video presentation that they had, do you find not only is it delivering the information audio and video and

pictures and stimulus but it's actually a piece of art okay? And which is kind of interesting because you're actually exposing these students to a piece of art that is designed to provoke a response or deliver them some kind of medium whatever interpretation you take away from that. I think that is an example of a very advanced use of this technology versus say slapping together a little PowerPoint presentation with some pictures it might not necessarily be as meaningful or artistic. So, I guess basically what I am trying to assert is that the choice of materials you use to expose these students to maybe just because something is technology doesn't make it something that they're into. Having said that showing them a piece of artwork that is open to that interpretation that's expressive, that's careful, that there has been some thought put into it is more of an ideal vehicle for that type of thing and I guess I'm juxtaposing that against flapping lecture notes up on an Internet website and expecting that students are just going to pull that meaning that deeper meaning away from lecture notes on a website page. Or, just playing a video of a documentary... I have a tendency to go back to Gardner who has a tendency to talk about learning styles and definitely you see some different types of learning styles play themselves out. I finally figured out for myself, of course we're a combination of all these different learning styles, but you know they talk about kinesthetic and oral and visual and so forth, I found I learn best by listening. I love to go into a lecture and listen. As a matter of fact, I don't take too many notes, I just like to kind of just be present and that's a good way for me to learn. And you know when you're talking about the fragmentation of the younger students where sometimes the attention span is a little bit different too because we've kind of grown up with these commercials that are a little you know 15 second bites of information that is kind of thrown in your face but having said that as a society we're kind of getting used to that too because it's our news programs. We don't want to spend any more time than the half hour it takes to deliver the news and that instantized and then we expect to hear the main story and then the secondary story and then a puff piece about somebody that's doing something just to end on a happy note kind of thing. And so we're used this kind of format of being kind of spoon fed this information. And we create a society that might be, I might be generalizing again, but it's like we're alliterate you know we know how to read and write but we almost choose not to because we're caught up in the daily routine and the writing that we do is this fragmented emails and so forth you know just to answer questions and there's a certain informality with that regardless of the age. The other day my wife Gia and her background is psychology and she was talking to me about the fact of generalizations that women write more in an email than men do. And we're just talking about the amount of words it takes to express an idea basically and the difference in genders and of course that's a generalization, but I've actually done a little research on that and maybe there's some truth to that. Like you say, it's an exciting world right now. It's like not quite the Wild West as it used to be but the rules like you say are still being figured out. There's not a code of ethics necessarily. And maybe there are on certain places on the Web or the Internet, but for the most part there's not a set of practices. As a matter of fact, it's set of practices that are being put together. One

of the things I was looking at was the way text messages are formulated and you know the little acronyms that they use and lack of punctuation nothings capitalized and so on and so forth; the mutation of the language. It is a mutation of the language. Interestingly enough, I once wrote a paper about email and talking about email and can that be meaningful and basically what I ended up coming up with, and I'm just talking about the message in itself, you send someone an email and the only way that particular email can be meaningful is if there's some background between the two or more people that have some understand, some previous relationship or context that has to be put into; because the email itself doesn't stand on its own communicating to people. But as far as the meaningful document...

Matt It's lacking lots of things.

Scott It is but however we read into that because of our relationships with the other person that we're talking about this is kind of exciting stuff. But one of the things we see where it plays out is with the generation gap, "Hey Dude, I didn't turn my homework in can you cut me some slack Jack?" And then using the LOLs and the TPFNs and all the language that they use.

Matt I think that emoticons are interesting phenomenon and for my own self I was really opposed to little smiley faces in the text because I tend to be a textual and somewhat visual learner but it just kind of seemed like this Forest Gump kind of smiley face "Don't worry be happy" type of thing, but actually there's a whole other side to emoticons which are that they give something very crucial that is missing in an email which is a tone and facial expression and which is context and there's almost a certain type of autism online because there's a blindness there they called the mind blindness to where someone with autism can't understand the facial expressions or the tone and can't empathize with the other person's point of view or perspective. And you have that in emails because you get these words that are on a screen and you don't really know how to interpret them or what the intention was and so, although it's fast and it's expedient and it's fun and you can do things with email with emoticons and graphics and sounds and things like that, it's the clunky recreation of face-to-face interaction. There's a lot of room for misinterpretation so. And I also heard where you're talking gender differences. Women do talk more, but men kind of try to control the conversation more which is interesting. And also that men react to things where women sometimes anticipate what's coming next and they can sometimes do a little bit better empathizes the other person's point of view and what's going on with the other person so for what that's worth.

Scott Well you talk about these emoticons and for example I do some online teaching and I'll be the first to tell you it's not necessarily my favorite way to teach. Having said that though I have had lots of comments from student that say, "Wow, you're such a fun teacher and you're funny and I really appreciate the time

you spent with us.” So, I do try to make it pleasant. But going back to these emoticons, they’re so useful especially if you want to make a joke because lots of jokes can be misinterpreted and so forth, but if you put that little wink or whatever on there then they can kind of interpret it. I have that same initial reaction to the emoticons, the smiley face and oh, my god, it seems so stupid at the time. And teaching online I find myself grabbing these things because you really need to convey meaning, it’s a way of conveying meaning through expression. Interestingly enough, we have another professor on campus who, have you met Mary Pierce, she is great, she does this whole thing on communications but it’s a non-verbal communications. You’ve heard these statistics when you’re talking that could be over 50 percent of it is actually non-verbal posture and hand gestures. She does this whole unit on how important that non-verbal communication is...

Matt That you’re not going to have online.

Scott Which you don’t necessarily have online. So one of the assertions that I was kind of facing about maybe it is that the technology we’re using right now just hasn’t really matured to a level to where it’s actually becomes very useful. I don’t know because we have television, telephone, messaging, emails, and letters. I’m just kind of thinking the technology seems like it’s so almost there but you know if you get a student that has a slow connection they’re missing out on this whole thing. We’re not all there; we’re not all up to speed on this.

Matt And, another book I brought is the novelization of the movie *Existent* from Oliver Stone which I think flew under the radar. You mentioned video games earlier and if we get games and technology to the point where they’re so organic and infused with our consciousness and our physical bodies there’s this danger that we will lose sight of what’s real and what’s not especially when we have the ecstatic truth and this mixture of fiction/non-fiction in the cyber world. In this book you basically plug into something that actually plugs into your body and instead of it being external and you’re looking at a screen it’s almost like a hallucinogenic experience where it affects your consciousness and then you’re in this other world. And, this is kind of a cautionary tale because a lot of times technology and science perceived and the ethics is running to catch up or the ramifications of it. But if we do get to this high technology where it’s bio-technology that’s infused with our own bodies and we have this continued development of this non-physical world, this virtual world you run this risk of kind of like emulating a mental disorder a psycho-schizophrenia not knowing what’s real or not and it’s a really interesting and well done movie and it’s all about that confusion that the game systems get developed enough and then run their course and they get to this part and it could have this very very dark side. I think we’re seeing it a little bit in how people who break up online or who don’t have as much of that non-verbal communication they might when they’re in the physical world dealing with people they might not want to confront people; they

might want to avoid confrontation and that leads to lacking skills in the service
ness; not being passive, not being aggressive but just being a service because if
you can do things online and do it indirectly and asynchronous that's going to
affect the synchronous world. I mean I think you know we're at 39th place right
now where we have this physical world and we have this interesting mirror world
one of your questions that I really like was what would happen if the technology
just stopped? I think that that's going to be a really big issue of the 21st Century
because of peak energy, oil and what you believe and what statistics you follow
the fact that we're having powered this world of technology and computers on oil
and on coal and on electricity and we've built up this world and those are non-
renewable fossil fuels rights. If we don't replace them with alternatives and we
don't replace them at the level of which we have right now you know plenty of
electricity and energy at least in the first world and we've got a huge population
on earth approaching 7 billion then that is going to be interesting because it's kind
of force everybody back into a more analog a more primitive type of world that
doesn't have all of these technologies and I think it's going to hit the Millennial
generation and it's going to affect Generation X and I actually kind of wonder
about our children who are similar in age, but I think that energy transition and the
potential disastrousness of energy depletion is a huge challenge for the 21st
Century and it's something that unites everybody. Because it's not one of those
political causes that okay this is for gays and lesbians and this is for
environmentalists, this is really; you're driving your car, having electricity, having
an economy, having communication, having infrastructure systems affect
everybody and there can be some real doomsday scenarios and it's basically it's
funny because the whole world of online education and the whole world online
networking, My Space and UToob and it's all based on the power being on and
the electricity being on and although this is kind of on the horizon if we do get to
that pint that is going to be one of the first causalities is we're going to have to
ration energy where it's needed most hospitals, military, exclusive businesses. It's
that exciting interesting time to be alive and I'm curious as to how it will play out
because we're so dependent right not on computer automation and energy and
electricity, but at the same time a whole other part of the world, what we call the
third world which is kind of getting up to speed with some of this stuff...

Scott In a weird way too because they're getting our cable TV and they're
getting the Internet and so forth and it's like and you know how other countries
used to think America is palm trees and Hollywood or whatever, but now gosh
with the Internet I shudder to think of the things people find on Wikipedia of what
the first world looks like to these other countries. My dissertation chair person, Dr.
Herto, works with a group of people of the hill tribe in Myanmar which used to be
Burma. And these are the yellow-leaf people and she's really interested in
working with them as she works with the group. A couple years ago they were
finally able to get power, enough electricity to run a couple of computers and
they're hooked up to the Internet now and it's like, oh my gosh, what is the
interpretation that is going on with this and so forth. I was lucky enough, actually

I was invited to go and help them with their technology as kind of a service learning project and due to the birth of my son at that same time I wasn't able to go, but I'm planning to go someday to work with these people.

Matt Yeah. How are we doing on time?

Scott We have about 10 well we've got about 8 minutes. Is that okay? You know that is a really interesting issue with the, it is the issue with the environment. One of the great things that I had the opportunity to witness you know periodically I have the opportunity to work with junior high school kids and help them make web pages and one day I was working with Sonoma Country Day School. And it was so cool because these kids were really interested in this whole green thing. They're really interested in...one kid did a thing about how his ___ used so much more fossil fuels than so forth...like you say, what an interesting time to be alive. You have all of this physical stuff, you have the web, you have person-to-person communication, you have forts and outside activities that aren't being played anymore. We used to go out and play; we used to play army or hide and seek, or football or ride our bikes. Nowadays, the kids are in watching TV or on the computer or also we're afraid to send them outside because the pervert lives on the corner something like that; we don't want to let them walk down to the park because you know this ...so you're probably work with that. So, these kids are going to be our future and we need to take into consideration like you say one of the best things that I ...I mean you said so many great things. I so appreciate it. But one of the assertions that you made, and I hear it loud and clear, is that the ethics and morality is running behind well, I should say ethics and not morality is behind the technology that comes out and we need to, like you say one of the courses you tutor these students in is critical thinking, and I think that is one of the most important things. How do we teach these young people to question? How do we teach these younger people to be able to see the artificial reality that we're taking in as the truth? I've had this thought since like the CDs came out. So, we're listening to this digital music, but is it really music? How real is that? What happens when the whole world becomes digitized or whatever? And like you say we have the solution for a experience that is this other reality that we accept for truth; that we accept for real this physical thing. And then it all goes back to what if the entire world does that?

What if our own reality is just a projection of what our mind is and nothing else really...anyway this is wild stuff. Now, I know we've gotta wrap up.

Matt No, I've got some time.

Scott One of the things I want to do. I am going to have this transcribed and I will send you the transcription. I'll also shut this off.

Matt Yeah sometimes the older school and this is a generalization can be resistant to bringing in some of these newer ideas or they don't see how Umberto

Eco connects with football or the mobile phone connects with these (Heidegger) German thinker and modified food have to do with feminist thinker, but these writers and they're all different writers in the series are excellent at bringing the connection and bringing some critical analysis to stuff going on today and also using the stuff going on today as concrete examples of all of this theory and airy wordy abstract you know high falutin.

Scott This is fantastic! I so appreciate this because it helps my research out so much. I've been working a lot as you know with Ricor, Habermoth, and Carney, Richard Carney, Kearney, whose a student of Ricor and I've actually had a chance to work with Richard Kearney and he teaches over at Boston College. And he writes a lot about for example, *Denial of the Holocaust* and so forth and he's really interested in story telling and the ability to interpretation and so forth; just fantastic stuff. But, thank you so much for turning me onto these because it's so great. What's this one here?

Matt This is a book called *The Interventionist Users Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life*. It's basically about art meeting kind of civil disruption but not necessarily vandalism or graffiti but kind of done in a more intelligent thought provoking way and the interesting thing about this is something that they call the experimental university which are different ways of learning than the traditional university that has this long tradition and so it's basically coming from the art world and sometimes it can be a little bit too arty farty; like trying to hard to be hip. But it's actually kind of neat because it's out of the box thinking. Like this is someone that just manipulates images and actually in another book I brought Dierdre and Bernard Stiegler *Cartography of Television* there's a huge chapter that Stiegler writes about the transformation from an analog photo to a digital photo is a revolution in and of itself because analog photos were always taken to be indicators of proof and they would verify people's testimony but when you have the ability to manipulate images with Photoshop and to manipulate them very easily and very effectively you've really changed ...it becomes a philosophical issue and an issue of validity and sense data. So, he writes a whole thing about the shift from the analog to the digital and it also connects to what you're talking about with music analog to digital and just basically from an analog mechanical world to this information driven digital one is that's a huge transition. And if you look at the evolution of our species and proto-humans it's a huge – it's like the wheel. It's like the industrial revolution. It's like the printing press. If we are in the midst of this absolute revolution going on and that's why the four or five generations that are currently alive right now interacting with each other it's so interesting because we're all at different points on that spectrum.

Scott Oh, yeah man! Oh, this is so great! I am so inspired; this is wonderful.

Matt And then the last book I brought is kind of a funny book, *Where's My Jet Pack: A Guide to Macy's Science Fiction Future That Never Arrived*. In the 50's

and 60's we had these utopian ____ (?4:20) of what the future was going to be like as early as 1980 and in a lot of ways from jet packs to dolphins that speak English, space stations, hover boards, wine cars, these things have not happened and we've moved in certain distopic routes as far as what has happened to certain populations of people and the environments and just the way that life has changed; the traffic jams and what Giello Biafra of the Dead Kennedys called "cocooning" where we are in these little worlds in our suburban safety and you know kind of disconnected from the rest of the world, but at the same time stuff like UToob and My Space and the just Internet coming along is a huge amazing step in human development and like you're talking about the first world being in a village with a communal TV and getting these images or being on a shared computer that's gonna be something that's going to spur a revolution and it's going to lead to innovation and sure they're going to absorb a lot of the detritus and the questionable stuff about Western first world culture but it's just I know I'm getting a little bit off from online education, but when you look at the kind of whole span of the human story and what Cornell Les (sp?) calls the Human Adventure it's really at an interesting point right now and I think you know to see where it will go especially with some of these predictions about energy depletion come true you know that could be...it's just a really interesting time.

Scott We were at one movie, where at the end of the movie all of a sudden it was a science fiction movie or something like that but the message was really great at the end of the movie. They were, the family, was kind of sitting around watching television and all of a sudden the power went out and it was like dark and "what do we do now?" So, the protagonist actually reached out for a book...

Matt It's on the shelf, dusty...

Scott Yeah – what is this? Cracked it open and that opens a whole other world you know.

So, maybe when this slows down when we start to take this seriously, you know I'm talking about the ecological issues that we're going through right now all of us maybe we'll reach for that book. Maybe we'll start to have conversations with each other again.

Matt And, I think too the what we're talking about the Nine Inch Nails video versus the PowerPoint, it's really not a versus it's kind of what you put into that PowerPoint and I connected with a lecture at SSU because I'm writing a piece on Bohemian on academics who leave for the punk side of things by either playing in punk bands or incorporating..

Scott Yeah like what's his name from Bad Religion...I read your article about that. Didn't you have an article?

Matt It hasn't come out yet.

Scott Okay, interesting, okay alright.

Matt I do have some other articles floating on the Web, but this guy at SSU has this PowerPoint about the history of western civilization but he shows his students the clashes London Calling album cover which is a mockery of an Elvis album cover and it's a way of kind of inheriting that history and having the Millennial generation understand what preceded them because I think that like any generation they're very involved in the here and now and there's a certain historical amnesia that's going on and if you look at cinema we've got Hollywood really scraping the bottom of the barrel and remaking movies that are maybe still warm like "*The Hills Have Eyes*" 'just got remade...

Scott *Blade Runner* is coming out again...

Matt Aww...

Scott One of my favorites..

Matt Yeah, it's like "*The Hills Have Eyes*" was you know this cult film from a certain Generation X generation but it was kind of repackaged and it made a little bit more hip-hop and made a little bit more sexy and made it stream and they kind of upped the gore and then it's just repackaged for the Millennial generation but they might not know any better that, "Oh, this is a remake?" and "Oh, it's the original is Wes Craven paying homage to something that came ____ (?8:56)" So, there's our rights about the end of history and it's actually one of the post-modern vouchers for tearing down the end of history. So, we know that something major is going on right now but what they talk about in this book is suffering from information overload at least in the first world and having sifted what's useful from what's not and but it's so overwhelming right now and not only physical challenges to the world but ecological challenges but kind of how we make sense of all this stuff.

Scott You know it's so true and we kind of have to step back from it and this whole post-modern is a little bit tongue and cheek. For example, I was musing the other day on my Outlook calendar and how I manage. I was thinking about our appointments this morning and shifting things around to make things work, but it's like I plan my life by shifting little blocks around on a calendar now and you know it's not...

Matt Are you controlling the calendar, or is the calendar controlling you?

Scott You know, it's so interesting to take ...to create an abstract of what actually really happens in life and to be able to manipulate that abstract and see how that has repercussions on actual real life and I know that's totally off the

point...well, it's not necessarily off the point because it's kind of this whole idea of creating this abstract model or a simulation or a...and the whole idea of the acceptance of reality. I was at Boeing last month and I now you need to go, but let me just explain something. I was talking to pilots the first time they actually fly the piece of equipment that they're learning say transitioning from a 737 to a 747 as an example. So, they go back to flight school and they spend this time in a flight simulator so the actual first time they really fly the actual 747 jet airplane in real life is with passengers.

Matt Yeah.

Scott Because of simulation technology is kind of – it's so good that seamless transition between that artificial world and the real world. One of the things I kind of took from that is maybe there's some things we could learn from these pilots about learning because obviously they have something that works but one of the really interesting things that pilots have that these, we don't necessarily have as instructors is – pilots have these really strict standard operating procedures. This happens this way because and this happens this way because it's this way; not open to interpretation. Okay? You lose an engine at a certain speed this is what you do, okay? Not open to interpretation, Verandino (sp?), so maybe in more of a ...and I'm not saying pilots are mechanical because they do have to make judgments all the time, but in that kind of circumstance maybe the technology is up to speed. However, having said that, when we're talking about the whole post-modern reality we're still working with this amalgamation of different sources of, like you said, cobbling together these little blocks to create some kind of an algorithm or some kind of an analog of what ...

Matt But I think this fragmentation shows to the Millennial generation in a way that they put sentences together and there's, some of their writing samples because the, if they're not sure what rules apply it's, "Okay, I don't need to use an apostrophe in my text message and there was no apostrophe on the sign at the store but proper English is using the apostrophe, what do I do?" And, also I've seen some writing samples at the JC and there's a fragmentation for the thought process that's interesting which is how this technology and how the information we have is beginning to affect the consciousness which is a marked difference from the more linear rational sequenced generations before including ours and so that would be a whole dissertation in itself.

Scott That's a whole dissertation itself...this doesn't totally belong to what we're talking about but that's an absolutely important thought that you just brought up and they're you can actually see it happen. Now, these days when they do the writing sample do they use the computer or do they still write it out?

Matt No, it's on the computer and it gets printed out. I was just kind of surprised at the level I thought students would be at and the level they're at and I know

there's high remediation rates at the JC, but I also can't help but think that the Millennial generation are somewhat guinea pigs because they're growing up in this environment of the technology that like we agreed upon. It's largely kind of in a state of anarchy, but that's not necessarily bad, but there's a frontier aspect to it that the rules involving organically they're not always well defined and so it's ...I can understand that if you don't have that sense of history and if you haven't tried to struggle through making lunch or even a table but you're used to more information coming in more cyber bytes and bits...

Scott Cyber spoon...

Matt Yeah, it's quite a different model of doing things so...and the other thing I was going to mention is I read an interesting article about right now our online world is two-dimension; we either read stuff or watch a video, or we hear something; but it's still kind of in this window like a virtual desk where you can lay things one on top of the other; quite two-dimensional, but if we can mix that with global earth and also with the virtual reality worlds like Second Life and I think there's a world call Zaire and there's these funky representations of the real world. If we can mix those two together we can actually have people in the cyber world with their ___ cards (?15:35) with their; and this goes back to identity like their cyber cells wandering around this world then interacting with that two-dimensional information of traditional texts you know and videos and that seems like the next logical steps that people have gotten very used to the 2-D world with the computer but it's time to go to the next level and make it the 3-D experience. The only thing I worry about is the that the technology gets ...

Scott ...to the point where you plug into it right?

Matt Until the point where it completely overtakes your consciousness and completely seamless between the virtual and the real; what is real, like in a flight simulator. Then you can run into problems of what is real. And what is real has always been a problem, but it's specially coming to the forefront now because we're playing with reality so much and reality information is the industry that is going on right now and it's largely shaping the early 21st Century. Where the 20th Century was based on industry and mass production and war and these kind of physical things happened: typewriters and letters sent through the mail and I don't you've studied some French guys but Jean Beaudriard (sp?)

Scott I haven't heard of Jean Beaudriard.

Matt He died recently, but he had this really controversial philosophy that our stimulation of reality has replaced the original reality and now we don't know the simulation from the reality. And he calls that state of being "hyper reality." And he actually got in a lot of lot of trouble by saying, "how do we know that the First Gulf War took place?" It was such a sanitized media driven; it was sent to us

through these images of ...

Scott And they looked like little Nintendo pictures.

Matt And it was like a video game and so how do we know that really happened? And there's a movie, "Wag the Dog" about how people can be manipulated and you can recreate reality but that's definitely a powerful tool and you know as it sounds comic bookish, but in the wrong hands it can be a real powerful tool of social control and not just on an individual level it kind of screws the people's heads. So, that's like you say the critical thinking skills of not necessarily going to college to become indoctrinated into a social progressive left-leaning person, but just how to go and have critical thinking skills and kind of know how to express yourself and know how to be skeptical and kind of have a relationship with your own mind; an inner life. And that sounds like strange, but it's actually there's so much distraction these days and so much going on that we can get distracted and then get distracted from our distraction and we're just on this mental level of distraction.

Scott You know it's so funny and you talk about these mediums that take up this hyper-reality you know. The scary thing is when you actually think about who owns these media channels. These corporations like General Electric and folks are kind of buying and paying for the information news information that we get to see and picking the stories that we get to see versus other stories that we don't get to see and like you say manipulating truth. It's interesting I'm also kind of a fan of Noam Chomsky and you've probably read him..

Matt I know a little bit of...

Scott And he has a pretty famous video called *Manufacturing Consent* you know and that whole idea you know it kind of all goes back to like you say, "I think therefore I am."

Matt And that's getting that classic of Descartes is kind of getting remixed these days because what am I especially if there's an online identity and a physical identity and there's the fragment itself and then what it's thinking; what is real, what is information, what is solid information, and so that whole cogito ergo sum has really been given an interesting treatment these days.

Scott What do they call that the Cartesian anxiety?

Matt Yeah.

Scott There's no central point that we can lock anything into. This is your student. Okay so thank you so much. I hope ...
Tape turned off.

APPENDIX G

Mike Starkey: Copy of Transcription

**Conversation with Mike Starkey
Tipp Thai Restaurant, Santa Rosa**

October 13, 2007

Scott So, I'm sitting here with Mike Starkey, it's October 11, 2007. We're in a Thai Restaurant. And we're talking about technology and learning. And one of...Mike is a professor at SRJC as well he teaches in other places and other forums as well as he has his own studio and he does a lot of work with that. How do you express...actually, let's take it back for a second, how do you think technology assists learners as a medium for learning? What do you think the advantages are of using technology versus, like, say a stagnant classroom setting – not stagnant, but a classroom that doesn't use any technology?

Mike Well, I think in what I'm teaching the best use of technology has been a visual presentation; a lot more detail, for example, if you were using, if you were trying to learn about anything from a book versus what you can do visually with a movie, a video, a DVD, you can provide a lot more information with a lot more detail and accuracy than you can reading a book. One example, it's not really a school, but there's a guy who just hired me – he builds hotrods – he's a car guy, he's world renown and he runs an incredible shop where he builds dragsters, funny cars, NASCAR's, the whole gamut of cars; he has put his entire teaching experience onto DVD because he realizes everybody who's 30 and younger, maybe 35 and younger, certainly are not really ready books since like we used to. One of the things he struggled against was the people who are the distributors are the older generation who still like the book still sort of on the fender of the car, but everybody that they're selling to is not really using books so one of the commercials that I made for him showed a picture, a sketch, of a piston in a book versus him holding it in his hands rotating it showing all the details pulling things out and then actually placing it in the engine rather than just a written description. And, so as far as people learning especially the younger, like I said these 30's and below, they're expecting things to be on a CD/DVD, projected, visual.

Scott That's interesting that you say like they're expecting it because I mean that's pretty much the way what we call the traditional age students the 18-25 year olds that we're seeing now in our classroom sometimes people call them the Generation Y or the Millennials, or whatever. You're right, they do expect it this more of a fancy presentation that includes multi-media not just reading it out of a book; they really want to have this you know kind of see it, touch it, hear it, look at it kind of experience. They want experience see it and hear it.

Mike They don't want to touch it necessarily.

Scott Oh, okay.

Mike But, they want to see it and they want to hear it because that's ...if you look at younger students' either bedrooms or dorm rooms or wherever they study the number of books is a lot less than it used to be. There are stacks of CDs. There are stacks of DVDs. There are i-pods. They are podcasts. There are videos online. There's all this other stuff that's going on that is how they really, not only how they communicate, I mean if you go back to *My Space* the good the bad and the ugly of it, it's how they communicate.

Scott Right.

Mike And in fact they consider email slow because remember when we started using email we referred to snail mail as the regular mail at the post office. They now consider email to be snail mail because it's too slow. It's all instant messaging; texts messaging which I don't even do.

Scott I know. Which is so funny because like you're teaching class, I know you get the same thing you have older students and you have younger students, I always ask, "how many in here text message," and half of the class's hands go up and they're all the younger groups of students. Then maybe we don't get...for me, it's like why type when you can talk. Apparently, there's this real appeal to be able to send this message just like instantaneously – synchronous.

Mike They've also created their own language. And, it's not that different from what generations have done historically, but they have built a language that a lot of older people including parent don't understand.

Scott Like with TTFN. I for this paper project that I'm working on I maybe should include little snippet of that as an example because it is a new language.

Mike There's a very funny TV commercial on right now about that where the parents talking to the kid with all of the mnemonics...

Scott Mnemonics, acronyms, whatever they call them right? It's the one with the grandma right? And the grandma starts sending them...so cool. I just love it. It's a crazy world. And Mike one of the things I'm excited about and one of the big reasons why I'm using you in my research is the fact that you get...you're a musician and a videographer and so forth and you're kind of an anthropologist as well and the fact that you know you have your eyes open and you're doing this video stuff and like we're sitting back...I guess what I'm trying to get at is that I think there's a lot I can learn, we can learn, from folks like yourself who are in the process of taking every these lessons and putting them into video and not only that, but you are also empowering people to be able to take their own story, if you

will, and put it onto video by teaching in your video courses where you show them how to use the software and the camera work and so forth which is fantastic. One of the things which I wanted to kind of also save us that benefit the video stuff is that you have this ability to stop it and rewind it and go back through it, so it's this lesson that's kind of codified it in time. And which is so interesting about the podcasts and things that professors seem to be getting onto this pod cast and you know the pod cast when it first came out, of course it was this just to be audio pod cast, but now it's this full video and so if you miss the lecture you can just download the link and just see the lecture and skip through the boring parts and go to the parts you need and so forth and get that instantaneous information. How would you...you know we're talking about these students and I was thinking this is really a different area this project is going to go into. What kinds of things do you, in looking at this new style of learning or the way the students learn now, what kind of adjectives would you or how would you describe some of the ways that they are in the world?

Mike Well, there's a couple of things there. One is I am teaching online. I have been teaching online for about two years now in a class that I've done the last six years in person. PhotoShop class. I find it a little difficult. I think it has advantages and disadvantages. I think the advantage is you can reach anybody anywhere including that I had a student in my class last semester who was in South Africa in addition to students that were all across the country. So, I think that's pretty cool. People who are in remote places can actually just log on and be a part of a virtual classroom The downside is I don't have my weekly lecture in person. I can't talk to people face-to-face. I do occasionally because if it's local if they're having trouble I invite them to come in for a lab – office hour. That's not possible for everybody.

Scott Right, 'cause they're in South Africa.

Mike They're wherever. The other thing I don't really like is in lieu of my two hour presentation that I would do in a classroom I'm most of it is all in an email. So, I've written my everything that I would say is now written into the emails on the class email list. The downside to me is, in fact I'm about to replace all of this with video, because I think this is completely backward to have an online technology class and be reading. That's not what the point is so the point is they want to see something and it's a visual class anyway; PhotoShop is. All this wordy type is just type and I know kids are grazing over. I know the older people in the class would just read through it because they're used to just reading things, but I think a movie would be just so much more effective. Now, the downside and the reason we didn't just start off with the movies is because to have movies play accurately on the a PC, on a Mac, on an older version, newer version, different operating systems the whole thing the compatibility is such a problem that I as a videographer and person with a video studio have held off for a long time because I've really been looking for the ultimate compatibility because I wanna make sure

it works for everybody. And the examples that are out there now are Adobe has very universal movies on their site that pretty much play anywhere; Linda.com has all the tutorial movies and they play pretty much anywhere.

Scott Now, are they using like a QuickTime for that or...?

Mike Well, you know, I'm sure exactly what they're using. They're using something like Camtasia and I'm not sure what the Mac version is, but the point of this was file size consideration; make sure that it runs efficiently so that the new way to do it is to...or You Tube is an example because You Tube is another one where it's a video that's uploaded and it plays on any computer any browser. It seems to be the most efficient way to do it is to use the Flash Player. And the Flash Player is built into almost all the ...

Scott Browsers...

Mike And the computer that are two or three years old; if you get older than that you're going to run into other problems. If you have a Flash Player you can take a movie and it could be a Camtasia type movie where you just record what you're doing on the screen like they do on Linda.com and you talk.

Scott You have a narration of it.

Mike So you're wearing a microphone and all you see is the screen and you hear your voice and that's exactly the same thing you would be doing in your classroom. So, I'm hoping by next year that I can take my entire PhotoShop class lectures and record them in that format so that they are still online getting the same experience as they would in the classroom. The thing that's missing is the interaction you know the being able to face-to-face with people and go over their problems, especially if ...

Scott So, your point about the technology not catching up, but keeping up with...

Mike Right, there's always a plus and minus. The plus being availability, convenient, not having to physically be somewhere. However, you do lose, people tend to need to be more self-reliant, and they need to stay on top of things. It's easy to get behind. There's nobody on top of you.

Scott Exactly there's not a certain place to be at a certain time.

Mike It's structure less that works for people.

Scott You know the whole online environment is there's some asynchronicity (?) where one of the freedoms is that not only can you be anywhere in the world and take your class but you can do it anytime you want. You can do at 3 a.m. in your

pajamas and that is often done.

Mike That's right. Now, in addition to really sort of solidifying this PhotoShop class because that's an ongoing thing I'm also doing the video class and the video class is now part of a multi-media certificate and degree at the college. I sort of resurrected that class that I saw dying a couple of years ago because the way it was built originally was it was only on a Mac platform which I think is wonderful except that it leaves all the PC people out in the cold. I went through two or three semesters of trial and error with different software and it's not been easy but my point is to make it work for everybody on the Mac or PC so that they're working on their platform and not being forced to work on something they're not comfortable with...

Scott Right!

Mike ...and that is now for the first time working out. We have about 30 people in this class and that's a big change from where it was.

Scott And both Mac and PC users, right?

Mike Um huh.

Scott Now, you're talking about the online class or the in-person?

Mike This is in-person. One of my points in that class is, I'm just going back to what you said earlier, about showing people how to tell their story. One example that I'm working on there is and I do this on the weekend workshops through Community Ed too is this Family Heritage Video so my point is if you think visually instead of just the written word. And unfortunately the written word is just going away. I a little worried. I'm concerned about the lack of writing skills; the lack of reading skills. Even though we need to address this new technology in a sense that it's what people are doing now. I also think we need to find a way to preserve good writing skills and good reading skills because I see it slipping. I think that's worrisome.

Scott You know, it is. And I just said that to take tack on a point to that. It's almost like we're alliterate. I mean we know how to read and write, but we just chose not to because it's so easy to get it from the hype, or from the TV, or from...

Mike There's something very endearing about these old letters handwritten letters that went back and forth between soldiers and their family back at home; things like that. Now, even that stuff all done with email. And it's not as simple as good or bad or right or wrong; it's just that there are trade-offs. There are advantages and there are disadvantages. Um, one positive thing I think in the

video class, for example, if you think about your family heritage and you think about a photo album that you sit on the couch with your grandparents and they tell you the stories of that photograph or people over generations write on the back of a photograph. You know this is who this was; sometimes that kind of falls apart in that it was incomplete stories. A nice thing to do with video one of the things that I show people because they get it right away, if you take your old family photos and your old family movies and you transfer them and now you're working in a video editing environment, digital video, non-linear editing, which is what digital is you can easily move it around; you do not take the tape. What you can do is arrange those photos those 8 mm movies, edit them down so they're nice and clean, add your photos and then you sit your parents or your grandparents in front of your computer and just give them a microphone and they can now describe in words— they can just talk. And now what you have is their voice as a voice over with those pictures with those movies and with music underneath that you've got a completely different thing than a photo album with stuff written on the back.

Scott You know I bet the spontaneity of that actually just sitting down and being exposed to those pictures causes a inspiration.

Mike Well, there's a lot more emotion too. That's the thing and is preserved over time and so, you know the next generation to sit down and watch the DVD at grandma and grandpa's talking about the past generations. It's way different than looking through a photo album. I've worked with a lot of photographers and one thing I say over and over and over is that one does not ever replace the other. They are two different things. It's sort of like email is great but knowing how to write is still important. You know what I mean?

Scott Right, okay, I see what you mean. So, there's always going to be room for a still picture.

Mike There's always room for a still. There's always room for writing and there's always room for technology. I think that people, I'm afraid if we're not careful we're going to lose some of the core skills of writing communication that go back to reading and writing – the basic skills.

Scott It is so interesting that you mention that because I don't know if you're aware I'm on academic senate at the state level and one of the things that is coming around is that we're actually raising the bar for the associate's degree requirements for math and English. One of the senate presidents last year said that you know right now California Community Colleges have the same math level as Portugal. I don't know whether that's well, it kind of sounds like we're America we should be first you know or whatever, but the raising of the math and the writing skills is so important. What I'm hearing from the advisory, CIS Advisory Committee, which is our advisory committee and you were there to witness this, they're still talking about basic skills and you know as an example, Gary Serby

(sp?) from Exchange Bank says, “Well, I can get somebody to fix my network or set up my network, but I can’t get somebody to fix my network and than write a paragraph about it.

Mike Okay that is true. Now I’m working on this research plan for the video gaming and media industry. This is what I talked about at the Advisory Committee. One of the best things...well, first of all the reason I started that is because what I saw was a real need to connect the dots of our existing courses for this new thing called video gaming is every, it’s a huge huge industry where the real job is making good money. I have one of my oldest and dearest friends that I grew up with is now one of the executives at EA. EA is one of the biggest gaming companies and so you know we talk a lot about this stuff and what I saw a need for at the college was be sure we’re not missing the boat...we are the JC...we are in the middle of the community people look to us first. And we didn’t have anything in place. We didn’t even talk about video. We’re going to get into a lot of trouble here because there are a lot of private schools that aren’t really that good that charge a lot of money. There are a lot of people with this idea that they want to go be gamers or developers or work in multi-media. So, along with Jeff Diamond who’s did put together the multi-media certificate and major what I’m doing is putting together the courses that would get one well on their way to having a career in programming for video games. So, the best thing that happened this year was I went to this symposium in April 2007. There were instructors from all over the state just like myself who were trying to figure out the best way to do this, but more importantly, there were six or eight presidents of companies who do the gaming companies. The most consistent thing that they said was that they require their programmers to write proper English, to take math so they have problem solving skills that they have good communication skills, good creative writing skills, and work in teams. Because there’s a lot of kids or people that are programmers that have this idea sometimes that they can just work on an island in a vacuum as a programming ... in a closet somewhere. And that is not how it works. This one person in particular the president of the company said they would not hire somebody if they couldn’t write a proper sentence paragraph in___(? 10:34). They are very turned off by how sloppy writing skills have become. Because you still need to be a professional. And I was glad to hear that because bring this back to the college what I was able to do now was say, “Not only are we talking about PhotoShop classes, Flash classes, programming classes, animation classes, we’re also talking about math classes, English classes, and when we talk to parents we can say this is a real thing. This is not some pipe dream. This is a real skill with a real college degree and you can start here at the JC and if you can do a couple of things: you can come here for two years and probably be pretty prepared for an internship, or you can go on to a four-year school. And, what we’re really going to try to do is bridge the high schools to the JC to the four-year or the intern programs for the employers. We can do it!

Scott Wow.

Mike And it really is amazing to me that when I started looking into all this that CIS wasn't even present, our department wasn't even present at the career fair last spring which I find unbelievable! So, as we put this together and as spring comes around again and we do want to really advertise this that we are a destination school for multi-media and video gaming and we need to do it a couple of ways. You know we sit in meetings and we talk about all this stuff and we have all this paper you know with stuff on it. That's not what we need. We need a visual presentation because that's the whole point. And so, I've been talking to Matt who works with connecting the high schools to the college and so he's already out doing this sort of outreach. I'm going to start going with him to do some of those. I talked to Jeff Diamond about this too. I said, we need to make a very kind of flashy ...

Scott Just kind of like maybe what Academy of Art does, right?

Mike This is what they're doing everyday. They're watching DVDs and playing video games.

Scott Right, exactly you don't advertise in the newspaper.

Mike Right. You give them a DVD exactly. I'm so...I'm getting it.

Scott You know it's interesting that you're mentioning the writing and the math and the way that these students learn these days.

Mike It changing.

Scott Um, it's changing. And it's kind of a difficult it's like we're shooting at a moving target really because on one hand we have these students that really thrive on being able to see this visual and audio information just you know kind of having this experiencing and learning that way. But at the same time, what's kind of not catching up is their ability to communicate; they're ability to communicate orally or with writing; critical thinking like you say with mathematics and problem solving. Interestingly enough just after that I put together a program for the school called the Computer Help Desk Certificate. Almost half of those courses are basic skills courses and it was kind of, it seems like a no-brainer for help desk 'cause usually when people call the help desk they're not in a great mood you know, so you know that there's going to be this help desk person is going to have to have some kind of conflict management or personal skills, but I wanted to take it one step further and with the advice of the Advisory Board was to add that Fitness (? 14:13) English class you know so they would have the chance to know what a good email looks like; know what a memo is supposed to look like; what an agenda looks like and how to work through that, but at the same time it's like what...I know you're a visionary too, what do you see as, how is this

all going to work out, how are we going to...you know, do you have some ideas to incorporate this? Actually, let me step back, what do you think is the best way to teach these new students art? In consideration of other things we have talked about.

Mike Well, I think my feeling in doing both in person and online for example is that I think really we need to do a combination of both because I think working online in a classroom environment with a community, a virtual community of your other classmates where you can look at the galleries of other people's work you can communicate through like a chat room or a email list or whatever it is.

Scott You can click on a link and find out more if you want to, right?

Mike Right, but, I also think you have to get together once in a while. That's what's missing. And, it could even be done sort of like we do with the meetings...

Scott Teleconference?

Mike ...teleconferences, but that gets a little funky because the technology is not quite right. The technology is not quite right there, or there's some weird bug or somebody can figure it out but if you can get your class together, at least the majority of people, some are just too remote of a location, we can you can't give us the human connection entirely. And that's what I'm seeing as the only disservice to the online classes. It is still a developing area. Online teaching, you can now actually get an entire college degree online. And I think that's wrong because part of going to college is learning how to be a person with other people.

Scott Kindergarten...that's what you know, exactly, right.

Mike The fact that you can do your entire college degree without ever dealing with people it worries me because that is not the real world. You can get the degree that is only part of the story you have to still get through the day. You still have to communicate. You have to understand all the little weird nuances that happen in human relations.

Scott You know interestingly enough talking about human relations and nuances and so forth Will Beatty was one of my conversation partners and you know his wife is Mary Pierce and who is really into that and actually is this is inspiring conversation that we're having right now and I'm going to write Mary Pierce down on my thing to try and involve her in this, but apparently vocal person-to-person is apparently almost 60 percent is the visual part. Yeah. It's absolutely amazing. And people make all kinds of judgment calls. Now this is interesting because you're talking about...let's just take it a step further and would the video presentation you're talking about putting videos up online so that's kind of more of a one-way I mean it's not a conversation but they're having the video and

they're having the video and they have an opportunity to see that and experience that communication in a different way.

Mike Well, it's the same presentation that you would get in a classroom minus the all the wood (? 18:00) pats or can you clarify this, I don't understand that. There's no room for that so another downside I see to teaching online is and this is for the whole culture of the generation whatever you want to call it, they expect instant gratification on everything including emails and so an in-person class is used to meeting once a week. It might communicate with students throughout the week but not very often.

Scott They might show up during your office hours.

Mike Right, maybe but really they turn in their folder, you give them back their folder, you talk before or after class. With the online class they send emails 24/7.

Scott 3:00 in the morning and they expect the answer by 6.

Mike Yeah, right away, they almost get pissed off if you don't respond to them. This is a little offensive. And I had going back to writing skills I had one brand new class that started five weeks ago who is as best I can tell is probably an 18 year old. I don't know I haven't met him, but the first thing in the email was, "Hey man blah, blah, blah." I was offended. I said and it wasn't that it came across mean spirited in anyway, it was just sloppy. And so I wrote back and I said I answered his question, "In addition, I would like to point out that you should not address your instructors as "Hey Man." I said it should be a little more formal like Mr. Starkey. And so he wrote back and said, "My bad Mr. Starkey," which I had to laugh at.

Scott Right.

Mike It's formalities that have worried me because I am a little even though I'm in the middle of all this old stuff, I'm still old school. I think what I worry about is today's generation destroyed the mannerisms and the ... I see a lot of selfishness; not necessarily a good thing; people getting a little too involved with themselves. It's almost too isolationist. They get separated. The community of a virtual community like My Space is not the same thing as an actual community. And there's a lot of power out there because people do things online that they would never do in person. I find that really worrisome.

Scott Right. Well can you give fuel for the fire? Can you give us a couple of examples?

Mike Well, a good example would be that Professor.com; that's a very small percentage of people that go in there, but they say some very flamboyant things

that can actually affect a small number of people that are carrying too much power. It's out of balance because people that read it will think that there's a bigger something behind it when it's really just a couple of frustrated students.

Scott Outlier, it could just be an outlier that was disgruntled because his girlfriend dumped him and he had a bad day with the teacher. He didn't turn in his homework assignment in on time and he was mad at the teacher about it.

Mike We've all had troubled students in an in-person class and you have to deal with that however you have to deal with it. So, when it becomes this sort of a flamboyant student online who is emailing the entire class list or posting things or blogging things or rating professors like on Professor.com. That's dangerous because it stays out there; there's no way to respond; it's almost like the dangers of what the classic rumor mill gossip mill is. The minute someone accuses you of something, or something is misunderstood if you try to defend yourself it sort of tangles up on itself and gets worse.

Scott And plus it's in writing and it's permanent.

Mike Right, that's what I mean. It's not a conversation.

Scott Right very interesting.

Mike Right. What I see is a whole lot of pluses and minuses and again it sort of goes back to my point of photography and the video photographs versus video; one will never replace the other. They are two completely different things. And we can't, just like with technology, we can't let go of the old stuff of basic human skills of basics writing and reading. They need to be integrated not replaced.

Scott Integrated not replaced. That's excellent. This is awesome

Mike When I see a 15 or 16 year old sit in one of my classes as they do, you know they come from the high school...

Scott Sure.

Mike And I pay extra attention to them because they come at things from a completely different perspective and I learn a lot from them.

Scott I'll bet.

Mike Yeah.

Scott Yeah, I learned a lot from my young students as well.

Mike I teach to everybody, but you have a range from 15 year old to a 70 year old it's important to stay in tune with the 15 year to 25 year olds because things are very different than they used to be and we've got to be careful we don't get stuck in our old patterns and sort of not hear what they're saying or see what they're doing or even worse, which I don't do but I know some people do worry about is this wrong.

Scott Disregard it because there's 50 young kids, right. Yeah, you know, it's a huge mistake.

Mike We need to listen to them.

Scott Huge mistake. Yeah, you know it's funny times right now with this whole convergent technology convergence and our ambitious id's about being able to teach and learn and online and these different methods. You know it's so interesting because the ability to we're constantly wired into something. I mean, we both have our cell phones here and we can get on the Web with them and get our emails and instantaneous chat and communication and if I really wanted to find out what movie is playing down the street right now I could just type in three things and just find it and it almost in a way is like as instructors we're sometimes expected to you now produce the information on the spot, on the fly and so forth – I'll just stop here because I lost my train of thought.

Mike Well, I will say this I saw an interesting thing yesterday just driving where normally you would see the what, where, and when all it said was, "Google this name."

Scott I saw that yeah right.

Mike And I went, "Well that's interesting," that's really a sign of the times because you can put all of ... 1) it's the next day and talking about it right now, and 2) if I did Google that I would be able to get way more information than I could possibly put on a flyer. Just the fact that the word "Google" ...

Scott Right, I think Google even made it into the dictionary, "Google this person, Google that person," I Google myself in front of my class which sounds funny. You know when we were talking about security and we were talking about the Web and we're talking about instantaneous information and so forth and me the lowly college instructor and look at all the stuff that pops up about me. You know, I totally forgot about golf scores or something it's like all there. I try to tell my sis well to hire a baby sitter well Google this person. Then I tell my younger students as well and say, "Hey man if you're going to go and get a job you're going to have to make sure your picture on My Space page doesn't show you sitting there drinking a 40 uncer or whatever and if you want that kind of a job you know." So, you have to be careful about what your online persona is because

anybody can get a hold of that. And I know that in My Space you can have restrictions on things, but most people...

Mike Most kids that are doing that on My Space are always party boys and stuff don't think that's going to come back to haunt them. And it's no different than the Paris Hilton or the Pamela Anderson videos you know and that was before it was online, but if you open yourself up to any form of technology especially video or photography historically it has always been true if you end up on some questionable person's video and they decided to distribute it and the can and you're a celebrity or whatever, but now it's not even a celebrity it's girls gone wild. It's all these places that sort of revolve around My Space and that whole thing that they just think they're in a bubble somehow. That it's not going to come back and haunt them so they're posing for pictures they shouldn't pose for; they're doing things they shouldn't be doing; they all think it's funny until they don't get the job, or they get in trouble or something happens. So I'm a little surprised at the lack of concern of the younger generation about what they're doing to their privacy.

Scott Right, do you think it's kind of funny I'm thinking well maybe the parent didn't tell the kids, but the parents don't know about it either. They don't realize what the danger is.

Mike The problem with technology right now for parents, I don't know what the percentage is but I guess it is high, it would probably be like 65 to 70 percent have very little idea or they just don't know what the kids know. They don't know how to access things. The kids can snowball them. Like that. 12 and 13 year olds.

Scott Easily, yeah, yeah. Just like you say they have their own language now.

Mike It's even worse than that because they know their computers better than their parents. The old joke is you get your kids to program your VCR, well it's a lot worse than that. Now we're talking computers and they're fast computers and they're powerful computers...

Scott And they're hooked up to networks that are connected to the world.

Mike The world. We are not just high school education communities. That's really my one thing will not replace another. We have to respect the power of both and figure out how to integrate them together. And, still not lose what it is to just be human.

Scott Right and that's an interesting point.

Mike I see a lack of sensitivity. I see a lack of caring. I see a lack of understanding. I see a diminished emotional development. It concerns me a lot. It

makes me really on a lot of days want to stop the whole thing.

Scott You know as an example these teenage boys I don't know a middle school kid or boy anyway that's not addicted to video games. It seems like they all are.

Mike They all are.

Scott And it's usually violent video games and you know we can argue about whether...however, but you have your head in that frame set for that many hours a day for that many years and there's...

Mike There's a lot of desensitizing that is going on an emotional, personal, human level and that is not good.

Scott Now, one of the interesting things I know that you're doing to address this stuff you mentioned it before, the video project that you're doing to create, help bring back the memories of things that happened. Do you find that you that when you're even teaching a video course which is lots of theory and applications to that but you also go talk about the ethical component to that? Or, the frame work – I know that's kind of part of your being.

Mike I do. I talk about there's sort of two sides to the point: 1) technological side how things work, and the other side is 2) content; ethical side and that's astounding to me. I have really zero respect for people that have incredible skills, but use it in a bad way. It's like I am not impressed by good video game programming if the end product is Grand Theft Auto or whatever where it's just the most horrible images you can imagine.

Scott Right, right.

Mike It's sort of like I've never developed an appreciation for RAP music because of what they sing about. It's not how they're doing it it's what they're saying; it's so violent and it's so vulgar...and it's what they would say is they are reflecting their experience into their art or their music, but what they're also doing is they're continuing because kids grow up being cruel.

Scott Right good point. It's infectious.

Mike Not bad. There's a handful of these rappers now that are getting to be 40 and older and looking back. I forget his name, I just saw him on the news, and he's like completely erased his own catalog and changed his whole perspective and said, "all this stuff that I said was my anger as a young black growing up in the ghetto pissed off at the world kind of thing, but now I'm married; I've got kids. I don't my kids listening to my music. I'm embarrassed."

Scott Really, oh my god.

Mike Which I found very interesting because that's crap.

Scott Right now we're sitting around and we are kind of like the two old guys sitting on the park bench talking about these darn kids these days, but you know what, it's this whole change and like you say we do need to hold that humanity in the technology because without that human element it's nothing. It's stale and nothing.

Mike You could have ...there are people who have spent their whole careers developing things like artificial intelligence. And you can go back to music, you can go back to the first drum machine emphasizes...what they did was take all this technology and they spent incredible amounts of time and money trying to replicate what a piano sounds like, or a cymbal. You know what, just play a piano or a cymbal because the overtones and little subtleties and little nuances what strings vibrating do and how metal shimmers up a cymbal.

Scott Right and the changes is a dynamic variations in that.

Mike It's the overtones. It's the little details that make it sound right. And I just wonder why we spend so much time trying to recreate something that already exists.

Scott It's so true. I hear that.

Mike Just because you can. It's like so what.

Scott And a lot of technology is like that...

Mike We're going to spend all this energy to ... well, just play a piano then.

Scott Right. I wrote a paper one time on email. And just look at email at a vehicle for communications and my...what I was particularly looking at was does email itself have the ability to have meaning? And basically what I kind of came up with well, you know email definitely can have meaning except there has to be some kind of a pre-relationship that has existed before so before the email can have any meaning there has to be a relationship between the two people that are reading email and there has to be kind of a context because all of these things have to be put into some type of context because an email on its own doesn't necessarily convey; well it can convey information but it doesn't necessarily convey like it means anything.

But, you know like you say, it's another method that we're using like a drum machine is another way to get drums onto a piece of tape, well email is kind of another vehicle for us to be able to express ourselves to each other, but what I'm looking at is are we missing out by sending so much time emailing each other

rather than sitting down and talking to each other.

Mike I know people that live next door to each other; I know people that live on the other side of a wall in the building who email each other.

Scott I'll be honest with you my wife and I email each other, you know, sex tonight...and it's

Mike It's not that it's again good or bad. It's sort of like the balance is out of balance. I for years and I still really don't have a computer at home. I have a laptop. I didn't even have that for years and so people got frustrated with me that I worked with because they couldn't email me at home. And I said, "I spend my entire day at a computer either at school or at my studio so the last thing I want to do when I get home is be on the computer." And they were just dumbfounded by that. But when I go home I want to go outside. I want to go for a walk. I want to hand out with my dog and my friends. I don't want to be on a freaking computer.

Scott Right good point.

Mike But, I can't tell you how many people got agitated by that because it's that instantaneous stuff. I'm like look I'm not at my computer.

Scott You know and it's a funny thing and then you wonder why so many people are depressed; take Prozac and antidepressants and so forth, well because I think we kind of set ourselves up for this out of balance.

Mike Not that it's bad, but we've got to keep...we're losing perspective and...

Scott And quickly.

Mike And quickly and it gets worse because technology moves so quickly and so fast. This whole industry is unprecedented. It changes. I remember ten years ago talking in my classes about it's an unprecedented that nothing has ever changed this rapidly. The work to keep up with this every three to six months with major changes. You know people didn't have to work this hard to stay current. You know it's tough – it's not an easy gig. And a lot of times I just want to get off the train.

Scott Stop the world just for a second.

Mike Just for a couple of weeks you know why is there always the next version?

Scott Why is there always a next version.

Mike I don't know but I gotta take a test.

Scott I know right.

Mike I got to take one next month.

Scott Well, that's another thing as an educator in this system. We have to be certified; we have to be current; we have to be...

Mike It takes a lot of time to stay current. And one of the things I see is that we can get so bogged down by keeping current and learning the application is that we forget to just create something. And that's what it's really for. It's not just to be current it's to make something.

Scott Yeah, and I so agree with you on that. You know you can write a whole dissertation on just that fact alone and the fact where's all the beautiful artwork we used to do or where's all the beautiful stuff we've done with technology. Well, it's in that portfolio that you used to get the job but now that you have the job you've got to stay so current so you don't have time to create anything any more.

Mike My soul if you will always goes back to things like string instruments like violin, cello, bass, piano; things that are more real.

Scott Poetry out of the book

Mike Reading.

Scott Reading poetry or listening to poetry.

Mike Just things

Scott And the romantic, brings up the romance and ...

Mike And with all that said I love all the technology. I love the fact that my computers do what they do, but I don't want to live there.

Scott Right.

Mike I have to go to Walden once in a while.

Scott Well Mike this has been a remarkable conversation. Thank you so much for doing that. It's been a long time coming and I'm just really glad because I think that this could be dynamite.

You're insight is going to provide a lot into my research. I'll make sure I share it all with you. Thanks again.

----Tape ended.

APPENDIX H

Selected Journal Entries

My selected journal entries are comprised of personal reflections as well as reflections on my conversation data. These entries are provided in order to aid in a deeper understanding of my conversation data in juxtaposition to hermeneutic theory.

October 17, 2007

Technology moves so so fast. This whole industry is unprecedented. I remember ten years ago talking in my classes about the fact that nothing has ever changed this rapidly. Every three to six months there are major changes not only in the technology, but the way we handle information. In the past, it was easier staying current. You know it's tough – it's not an easy gig. And a lot of times I just want to get off the train.

Mike Starkey Conversation (October 2007)

March 30, 2007

The following vignette taken from an actual adult learner experience illustrates the phenomena of narrative identity in a virtual culture:

Sitting in her kitchen in Wisconsin, with her children finally asleep, Linda - an accountant, single mother, and graduate student - turns on her computer and logs on to an online seminar on global leadership. She reads the entries posted by the professor, a public policy expert who lives in Texas, and the other student members of the seminar: a retired U.S. Air Force captain in Virginia, a banker in Brazil, a social worker in Boston, a teacher in Tokyo, and a lawyer in San Francisco. Linda posts her paper on the online forum and responds to the comments of other students. She switches to the university's online open forum, where she reads some contentious dialogue about the university's recent hiring decision. She chooses not to join in. A notice pops up on her screen inviting her to join in a live text chat with two students who entered the graduate program with her last year: a nurse in Sweden and a police officer in Alaska. They ask for help in understanding a difficult statistics problem. Linda turns on the log function of the chat room to save the text on her home computer. After 15 minutes of online

discussion, Linda says goodbye and leaves the chat room. She checks her e-mail and is disappointed that she has not yet received a reply from her professor on a question she e-mailed over a week ago. She wonders whether the professor is upset with her question, disappointed in her work, or just too busy to answer. Linda sends an e-mail to one of her online friends, complaining about the faculty member's lack of response. She scans her other e-mails, annoyed at the number of messages that are being broadcast to all students at her university. She deletes some without reading them, frustrated at spending her time clearing out these "extra" e-mails. It takes more than an hour to review and respond to the remaining e-mail from others at the university, to colleagues at work, and from her family and friends. When Linda finally logs off the Internet, she leaves a virtual world where time, space, culture, and even identities are untethered by the constraints of the "real world." She continues to work on her computer, scanning the text she has saved from these live chats, and notices a pattern of increasing tension between two participants. This pattern suggests a new model for online conflict that might be relevant to Linda's research. She wonders whether to try out her new qualitative analysis software to analyze this text and further develop this model. Two hours after turning on her computer, she turns it off.

Linda opens her text and begins her assigned reading. She is exhilarated and exhausted by her online world, and worries about keeping this world in balance with the reading and writing demands of her studies and with the pressures of her other roles as a professional, mother, and volunteer to youth sports. She knows that she has to leave behind some "real life" roles and make time for her life in her virtual learning community. But she does not know which ones.

Agger-Gupta, D. (2002: 125-126)

This vignette illustrates the complexity of the online environment. Clearly Linda has an identity in the real world, but she also has an identity in this cyber world. This cyber world lends itself to various social opportunities where Linda has an opportunity to participate in several disparate cultural settings at the click of a mouse. Each electronic venue presents new opportunities for social interaction, some with an explicit social rule set, others with a casual social framework. In this artificial world Linda has a very real identity and is faced with ethical decisions which have social repercussions which can reach around the world.

July 5, 2007

Ricoeur

Narrative Identity

Theory of Narrative Identity

"...constructs a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character in the plot of the story a person tells about him- or herself. The story becomes that person's actual history" (Ricoeur 1988, 247).

Theory of Narrative Identity

- Knowledge of the self is an interpretation.
- The interpretation of the self, in turn, finds narrative, among other signs and symbols, to be a privileged mediation.
- This mediation borrows from history as much as fiction making the life story a fictive history or, if you prefer, an historical fiction (Ricoeur 1991).

In contemporary discussion of identity, the problem comes from the fact that there is confusion about interpretations of permanence over time. However, the concept of narrative identity can offer a solution to the aporias concerning personal identity.

Theory of Narrative Identity

Through narrative, the durable character of an individual is constructed. This is called the narrative identity.

Theory of Narrative Identity

However, the self does not know itself or create its identity immediately. "Only indirectly, through the detour of cultural signs of all sorts, which articulate the self in symbolic mediations" can knowledge of the self come about through interpretation" (Ricoeur 1991).

Theory of Narrative Identity

Narrative interpretation provides a 'figureable' character of the individual which has for its results, that the self, narratively interpreted, is itself a figured self-a self which figures itself as this or that" (Ricoeur 1991).

Narrative Identity... Constructs a sense of self-sameness, continuity and character in the plot of the story a person tells about him – or herself. The Story becomes that persons actual history” (Ricoeur 1988: 247).

... the narrative identity of a person, presupposed by the designation of a proper name, and sustained by the conviction that it is the same subject who perdures through its diverse acts and words between birth and death." (Kearney 2001: 152)

... our existence is already to some extent pre-plotted before we ever consciously seek out a narrative in which to reinscribe our life as life-history. (Kearney 2001: 129)

. . . individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history (Ricoeur 1988: 247).

... a life is not more than a biological phenomenon as long as it is not interpreted (Valdes 1991: 432).

"Do not human lives become more readable when they are interpreted in function of the stories people tell about themselves?" And with these life stories "Are they not rendered more intelligible when they are applied to narrative models-plots-borrowed from history and fiction?" (Ricoeur 1991).

It is the search for this personal identity that guarantees the continuity of a potential or virtual story and the purposive story for which we assume responsibility (Valdes: 435).

How stories transform the imagination of readers

Ricoeur defines narrative as the "capacity to redescribe reality by combining elements dispersed in time and space into some kind of coherent pattern" Kearny (1988: 242).

It is the task of narrative... to provide us with specific ways of imagining how the moral aspects of human behavior may be linked with happiness and unhappiness.

August 1, 2007

Imagination

Mimesis

Language and the narrative make reconfiguration possible through imagination. Mimesis refers to what precedes and follow stories.

Preconfiguration: bringing a history into the conversation of the story – memory of past actions and relationships with others.

Configuration: attention of present reality that let's go to part in order to imagine a new future or new possibilities.

Reconfiguration: the insights into the future; suggested strategies.

Text

Dialectic of interpretive stance as text- ultimately the correlation between explanation and understanding an explanation, is the hermeneutic cycle Ricoeur (1981: 221).

“Each time will have to understand transmitting text in its own way; for the text belongs in the whole of the tradition that is of substantive interest to the age. And in which it tries to understand itself” Gadamer (1975: 277).

What is written text?

The text makes it available for individual and collective memory. Writing fixes the content of the text “guarantees the persistence of speech –Hegel: the same advantages, but the said persists” Ricoeur (1981: 92). The text makes it linear, which permits analytic and distinctive translation.

Distantiation in text

Discrepancies between text and its creation are “positive distantiations” the event of saying, surpassed by meaning of what is inscribed.

Discrepancy between inscribed expression and original speaker.

Decontextualization – original audience – social and historical conditions of production. Emancipation from the limits of ostensive reference r Ricoeur (1981: 13-14, 132-144)

The meaning contained in cultural monuments is rendered economist with respect to the intention of the author, the initial situation of discourse in the original addressee Ricoeur (1981: 108).

August 15, 2007

Text in Action

Four criteria of action as text Ricoeur (1981: 203-209)

- Fixation of action. -Fixation of action can be objective, it retains meaning in this meeting can be discerned after the event. The fixation of meaningful action transcends the event.
- Autonomisation of action- action games autonomy once done and can lead to unintended consequences. Action can be adopted into new patterns of behavior
- Relevance and importance. -Meanings of working action can transcend, exceed and overcome the conditions in which it occurred and can be reenacted in new conditions.

- Human action as open work- written text and action both addressed to unknowable range of possible readers. The meaning of action is held in suspense over time, and is subject to interpretation and reinterpretation.

Appropriation

“Authentic self understanding is something which... can’t be instructed by the matter of the text” Ricoeur (1981: 221)

Make one’s own what was initially alien

Self enlarged by appropriation of world in which interpretation unfolds.

“Expands the conscious horizons of the reader by actualizing the meeting of the text” Ricoeur (1981: 17).

Interpreting text seeks to place the reader in its meaning. This interpretation is based on understanding, which brings together the contemporary and similar.

Solicitude and Leadership:

In helping others, it is important to develop an orientation toward "the need to recount the narratives of those others who have become the forgotten victims of history." (Giroux in Gottesman 1998: 146).

The work of leadership is a text, which "is not an entity closed in upon itself, it is the projection of a new universe, different from the one in which we live." (Ricoeur 1991: 431).

September 3, 2007

Gadamer

Language

Language is a medium that represents the world, it is historical in nature.

Gadamer asserts that language and history make us who we are. Language formulates new ideas and allows us to communicate old ones.

... Understanding is language-bound (Gadamer 1976: 15).

History precedes me and my reflection; I belong to history before I belong to myself' (Ricoeur 1981: 68).

“For Gadamer, both language and history make an integral part of who we are. There is not a method to find the truth; rather, we need to expose ourselves to the truth, much the same way as we expose ourselves to art” Herda (1999: 64).

Language: old paradigm

- Language is a tool to represent the world.
- Language is neutral.
- Language is used to talk at people
- Language directs and controls

A story is a neutral description of the world that is told

Language: new paradigm

- Language is a medium for living.
- Language holds possibility in conversations.
- Language is interpretive.
- Language has action and motion and morality

A story interprets human life and allows for new understanding

September 5, 2007

Play

Gadamer said that when "we speak of play in the context of art, play does not mean the behavior or even the disposition of the creators or the enjoyers of art, and at all the freedom of a subjectivity that dabbles in play, but rather the way of being of the artwork itself" (Weinsheimer 1985).

“The concept of play provides an understanding of the ontological interpretation of works of art” Gadamer (1989: 130)

A conversation is just not the back-and-forth utterances of persons; the idea of play is important. The topic is the object, not the persons involved, in this way, conversation leads to understanding. Gadamer asserts that the nature of

understanding is historical. Therefore the fusion of object and the person becomes “effective history”.

“... what does the concept of play, have to do with the ontology of a work of art, truth and with hermeneutical understanding? It has to answer in a word, I think Gadamer would say “everything” Bernstein (1983: 22).

“A work of art is not to be thought a as a self-contained and self enclosed object” Bernstein (1983: 123).

Play leads to deeper meaning and understanding your imagination and improvisation. Additionally play allows you to create understanding through conversation, and interpretation.

“it is thus the nature of dramatic or musical words that their performance at different times and on different occasions is, and must be different... the viewer of today not only sees in a different way, but sees different things” Gadamer (1989:130).

There is a dynamic interaction or transaction between a work of art in the spectator who shares in it.

“...the being of a work of art is play, which needs to be perceived by the spectator in order to be completed” Bernstein (1983: 24).

Fusion of horizons

- Fusion of horizons happens here
- It’s participation and engaging.
- It’s complex on many levels, and many texts are involved
- The audience’s is key

Our ‘worlds’ are not exactly the same, this extends to language too. The same ‘world’ has different definitions – based on our experiences. Gadamer refers to the ‘worlds’ as horizons.

Our horizon is the range of vision from a particular vantage point. With that a-ha moment our horizons change. In conversation, we move from “my world”, “the world”, “to our world”. Our horizons expand leading to fusion.

Are worlds are perspectives, our horizons can be different. New learning and understanding expands our horizons our horizon, helps us understand who we are in relationship to the other. A fusion of horizons is an interplay, were a particular tradition – scientific, literary, religious, is brought to articulation, leading to the illumination of human understanding.

In conversation, we come to fusion of horizons, when we reconfigure the past to rethink the future. Through fusion of horizons, we come to the truth of hermeneutic understanding. Horizons of present and past fuse into one great horizon. We do not disconnect from the past. This fusion is universal, or nothing in principle, is beyond the possibility of understanding.

Real conversations lead to understanding this understanding transcends the protocol in which it is revealed. New understanding leads to change actions, behavior, and reasoning. Gadamer asserts that the interpreter's past and prejudices are necessary conditions for understanding.

Fusion of horizons is the process of expanding our horizons. A fusion of horizons involves persons – not between text and text. And might not always be between two persons, but also can be between person and text.

The Ah Ha comes when we reach real understanding. We live in a world of changing horizons this very nature allows for its fusion. Interpretations are grounded in understanding and manifest in self-realization through understanding, Heidegger asserts that we come to acknowledge our own essence.

October 10, 2007

Richard Kearney

Story

Storytelling invites us to become not just agents of our own lives, but narrators and readers as well. It shows us that the untold life is not worth living (Kearney 2001: 156).

“... every story shares the comment function of someone telling something to someone about something” Kearny (2001: 5).

...life can not be understood other than through stories we tell about It (Valdes: 435).

Appropriating a work through reading it is to unfold the implicit horizon of the world which embraces the action, the personages, the events of the story told (Valdes: 431).

This interestedness is essentially ethical in that what we consider communicable and memorable is also what we consider valuable. (Kearney 2001: 154)

. . . catharsis affords a singular mix of pity and fear whereby we experience the suffering of others *as, if* we were them. And it is precisely this double-take of difference and identity - experiencing oneself as another and the other as oneself - that provokes a reversal of our natural attitude to things and opens us to novel ways of seeing~ and being. (Kearney 2001: 140)

. . . the story told by a self about *itself* tells about the action of the 'who' in question: and the identity of this 'who' is a narrative one (Kearney 2002: 152).

Fiction is the path of re-description; or to speak, as Aristotle does in the Poetics, the creation of the mythos, of a fable, is the path of mimesis, of creative imagination. Ricoeur (1981).

What is imagination?

"Imagination lies at the very heart of our existence. Since the beginning, imagination has been acknowledged as one of the most fundamental, if concealed, powers of humankind." Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (1998)

Kearney describes the human precondition of *freedom* as essential to imagine and project new possibilities.

Without freedom to imagine we can not imagine how things might be or envision new possibilities of a world from grounded in our past and inclusive of our present.

Of all the powers of humankind, imagination is one of the most powerful to envision something that does not exist

It is part of our existence - open ended, pictorial, and metaphorical - Cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility - grounded from our past

"The human power to convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, *what-is* into *something-other-than-is*." Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (1998)

"If we take seriously the act of reinterpreting our world and our past activities, we will realize that we are not simply reviewing and analyzing past theories, policies, or assuming the role of the advocate.

Rather we are using our knowledge and understandings to aid in shaping the future and interpreting the past with a pre-orientation that we will use this knowledge to create new possibilities for the future.' (Herda 1999).

Hermeneutic Account of Imagination

Most phenomenological accounts of imagination are descriptive in method.

The hermeneutic orientation moves us toward the interpretive view.

"Imagination is assessed as an indispensable agent in the creation of meaning in and through language what Paul Ricoeur calls semantic innovation" Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (1998)

Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Account of Imagination

It is Ricoeur's discussion of the imagination function that "represents the single most direct reorientation of a phenomenology of imagining towards a hermeneutics of imagining." Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (1998)

Imagination: power of

"it is because we can imagine that we are at liberty to anticipate how things might be; to envision the world as if it were otherwise; to make absent alternatives present to the mind's eye" Kearney (1998: 6).

Are we not ready to recognize in the power of imagination, no longer the facility of deriving images from our sensory experience, but the capacity for letting new worlds shape or understanding of ourselves? Paul Ricoeur (1981).

Imagination

Through recorded history, the pictures of the world put forth by individuals have come from two primary sources: their own imaginative constructions, and the images given in the art and mythology of their society. Howard Gardner – leading minds (1995). Add to bibliography

Imagination and action.

There can be no action without imagination. Ricoeur (1981).

Of all the powers of humankind, imagination is one of the most powerful to envision something that does not exist. It is a part of our existence – open ended, pictorial, and metaphorical. Imagination is the cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility – grounded from our past.

Imagination.

Our past grounds us and gives us perspective. As Ricoeur writes, “I believe we must have a sense of the meaningfulness of the past. If our projections into the future are to be more than empty utopias” Herda (1999)

Modern philosophers understand imagination as “presence in absence” or “the human power to convert absence into presence, actually into the possibility, what is into something other than-it-is.” Kearney (1998) poetics of imagining. Add this to the bibliography

Most phenomenological accounts of imagination are descriptive in method. The hermeneutic orientation, moves us toward the interpretive view. If

Imagination is assessed as an indispensable agent in the creation of meaning in and through language – what Paul Ricoeur calls semantic innovation. Kearny (1998)

Is it just a children’s story? Or “... the very precondition of human freedom... to be free enough to be able to surpass the current world as it is given here and now in order to project possibilities of existence” Kearney (1998: 6).

Imagination and narrative

... acts of memory-formation are acts of editing and active construction... all acts of remembering are also acts of editing and reconstruction. This makes the idea of a past “as it truly was” very problematic whether or not the level of individual psychology or at the level of collective or group consciousness” Kearney (2002: 4).

“... if narrative calls and times for critical and theoretical interpretation, it also enchants us with the sheer magic of imagination” Kearney (2002: 5).

How stories transform the imagination

Stories allow us to come to know one another without being overwhelmed by envy and possessiveness... which opens us to the complexity of what is other than ourselves.

Stories empower readers to identify with the concrete events that affect particular people.

Narrative imagination thus “enables each one of us to relate to the other as another self and to oneself as another” Kearny (1998: 245)

Construction of a story

“...we tell a story, we capture time. One can say that in the story are past and future belong to us, and the story we have to write (or read) only takes on meaning in the here and now of our lives” Herda (1999; 76).

“Ricoeur here is interested in learning what proceeds are stories and follows them” Herda (1999: 76).

Reconfiguring action

“... stories [serve] to address psychic as well as physical suffering. The pain and loss and confusion of loved ones passing away, [calls] out of our stories” Kearney (2002: 6).

“... memories have not only been able to be understandable, they have to be acceptable, and its this acceptability, which is at stake in the work of memory and mourning” Kearney (1998 : 7).

Ricoeur asks us to recognize the power of our imagination to shape our understanding of ourselves.

“Ricoeur affirms the most poetical role of imagining: that is, the ability to say one thing in terms of something new” Kearny (1998)

October 10,2007

Four categories of imagination Kearney (1998)

- Symbolic imagination – a work of imagination through symbols (cosmic, oneiric or dream, poetic) which enable language and thought.
- Oneiric imagination – The dream image as narrative interpretation can show us how some direct meanings can have indirect ones.

- Poetic imagination – a description of metaphorical imagination by establishing similarity in dissimilarity.
- Social imagination – ideology as an image picture and Utopia has image fiction “serving to integrate and legitimate social order”

October 17, 2007

Reconfiguring action: organizations

“if we cannot imagine how organizations can improve, we can never live in a world different from the current conditions” Herda (1999 : 77).

Reconfiguring action: possibilities within organizations: Herda (1999:78)

1. Imagine a “world already figured” i.e. an existing corporate culture.
2. Enter a new employee, who has to make sense of this organizational life. This will result in a new configuration.
3. This then allows us to imagine the organization we want to become... “different ways of acting and being”

Ricoeur’s hermeneutic account of imagination

It is Ricoeur’s discussion of the imagination function that “represents the single most direct reorientation of a phenomenology of imagining toward the hermeneutics of imagining” Kearney (1998)