EXPLORING THE CRITICAL DIALOGICAL

PROCESS: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL

SPACES CREATING CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE

TO MULTI-SYSTEM COLLECTIVE ACTION

IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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Title of Study: EXPLORING THE CRITICAL DIALOGICAL PROCESS:
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Abstract:

Title: Exploring the critical dialogical process of psychological and physical spaces creating conditions conducive to multi-system collective action in higher education.
Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore physical and psychological elements conducive to engaging educators from K-12 and higher education in meaningful exchanges that lead to collective action.
Research Design: Through a qualitative case study of two higher education sites focused on advancing academically-based service learning partnerships between K-12 and higher education framed in a constructivist epistemological worldview to explore conditions conducive to collective action. **Participants** were selected using a purposeful sample from a population of leaders in the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania, or the Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma.
Method: Through interviews, observations, media imagery elicitation, and document and artifacts analyses, the perceptions and lived experiences of leaders involved in efforts to develop K-12 and higher education academic partnerships were explored.
Theoretical Lenses: Multiple theories provided lenses for analyses including critical dialogical discourse, transformational leadership, servant leadership, adaptive leadership, authentic leadership, social discourse, generative relationality discourse, trust theories, and intergroup contact theory in equity.
Research Question: One primary research question guided this study with two subquestions: What are the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action? Subquestions: How do educators describe environments they perceive as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that lead to collective action? What are the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that are perceived as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?
Findings: The findings from this study were organized around four meta-themes including (1) creating equity (2) responsive leadership (3) developing relationships and a sense of community, and (4) other influencing factors. This study extends theory, research, and practice on the roles of administrators and practitioners in higher education institutions seeking to address societal needs through advancing academically-based service learning partnerships with K-12 educators.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the last few centuries, societies have become more complex in structure and

resources, increasing the need for intentional teaching and learning within a changing

system (Dewey, 2008). As a part of their mission, higher education institutions are

increasingly taking ownership of their broader environment as citizens with a

responsibility to their neighbors (Spanier, 2010; Anchor Institution Toolkit, 2008).

Engaging with challenging societal issues and advancing critical thinking through

dialogue helps educators interpret and understand the issues (Healey, 2012) and

constructively collaborate with peers to discover solutions (Marchel, 2007; Stephenson,

2011; Schirch & Campt, 2007).

Institutions of higher education are expanding traditional boundaries to establish

meaningful connections between the two arguably incongruent worlds of K-12 and

college (Preus, 2012; Ballard, S., 2010; Osterhold & Barratt, 2010). The exchange of

ideas is the heart of a healthy democracy as educators think better together as co-

participants in learning, understanding, and shaping decisions that affect families,

communities, regions and nations (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Further recognizing this

growing need, higher education accreditation bodies "are increasingly supportive of

community engagement and are including indicators of engagement in their assessments

of institutional quality" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 633).

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Advancing education dialogue requires authentic academic conversations, or critical dialogues, in a power-free environment where exchanges between people who are trying to learn from one another build meanings that they didn't have before (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010; Marchel, 2007). Critical thinking and academic dialogues link opportunities to collective action primarily in transmission through communication (Dewey, 2008), which functions as the essential intermediary, connecting stakeholders in a decision-making process (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Educators are being challenged to examine their own perspectives regarding societal issues and entertain new ideas about equitable and meaningful education, policy, pedagogy, ideology, norms, and beliefs (Marchel, 2007; Henkin, Vineburgh, & Dee, 2010). Conflicts may be inevitable, and defensive behaviors complicate and constrain the change initiatives depending on the permeability of traditional organizational boundaries (Henkin et al., 2010).

As early efforts for collaboration often evoke territorial concerns, organizational members are compelled to interact differently in both physical and psychological spaces (Henkin, et al., 2010; Sanders & Mahalingam, 2012). Developing conditions that break down psychological barriers to identifying and developing external partnerships diminishes conflict and division among people who perceive a situation differently and view each other as obstacles to their own goals (Anchor Institutions Task Force, 2008; Schirch & Campt, 2007). Educators are turning to facilitated dialogical processes because other forms of communication fail to provide the structure or safety required to begin discussing difficult subjects (Schirch & Campt, 2007).

The work of multi-sector education teams is not always easy, yet it produces the

greatest rewards, products, and processes (Farber, 2011; Fulton, 2012). Organizations

operating as open and collaborative systems mediate capacities for change and

transformation within larger socio-political suprasystems (Henkin, et al., 2010).

Collective wisdom, analysis, and visions for the future will open doors for improving

student achievement and significant possibilities not yet discovered (Schirch & Campt,

2007).

Problem Statement

In an era emphasizing the need for U.S. students to become competitive in a

global society and falling college completion rates, elected officials and higher education

leaders are driving a college- and career-ready policy agenda (Conley, 2007; Dansby &

Giles, 2011; Conley & Hamlin, 2009). Many college-going students are graduating from

high school inadequately prepared for college-level work while colleges are addressing

critical issues of remediation, persistence and college completion (Huerta, Watt & Reyes,

2013; Kinnick, 2012). Collective action between professional educators in K-12 and

higher education is critical because large-scale social change comes from quality cross-

sector coordination rather than from the isolated interventions of individual education

organizations (Freire, 2006).

Institutions of higher education are striving to expand traditional boundaries and

bridge secondary to post-secondary education to help students forge meaningful

connections between the two disparate worlds of high school and college (Preus, 2012;

Ballard, S., 2010; Osterhold & Barratt, 2010). Effective P-20 partnerships are associated

with higher levels of student achievement and turn around in under-performing K-12

schools (Bandura, 1993; Henkin et al., 2010); these collaborations may serve as an

education vehicle to access and equity (Picower, 2011).

However, the two entities do not typically communicate well. A lack of trust exists between K-12 and higher education settings (Bowman, 2012) stemming from ineffective communication resulting in territoriality-induced interactions (Scott, 2003; Henkin et al., 2010). Highly effective partnerships are shaped by a number of complex social, cultural, and political factors that require a high degree of trust (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). There may be a lack of understanding among administrators in higher education and K-12 educators about how their campuses might best interact with external partners. Also lacking are permeable boundary linkages that account for fostering reciprocal, trusting relationships for mutual benefit (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Levels of campus engagement with external partners "vary considerably and traditional views of higher education scholarship maintain restrictive definitions of research and promotion that inhibit community-engaged work" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 635). Typically narrow professional educator development does not allow for K-12 and higher education relationship building and the facilitated critical dialogue necessary to create collaborations (Picower, 2011). Therefore, educators struggle to shift in orientation from individual work to collective action with individuals who may not share the same values and perspectives about education (Dee & Henkin, 2001; Henkin et al., 2010). Territoriality evokes claims of physical and psychological ownership that impact communication, coordination, collaboration, relationships, and organizational climate (Henkin et al., 2010) and large-scale reform efforts often derail before they are fully implemented. When an individual becomes part of a traditional organizational structure, she/he will frequently be assimilated into the dominant values of the

organizational culture, which can 'rule out other forms of talk' (Meyerson & Scully, 1995; Westerman & Huey, 2012,). With increasingly heavy workloads, practitioners argue that equity work and advocacy should be left to others within the institution, perpetuating the status quo of traditional boundaries (Westerman & Huey, 2012).

It is possible that we need to take a step back from a focus on collective action (the desired outcome) to consider the process that takes us to that place, specifically the critical dialogue that tends to occur prior to true collaborative action**.** An increased understanding of the creation and maintenance of collaborative spaces leading to critical dialogue and, ultimately, collective educational action is needed.

Purpose of the Study

The **purpose** of this study was to explore physical and psychological elements conducive to engaging educators from K-12 and higher education in meaningful exchanges that led to collective action.

Research Questions

One primary research question guides this study with two subquestions: What are the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action?

- How do educators describe environments they perceive as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that lead to collective action?
- What are the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that are perceived as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?

Epistemology and Methodology

Given that the basic generation of meaning arises in and out of interaction with

the social human community, I sought to understand the context and setting of the participants through a social constructivist position by personally visiting the context of K-12 and higher education collaborative work and gathering information (Creswell, 2009). Human beings construct meaning as we engage with the world we are interpreting; my interpretation was shaped by my own experience and background (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2009). This social constructivist epistemology informed my interpretivist theoretical perspective given that participants' views are socially, politically, and psychologically constructed; by gathering several sources of descriptive data, I captured and reported participants' multiple perspectives rather than singular truth (Patton, 2002; Crotty, 1998).

Significance to Research

Further research was needed to define and examine what faculty refer to as "community engagement" (O'Meara, 2008). This study contributed to this gap in the literature, as well as provided needed research on conditions that lead to effective critical dialogue and other factors that undergird collective action by educators from across the span of the educational pipeline. The results of this study contribute to the body of literature that informs education reform efforts involving diverse organizational cultures within P-20 systems. The existing research and literature on faculty motivation for partnership engagement is at once instructive and incomplete in categorizing and understanding engagement as it is practiced today (O'Meara, 2008).

Studies suggest territoriality-related conflict may be inevitable as ownership of physical spaces, ideas and identities are contested in the course of school reform dependent on collaborative work (Henkin et al., 2010) and may impede the process

preceding collective action. Current research studies on collaborations focus most

actively on business schools and centers of management studies (Beteille, 2009).

Additional research exploring engagement in K-12 and higher education environments,

such as this study, assists in examining the transaction spaces where knowledge

differences are negotiated during collaborative work (Lamm, Shoulders, Roberts, Irani,

Snyder & Brendemuhl, 2012; Garraway, 2010).

Significance to Practice

The study informs professional educators seeking collective action to address

real-world problems (Conley, 2008; Dewey & Bento, 2009). In reframing views of

identifying, creating, and sustaining meaningful reciprocal partnerships with external

education constituents external to the university setting, this study informs practitioners

with deeper understanding of the meaningful effective critical dialogue processes as an

imperative precursor to collective action outcomes. Members of school communities will

benefit from recognition of organizational, professional boundaries and potentially make

positive use of territorial understanding by acknowledging and understanding other

educators' attachments to places and ideas within their respective K-12 and higher

education environments (Henkin et al., 2010). Collegial respect is about honoring a

person's being and valuing his/her right to expression and, in daily practice, collegial

respect allows one to feel safe with others and to embrace the opportunities of learning

from encounters (Bowman, 2012).

The findings describe and inform professional educators of the physiological

and environmental conditions for collaborative collegial encounters. The findings

address an existing aperture in our understanding of the conditions that led to collective

action in education and provide a blueprint to inform professional educators of process steps to pursue in interdisciplinary, respectful, professional and collegial collaborations.

Significance to Theory

This study contributes to our understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and applicability of theories such as dialogical theory; collective sense making of complex issues (Dewey & Bento, 2009); organizational change; environmental conditions for critical dialogue; trust building; and facilitative leadership during the process of dialogue, adaption and innovation in P-20 education collaborations (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Iachini, Flaspohler, Bean & Wade-Mdivanian, 2010) leading to collective action. This study contributes to dialogical theory using a dialogue process to elicit experiences and generate specific examples, stories and metaphors about positive (Patton, 2002, p. 181) conditions for advancing collective action through antecedent critical dialogue.

This study contributes to utility of boundary-crossing theory (Garraway, 2010) and territoriality theory as an additional lens for analyses of collaborative work behaviors (Henkin et al., 2010) and shed light or build on existing or emerging theories.

Definitions

The following definitions were used within the context of this study.

Collective action: the collaborative, planned actions of a group of important actors from different education sectors committed to a common agenda, which result in addressing or solving a specific social problem (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Community engagement: the Carnegie Foundation definition is "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and

reciprocity" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 632). In this study, community engagement specifically involves the process of higher education and K–12 public school systems engaging to work together in order to plan and implement partnerships leading to collective action.

Dialogue: is a communication process that aims to build relationships among people as they share experiences, ideas, and information about a common concern. Dialogue aims to help groups take in more information and perspectives as they attempt to forge a new and broader understanding of a situation (Schirch & Campt, 2007, p. 6). "Dialogue is a unique communication process because it focuses participants' attention on listening for understanding and works best when participants listen for what might be true, correct, and insightful about what others have stated. The listeners try to find ideas with which they can agree, and potentially combine those with their own ideas to build a larger truth than any side has on its own" (Schirch & Campt, 2007, p. 8).

Critical dialogue: is the ongoing collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that comprise everyday life; paying particular attention to the role of personal bias, especially with regard to patterns of power and privilege; and, is a collaborative act in which peers assist each other in mutual examination of biases (Marchel, 2007).

Conversation: information and ideas flow between people for the primary purpose of self-expression (Schirch & Campt, 2007, p. 7).

Debate: is defined as a formal discussion about a issue or a problem (Healey, 2012); is like a context in which there are winners and loser; participants listen to others to find what is wrong, incomplete, or otherwise flawed in their opponent's statements with the intention to identify those flaws, expose them, and poke holes in the opponent's overall

position (Schirch & Campt, 2007, p. 7).

Critical thinking: using broad in-depth analysis of evidence to make decisions and communicate his/her beliefs clearly and accurately (Healey, 2012, p. 241).

Boundary spanning: defined as the bridge between an organization and its exchange partners with the primary purposes being to process information from the environment and provide external representation to stakeholders outside the organization (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Meaningful partnerships (in education): sustained, democratic partnerships that serve public schools and universities by intentionally linking the needs and interests of all partners through joint planning and management; increasing contributions to the advancement of learning in PreK-20 with emphasis on real-world problem solving (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The promise of attaining a richer and more meaningful American life, and the range of what can be hoped for, cannot be confined within isolated and autonomous education sectors (Rhoades, 2009; Sullivan, 2011). As communities encounter increasingly complex problems, educators in K-12 schools and higher education are developing academic relationships to better coordinate and align efforts toward shared outcomes (Fulton, 2012; Strier, 2011). Consequently, as higher education reimagines and redefines the role of the community-engaged institution, strategic collaborations among diverse educators are being formed to identify and address societal needs (Stephenson, 2011). Meaningful experiential learning opportunities are resulting from academic partnerships in higher education service-learning coursework (Schirch & Campt, 2007; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Academically-based service learning offers a collaborative education model designed to address societal issues through experiential coursework relevant to the objectives of the curriculum. This foundational component of academic partnerships is to create, identify, and address a community problem through constructive change (Schirch & Campt, 2007; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). The steps preceding collective action require a deeper understanding of change and the importance of establishing trust and equity among with collaborators within the group.   Factors such as organizational

dynamics, facilitative leadership skills, and norms of interactions impact the group's progress toward achieving project goals, particularly when practitioners represent diverse education settings. Critical dialogue produces a sense of togetherness among disparate people and builds equitable relationships where people have no established patterns of relating to each other (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Topics related to community-engaged partnerships and leading change are woven throughout the literature review and the theoretical lenses in this chapter.

This literature review discusses the factors and conditions that occur before collective action and sheds light on the issues that may be related to critical dialogue in the context of collaborative partnerships. Exploring the physical and psychological elements that are conducive to community-engaged academic work illuminates the essential steps preceding collective action.

Higher Education and Community Engagement

Colleges and universities serve in a role that is broader than simply educating its students in classrooms (Spanier, 2010). The collective purpose of educators, policy makers, and community leaders is designed to encourage a form of civic engagement where partners at all levels of K-20 education contribute to improving efficacy of life (Sullivan, 2011). John Dewey's ideas about an equitable and democratic education suggest that public schools and universities belong to all members of the community and should serve all individuals (Dewey, 2008; Harkavy, Hartley, Weeks, & Bowman, 2011).

Seeking both legitimacy and efficacy in education allows us to reach these aspirations for a more just and humane society where universities are closely interwoven with their communities (Harkavy et al., 2011). These ideas stem from beliefs about the

service role of higher education with the responsibility to strengthen efforts of university-community engagement for societal good (Dewey 2008; Harkavy at al., 2011; Sullivan, 2011).

Academically-based service learning courses enhance upward social mobility and open opportunities for practitioners beyond the narrowly circumscribed teaching and learning practices in the classroom (Rhoades, 2009). These service-learning courses provide an academic bridge and establish pathways between K-12 and higher education. Partnership work leads to empowerment in the lives of collaborators as well as in the communities where change is introduced (Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Picower, 2011). Through this empowerment, critical dialogue is a conduit, which connects the vision of practitioners to the beneficial rewards inherent in successful collaborations.

Yet, the challenge for evolving university-community engagement is "the imbalance that has focused Americans too much on the language of individualism and self-interest at the expense of those of interdependence and the common good" (Sullivan, 2011, p. 78). In this information-laden world, every citizen is faced with the challenge of hearing diverse ideas, theories, and opinions and making sound judgments regarding whether the information they are receiving is valid and reliable (Ballenca & Fogarty, 2012). These interpretations involve critical thinking and group dialogue, which leads to decisions about problem-solving approaches. The group process of identifying, defining, and determining a collaborative approach to address a problem with diverse educators is complex and influences how skillfully problems are solved. Critical dialogue is an essential component of solving difficult problems and often transforms individuals as they develop relationships through the collaborative group work (Schirch & Campt,

2007).

Combining efforts from K-12 and higher education sectors requires equitable

interactions among group members in a society where collective responsibility has

weakened and individualism remains strong (Sullivan, 2011). Optimally, when educators

with different opinions disagree, it does not affect their relationships and teaches them

new ways of engaging in positive cross-cultural dialogue (Picower, 2011). The

willingness to hear multiple perspectives provides opportunities for collaborators to talk

to each other in ways that are not typical in mainstream discussions (Picower, 2011).

However, two-way partnership interactions are often hampered because

collaborative work is "designed narrowly with partners acting as passive participants, not

partners in discovery" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 634). Unlike traditional

professional development where there is an expert who is leading learners, these

reciprocal exchanges require everyone to play both roles at different times (Picower,

2011). Collaborative work is rewarding for practitioners where service-learning requires

leaders to facilitate dialogues with diverse educators in different settings. Individuals

representing multiple organizations overcome potential group-based privileges, which are

often prescribed by an organization's control of discourse and structural inequality.

Effective critical dialogues within K-12 and higher education academic

collaborations have the opportunity to advance equity through partnership discussions

that are essential for designing and implementing the work (Fulton, 2012; Sanders &

Mahalingam, 2012). As reciprocal exchanges emerge during facilitated critical dialogues,

a unique space is created where collaborators feel a great sense of accomplishment and

renewed motivation in education (Picower, 2011). Establishing equity in this space is

crucial to partnership work and influences the practitioners' willingness to engage with diverse educators from other sectors. For example, the Strive Project at Stanford University advanced partnership work with the community when the core group of academic and community leaders decided to abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach in their work (Kania & Kramer, 2011). The leaders prioritized group goals over personal gains for the purpose of collective action.

Shifting from traditional curriculum to transformational approaches in service learning coursework is a multi-layered process of change. Educators persevere to implement incremental change within organizations bogged down by state and national policies (Craig, 2009). The commitment toward common social purposes for collective efficacy takes place within institutional and cultural settings shaped by individual attitudes toward educational purposes worthy of pursuit (Strier, 2011; Sullivan, 2011). Clarifying the institution's definition of community-engaged activities "worthy of pursuit" establishes clear expectations for academic standards of practice necessary for evaluating contributions.

Hellstrom's (2004) research suggests that monitoring and evaluating research contributions from academic colleagues hinges on the institutional definitions of collective action and perceptions of collective interest (Furco & Miller, 2009). This 'knowledge paradox' in higher education describes the existing tensions between the universities' attempt to handle new demands for social action in an academic world while, at the same time, retaining a set of independent academic norms (Hellstrom, 2004; McKenna & Main, 2013). A central task is getting administrators and practitioners to clarify what matters most in the scope of the institution's role in surrounding

communities (Stephensen, 2011).

Although universities may determine institutional priorities, modern leaders in education and policymakers still have few tools for identifying, defining, assessing societal problems. Polls do not provide leaders with real insights into what educators consider to be the root issues. It is difficult to elicit problem-solving ideas to address undefined problems (Schirch & Campt, 2007). A component of academically-based service learning involves collaborators seeking to uncover the root issues of a societal problem. By engaging in critical dialogue in equitable conditions with diverse educators, multiple ideas for problem-solving approaches will typically emerge.

Community-engaged practitioners are typically more action-oriented toward problem solving and have more familiarity with issues concerning specific segments of the populations. This familiarity stems from a closer view of issues through regular interactions in a variety of social circumstances in the community (McKenna & Main, 2013). Participating in roles within local populations provides a broad exposure to diverse organizations and people beyond the campus in the community. These community-engaged practitioners are positioned to offer colleagues a greater depth of understanding as they interpret relational nuances and social dynamics in unfamiliar community sectors. These layers of knowledge play a role in the group's decisions to introduce change to alleviate the weight of societal problems.

Leadership and Change

Multidimensional models of responsive leadership, such as adaptive, authentic, and transformational servant leadership, are better suited to the changing demands and organizational complexity of K-12 schools and universities (Shulman & Sullivan, 2015;

Eddy, 2010). Over the past several decades, the literature has described new conceptualizations of leadership, which have shifted from "leader-centered, individualistic, hierarchical, emphasizing power over followers to a process-centered, collective, non-hierarchical, and focused on mutual power and influence processes" (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006, in the ASHE Higher Education Report, p. 33). While effective leadership cannot guarantee successful education reform, research affirms that sustainable improvement in education requires active, skillful leadership from educators (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013; Fullan, 2006; Hall & Hord, 2002; Hallinger, 2011).

Higher education is a particularly political environment where conflict and resistance can be a major problem in creating change. University administrators and practitioners are confronted by a variety of imminent social and political pressures initiating the call for institutional and societal change (Stephensen, 2011). Understanding and facilitating long-term changes require an adaptive approach that involves rethinking institutional assumptions, values, and political stances (Furco & Miller, 2009; Stephensen, 2011).

Kezar's (2001) research discusses the need for practitioners to navigate channels for change despite organizational tensions related to faculty reward and recognition of partnership work within the institution. The change process in higher education involves decisions for determining the right political approach as the inherent politics, conflict, resistance, and competing values often thwart efforts at educational change within the institution (Kezar, 2001).

While university leaders and practitioners are considering how to spur change in

highly adaptive and evolutionary ways, change is already being introduced through internal dialogues. Change can be initiated if we understand and acknowledge the divergent patterns of discourse operating within organizations (McGowan, 2009). Research studies describe how change elevates anxieties among practitioners within the institutions as the organization shifts to new forms of governance and community-engaged infrastructure (Hamel-Lambert et al., 2012; Hellstrom, 2004). New strategic designs for change require authentic and transparent critical dialogues within the institution where individuals impacted by the change are invited to participate in the discussions.

Internal discussions open doors for engaging the institution's key decision makers. These decisions reassure practitioners of the institution's commitment. The ability of institutional leaders to discern how to provide support for community-engaged work involves a deeper awareness of potential internal barriers (Hellstrom, 2004; Picower, 2011; Stephensen, 2011).

When institutional leaders endorse partnership work, they should clearly articulate the levels of reward, recognition, and support for practitioners' community-engaged practices. University commitment is demonstrated through planning decisions designating human resources and a sufficient annual budget secured to expand and sustain the partnership work through infrastructure support. Advanced planning may ward off resistance to change among practitioners not yet involved in academically-based service learning course development.

Smaller academic networks comprised of individual faculty may impede institutional change because of issues related to power. In ego-focused academic

arrangements, individuals may feel threatened as organizational boundaries become more permeable due to an increase of academic collaborations with external organizations (Beteille, 2009). Including individual voices representing internal contingencies provides opportunity to share accurate information and clarify misunderstandings. Individuals should be invited to share concerns and be heard. Seeking common ground provides a counterbalance the 'me first' mentality that prevails in humans and helps to address concerns (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011).

Experienced community-engaged practitioners advise fellow collaborators to secure "wins" in partnership work to help them bear the weight in making the hard decisions that ongoing collaborative work entails (Stephensen, 2011). Despite these challenges, practitioners are persevering and engaging in collaborative work in pursuit of their professional objectives.

Academically-Based Service Learning

Academic partnerships, developed in K-12 and higher education coursework, serve as a tool for societal change. Practitioners address societal needs through academically-based service learning, which is designed to identify local community concerns and address them in order to empower surrounding communities (Beteille, 2009; Diers, 2010; Strier, 2011). O'Meara's (2008) findings convey that when faculty across disciplines identified topics they wanted to study, and acknowledged they did not have the necessary knowledge to explore what they wanted to learn, they became motivated toward engagement practices involving a problem they could not solve without interaction with partners.

Communities that have successfully solved problems over time often need to

break "well-established patterns and habits and develop the capacity for social innovation by paying attention to what has not been working in the past in order to adapt and try new possibilities" (Fulton, 2012, p. 14). Experiences gained through service learning coursework produce opportunities for individuals to think critically in order to address complex problems.

Based on results from their 2009 research study exploring leadership's role in education, Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) suggested there is a need in the education system to prepare educational leaders to think globally and act courageously about social justice in light of the implications of research and practice in national and international educational settings. Students involved in the university and K-12 curricular partnerships gained real-world experiences through relationships with each other as peers in service learning. Gaining real-word experiences necessitates a deeper knowledge and understanding problems in communities and methods of problem-solving approaches.

Student preparation for community engagement. Academically-based service learning creates opportunities for students to gain insights and increase their knowledge about solving real community problems. Students in our society have limited experiences about how to contribute as good citizens within a culture where individuals compete for personal advantage (Sullivan, 2011). Engaging students in experiential learning situations within diverse communities enhances educational content that is relevant to real-world conditions (Strier, 2011).

These collaborative partnerships serve as a useful educational tool and exposes students to diverse populations beyond the classroom setting. Our culture does not typically teach students "how to participate with others in the public sphere of discussion

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and debate, and even less so about how to act together with others to achieve well-conceived public goals" (Sullivan, 2011, p. 78). These learning experiences create situations for individuals to dialogue with diverse population groups. Real-world experiences bring new insights and help individuals recognize assumptions about diverse groups through self-reflection. Active listening, respecting differing perspectives, and obtaining a deeper understanding of others' ideas help overcome biases (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Practitioners from across the K-12 and higher education system should learn how to interact with each other as they are discussing and outlining their partnership's service learning coursework. These new interactions among practitioners should be transferred to students who are enrolled in the course. In addition, the coursework is sometimes designed to involve students in determining the problem-solving approach to address a community issue.

Participants in academically-based partnership work cross over organizational boundary points in order to collaborate with educators from different educations organizations. Collaborating educators should develop healthy cross-boundary dynamics as they learn new ways to interact with colleagues from other education sectors. These relationships begin to cultivate trust among practitioners from K-12 schools, higher education, and the local communities where problems need to be addressed (Godemann, 2008; Garraway, 2010). Navigating across organizational boundaries through interactions with others in the education system is an essential step to incorporate critical thinking ideas into dialogue.

Critical Thinking in Community-Engaged Work

Collaborative partnerships build during a shared process where practitioners

articulate thoughts and ideas using words. Practitioners dialogically link critical thinking into language to describe complex ideas. Higher-order thinking involves abstract concepts, which tend to be used by experts in every discipline to build, shape, explore, and challenge ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Thinking aloud helps practitioners develop ideas within academic conversations when other people are involved (Lamm, et al., 2012; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Without these dialogical exchanges, ideas are merely left as unchallenged ideas in the individual's mind.

Critical thinking skills have shifted to the forefront of education in expectations for students. These measurable skills delineate the levels of literacy and language used for real purposes of listening and comprehending meaning (Bellanca & Fogarty, 2012). Developing these skills is important because students are expected to use these abilities with accuracy and precision to prepare for life and career in a complex, demanding society (Bellanca & Fogarty, 2012). Therefore, K-12 curriculum has evolved to incorporate critical thinking objectives, which require students to demonstrate skills needed to collaborate in teams, express their ideas, listen to one another, communicate with purpose, and convey their thoughts in coherent ways (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These skills provide a multitude of advantages and encourage dialogue rather than monologue in the classroom.

The benefits of critical thinking through the collaborative work embedded in academically-based service learning provide advocacy for communities and strengthen relationships between higher education and K-12 schools. These experiences keep students engaged in learning and improve student outcomes (Bathgate & Silva, 2010). Practitioners and their students should learn how to use their critical thinking skills in

order to improve surrounding communities through innovative partnership work. While students are expected to develop their critical thinking skills, practitioners should confront their own challenges through subsuming their critical thinking into verbal interaction (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Educators refine critical thinking skills through these same service-learning experiences, which provide ongoing professional development. Active listening is critical to decipher the intended meaning within dialogue, particularly with collaborators representing different cultures and backgrounds.

Critical Dialogue in Community-Engaged Work

Many of our important ideas are unfinished without exchanges with others. We continue to shape our thoughts and opinions through experience, reflection, and interaction with others (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Verbal interactions tend to be much more complex than we realize. Zwiers and Crawford's (2011) findings reveal these interactions as simple exchanges of views between people when they perceive each other's beliefs and desires and assess the situational constraints acting on them at the time.

While critical dialogue is used to solve immediate problems, it may contribute to our understanding of the power of words. Findings suggest that we approach communication as an opportunity for a reward rather than as a threat (Sorensen et al., 2009). Schirch and Campt (2007) conclude that effective critical dialogues offer powerful opportunities to bring people together to address deeper, historical divisions between people groups.

Dialogical skills. When individuals prefer to use monologue rather than dialogue, the essence of conversation is no longer productive. Group interactions may

become more complicated if people have had limited exposure to negotiate with people who are different from them (Sorensen et al., 2009). Although most people are not naturally gifted with critical dialogue proficiencies, these skills can be learned, developed, and practiced (Marchel, 2007). Through critical dialogical exchanges, practitioners learn to communicate with colleagues in ways that influence educational practices, improve teaching, and change school culture and practices (Marchel, 2007).

The quality of the exchange is influenced by the sense of solidarity with each other and the commitment to the partnership's project. Weerts and Sandmann (2010) offer best practices on campus-community exchanges and explain how practitioners cross over institutional boundaries into the community. This requires the inclusion of community voices in the coursework design, which fosters genuine dialogue in public problem solving (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). When the practitioners perceive legitimacy of the dialogical process, they can trust facilitative leaders, which results in commitment to the service-learning project (Fulton, 2012).

Forming opinions. Effective critical dialogue is a form of thinking, communicating, and relating with others through an open and genuine exchange of ideas in response to others (Fulton, 2012). Unlike writing or listening, critical dialogues allow us to closely examine, scrutinize, criticize, validate, and shape our ideas along with the ideas being discussed (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These dynamics help form our opinions, which continue to develop as we respond to others. Research suggests that critical dialogue develops intellectual potentials, which help us respond to unanticipated comments (Healey, 2012; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Optimally practitioners improve their capacity to express their thoughts, emotions, and spirit through words (Schirch &

Campt, 2007).

Critical dialogue in collaborative work allows practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of the complex social and political problems we face. Research shows how critical thinking and critical dialogue skills help us predict, connect, formulate, sequence, and organize our thoughts (Picower, 2011; Sorensen et al., 2009; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These exchanges help us identify evidence to support our opinions, test our ideas, and compare them to others' opinions. Through critical dialogue, some points of view are confirmed, changed, or discarded (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). The culmination of perspectives contributes to the practitioners' understanding of societal problems and ultimately, influences the group's understanding of the problems.

Active listening and clarification. Practitioners across the education system should be aware of the subtle and unconscious influence of academic environments regarding fundamental modes of speech (Dewey, 2008). In environments where active listening is encouraged, collaborators are more likely to express their opinions and engage in dialogical interactions (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Active listening is a fundamental component of effective critical dialogue. In particular, Strier (2011) suggests that risks for project derailment increase when participants from drastically different backgrounds possess different ideas and perspectives yet do not actively listen and hear each other's perspectives on issues.

Active listening and clarification establish productive group norms of communication. During critical dialogue, active listening and clarification help deter misunderstandings and uncover language incongruities (Schirch & Campt, 2007). When dialogical discrepancies are recognized and reconciled, collaborators' decisions become

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more reflective of the collective vision of the group. Clarification may require a healthy amount of repetition of ideas, which offers us "a chance to say something again – better and clearer than the first or second time it was said-- and negotiate meaning to push [dialogue] into more precise examples and more advanced language with each turn" (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011, p. 12).

Active listening followed by a clarification process allows collaborators time to explain words and allows others to get closer to interpreting the intended root meaning. When two or more people adapt their differing ideas of a topic, they come to a more shared understanding and get on the same page (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Two important strategies in clarification involve comprehension checking and paraphrasing. These allow a listener to question the meanings of terms and concepts and paraphrase to confirm comprehension (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011).

Seasoned facilitative leaders model active listening and continue to develop a wider range of abilities. It is important for facilitative leaders to gain understanding in techniques for clarification. Fellow colleagues and K-12 educators involved in the partnership work depend on these abilities of the leader.

Facilitating critical dialogue. Facilitating critical dialogue is an expected skillset of leaders in higher education who function as change agents. Facilitative leaders view boundary-spanning roles as multi-layered relationships with external agents serving various purposes at numerous levels (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Organizationally, internal and external group members of community-engaged partnerships expect the group's leaders to demonstrate proficiency in facilitation. All practitioners are not comfortable as leaders facilitating dialogues to bring change. Unfortunately, some

practitioners view themselves as change agents yet "maintain an overt appearance of non-political impartiality and tone down institutional imperatives to merely address 'thin' institutional needs instead of meaningful change" (Westerman & Huey, 2012, p. 227).

The quality of participants' experience in partnership work is dependent on the quality of facilitation they experience (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Schirch & Campt, 2007). Without a proficient facilitative leader, partnerships are at a greater risk of failure. In particular, Strier (2011) suggests that the risks for project derailment increase when collaborators from different backgrounds possess different ideas and perspectives yet do not actively listen and hear each other's perspectives on issues (Strier, 2011).

Leaders gain expertise in facilitation through experiential professional development within community-engaged collaborations and experiences with diverse groups. Research suggests that the development of facilitation skills involve the growing leader's ability to identify common ground with group members, and to speak honestly and assertively about experiences and opinions while remaining sensitive to others (Fugazzotto, 2010; Sorensen et al., 2009; Schirch & Campt, 2007).

Multiple advantages emerge as forms of professional development from collaborations through partnership work. When practitioners continue to cultivate their professional skills, Picower (2011) suggests that they stay more connected to the reasons they chose the education field. The key validation to successful collaborative work is the degree to which the partnership has moved into an upward spiral of increased trust and ownership and into a broadening, adaptive learning network of partners (Fulton, 2012). When leaders cultivate their professional skills, Picower (2011) suggests that they stay more connected to the reasons they chose the education field. Research suggests that

practitioners continue to polish these proficiencies as they pass along learned knowledge of facilitative leadership practices to their colleagues (Picower, 2011; Hamel-Lambert, Millesen, Slovak & Harter, 2012). This informal knowledge-sharing is particularly beneficial for colleagues who are considering entering into community-engaged work.

Sharing with colleagues and engaging in other similar opportunities sharpens facilitation skills and increases the leader's confidence to facilitate in unexpected, complex contexts (Picower, 2011). The seasoned facilitative leader is often in high demand in partnership work as collaborators recognize that this unique skillset influences the success of collaborations and positive, ongoing relationships with community partners.

Facilitative leaders continue to develop the ability to discern the appropriate timing to introduce sensitive critical dialogues. When individuals in organizations appear to be resistant to new ideas and cross-boundary work is a concern, expert facilitative leaders draw on previous boundary work experiences to determine ideal timing for desired results. Research suggests that previous boundary work experiences help leaders select the optimal timing for critical dialogue, particularly when they are introducing change at organizational boundary points (Hellstrom, 2004; Jones, Keller & Wheeler, 2011). During these crucial discussions, facilitators should be reasonably clear on the objectives, effectively command the attention of participants, convey confidence about the process itself, and be thoroughly familiar with the design so they can make decision about adjustments that might be needed (Schirch & Campt, 2007).

Facilitative leaders play a valuable role as they guide groups in critical dialogue and establish equitable group norms within the collaborative process.

Creating equity through critical dialogue. Equitable critical dialogue among group members influences the progress of their partnership work. Creating equity bridges collaborators together who are often from different backgrounds and socio-economic groups. Research studies suggest that meaningful university partnerships develop capable collaborative partnership, which improve the equality of excluded social sectors by integrating participants (Stephenson, 2011; Strier, 2011).

Establishing equity through critical dialogue requires that facilitative leaders and group members discern and skillfully address expressions of cultural prejudice. When multi-cultural group members authentically discuss at deeper levels the need for social change, group members explore their own perceptions of commonalities, power, and privilege within the group, as well as within the community (Sorensen et al., 2009). This requires an ongoing personal examination of values and assumptions made through individual reflection

Multicultural psychologists view personal self-examination for biases and presumptions as the first and most important aspect of working with diverse people in education (Marchel, 2007). Bourdieu's (1973) theory of social reproduction and the development of cultural capital involve the ability to receive, internalize, and transmit a linguistic cultural competence to the dominant culture through the educational system. The contribution from the educational system to the reproduction of the structure of power relations between classes "contributes to the reproduction of the structure of distribution of capital culture among these classes" (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 173).

A multi-cultural lens encourages collaborators to foster an understanding about how others in the group think, learn, and communicate. These prioritized goals of

partnerships should strategically and collaboratively advance their group work together for long-term academic, social, and emotional gains (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Change often begins within the group and the future of the partnership rests on the strength of equity established in the group early in the partnership work.

Kania and Kramer (2011) discuss how a path to developing a multi-cultural voice is a process that always involves struggle and hope. Cross-cultural discussions will sometimes be uncomfortable and different perspectives must be respected in a place of tolerance to other people and their views (Picower, 2011). Although experience, education, age, or language background may make some people perceive themselves or others as less capable of expressing themselves verbally (Schirch & Campt, 2007), recent studies suggest that "every human being is capable of looking critically at the world in dialogical encounters with others" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 33). Educators engaged in social justice issues understand that disagreeing with others is a component of fruitful collaborative work. Unlike superficial, polite circles where disagreement is swept under the rug, individuals in facilitated partnerships understand the importance of pushing through their differences.

Practitioners build confidence as they actively seeking out lively critical discussions that push them to think and broaden their understanding of different subjects and other cultures (Picower, 2011). In a research study examining the facilitation of interracial dialogues, group members with less formal education spoke less often and later shared that they kept quiet because they thought the participants with more formal education could talk about the issues in a "fancy" way (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Perceptions of personal credibility were viewed on the level of formal education an

individual had attained. This education gap among educators from K-12 schools, higher

education, and community members proved to be a major issue in multi-cultural group

work. Successful partnership overcame this obstacle, which required critical dialogues

guided by a seasoned facilitative leader early in the collaboration.

Since a primary goal in academically-based service learning work involves

creating equitable partnerships across lines of division, the facilitation of delicate critical

dialogues built bridges across race, class, and education (Schirch & Campt, 2007). In

Schirch and Campt's (2007) study, dialogue specialists addressed potential hindrances of

language differences that reflected education levels. For example, they incorporated non-

verbal communication techniques such as visual drawings, in efforts to gather everyone

on equal footing (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Relationships developed across boundaries,

some of which developed into long-lasting community partnerships.

Power imbalances. In collaborative work with K-12 schools, practitioners

should be aware of inequities among group members, which may lead to significant

tensions during dialogical exchanges. In power imbalances, collaborators may sense that

the exchanges are merely a false ritual to prepare everyone for what the more powerful

members intend to do anyway (Schirch & Campt, 2007). These superficial discussions

may be perceived as inauthentic and construed in order to quickly establish goals to meet

a deadline. Community-engaged partnership group may encounter issues during their

attempts to mesh equity and excellence among educators with competing values (Craig,

2010). Zwiers and Crawford (2011) define equity as equal access to future educational

and professional opportunities. In this chapter, I continue to thread power-related issues

as cited in the literature, specifically through the subtheme sections of language,

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territoriality, and boundary work.

Inclusion. Unequal power relations between universities and K-12 schools led to the exploration of intentional partnership designed to be flexible and include the weakest partners as equal partners in planning and decision making processes (Strier, 2011; Jones et al., 2011). In settings where power is uneven among participants, less powerful members of the group may psychologically disengage from the process and/or resent the more powerful members (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Individuals in search for equitable community engaged practices should begin from a position of humility, remain open to learning, and recognize that cultural assumptions do not shift overnight (Stephensen, 2011). When administrators and practitioners acknowledge others' competences, they foster respect for different workspaces by giving recognition to individual expressions of ideas that differ from the status quo (Hankin et al., 2010).

Language

The power of language emerges in the close association between power and knowledge (Farquhar & Fitzsimmons, 2011). Care and concern for others is changed through the dialogue process; efficiencies are discovered, costs and future benefits in terms of better trust and coordination of effects brings a power of result-based thinking (Fulton, 2012).

This limits community partnership work as the circle of power enlarges past the organization into a struggle involving multiple organizational hierarchies. Foucault (2001) stated the exercise of power is defined as the way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions; the way we speak establishes what we consider possible or what we hope for.

To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged experience, and it may be said that the measure of worth of any social institution is its effect in enlarging and improving experiences (Dewey, 2008). Ensuring mutual understanding throughout a process is a core component of collaborative teams, rather than just having people make their points without asking them to take the perspectives of others into account (Fulton, 2012; Stier, 2011). People appreciate the tone and nature of dialogues to allow the group to develop strong relationships and genuinely enjoy dialoguing together (Fulton, 2012).

However, the two-way interaction in partnerships is often hampered because "research is designed narrowly with partners acting as passive participants, not partners in discovery" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 634). Well-formed collaborative groups allow participants to share their conceptual and procedural knowledge in the joint construction of a problem's solution, so that all members are actively engaged in the problem-solving process and differences of opinion are resolved in a reasonable manner.

Tools of language help us share ideas, defend opinion, and change the many unjust cycles that are perpetuated by current policies and practices (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Recent studies suggest that many academic-community initiatives are very asymmetrical, based on previous models and preconceived ideas developed without real participation in a group (Strier, 2011). Blurred boundary lines of authority "lead to understandable tensions and confusion over who has the legitimate credibility to convene any given initiative" (Fulton, 2012, p. 19). The need to establish legitimacy and buy-in from stakeholders comes through a general commitment to common outcomes rather than through administrative authority (Fulton, 2012) and traditional power dynamics.

The level of success in collaborative groups is largely dependent on the level of

functionality of the group, which is partially determined by the group makeup (Lamm, et al., 2012). It is critical that participants bring diverse experiences, different perspectives, and orientations in order to lead to greater understanding and growth (Schirch & Campt, 2007). This insight proves helpful both in conveying action orientation by looking at what is already happening to achieve these goals and in spreading the commitment to the process by acknowledging the leadership of a broad range of partners not just those on the official leadership team (Fulton, 2012). Dialogues are usually more successful when no imminent decision is required; without pressure for immediate action; focus on generating and analyzing facts relevant to decisions; and enough time for dialogue processes to deescalate tensions in situations of impending conflict (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Effective critical dialogue requires: 1) an awareness of the ways personal biases can influence thinking; 2) an understanding language as a tool for learning rather than only expression of ideas; and 3) specific skills in speaking and listening in order to promote mutual learning (Marchel, 2007).

Strier describes tensions across group affiliations related to members using projects for personal agendas and overlooking broader goals of political activism to achieve change at a national level (Strier, 2011). Using neutral language represents an acceptance by some practitioners of hegemonic ideas and practices that reinforce the power of dominant groups within the institution and society, framing social reality in way that are frequently obscured or left unquestioned (Fairclaugh, 2001; Fraser, 1989; Westerman & Huey, 2012). Ferguson (1984) states that internalizing the rules of the bureaucratic game can result in an inability to see beyond the organizational rules (Westerman & Huey, 2012).

Political stances are not only viewed as being related to the practitioner's worldview, but they are also seen as influencing the practitioner's ability to do their work competently and impartially while suggesting equity needs call for special treatment by interest groups (Westerman & Huey, 2012). The power of collective support addresses educators' sense of isolation and alienation when participants are willing to take action on each other's behalf (Picower, 2011). Hopelessness is "a form of silence; and dialogue is only carried out in communion with others and cannot exist without hope" (Freire, 2006, p. 91). Dialogue requires hope in the individuals willing to engage collaborative in discourse and share thoughts and ideas.

Ideas last longer when they are products of shared mental labor as we work with knowledge to construct ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). In conversations, we learn: (1) to value the process of talking with another person about deep and serious issues; (2) that talk is a powerful way to connect with others, to value them, and to understand the world; and (3) that it is important to strive for clarity; and (4) it takes negotiation of meaning to achieve clarity (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Conversations help us connect thoughts to build ideas much bigger and more relevant than snippets of knowledge in isolated practice activities (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). The single conversation is often a short slice of time that informs a longer conversation built on the previous meaning, which adds to the construction of ideas over time (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Conversations allow for the building of a rich foundation of communal backgrounds and shared experiences; whereas, in individual learning we have only our own background to build from (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). The meaning would not be communicated to establish a progressive order of gaining insight into what is more complicated if experiences are

not shared (Dewey, 2008).

Institutional Boundary Work

Institutions have distinct boundaries comprised of organizational identities that exist or are presumed to exist in perpetuity. However, the organic growth of interpersonal relationships among collaborators stretch across formal organizational boundaries and reach into spaces where human interactions construct more permeable boundaries (Beteille, 2009). As boundaries become more pliable, more practitioners engage in multi-organizational partnership work through new, seamless pathways for partnership work. These cross-boundary pathways generate a multi-directional flow of collaborative partnerships with other organizations.

An example of cross-boundary work involving over 30 institutions in the greater Philadelphia area is The Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND). This consortium originated with the Netter Center's vision and leadership to develop mutually beneficial, sustained, and democratic community-based service-learning partnerships. The Netter Center serves on the steering committee of this consortium, which actively seeks to revitalize local communities and schools among the region's colleges and universities (Retrieved from phennd.org/about/). The organizational boundaries blend together when educators meet bi-annually to share research and best practices from academically-based service learning coursework.

Organizational norms. Organizational boundaries define spoken and unspoken organizational norms within institutions. These internal boundaries delineate the real or perceived expectations of behaviors, attitudes, and social interactions often deeply rooted in tradition, power, and politics. Within institutions, cooperative transdisciplinary

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boundary crossing is exhibited when practitioners of different disciplines share and integrate knowledge for a problem-solving purpose. This knowledge transfer integrates within the team when practitioners remain open to hearing new opinions (Godemann, 2008). Through diverse knowledge sharing, ideas for innovative problem-solving approaches emerge.

Although transdisciplinary cooperation may be a desirable goal of the institution, it may bring academic cultures into question and discipline-based outlooks into confrontation (Godemann, 2008). Good will alone is not enough to bring group consensus because egos and power structures impede progress in problem-solving critical dialogues (Godemann, 2008). University administrators and practitioners have the opportunity to promote equitable conditions and neutralizing power within the institution by modeling the unpretentious nature of servant leadership.

A roundtable approach eliminates a "head of the table" and promotes critical dialogue and diverse ideas will be received in a non-judgmental climate. The roundtable approach neutralizes power when all voices and opinions around the table are respected and considered of equal value. Threading equity in the academic fabric of the institution, as well as in partnership work, influences conditions conducive to critical dialogue.

Infrastructure as an internal investment. University leaders play a critical role in providing practitioners with needed support in the development of academically-based service learning courses. Research studies convey that creating an internal support system requires informed decisions, accountability, and endorsement by university leaders (Furco & Miller, 2009; Harkavy & Hartley, 2012; Holland, 1997; Ward, 1996). Administrative decisions to provide funding support are critical to institutional work.

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Dr. Amy Gutmann, President of the University of Pennsylvania, articulates the university's core values and the institution's role in solving real-world problems in partnership with communities. The university provides financial support and resources for academically-based service learning, which is supplemented through alumni and foundation gifts (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012). The internal decisions to support institutional growth in community-engaged work include establishing an infrastructure system. An infrastructure provides vital resources to sustain the work and validates that the service-learning partnership activities align with the mission of the university. The university's commitment influences sustainability of the community-engaged academic coursework.

Kelly Ward's (1996) examination of five higher education universities reveals factors within the institution, which convey a substantial commitment university-community engagement. This institutionalization of the work is indicated by the presence of an office supporting the work, broad-based discussions by practitioners about how to incorporate engagement into the curriculum, and the articulated and symbolic support of institutional leaders (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012; Ward, 1996).

Additionally, Barbara Holland's (1997) findings identified specific elements of institutional commitment in her analysis of 23 higher education community-engagement case studies. Holland's research suggested that indicators of institutional support align with the institution's historic and currently stated mission; evidence of support through promotion, tenure and hiring guidelines; and support related to the level of community involvement conveyed through campus publications (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012; Holland, 1997). Rhoades (2009) recommends that universities incorporate the use of measures of

excellence, which provide guidance for building and evaluating community-engaged academic work. Similarly, Furco and Miller (2009) described five foundational and measurable components critical to building and sustaining community-engaged work within an institution: (1) an institutional philosophy and mission that emphasizes engagement; (2) practitioners' genuine involvement and endorsement for community-engaged research and/or teaching; (3) a broad range of coursework opportunities to involve students in high-quality community-engagement experiences; (4) institutional infrastructure that supports engagement practice; and (5) mutually beneficial and sustained partnerships and relationships with community partners. Institutionalizing community-engaged work offers a critical support system to sustain, evaluate, and expand academically-based service-learning across university departments.

These types of measurements are used to evaluate community-engaged activities and help universities in the development of long-term plans, implementation, and evaluation needed for infrastructure resources. Similarly, the Carnegie Foundation created a new system of classifications and formed documentation used for public-service missions and community-engaged activities (Rhoades, 2009; Furco & Miller, 2009; Hamel-Lambert et al., 2012). Broadening the scope of community-engaged work beyond campus boundaries extends across organizations and into the relationships in partnerships with K-12 schools and the surrounding community.

Group Boundary Work

Practitioners bring a myriad of expectations of group norms and perceptions of collaborative groups from previously lived experiences. While some collaborators have recently engaged in partnership work, many group members are new to working across

organizational boundaries with educators from different organizations. Blair and Jost (2003) suggest that boundary permeability is influenced by prior group experiences. Therefore, a central responsibility of facilitative leaders involves the development of constructive responses among diverse group members (Sorensen et al., 2009; Stephensen, 2011).

Individuals in new partnership groups may encounter an unfamiliar leadership approach, which establishes ground rules and guidelines for interactive discussions and debate (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2009). The seasoned facilitative leader helps group members co-create a shared understanding of the expected behaviors of an equitable collaboration. However, collaborators often learn new ways to interact diplomatically, which may be innately stressful for those accustomed to an authoritative, leadership style (Stephensen, 2011).

Collaborations incorporate problem-solving approaches where practitioners wrestle with different interpretations of ideas offered for solutions by group members. Critical thinking and dialogue provide a way to identify and verbalize the most important issues affecting a community. Discussing perceptions of the most pressing problems may help motivate group members to become more involved and committed to advocate for change (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Facilitative leaders and practitioners need to understand the connection between critical thinking and dialogue in relation to partnership work.

Investing time. True educator development requires long-term and intense investments in the relationships and well being of aspiring social justice practitioners (Picower, 2011). Collaborative partnerships require sufficient time to define the societal

issue and mutually agree on the group's problem-solving approach. However, our education system is overwrought with mandates and imperatives in ways that limit what educators are able to know and do (Craig, 2009). Collaborators concerned with investing sufficient time in partnership work develop a neutral space for educators to bring their educational backgrounds and voice their concerns in pursuit of common outcomes (Strier, 2011; Jones, Keller & Wheeler, 2011; Hamel-Lambert, Millesen, Slovak & Harter, 2012).

Facilitating critical dialogue among diverse collaborators requires an environment of trust and connection with others in the dialogue. Hectic schedules and organizational activities disrupt a group's progress, which requires individual commitments to meet for a reasonable amount of set time. Dewey (2008) explains that we must believe that we are connected to others, and that we cannot perform our own activities without taking the activities of others into account. Universities and K-12 schools are realizing that their collaborative work must adhere to and work within the partners' daily activities, contractual commitments, and site rules for engaging external partners (Furco, 2013).

Open deliberations inform group actions and introduce new group norms of working together constructively in good faith (Fulton, 2012). Collaborators in equitable partnership groups recognize that each individual brings a set of learned organizational norms and dialogical experiences in previous group work. Facilitative leaders guide and monitor critical dialogue exchanges as the group makes progress toward a goal orientation and fragmented efforts are coordinated for group cohesion. Groups that are willing to invest their time and energy reconcile competing individual values and perspectives within their partnership (Stephensen, 2011). Attaining the desired outcomes

from the partnership work reflects sufficient time spent on these critical early steps of established equity within the group.

According to Fulton (2012), boundary-working facilitators guide the group members through the macro-level steps of creating a learning model for collaborative work. Each step requires an investment time to carefully plan and carry out each short-term goal for long-term results. Fulton describes macro partnership moves:

- Include a diverse group of participants from across the different domains, departments and state/local contexts;

- Engage in dialogue around which the outcomes are most important in terms of being signs of progress at the systems level;

- Reach consensus on those high-level outcomes and a handful of measurable indicators to track progress;

- Scan the existing efforts that are already making progress toward these outcomes and tap into local leadership to help coordinate efforts;

- Convene partners regularly to promote network-wide communication and to learn from each other's efforts;

- Gather data on the current status of the outcomes and indicators and reassess progress on a regular basis;

- Continue the cycle of learning to build a culture of collaboration across the state and local systems and networks. (Fulton, 2012).

With over 50 percent of new teachers leaving within the first five years, academically-based service-learning work allows practitioners the opportunity to put their vision of preparing students into practice (Jones et al., 2011; Picower, 2011). A sense of

satisfaction is gained through teaching with a purpose in a community of peers and may develop resilience to overcome obstacles to community-engaged boundary work.

Obstacles to Boundary Work

Nancy Fraser's (1989) research suggested that higher education boundary work experts understand that many of their colleagues feel obligated to function solely within their organization's boundaries. Hellstrom (2004) further explains this concept of boundary-work as pertaining to the ability of educators to monitor its own boundaries and maintain its professional integrity where the academic autonomy of practitioners is under threat.

Funding. Administrative funding and support is critical to institutional work. The challenges discussed in this study add to the discussion about the lack of funding as the education system responds to community problems through academic work. The literature cites the funding issue as a lack of serious strategies to identify specific state and federal opportunities for immediate action, comprehensive longer-term legislation, and research, thinking, consultation, and analysis will need to go into developing a meaningful legislative and policy agenda (Alperovitz, Dubb & Howard, 2008; Van Fleet, 2012;).

University administrators and practitioners are often torn between maintaining the familiar, bureaucratic status quo with engaging in new education reform efforts, which introduce changes within the organization. Recent research states "individuals who work within bureaucratic structures are so constrained by the institutional context that they become detached, depoliticizing arbitrators of politicized claims" (Westerman & Huey, 2012, p. 223). The lack of research in the literature regarding bringing change through K-

12 and higher education collaborative partnerships suggests that we need to consider creating space for a different kind of talk within the education system.

<div align="center">**Creating Space for a Different Kind of Talk**</div>

Building strong partnerships between universities and K-12 schools is a complex task. Their collaborative process requires attention in multiple areas such as power relations, group trust, cultural climate, and individual perceptions of the social problems (Strier, 2011). Academically-based service learning collaborations are well suited for intersecting different points of view. Research suggests that practitioners have rich experiences to draw upon, yet establishing a space where they can feel comfortable to share perspectives is critical (Alejano-Steele, Hamington, MacDonald, Potter, Schafer, Sgoutas & Tull, 2011). Although research describes factors related to the gradual shift in education to address community issues through service-learning courses, insufficient information is provided about creating conditions conducive to collective action as well as descriptions of what those conditions really look like.

Schirch and Campt's (2007) research conveys that the practitioner's openness to gain knowledge from others and their willingness to learn about others are contributing factors for creating an authentic space where people can be honest about their similarities and differences.

Psychological Space

Building an atmosphere of trust and commitment is vital for growing and sustaining partnerships, especially as they seek to expand with new members entering the process (Fulton, 2012). Individuals need to self-assess their knowledge of other cultures in collaboration with diverse participants in the group. This self-appraisal will provide an

accurate measure of fit between the intended activity and the social-cultural norms, which affect each participant's attitudes (Furco, 2013).

There is no "one right place" or "one right way" to create the best home for critical dialogue (Sorensen et al., 2009). Collaborators should understand that while they have shared goals, they are not going to agree on every issue. They need to establish a safe space to unpack complex issues from multiple perspectives (Picower, 2011). This space is described by Fulton (2012) as a setting with a clear tone of nonjudgmental, welcoming, listening, and respecting group dialogue, which builds a sense of care for others and commitment to the group.

According to Picower (2011), collaborative space is characterized by unspoken norms where collaborators should: (1) be full participants, regardless of their educational level; (2) explore multiple perspectives; (3) allow for a certain level of tension in a way that challenges and furthers their thinking rather than weakening group cohesion; and (4) center in a place to discuss educational issues that do not typically occur in mainstream conversation. By having a space that allows for tension, practitioners are able to recognize and examine previously unquestioned stances that might originate from upbringing and personal experiences. This openness and willingness to consider multiple perspectives allow practitioners to challenge the validity of their previous assumptions and think about situations differently (Picower, 2011).

Practitioners learn that mutual understanding is the goal of critical dialogue rather than the need to convince or convert someone to a viewpoint. Members should allow people to be feel free to take risks no matter their level of experience (Picower, 2011). Practitioners should be less defensive and more open to new ideas. The optimal path to

address the problem is more likely to surface when no one feels judged and there is an equal exchange of ideas (Fulton, 2012; Harkavy & Hartley, 2012; Picower, 2011). As respectful interactions are exchanged within an authentic space, trust begins to develop and productive group norms are established. Then, collaborators can reach agreement on their common goals and come to a consensus on the concept of the societal problem.

Trust. Trust is the confidence that one's well-being will be protected by the good will of a trusted person or group (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Trust matters in education leadership (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). The facilitative leader should cultivate positive relationships and nurture trust in relationships in the group through benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, openness, hope and wisdom (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Building on Tschannen-Moran's research, Cummings and Bromily (1996) state that trust in the reliability and competence of the leader becomes critically important to organizations and collaborative work. Day (2009) added that trust involves the leader's character, integrity, authenticity, and openness. Further, hope is nurtured and renewed by the wisdom of the leader's discernment and timely decisions (Day, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Lencioni's (2002) research on trust posits that the foundation of effective organizations is built by trust in authentic leaders. The definitions of trust in the context of collaborative partnerships rely on facilitative leader who models behaviors and attitudes and guides collaborators to develop group trust.

Fear plays a role in trust building. Lencioni (2005) further suggests that the lack of trust weakens what an organization is trying to accomplish. His research further proposes that organizational leaders who cannot establish trust fail as leaders because of

their fear of being vulnerable to their colleagues, fear of conflict, fear of lack of commitment and accountability, and fear of outcomes becoming unachievable (Lencioni, 2005). Trust embodies the confidence among group members.

Building trust takes time. People need to be given the chance to build relationships of trust, especially with a core group of collaborators in the early stages of a partnership (Fulton, 2012). Recent research reveals the importance of establishing a supportive bond that includes the giving and receiving of feedback and creating group trust structured to support mutual learning (Fulton, 2012; Hebron et al., 2010). Exceptional facilitative leaders seek to cultivate trust as an integral component in the culture of the partnership and stress the importance of trust and inspiration among leaders and followers (Hayes and Comer, 2010).

Core values of individuals may align when group trust is nurtured. The ability to feel trust and empathy for fellow collaborators are influenced by whether or not one feels part of the same social group (Bowman, 2012). Trust contributes to a group's ability to capture their highest aspirations for partnership work, which emerges from a generosity of spirit and cooperation for a noble cause (Bowman, 2012). As group trust builds, individuals develop relationships and begin to collectively seek pathways to improve communities.

One can neither nurture trusting collegial relationships nor diffuse power structures in academe by decree, sheer will, and inflated ego (Bowman, 2012). In academe, "inflated egos serve as an enemy of trust including administrators who are all about themselves and not the institution as a whole" (Bowman, 2012, p. 909). However, when new members benefit from the contributions of those who have come before, the

members are more likely to offer their best efforts as well and perpetuate the virtuous cycle of trust, commitment, and outcomes (Fulton, 2012).

Clear and measurable goals provide information about progress toward goals, which build a climate of trust. This is critical when things go wrong and individuals in the group blame each other. In a trusting environment, the group focuses on learning to adapt by responding to measurements of progress instead of seeing others as scapegoats (Fulton, 2012). This process building trust in the collaborative work requires a constant and ongoing investment through face-to-face knowledge exchanges between partners (Strier, 2011). The in-person critical dialogues provide more depth of information as group members can hear tone of voice, see each other's facial expressions, and interpret body language.

Territoriality. To avoid silos and turf issues, cross-boundary collaborative groups agree on the criteria for equal representation in the partnerships (Fulton, 2012). While territoriality can apply to things that would "provide the owner with power or political influences, the underpinnings of the construct reflect basic psychological needs" (Hankin et al., 2010, p. 56). The territoriality phenomenon has been associated with individuals in an organization trying to create, express, and maintain their social identities and dissuade others from laying claim to their territory, whether it is a physical space or an idea (Hankin et al., 2010). This is important to understand in the context of partnership work where individuals from different sectors of the education system cross through boundaries to share ideas in a more neutral territory that does not convey strict ownership.

Recent research suggests that elements of territoriality are a combined number of

perspectives such as space, time, power, issues of culture, identity, and meaning (Maréchal, Linstead, & Munro, 2013; Striers, 2011). In the context of K-12 and higher education partnerships, territoriality may occur within their organizations as well as between them. This territorial dominance behavior has a symbolic significance and represents a defended space associated with acts of control representing power and superior authority (Maréchal et al., 2011). Collaborative work inherently connects people and organizations together resulting in more permeable boundaries, while the closed territories are maintained through fixed, rigid, and impermeable borders (Maréchal et al., 2011).

The power and control of organizational cultures with closed territories operates in sharp contrast to the openness of equitable environments established during partnership work. Traditionally, schools have organizational and hierarchical authority structures that define legitimate authorities, which influence territoriality-induced interactions (Henkin, Vineburgh & Dee, 2010). Conflict may occur where community-engaged practitioners engage in activities to advance service-learning partnerships involving organizations with closed territories.

All territoriality behaviors are not inherently negative. They may also promote feelings of autonomy, accomplishment, and professionalism (Hankin et al., 2010). Hankin et al. (2010) posit that "territoriality fulfills inherent psychological needs for ownership in an expression of a social identity and being the master of one's environment" (Hankin et al., 2010, p. 53). However, collaborative cross-boundary work involves more direct, dynamic, and immediate forms of working relationships. Boundary-crossing involves more open and elastic forms of territoriality where collective goals are

supported by a special sense of solidarity and identity becomes a common cultural marker as a growing history is shared by members of a group (Maréchal et al., 2011). This open type of territoriality, also expressed as a form of social identity, emerges from the coexistence of a plurality of permeable and mobile borders such as those that can be created across traditionally organizations in the educational system (Maréchal et al., 2011).

At the macro level view, collaborators overcome territoriality-induced boundary issues and proceed to fulfill the goals of partnership work to improve society. Fulton (2012) suggests that successful collaborative partnerships include the production of a favorable result and build a collaborative network of partners that self-organizes and functions as a learning community (Fugazzotto, 2010).

Educators from K-12 and higher education who create a mutually agreed upon new boundary lines for their "space" of work contribute to the legitimization of academic service-learning projects for both organizations. This space also provides an opportunity for university partners to function as external peers and advocate for promising education reforms championed by K-12 educators (Furco, 2013). This cross-boundary identity flows from a macro level and reaches individuals within their home organizations who promote change from within.

Identity. Education organizations have the potential to develop individual perspectives, which have the power to reshape expectations and beliefs to secure community change (Stephensen, 2011). However, practitioners in partnership work are often constrained by organizational factors and are at risk for being perceived by colleagues as unreasonable outsiders who function as activists within their organization

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(Stephensen, 2011). Practitioners seeking institutional support for community-engaged work may encounter resistance from administrative decision-makers who may be uncomfortable with the societal problem as well as the underrepresented population.

An underlying assumption is that "education practitioners who see equity work as political ties to social justice and practitioners with identities and positions as political, problematic, or even incompetent" (Westerman & Huey, 2012, p. 227). Craig's (2009) research conveyed that when school principals found themselves engaging in activities outside of the district's boundaries of formalist procedures, they "experienced considerable stress because of the challenges their [work] presented to their respective systems and hierarchies of power" (Craig, 2009, p. 126). This discriminating perception is often amplified in the organization when the practitioner's identity is linked to marginalized groups within the external community (Westerman & Huey, 2012).

All academic collaborative activities should be viewed as opportunities to encourage cooperation among the dense and variegated relationships in the education system (Stephensen, 2011). Some practitioners remain uncomfortable mixing with people from different socio-economic groups and varied education backgrounds. Although community-engaged practitioners clearly articulate the intent to improve the undesirable conditions of the marginalized group, "practitioners should seek 'moderate' ways of challenging the status quo" (Westerman & Huey, 2012, p. 229).

Strier's research (2011) reveals that partnerships have leveraged their relationships and helped communities achieve social justice through supportive leadership and university immersion. Decisions made by institutional leaders influence the identity and practices of the institution. Administrators should assume the

responsibility of revisiting the non-negotiable mission of their university and clearly communicate expectations and a reward system to support practitioners and endorse academic service-learning coursework. These practitioners are carrying out the community-engagement mission through their partnership work with K-12 educators.

The education partnerships involved in service-learning activities develop pathways across organizational boundaries and strengthen academic resources in the broader education system. Little research discusses the challenges practitioners face in order to obtain organizational endorsement for this partnership work, much less for acquiring approvals from multiple partnering organizations. Effective leaders should facilitate critical dialogue within their respective organizations and strategize with external partners to identify ways to overcome these challenges.

More research is needed for administrators and practitioners to gain understanding about psychological factors associated with space and related factors that contribute to conditions conducive to collective action.

Physical Space

Collaborators who engage in critical dialogue where people care for each other and learn to think together in a relational space have a powerful source of potential sustainability (Fulton, 2012). This physical space in organizations used by practitioners is connected to psychological space. It has been long established and widely agreed that the architecture of space, or types of physical environments, can enable or hinder outcomes of collaborative work (Harrop & Turpin, 2013).

Bourdieu posits that "power-laden symbolic hierarchy is apparent within the design and ordering of university space" (Bourdieu, 1973). Particular layouts of space

foster normative bonds and effective use of space breaks down perceived barriers to collaboration and cultural change (Fugazzotto, 2010). Practitioners motivated by their personal commitments to social justice issues convey that there is an existing need for changing university "spaces" to become more democratic, socially just, and transformative (O'Meara, 2008).

Practitioners have decisions to make about where and when collaborative groups will meet to plan the partnership work with K-12 educators. Physical space influences the effectiveness of critical dialogue and the active decision making process (Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Cennamo & Brandt, 2012). Some research indicates the location of the community engaged work may occur more easily in settings embedded in the communities they serve instead of isolated institutional places where dialogue may not occur naturally (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). More information is needed involving settings conducive to collective action in consideration of issues of territoriality, power, and selection of optimal space for critical dialogue among diverse educators.

Environment. Place is about environment, but also about people and what is going on inside the physical meeting space (Harrop & Turpin, 2013). These spatial arrangements for group dialogues are often the backdrop to action involving a constant negotiation between the pressure of alienation and the engagement of collaborators (Cox et al., 2012). Community engagement includes social interactions within a sense of common purpose. The shared space for collaborative work should feel motivational and collaborators should be aware of what makes a space feel like a place (Harrop & Turpin, 2013).

Higher education spaces demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, and preferences

(Harrop & Turpin, 2013). Decisions at universities can underpin space allowances without purposeful placement and can generate unworkable space inhibiting conversations (Harrop & Turpin, 2013). Space selection contributes to attributes of learning theory, place making, and architecture design as environments enable or inhibit group interactive work (Harrop & Turpin, 2013). When an organization and its members have a high degree of space ownership, relatively few barriers to social interaction occur because the "owners" of the space are responsible for actively managing the space and may find it easier to perceive the space as shared space (Gislason, 2009). Educators' awareness of concepts of visual communications encompassing the identity of place to the identity of community, both historically and currently, can infuse a mix of associations, relationships, social actions that have taken place, and promote the characteristics of groups coming together in a space (Zande, 2010).

Architectural design. Physical designs in education settings can help colleagues socially connect, feel more socially accepted, and support interaction patterns related to psychosocial dynamics of isolation or connectedness (Gislason, 2009; Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Cennamo & Brandt, 2012).   The current literature primarily discusses research about physical space associated with architectural design projects for education groups in general, rather than space created for practitioners engaging in critical dialogue representing multi-organizations. There is a growing awareness of, and demand for, environments that promote participation as physical designs are becoming more influential in collaborative work outcomes (Hitch, Larkin, Watchorn & Ang, 2012; Watchorn, Larkin, Ang & Hitch, 2013).

Other than the existing body of literature recommending room décor and

groupings for early childhood and elementary grade students, little research is provided

regarding attributes designed for collaborative spaces used by adult educators in K-12

and higher education organizations. It is possible that educators have not been widely

introduced to architectural design principles, which may subtly influence their work and

the different people involved. The concept of "universal design" is about social inclusion

and opportunities where a shared respect for others contributes to meaningful

professional education collaborations (Gislason, 2009; Harrop & Turpin, 2013). Effective

space fosters a generally higher tone of dialogical quality in discussions (Fulton, 2012;

Sorensen et al., 2009).

      Architectural design research findings describe the "psychologising of space" that

can confine work in allocated spaces, mediate meaning and access for group participants,

and impact attentive processing (Cennamo & Brandt, 2012; Kite, 2013). Floor plans and

traffic flow in a space can lead to stifling limitations instead of creative seating

arrangements promoting interactions and a sense of social and professional membership

(Gislason, 2009). Along with the use of technology tools that help participants convey

their concepts, room attributes such as lighting, colors, orientation, ventilation, and

interactive space design contribute to improving group interactions (Moons & De Baker,

2013; Harrod & Turpin, 2013). These factors should be considered in advance when a

conference room is designated and before collaborators arrive. Murals, decorations, and

material visuals in education spaces embrace emotional and sensory experiences and

project organizational values (Burke, 2013). Architecture research posits that the

necessity of spaces should be inclusive of all cultures, which requires a deeper

understanding of the space requirements from individual communities (Zande, 2010).

Symbols and images in environments represent non-verbal ideas, values, and/or beliefs of an individual or group of people and the culture from which they have evolved (Zande, 2010).

Research studies describe how physical spaces provide recognition and respect for the strengths of group members and good working relationships (Gislason, 2009). These design principles include efficiency in form and function, facilitate group mobility for interactions, recognize usefulness in the appropriate space and size accommodating a wide range of individual preferences and sensory abilities (Hitch et al., 2009). More research is needed in the context of creating optimal physical space for partnership work between K-12 and higher education practitioners, particularly when diverse collaborators from multiple organizations are involved. The location of the physical space carries an organizational message regarding the value and priority level of the community-engaged work.

Location. Universities communicate the priorities of the institution through designated use of space (Fugazzotto, 2010). This is particularly important in the context of institutionalizing community-engaged work and the allotment of space to support and sustain partnership activities. Fugazzotto (2010) suggests that the location of space supports the strategies that institutions pursue to carry out missions and regulates the assigned social values (Beteille, 2009). Physical space that is appealing and perceived as a significant location has a definite "high value" and contributes to the identity of the users in both symbolic and material significance (Christiansen, 2009; Beteille, 2009).

The practice of assigning space for partnership work should include an understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures of others, instead of leaving a

contradictory impression on group members (Coleman, 2010; Cox et al., 2012). More research is needed to inform administrative leaders on the implications of their decisions for allotting space and the significance of unspoken messages associated with the space location in the university.

Critical dialogue is should be facilitated in a space perceived to be neutral both symbolically and logistically, and it should not inadvertently give some participants an advantage over others (Schirch & Campt, 2007). The venue space is a symbolic association that matters and have a historical association with one or another side of an issue that may affect different initial dialogue participants (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Reserving space for collaborative work should involve a sensitivity to varying work schedules and transportation options to avoid sessions scheduled in a way that consistently compromises one group's ability to attend (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Space selection should entail considerations of additional logical attributes to ensure effective critical dialogue such as distractions and nearby noise level.

Distractions. If the intended use for space is poorly matched with physical environment attributes, communicative group dynamics may falter in its intended purpose leading to negative experiences (Gislason, 2009; Harrop & Turpin, 2013). Physical space distractions such as proximity, heavy traffic, parking issues, noise levels, and acoustical problems impact collaborators' focus and hinder dialogue and knowledge sharing (Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Gislason, 2009). Although practitioners typically accept rooms that are made readily available, research findings suggest that undesirable attributes in physical space may lead to dominance and conformity (Coleman, 2010; Cox et al., 2012). Distractions should be alleviated or kept to a minimum, which correlates to

the location of the space and noise levels in surrounding hallways and offices.

Hospitality. The atmosphere created by leaders hosting partnership meetings and project activities influences the attendees. Attention to hospitality, such as having food and drink available, helps people relax and gives them something to do as they interact with each other before and after the meeting and at breaks (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Having refreshments serves as "breaking bread together" and recognizes our humanity and commonalities.

Schirch and Campt's research suggests that the appearance of the physical space and hospitable warmth expressed through a beautiful and comfortable space and refreshments helps people relax enough to consider multiple points of view (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Hospitality is often associated with social entertaining in the "comforts of home". The practice of offering food and drink, particularly for external practitioners traveling a distance from their own organization, makes collaborators feel more at ease and conveys a sense of caring.

The literature describes the power of psychological and physical space. An institution's use of physical space may reveal the complexities and contradictions of the provisional nature of space identification or nurture a strong sense of belonging (Cox et al., 2012). Practitioners would benefit from an increased awareness when accepting whatever space is available for collaborative group work in consideration of what the space offers and signifies to both internal and external constituents.

Theoretical Lenses

There are a variety of theories related to issues of leadership, equity, and relational multi-cultural dialogues in the context of community-engaged service learning

partnerships. The broad spectrum of educators' beliefs, values, experiences, and expectations for partnerships collaborating for societal good is indicative of the complexity of institutionalized education coupled with the web of human relationships (Hicks, 1996).

Leadership Theories

This particular topic is complex in a way that requires the use of multiple theories for understanding steps preceding collection action. The post-industrial leadership theories involve reciprocal relationships and differ from previous theoretical knowledge and approaches of singular leaders with singular visions.

Servant leadership. Greenleaf's (1970) philosophy of servant leadership is an ethical-moral, transformational form of leadership where leaders have been followers and vice versa on a continuum of growing and learning. Servant leaders "bend their efforts to serve with skill, understanding, and spirit, and that followers will be responsive only to able servants who would lead them" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 3). Building on Greenleaf's foundation of servant leadership, Van Dierendonck (2011) identified six primary characteristics of servant leadership behavior: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship.

Transformational leadership. The premise of Burn's (1978) transformational leadership theory incorporated a dependence on context, relationship, needs, and circumstances. Transformational leadership theory posits that organizations are impacted when the goals of the leader transcend their own self-interest and work toward the common good of their followers (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership creates positive change in the followers and the group process as they take care of each other's

interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole (Burns, 1978).

Bass and Riggio (2006) added that the transformational leader supported the values and vision of the collaborators and intentionally integrated a group process, which focused on higher order needs of individuals before the group addressed a societal problem. Leaders developed a responsive behavior and empowered followers, which helped aligned the individual and group objectives and goals before moving forward. Rost (1993) further explained transformational leadership as a shift from good management skills to the actual process of leadership with clearly articulated vision, sense of purpose, and the engagement of followers.

Rost (1993) suggests that the transformational leader is focused on the relationships in the group, which were originally formed for a socially desirable moral purpose. Transformational leadership builds the organization's capacity to support changes to teaching and learning based on a shared commitment to school change (Hallinger, 2003). This change mobilized the educators to fulfill their common purpose through relationships based on mutual openness, trust, and affirmation (Donaldson, 2006). Further, as Donaldson (2006) suggested that transformational leadership mobilized educators to fulfill their common purpose through relationships based on mutual openness, trust, and affirmation.

An increasing number of educators at these two sites pushed through traditional boundaries "by seeking opportunities to challenge the status quo through a shared vision" (Santamaria and Jean-Marie, 2014, p. 336). Transformational servant leaders established and nurtured group relationships and encouraged persistence in the work "by keeping hope and determination alive" (Santamaria and Jean Marie, 2014, p. 336).

Integrated leadership. Directive instructional models continued to become less desirable with the principal or practitioner at the center of expertise, power, and authority. Innovative collaborative work required the leader's emphasis to be redirected away from the leader-centered goals to a focus on leading using effective group process toward achieving the group's goals. Hallinger (2003) proposed an integrated leadership theory blended with transformational leadership in the context of education reform and reflected a more diplomatic, distributive leadership approach.

Adaptive leadership. Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership theory also emphasized the leadership process of engaging others to understand, clarify, and solve complex societal problems (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). Adaptive leadership involved a *meaningful* process and practice and helped individuals and organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments undergoing change. These meaningful processes developed mutual understanding within equitable group discussions among educators representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds and organizational cultures.

Authentic leadership. Starratt (2004) proposed authentic leadership theory in education as authentic relationships "require work to build and strengthen and maintain…[where] a sense of inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, transparency, and caring is to be developed and valued" (Starratt, 2004, p. 91). Starratt proposed the authentic leadership approach in education where learners encounter the meanings embedded in the curriculum about the natural, social and cultural worlds they inhabit, and, at the same time, find themselves in and through those very encounters (Starratt, 2007) and becoming intrinsically transformed through the education experience.

Dialogical Theories

In response to Bakhtin's (1981) individualistic discourse theory with dialogic struggles and intense interactions as indicators of engagement, Hicks (1996) suggested that knowledge construction of learning entailed a social dialogic engagement as reflected by acting/thinking/feeling persons in relationship with each other, rather than an intense dialogic struggle.

Dialogical theory of social discourse. Hicks (1996) dialogical theory of social discourse required educators to be engaged in simple acts reflective of the value of relationships. The implications of social discourse provided a humane means to connect thinking and speech in a shared learning process among people in relationship with one another (Hicks, 1996).

Critical-dialogic process theory. This critical dialogue theory focuses on contextualizing intergroup interactions in systems of power and privilege and on building relationships across these differences evolving out of social identity theory (Sorensen et al., 2009). The goal of dialogic communication is not to present or defend one's opinions in a right or wrong perspective, but to strive for understanding through exploration of others' experiences, identifying assumptions, and reappraising one's perspectives in light of dialogic exchanges through active listening, personal sharing, and asking questions (Sorensen et al., 2009).

Theory of Trust

One of the key practices of servant leadership is the development of trust. Tschannen-Moran's (2003) theory of trust proposed that as trust develops in newly established relationships, stages of trust begin at an initial period followed by a period of more intense exploration where "trust is established through a commitment period during

which each partner has the opportunity to signal to the other a willingness to accept personal risk and not to exploit the vulnerability of the other for personal gain" (Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 42).

Equality Discourse Theory

Griffiths (1998) equality discourse theory conceptualized equality in relation to the democratic notion of the common good. Griffiths proposed that "social justice is a dynamic state of affairs which is good for the common interest…the good depends on there being a right distribution of benefits and responsibilities" (Griffiths, 1998, p. 302). Furthermore, Bauman (1997) suggested that social justice and equity are not merely goals, and are often conceptualized as people move together toward desirable final outcomes of victory. The theoretical underpinnings of social justice among collaborating practitioners fuel the pursuit of theoretically informed social justice principles for managing schools as related to social justice and education improvement.

Brandsford Problem-Solving Theory

Brandsford's (1984) problem solving theory is utilized in both academic and corporate settings (Lamm et al., 2012). The Brandsford model corresponds to Dewey's problem solving approach, which include similar steps: experiencing a provocative situation, defining the problem, seeking data and information, formulating and implementing possible solutions, and evaluating the results (Lamm et al., 2012).

Lewis (2002) describes this problem solving process as fundamental project management stages. Lewis defines each stage of a healthy project life cycle where the dialogues within each stage are critical to development of solutions to problems from diverse perspectives.

Conclusion

One of the main barriers to successful partnerships is that collaborators often have many different viewpoints in understanding what causes tensions and strains group interactions as they seek agreeable solutions to a societal problem (Strier, 2011). Leaders must recognize that many professional colleagues develop process fatigue after many years of systems building, and they bring resistance and suspicion to a new process (Fulton, 2012).

Normative practices in higher education community-engagement are not concise and are often imposed from a variety of sources represented by a broad set of societal stakeholders and powerful governing concepts (Hellstrom, 2004). Educators are often overwhelmed by how to manage their time and responsibilities; collaborative partnerships provide a functional space to get concrete work done (Picower, 2011). Therefore, processes need to unfold in a timely manner but not come across as rushed in order to strike the right balance between being inclusive and open to input; results that are fast enough so people could see progress between meetings (Fulton, 2012).

When people believe that they alone hold the truth, there is not need to listen to others (Schirch & Campt, 2007). It requires humility to recognize that one person or group does not have the whole truth and people acknowledge that they can benefit from listening to and learning talking, and working with others (Schirch & Campt, 2007). The collaborative stage of taking action is often more a matter of incorporating existing efforts than of taking on new projects (Fulton, 2012). A critical component of establishing commitment to a broader cause is building on the commitment that these partners already had to their own work and transferring those commitments to a broader,

collective process (Fulton, 2012). We must realize and respect the differences and make extra efforts.

Many of us have not observed, learned, and practiced appropriate argumentation skills and how to respectfully challenge others' ideas and respond to challenges of our own ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Conversation improves our abilities to listen to academic messages. When we listen we are expected to respond and co-construct ideas which sharpens our listening skills (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Learning to interpret intonations, facial expressions, silences, and other clues in a variety of different people (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011) is required for emotionally intelligent professional educators. The use of debates within higher education has generally remained restricted predominantly to extra-curricular debate teams outside the classroom, relating to criticism against the Socratic debate method for being too adversarial and combative (Healey, 2012). Critical dialogue "helps build focusing stamina and self-monitoring to maintain focus" (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Facilitative leaders guide collaborative groups through critical dialogue to establish equity and trust required for accomplishing group goals. Influencing psychological and physical factors contribute to the complexity of community-engaged partnerships.

Recent studies reveal collaborative education initiatives are gaining traction in strategic and mutually beneficial initiatives to support student achievement and strengthen communities. Exploring the approaches of the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania; and The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma will provide insight into how critical issues are identified and prioritized among professional educators in two different U.S. regions, which are

skills required for effective facilitated critical dialogue across multi-sector constituencies,

and which experiences lead to collective action and change.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This methodology chapter includes a review of the problem statement, research questions and purpose. Also included are my rationale for selecting a qualitative approach and the components of the research design: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methods, and ethical issues.

Abbreviated Problem Statement, Purpose and Research Questions

Collective action between professional educators in K-12 and higher education is critical because large-scale social change comes from quality cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated interventions of individual education organizations (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Many college-going students are graduating from high school inadequately prepared for college-level work while colleges are addressing critical issues of remediation, persistence and college completion (Huerta, Watt & Reyes, 2013; Kinnick, 2012). Institutions of higher education are striving to expand traditional boundaries and bridge P-20 education to help students forge meaningful connections between the two disparate worlds of high school and college (Preus, 2012; Ballard, S., 2010; Osterhold & Barratt, 2010).

Institutional leaders are considering strategies to facilitate meaningful exchanges with K-12 educators (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) to generate constructive change (Schirch & Campt, 2007) associated with higher levels of student achievement and turn around in under-performing schools (Bandura, 1993; Henkin et al., 2010). These

collaborations may serve as an education vehicle to access and equity (Picower, 2011).

However, the two entities of K-12 and higher education institutions do not typically communicate. A lack of trust exists across K-12 and higher education settings (Bowman, 2012) stemming from ineffective communications, and resulting in territoriality-induced interactions (Scott, 2003; Henkin et al., 2010). Highly effective partnerships are shaped by a number of complex social, cultural, and political factors that require a high degree of trust (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). There may be a lack of understanding in higher education about "how their campuses might best interact with external partners to foster reciprocal, trusting relationships for mutual benefit" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 634).

Territoriality evokes claims of physical and psychological ownership that impact communication, coordination, collaboration, relationships, and organizational climate (Henkin et al., 2010); educators struggle to shift their orientation from individual work to collective action with individuals who may not share the same values and perspectives about education (Dee & Henkin, 2001; Henkin et al., 2010). "With increasingly heavy workloads, practitioners argue that equity work and advocacy should be left to others within the institution, perpetuating the status quo of traditional boundaries" (Westerman & Huey, 2012, p. 227).

It is possible that we need to take a step back from a focus on collective action (the desired outcome) to consider the process that takes us to that place, specifically exploring the conditions leading to effective critical dialogue that tends to occur prior to true collaborative action. An increased understanding of the creation and maintenance of strategic "safe zones" leading to critical dialogue and, ultimately, collective educational

action is needed.

Purpose of Study

The **purpose** of this study was to explore physical and psychological elements conducive to engaging educators from K-12 and higher education in meaningful exchanges that lead to collective action.

One primary research question guided this study with two subquestions: What are the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action?

- How do educators describe environments they perceive as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that lead to collective action?

- What are the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that are perceived as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?

Qualitative Inquiry

I selected a qualitative strategy of inquiry to conduct this study as "qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail" (Patton, 1990, p. 14). This qualitative research approach responded to my research question as qualitative data describes and "captures and communicates someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words" (Patton, 1990, p. 47) in order to help me understand the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action.

Constructivist Epistemology

Qualitative research responds to both my research questions and my constructivist epistemological worldview. My assumptions about human knowledge and realities

encountered in our human world "shaped the meaning of my research questions and the purposiveness of research methodologies" (Crotty, 1998, p. 17). As a researcher, I was positioned in the research as I sought to understand the meanings participants from the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum had about conditions conducive to collective action. My central assumption was that individuals develop subjective meanings of their own personal experience. This gave way to multiple meanings so I expected that different stakeholders involved in this study would have different experiences and perceptions of conditions conducive to collective action. Therefore, it was my role to understand the multiple realities from the perspectives of participants.

The only way to achieve this understanding was to become involved in the reality of the participants and to interact with them in meaningful ways. My role as a constructivist researcher was essentially that of passionate participant and I acknowledge that my experiences shaped my interpretations of the data. My constructivist epistemological stance informed my interpretivist theoretical perspective looking for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

Interpretivist Theoretical Perspective

Through my interpretivist theoretical perspective, where participants' views are socially, politically, and psychologically constructed, I sought "to understand the context through visiting the context and gathering information personally" (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). My intent was to interpret the meanings others have about the phenomenon of collective action and inductively develop a pattern of meaning. I gathered data from several sources to attempt to capture various perspectives from the Netter Center and The Higher Ed

Forum to present as complete of a understanding as possible on how critical dialogue leading to collective action may occur. The interpretivist theoretical perspective informed my case study methodology, which guided me to the case study research methods, which "selectively narrowed the focus within a previously explored field" (Wolcott, 2009, p. 95) of community-engaged practices.

Case Study

I matched research methods to the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the resources available. In order to examine the most salient factors for critical dialogue and collective action. I chose a non-experimental multi-site case study to explore participants' perspectives and artifacts of two distinct models at the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum.

This study involved documenting a detailed description of the Netter Center and Higher Ed Forum settings followed by an analysis of the data collected; the research questions guided efforts toward emerging themes or issues. The rationale for choosing inquiry multi-case study design was to explore in depth the collaborative processes between K-12 and higher education, focused on the phenomenon of conditions conducive to collective action "that can be defined as a specific unique, bounded system" (Patton, 1990, p. 447).

The case study tradition built an in-depth detailed picture of two different sites through multiple forms of data collection to "convey the complexity of the reality while also elucidating single culture-sharing group specifics" (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). I gathered information in many ways to observe the culture-sharing groups at the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum sites and functioned as a participant researcher.

Site Selection

I selected these two sites as a result of my experience with both; founder of The Higher Ed Forum created through a partnership with the Netter Center. Although the two sites contrast in geographic regions, university type, size, and scope, the foundational mission of both sites was focused on academically-based service learning through curriculum, requiring community-engaged partnerships between secondary and post-secondary students and teachers. Both sites have a successful history developing academically-based service learning partnerships.

The leaders of the Netter Center continue to mentor leaders of The Higher Ed Forum and the two sites have joined together as plenary speakers on panels at national conferences and presented research and best practices in community-engaged partnership work. Two criteria were used to select the proposed case study sites: (1) to ensure richness of perspectives, institutions that d established a reputation for supporting outreach and engagement; and (2) to explore potentially differing issues of institutional identity and engagement sites with differing missions, histories, and stakeholder groups (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Although the Higher Ed Forum was created in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania to revise and expand the mission of the Netter Center's academically-based service learning model, the Forum operated autonomously, functioning on similar foundational goals to the Netter Center influenced by local schools and students' educational needs.

The first site was a large, private northeastern university considered the 4th oldest university in the U.S. This university's community-engaged initiative was developed through the Netter Center for Community Partnerships and focused primarily on the

impoverished neighborhoods and surrounding K-12 public schools in West Philadelphia. All participants were functioning as decision makers at a senior administrative level or were faculty on an administrative team within their secondary or post-secondary institution. The majority of participants from both sites were highly accomplished in scholarly research publications in peer-reviewed journals. All participants had conducted research in community-engaged collaborative work, and were active in public speaking through national to international conference presentations. Participants from both sites were involved on internal and external education-related boards and committees and served on strategic planning committees at the highest levels of their organizations. The first site selected was the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. The Netter Center engaged stakeholders internally and externally and centered on academically-based service learning projects with West Philadelphia schools and neighborhoods. The mission of the Netter Center was to initiate, develop, and grow mutually beneficial, sustained, and democratic community-engaged service-learning partnerships.

In 1992, the Netter Center was institutionalized, established as part of the official institution, within the University of Pennsylvania and served as a primary hub supporting the university's academically-based service learning opportunities. The Center provided student seminars within innovative community-engaged coursework, offered preparatory training for students and faculty preparing to engage in partnership work in the community, and published scholarly research related to the academic activities. The Netter Center intentionally developed and expanded faculty involvement in academically-based service learning coursework across campus, anchored in Dewey's

belief that "as societies become more complex in structure and resources, the need for formal or intentional teaching and learning increases" (Dewey, 2008, p. 14).

The second site, The Higher Ed Forum of Oklahoma, was a much smaller grassroots initiative founded in 2007 through a proposal awarded as a replication site for the Netter Center. The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma was housed in the northeast region of the state at a large, four-campus community college. Delegates represented organizations from nine public higher education institutions, two private higher education institutions, and eight public school districts. The mission of The Higher Ed Forum was to build relationships and academic partnerships between K-12 and higher education in the region. The Forum served as a neutral convening space and built multi-organizational education collaborations to support college readiness efforts across the P-16 educational pipeline. Since 2008, the Forum began linking educators from high schools and colleges through a process that provided access to academic service learning partnerships. These partnership facilitated non-traditional student learning opportunities and engaged college and high school students in experiential learning curriculum relevant to their career paths. The foundational goals of the Forum were to improve student achievement through projects for academic credit to bridge the gap between K-12 and higher education institutions and provide high school students with exposure to the attainable realities of college coursework. Although the Higher Ed Forum initiative was hosted at a community college, the initiative served many organizations and was not formally institutionalized.

The common goals of these two sites were to advance community-engaged work through experiential learning for academic credit in both high school and college coursework. Academically-based service learning coursework and projects required

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higher education educators to cross over organizational boundaries into public schools and public school educators to move into university settings. Although two sites were geographically diverse, their parallel goals provided mutual support to advance community-engaged work, which allowed me the opportunity to cast a wider net in the data collection process. The cornerstone of the Forum's work included deeply rooted beliefs that critical dialogue leads to effective collective action and pools existing resources to coordinate academically-based service learning opportunities.

Both sites reflected constraints of the "real world" suitable for examining the full context of critical dialogue and collective action perspectives (Gay & Airasian, 2003) with partnerships specifically targeted toward, but not limited to, underrepresented student groups and Title I high schools. Educators and students were exposed to eye-opening experiences and issues of real world circumstances in local communities.

Academically-based service learning brought opportunities for deeper understanding among students and educators in K-12 and universities regarding the realities and barriers students from impoverished communities face in striving for academic achievement. The institutions of higher education and public school districts at both sites promoted innovative coursework, which required non-traditional, multi-organizational collaborative processes. This study involved detailed, in-depth data collected at both sites through observations, interviews, document analysis, reflexivity memos, annual reports, and media imagery elicitation (Schwartz, 1989; Näykki & Jarvela, 2008; Melles, 2007).

Participants

"The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites

that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question"

(Creswell, 2009, p. 178). I selected participants using a purposeful sample, subsets of the

larger population bounded by participation in the Netter Center or the Higher Education

Forum. Purposeful sampling "focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study

will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 1990, p. 231). The selection stemmed

from identifying individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009) of

community-engaged work through academically-based service learning.

The criteria for participant selection included individuals with a close

involvement historically in the development and decision-making processes at the Netter

Center and The Higher Ed Forum. These participants were founding leaders and

members who were personally involved in developing their site's processes leading to

collective action. I was conscious of diversity for the participant sample, although

diversity was not a requirement given the limited pool. In both initiatives, each

participant was involved at the time of the inception of the initiative, with a total length

of involvement that ranged from 7 to 27 years.

The participants in this study included two females and two males from the

University of Pennsylvania Netter Center and two females and three males from The

Higher Ed Forum of Oklahoma. I was personally aware that these nine participants

represented a wide range of ages, experiences, and familial backgrounds because our

relationships spanned many years I had become generally knowledgeable about these

basic demographics. At the time of the interview, seven participants held doctoral

degrees in an education or education-related field, and two participants held master's

degrees and were completing doctorates while working full time. All participants were

administrators at their institutions and were current or previous teachers in K-12 or

faculty members in higher education.

The participant descriptors are included in Chart 1 listed below.

Chart 1. Participant Descriptors

#	*Pseudonym	**Site	Highest Degree Attained	Gender
P 1	Rachel	Netter Center	Master's Degree, Completing Doctorate	F
P 2	Julie	Netter Center	Master's Degree, Doctorate ABD	F
P 3	Carl	Netter Center	Master's Degree	M
P 4	Joel	Netter Center	Doctorate	M
P 5	Burke	HEF	Doctorate	M
P 6	Walter	HEF	Doctorate	M
P 7	Anne	HEF	Doctorate	F
P 8	Kevin	HEF	Master's Degree, Completing Doctorate	M
*IRB approved this research study containing site names only. Additional participant Information was not provided based on potential identifiers of participants. Numerically- assigned pseudonyms represented the names of participants.				
**The University of Pennsylvania Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships ("Netter Center") and The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma ("HEF")				

Participant recruitment began with brief explanations of the nature of this study

and requests for interviews by appointment. Through phone calls and email, I contacted

participants directly and inquired about the best scheduling option.

The participants were listed in Chart 1 by their pseudonyms, site, the highest

degree in education attained, and his or her gender. In addition to the previously stated

criteria of being a founding leaders or members at the inception of one of the sites, I

selected the participants based on my long-term association with the Netter Center as author of the proposal for a site replication and as the founder of The Higher Ed Forum. This factored into the selection of the participants as I was aware of their respected work in the field and localities, and their leadership roles by title and/or job description. All participants invited to participate in my study agreed to be a part of my research.

Access

Relationships with leaders in local school districts provided another participant researcher advantage for access to interviewees familiar with community-engaged work in the locale. My relationships with participants at both sites allowed me to access email addresses and technology systems, which contained email addresses participants. I used the same recruitment process at both sites. All selected participants agreed and either directed their administrative assistants to establish a date and time for the interview or set up a meeting time with me directly.

With the Netter Center and Forum participants, I communicated that "the information is important, the reasons for that importance, and the willingness of the interviewer to explain the purpose of the interview out of respect for the interviewee" (Patton, 1990, p. 407) before the interview began. The IRB-approved consent forms were introduced and reviewed with each participant at the beginning of their interview with ample time allowed for questions and answers (see Appendix C for Consent Forms and Appendix D for Institutional Review Board Approval) before the start of the interview.

I did not encounter problematic constraints in scheduling interview appointments despite the time demands of university administrators and faculty members. All interviews with participants were conducted between the end of May to August of 2014.

Observations

Observations provided me with a "first-hand experience with participants where I could record information as it occurs" (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). I observed and recorded the natural settings of the participants in multiple venues in order to see the expressions, interactions, body language; I also sought to experience the general atmosphere among educators in K-12 and higher education. I observed a total of three hours of separate observations and collaborative meetings at both sites. The observation settings at the University of Pennsylvania included collaborative partnership planning meetings or conference sessions with educators from Philadelphia public schools and the Netter Center facilitated by project group leaders. At the Higher Ed Forum initiative when I was not facilitating, I observed three separate hours of collaborative meetings among local school district educators and post-secondary faculty in discussions involving their collaborative work progress and/or project planning sessions. At both sites, I sat on the perimeter of the group and did not share that I was observing as I jotted my notes. In addition to these observations, I took notes at the time of the interviews to record details about the surroundings as well as reflexive notes from my position as participant researcher.

My observations included a variety of settings where presentations, dialogues, and free-flowing interactions occurred with K-12 and university educators in their natural settings during a wide variety of committee meetings at K-12 and higher education sites and monthly sub-committee meetings. I jotted extensive amounts of field notes. I included demographic information and handwritten reflective notes about my "personal thoughts, such as speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions and

prejudices" (Creswell, 2009, p. 182); these notes provided data and opened insights for me into complex social and cultural nuances.

One-on-One Interviews

All of the interview sites were determined by the interviewees based on their schedules, convenience of location, and privacy in a professional setting. I jotted field notes in the settings where I conducted the interviews and described behaviors and happenings in the participants' environment in my notes. In my qualitative research interview, I tried to understand the responses from the subjects' point of view and the meaning of their experiences (Kvale, 1996). The purpose of these interviews was to explore perceptions and gain understanding of the subjects' points of view related to the research questions. I began each interview with informal welcoming conversation, followed by an explanation of the study and the consent form.

The interview sites included five interviews in private participants' organizational offices, two interviews in quiet library conference rooms, and two interviews conducted over meals in restaurants convenient to the participant's schedule and location. One of the restaurant settings became increasingly noisy and crowded, and, although the interview was on the brink of concluding, we moved into a much quieter space outside the restaurant and continued. This shift in setting seemed to re-energized the discussion, which was wrapping up and the interview continued longer. I conducted nine digitally audiotaped, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews ranging from 60 to 130 minutes composed of guided open-ended questions (see Appendix A for interview guide).

Each interview was characterized by a "methodological awareness of question forms, a focus on the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee, and

also a critical attention to what is said" (Kvale, p. 15, 2008). Although the open-ended interview questions established a fixed sequencing of questions at both sites, I began each interview "with questions about noncontroversial present behaviors, activities, and experiences" (Patton, 1990, p. 352). My interview questions initially began with exploring interviewees' definitions of the phenomenon so that their opinions and judgments were grounded in their own words and described by what they experienced. I followed the same interview procedures with both sites.

Documents and Artifacts

Collecting data in the form of public documents and internal documents given to me by participants enabled me to obtain the language and words of the participants through brochures, summative program reports, formal annual reports to stakeholders, marketing materials, contents housed on specific organizational and departmental websites, newspaper articles, and any materials related to the research questions.

Data collection including documents goes beyond typical observations and interviews to "capture useful information that observations and interviews may miss" (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). Many of the participants generously contributed internal documents during the interviews, or guided me to public online sources. There did not appear to be much interest in discussing the documents other than brief explanations of how they might contribute to the study; one participant gave me a copy of the book they used as a teaching guide during K-12 and higher education partnerships.

I kept journals during the study and examined publicly available online biographies of the participants, including information about their roles at their workplaces, their professional career histories, and professional activities such a

conference presentations and publications. I analyzed public documents, which included office memos, annual reports, internal coursework documents, and archived records that some of the participants provided to me. The documents included "information representing primary material, i.e., information directly from the people or situation under study, or secondary material, i.e., secondhand accounts of the people of situation written by others" (Creswell, 2009, p. 183) such as conference biographies, statements in annual reports and marketing materials, website content, and publication by the organizations. Also, I absorbed and reviewed many of these documents before each interview as "some background information may be necessary at the beginning to make sense out of the rest of the interview" (Patton, 1990, p. 353).

Documents and artifacts pertinent to the study were included through official publications, reports, memos, and website photos in the public domain as pictorial knowledge mediates collaborative knowledge construction (Näykki & Jarvela, 2008). The process of collaborative knowledge construction had used technology and pictorial knowledge representations for visualizing groups' shared ideas.

This interpretive and descriptive visual activity was a strategy I used to generate and enhance the research process (Schwartz, 1989; Melles, 2007, Näykki & Jarvela, 2008). This pre-existing pictorial knowledge was considered a component of documents and artifacts. The media I retrieved from the Netter Center and Higher Ed Forum websites, conference presentations, and similar visuals such as videotapes and photographs allowed me to explore technological and pedagogical possibilities characterized as cognitive, interpersonal, and organizational tools in collaborative learning (Näykki & Jarvela, 2008; Dreon, Kerper & Landis (2011).

Media Imagery Elicitation

Near the end of the individual interview, I asked participants to discuss the

contents of the pictures selected for media imagery elicitation used to stimulate and

worked as a catalyst for further discussion. This process encouraged direct participation

of the study participants in sharing living stories and viewing metaphorical visual

narratives, which drew out stories and perceptions of community-engaged experiences

related to the visuals. I provided 9-10 images unique to each site, which portrayed

collaborative work taking place in meetings, projects, conferences and presentations. All

participants at the same site saw the same photos. Participants viewed the photos

informally displayed on the table during the interview and personally noted any of the

images which visually described their work. Using media imagery elicitation,

participants were shown pre-selected pictures from diverse combinations of their settings'

representative spaces, places and subjects in collaboration which I obtained and scanned

from university public marketing brochures, website pages, social media, and published

annual reports. I also selected and scanned images from site websites specific to the area

of academically-based community-engaged partnership work, photos displayed on the

broader institution site, photos from marketing and annual report materials, and photos

from media sources accessed through newspapers, magazines, and online sources open to

the general public.

My selections were informed by a wide range of pictorial scenarios such as

outdoor classroom sessions, candid and posed photos during K-12 and higher education

partnerships work, internal and external academic settings at the sites. The photos jogged

participants' memories of times, places, and spaces as indicated by the outpouring of

more stories, laughter, or deepened facial expressions in frowns as they recognized the content. The participants did not seem particularly engaged in the actual media imagery process of the interviews, the photos triggered new stories although the photos did not draw out stories about the actual scenes depicted in the images.

I prompted responses and asked about physical and psychological space created for these collaborations (see Appendix B for images question guide). During the conclusion of this segment, I asked participants to provide me with additional images via email, during the follow up member checking session or anytime throughout this study. Participants appeared more engaged during the interview prior to the photo discussion and, in retrospect, I should have opened the interview with this photo elicitation process and concluded the interviews without prompts for the participants' voices.

Member Checking

Member checking is used "to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings by taking specific descriptions or themes back to participants and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate" (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). Following the conclusion of the interview process, every participant in the study was sent a copy of his or her own verbatim transcription from the interviews accompanied by an explanatory email describing the purpose of a member check. Each participant was specifically encouraged to clarify or edit his or her existing statements in the transcripts and asked to provide any new thoughts or clarifications. One participant sent minor items for clarification and one participant approved of her transcription through an email note. The response time was left open and ongoing for new insights or post-interview thoughts and I ended up with additional informal interviews by phone and email with participants at

both sites. During the post-interview exchanges, I collected new data and remained open to further possibilities.

Saturation

I gathered enough information to saturate the data collected during the course of the interview, ongoing post-interview discussions, documents and artifacts, observations, and follow up member checking discussions, which will be conveyed in the data presented in Chapter 4. This organic process evolved until redundancy appeared in the form of general commonalities in participants' repeated thoughts and phrases when I no longer heard or discovered new information.

Trustworthiness/Credibility/Dependability/Generalizability

The strategies employed to reduce bias, establish trustworthiness and credibility through validity as a social phenomenon involved member checking and a statement of my personal experiences related to the research questions. I stated possible bias by describing my positionality as a participant researcher. I sought objectivity as a counter to bias with emphasis on fair and conscientious accounts of multiple perspectives, multiple interests, and multiple realities.

Multiples sources of information were "sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on the program" (Patton, 1990, p. 306). Using triangulation for validity, multiple sources of data were incorporated to maximize accuracy and the credibility of my findings. I provided discrepant information that conveyed contradictory evidence to the general perspectives of participants.

Ethical Considerations

Before conducting my study, I obtained approval and scientific, ethical and regulatory oversight from the Institutional Review Board. This study required signed informed consent forms ensuring voluntary and confidential participation, which I obtained and stored in a secured file. Written materials from the study were structured in ways to protect the identities of the participants' real names. With the Institutional Review Board's written permission, I used the real names of the sites and generalized the professional titles of the participants. As the sole researcher, I transcribed the audiotapes verbatim and stored all data properly with assigned pseudonyms to replace participant identifiers.

Analysis of Data and Synthesis

I used open coding and data reduction to organize and interpret data objectively and systematically into categories and themes. My data analysis was an ongoing process. Data collection analysis involved "organizing and preparing the data, reading and re-reading through the information, coding the data, and developing a description and themes from the coding process" (Creswell, 2009, p. 201.) My interpretations involved stating "lessons learned, comparing the findings with past literature and theory, and raising questions" (Creswell, 2009, p. 201) without using pre-determined categories, I stepped away from the data coding on several occasions in order to return with a fresh examination. I started combining things, aggregating data, discerning patterns as I spent months "rereading, re-sorting, refining, rechecking, revising add time for just staring into space ruminating" (Wolcott, 2009, p. 47)

This coding process helped with my ongoing data appraisal through continual re-readings of the transcriptions and reconsideration of the emerging findings. Further, as a

researcher I exercised judgment as to what I thought was important, including any contradictory or inconsistent findings and I remained open to the unexpected. As a participant researcher, I came to "new settings with prior knowledge, experience, and ways of understanding, and our new perceptions and understandings build on these" (Patton, 1990, p. 596.) The findings were my own current best integration of many aspects of this study including "the participants' aims, ideas, struggles; and their historical development as conveyed in observable actions and records collected" (Patton, 1990, p. 592).

In a concentrated and systematic effort to find connections within the data and weave them into patterns, I noticed changes in what was reported in the literature and continued to gather more perspectives, which included participants' views on K-12 and higher education territoriality issues, conflict within organizations emphasized more than barriers between organizations, components of safe psychological space, and the role of the facilitative leader in critical dialogue. Ultimately, I discovered the research findings from the two sites were similar enough to collapse into findings as my intent was to explore the specific topic and not compare and contrast the sites.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include that my research "occurred in a particular place, at a particular time, under particular circumstances" (Wolcott, 2009, p. 34) as my observational data were "constrained by the limited sample of activities actually observed" (Patton, p. 306) during my conference visit to the Netter Center and during Higher Ed Forum activities. As most of the participants either worked closely together or were associated professionally, I remained "cognizant of suggested power relationships"

(Creswell, 2007, p. 44) among participants. For this reason, I did not select focus groups as a method to gather data as power could have been an issue. As both site names were revealed, focus groups might have been problematic due to issues of confidentiality because most of the participants knew each other and several worked together.

The semi-structured interviews allowed control over the line of questioning yet involved limitations because participants responded to my questions and with specific stories shared in relation to my questions. Expanding the probing questions to open more thoughts and responses from the interviewee was at my discretion. My intent was not to prohibit the continuance of discussions, while remaining aware and respectful of the time offered by each participant.

Limitations existed in my role as the researcher as a participant observer and interviewer, although I mindfully took steps to minimize researcher bias. Limitations included my interaction with the interviewees and the possibility that I may have affected the situation being observed. My presence may have produced socially acceptable behaviors or responses in participants that may have not been present otherwise; participants may have behaved in different ways because they knew they were being observed. Having interviewed only nine key people, this study is limited by having only the ideas of these people. As in all qualitative studies, these findings are not generalizable. Rather, they are meant to be a resource for others considering the ways to cultivate and sustain collective action stemming from critical dialogue. Limitations may have included potential weaknesses in assumptions reflected in the interview questions and words chosen.

Limitations of the interview data may have included responses due to the

emotional state of the interviewees, possible current work demands, unidentified personal issues, and my subtle tone and word inflections "since interviews can be greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewee at the time of the interview" (Patton, 1990, p. 306). The documents and records I selected may also have limitations as "they may be incomplete or inaccurate…and variable in quality and completeness" (Patton, 1990, p. 307).

As a participant researcher, I had varying degrees of established rapport with the participants, and I was mindful that the rapport did not undermine my neutrality so that the interviewee could "tell me anything without engendering either my favor or disfavor with regard to the content of her or his response…nothing the person tells me will make me think more of less of the person" (Patton, 1990, p. 365). Although I was careful, I could not control the perceptions or concerns an individual may have had that affect his or her responses.

Positionality and Reflexivity

With the intention to represent responsibility through critical consciousness, I incorporated an ongoing reflexivity process as I recognized my writings are co-constructions and representations of interactive processes between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, 2007). I adopted an insider point of view and sought to discover and understand meanings of the participants' experiences; adopting a flexible stance open to change. Reflexive about my own voice and perspective, I acknowledged personal values and brought my own experience to bear on the study by including analytic memo writing as a component of my work (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Lutrell, 2009).

Engaging in ongoing reflexivity practices, I wrote analytic memos consisting of

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questions, musings, and speculations about the data and I documented personal reactions to participants' narratives included in the data corpus for analysis (Creswell, 2007). This reflexivity, or self-awareness, allowed an interpretive approach in qualitative research and acknowledged the importance of writing as a participant observer researcher. The data sets were co-constructions and represented interactive processes between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, 2007).

I worked at being reflexive through analytic memos and field notes. I had a pre-existing familiarity with the participants and the nature of their work and roles in community-engaged activities. As a participant researcher, I benefitted by understanding the acronyms participants used when discussing organizations, places, and settings as they shared stories of experiences and perspectives. It is also quite possible that the participants shared more easily about their feelings regarding hopes and failures, and other issues more personal in nature, because there was already a degree of established trust between us.

My professional relationships with participants at both sites stems from my role in sustaining the partnership between the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum. In various formats, we have presented our work and research at national conferences, and nurtured the growth of academically-based service learning opportunities between public K-12 school districts and institutions of higher education in our respective locales.

I have an established rapport with participants at both sites, which has grown through collaborative strategic planning processes, coordinating community-engaged partnerships, hosting conferences, creating programs and reports, strengthening relationships within our regional K-12 and higher education network, and communicating

with the Netter Center.

My professional background as an administrator, adjunct faculty member, and founder of The Higher Ed Forum included writing the 2006 replication site proposal requested by the Netter Center. The goals of the proposal award involved advancing the Netter Center's academically-based service learning work to the southwest region with the freedom to create a different model based on the needs and resources of the region in Oklahoma. The development of The Higher Ed Forum of Oklahoma provided a unique hub for educators in K-12 and higher education to gather and develop collaborative partnerships to grow academically-based service learning regional network in Oklahoma.

In this chapter I have discussed the problem statement, research questions, purpose and my rationale for selecting a qualitative approach and the components of the research design: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methods, and ethical issues. I will present the findings of the study in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

And one story I'll never forget… (long pause) is how he was as a *person,* as a

human being. When [he] was president, we had a community board meeting and

he got up and; we were having breakfast, and he gets up and because the service

wasn't [happening]…he walks around and (lowering his voice) served everybody

coffee. The president of the university *served coffee. (*He sat back and threw his

hands in the air). I watched the faces of my friends and they just *loved* it.

(Animated now and his voice growing louder). They loved it not because he is

stooping to conquer…no, he is a person. [Me: So why was that surprising?]

Because university presidents don't *do* that …and he did it because of a

genuineness of partnership and friendship…coming as a progressive southern

white who felt deeply about the issue of race issues (quietly), which moved him

very much. (Joel, Netter)

This scene and direct quote from a study participant, Joel, is just one of many

depicting the type of leaders who participated in this study. The humbleness portrayed in

this vignette is critical to the success of building relationships of all kinds, including

partnerships that fostered collective action. Witnessing this university president serve and

care for others in a meeting clearly made a lasting impression. Joel explained that the

university president, as a white man in a position of power, served the coffee in this manner instead of allowing the hired service to do so. His behavior appeared to honorably serve those with perceivably less status in the room. Based on the findings, I open with this vignette to show the critical need for a "leader as servant", one of the meta-themes of successfully facilitated critical dialogue leading to collective action in the form of academic service-learning partnerships.

The purpose of this study was to explore elements conducive to engaging educators from K-12 and higher education in meaningful exchanges that lead to collective action. One primary research question and two subquestions guided this study:

- What are the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action?

- How do educators describe environments they perceive as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that lead to collective action?

- What are the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that are perceived as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?

This study explored and untangled a wide range of complex topics in this unique subject where K-12 and higher education collaborative partnerships create academic coursework outside of their traditional norms. Educators from The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum were predisposed to finding the value in community-engaged partnerships and figuring out the best practices despite the lack of professional development to inform their work.

The goal of this chapter is to address the research questions through a thematic presentation of the related data, and as Merriam suggests, there is no standard format for

reporting case study research (Merriam, 1988). To best communicate the findings of this study, data themes are presented through direct quotes, individual passages, and excerpts from the transcripts, observations, and other data sets from the data corpus.

The findings from this study emerged from the interview of nine participants, and observations at meetings, and various artifacts. The findings uncovered the meta-themes, which connect and overlap. The categories of findings emerged as connected, dynamic, and interwoven meta-themes and themes.

These meta-themes cyclically feed each other and draw from each other in a continuously adaptive circle. These findings include 1) creating equity; 2) responsive leadership; 3) developing relationships and a sense of community; and 4) other influencing factors. These meta-themes are dialectically connected as one feeds off of the other and the quality of one intimately affects the other. Therefore, these findings are visually represented in a cyclical manner rather than a simple list meta-themes, demonstrating the necessary dialectic for critical dialogue and collective action to occur.

Figure 1. Meta-Themes.
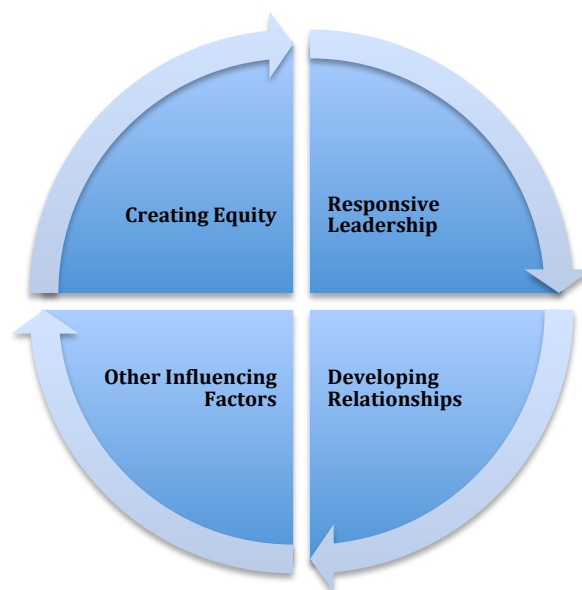
While "creating equity" is one of the four themes, it is unique in that it was the overarching intention and vision that drove the K-12 and higher education partnerships, critical dialogue and collective action at these two sites; as a parallel requirement, in order for the collaboration to work, a concern for creating equity also had to be mirrored within the collaborative itself. This case study shares the stories of people at the two study sites who were willing to assume personal and professional risks to involve more educators in incorporating academically-based service learning in higher education curriculum through partnership with K-12 schools. This cyclical process flexes and adapts to the differing contexts, often appearing misshapen to the untrained eye; the circle re-stabilizes in resilience--a relentless force of a purposeful democratic pursuit of equity.

Creating Equity. *"I was motivated by vision. Wanting to change the world" (Joel).*

The intention of creating equity in our schools through meaningful, fair and impartial educational learning experiences was reported by the majority of participants as the cornerstone for conditions conducive to collective action. Creating equity required educators from K-12 and higher education to come together and partner in academics through a common vision of democracy and social justice. Having "vision is first" (Leigh) in the critical early steps of establishing partnerships was a critical early step in the partnership process because "unless you have a vision where you're going, you're not leading anywhere" (Burke). Creating equity in schools required creating equity in the partnership work. A common vision was a crucial element in early collaborative work.

The concept of collaborative partnerships brought educators from K-12 and higher education together to communicate, develop relationships, and address societal issues through problem solving curriculum. Before these mutually beneficial partnerships

mobilized university and K-12 resources, the early dynamics of group formation "began

working together to come up with ways to interact and have democratic work together"

(Julie) in order to establish healthy group norms. Educators created group equity within

the collaborative work as they focused on mutually beneficial partnerships because

"people support that which they mutually create" (Carl), and a sense of equity stirred

mutual respect among educators. Participants did not arrive and interact this way

immediately but a sense of individual equity within the group emerged through the

ongoing relational process. Educators intentionally clarified the broader group vision

where "both sides see the benefit of why they're at the table" (Julie), which involved

openness and relationship building before the project planning began. Collaborators were

gaining ground and unifying by sharing thoughts and ideas through interactions.

Getting on the same page required an intentional willingness to respect and value

the opinions of others with an open mind. Based on common beliefs that creating equity

through partnerships was "really important for the *revolution* here [and] to really get on

the *same* strategic page" (Carl), required establishing an "*even playing field* where

everyone feels valued and respected" (Burke) to create equity within the collaborative

process itself. Establishing equity in these partnerships was worth the time invested and

helped to avoid the perceived power struggles within or between educational

organizations. Educators pre-disposed to partnership work were willing to ask questions

about the values of their fellow faculty member. Rachel explained that this "makes a

difference; if you've got someone who really fundamentally believes in social justice and

equity and that's part of the agenda" (Rachel) of the collaborative vision. The

collaborators' realization of their general common beliefs and values toward societal

equity and improving education through academically-based service learning among collaborators created a norm of group equity and in the group with like-mindedness outweighing the differences.

The creation and maintenance of group equity required a servant leader of the collaborative who modeled the expectations for group behavior and dialogue. Anne looked me straight in the eye and said "you *have* to have a leader in place" (Anne) to help establish group equity as a group norm. All participants expressed the critical role of leadership and behavior traits of leaders as "the number one factor in collective action" (Burke). The leaders in the collaborative partnership had a keen eye for creating equity with sensitivity to race and class differences, as exhibited by the vignette where the president modeled this by serving coffee as he conducted a meeting. Portraying and valuing servant leadership was a critical factor at the university president level as well as the collaborative group level. These leaders found ways to help people in the group understand each other and modeled putting others first in the process. The role of the leader as a facilitator was a critical theme. Kevin shared that "the facilitation is huge" and the primary contributing factor in conditions conducive to collective action.

Early group dynamics were usually superficial and polite in the beginning because interactions involved educators who did not know each other very well. The social pleasantries developed into more meaningful active dialogues where educators were "*always* trying to coordinate and facilitate conversations" (Carl) during meetings. However, at the time I conducted this study, the Forum had matured as a group and had experienced seven years of collaborative work. I observed people arriving early to Forum meetings and greeting others with a smile and a handshake, signing in at the welcome

table, grabbing a copy of the agenda along with a cup of coffee with cookies that were typically provided. Whether it was a Netter Center or Higher Ed Forum general meeting or gathering at a professional conference session, the educators were engaged in lively interactions when meetings concluded. They often lingered after the meeting concluded and remained in conversation in smaller groups and one on one. I heard sudden bursts of laughter from small groups in one area while other people standing together nearby were engaged in more serious discussions. Their heads were leaning close together as if they wanted to catch every word. The energy during the meetings were fueled by real conversations, which conveyed, "here are individual problems and coming together and saying 'what is the solution?'" (Anne), and the direction of the dialogue flowed organically. These views of individuals progressed in the early years and developed over time to a collective "how do we accomplish that vision?" (Walter) as relationship developed and the dialogue continued. The continual dialogical exchanges began a process of building relationships and evolved into a deeper mutual respect over time. Understanding the role of relationship building was an important precursor for partnerships and required patience despite the pressure of project timelines. Advancing partnership projects required nurturing these early interactions and the leaders ensured sufficient time for these relationships to be nurtured.

The role of the facilitative leader in collaborative partnerships included a unique set of skills as a servant leader who was devoted to modeling and guiding groups toward collective action without the intent of self-gain or self-promotion.   The servant leader empowered collaborators through dialogue leading to a sense of equity in the group before they embarked on specific plans to address a social problem. Participants

conveyed that facilitative leaders served "as a vital element for negotiating power and leveraging equity issues" (Walter), implying that a good leader was a good facilitator; "the leader [in partnership work] is seen as the facilitator and not the top down authoritative person" (Anne). Participants responded to incidents of humility in leadership, similar to the vignette portraying the humble traits of the president who served coffee. The facilitator was described as "the ultimate person responsible for leveraging all the voices in the room so there's equity" (Walter) who monitored the climate to ensure equitable processes were in place. Kevin shared "how meetings are facilitated is *huge*...where [the facilitator] is very cognizant of power structures and engages participants equitably, gives value to all people who take the risk of speaking up" (Kevin) is an expected role of the leader. While modeling a sense of felt equity with others, the facilitative leader also discouraged attempts for self-promotion through pontification or elitist attitudes among group members. I observed facilitative leaders protecting equity through techniques used in group dialogue to re-focus the discussion when an individual began to dominate the meeting. Facilitation skills were essential for a leader that promotes fairness and critical dialogue.

Although the participants in this study had administrative titles, the majority indicated that they disregarded titles as the titles were not evidence of capability to collaborate. Participants shared their perceptions of titles as a potential challenge in collaborative work. Leigh conveyed an irrelevance of titles of leaders and group collaborators to the partnership work: "What's important is the task that we are all here to do. The fact that that's my title is not relevant to what we're doing together. Just because I have a *title* doesn't make my contribution better than yours." Participants looked

beyond the organizational titles, which they felt did not contribute to creating equity, and conveyed that the facilitative leader helped neutralize perceptions of power so that the collaborative work would get underway and progress. Walter appreciated that "all the titles stayed at the door and it's just about conversation" during partnership meetings. I observed this humbleness about the use of titles during observations in a variety of circumstances at both sites. Administrators and faculty with senior titles made a point to greet other educators at the door, and they made an effort to sit at tables with educators who represented all organizational levels of K-12 and higher education. Burke shared the opening of meetings as "when we go around and introduce each other you hear people say their positions and titles but when it's all said and done, people are just introducing themselves…there's not one pompous lick", which aligned with my observations of humbleness of educators. Kevin added another expectation for the facilitative leader as the one who set the tone in "thinking beyond the title…and takes away some of the power play and power structure that [are] inherent in titles" (Kevin). Leigh recalled a situation from her past as a graduate student.

> And so they had to hire a professor…and they brought in this beautiful woman who had just graduated with her PhD from Yale…and she wrote 'Mrs. Grober' on the board and she turned around and said 'yes, my name is Mrs. Grober. You have probably heard that my name is Dr. Grober and it's true, I do have a PhD. Please call me Mrs. Grober though…there are plenty of brilliant people without PhD's and plenty of idiots with them, so please call me Mrs. Grober.'

This had a lasting impact on Leigh, who sat back in her chair and slowly shook her head. Leigh recalled her experience with Mrs. Grober as pivotal in her approach to creating

equity in education. She explained further, "And I've never forgotten that. And I do not use my title. But when people call me 'doctor', I shake their hand and I look in their eyes and say *please*, call me Leigh". This example describes the traits of a servant leader, putting the students needs before her own potential ego gratification in being called "doctor", demonstrated the collaborative traits which effectively advanced relationships and trust in partnerships as well as the classroom. This goes beyond just putting the students' needs first and a lack of need for ego gratification into suggestions of pre-embedded personal beliefs about equity that was established before collaborative work began. Those kinds of beliefs and practices about equity were part of what drew people to this type of work.

Interestingly, a few participants described incidents when people used their titles as a positive and beneficial power boost to endorse the collaborative work. Acknowledging the titles when it was useful to the mission was strategic yet uncalculated. Joel stated that "there is some elevation when faculty see one another and their titles", which appeared to lift up the value of the work when people with titles were genuinely participating, similar to the faculty who witnessed a university president serve coffee. The facilitative servant leader sought equity in formal and informal exchanges, provided reassurance for educators attending the meetings and endorsed their participation in partnership work, regardless of perceived status.

Community partners were valued formally and informally. In one particular Higher Ed Forum scenario, I observed a catered dinner conference bringing K-12 and higher education faculty together to discuss secondary and post-secondary curriculum and measurements of learning success. Anne was closely involved in months of event

planning and thought it was critical to create equity at the dinner tables in order for educators to engage authentically in the table dialogues. With the help of the event team, Anne pre-assigned seating at round tables so that each table had a diverse and well-represented group of educators from both high schools and colleges from different organizational levels. She shared:

"The [conference] opened up with the superintendents from the districts discussing how important it was and how critical everyone's thought and contributions were. At our table the teachers felt just as empowered as the faculty and the deans. The first is that they were given permission and the second is that they were invited." (Anne)

Institutional "buy in" was important, which was impossible without having the leadership on board as well as having a servant-leadership style. These were important factors and set the democratic tone for the entire dinner conference evening. These findings shared evidence that educators pursued equity through networking across organizational boundaries and the perceived status of others, sharing resources, and providing access, support, and recognition. This use of power was beneficial and provided institutional permission and backing for collaborative partnerships. The partnerships created horizontal collaborations and leveled previous hierarchical relations. A wide variety of documents and artifacts associated with this dinner event were provided or accessible to me, in additional to the social media data I acquired for the planning and implementation of this event. Months of brainstorming was put into determining a simple structure for the evening agenda so that newly introduced educators could focus on interacting instead of a complicated process of working together as a group. The task force agendas for the

event planning meetings prioritized an atmosphere of coordinated physical elements such as round table set ups, assigned seating to mix up attendees in order to introduce new people from different education organizations. Memos included notes describing the discussion and decisions made for nametags not to include titles. Pre-assembled folders were provided to attendees, which contained only the pertinent information required for the evening so that the dialogue could be the focus without the distractions of shuffling through printed paperwork. Conference event reports and training artifacts provided to me showed that educators were recruited to serve as table facilitators and were trained in advance to increase sensitivity to inequalities, dominance, and silences among table members while they discussed five relevant questions and shared experiences. The attendance of organizational leaders at events such as this in addition to some of the regular meetings provided tangible confirmation that the organizations supported the work.

Top organizational leaders attended general meetings, affirming and encouraging partnerships. Instead of only representing his or her home institution, his or her presence gave sanction to the growth and creation of multiple liaisons, opening spaces for critical dialogue among representatives who otherwise might not be in dialogue. Joel shared this vignette regarding a meeting he attended where the Dean of Education sat enthusiastically at a table right in the middle of the collaborators:

> That is key…that the dean was there. It's someone who has position of authority and leadership and can, in fact, make this happen… the Dean participates, changes everything. Changes *everything*. Because it matters…he can do something. It matters. It changes everything. Permission and *power*. The Dean

has power…its not just permission. Power and *permission*. The permission is

key but the power can make it happen…you need a person in power to be able to

do that. (Joel)

Like the president serving coffee, this humbleness among leaders involved a willingness

to let go of individual status power in order to gain oneness in the power of group

collaborative work. The location of where these collaborations took place also made a

difference in the perceptions of equity and diplomacy.

In creating equity as a group norm, the attributes of selecting and arranging

physical space appeared to be the responsibility of a partnership's facilitative leader to

decide what is most conducive for partnership work between K-12 and higher education.

As the dinner conference for educators involved creating equity using round tables, the

findings indicated that physical settings influenced the meeting and, therefore, critical

dialogue. Space has meaning and, as Burke stated, "it's funny how different rooms affect

people." All participants shared places and stories of favorable space containing the

optimal set up with a round configuration for openness and sharing during discussions as

"the roundtable approach works…only then will they have that type of discussion…at a

round table" (Walter). Participants connected the round configurations to issues of power,

as Rachel described below:

So when you do start sharing and getting into some challenging stuff it's nice to

have the round table and no head of the table**.** Round spaces are *always* good. I'm

always a fan of really sitting in a circle…our staff meetings and trainings we do in

one giant circle with just empty space in the middle. It just feels conducive to

sharing because there's a completion too…you're confined to that circle and it

almost becomes that safe space. (Rachel)

Several participants shared the need for selecting a neutral territory for meetings with K-12 and higher education and addresses location issues. Location is about "where you are willing to meet…sometimes it's really good to have on campus because of the status" (Joel) toward the mission, not status for the sake of ego. Participants often viewed location of meetings as an opportunity to bring validity to the work**.** Creating equity involved creating a physical space which served "an even playing field...so no one felt more powerful than the other or had more weight than the other in terms of when they contributed" (Leigh). The thought process put into selection of the physical space built on the growing trust and relationships in collaborative work. The participants relished in describing their perceptions of specific details within the physical space chosen for meetings.

Most participants conveyed that having the right people in the room and creating equity in the group was the most important element of partnership work, not the site itself. Walter stated, "The partnership elements in the space are the people…people who are at the table, people who to travel to the location to sit together and discuss critical issues impacting our kids and our institutions." The people in the physical space mattered the most as "your heart is on the *inside* with your work and the people and the spaces within" (Rachel). In the end, the place selection for meetings was not as important as what it came to mean because of the interactions and, ultimately, positive relationships and impacts of projects that were born there.

Before attendees of the collaborative groups attended meetings at both sites, they did notice what made an environment more conducive to dialogue. An equitable setting

provided boundaries for equitable group dynamics. The attributes involved comfort and logical elements such as room temperature, natural lighting, and open space. The facilitative leader was expected to make arrangements for comfortable and functional space conducive to critical dialogue exchanges; a setting "that catered to the particular needs of the meeting" (Burke) conducive to different types of small and large group discussions and presentations.

The convenience of the location included accessibility to the meeting space and parking as many partners are "coming from all over the place" (Burke) and leaders created a hospitable welcome. Hosting meetings at one university provided a welcoming open door as "folks over the years have always felt well they're not welcome at [our institution] and this way it's one more effort to make the community feel like it was welcome" (Julie). Rachel prioritized the environment being quiet enough (no external noise) so that everyone could be heard, while Anne concurred with Leigh, saying "natural light…to me that's just *huge*" (Anne). Although participants' perceptions of physical space involved detailed attributes of the space, the attributes were focused on providing the most welcoming atmosphere for group members and not necessarily on personal preferences. How the room was set up influenced the atmosphere of equity and provided visual statements encouraging open and collaborative dialogue connected to open spaces.

Participants described physically open spaces for interactive purposes and mused about the unspoken messages of architecture designed to showcase or diminish a sense of organizational hierarchy. In documents and pictures of physical settings in the media imagery photos, participants identified collaborative work with open spaces where "people are more accessible… to readily share and interact" (Joel) and allowed

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movement. Open space offered "limited differentiation in position so that the architecture doesn't reflect the isolation of the leadership" (Joel), where leaders were not imprisoned in isolated towers and more accessible to interact. However, Leigh mentioned a time when "open space" actually made collaborating faculty feel vulnerable after a renovation: "When people moved *back* in, it was beautiful space and yet people felt very unprotected…but people felt out in the open" without the physical walls as their group trust was not fully developed. Openness translates to vulnerability in some cases, and the walls provided privacy and barred exposure to thoughts, ideas, and expressions. Relationships functioning in trust based on equity do not fear exposure and embrace diversity of opinions as the ultimate goal is working together to address societal issues of inequity.

These physical attributes regarding space and place, engaged a group with minds oriented toward equity for the community. Physical space was related to psychological space in descriptions and words chosen by participants. They were keenly aware of meeting space as an opportunity to develop an openness of interactions required for rich critical dialogue. Kevin shared perceptions that "we respond to our environment, even our physical environment, with how much we're willing to share and how open we feel the environment will allow us to be" conducive to critical dialogue. Leigh conveyed an experienced wariness of psychological spaces and said "if you put me in an environment where the first message that comes to me is 'we don't want to hear from you' then that it is problematic space" and Kevin concurred as he emphasized the importance of open discussions, saying "any discussion or dialogue about high stakes kind of issues is the ability to be open with your discussions" (Kevin). All participants described

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psychological space as feeling safe in the space that overcame the inherent risks in

collaborative dialogues preceding collective action. Participants generally shared

common definitions of safe space where "all voices will be heard and respected and

people are comfortable sharing their thoughts and beliefs...and different viewpoints but

this is an environment where people can speak openly" (Walter). This level of

willingness to contribute openly required a sense of respect and being valued among

peers and "knowing that when you do open your mouth you will be valued by your

peers" (Burke) in the psychological space because "anytime we open up our ideas to

another person we take a risk" (Kevin) that personal thoughts and opinions might be

ridiculed or not taken seriously. Vulnerability in taking risks while sharing openly is

similar to the vulnerability when architectural walls are down, exposing what is often

protected in society; fear of dealing with others' judgment of our inner selves.

    The proactive process of reassuring others to be open in sharing is akin to

building relationships over time where respect is inherent and modeled by the facilitative

leader. The group norms including being accepted and willing to actively listen to views

of others. Leigh's comment reflected the views of many:

> "Everyone who is present is acknowledged, everyone's contribution is welcomed;
> it doesn't mean that we don't get done what we need to do. We can do that. But
> we can do that in a way that honors and respects everyone who was there."
> (Leigh)

This safe psychological space Leigh described created equity among educators to share in

a professional and respectful manner, perpetuating deeper levels of trust and sharing over

time.

Creating equity through physical and psychological space takes time and experience; a commitment to a democratic approach to bring change working alongside diverse partners for the greater good. The change the participants sought to bring also changed them during the process; collaborative "growth evolves over time" (Kevin) and is needed to establish group identity, create consensus in definitions, language, and planning processes. Democracy takes longer as its goal is to give a voice to everyone.

Participants conveyed that the amount of quality time needed for successful collaborative projects was directly connected to decisions, attitudes, and trust. "Particularly in urban education, many of the universities do not have long-standing trusting type relationships with their communities…so you build the trust that you're going to be there for the longer term" (Julie). The process for creating equity involved the partnership collaborators and community members representing the realities of the societal problem being addressed.

All participants described the need for institutional leaders to gain understanding and provide approval for adequate investment of educators' time in collaborative relationships and projects. Time is needed to develop trust in relationships with people bringing different perspectives and lived experiences to the table. "You need time to talk things through and get to know each other" (Joel) and time for the group to define the problems and possible solutions. Time was needed to establish relationships, plan and carry out collaborative projects, and for reflection of the work as "an organization should have space and opportunities to talk, discuss, and *reflect*" (Anne).

Optimally, the element of reflection was incorporated periodically into partnership work and became part of the process. However, time became a limiting factor

and this was not always the case. Carl shared that having time for reflection and re-grouping contributed to process improvement on an individual and organizational levels in community-engaged work. Carl shared emphatically, "I need *time* for these reflections…reflection that is not just logistics. Reflection needs to incorporate conversation about what is it that each of the partners can do differently. It's figuring out what you can do better next time". The reflection leads to "the structure, a sound way of doing things, a process of coming up with and making decisions that is put in place" (Anne) for decision making.

Deliberate reflection offers individuals and groups the opportunity to contemplate progress, celebrate milestones, learn from best practices, and share thoughts about potential revisions, and anticipate smoother future endeavors. All of these components are conducive to building higher order thinking shared through critical dialogue. These processes and all stages of projects, beginning with concept to evaluation, require data, group input, and equitable decision-making.

All participants described decision-making skills as a vital component conducive to the process preceding collective action. Creating equity includes "establishing a process of coming up with and making decisions" (Anne), particularly at critical junctures in collaborative work requiring "a *deliberate* decision" (Carl). In several settings, I observed the Netter Center and the Forum utilizing a clear decision-making process, which "serves to set up parameters and boundaries" (Kevin), allowing equilibrium and equity during the formation and growth of partnerships.

Many participants recalled stories regarding the impact of strategic decision-making on institutional progress that propelled community progress. One example that

Julie described with excitement was when the Dean of Medicine endorsed an infrastructure-related federal funding application that leveraged an additional $1.2 million, and expanded health care into partnering public schools…The Dean's "decision of bringing the college of dentistry into that [partnership] was pivotal" (Julie). This was another example of a servant leader with a vision beyond his or her administrative role.

An unspoken expectation was creating equity viewed as a responsibility of the leadership. A clearly understood and fair process for making decisions contributed to group equity and drew interest from educators in K-12 and higher education from a wide variety of disciplines. Data cited from credible sources guided decisions and played a critical role in engaging diverse partnership collaborators. Both K-12 and higher education participants described the value of data as a key element in all stages of the work. "That [data] has been, I think, *extraordinarily* important in developing our ABCS courses. They've been instrumental in many of them…in prompting their own faculty members" (Julie), demonstrates the valuation of data for decision makers. The data-guided decisions appeared to translate into actions resulting in community-engaged course development with increased faculty involvement. In addition, "the follow up and follow through" (Walter) after decisions were made was vital in creating and maintaining collaborative partner organizations.

Having the right people at the table and continually asking who else should be at the table kept the data flowing for relevant decision making and to the project. What decisions were made and how they were made during the course of the project contributed to successful outcomes or project derailment. Creating equity early in collaborative work was significant for building healthy group dynamics; an unspoken

expectation as a responsibility of the leadership.

Responsive Institutional and Group Leadership

> *"Another hallmark of leadership…it depends on how much weight there is in the cloak that you bear. If you wear it with the lightest of gossamer then you're doing a fine job as a leader. Ideally, leadership should not be pompous or verbose or any of those things it has the potential of being." (Burke)*

Participants clearly stated that institutional leadership matters. The nature of collaboration is the action of working to produce and create something bigger than oneself; a human activity of people endeavoring to work together to accomplish group goals. Presidents of universities, school district superintendents, and the leaders of collaborative partnerships influenced group climate, group productivity, and project outcomes.

Responsive Institutional Leadership. Responsive institutional leaders were visionaries who believed that outcomes of collaborations could be achieved and change could be realized. Participants described how their community partnership benefited when leaders responded in a positive and timely manner regarding the needs, approving various types of support, and making critical decisions required for progress. For example, the benefits of responsive leadership approving funding of projects allowed partnership plans to progress through a balance of project scope and resources required to reach project goals. The decisions prioritizing collaborative projects contributed to a healthy climate of support for faculty involved in the work, and validation to the related curriculum and research. Frequently, institutional funding leveraged external funding; the internal financial decisions influenced interest and confidence in the significance of the work among stakeholders. Responsive leadership contributed directly to creating conditions within their organizations conducive to collective action.

The university president modeled responsive leadership. Similar to the vignette describing the president serving coffee, supportive presidents portrayed an authentic understanding and sensitivity to the organizational influences impacting the progress of collaborative work. This institutional leader, functioning in a servant leader mode, responded to the needs of individuals and the group as a whole through consistent behavior, and demonstrated a modest view of self at their institution. Participants shared that current shifts in education are moving toward an increased approachability of presidents and administrators "who will genuinely sit down and listen to you" (Kevin), in order to remain informed and identify supportive measures. These leaders verbalized their knowledge of the types of community partnership work growing within a variety of disciplines of their organization such as social work, architecture, education, nursing, engineering, and more. Direct quotes from presidents and administrators and visuals printed in documents and artifacts conveyed the same message at both sites; presidents were keenly aware and informed of the work. University of Pennsylvania's President Amy Gutmann announces an annual award to a Penn student involved in collaborative work through the Netter Center. Her President's Engagement Prize was "underscoring the high priority that Penn places on educating students to put their knowledge to work for the betterment of humankind" (The Netter Center for Community Partnerships Annual Reports, 2014). In describing an external funding gift, leveraged by internal decisions to institutionalize the work, President Gutmann stated: "One of Penn's great strengths lies in our ability to work hand-in-hand with our West Philadelphia neighbors to improve lives…to make a difference in our West Philadelphia community while creating new knowledge that can benefit communities everywhere" (Netter Center for Community

Partnerships Awards, 2014). After attending a Higher Ed Forum event, a high ranking

public school administrator shared, "We need more of what happened tonight. The

dialogue alone built a bridge…it was amazing to have administrators, faculty, student

services and coordinators all at one table dialoguing about the total student experience"

(The Higher Ed Forum One Agenda, 2014). Event attendees were able to easily discuss

community-engagement within the organization and with external stakeholders because

public school district administrators and university presidents made time to listen to their

faculty.

        Participants also made it clear that responsive institutional leadership leaves a

legacy. The majority of participants described the enormous leadership influence of

presidents of universities as a factor impacting critical dialogue and behaviors leading to

long term collective action. The findings conveyed historical stories with evidence in

multiple scenarios where the president's leadership positively impacted the

organization's community-engagement progress and the long term ramifications. Carl

reminisced on specific pivotal points in his institution's community engagement work.

He shared tangible organizational support by the president as a "turning point in the

[university president's] administration" (Carl), which provided reassurance to faculty

who perceived community-engaged work as a career risk, particularly in the early days.

Endorsement from presidents goes beyond support as an action oriented response. Joel

explained further and shared, "You can shape it all you want but if you have leadership

who does not create or move in your direction and creates the fence…we *never* would

have grown so much if we didn't have the support of the presidents" (Joel) who

increasingly provided continuity to community-engaged work in succession. Participants

shared stories of highly regarded legacies of past university presidents and descriptions of how president's genuine interest in community-engaged work influenced faculty perspectives. Julie conveyed that "the earliest challenges were trying to get university faculty and administrators to see the value of this type of work, that the university had a role in these types of partnerships. And that took presidential leadership…a series of presidents." (Julie) who came to the realization that the collaboration was directly carrying out the mission of the organization. Participants' suggested that there appeared to be a shift in the administration's response to faculty's desire for more open, transparent interactions within the institution. One participant shared that "this generation of college presidents is trying to work toward that kind of [open] culture. I think we're moving toward that…more thought is being put into it now." (Anne) These decisive leaders provided clear administrative endorsement and transformed the difficult rugged terrain of community-engaged work into paved pathways sustaining collaborative partnership work among faculty and K-12 educators.

I observed university presidents and superintendents or their administrative designees at both sites give opening informed addresses at events and specific welcoming remarks at conferences with direct reference and gratitude to faculty fulfilling the missions of their organizations in partnership with the surrounding community. A variety of social media sites and websites associated with The Higher Ed Forum and The Netter Center contained official statements of support next to smiling photos of presidents and administrators.

Responsive institutional leadership influenced the identities of faculty collaborating in academically-based service learning projects. Participants shared

earnestly that it was "important to feel honored and respected for what I can contribute" (Leigh) and feeling valued by the organization and their peers. Feeling respected was a form of reassurance, which influenced educators' level of willingness to contribute openly in collaborative dialogues. Burke stated that "knowing that when you do open your mouth you will be valued by your peers" contributed to the participants' self-identity in the workplace. The participants explained how positive self-identity, partly formed through the responses to their work by institutional leaders, played a role in willingness to participate, depicted by the behavior of colleagues and fellow collaborators for community partnership work. During productive and meaningful planning meetings, Leigh shared with earnest, "Everyone who is present is acknowledged, everyone's contribution is welcomed; it doesn't mean that we don't get done what we need to do…but we can do that in a way that honors and respects everyone who was there" (Leigh).

Responsive institutional leadership recognized the difficulties faculty faced and encouraged transparency when faculty discussed successes and perceptions of failure with their colleagues. Faculty associated their professional identities with community-engaged work and felt safer in sharing when their work was legitimized through institutional recognition. This openness bolstered the ego strength of faculty and encouraged humbleness in sharing failures and feelings about discouragement with their colleagues. The vulnerability in a deeper level of sharing contributed to discovering needed improvements in the partnership process and guided faculty in better understanding of how to best support fellow collaborators. Innovative work involved discussing process improvements where "you can't be *defensive*" (Joel) with ideas and

thoughts about the work. Leigh shared this atmosphere required a willingness to hear

other's opinions and "don't think people always have to be right or always have to get

their way" (Leigh). Sharing fluidly at this level was not easy to incorporate at the

administrative, faculty, and staff levels. During professional development sessions "we

are really asking our staff to explore challenges that they have confronted so they have

to…kind of admit failures and challenges" (Rachel) and further findings conveyed a

connection of ego strength at work with self-identity as professional educators. A few

participants described identity related to independent faculty work, referred to as

"working in silos" (Kevin) with faculty receiving customary credit for their own work.

Joel explained that "the issue also that is a part of collective action is that it's not natural,

so at times people just prefer remaining in a silo and that's difficult" (Joel). He continues,

"Because of history you get credit for doing what you've done. You're used to it.

[Leaning closer]. You know, Franklin had a great line…he said 'human beings have an

unaccountable prejudice for ancient customs and habitudes'. People just do what they

do" (Joel). This perspective emphasized the vulnerability of innovative educators

involved in early academically-based service learning and the identity risks they faced.

The faculty discussions incorporated a mindful reflection and required a humble posture

similar to the attitude of humility that faculty desired to be portrayed by their university

president.

  Responsive Group Leadership. Alongside the behaviors of responsive

institutional leadership, ego strength carried educators in the collaborative through the

early years when they were establishing themselves in their career and carving new

territory. Institutional and group recognition of the work contributed to positive faculty

identity, particularly when faculty perceived potential career risks in the collaborative partnership work. This brought complex issues to the forefront regarding the early work of collaborators who described the very real professional and personal risks of engaging in academically-based service learning. This resilience required ego strength of educators as Joel conveyed, "they also have egos that are *strong* enough to say I'm not only concerned with what X feels about me being in the field…the difficulty is that breaking from that can hurt your career when you're younger and it can hurt your career when you're older because it's become such an identity in this where disciplines become impediments" (Joel). These educators lived with inherent career risks of functioning as boundary spanners who identified new territory ripe for partnership work. Participants described responsive leadership and ego strength as a critical factor leading to collective action.

Responsive group leadership involved participants' expectations of interconnected facilitation proficiency with the leadership skills. All participants described the critical role of the facilitator as partnership work is engrained in "always trying to coordinate and facilitate and categorize conversations" (Carl). As described earlier in creating equity, seasoned facilitation skills in leaders is "*very* impactful to the way that the participants engage in dialogue…gives value to all people who take the risk of speaking up" (Kevin) and requires experience gained over time through a wide range of organizational scenarios. These broad skillset of facilitative leaders included consistent and reliable expertise in communication, which set standards for group interaction processes. All participants shared "that constant interchange of information and communication is absolutely essential" (Burke) and must include active listening, clarity,

understanding, and commitment. Effective communication set a tone of inclusiveness and a transactional information exchange among collaborators from multiple organizations. Burke explains that the "*openness* of the communication that occurs, the *frequency* of communication is important…to maintain that sense of commitment…so hopefully they feel involved" (Burke) indicating other factors were influenced by the level of communication. Effective communication nurtured openness, trust, and sharing. Kevin summed up these associations with a responsive facilitative leader as "the ability to communicate in a way that is non-threatening was very important in establishing some trust and rapport between higher ed and some K-12 institutions" (Kevin). Facilitation and leadership skillsets were interwoven in responsive leadership stories described by participants and conducive to successful collaborations.

Initial steps to gain understanding of the goals of the partnership work and understanding the cultures involved built trust and established rapport. Joel explained that "even if there is an acceptance of the university partnership…there has to be a degree of *clarity* and *understanding* of what we're talking *about*" (Joel). Leigh shared that "people need to understand" (Leigh) different cultures and background experiences in education. Defining the terminology of education language was needed because groups got confused when they applied different meanings to the same words. Anne shared that "sometimes they [faculty] don't understand that K-12 is focused on accountability, or a different kind of accountability from higher education" (Anne). Clarity and understanding went beyond interpreting language into a willingness to see the world through the lived education experiences of other socio-economic groups. This involved the realities of access to higher education, particularly among underrepresented students and their families.

Understanding that some pathways required "an extraordinary amount of school and family support to do it…even just the process and families understanding what it is" (Julie) introduced disparate realities, which required relevant training. Participants shared that relevant training for K-12 and higher education collaborations made a difference at the Netter Center site but more is needed because "it's a little more problematic when you align K-12 and higher ed at the table because they speak a different language and we need to strengthen that language" (Anne). Kevin concluded that "if we don't understand those perspectives we might continue to perpetuate the oppression" (Kevin) and miss opportunities to bring positive change. Communication, clarity of language, meanings of words, and understanding were critical factors preceding collective action propelled by active listening.

A culture of active listening is essential in the collaborative work and a training need identified by participants. Developing the skill of listening does not always come naturally in collaborations and "it's important that people are *taught* to listen" (Kevin) and trained in the "art of attentive listening" (Leigh). Creating authentic listening environments was conducive to critical dialogue where "listening rather than speaking" (Kevin) instead of "over talking and not being a good listener" (Walter) were expectations of individual educators and leaders within collaborations. Active listening required training, patience, and time.

Community-engaged partnerships require time to develop relationships, develop the group processes and norms, and time required to efficiently plan and implement the work. Leadership plays a role in determining time restrictions through deadlines and "how busy faculty are meeting the requirements of the institution" (Anne). The critical

need for more time allowed for project to develop into successful collective action outcomes because "it doesn't all happen at one time" (Rachel). The dialogue surrounding the partnership process takes time as Leigh stated, "We spent a lot of time really hammering out what are we really talking about here…we ended up in a really good place. But we didn't start out there" (Leigh). I observed planning meetings in various stages of project development at both sites and recognized that the group leadership did not rush the agenda. Most participants described the investment of time as connected to credibility and assigned a value to a partnership in relation to the amount of time they collaborated. Julie described a "lifetime partnership" (Julie) and Rachel related partnership value and legitimacy with time as "just being at it for a really long time brings legitimacy" (Rachel), which involved some aspect of approval by leadership. Participants described time as part of their organizational identity during the photo imagery discussions. Julie identified a photo of a colorful, professional brochure as "our annual report card…it kind of captures all of our work in time. It's a visual that can have so much meaning to it, which is why we put so much time into it" (Julie) and related time to the quality of the product. The brochure was an official report, filled with descriptive pictures and data on number of people involved and impacted. The colorful pictures demonstrated examples of all sizes of partnership groups engaged in various projects.

The projects included a picture scanning a few rows flourishing with vegetables labeled by hand-painted signs in a local community garden, college students providing tutoring in reading with grade school students with open books on their laps, and modern graffiti-type art murals with college and high school students holding up colorful green paint-tipped brushes in a public school hallways. All photos contained visuals of people

in relationship to each other and the collaborative project. The participants responded to these photos in the annual report documents and media imagery describing a common denominator in conditions conducive to collective action: relationships.

Effective communication involves openness and trust. The ability to "communicate in a way that is non-threatening was very important in establishing some trust and rapport between higher ed and some K-12 institutions" (Kevin). Communication was the vehicle unifying understanding and trust in relationships. As evidenced in this section, creating equity and responsive leadership, the first two meta-themes, are intertwined. Threading equity and leadership together in the collaborative partnership work required establishing and nurturing of the relationships.

Relationship and a Sense of Community

> *"All of them [university-community partnerships] develop these relationships…and they find things in common, you know…and that breaks a lot of those barriers down before they collaborate. Barriers can be overcome once relationships are developed. They have the relationships." (Rachel)*

Relationships existed at the core of collaborative partnership work. They grew in depth starting as newly introduced project co-collaborators to deep friendships. Relationships were a constant presence in the quest to establish mutually beneficial partnerships. Throughout these meta-themes, participants repeated that the "relationship piece is critical…relationships are key and relationships matter" (Carl) in a multitude of phrases and stories.

As educators journeyed through stages of project development, relationships developed into friendships offering mutual support. Burke shared that "in the various academic programs we've had to support one another…the fundamental relationships" (Burke) and working side by side to bring life to the visions and make change a reality.

Relationships were a springboard and "a precursor to having a really strategic and honest set of conversations" (Carl) and played significant role in a sense of belonging and contributing to something bigger; something beyond individual efforts. Rachel explained how nurtured relationships helped diverse partners find commonalities, a process that developed trust and broke down barriers throughout the collaboration.

Trust at various levels within and between organizations, among people in the collaborations, and between the leader and collaborators were a necessary component in relationships, which encouraged critical dialogue. A sense of trust kept partnership collaborators on the visionary path they laid out together despite the challenges inherent in multi-organizational group work. Before partnerships gained ground toward collective action, they had to learn to work together and take steps to develop "the *trust* in relationships" (Rachel), with individuals and the group as a whole. Joel shared a story of a friendship brought to life through easy dialogue and matured into a long-term collaboration, and "in the context of that [partnership] we became *friends*" (Joel) who supported and encouraged each other. Relational trust was being there for each other and caring about the people before the project objectives, which eventually merged together in a sense of purpose and belonging. Conditions conducive to collective action required a confidence in the partnership where "there's no distrust…it's very clear that we're all in this together" (Anne), which perpetuated deeper commitment to each other and therefore, the project.

Trust was an action. Participants described that an important behavioral component of building trust involved knowing *names* of those in the community where collaborators were working to bring positive change in addition to names of fellow

collaborators. One example of knowing names involved the importance of faculty showing up for a high school partnership, conveyed through Rachel's perspective. She shared "what I'm hearing the students talk about now…saying we have to keep on showing up and the kids notice if you're not there and they also notice if you don't know their names…you have to *learn their names* and *learn who they are*, because they'll remember you" (Rachel) and learn to trust that you will not abandon the project, which translated to not abandoning them personally. Knowing names designated a longer-term relationship. Trust in action and many others behaviors were not considered incidental as they contributed to building bridges along the way.

Perceptions of levels of trust among individuals, organizations, and the surrounding community made a difference in the depth of engagement in the partnership work. Julie shared that "trust was built among ourselves and particularly with the community…in urban education, many of the universities do not have long-standing trusting type relationships with their communities" (Julie); this had to be addressed in order to grow authentic collaborative partnership work. Participants' perceptions of trust at an individual level involved confidence in the skills, knowledge, and abilities of other individuals involved in partnership progress, as well as trust that they will be heard and valued. Kevin explained that "trust is huge and I think without that you can't work forward at all…confidence in the other person, their skill, their knowledge, you know…and their ability to perform" (Kevin). Critical dialogue had the potential to reinforce trust during partnership interactions. "Trust is huge…trust what you're going to say or do will be understood, will be acknowledged, and will be valued." (Leigh). Organizational trust, group trust, and community trust took time to build, nurture, and

sustain.

Participants shared perceptions of how educators manage time differently within the university and in K-12 schools. Different organization "might have a different time horizon" (Carl) and function on different understanding of deadlines. The majority of participants shared that there was never enough time and "we want to be able do all these things and sometimes we just can't" (Joel) due to schedules. Time was also conveyed as an issue related to perceptions of busyness and "how busy faculty are meeting the requirements of the institution" (Anne) and need for leadership to understand that more time was needed to for project development, trust and relationship building, and planning. The longer amount of time invested was related to positive outcomes and successful facilitative leaders conveyed what **"we need is more time to *work it*"** (Joel) and see the project to fruitful completion.

Relationship building and trust building were critical to the work and required dialogue and time to develop. The group dialogues were different at the beginning of the partnership work. Joel explained how early dialogues evolved and healthy elements of partnerships were proven over time. He explained that "the dialogues are different than when we started because that was proof of concept, proof of friendship, and proof of reliability…you have to have trust" (Joel), particularly when unforeseen project problems needed to be addressed. Belief in the community-engaged work was later related to the collaborators' perceptions of the partnership concept, genuine friendship, and consistent reliability. Building trust between and within organizations led to shared resources, motivation, and perseverance. Through challenging phases of change, the established trust encouraged "the personal contact and relationship building and being willing to

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share resources, to work through the difficulties in the early stages of a partnership, or ongoing stages of partnership" (Julie). Trust in the leadership contributed to partnership progress. As Walter shared, "If they know and trust someone they are more likely to follow that person and that person has their good intentions in care and everything" (Walter) while advancing the work. Facilitative leaders were aware of the importance of trust issues and dynamics "not only *between* the university and the school district but the trust issues within the school district *within* their own continual change (Julie). Creating trust early in the partnership nurtured growth of the relationship and clearly shaped the mutually beneficial elements required for successful collaborative work.

Joel described mutually beneficial partnership work as "people working together to solve mutually agreed to...mutually identified and mutually agreed to problems…where collective action would never have happened without the idea of a common very significant issue that we all care about and we focus on" (Joel) through academic partnerships. Mutually beneficial partnerships between the university and community served as democratic approach to bring about societal change. Participants described that groups that were determined to make decisions through mutually agreed approaches for addressing problems directed the project planning toward mutually beneficial project goals. Kevin explained collective action further as an "opportunity for some change or action that would benefit others, benefit the participants [faculty] but benefit others as well" (Kevin) through expertise, beliefs, values, opinions brought together in a productive way.

Oftentimes, the underlying dynamics of creating mutually beneficial partnerships blurred organizational boundary lines. More permeable boundaries opened doors for a

mix of insiders and outsiders to pull up a chair to the collaborative circle. Participants discussed how permeable boundaries created equity among insiders or outsiders who were considered new to the work or the project. Leigh described a Higher Ed Forum meeting setting in terms of boundaries and the importance of warmly welcoming new participants. She shared, "It was a welcoming place…people could see in and you could see out…you know that boundary between inside and outside was not very rigid" (Leigh), which provided a warm welcome. Joel explained that the collaborative work provided a style that was a "professional informality for *outsiders*" (Joel) to make everyone at ease. These findings connect to the physical setting and psychologically safe places where, in a hierarchical organization, "we do get to choose what we do on the *inside* of it" (Carl), which promotes group equity. The majority of participants discussed boundaries in terms of relationships, belonging, and credibility within or between organizations. Rachel described an institutional leader and shared, "I think he's insider and outsider…because he does have those relationships that go that far back" (Rachel), clearly connecting boundaries, relationships, and insider/outsider issues. It was not always easy to step over boundary lines, and Carl explained circumstances "when we are looking at many different cultures, socioeconomic groups, levels of education…coming together, almost as an insider-outsider coming together in collaboration within those dialogues, which can be awkward and difficult" (Carl), and required time, seasoned facilitative leadership, and preparatory training. Permeating established boundaries brought diverse educators together to collaborate and fueled the spirit of inclusivity. Providing an equitable and psychological safe space was critical for group cohesion and forward movement.

The participants' stories included real scenarios of unavoidable ethnic, racial, and socio-economic boundary issues. These occurred in the academic settings with educators in K-12 and higher education. Julie shared that "if you're in an inner city urban school for the first time in your life (pause) in front of a classroom…it's not just something that necessarily comes naturally to you…you know, not going over boundaries" (Julie) and respecting other cultures in the surrounding community. Participants described how strong partnerships surmounted boundaries of race and ethnicity when representatives of diverse communities engaged in the collaborative work. Critical dialogue could take place because, as Kevin mentioned, "we were…[aware of] those racial boundaries undertones…I don't really see them being prohibitive to the discussion. I think every voice is heard and it's a good ground" in a climate that carried collaborative relationships forward. However, sometimes the group partnerships or their organizations needed a push out of historical ruts based on tradition. The notion of push required a seasoned facilitative leader with enough ego-strength to assume the risks, in contrast to the unattractive arrogance associated with a self-serving inflated ego.

Leaders with facilitative characteristics knew how to facilitate new growth or push boundaries by pushing at the point of perceived internal and external boundaries. Pushing boundaries was the effect of facilitative leadership. These skills required a leader's keen sense awareness, timing, and capabilities. Different types of "push" included facilitating organizations to garner critical support or to make more progress in academically-based service learning curriculum development and research. Leaders facilitated effective critical dialogue when utilizing a diplomatic approach in order to elevate organizational awareness, and thus were able to push boundaries at the point of

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organizational power and politics. When giving specific examples of leaders pushing the community-engaged partnership work, Rachel provided her description of a mentor who she believed modeled how to push effectively and efficiently.

> I think [he] has been as successful as he has because he knows when to push the boundaries and when to be part of the system and push the system from within. Power and politics. He's so good at what he does…we talked about the *boundary pushing* and when and when not to do that. (Rachel)

Push skills were described as a natural outflow of a seasoned facilitator exhibited in both formal and informal settings. Participants shared stories of pushing boundaries as difficult and felt "obligated to keep pushing the envelope…that we should always be pushing…[to] figure it out by always offering [partnership opportunities] and seeing how far we can go" (Carl), a mandatory step toward progress in traditional academic settings. Trust in relationships played a major role in moving past problems in the partnership. Joel described a long-time friend and colleague he admired for knowing when to push and how much to push. Joel shared that his colleague "would have more conversations along the line you would term critical dialogue but he would…talk about some of the issues and problems and *push them* [to] solve it" (Joel). The adverse reaction to push was related to past experiences and lack of trust in relationships. Leigh gave an example of traditionally perceived negativity associated with ineffective pushing and shared that "as long as high schools feel that as soon as we walk in the room we're pushing them…that's just going to reinforce the divide and folks are going to clam up" (Leigh) and barricade progress. Expectations for facilitative leaders involved having the experience and knowledge of facilitating (and pushing) appropriately. Creating equity involved the

courage to step across boundaries and bring others with you; a path that carved new ground and became so worn that the original boundaries from one people group to another were smooth and nearly unperceivably. This involved a well-spoken word in gentle goals in specific conversations to bring about a new way of seeing community-engaged work as progress in education and the possibilities to impact education. These critical dialogues lit the fires for a better future and ended up building a sense of community through encouragement and navigating on a shared journey. This often took place over the "breaking of bread" and the inspirations frequently offered over a shared meal.

Every participant shared stories about the importance of "breaking bread with colleagues and collaborative partners for the purpose of building relationships. The meaning of "breaking bread" was associated with sharing food. It was a contributing factor to building relationships and making the context conducive to critical dialogue. When discussing a culture of sharing, Kevin conveyed **"food or drink helps…even if it's not a meal…I have a good friend who says let's have a cup of coffee…it's the idea of getting together to share" (Kevin) and provides time to invest in relationships and friendships. Sharing meals provided time for discussing the joys of progress and encouragement to move past the despair "when hope fades" (Joel). Two of my interviews conducted with Netter Center participants were, by choice of the interviewee, over a meal. Interestingly, "going to lunch" was a common phrase referring to the activity where people got together informally to talk in all stages of partnership work. Collaborators also took people to lunch to recruit them and "there will be some discussion about obstacles and things…we do have those conversations…take them to

lunch" (Joel) and break bread. During tense episodes of the project, Julie shared that an administrator always advised his colleagues to "take 'em to lunch, just take 'em to lunch (both laughing) and break bread" (Julie) and talk about the issue at hand. Burke shared his perspectives about how meaningful breaking bread was as at the meetings:

> Whenever the group is convened, there is always some effort to bring refreshment and food. That's important – it's a requisite. It's a human endeavor. If you're going to do something together and it's worthwhile, acknowledging people through food is probably one of the longest things humanity has done. So, as far as environment goes, the best meetings have opportunities for some sort of refreshments to break bread together but just to feel good about being there…it tends to relax people, to open them up. (Burke)

Participants' perceptions about breaking bread were related to relationship building and creating a sense of community. Joel shared that "there's something about breaking bread together…we still do that…we want faculty to sit, relax, and chat. It's breaking bread. It's friendship" (Joel), which helped build the partnership. Documents contained photos of smiling educators pausing to pose at award ceremonies, and conference settings with banquet tables filled with food. Participants were drawn to the photo images of halls filled with round tables, which brought memories of breaking bread together with colleagues. Food brought people and dialogues together naturally in a joint activity of breaking bread, a natural necessity as people usually make time to eat in the busyness of the day. Food was served and merely contributed as a relational tool over which to gather, to instill and renew hope in the journey.

Stories of the participants included reflections of hope in the journey. Trusted

collaborators relied on their relationships and drew hope from each other. Interestingly, the educators' quest through complex labyrinths toward collective action began with creating a sense of community through collective efforts based on combined hope in the pursuit. Participants chose words to share their personally lived experiences, and were often moved by their own words reflecting on seasons of storms in their careers. In his emotionally moving conclusions at the end of our interview, Joel shared that "I think there's been an effective revolution…and I see it in the great progress at Penn and great colleges who are moving the needle" (Joel) and I viewed photos on social media and websites of university presidents with their quotes advocating for community-engaged partnerships, an unheard of practice years ago. Joel talked times he became discouraged when "great hopes for collaboration often seem to fade" (Joel) and he turned to fellow collaborators for encouragement. A resurgence of hope often took place with a colleague while breaking bread together in friendship. He described how the faded hope turned around with the encouraging words of a friend who understood the difficulties in the work. As Burke described students and the future of education, his hope the future mixed with the realities of students getting through the obstacles in education:

> Everybody deserves a shot at education irrespective of their background and they are entitled to the best efforts we have in getting them through. I'm not as optimistic as I used to be. I don't think everyone is going to get through. But everybody gets an opportunity and everybody gets our best efforts and…do with it as they may. (Burke)

Participants described these obstacles in education as extensions of societal problems. Creating a sense of community united educators together through their common

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vision. Led by responsive facilitative servant leaders through equitable processes

establishing mutually beneficial partnership work; the sense of community was a result of

nurtured trust and renewed hope through relationships which evolved into friendships.

Instead of the early point of origin depicting "them" or "us", the partnership work created

"we" as collaborators encouraged one another.

The growing sense of community fortified the courage to push across perceived

organizational and societal boundaries to bring change. Despite wisdom gained through

creating equity in the collaborations, enlisting and receiving sustaining support from

responsive leadership, and building trusting relationships, there were similar patterns of

difficulties, which unfolded across a widened range of disciplines.

Other Influencing Factors

Other factors contribute to the progress or lack of progress of partnership work.

The positive factors feed into the cycle and the negative factors draw out of the cycle.

There is a continual shifting of these factors and the meta-themes as organizations and

group partnerships adjust and readjust practices to stabilize and move forward in

equilibrium. Trials existed in creating equity within the collaborative partnership process.

Challenges appeared when multi-cultural educators grew in their determination to work

collectively to address diverse societal problems of inequity through academically-based

service learning work. The challenges described by participants were related to issues of

adversarial leadership, unplanned organizational change, toxic cultures, lack of funding,

and risks.

Adversarial leadership. There were seasons where high-level organizational

leaders did not exemplify the behaviors and attitudes required to create conditions

conducive to critical dialogue and collective action. Some high level leaders and presidents did not support institutional advancement in community-engaged work and were too busy to become more informed by faculty. Participants described undesirable traits of unapproachable university presidents where **"**he or she is not seen as having time…he or she is seen as having a *position*…the busyness superseding the request for dialogue and involvement in a decision-making process" (Joel), which often temporarily partnership plans to a grinding halt. The dictatorial decision making style in "top down hierarchical type agendas" (Walter) slowed the educators' pursuit of a democratic approach to collective action in an organization functioning as a rigid bureaucracy. A few participants gave me printed copies of organizational charts to describe the leadership roles, where they fit, and the power or lack of power they assumed. The participants' perceptions of community-engaged work as a low priority on the university's strategic plans to institutionalize community-engaged work perpetuated a sense of stagnation. The lack of decision-making in tangible support of academically-based service learning collaborations felt like a dismissal of the visionaries' work to carry out the university mission. Educators in partnership groups were frustrated, particularly because their co-collaborators in K-12 and community partners were looking to the university to *lead* the change. Anne was slowly shaking her head when she shared, "It's very clear to higher ed that they can't be stagnant like they have for the last 25 years…we are going to be hearing more conversations about higher ed tweaking and making adjustments for today's society" (Anne) through the partnership work. The traditionally internal university focus reminded Rachel of professors who voiced the need for critical dialogue and change within the classroom walls and she stated, "I think back to my other

professors in undergraduate years who always talked about 'a real conversation'…one in which you go in expecting that your mind might be changed" (Rachel) yet the institution as a whole was slow in moving the needle toward significant community change.

Unplanned organizational and institutional change. Frequent changes in K-12 and university leadership and system policies impacted trust building and often pulled educators apart instead of pulling them together. Julie shared examples of K-12 and university partnerships derailing because "if the school district changes something we could be spinning our wheels and need a revamp…you just get the rug pulled out from you" (Julie) and either start over or cancel the project. When discussing challenges in collaborative work, Leigh mused that "it's [educational change] is a huge transformative effort…and it's like changing anything. You change one little piece and it affects *everything* it touches. And those things affect everything they touch and pretty soon you've changed everything" (Leigh), which confounds the collaborative process. I observed shifts in meeting attendance within partnership groups due to schedule changes within their home organizations, which prevented their participation.

Participants described the instability and the negative impact on collaborative work due to change when it is not a planned and deliberate change. An example Carl provided conveyed that "what the schools would look like in the falls, changed throughout the summer, in September and even October" (Carl) and planning couldn't begin. Even planned change in schedules for holidays was different within collaborating groups from K-12 and higher education. Julie described that "if they [teachers] didn't return a phone call or the school schedule changed…and we have holidays when they don't" (Julie) brought challenges to steady planning processes. Walter spoke with a tone

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of despair:

> Ongoing change in leadership brings programmatic overload. Every time there is a change people introduce new programs. Program never tend to stick because leadership continues to change and then there's no buy-in and less trust in the change. Certain populations suffer, especially teachers and students. It's very important that there is less change in organizations and people have to adapt to the new leader. (Walter)

The challenges of change impacted partnership programs and consistent trust in organizational leadership. This was in both university settings and K-12 school districts. Describing the frequent leadership changes, Carl shared "we have not had a consistency of superintendents" (Carl) and the K-12 systems "have had such tremendous challenges facing them during all of this work between changes of principals, superintendents" (Julie), which brought additional unplanned changes of directions of curriculum. This was coupled with the overarching task of determining an equitable process or blueprint to engage collaborators, plan, implement, and evaluate the work.

Educators are not untouched by the responses to institutional change and the fear of uncertainty. Joel discussed students' reactions to unexpected change and how he is faced with helping them deal with undesired changes in plans. He quietly explained why he had doors on his office, although most offices were being remodeled with open architecture for transparency. He shared this was "because I come in and I have to deal with issues. You know, people cry in my office" (Joel), and doors and walls shield the personal discussions from others, which portrays the opposite of the desired open climate of collective action. Participants shared architectural details and artifacts that revealed

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their plans for construction of more open space. Yet, the participants revealed that they knew there would be challenges. Sitting up straighter, Leigh declared, "We understand this is hard…we understand this isn't going to be easy…we understand these answers aren't going to emerge…we understand we're facing major challenges and we're not brushing over that" (Leigh), and she was unapologetic for her bold tone. These resilient educators involved in community-engaged work often dealt with unplanned change and learned to cope and carry on the work.

Some participants conveyed how the "baggage" people brought with them into partnership work created challenges instead of equity. Carrying baggage was defined as carrying burdens of negative past experiences or adverse circumstances of unplanned change resulting feelings into the collaboration. Burke described that "when you get into instances of critical dialogue, everyone carries baggage into the room…upon reflection, you should have shed some of that baggage before you went into the room because it could have been so much easier" (Burke) for the individual and the entire group. Julie shared her perceptions that "we've gotten more set in our molds…we bring so much more baggage and weariness of what you want and what's this going to be about…and we keep more guards up" (Julie) in the process, which is the opposite of the desire trust in people and relationships. The baggage was also described as a contributor to toxic cultures. Walter explained how this turns into a waste of time for the partnership work and slows productivity:

> The culture in this type of setting the culture is a good culture because we can
>
> easily connect the dots…we can easily target and zero in on what needs to happen
>
> to bring about collective action. If the culture is toxic you won't get to that point.

You spend more time going back and forth about what you want to accomplish
and why. You spend more time disagreeing and trying to get on the same page. In
those meetings they are beat up by numbers and data or not doing something
right. That's a waste of time. (Walter)

Working toward the same vision for collaborative work included unifying the
collaborators along the way.

Toxic cultures. Toxic cultures did not promote healthy and central factors
conducive to collective action in behavior and attitudes. Participants conveyed their
strong aversion to arrogance among administrators and faculty. Burke described a
scenario with leadership, and he thought to himself, "How are you projecting
yourself…within this type of behavior…is it based on that hallowed esteem of higher
education and pomp and circumstance and everything that goes with it?" (Burke), which
perpetuated a cycle of divisiveness in organizational settings. Unhealthy cultural norms
with inefficient standards of communication surfaced and brought issues to collaborative
work. Participants handed me copies of documents that had been developed to address
communication issues, which were handed out in meetings. These documents listed
expectations of general protocols and recommended communication processes. Other
organizational frustrations conveyed were distracting noises and the search for quiet
meeting space. Participants emphasized the dilemma of cell phones ringing during
meetings because "you've got to be able to hear each other clearly" (Kevin) in dialogues.
None of the participants knew how to mitigate the cell phone issue. Kevin explained that
"the message is either that they're not interested…and it's just pretty typical that even in
very high-level meetings someone forgot to turn their ringer off…as a speaker, do you

call the person out or stop? Because at that point no one is listening" (Kevin) and the critical dialogue paused and had to be reintroduced. Toxic cultural norms slowed progress yet one of the most major challenges was funding.

Lack of funding. Funding the resources required for successful partnership work and funding for the people who carried them out was a limiting factor. Anne described her "biggest challenge was fundraising" and Julie's shared that "bringing that funding on board was critical" (Julie) to the process preceding collective action. Partnership work suffered when K-12 and/or the university partner did not allocate funding. Burke conveyed that "obviously you have to *fund* people first or nothing happens…the opportunities that would exist but oftentimes maybe the school district or higher ed institution doesn't have the funds to make it work" (Burke) and projects ceased to progress. There was no blame for K-12 or the university and, as Joel explained, "I think that it's important to emphasize that the current superintendent does care about these things…we're under-funded, he is under great stress, and the pressures are *enormous*" in the wider scope of funding issues. Participants shared how they learned to navigate political strings often attached to funding and the true purpose of the funding request. Carl explained further:

> Certain funding sources either don't support the comprehensive mission or are
> hostile to it...so there are a lot of great theories out there but you can kind of
> understand on one hand why funding sources create certain constraints…and we
> have an option to not take it. (Carl)

The lack of funding directed educators to accepting in-kind donations from people who wanted to help. Burke analyzed that "if there was some funding…we would have an

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easier time of marketing… rather than resting on the good wishes and good intentions of people to help us develop websites and other things like that" (Burke), offered on an inconsistent basis, and yet was greatly appreciated. Funding was an ongoing challenge, and institutionalizing the community-engaged partnership work made a clear statement that the work was valued and a good investment in education. Institutionalization provided a foundation and brought an element of stability to the work, which was supplemented by grants and external foundation contributions. During the course of this study, I observed projects aligned with larger programs begin to derail and not reach full fruition due to lack of funding and I witnessed leaders in education scramble to bring resources to partnerships. All of these challenges added to the personal and professional risks assumed by educators seeking to advance community-engaged partnerships.

Process. The Netter Center recognized the need to identify and discuss a problem-solving learning process with their faculty and students as a step in preparing for academically-based service learning coursework activities. After years of post-course reviews and suggestions offered from undergraduate and graduate students reflecting on the advance preparation for engaging with the community through coursework, several faculty implemented updated versions of the Problem Solving Learning (PSL) Question Guide (See Appendix F). The Netter Center faculty lead critical dialogues with students through required seminar series using the Problem Solving Learning guide as a tool to prepare students for community-engaged partnership work while building on students critical thinking and process questions. This tool was shared with me during the interview process and permission given to include in my research.

The process established by The Higher Ed Forum was created out of concern for

the education community's access to resources in education and equity in the distribution of those resources. After piloting a process project to improve access and equity from secondary, post-secondary, and community organization vantage points, Forum members representing these three sectors unanimously agreed to implement the Request for Academic Partnership process (See Appendix E). This process is housed on the Forum website and serves as a public "front door" entry into educational organizations as the majority have not yet established an institutionalized community engagement center. The RAP is a document serving as access in an equitable process to connect individuals and groups together for academically-based service learning coursework development and implementation. All of the Request for Academic Partnership submissions are archived on The Higher Ed Forum website and listed by title and the presenting author's name in the monthly agendas.

Risks. The risks included a fear of failure and the risks early pioneers of academically-based service learning projects faced in their careers, professional reputations, and ultimately their family's financial stability. Joel shared that teachers with more advanced careers and tenured faculty "were able to do this because they were at the top of the heap…there's no threat" (Joel) as they had an unquestioned reputation in education work. Several of the participants were much younger and dealt the risks to overcome "that fear or some psychological components of faculty is figuring out is this something that is viewed by the institution as valuable work" (Julie), while they introduced change in curriculum to bring change in society. This took time and required a realistic view of how ongoing progress would have a great impact over time. Leadership within dissimilar education settings viewed timeframes differently as Carl experienced.

He shared,

> One of the things I think we have to do, at all levels of management is to help
>
> remind and frame the context. There are certain activities that have grand goals
>
> three months from now and they may achieve 80% of those. And you have folks
>
> that feel that is a great failure. (Carl)

A view of success related to time was needed. When the idea for community-engaged

work was being introduced, participants' concern for the community and fear for careers

created "a sense of tremendous trepidation…for the project, for the community, for [the

university]…and to be frank [trepidation for] a lot of our careers… reactions to the risk

financially, career…status issues too" (Joel) portrayed perseverance and ego strength to

move forward in unchartered waters. The goals were worth the risks. Participants shared

lived experiences "about very critical issues in the community that could change the

community for the next 20 years…the next 100 years" (Anne) and continued to press

forward to advance curriculum they believed would change the lives of students and the

curriculum developed by educators in K-12 and higher education.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented meta-themes of creating equity, responsive leadership,

relationships and a sense of community, and challenges to community-engaged

partnership work. These partnerships worked when institutional and partnership group

leadership was responsive and made supportive and timely decisions leading to

sustaining the work by institutionalizing imperative resources. The early pioneers of

mutually beneficial community-engaged partnership work and later educators involved in

advancing academically-based service learning had a common vision based on creating

equity. In order to create equity among themselves and in the surrounding communities, they developed collaborative education experiences with K-12 and higher education organizations through academically-based service learning curriculum. What educators discovered from the fruits of their years of labor was that the process of creating equity for students in a diverse society also created a greater sense of equity among diverse educators. Creating equity ended up being critical for the collaborative to work at all. They found ways to understand each other better and gain oneness in power when the collaborators' emphasized the title of the work, not the titles of their status. This required overcoming outdated, traditional boundaries and a willingness to take risks required by innovation. These educators shared lived experiences and how they dealt with ego strength and self-identity, and encouraged each other in hope while breaking bread in friendship.

The quest was creating equity but there was not a blueprint in existence to guide the way. Simple processes were developed, piloted, and incorporated and used in planning guides for problem-solving learning and providing access for other to engage in partnerships. The vision was based on democratic principles where every voice was heard and every opinion respectfully considered, in the psychologically safe space they created. They did not look the same as their fellow collaborators. They recognized, valued, and embraced diversity as an unspoken unifier within an inequitable society. They facilitated open critical dialogue and respected their fellow educators regardless of status and viewpoints.

The unpaved road underfoot began to develop through trust and relationships in a common vision with fellow collaborators. The scenes along the journey revealed

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mutually beneficial partnerships among educators who endured lack of funding, toxic cultures, and detours of negative societal influences on education. Introducing change in an unstable system overwhelmed by continual unplanned change was difficult. At time, hope faded. Yet, the humility in servant leadership among these educators gave up control and transferred power for the greater good. And they helped others along the way to see things differently and advance the work and changed lives. And the president served coffee.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The meta-themes were complex and cyclical in that they integrated and overlapped each other. The energy in the cycle was perpetuated by positive or negative conditions, as the meta-themes did not stand alone in the pursuit of collective action. As shown in Figure 1, each meta-theme fed into or from the other themes. The meta-themes include: 1) creating equity; 2) responsive leadership; 3) developing relationships and a sense of community; and 4) other influencing factors.

The purpose of this study was to explore conditions conducive to collective action through K-12 schools and higher education academic service-learning partnerships. One primary research question and two subquestions guided this study. What were the conditions that encouraged critical dialogue or other behaviors that served as a springboard for collective action? How did educators describe environments they perceived as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that led to collective action? What were the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that were perceived as facilitating conditions that preceded collective action?

I analyzed the data describing conditions contributing to collective action through the lenses of theory and literature. The analysis was quite complex and I drew on multiple theories and research in the literature to shed light on the findings. The theories provided theoretical lenses for my analysis of the findings include Burns' (1978) transformational

leadership theory, Greenleaf's (1970) theory of servant leadership, Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership theory, and Starratt's (2011) authentic leadership theory. Hick's (1996) dialogical theory of social discourse and Gergen's (1999) theory of generative relationality discourse helped me understand the relational aspect of leadership in collaborative work. The trust theories of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) and Allport's (1979) intergroup contact theory in equity contributed to my interpretation of intergroup dynamics during facilitation of critical dialogue.

The analysis illuminated conditions conducive to collective action involving diverse K-12 and higher education practitioners collaborating in problem-solving approaches to address societal issues. Through the data analysis, I discovered findings, which influenced partnership work among K-12 schools and higher education in their journey towards collective action. For the purpose of clarity, the meta-themes illustrated in Chapter IV (see Figure 1) are further inserted in this chapter to provide the reader with a visual guide.

Figure 1. Diagram of Meta-Themes
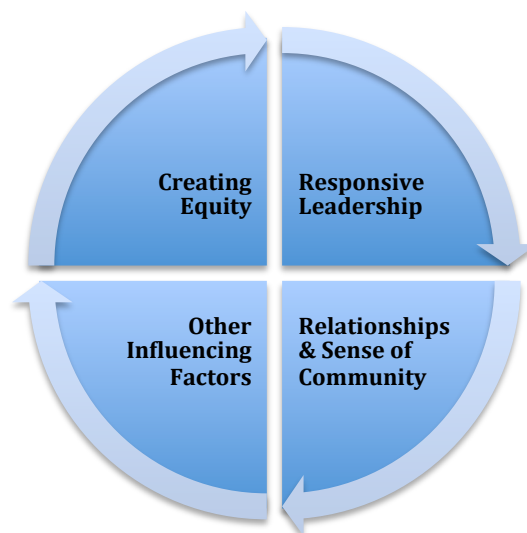
The meta-themes of creating equity, responsive leadership, developing

relationships, and other influencing factors overlap each other throughout the discussion

of findings. These meta-themes, analyzed through a theoretical lens and literature, are

presented in a resulting leadership practice format as recommendations with a concern for

the practitioner/leader. I will further discuss implications for research and theory at the

end of this chapter. I used the meta-themes as major areas used to group and discuss each

theme that falls beneath it.

Responsive Leadership Practice: Creating Equity

*"What's important is the task that we are all here to do. The fact that that's my title is
not relevant to what we're doing together. Just because I have a title doesn't make my
contribution better than yours." (Leigh)*

As previously noted, Creating Equity is one of four meta-themes involved in

conditions conducive to collective action. Within this meta-theme are multiple equity-

related themes that will be discussed at a deeper level.

Creating Equity and Mobilizing Change

The role of higher education in addressing societal needs through community-

engaged partnership work is led by transformational leadership practices. Originally

conceptualized by Burns (1978), transformative leadership is an approach for social

justice in education to inspire, energize, and intellectually stimulate groups through a

collaborative, shared vision (Burns, 1978). The theory of transformational leadership

describes leading with a moral foundation and authentic character (Burns, 1978; Bass,

1991; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Regardless of culture, transformational leaders surpass

their own self-interests for the good of the group and organization to expend greater

effort in the common vision. Transformational leaders encompass a clearly articulated

vision, a sense of purpose, and an engagement of followers (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1993;

Heifetz, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

This study ties to these components of transformational leadership, which shifts leadership traits from good management skills to the actual process of leadership. This process of leadership, as suggested in the literature, reveals that community-engaged practitioners seek "opportunities to challenge the status quo through a shared vision" (Santamaria and Jean-Marie, 2014, p. 336). A shared vision focuses on the individual, group, and organization, and transcends organizational boundaries. The academic partnerships, developed through The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum, were created through a leadership process and crossed over organizational boundaries to engage K-12 schools, community agencies, and other universities. As evidenced in annual reports, news articles, and website pictorials of collaborations, this study further reflects transformational leadership as practitioners challenged the status quo, initiated innovative consortiums, and mobilized educators to fulfill their common purpose.

Griffiths (1998) equality discourse theory helped me understand equality in partnership work in relation to the democratic notion of the common good. Bauman's (1997) study of equality suggested that social justice and equity are not merely goals, and are often conceptualized as people move together toward desirable final outcomes of victory. This is evidence by statements discussed in Chapter 4 and documents housed on the Netter Center and Higher Ed Forum websites. The original roots of The Higher Ed Forum began when nine institutions formed a democratic consortium in a clearly articulated mission to advance community-engaged partnerships in northeast Oklahoma. These conceptualized partnerships moved people together toward the vision, which supports Bauman's equity theory. In another example of shared vision and a democratic

notion for the common good, The Netter Center serves on the steering committee of the

Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) and

sustains the regional work through student internships. The PHENND coalition

coordinates community-based opportunities from over 30 institutions and develops

democratic community-based service learning opportunities (Retrieved from

Phennd.org). The outcomes of shared vision and a leadership process of mobilization is

evident by published reports of the growing collaborations between higher education and

K-12 schools. This progress in building coalitions for partnership work is evidenced in

the interviews such as Joel's statement that he has witnessed growth "in the great

progress at Penn and great colleges who are moving the needle."

Creating Equity and Democratic Coalitions

This study contributes to research that conveys that the collective purpose of

educators, policy makers, and community leaders is designed to encourage a form of

democratic civic engagement where partners at all levels contribute to K-20 education

(Sullivan, 2011). Similarly, my findings of the open door for access to higher education

at both sites for collaborators to participate serve as an example of the research conveying

that equitable education in public schools and universities belongs to all members of the

community and should serve all individuals (Dewey, 2008; Harkavy, Hartley, Weeks, &

Bowman, 2011), as evidenced by the diverse organizations partnering through The Netter

Center and The Higher Ed Forum.

The transformational leadership theory sheds light on the meaning of individual

partnership leaders "pushing the boundaries" in organizations through critical dialogues

to build democratic coalitions. The strategic pursuit of equity and persistence is

evidenced in my observations and interview transcripts such as stories of pushing boundaries and feeling "obligated to keep pushing the envelope…that we should always be pushing…[to] figure it out by always offering [partnership opportunities] and seeing how far we can go" (Carl). This study further explains the organizational research of Bolman and Deal (1997), which describes leaders strategically pursuing equity by building coalitions and negotiating through mediation and persistence. As Rachel described a leader she believed to be successful in pushing effectively and efficiently toward democratic coalitions, she stated, "I think [he] has been as successful as he has because he knows when to push the boundaries and when to be part of the system and push the system from within" (Rachel).

Both sites built coalitions between K-12 and higher education and pushed progress despite traditional perceptions of organizational boundaries. Years of coalition-building is evident at both sites as evidenced in the displays of official media photos of K-12 and higher education practitioners and their students on the websites. My data from observations of service-learning conference presentations and partnership reports with accompanying pictorials of diverse educators and students represent successful cross-boundary collaborations in academically-based service-learning. Evidence of practitioners engaged with educators from K-12 schools contain project summaries printed in recent Netter Center Annual Reports.

Creating equity and democratic coalitions requires vision. Practitioners and administrators functioning as transformational leaders within the institution build the organization's capacity to support changes to teaching and learning based on a shared commitment to education change for a socially desirable moral purpose (Hallinger, 2003;

Rost, 1993). This study builds on the recent research of Fulton (2012), Strier (2011), and Stephenson (2011), which posits that educators in K-12 schools and higher education are aligning their academic efforts in a unified commitment to equity and improvement. Evidence in the interview reveals transformational leadership based on commitment to change for a moral purpose. Joel shared that he was "motivated by vision" in wanting to change the world through education and Burke stated that "unless you have a vision where you're going, you're not leading anywhere." Media articles and conference programs highlighted practitioners at both sites presenting their research and collaborative coursework in partnership with local public school districts. This evidentiary data suggests that service learning coursework better reflects the vision, core values, and aspirations of the University of Pennsylvania and institutions associated with The Higher Ed Forum.

Transformational leaders and practitioners engaged in collaborative work at both sites pushed through traditional boundaries as described in the literature as "seeking opportunities to challenge the status quo through a shared vision" (Santamaria and Jean-Marie, 2014, p. 336). As evidenced in her interview statements, Anne conveyed that higher education "can't be stagnant like they have for the last 25 years [and higher education is] making adjustments for today's society" to challenge the status quo. Leigh described opportunities for change as "a huge transformative effort" through a shared vision and commitment to create equity by addressing real-world problems in through collaborative academic partnerships.

It is important for administrators and practitioners to gain understanding of the visionary change being introduced in communities through innovative service-learning

curriculum. As reported in public documents and social media clips, President Amy Gutmann articulated on multiple occasions that The Netter Center was carrying out the university's mission and bringing change to local communities through academically-based service learning work.

Leading change to create equity is complex and requires multiple responsive leadership models and the willingness to focus on mutual power among collaborators. Integrated leadership theory (Hallinger, 2003) proposes an integration of transformational leadership with an emphasis on a diplomatic and distributive leadership approach. Adding to transformational leadership, the emphasis of integrated leadership redirects the focus away from traditional leader-centered goals to a focus on a group process to achieve the group's goals. The blend of integrated, transformational leadership distributes power within the group by focusing on group goals instead of the autocratic and directive beliefs of the leader. This mutual power is evidenced in this study through Joel's description of mutually beneficial partnership work. Joel shared partnership stories of "people working together to solve mutually agreed to...mutually identified and mutually agreed to problems…where collective action would never have happened without the idea of a common very significant issue that we all care about and we focus on" (Joel).

Further evidence in this study of established mutual power arose in interview statements in the form of mutual agreements throughout the collaborative planning process. Leaders at both The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum described how mutually agreed upon approaches for addressing problems directed the project planning toward mutually beneficial project goals. Kevin explained mutually beneficial collective action as an "opportunity for some change or action that would benefit others, benefit the

participants [faculty] but benefit others as well" (Kevin). Kevin conveyed that mutually

beneficial collective action emerged through expertise, beliefs, values, and opinions

brought together in a productive way, in an organic distribution of power among

collaborators.

When power in partnership groups is not perceived as mutual and distributed

among a group of people, a negative "push" perpetuates division. Allport's (1979) theory,

discussed in Chapter 2, proposed that dialogues among diverse groups of individuals

should not be framed to include damaging consequences of inequitable power

arrangements (Schoem, 2003; Allport, 1979). Leigh gave an example of negative

division where a group did not convey a clear sense of mutual power. She shared that "as

long as high schools feel that as soon as we walk in the room we're pushing them…that's

just going to reinforce the divide and folks are going to clam up" (Leigh) and impede

progress.

Establishing equity and building coalitions with mutual power in collaborative

groups of The Higher Ed Forum and The Netter Center required intentional and mindful

leadership. These findings shed light on research by Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-

McGavin (2006), which posit that a collective, non-hierarchical, focus on mutual power

will influence positive partnership progress. This is further explained by interview

statements, which conveyed that groups "began working together to come up with ways

to interact and have democratic work together" (Julie) based on the importance of

"getting on the same page" (Carl) for "social justice and equity" (Rachel). Mutual power

was described in other terms when Burke stated there "needed to be an even playing field

where everyone felt valued and respected" (Burke). Mutually beneficial partnerships

between the university and K-12 educators served as democratic approach to bring about

societal change through the equity in mutual power among collaborators.

Creating Equity and Cross-Cultural Education Contexts

Transformational leadership seeks to overcome cross-cultural differences to

advance social justice and educational equity toward a democratic and equitable reform

of schools in diverse educational contexts (Quantz, Rogers, & Dantley, 1991; Shields,

2010). The partnership work of the Netter Center and Higher Ed Forum is concentrated

in areas of lower socio-economic student populations, as evidenced in documents with

demographic data of schools partnering with higher education faculty. Readily available

on The Higher Ed Forum website, the archived reports and photos of collaborations

identify partnership activities involving diverse cultures regardless of the proximity of the

K-12 school to the collaborating university. The focus of academically-based service

learning to address societal needs stretches across organizations and cultures to bring

change.

Creating Equity and Access to Higher Education Resources

This study contributes to a body of research explaining how meaningful

experiential learning opportunities create, identify, and address a community problem to

bring constructive change (Schirch & Campt, 2007; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell,

2009; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). This study further explains Bauman's (1997)

research, which states that social justice and equity are often conceptualized as people

move together toward a desirable final outcome. This is evident through the open public

process for individuals, groups, and organizations to submit and share ideas for academic

partnership work to the institutions involved with The Higher Ed Forum. Using the "Request for Academic Partnership" or RAP forms available on the Forum's public website, educators and community members have suggest innovative partnership ideas for an education issue they are facing. After contacting The Higher Ed Forum electronically using these forms, a process for reviewing a request for academic partnerships is prepared as a RAP agenda item and presented by the author at the next monthly meeting.

The work of Bass and Riggio (2006) contributed to our understanding of transformational leadership qualities where the leader supports the values and vision of the collaborators and intentionally integrated a group process and focuses on higher order needs of individuals to address a societal problem. Leaders developed a responsive behavior and empowered followers, which helped aligned the individual and group objectives and goals before moving forward (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the case of The Higher Ed Forum, representatives of K-12 and higher education created the RAP form as a democratic process for access to academic university resources. This is evidenced through The Higher Ed Forum's website where agendas with RAP submissions are archived along with the partnership reports.

Although many universities do not yet have an apparent "front door" for partnership requests initiated beyond campus boundaries, this RAP provides a process created for equitable access and invites problem-solving ideas from individuals from other organizations. Ultimately, the university introduces elements of humility as higher education practitioners serve educators in K-12 schools and the surrounding community.

Creating Equity and a Posture of Humility

The theory of servant leadership characterizes an attitude of humbleness, neither

needing nor seeking recognition for achievement and success, as one leads by serving

others (Greenleaf, 1977; Dean, 2014). This theory best explains the subtheme of humility

in seeking equity. Servant leaders "bend their efforts to serve with skill, understanding,

and spirit, in that followers will be responsive only to able servants who would lead

them" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 3). Greenleaf (1970) describes as a component of servant

leadership practice where practitioners are given the opportunity to initiate and lead

collaborators in their service-learning curriculum development (Greenleaf, 1970).

Servant leadership is evidenced in both The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum as

leaders often put themselves in the supportive role of a follower to empower

collaborators.

A wide range of diverse educators discuss partnership project outcomes at

monthly Higher Ed Forum meetings, as evidenced in the archived agendas housed on the

website. As these community partnerships were formed at The Netter Center to cultivate

deeper meanings related to the proposed curriculum (Starratt, 2011), they became

"coalitions with a purpose that touches upon their common humanity, their common

needs, their common aspirations for achieving something out of the ordinary" (Sarratt,

2012, p. 83). The Netter Center celebrates and reports successful outcomes of partnership

activities across university departments, even when The Netter Center practitioners are

not leading the collaboration. Servant leaders influence organizational culture and create

equity by demonstrating a posture of humility.

In the literature, Van Dierendonck (2011) further contributes to Greenleaf's

theory by identifying humility as trait of servant leadership. This study sheds light on the

importance of leadership traits when Burke expressed that behavioral traits of leaders as critical and "the number one factor in collective action" (Burke). Creating equity among educators required a new form of approachable leadership in order to establish safe space for collaboration. Sarratt (2012) outlines education collaborations as "coalitions with a purpose that touches upon their common humanity, their common needs, their common aspirations for achieving something out of the ordinary" (Sarratt, 2012, p. 83). The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum are coalitions with a purpose and reflect what Sarratt calls "education collaborations" with a purpose to build academic partnerships across K-12 and higher education through service learning coursework to achieve goals set by the partnership. The values and beliefs of servant leaders guiding the coalitions modeled an ethical-moral form of direction to create equity in the process.

This is further evidenced at the institutional level, through a study participant's recollection of the university president who modeled humble servant leadership behavior in the vignette depicting the president serving coffee. This desirable servant leadership behavioral trait was further described through perceptions of the approachability of leaders "who will genuinely sit down and listen to you" (Kevin). Interview transcripts described how humble leaders centered on group goals, and not self, as evidenced in the statement by Walter describing effective groups asking "how do we accomplish that vision?" (Walter). Servant leaders kept meetings focused on prepared agenda items and demonstrated humility through behavior.

Through observations at both sites, I witnessed presidents and group leaders greet collaborators of all organizational levels with authentic smiles and welcoming handshakes. The leaders often lingered to talk to collaborators and typically did not rush

to leave, dispelling the message that leaders felt that they had somewhere more important to go where **"**he or she is not seen as having time…he or she is seen as having a *position*" (Joel). They displayed a servant leader's posture of humility, which set an equitable tone for the institution and for the collaborative group. This humble behavior gave a message that everyone participant's voice was valued and equitable, regardless of education background or socio-economic level.

The use of titles related to the posture of humility. A portrayal of blended transformational and servant leadership is the subtle and dispassionate use of titles as evidenced by Burke's reflections regarding the opening of meetings. "When we go around and introduce each other you hear people say their positions and titles but when it's all said and done, people are just introducing themselves…there's not one pompous lick" (Burke). Kevin described the open environment of productive groups and their "thinking beyond the title…[which] takes away some of the power play and power structure that [are] inherent in titles" (Kevin).

Transformational servant leadership establishes "a vital element for negotiating power and leveraging equity issues [in that] all the titles stayed at the door and it's just about conversation" (Walter). Leigh's example of Mrs. Grober insisting her students leave off the title of "doctor" and refer to her as Mrs. Grober because "there are plenty of brilliant people without PhD's and plenty of idiots with them, so please call me Mrs. Grober" further substantiates this claim. A posture of humility and de-emphasis of titles contributed to group equity, dispersed issues of power among diverse educators and opened doors for inclusion.

Creating Equity and Inclusion

The meta-themes in this study illuminated by Starratt's (2011) proposed authentic

leadership theory, as relationships "require work to build and strengthen and

maintain…[where] a sense of inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, transparency, and

caring is to be developed and valued" (Starratt, 2011, p. 91). Starratt (2011) authentic

leadership approach in education suggests that learners encounter the meanings

embedded in the service-learning curriculum about the social and cultural worlds they

inhabit and are intrinsically transformed through the education experience (Starratt in

2007, 2011). This is evidenced by Rachel's statement, "I think back to my other

professors in undergraduate years who always talked about 'a real conversation'…one in

which you go in expecting that your mind might be changed" (Rachel). Although he said

that at times it was difficult, Carl explained circumstances that created change within

collaborators as "when we are looking at many different cultures, socioeconomic groups,

levels of education…coming together, almost as an insider-outsider coming together in

collaboration within those dialogues" (Carl). Effective transformational leaders are aware

of the importance of inclusion and issues of trust "not only *between* the university and the

school district but the trust issues within the school district *within* their own continual

change (Julie). Through academically-based service-learning partnerships, practitioners

who are open and inclusive to collaborating with others unlike themselves are often

enlightened and changed in the process.

Leadership Practice: Responsive Leadership

*"Another hallmark of leadership…it depends on how much weight there is in the cloak
that you bear. If you wear it with the lightest of gossamer then you're doing a fine job as
a leader. Ideally, leadership should not be pompous or verbose or any of those things it
has the potential of being. (Burke)*

Responsive leadership describes the guiding attitudes and behaviors of the institutional leaders or partnership group leaders and the focus on attaining goals. Responsive leadership discerns and actively addresses the needs of the organization or collaborative group to establish and carry out processes vital to fulfilling the vision. In this section I discuss components of responsive leadership at a deeper level and based upon subthemes.

Responsive Leadership and Facilitation

Transformational servant leaders adapt to navigate community partnership work through critical dialogue that establishes equitable group norms and mutual understanding. As study participant Julie described, respect grew among collaborators as they found a new way to interact and work together. Facilitative leadership was key in gaining ground and unifying through critical dialogue as "people support that which they mutually create" (Carl).

The seasoned leader with effective facilitation skills was instrumental in creating conditions conducive to collective action. Facilitating critical dialogue engages all participants and encourages opinions to be shared, further adding to Rost's (1993) research explaining that a component of transformational leadership is a shift from good management skills to the actual process of leadership, which engages followers (Rost, 1993). Participants frequently referred to critical dialogue as a facilitated process and Kevin shared that "the facilitation is huge" in partnership work.

Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership theory posits that meaningful processes are used to develop mutual understanding within equitable dialogues facilitated among educators representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds and organizational cultures.

This need for facilitated dialogue to bring understanding is evidenced by Joel's statement that "you need time to talk things through and get to know each other" before you begin to define problems and suggest solutions.

Other components of Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership theory emphasize the leadership process of engaging others (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009), which helped me gain understanding of effective facilitation of critical dialogue at both sites. Regularly scheduled monthly Higher Ed Forum meetings provided face-to-face interactions and opportunities to engage with other practitioners from a wide variety of organizations. Copies of emails with the subject line beginning with the word "newsflash!" in data sets of documents from The Higher Ed Forum often served the purpose of informing Forum members to consider engaging in opportunities across the education sector, which were not directly sponsored by the Forum. The Netter Center sends monthly group emails to a broad range of practitioners in the education system. This adaptive, transformational leadership approach provides evidence that both sites communicate a focus on group and organizational growth and engagement.

Hicks (1996) dialogical theory of social discourse requires educators to be engaged in simple acts reflective of the value of relationships during dialogue. This component of social discourse theory helped me interpret Kevin's comments about critical dialogue, where dialogue brought people of all cultures together. He stated as "we were…[aware of] those racial boundaries undertones…I think every voice is heard and it's a good ground". This implies that a psychological space nurtured an environment, which embraced critical dialogue and valued the opinions of others. Evidentiary data findings reflected by participant quotes, observations, and document analysis pointed to

the critical role of responsive leadership. Participants' firmly stated beliefs of leadership were conveyed as "the number one factor in collective action" (Burke).

Facilitated critical dialogical inherent to academically-based service learning partnerships promoted positive civic participation, communication, and mutual understanding among groups. The broad skills encompassed within facilitation included a consistent and reliable expertise in communication, which set standards for group interaction processes.

Responsive Leadership and Communication

This study further contributes to research by Sorensen et al. (2009), which posits that the goal of dialogic communication is not to present or defend one's opinions in a right or wrong perspective, but to strive for understanding through exploration of others' experiences, identifying assumptions, and reappraising one's perspectives in light of dialogic exchanges through active listening, personal sharing, and asking questions (Sorensen et al., 2009). In environments where active listening is encouraged, collaborators are more likely to express their opinions and engage in dialogical interactions (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Active listening is a fundamental component of effective communication. In his research, Strier (2011) reveals that risks for project derailment increase when participants from drastically different backgrounds possess different ideas and perspectives yet do not actively listen and hear each other's perspectives on issues (Strier, 2011).

Burke explains that the "*openness* of the communication that occurs, the *frequency* of communication is important…to maintain that sense of commitment…so hopefully they feel involved" (Burke) indicating other factors influenced by the level of

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communication. Effective communication nurtured openness, trust, and sharing. Kevin summed up these associations with a responsive facilitative leader as "the ability to communicate in a way that is non-threatening was very important in establishing some trust and rapport between higher ed and some K-12 institutions" (Kevin).

All participants shared "that constant interchange of information and communication is absolutely essential" (Burke) and must include active listening, clarity, understanding, and commitment. The adaptive, transformational servant leaders at the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum facilitated critical dialogue and set a tone of inclusiveness in exchanges among collaborators from multiple organizations. Time must be spent in dialogue through the partnership process. Leigh stated, "We spent a lot of time really hammering out what are we really talking about here…we ended up in a really good place" (Leigh) and "it doesn't all happen at one time" (Rachel).

Active listening and clarification establish productive group norms of communication. During critical dialogue, active listening and clarification help deter misunderstandings and uncover language incongruities (Schirch & Campt, 2007). to obtain a deeper understanding of others' ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). This study contributes to the literature and developing the skills of active listening, which does not always come naturally in collaborations. This is evidenced by interview statements such as "it's important that people are *taught* to listen" (Kevin) and trained in the "art of attentive listening" (Leigh). Creating authentic listening environments was conducive to critical dialogue where "listening rather than speaking" (Kevin) instead of "over talking and not being a good listener" (Walter) were expectations of individual educators and leaders within collaborations. Active listening required training, patience, and time.

When practitioners perceive legitimacy of the dialogical process, they can trust facilitative leaders, which results in commitment to the service-learning project (Fulton, 2012). Adding to Weerts and Sandmann (2010) findings on best practices on campus-community exchanges, this study further explains how practitioners cross over institutional boundaries into the community through dialogue. The inclusion of all collaborators' voices in the partnership process fosters genuine dialogue in public problem solving (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Responsive Leadership and Decisiveness

Burn's (1978) transformational leadership theory suggests that, as the leader supports the vision of the collaborators, the leadership process becomes intentionally focused on higher-order needs of the individuals in the group. Transformational leaders guide the group's progress so that the goals of individuals begin to align with the group objectives, which are required before partnership work moves forward (Burns, 1978). Leaders work with others toward the common good of their educational mission (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014), which requires institutional and group decision-making at critical junctures.

All participants described decision-making skills as a vital component conducive to the process preceding collective action. Responsive leadership includes "establishing a process of coming up with and making decisions" (Anne), particularly at critical junctures in collaborative work requiring "a *deliberate* decision" (Carl). In several settings, I observed the Netter Center and the Forum utilizing a clear pre-determined decision-making process, which "serves to set up parameters and boundaries" (Kevin). allowing equilibrium and equity during the formation and growth of partnerships.

Responsive Leadership and Infrastructure

The literature describes the implications of developing transformational leadership abilities at upper levels of the organization to enhance the likelihood of such leadership at lower levels (Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987). This component of the transformational leadership role was evident in the stories of legacies of the university presidents at the University of Pennsylvania. The upper level administration's endorsement, decision-making, and reward and recognition of the value of community-engaged partnerships proved to be a key factor in The Netter Center's institutionalization process. The institutionalization of The Netter Center was a tangible validation from the university president, evidenced by institutional awards presented by President Amy Gutmann to the Netter Center. The validation of partnership work within the institution leveraged philanthropic support shared in documents thanking funders for financial gifts and reported grants awards from foundations. At the Netter Center, the validation from the university president endorsed the service-learning curriculum and provided resources to support the expansion of academically-based service learning across campus departments and colleges.

Endorsement from presidents goes beyond support as an action oriented response. This is evidenced by Joel's explanation, "You can shape it all you want but if you have leadership who does not create or move in your direction and creates the fence…we *never* would have grown so much if we didn't have the support of the presidents." (Joel) Frequently, institutional funding leveraged external funding; the internal financial decisions influenced interest and confidence in the significance of the work among stakeholders. Julie conveyed that "the earliest challenges were trying to get university

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faculty and administrators to see the value of this type of work, that the university had a role in these types of partnerships. And that took presidential leadership…a series of presidents" (Julie).

Recognition and endorsement of the work comes ranges from local to international conferences aimed at sharing research and practices of community-engaged work. The Netter Center specifically recognized the accomplishments of other educators from a vast array of universities and regions of the United States. Years after the Netter Center was institutionalized, in a decision made to replicate the work in a different region of the country and advance university-community partnerships, The Netter Center awarded three years of funding to help develop infrastructure development for The Higher Ed Forum. Further, the Netter Center supported new leaders of The Higher Ed Forum and provided ongoing mentoring for the initiative. This was servant leadership in action with The Netter Center providing colleague-to-colleague professional development and wisdom shared through insights.

Leadership Practice: Developing Relationships

"All of them [partnerships] develop these relationships…and they find things in common, you know…and that breaks a lot of those barriers down before they collaborate. Barriers can be overcome once relationships are developed. They have the relationships." (Rachel)

Developing relationships was a critical component in creating conditions conducive to collective action. In this section, I discuss the themes of developing relationships in more depth.

Responsive leadership: breaking down barriers. This study supports the literature describing the importance of relationships in community building and social renewal as an effective framework (Fletcher, 2007; Griffiths, 1998; Bauman, 1997). As

discussed early in equity and inclusion, collaborations must be given sufficient time for acquaintances to develop relationships and to learn the historical and cultural background of the "other" in the partnership. This study furthers Donaldson's (2006) research conveying that transformational leaders mobilized others through relationships based on mutual openness, trust, and affirmation (Donaldson, 2006). Transformational servant leaders established and nurtured these group relationships in the work "by keeping hope and determination alive" (Santamaria and Jean Marie, 2014, p. 336) to fulfill their common purpose. Throughout the meta-themes, participants repeated that the relationship piece was critical in partnership work and "relationships are key and relationships matter" (Carl).

This study illuminates Sorensen et al. (2009) discussion of critical dialogue theory, which focuses on contextualizing intergroup interactions in systems of power and privilege and on building relationships across these differences (Sorensen et al., 2009). This is evidenced by one of Carl's statements that relationships were a springboard and "a precursor to having a really strategic and honest set of conversations" (Carl) about the work. Rachel explained how relationships helped diverse partners find commonalities in a partnership process that developed trust and broke down barriers throughout the collaboration. She shared that finding things in common *"breaks a lot of those barriers down before they collaborate"* and "barriers can be overcome once relationships are developed" (Rachel).

Starratt's (2004) proposed authentic leadership theory in education says that authentic relationships "require work to build and strengthen and maintain…[where] a sense of inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, transparency, and caring is to be developed

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and valued" (Starratt, 2004, p. 91). The relationships of practitioners engaged in academically-based service learning curriculum development often grew into deep friendships and support. Burke shared that working side by side "in the various academic programs we've had to support one another…the fundamental relationships" (Burke). Relationships played a significant role in a sense of belonging and contributing to something bigger; something beyond individual efforts. As in the elements of transformational servant leadership, the focus involved the individuals and groups involved in the partnership, as evidenced by Burke's interview statement: "The partnership elements in the space are the people…people who are at the table, people who to travel to the location to sit together and discuss critical issues impacting our kids and our institutions." Relationships matter and exist at the heart of the partnership work.

Responsive Leadership and Developing Trust

One of the key practices of servant leadership is the development of trust. Tschannen-Moran's (2003) *theory of trust* proposed that as trust develops in newly established relationships, stages of trust begin where "trust is established through a commitment period during which each partner has the opportunity to signal to the other a willingness to accept personal risk and not to exploit the vulnerability of the other for personal gain" (Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 42). Kevin shared that collaborators in effective partnerships "communicate in a way that is non-threatening was very important in establishing some trust and rapport between higher ed and some K-12 institutions" (Kevin).

Trust at various levels within and between organizations, among people in the collaborations, and between the leaders and collaborators were a necessary component in

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relationships, which encouraged critical dialogue. A sense of trust kept partnership collaborators on the visionary path they laid out together despite the challenges inherent in multi-organizational group work. This study connects effective facilitated critical dialogue to relationships and trust. "The dialogues are different than when we started because that was proof of concept, proof of friendship, and proof of reliability…you have to have trust" (Joel). Before collective action, collaborators had to learn to work together and take steps to develop "the *trust* in relationships" (Rachel). Relational trust was being there for each other and caring about the people before the project objectives, which eventually merged together in a sense of purpose and belonging.

Conditions conducive to collective action required a confidence in the partnership where "there's no distrust…it's very clear that we're all in this together" (Anne), which perpetuated deeper commitment to each other and therefore, the project. This is also evidenced as Joel shared a story of a friendship brought to life through easy dialogue and matured into a long-term collaboration "in the context of that [partnership] we became *friends*" (Joel). Through challenging phases of change, the established trust encouraged "relationship building…to work through the difficulties in the early stages of a partnership, or ongoing stages of partnership" (Julie). Trust in the leadership contributed to partnership progress.

A significant component of transformational servant leadership is the role of the followers. This study gives evidence of followership, as Walter shared, "If they know and trust someone they are more likely to follow that person and that person has their good intentions in care and everything." On the institutional level, evidence of the importance of developing trust was in Julie description of the lack of trust historically between

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universities and surrounding communities. She shared that "trust was built among ourselves and particularly with the community…in urban education, many of the universities do not have long-standing trusting type relationships with their communities" (Julie).

Participants' perceptions of trust at an individual level involved confidence in the skills, knowledge, and abilities of other individuals involved in partnership progress, as well as trust that they will be heard and valued. Kevin explained that "trust is huge and I think without that you can't work forward at all…confidence in the other person, their skill, their knowledge, you know…and their ability to perform" (Kevin). Critical dialogue had the potential to reinforce trust during partnership interactions. "Trust is huge…trust what you're going to say or do will be understood, will be acknowledged, and will be valued." (Leigh).

This study adds to the research on trust in the literature, and Cummings and Bromily (1996) posit that trust in the reliability and competence of the leader becomes critically important to organizations and collaborative work. Lencioni's (2002) research on trust suggests that the foundation of effective organizations is built by trust in authentic leaders and that the lack of trust weakens what an organization is trying to accomplish (Lencioni, 2005). Lencioni's (2005) research discusses that organizational leaders who cannot establish trust fail as leaders because of their fear of being vulnerable to their colleagues, fear of conflict, fear of lack of commitment and accountability, and fear of outcomes becoming unachievable (Lencioni, 2005).

Trust in the leadership contributed to partnership progress. As Walter shared, "If they know and trust someone they are more likely to follow that person and that person

has their good intentions in care and everything" (Walter) while advancing the work. Facilitative leaders were aware of the importance of trust issues and dynamics "not only *between* the university and the school district but the trust issues within the school district *within* their own continual change (Julie). Creating trust early in the partnership nurtured growth of the relationship and clearly shaped the mutually beneficial elements required for successful collaborative work. This is evidenced by interviews and Joel's statement that "the dialogues are different than when we started because that was proof of concept, proof of friendship, and proof of reliability…you have to have trust" (Joel). Trust is the foundation leading to a sense of community among collaborators. Trust between universities and surrounding communities, in that "trust was built among ourselves and particularly with the community…in urban education, many of the universities do not have long-standing trusting type relationships with their communities" (Julie) had to be addressed in order to grow authentic collaborative partnership work. Kevin explained that "trust is huge and I think without that you can't work forward at all…confidence in the other person, their skill, their knowledge, you know…and their ability to perform" (Kevin) and the collaborators trust that "what you're going to say or do will be understood, will be acknowledged, and will be valued." (Leigh).

Participants' perceptions of trust at an individual level involved confidence in the skills, knowledge, and abilities of other individuals involved in partnership progress, as well as trust that they will be heard and valued. Historically between universities and surrounding communities, Julie shared that "in urban education, many of the universities do not have long-standing trusting type relationships with their communities" and Leigh described trust in stating "trust is huge…trust what you're going to say or do will be

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understood, will be acknowledged, and will be valued." Facilitative leaders were aware of the importance of trust issues and dynamics "not only *between* the university and the school district but the trust issues within the school district *within* their own continual change (Julie).

Responsive Leadership and Creating a Sense of Community

Creating a sense of community has multiple layers and is distinct from the *breaking down* of barriers; creating a sense of community occurred once barriers were taken apart. The transformational leader's facilitation of critical dialogue guided how group members learned to talk together, which directly influenced how they learned to work together (Burns, 1978; Kezar et al., 2006). As in Burn's (1978) transformational leadership theory, the group members focused on collective action and desired outcomes, which created a sense of community. This is evidenced in several sets of data in this study. Most notably, The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum shaped and fostered growth in a widening circle of professional educators from K-12 and higher education and cultivated a legacy of innovation and lifelong friendships as evidenced through documented speaking engagements and new initiatives growing through relationships and collaborations.

The meta-theme of relationships involves the people and the shared learning process within a safe psychological space. Hick's (1996) discusses the implications of social discourse as providing humane means to connect thinking and speech in a shared learning process among people in relationship with one another. These components of social discourse theory shed light on Rachel's statement describing collaborators that mattered as "your heart is on the *inside* with your work and the people and the spaces

within" (Rachel). In these spaces, transformational servant leaders established and nurtured group relationships and encouraged persistence in the work "by keeping hope and determination alive" (Santamaria and Jean Marie, 2014, p. 336). This often took place over meals.

Responsive Leadership and Breaking Bread

This study contributes to the body of literature describing the importance of attention to hospitality in the form of food. People relax and eating food gives them something to do as they interact with each other (Schirch & Campt, 2007). Having refreshments serves as "breaking bread together" and recognizes our humanity and commonalities. This study illuminates the research of Schirch and Campt regarding the hospitable warmth expressed through a beautiful and comfortable space and refreshments, which helps people relax enough to consider multiple points of view (Schirch & Campt, 2007) in a provisional space which nurtures a strong sense of belonging (Cox et al., 2012). Interestingly, "going to lunch" was a common phrase referring to the activity where people got together informally to talk in all stages of partnership work. The data sets contained many comments about food, as Burke shared, "It's a human endeavor. If you're going to do something together and it's worthwhile, acknowledging people through food is probably one of the longest things humanity has done. So, as far as environment goes, the best meetings have opportunities for some sort of refreshments to break bread together…" (Burke).

Data from my observations described refreshments at collaborator's gatherings as a meeting place to dialogue where relationships developed while breaking bread. Joel shared that "there's something about breaking bread together…we still do that…we want

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faculty to sit, relax, and chat. It's breaking bread. It's friendship" (Joel). Every participant shared stories about the importance of breaking bread for the purpose of building relationships. Kevin conveyed **"**food or drink helps… I have a good friend who says let's have a cup of coffee…it's the idea of getting together to share" (Kevin) and invest in friendships.

This builds on the literature stating that "colleagues can provide support not only with work-related problems; they can also offer 'an ear' to listen when other troubles arise in the workplace" (Schutte & Loi, 2014, p. 134). Sharing meals provided time for discussing the joys of progress and encouragement to move past the despair "when hope fades" (Joel) and collaborators reach out for encouragement. During tense episodes of the project, Julie shared that an administrator always advised his colleagues to "take 'em to lunch, just take 'em to lunch (both laughing) and break bread" (Julie) and talk about the issue at hand.

Participants' perceptions about breaking bread were related to relationship building and creating a sense of community. Joel shared that "there's something about breaking bread together…we still do that…we want faculty to sit, relax, and chat. It's breaking bread. It's friendship" (Joel). Documents contained photos of smiling educators pausing to pose at award ceremonies, and conference settings with banquet tables filled with food, which brought memories of breaking bread together with colleagues. Food brought people and dialogues together naturally in a joint activity of breaking bread, a natural necessity as people usually make time to eat in the busyness of the day. Food was served and merely contributed as a relational tool over which to gather, to instill and renew hope in the journey.

Other Influencing Factors

The meta-theme of other influencing factors describes a set of sub-themes that include factors that contribute or take away from conditions conducive to collective action. I describe other influencing factors in more depth in the following sections.

Creating Favorable Psychological and Physical Space

This study adds to leadership studies in the literature that suggest that cognitive, social and emotional skills create a caring and engaging learning environment in education for social good (Bracket & Katulak, 2006; Mayer and Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). In the context of the community partnerships with The Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum, the servant leaders strategically cultivated this type of caring environment to create equity, where individuals in the group felt safe to express ideas and opinions despite a wide range of backgrounds and differing vantage points. These psychologically safe spaces welcomed differing opinions, which involved active listening and respect. Further, research by Bracket and Katulak (2006) suggests that "incorporating social and emotional learning are associated with success in many areas of life as well as academic performance" (Bracket & Katulak, 2006, p. 2).

Practitioners assume risks to overcome "that fear or some psychological components of faculty is figuring out is this something that is viewed by the institution as valuable work" (Julie). This resilience required ego strength of educators as Joel conveyed, "they also have egos that are *strong* enough to say I'm not only concerned with what X feels about me being in the field…the difficulty is that breaking from that can hurt your career" (Joel). This study supports the work of Lencioni (2005), which proposes that overcoming fear of being vulnerable to colleagues is element of leadership.

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This also involves fear of conflict, fear of lack of commitment and accountability, and fear of outcomes becoming unachievable (Lencioni, 2005).

The risks as shared in stories during interviews included a fear of failure that practitioners at The Netter Center faced in their careers, professional reputations, and ultimately their family's financial stability. Joel explained this further, stating that tenured faculty "were able to do this because they were at the top of the heap…there's no threat" (Joel) while Julie explains that younger practitioners dealt with fear of administrators not figuring out that this is valuable work provided by the institution. Joel described having "a sense of tremendous trepidation…for the project, for the community, for [the university]…and to be frank [trepidation for] a lot of our careers… reactions to the risk financially, career…status issues too." The evidence of the value of the work was portrayed through the perseverance and ego strength to move forward in unchartered waters. These practitioners created safe psychological space to advance academically-based partnership work within the university and within the collaborative groups. The goals were worth the risks and The Netter Center became institutionalized following a large foundation donation to support the work. Hope is alive as practitioners at The Higher Ed Forum shared that these current lived experiences in partnership work are "about very critical issues in the community that could change the community for the next 20 years…the next 100 years" (Anne).

Instilling hope. In addition to breaking bread together to renew hope when collaborators were discouraged, hope played a role as a component of psychologically safe space. This sheds light on the research of Kania and Kramer (2011) regarding how a path to developing a multi-cultural voice is a process that always involves struggle and

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hope. Leaders discerned when hope was fading and offered encouragement through dialogue about the progress of the work. Discussing fears, failures, and feelings of discouragement helped individuals move past the despair "when hope fades" (Joel) and required an established safe space to be vulnerable. This is evidenced as Rachel shared that "we are really asking our staff to explore challenges that they have confronted so they have to…kind of admit failures and challenges". This research supports Tschannannen-Moran's (2004) research stating that the facilitative leader should nurture hope. Day (2009) explains that hope is renewed by the wisdom of the leader's discernment and timely decisions. Further, transformational servant leaders encouraged persistence in the work "by keeping hope and determination alive" (Santamaria and Jean Marie, 2014, p. 336).

Looking through the lens of Griffith's equality discourse theory, which posits that the theoretical underpinnings of social justice among collaborating practitioners fuel the pursuit of theoretically informed social justice principles, helps me understand education improvement and the influencing factors of desirable psychological and physical space.

Physical space. This study supports research by Bowman (2012) describing conditions which influence whether or not one feels part of the same social group and group's openness to share ideas and capture their highest aspirations for partnership work (Bowman, 2012). This is evidence by Kevin's shared perceptions that "we respond to our environment, even our physical environment, with how much we're willing to share and how open we feel the environment will allow us to be." Leigh said that "if you put me in an environment where the first message that comes to me is 'we don't want to hear from you' then that it is problematic space."

Research by Fugazzotto (2010) discusses how particular layouts of space foster normative bonds and effective use of space breaks down perceived barriers to collaboration and cultural change. The physical space attributes discussed at length in Chapter 4 list and describe elements of location, lighting and designs for seating arrangements conducive to critical dialogue in collaborations. This study supports the research of Harrop and Turpin (2013) suggesting that space selection contributes to attributes of learning theory, place making, and architecture design as environments enable or inhibit group interactive work. Evidence in the findings discussed in Chapter 4, support Picower's (2011) study, which conveyed that collaborators need to establish a safe space to unpack complex issues from multiple perspectives. Elements in safe space weave psychological and physical space together as conditions conducive to collective action.

Influencing Factor of Funding

Administrative funding and support is critical to institutional work. Funding issues created challenges in fully carrying out a myriad of activities and curriculum projects created to grow the academically-based service learning curriculum and build relationships between K-12 and higher education. The challenges discussed in this study add to the discussion about the lack of funding as the education system responds to community problems through academic work. The literature suggests that the lack of funding demonstrates a need for serious strategies to identify specific state and federal opportunities and meaningful legislative and policy agendas (Alperovitz, Dubb & Howard, 2008; Van Fleet, 2012). This supports the literature conveying that the University of Pennsylvania's legacies of presidents, such as Judith Rodin, and currently,

Amy Gutmann, have worked hard to change the institution's business practices over a ten-year period (Alperovitz, et al., 2008; Harkavy & Hartley, 2012). This is evidenced by Julie's story about the Dean of Medicine endorsing an infrastructure-related federal funding application that leveraged an additional $1.2 million and that the Dean's "decision of bringing the college of dentistry into that [partnership] was pivotal".

Grants and donations supported The Higher Ed Forum's One Agenda Launch and Annual Student Leadership Conferences but funding for these and other ongoing, innovative education events was not within the Forum's annual budget. Although the Forum and the participating organizations leverage donations to support the work, the primary mission of the Forum was to engage and build meaningful relationships through academically-based service learning partnerships between K-12 and higher education institutions in the region. In contrast, The Netter Center's work is now deeply embedded and institutionalized within the University, which was influenced the university's decisions to grow and sustain the work university wide and fund the center through the university budget.

Influencing Factor of Process

Problem-solving approaches such as Brandsford's (1984) problem solving theory are utilized in both academic and corporate settings (Brandsford, 1984; Lamm et al., 2012). The Brandsford model corresponds to Dewey's problem solving approach, which includes similar steps: experiencing a provocative situation, defining the problem, seeking data and information, formulating and implementing possible solutions, and evaluating the results (Lamm et al., 2012). Lewis (2002) describes this problem solving process as fundamental project management and defines each stage of a healthy project

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life cycle. Lewis discusses the importance of dialogues within each stage as critical to development of solutions to problems from diverse perspectives (Lewis, 2002). The problem-solving approach is critical to fulfilling the role of the transformational leader and introducing a process of leadership. This is evidenced by The Netter Center's development of the problem-solving learning (PSL) guide and The Higher Ed Forum's process for a Request for Academic Projects. The RAP forms include a narrative explaining the ten step process for submission and presentation at the meeting.

Summary

The findings in this study defined collective action in the context of the work of the Netter Center and The Higher Ed Forum through descriptions of instances and the steps preceding to collective action.

The conditions that encouraged critical dialogue or other behaviors that served as a springboard for collective action between educators in K-12 and higher education involved a matrix of resources perpetuated through leadership abilities and behaviors. The cycle of the institution's internal mechanisms originated by visionary practitioners dedicated to identifying and addressing societal needs through academically-based service learning coursework. However, tension existed among individuals in organizational subcultures when perceptions of the status quo threatened their identities and egocentric reward system in higher education. This study contributes to the literature discussing the need for leaders to determine the right framework and political approaches and build a collective capacity for change. The inherent politics, conflict, resistance, and competing values often thwarted early efforts to introduce service-learning coursework within the institution.

Practitioners experienced organizational level and group level challenges to the process. This study explored and described the physical, organizational, psychological and cultural factors perceived as facilitating conditions conducive to critical dialogue. These factors were often influenced by conditions present in the environments, which served as a springboard for collective action between educators in K-12 and higher education.

The conditions that encouraged critical dialogue or other behaviors that served as a springboard for collective action between educators in K-12 and higher education involved establishing a democratic and equitable environment with responsive leadership. Organizational factors conducive to collective action centered on leadership. The president's consistent articulation that academically-based service learning coursework advanced the university's mission and improved the greater good of society was pivotal and expanded the work across the campus. Institutional leadership recognized that partnership work was valued and fulfilled the mission of the university. This endorsement provided organizational permission and legitimized the partnership work. Advancing the institution's development of community-engaged partnership work required administrative decisions to allocate budgetary resources and leverage funding for sustainability. Decisions to institutionalize community-engaged partnership work provided reassurance to practitioners and provided needed resources as they developed community-based projects with surrounding communities. Although subcultures resisted change in some instances, the discerning and humble approach of faculty leading partnership efforts gained ground over time.

Conditions conducive to collective action involved transformational leaders portraying genuine humility within the institution as well as the collaborating groups facilitated these effective dialogues. Transformational servant leaders set the humble tone for inclusive round-table discussions where all voices of collaborators were respected and heard regardless of title and education background. The willingness of collaborators to actively listen and hear others' points of view was critical in the multiple factors involved with effective communication. The leadership was key at both the institutional and partnership group level. Practitioners in K-12 and higher education academic partnerships groups crossed organizational boundaries and learned how to talk actively with each other despite diverse backgrounds, values, and beliefs. The skills of the facilitative leader were a significant contributing factor in establishing respectful group norms, equity, and inclusive critical dialogues.

These leaders accepted risks, overcame fears, pushed boundaries in their organizations, and generated new experiential problem-solving learning opportunities for students.

Partnering collaborators from different sectors of the education system brought norms of understanding for collaborative work and group interactions. Often not knowing one another, the K-12 and higher education partnership groups learned new ways to talk with each other and unify their values and beliefs to achieve project goals. A seasoned facilitative leader guided the process and nurtured trust in the group relationships and trust in the leader. As group equity formed, titles became less important and the sharing of wisdom from lived experiences opened doors to understanding different vantage points.

The physical, psychological, and/or cultural factors that were perceived as facilitating conditions that preceded collective action had many layers. Creating safe psychological space where diverse individuals were willing to openly share and listen to others' opinions was a critical condition conducive to collective action. In order to begin to address inequities in local communities, practitioners realized they were in a process of overcoming differences and inequities within their partnership group.

The psychological factors networked from a central point of relationships. Seasoned facilitative leaders guided critical dialogues and mutually agreed definitions and problem-solving approaches emerged. Building trust and instilling hope during partnership work influenced the collaborators' commitment to the project and to each other. As equity developed in group work, relationships deepened and grew roots of lifelong friendships. Friendships grew out of the collaborating relationships and contributed to increasingly permeable organizations boundaries. Practitioners encouraged each other and renewed hope when circumstances felt discouraging. However, the layers of the deepening relational process perpetuated trust and commitment among the group members to fulfill the group's vision. Nurturing relationships required an investment of time.

Environmental factors such as a hospitable, easily accessible physical location contributed to the partnership work. The physical factors involved the creation of a setting and atmosphere conducive to all educators regardless of which "side" hosted meetings. Interestingly, territoriality did not emerge as a contributing factor in K-12 and higher education collaborations. Practitioners were more concerned about inclusivity and having the right people in the space designated for the "heart" of collaborative work. This

psychologising of space contributes to attributes of learning theory, place making, and architecture design as environments enable or inhibit group interactive work. Subtle nuances such as round-table configurations for seating neutralized power and introduced respect for opinions from educators of multiple cultures. These physical and psychological components were intertwined and resulted from intentional approaches to create equity and create a sense of community within the group.

Professional development and training was needed to prepare faculty and students before engaging in academically-based service learning. Understanding cultural differences, such as norms of discourse and language used to describe viewpoints, required learned active listening skills and a willingness to see social problems through the lens of others. Concern for student preparation, as well as the individuals in the community in which they would be involved, contributed to conditions conducive to collective action.

The actual *process* in collaborative group work was instrumental in creating conditions conducive to collective action. Using a problem-solving learning format posed questions to both students and faculty in seminars in preparation for uncovering the root of a societal issue and optimal decisions on how to approach to problem-solving. The Netter Center's seminar problem-solving guide served as a vital tool and was used to facilitate critical dialogue among students enrolled in academically-based service learning courses. The Higher Ed Forum's Request for Academic Partnership provided an inclusive process to establish equitable access to resources in the education system. This was developed and used by higher education, K-12 school, and community organizations as a tool to interconnect and form academic partnerships.

The challenges to partnership work involved lack of funding, unexpected and unplanned organizational change, and toxic cultures. Some collaborators were initially weighed down in collaborative work by the organizational baggage they carried as a result from exposure to undesirable ego-centric attitudes and behaviors of arrogant leaders in their home organizations. Although the participants openly shared stories and views on the challenges during difficult times, they primarily chose to highlight the successes and the milestones. These practitioners were visionaries and their responses were consistently open-minded, optimistic, and forward-thinking. They humbly inspired and encouraged others as a natural way of practice.

The visionary practitioners led by seasoned facilitative leaders in organizations that provided resources for the work opened doors for relationships with colleagues across the education system. Conditions described in the findings and analysis of this study contribute to the growing body of academically-based service learning curriculum designed to address societal issues and improve communities. The process of creating equity facilitated by responsive and humble leadership brings change to the lives of practitioners and students as education practices bring change to society through their collaborative partnership work.

Implications for Theory

This study contributes to our theoretical understanding of dialogical theories in the context of collaborative group work among educators from differing organizational cultures, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic sectors. This study contributed to theoretical knowledge of transformational servant leadership theories and the implications of introducing change within diverse groups of practitioners seeking to bring

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change to improve local communities. Collaborative working environments viewed through the lens of dialogical theories contributed to deeper meaning of spaces established for respectful, open, and authentic critical dialogue. This study provided understanding of equitable dynamics, which identified assumptions and helped reappraise personal perspectives through active listening, personal sharing, and asking questions.

Adaptive leadership involved a *meaningful* process and practice and helped individuals and organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments undergoing change. These meaningful processes developed mutual understanding within equitable group discussions among educators representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds and organizational cultures. Creating spaces conducive to dialogue influenced the willingness of group members to hear and engage with colleagues who expressed differing values and beliefs. The findings support interdependence across K-12 and higher education as a collective agency where shared beliefs in the power to produce meaningful experiences together is conducive to collective action.

Understanding the conditions that influence individuals coming together to collectively uncover and explore complex societal issues exists as a gap in the current theoretical knowledge. My study generated specific examples and stories about positive conditions (Patton, 2002) for advancing collective action through antecedent critical dialogue. Better understanding of conditions fostering a collective response will contribute to the meaning of relationships among collaborators drawn together to solve community problems. Practitioners are integrated academically-based service-learning work among educators from K-12 and higher education. Practitioners would benefit from

a deeper theoretical knowledge exploring the inner conflict of educators pushing

organizational boundaries in relation to loyalty to the organization's status quo.

This study adds knowledge to favorable conditions creating more permeable

boundaries. However, there are current gaps in theoretical knowledge related to

identifying and understanding perceptions of where boundary lines fall. Educators need

more understanding of successful partnership processes, including the facilitative skills

required to lead effective critical dialogues conducive to K-12 and higher education

collective action.

This study contributes depth of meaning of dialogical exchanges, which influence

the steps preceding the collective action and the conditions nurturing interdependence in

a traditionally independent education profession. The critical-dialogic process theory

focuses on contextualizing intergroup interactions in systems of power and privilege and

on building relationships across these differences (Sorensen et al., 2009) and this study

adds to theoretical knowledge of spaces where these intergroup interactions take place.

Implications for Research

This study contributed understanding to organizational, physical, psychological,

and cultural factors perceived by educators in K-12 and university settings as conducive

to collective action and mutually beneficial partnerships. Building on the current data,

this study described the proficiencies expected of the facilitative leader and the critical

need for trust and authentic critical dialogue. These contributions build on current

literature and included new understanding of boundary work in and between

organizations and the importance of creating psychologically safe spaces. Attributes of

physical settings with designs using round configurations are typically discussed in

architectural design journals. Although architectural design research studies contribute to knowledge about physical space in collaborative work, little research has been conducted in the education setting and the influences of physical space on collaborative partnership work.

Elements of organizational factors influencing collaborative work surfaced in my study. The elements discussed in this study include the need for the institution to recognize the value in collaborative partnership work and clear articulation by the president giving permission and endorsement. Specific psychological factors preceding collective action add to the current literature and bring meaning through the discussion of data, findings, and analysis. Physical settings and psychologically safe spaces enhanced critical dialogue and influenced the depth of collaborators' engagement in the partnership process.

Previous research discusses collaborative work through business and management studies. The findings in this study indicated academic collaborations have broadened widely across the majority of disciplines, particularly in education and health sciences, which may suggest a systematic recognition and growing acceptance of K-12 and higher education partnerships. This study provided additional research exploring environments in K-12 and higher education and assisted in examining transaction space where knowledge differences are negotiated during collaborative work (Lamm et al., 202; Garraway, 2010).

This study supported the growing body of literature exploring perceptions of faculty and organizational dynamics influencing university-community engaged research, and physical, psychological, cultural, and general conditions conducive to collective

action. There is little research involving the physical attributes in education settings conducive to critical dialogue, and this study provides descriptions of setting attributes as well as psychological factors contributing to functional collaborative processes. Although current literature describes academically based service learning curriculum and community-based research, this study addresses gaps in the literature regarding preparation for collaborative work and the critical factors influencing the growth of mutually beneficial partnerships.

The premise for developing critical dialogue skills is the underlying foundation for collaborative partnerships and was threaded throughout my study findings. My study builds on the research of Marchel (2007) discussing critical dialogue components that require awareness of the ways personal biases can influence thinking; understanding language as a tool for learning rather than only expression of ideas; and specific skills in speaking and listening in order to promote mutual learning.

Implications for Practice

Creating conditions conducive to collective action begins before collaborators attend initial meetings. The primary recommendations for establishing pathways to collective action through mutually beneficial partnership work are included in the following:

- Explore the cultural climate for fellow educators interested in engaging in partnership work and take the time to understand the dynamics within the successful as well as derailed projects.

- Enlist highly visible and authentic presidential and administrative endorsement for the work as aligned with the organizational mission.

- Without institutionalization, sustaining and growing the work is difficult; physical location of a center with resources to support staff and faculty in their specific community-engaged work must be highly valued at all levels of the organization.

- Incorporate problem-solving learning discussions in student seminar series and faculty professional development. See Appendix F as a recommended piloted document to consider using.

- Create ongoing training series for students and faculty interested in community-engaged work to provide relevant cultural lenses and enlightenment in self-assessing attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of racial and cultural prejudices.

- Provide a process of sharing research reports; program evaluations, reflections, best practices, and other relevant data to the president and development office to garner interest from the organization's philanthropic funders and foundations.

- Highlight research during highly visible, well attended, interdisciplinary regularly scheduled faculty meetings to illuminate theoretical frameworks of community-engaged partnership work; provide protocol and criteria to reward and recognize scholarship within the institution and discuss published works of experts in the field.

- Review internal policy with the university president and administration and formalize academically-based service-learning as a recognized and valuable contribution to research campus-wide; as a desirable element included in faculty committee reviews.

- Provide professional development for faculty to gain understanding and available tools to support their steps leading to collective action, such as the Request for Academic Partnership process (See Appendix E).

- Pursue relationships with K-12 districts and other universities and participate on committees forming partnerships and seeking research support; inform tenure-track faculty of opportunities and research needs within the institution and the community through competent communication streams provided by the institutionalized center.

- Provide graduate and research student internship stipends to support research capacity on faculty projects.

- A mindful selection of a seasoned facilitative leader, with experience in a wide variety of partnership settings, should be established before collaborators assemble to meet.

- Meeting location should include an acute awareness of logistics and physical layout conducive to roundtable collaborative group work.

- Verbalize and encourage the investment of time in relationship building and nurturing trust in partnership work expands beyond the collaborators to include administration, district superintendents, university presidents, and leaders in community agencies.

- Gain understanding of the dialogical and leadership theories, and theoretical models of change in organizations in the context of partnership work and academically-based service learning.

- Publish community-engaged research to inform theory and practice; present data and participate in community partnership peer-reviewed professional conferences offered through 1) the National Institute for Educational Leadership; 2) the University of Pennsylvania Netter Center for Community Partnerships; 3) Campus Compact regional conferences; and 4) regional and internal research day poster or paper presentations.

Located in the chapters of this study, practitioner's stories involve a flow of recommendations for practice and process, which are included in the appendices.

Further Research

Further research is needed to explore models of institutionalized community-engaged centers and what the centers entail as far as funding, staff, policies, and processes. Although there is a growing body of literature describing academically-based service learning partnerships and curriculum, more research is needed to examine organizational climate and readiness for change in community-engaged collaborative work, as well as implications for transformational servant leadership styles influencing successfully implemented mutually beneficial partnerships.

Based on this study, further qualitative research is needed to explore the role of the president in a community-engaged university, development and evaluation of a blueprint for the process of critical dialogue leading to collective action, faculty perceptions of the use of problem solving approaches during community-engaged collaborations, the proficiencies of an effective facilitative leader, and strategies to build reward and recognition into higher education arenas. More research is needed on professional training and development when preparing students and educators for

collaborative work. As boundaries become more permeable between K-12 and higher education institutions, research is needed to provide understanding of changes of real or perceived power shifts within and between education organizations. Additional qualitative research is needed to explore the influence of community engaged academic work within the organization and deepening dialogical interactions among educators outside their home institution.

The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma Request for Academic Partnerships (see Appendix G) and Benson and Harkavy's Problem Solving Learning questions for critical dialogue (see Appendix H) have appeared to be successful in advancing the community-engaged work and might contribute to as elements of a blueprint for mutually beneficial community partnership work. Evaluation of these tools would contribute to gaps in the current body of research.

Conclusions

The early pioneers at The Netter Center continue to mentor leaders of The Higher Ed Forum in an ongoing transformational servant leadership role. Academically-based service learning courses have developed across K-12, higher education, and the community in northeastern Oklahoma. Relationships have developed based on trust, inclusivity, and a vision for student experiential learning. Establishing group equity within the Higher Ed Forum introduced a process for practitioners to share resources and collaborate in community problem-solving.

The Netter Center's visionaries in education were resilient in their beliefs that serving the common good involved creating equity through academic partnerships between higher education and K-12 schools. Their vision became a reality. The Netter

Center advanced academically-based service learning beyond their university and changed lives as collaborators addressed societal problems. Practitioners and administrators fostered change through university practice, advanced an equitable and democratic culture of education, and created a sense of community beyond the campus through mutually beneficial partnerships with K-12 public schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Research questions and the subquestions are bolded. The interview questions are listed below each research questions and subquestion.

What are the conditions that encourage critical dialogue or other behaviors that serve as a springboard for collective action between educators in K-12 and higher education?

1. How would you define collective action in the context of the work of Netter Center/Higher Education Forum?

2. Please describe instances of collective action in the context of the work of the Netter Center/Higher Education Forum.

3. What were the essential steps leading to collective action in this context?

4. What were the challenges to this process?

- **How do educators describe environments they perceive as conducive for critical dialogue and other behaviors that lead to collective action?**

  1. What have you experienced as the steps of critical dialogue?

  2. Please describe the environment you have experienced as most conducive to critical dialogue.

- **What are the physical, organizational, psychological, and/or cultural factors that are perceived as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?**

  1. Please describe the physical environmental factors you have found to be

  2. important conditions that precede collective action.

  3. What is important to you that you have in your physical environment in order to encourage you to collaborate with others?"

  4. Describe the physical characteristics of a room that you have experienced as encouraging collaboration.

  5. What organizational factors served as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?

  6. Please share the psychological factors you perceive as facilitating conditions that precede collective action?

  7. What were cultural factors that you experienced as playing a part in leading to collective action?

Appendix B: Media Imagery Elicitation Guide

Following the interview process, the participant was given a selection of photos depicting a wide variety of photos, media pictures, and collaborative group work. Participants at both sites viewed the same images originating from the Netter Center or Higher Ed Forum. This was followed by a series of questions about physical and psychological space created for these collaborations. The instructions below were provided for the media imagery component of the study.

1. Please select and describe the elements in these pictures that best represent favorable psychological conditions that precede collective action.

2. Please select and explain the elements in any of these pictures that best represent the desired physical conditions conducive to collective action.

3.   Please share a story (or stories) associated with creating these

psychological and physical spaces/environments.

4.   Please share any additional photos or media images you would like to

share and describe related to your collaborative work.

Participants were instructed to select and share additional media images at the time of the

interview. Participants were encouraged to share any additional media images and

related stories during the second follow-up interview and after that time during the course

of the study.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

**EXPLORING THE CRITICAL DIALOGICAL PROCESS: PSYCHOLOGICAL
AND PHYSICAL SPACES CREATING CONDITIONS FOR
MULTI-SYSTEM COLLECTIVE ACTION
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
FACULTY AND/OR ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW
INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

Introduction:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating elements of critical
dialogue and collective action conducive to engaging educators from K-12 and higher
education. Pamela Pittman, Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Administration and
Policy Studies, Oklahoma State University, is conducting this study. You were selected
as a possible participant in this research because of your affiliation with the Netter Center
or The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma. Please read this form and ask questions
before you agree to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore physical and psychological elements conducive to
engaging educators from K-12 and higher education in meaningful exchanges that lead to
collective action.

Approximately 10-12 faculty and/or administrators will be selected to participate in this research to provide information for professional educators from K-12 and higher education regarding steps leading to collective action.

Procedures:
If you voluntarily decide to participate, you will be asked share about your collective action experiences in order to include faculty and/or administrator feedback and perceptions. The interview will be audio taped using my digital recorder. We will **not** videotape our session. You will be assigned a pseudo name of your choice during the interview to remain confidential on the audio and written transcript of the interview. As the researcher, I will be the only person in possession of the audiotape and I will erase the interview contents at the conclusion of this study. The information will be used for education purposes and any written summary or transcript will only contain pseudo names of the participants. The benefits to participation include your voice in providing information related to perceptions, expectations and experiences of critical dialogue and collective action in education. Study responses will assist in understanding the steps involved prior to collective action.

Compensation:
No incentives or compensation are involved with this study.

Confidentiality:
The information obtained in connection with this research study is confidential and will be used for education purposes. Your responses will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented.

I will keep the interview research results in my locked file cabinet in my research office along with the audiotape. I will finish analyzing the data on or before Fall 2014. All audio recordings will be erased at the conclusion of this study. All transcripts of interviews will be used for educational purposes only.

Voluntary nature of the study:
Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with your university site. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop the survey at any time without affecting these relationships.

Contacts and questions:
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Pamela Pittman at pam.pittman@okstate.edu. You may ask questions now, or if you have any additional questions later, I will be happy to answer them. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board, at 405-744-3377.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:
You are making a decision whether or not to participate in the interview. Your signature indicates that you have read this information and your questions have been answered. Even
after signing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the interview at any time before or during the session. All interviews will take place at your university setting in a classroom, office, or via technology.

I consent to participate in the interview. Please clearly sign your name below.

_____

Signature of Participant (Required)   Date

_____

Signature of Researcher (Required)   Date

Appendix D: Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Thursday, April 10, 2014
IRB Application No	ED1461
Proposal Title:	Exploring the Critical Dialogical Process: Psychological and Physical Spaces Creating Conditions for Multi-System Collective Action in Higher Education
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 4/9/2017

Principal
Investigator(s):

Pamela Pittman   Kerri Shutz Kearney
3609 Brownwood Lane   315 Willard
Norman, OK 730721798   Stillwater, OK 74078

_____

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Appendix E: Higher Education Forum Request for Academic Partnerships (RAP)

The Higher Ed Forum of Oklahoma
Request for Academic Partnerships (RAP)
Visual 10-Step Process for
Universities, P-12 School Districts, & Community Organizations

1. From our Forum website, download the appropriate RAP Form and describe your basic concept and goals. We will help you clearly express your idea in written format.

2. Obtain any required approvals from your organization listed on the RAP form, scan the RAP, and email to Forum Exec member or pamela.pittman@tulsacc.edu.

3. Forum Exec will review your RAP for components and required criteria included on the RAP form. We contact you with approval or request clarifications.

4. You will be notified of your final written RAP version approved by our Forum Exec. Your RAP title with your name as Author will be included on an upcoming Forum agenda.

5. You will bring copies of the final RAP and copies of your PowerPoint notes to the Forum meeting. Our members will attentively hear your RAP with Q&A time (20 minutes).

6. Our Forum members have approximately 30 - 45 days to inquire for interest at their institution, P-12 district and/or agency for your potential RAP project partners.

7. Interested faculty (at one or more institutions), P-12 educators &/or agencies will contact any Forum Exec member or contact Pam: pamela.pittman@tulsacc.edu

8. We notify you and we coordinate a timely meeting date, neutral location, and facilitate your introductory team meeting to guide your early planning steps.

9. Your RAP team meets to exchange ideas to guide project decisions. The template gives organized, chronological steps to create a clear Project Management Plan (PMP).

10. The PMP will be implemented, monitored, with data outcome analysis. Your periodic Forum update reports are housed on the website. The completed project closes or sustains.

The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma
Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) Form
Secondary Schools Version

When an institution **proposes** a new partnership with embedded service learning and/or academic components, the Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) form must be completed in its entirety and appropriate signatures must be secured prior to submission to the Higher Ed Forum (HEF). The HEF meets on a bimonthly basis and reviews RAPs during its meetings. RAP submissions generally are presented by the author or by a designated representative from the author's institution during meetings of the General Forum. . The Placement Committee will notify the author of a proposed partner within 3-4 weeks of the presentation.

Proposal Title:

Proposal Contacts (include name, title, affiliation, phone and email):

Proposal Description (include area/discipline, type of assignment, number of students/volunteers requested, hours per week, days per week, preferred time of day, dates of the assignment, associated responsibilities, requisite skills, and who will provide supervision):

Proposal Facility and Logistical Requirements (include specific facility requirements with respect to size, equipment, type of activity, etc. and include logistical requirements such as transportation that would require additional coordination):

Proposal Goals (include measurable goals for the requesting institution and its clientele as appropriate, i.e. number of students/classes/sites/partners served, student-to-student ratio, improvement in competency and/or curricular assessment, etc.):

_____   _____
Teacher   Date

_____   _____
Assistant Principal or Principal   Date

_____   _____
Assistant/Associate Superintendent   Date

The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma
Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) Form
Post-Secondary Version

When an institution <u>responds</u> to a Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) the following items must be completed in their entirety and appropriate signatures must be secured prior to submission to the Higher Ed Forum (HEF). A subcommittee of the HEF meets on a bimonthly basis to review responses and to identify the institutions best suited for the academic partnership. Response contacts will be notified of their status and a representative of the HEF will facilitate the first meeting of the new partners.

Response Contacts (include name, title, affiliation, phone and email):

Response Description (include area/discipline, type of assignment, number of students/volunteers available, hours per week, days per week, preferred time of day, dates of the initial pilot, associated responsibilities, requisite skills, and who will provide supervision):

Response Facility and Logistical Availability (include specific facility availability with respect to size, equipment, type of activity, etc. and include ability to address logistical requirements such as transportation that would require additional coordination:

Response Goals (include measurable goals for the requesting institution and its clientele as appropriate, i.e. number of students/classes/sites/partners served, student-to-student ratio, improvement in competency and/or curricular assessment, etc.):

_____   _____
Faculty Member   Date

_____   _____
Department Head/Director/Coordinator   Date

_____   _____
Dean (if required)   Date

The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma
Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) Form
Community Organization Version

When a community organization **proposes** a new partnership with embedded service learning and/or academic components, the Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) form must be completed in its entirety and appropriate signatures must be secured prior to submission to the Higher Ed Forum (HEF). The HEF meets on a bimonthly basis and reviews RAPs during its meetings. RAP submissions generally are presented by the author or by a designated representative from the author's institution during meetings of the General Forum. The Placement Committee will notify the author of a proposed partner within 3-4 weeks of the presentation.

Proposal Title:

Proposal Contacts (include name, title, affiliation, phone and email):

Proposal Description (include area/discipline, type of assignment, number of students/volunteers requested, hours per week, days per week, preferred time of day, dates of the initial pilot, associated responsibilities, requisite skills, and who will provide supervision):

Proposal Facility and Logistical Requirements (include specific facility requirements with respect to size, equipment, type of activity, etc. and include logistical requirements such as transportation that would require additional coordination):

Proposal Goals (include measurable goals for the requesting institution and its clientele as appropriate, i.e. number of students/classes/sites/partners served, student-to-student ratio, improvement in competency and/or curricular assessment, etc.):

_____   _____
Requester   Date

_____   _____
Approval Level 1   Date

_____   _____
Approval Level 2 (if required)   Date

The Higher Education Forum of Oklahoma
Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) Form
Secondary Schools Version

When an institution <u>responds</u> to a Request for Academic Partnership (RAP) the following items must be completed in their entirety and appropriate signatures must be secured prior to submission to the Higher Ed Forum (HEF). A subcommittee of the HEF meets on a bimonthly basis to review responses and to identify the institutions best suited for the academic partnership. Response contacts will be notified of their status and a representative of the HEF will facilitate the first meeting of the new partners.

Response Contacts (include name, title, affiliation, phone and email):

Response Description (include area/discipline, type of assignment, number of students/volunteers available, hours per week, days per week, preferred time of day, dates of the assignment, associated responsibilities, requisite skills, and who will provide supervision):

Response Facility and Logistical Availability (include specific facility availability with respect to size, equipment, type of activity, etc. and include ability to address logistical requirements such as transportation that would require additional coordination):

Response Goals (include measurable goals for the requesting institution and its clientele as appropriate, i.e. number of students/classes/sites/partners served, student-to-student ratio, improvement in competency and/or curricular assessment, etc.):

_____   _____
Faculty Member   Date

_____   _____
Department Head/Director/Coordinator   Date

_____   _____
Dean (if required)   Date

Problem Solving Learning

Developed by Lee Benson and Ira Harkavy, University of Pennsylvania Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships. Part A is reprinted with permission from Cory Bowman, Netter Center Associate Director with additional Part B section created by Pamela Pittman-Adkins, The Higher Ed Forum of Oklahoma, Executive Director.

Academically Based Service Learning Course Seminars

Part A.

1. What is the problem?
   1.1) What is the subject? (i.e. schools, housing, undergraduate education)
   1.2) What is the present condition?
   1.3) What is the desired future condition that you will help bring about?
   1.4) Who is (given your current thinking) the probable agent?
   1.5) What actions (do you think) the agent could/should take?
   1.6) Who (what) is the catalyst to get the agent to take the actions that you think should be taken?
   1.7) What actions (do you think) the catalyst should take?
2. What do you now know about the problem? Why do you care?
3. What things do you need to know other than you know right now?
4. How are you going to find out what you need to know?
5. Once you find the information you need to find, how will you identify different possible solutions to the problem?
6. How will you go about evaluating different solutions to the problem? What will be your criteria for evaluation?
7. Once you have identified the best solutions, how will you implement them?
8. Once solutions are implemented, how will you monitor them?
9. After you receive feedback, how will you evaluate how well solutions are working?
10. How do you plan to sustain the changes you propose?
11. Be ready to start over.

Part B.
- What beliefs and values are at the core of this work from each partners' vantage point?
- How does the community engagement project align with the academic vision and mission of the university? How does it align with student coursework objectives?
- Will this project be incorporated into components of current or new curriculum?

- Who will document group proceedings? See template available for meeting agenda, decisions, actions, timeframe: http://www.thehigheredforum.org/RAP.html
- How often and where do you meet? Discuss schedules, organizational norms, and expectations for preparing for meeting discussions.
- Who is your facilitative leader? What are his/her proficiencies? What are the group's expectations of this role? What are the facilitative leader's expectations of the group?
- Is everyone present who will be involved in the initial project? Who else should be here?
- Who are the internal/external partners and what are their roles? Define together.
- How will your group resolve differences of opinion?
- What are the protocols and processes for communicating during and between meetings?
- Will you be willing to share this journey as part of a seminar series?
- View and discuss the stages of a healthy project lifecycle available for print or download: http://www.thehigheredforum.org/RAP.html
- What are your plans for utilizing a project management template to keep the scope, resources and timeframe in balance? Will you need a project manager? Discuss overview of project components.
- Define resources available and required and needed (i.e. people, funding). See project management planning template examples: http://www.thehigheredforum.org/RAP.html
- When and how will you embed reflection? Will this reflection be individual, group, or both?
- Will this project bring opportunities for expanded partnerships?
- Are there future implications for student or faculty research publications?
- Does your collaborative group require specific training? How do you know? What is available?
- Who else in your organization/university should be periodically informed of your progress? Who will take on this role of informing?

VITA

Pamela Pittman-Adkins

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: EXPLORING THE CRITICAL DIALOGICAL PROCESS: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL SPACES CREATING CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO MULTI-SYSTEM COLLECTIVE ACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Major Field: Higher Education Leadership and Policy Studies

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Human Relations with a Concentration in Applied Behavior Research at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Experience:

Higher Education Forum of Northeastern Oklahoma; Founder and Chair of Executive Council
Tulsa Community College Adjunct Professor, Intro to Psychology and Formative Research Consultant for Division of Concurrent Enrollment
University-Assisted Community Schools and Academically-Based Service Learning National Partnership Award for Southwest Regional Center, The University of Pennsylvania Netter Center
College of Education Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Social Foundations, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
Tulsa Regional Chamber Partners in Education Steering Committee
University-Assisted Community Schools National Network Leader, Institute for Education Leadership, Washington, D.C.
Oklahoma Campus Compact, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 2013 Community Engagement Professional of the Year
MSCEIT Emotional Intelligent Leadership Training Cert., Yale University