

THE COURAGE TO EXPLORE THE INNER WORK  
OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
in  
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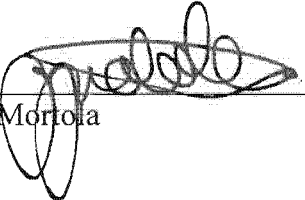
DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The abstract and dissertation of Paul E. Andrews for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership were presented May 2009, and accepted by the examining committee.

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## ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of Paul E. Andrews for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership presented May 2009.

Title: The Courage to Explore the Inner Work of Educational Leaders

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of inner work on four cohorts of educational leadership doctoral students. Specifically, it used a qualitative, phenomenological methodology to interview 22 current and former educational leadership doctoral students who had attended retreats based on the Courage to Lead principles and practices. It sought to discover how these retreats impacted the personal, professional, and academic lives of those students from their perspective.

The data indicated that reflection, relationship-building, and the activities of Clearness Committees, poetry, artwork and socializing emerged as prevalent themes. The data also indicated that the fact that the retreats were perceived to be required was not seen to be a negative aspect of the experience from the perspective of the vast majority of the participants. Members of all four cohorts described ways in which the retreats had positively impacted their personal and professional relationships. They felt a great deal closer to their academic cohort, and many reported having generalized some of the reflective skills they learned at the retreats to other aspects of their lives.

The prevalence of the themes of cohort/relationship-building and social activities required a reframing of this study. A Gestalt notion of Contact better explained the results of the data than just inner work alone. Both concepts are defined and described in this study. Additionally, given the required reframing of the results, fidelity to Courage to Lead principles and practices was also assessed.

Implications of this study extended to directors of educational leadership programs, the Courage and Renewal Community, and educational leadership researchers. Educational leadership programs that value cohort-building, reflection, and other aspects of inner work may benefit from retreats such as those described in this study. The concepts of required participation and team building within the Courage and Renewal framework are implications that will require additional study.

Overall, the participants reported that they valued the retreats and felt they added an important component to their educational leadership doctoral experience.

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Finally, I wish to thank my family. To my parents, Bill and Sharon, thank you for instilling in me the value of education. To Robin and Jaime, thank you for your support, understanding and patience. And to Jenny, thank you for always believing in me and giving me unconditional love and support.

## DEDICATION

To Jenny, whose unconditional love and support got me through.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*After teaching fourth grade for 10 enjoyable years, Sarah Jones decided it was time for a change and began taking the classes necessary to become a school administrator. She completed her initial administrative license in a little more than a year and was hired as an elementary principal the following year. After a few years of on-the-job training as a principal, Sarah realized that she wanted to learn more about school administration and looked into doctoral programs in educational leadership. She enjoyed her job, but felt as though there was more to learn.*

*Sarah applied and was accepted to a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) program in educational leadership at a nearby small liberal arts college. The program required her to spend much of her summer on campus and attend classes throughout the year, all while maintaining her full-time elementary principal position. The program was based on a cohort model so she and the 15 other students who were accepted that year took all the same classes together.*

*One aspect of the program was completely new to her. For one weekend each quarter during the first year of her program, her entire cohort signed up to attend “Courage to Lead” retreats; the retreats constituted a required one-credit course each quarter. These retreats were not about leadership theory, or systems models, or cultural competence, or research methods. In fact, at first Sarah didn’t quite know where they fit in.*

*The cohort went to different sites each quarter to hold their Courage to Lead retreats. The facilitators of the retreats used poetry, small group activities, essays, journaling, and strategies based in the Quaker tradition to help Sarah and her cohort explore who they were as leaders, educators and people. They were asked to reflect, journal, share (if they chose) and spend time in silence. They were, in other words, invited to do “inner work.”*

*Sarah grew up in a moderately religious home. She attended church with her parents most Sundays until she went off to college.*

*While her church attendance waned through college and young adulthood, she still described herself as a “spiritual” person. As she got older and entered the workforce, Sarah struggled with how to connect her spiritual and professional lives. Given that she had chosen public education as her career, Sarah felt that she had to keep these two important aspects of her life as separate as possible. Through that separation, however, Sarah always felt something was missing.*

*Sarah received her doctorate in a little more than 3 years after starting her program. In retrospect, she thought about that first year more than any other. When she reflected on her doctoral program, she wondered what role Courage to Lead played in her professional life. Had she bridged that separation that she had felt between her professional and spiritual lives? Was she more reflective or attentive to her inner work than she would have been without it? Was she more centered or grounded or effective? And should graduate programs in educational leadership even be in the business of exploring school leaders’ “inner lives?” She wondered.*

This dissertation describes a research study that examined the inner work of educational leadership doctoral students who attended Courage to Lead (CTL) retreats as part of their course of study. It looks at the impact of this work on the personal, professional and academic lives of these leaders. This first chapter introduces the study.

### Background of the Study

Sarah’s story about how she came to apply to a doctoral program in educational leadership is not atypical. She taught, she earned her administrative license, she worked as an administrator for a few years and then she applied to a doctoral program. What may be more unique to Sarah’s experience are the inclusion of the CTL retreats and the expectation of her doctoral program that she explore inner work. There has not been a great deal of research looking at the impact or value of this

work within a doctoral program or indeed in any aspect of the lives of educational leaders.

For a number of years, research in leadership has stressed the importance of not only the content that leaders need to know to do their jobs, but also the examination of the inner work of those leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2006) wrote that all serious leadership starts from within. “Authentic leadership does not come from the outside in. It comes from the inside out...” (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 92). Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989) found that, “outstanding leaders have sources of inner direction” (p. 100), and Evans (1996) wrote that “authentic leaders build their practice outward from their core commitments rather than inward from a management text” (p. 296). As leaders look at all of the demands of their jobs, they must look within to discover how best to lead.

In the more specialized field of educational leadership, many researchers have also stressed the importance of values, character and inner reflection. Sergiovanni (2001) asserted that “character is the defining characteristic of authentic leadership” (p. 17). DuFour (2004) argued that educational leaders who have the best results connect with people’s hopes. Hopes are based on success, belonging, and a belief that we can make a difference. A successful school leader creates a culture of success, collaboration and moral purpose. Further, Fullan (2001) referred not only to the “moral purpose” of leadership in an organization, but also to the requirement that “although moral purpose is natural, it will flourish only if leaders cultivate it” (pp. 13-29). In other words, in order to ensure that educational leaders attend to

values, character and reflection, this inner work must be explored, supported and nurtured in those very same educational leaders so that they can then foster it in others.

Given that educational leadership is important, and given that a number of educational philosophers and writers have stressed that strong leadership has to come from inside, how does that happen? This study looks at whether CTL retreats, in the form of three 1-credit courses within an educational leadership doctoral program, are one way that inner work can be explored. And if inner work does occur through these retreats, the study also looks at what ways they help to literally transform those educational leaders in their personal, professional and academic lives.

#### Definition and Role of Inner Work

For the purpose of this dissertation, the definition of inner work will draw upon Christa Metzger's research and Parker Palmer's writing. In her earlier work, Metzger (2003) found that research participants defined what she called "inner focus" with terms such as a "sense of inner peace," "heart," "centered and focused," and "having meaning in life" (p. 666). While exploring what she referred to as "self/inner development," "personal development" and "personal growth," Metzger (2006) found six themes that surfaced from her research. Balance, self-actualization, personal improvement, values, inner focus and relationships were all related to self/inner development (Metzger, 2006, pp. 15-16). Palmer (2004) defined inner work with terms such as "values, faith...heart, spirit, true self, soul or place-beyond-all-naming" (p. 40). Inner work, therefore, is any activity (whether alone or with others) that causes

an individual to discover, explore or feel connected to his or her sense of values, faith, meaning, spirit or soul.

While some educational leadership programs have incorporated some segments of inner work into their curricula (e.g., Beck, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1992), there have been no studies looking at how educational leadership programs incorporate this larger notion of inner work. Nor have there been studies exploring how CTL retreats specifically impact doctoral students in these programs.

The Educational Leadership doctoral program at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon requires that students register in their first year for three classes entitled “Courage in Leadership,” which are a series of retreats based on the CTL model. As noted in Sarah’s story, CTL is not about any specific educational leadership theory, content, or research methodology; it is more of an opportunity and invitation for students to explore who they really are and how that impacts their work as leaders. This dissertation explores the impact of CTL retreats on the academic, personal and professional lives of educational leadership doctoral students.

### CTL

For more than 10 years, many educators across the United States have participated in “Circles of Trust” or “Courage” retreats (Palmer, 2004), based on Palmer’s (1998) book *The Courage to Teach*. In this approach, a group of educators gather for 3-day retreats every academic quarter for 1 or 2 years to explore the inner work of educators. The focus of the retreats is on professional development through inner reflection (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

The idea for these retreats started in 1991, when the Fetzer Institute invited Parker Palmer to work with them to create a program for K-12 public school educators that was different from typical teacher trainings (Palmer, 2007). The outcome of their work was a retreat series that invited teachers to renew and deepen their inner sense of purpose and to explore what is truly important in their work (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Called “The Courage to Teach,” Palmer piloted the series with a group of Michigan teachers between 1994 and 1996. It was replicated in four locations around the country between 1996 and 1998, and today there are nearly 150 facilitators in 50 cities across 30 states (Palmer, 2007).

One of the central tenets of *The Courage to Teach* is that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; it comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher (Palmer, 1998). Almost all other preservice and inservice trainings that teachers receive focus on what and how teachers teach (i.e., curriculum and instruction). Occasionally, teachers will be asked to dive deeper and ask why they teach. Seldom, however, are teachers asked the “who” question of teaching: who is the self that teaches? The focus of “Courage work” is to leave the “what,” “how” and even “why” questions to others, but instead to explore what Palmer (1998) has called “the heart of a teacher.”

Another main tenet of Courage work focuses on the need of educators to embrace opposites and paradoxes rather than separating themselves and their beliefs from the larger world (Livsey & Palmer, 1999). Toward that end, Palmer (2004) wrote the book *A Hidden Wholeness*, which described the search for lives that are consistent

with our core values, beliefs and truths. In addition to describing the philosophy behind this tenet, *A Hidden Wholeness* outlined strategies to achieve an undivided life through Courage retreats. The book described Circles of Trust that are formed at Courage retreats, and it provided readers with a description of the composition and activities of courage retreats.

Courage participants use personal stories, poetry, reflections on teaching practice, literature, and various wisdom traditions to reconnect to the roots of their teaching (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Jackson and Jackson (2002) described a typical Courage to Teach session as follows:

Twenty-five teachers and administrators sit in a circle, giving their full attention as an elementary teacher speaks passionately, and poignantly, about her love for her students and her commitment to reach each and every one of them. She goes on to tearfully describe the personal toll this is taking on her own life – creeping guilt at not having enough time or emotional energy to give to her own family, bone-deep exhaustion, nonstop worrying about the safety of some of her students, the weariness of facing an always burgeoning mountain of papers and projects to grade, a sense of increasing isolation from friends and colleagues because there is simply no more to give. The listeners sit quietly, respectfully, as she finishes, each reflecting on their own version of their story...

And around the circle it goes – each person relating stories and examples of how their complex journey as teachers and leaders has unfolded since the last time they were together a few months ago. (pp. 283-284)

In 1998, as Courage to Teach grew larger and more complex, the program was moved outside of direct supervision of the Fetzer Institute and the Center for Teacher Formation was established. In 2004, the Center changed its status from a program arm of the Fetzer Institute to a free-standing 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization with its own board of trustees (Palmer, 2007). One of the main purposes of the Center



was to train facilitators so that they could respond to the growing request for more retreats across the country.

As retreats with K-12 educators became more widely known, people in other professions began to ask why they too could not “reconnect who they are with what they do” through Courage work (Palmer, 2007). Retreats just for school administrators were formed, called CTL. Groups of physicians, lawyers, clergy, philanthropists and nonprofit leaders requested Courage retreats and cross-professional Circles of Trust retreats were formed (Smith, 2008). The Center for Teacher Formation quickly realized that its mission could become broader than serving only public school teachers and administrators. Due to the expanding reach of its work, the Center for Teacher Formation changed to the Center for Courage and Renewal in 2005 (Palmer, 2007).

### Problem Statement

Creswell (2007) described the “problem statement” in a dissertation proposal as the “need for the study” (p. 102). There are a number of reasons that this study is needed.

First, we simply do not know a great deal about the inner work of educational leaders. While there have been studies done on the inner work of different educational leaders (e.g., Metzger, 2003, 2008; Sheff Kohn, 1995), there is still much more to learn. If effective leadership really does require leaders to look within, we need to know more about how that is done effectively. We need to better understand how

educational leaders discover, explore or feel connected to their sense of values, faith, meaning, spirit or soul.

Second, we do not know much about the impact of specific programs such as CTL retreats on educational leaders, particularly those in doctoral programs. While there have been a handful of studies looking at related topics (Intrator & Scribner, 2000; Poutiatine 2005a, 2005b; Smith, 2008), there has been only one study looking specifically at CTL (Henderson, 2007). CTL itself has existed for fewer than 10 years (Palmer, 2007), so the research is still young and incomplete. Additionally, none of the research has looked at the role Courage work can play within higher education programs, and especially at educational leadership doctoral programs.

Third, inner work (through CTL) is currently required at Lewis and Clark College's educational leadership doctoral program. While this is perhaps a provincial need for the study, the issue as to whether or not CTL and inner work have any impact on students speaks to whether it is an appropriate part of the course of study. There is no research on how the three credits that make up Courage in Leadership impact the personal, professional or academic lives of the students who participate. The results of this aspect of the study may also lead to larger implications. If the data show that there is no impact on the students, then Lewis and Clark and other colleges and universities that use similar programs may want to re-evaluate their appropriateness. Conversely, if the data show that CTL and inner work have a significant impact, and we know the importance of inner work in leadership, it may beg the question why other educational

leadership programs are not incorporating something similar into their courses of study.

Finally, authors who support or promote inner work also speak of it needing to be voluntary (e.g., Palmer, 2004). While there may be ways that an individual student may be able to get around attending Courage in Leadership classes at Lewis and Clark College, the fact that it is part of the course of study implies that it is not voluntary. Does the fact that some students do not know exactly what they're getting into (as was the case for Sarah), and they are getting a credit for attending have any impact on the experience? There is no research exploring this interesting aspect of inner work.

#### Purpose of the Study

This study explores the inner work of educational leaders. More specifically, it explores the experience, meaning and impact of CTL retreats on educational leaders who are also current or former Ed.D. students at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.

Using a qualitative, phenomenological design, this study examines the impact of CTL retreats on 22 educational leadership doctoral students in four different cohorts at Lewis and Clark College. It asks participants to describe their experience with CTL. It uses interview data to look at whether some doctoral students found the retreats to be more valuable than others. The study researches differences in the application of CTL and inner work strategies and skills in the educational leaders' professional and personal lives. Finally, it looks at the participants' perceptions of how CTL meshes with their overall doctoral program.

### Significance of the Study

It is important for research to explore what factors contribute to effective educational leadership because educational leaders have a significant impact on student learning and on school culture. Algozzine, Ysseldyke, and Campbell (1994) found that educational leadership ranked as the primary variable associated with effective schools. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) further found that leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors impacting student achievement. Given that educational leaders have an important role to play in student learning and school environment, the initial and ongoing training that those leaders receive is critical. This study is significant because it seeks to further define characteristics and strategies that contribute to effective educational leadership.

Since the beginning of educational administration and leadership programs in higher education more than a century ago, there has been a lack of agreement on what those programs should look like (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). In the past 20 years, that lack of agreement has exploded into a cacophony of criticism about graduate educational leadership programs (e.g., Levine, 2005). Critics focused on the recruitment, curriculum, pedagogy and outcome of these programs (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002). There is a need to explore and fully justify what these programs should include as a part of their course of study, and how they should be taught. As more programs look at the possibility of including inner work in their curriculum, there needs to be more research on the impact and purpose of that work. Baker, Orr, and Young (2007) studied current trends in graduate programs in educational

leadership and concluded that there is a need for additional research focused on what the components are for “balanced, relevant, and rigorous curricula” (p. 308).

This dissertation is also significant because it will advance knowledge in the field of educational leadership by better understanding how educational leaders access and use inner work as a part of their daily lives. Metzger (2003) opened a fascinating new door when she began exploring the inner development of educational leaders, but that door is not yet all the way open. If indeed authentic leadership comes from within (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989; Evans, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2006), then anything the field can learn about how to open that door even wider will help improve educational leadership.

Henderson (2007) noted that there has been a call for studies related to the inner work of educational leaders, but “to date there is no empirical evidence in the literature addressing these ideas especially from the perspective of leaders” (p. 15). In his own dissertation, Henderson cited a number of implications for additional research. Specifically, he stated that additional research could be done on the sort of person who is drawn to this inner work. He noted that “examination of what prompted people to attend retreats might also reveal important understandings about the impact of the program” (p. 158). He also wrote that the focus of his study:

was not on the CTL experience at all, but rather an analysis of the impact of the inner lives of these leaders on their day-to-day leadership practice since having attended the retreat series. Since the focus of the study was not the CTL program, little was discerned from the interviews as to what prompted these leaders to attend the retreats. (p. 106)

Metzger (2003) also noted that there is a lack of research on the topic of inner work in the preparation of educational leaders. Her own research looking at the inner lives of 128 superintendents is one of the few studies done on this topic. She found that:

the lack of research related to factors surrounding the concept of self/inner development may be due to a fear that one may be approaching a forbidden realm that gets too close to areas one is not supposed to talk about in governmental institutions – matters of soul, spirit, and the personal/inner dimensions of living. (p. 658)

Metzger (2003) offered some areas for additional study as well. She suggested that more research be done on preparation programs and professional development activities to address the need that educational leaders have to explore their inner lives. She felt that there is more work to be done on the role that preservice and inservice programs can provide to help school administrators enhance their inner development.

Metzger (2003) also proposed that more research could be done comparing the value of being with others versus time spent on self/inner development in silence or solitude. CTL specifically focuses on inner work with others and lends itself to addressing this question.

Inner work is critical for educational leaders. Given that there are graduate level programs that require educational leaders to explore their inner lives (such as CTL), and given CTL itself states that participation should be completely voluntary, the problem that this dissertation explores is ripe for review. Higher education is too expensive and the information that school leaders need to know is too critical for those

who develop graduate programs not to base their coursework on research. This dissertation addresses these important questions.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to create a foundation for this study, it is important to review the theoretical and empirical literature related to it. Given that the focus of this dissertation is on the inner work of educational leaders who are also doctoral students, there are a number of topics that necessitate review. This chapter begins with the subject of adult learners in order to provide a context for understanding how the participants in the study might engage in inner work through CTL retreats. This section looks at Knowles' (1968) pioneering work that he named "andragogy" and then expands into Transformational Learning Theory of adult learning.

All of the participants in this study are current or recent doctoral students, so the second part of this chapter begins with a history of educational leadership programs' curricula and pedagogy. It then explores recent critiques of those administration programs. A review of the literature specifically on educational doctoral programs follows, particularly related to the Ed.D. degree. The final part of this section looks at current and proposed standards for educational leadership programs.

The third section of this chapter explores a different model for looking at educational leadership preparation. It introduces Daresh and Playko's (1992) tridimensional model of administrator preparation which includes the concept of



formation. Formation is explored both as a practical application for educational leaders, and from a more theoretical perspective.

Finally, the chapter concludes by describing the concept of inner work. The term is defined and pioneering research around the role of inner work in the lives of school superintendents and other school leaders is described. The section then explores the role spirituality and reflection play as well. All of those topics are tied together by examining the connection between inner work and professional and personal development. The chapter ends by describing the CTL work and the limited research related to it.

#### Adult Learners

All of the participants in this study are adult learners. Specifically, they are existing or future educational leaders who are (or recently were) enrolled in a doctoral program. For that reason, much of the theoretical underpinnings of the study are based on the ways in which adults learn, form new knowledge and transform what they already know. A review of relevant adult learning theories and models follows.

#### *Andragogy*

In 1968, Knowles introduced the world to a new word and a new concept, called andragogy. He described andragogy as a “new label and a new technology” (Knowles, 1968. p. 351), and he set out to distinguish the way adults learn from traditional pedagogy. Knowles (1970) noted that “pedagogy” is taken from the Greek stem *paid-* (meaning child) and *agogos* (meaning “leading”) to be defined as the art and science of teaching *children*. The new term, andragogy is based “on the Greek

word *aner* (with the stem *andr-*), meaning ‘man.’ Andragogy is, therefore, the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1970, p. 38).

Knowles (1980) developed a number of assumptions about learning as individuals mature to adulthood. These assumptions formed the basis of his concept of andragogy. His assumptions about adult learners included that:

1. Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being;
2. They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning;
3. Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and
4. Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness. (Knowles, 1980, pp. 44-45)

In later writings, Knowles (Knowles & Associates, 1984) added fifth and sixth assumptions. Specifically, he noted that the most powerful motivation is internal rather than external in adults (Knowles & Associates, 1984, p. 12). He concluded that adults need to know why they need to know something (Knowles, 1984).

The concept of andragogy came at a time when a number of educators were trying to distinguish the field of adult education as separate from other areas of education. Knowles’s ideas stimulated a great deal of debate, controversy and critical analysis as to whether andragogy really was a new concept, whether the assumptions made by Knowles could be proved empirically, whether children and adults really

learned differently, and especially whether andragogy could be considered an actual “theory” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 85).

Brookfield (1986, pp. 98-99) argued that three of Knowles’s assumptions were problematic when looking at practical application. He considered the first assumption about self-direction to be more of a desired outcome than a given condition. The third and fourth assumptions (relating learning to particular social roles and focusing on immediate application) could lead to “a technological interpretation of learning that is highly reductionist...to equate the sum total of adult learning with instrumental learning; that is, learning how to perform at an improved level of competence in some predefined skill domain” (p. 99). Merriam et al. (2007) questioned whether Knowles second assumption should also be left unchallenged. They argued that “the fact that adults have lived longer than children and thus have a quantity of experience greater than that of children does not necessarily translate into quality experience that can become a resource for learning” (p. 86).

Another point of contention had to do with the basic assumption that andragogy only applied to adults. Merriam (2001a) noted that some adults are very dependent upon structure and external motivation in order to learn whereas some children are self-directed, internally motivated and independent learners. Between Knowles’s (1970, 1980) first and second editions of his classic book on andragogy, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, he moved from an andragogy *versus* pedagogy perspective to representing them on a continuum from teacher-directed to student-directed learning. He acknowledged that either approach could be appropriate

for both children and adults depending on the situation (Merriam, 2001a). The very basis of andragogy as a foundational adult learning concept, therefore, had been changed.

Empirical studies on andragogy have been elusive. Rachal (2002) looked at 18 research studies that attempted to assess andragogical versus pedagogical instructional methods, and found their outcomes difficult to compare and contrast. Due to the variation of methodology and research strategies, Rachal proposed seven standards for designing future studies on andragogy. Even with these suggested standards, however, Rachal noted that it “may well be that researchers examining the effectiveness of andragogy will perpetually be stymied by its fluidity, even its amoeba-like formlessness” (p. 224). Merriam et al. (2007) asked if “perhaps the nature of andragogy, with its assumptions for adult learner-focused practice, makes it particularly difficult to validate directly” (p. 91).

Some of the more recent criticisms of andragogy concerned its lack of attention to the context in which learning occurs. Merriam (2001a) noted that “based in humanistic psychology, Knowles's version of andragogy presents the individual learner as one who is autonomous, free, and growth-oriented” (p. 7). Critical theorists, among others, have noted that Knowles appears to have ignored that people are socially situated and products of the cultural context of their times (Merriam et al., 2007). Studies that looked at members of various ethnic groups through the filter of andragogy (e.g., Lee, 2003) found that andragogy's overgeneralization of the experiences of all adult learners without addressing culture and context served to

further marginalize those who were not of the dominant culture. Knowles focused so much on the individual's learning that andragogy lost site of the world in which the learner lives.

The issue of whether andragogy should be called a theory of adult learning has been argued almost since the concept was first published. Davenport and Davenport (1985) noted that andragogy had been classified as a "theory of adult education, theory of adult learning, theory of technology of adult learning, method of adult education, technique of adult education, and a set of assumptions" (p. 157). Merriam (2001b) described an international discussion that has been taking place to determine whether andragogy is "a science, a discipline, or a technology" (p. 94). Merriam et al. (2007) noted that Knowles (1989) himself may have put this issue to rest in his autobiographical work, *The making of an Adult Educator*. In that book, Knowles wrote that he "prefers to think of [andragogy] as a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory" (p. 112).

Merriam (2001a) argued that even though there has been a great deal of criticism about andragogy, it has become "so much a part of adult education's identity, and [has] had such an impact on practice, that relegating [andragogy] to the status of historical artifact is inconceivable" (p. 11). She considers it one of the "pillars" of adult learning theory.

For the purpose of this study, andragogy has provided a broad lens that asks the researcher to consider adult learners differently. The assumption that adults may be more self-directed, internally motivated and experienced sets the stage for exploring

not only who adults are as learners, but how it is they change as a result of their learning.

### *Transformational Learning*

Whereas andragogy focused on the characteristics of certain types of learners, other models and theoretical frameworks have centered on changes in consciousness of the learner. Transformational Learning Theory (also referred interchangeably in the literature as *Transformative* or *Transformation Theory*) looks at adult learning not as an additive process, but as one in which the learner is transformed. The foundational theoretical construct of this dissertation is based on Transformational Learning Theory.

Mezirow (2000a), who developed a psychocritical approach to Transformational Learning Theory, argued that there are no permanent truths, definitive ways of knowing, or static human circumstances. For these reasons, “the human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings” (p. 3). Context cannot be taken out of the equation when looking at how adults learn; we make meaning when we know the conditions of a given idea or thought. “Interpretations and opinions that may have worked for us as children often do not as adults” (p. 4). Transformational Learning Theory attempts to explain the process of formulating dependable beliefs about adult experiences, assessing the contexts of those experiences, understanding their meaning, and basing decisions on the resulting awareness (Mezirow, 2000a).

Mezirow (2000b) argued that the early influences of this theory were varied. Thomas Kuhn's use of *paradigm* in the development of scientific thought, and Paulo Freire's description of conscientization (which is considered by Taylor (2005) to be a separate sociocultural definition of Transformation Theory) are foundational to Mezirow's theory. They, along with the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory, which broke down hegemonic ideology, created an environment from which Transformational Learning Theory grew.

In *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Mezirow (1991) first laid out the theory in detail. He wrote, "transformational learning involves reflectively transforming beliefs, attitudes, opinion, and emotional reactions that constitute our meaning schemes" (p. 223). He asserted that transformation is not just about adults learning new things. The goal is to "permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14) and to then act on those perspectives. O'Sullivan (2002) defined transformational learning as "a deep structural shift in basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world" (p. 11). It is a transformation in perspective, frame of reference, personal paradigm and habit of mind which all lead to a transformative point of view. It is, in short, a reordering of basic assumptions. Brookfield (2000) called true transformational learning an "epiphanic, or apocalyptic, cognitive event" (p. 139).

Mezirow (1991) believed that adult learning occurs in four basic ways. First, one can elaborate on existing frames of reference. Whereas Knowles looked at adult

learning experiences in general terms, Mezirow (2000a) more specifically defined “frame of reference” as a “‘meaning perspective,’ the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions” (p. 16). Frame of reference provides context for meaning using affective and cognitive means. Second, one can learn a new frame reference completely. Third, one can transform “habits of the mind.” Habit of mind is defined as a set of broad, generalized assumptions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of an experience (Mezirow, 2000a, p. 17). Varieties of habits of mind include sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological and aesthetic. Having a conservative or liberal orientation reflects habits of mind. Finally, one can transform one’s point of view. A habit of mind becomes expressed as a point of view. Point of view “comprises clusters of meaning schemes – sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and judgments – that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects, and attribute causality” (Mezirow, 2000a, p. 18). They arbitrarily determine what and how we see something and help determine a course of action that we tend to follow.

Mezirow (2000a) further contended that the two central elements of transformative learning are objective reframing and subjective reframing. Objective reframing involves critical reflection on others’ assumptions when experienced through a narrative or in task-oriented problem solving. Subjective reframing involves critical self-reflection of one’s own assumption about a narrative, system, organization, feelings or relationships, or personal epistemology (Mezirow, 2000a).



The overall purpose of adult learning, according to Mezirow, is to “realize one’s agency through increasingly expanding awareness and critical reflection. The function of adult educators becomes to assist this development by helping learners reflect critically on their own and others’ assumptions” (Brookfield, 2000, p. 142).

The purpose of adult education then can be seen as the assistance of learners who are old enough to be held accountable for acquiring or increasing their understanding, skills and dispositions (Mezirow, 2000a). Critical reflection, reflective discourse, experience, validation and action make up the process of transforming adult knowledge. This transformation describes a significant change in how we know. The broader purpose of adult education, according to Mezirow (2000a) is to “help adults realize their potential for becoming more liberated, socially responsible, and autonomous learners – that is, to make more informed choices by becoming more critically reflective” (p. 30).

Brookfield (2000) described in detail the concept of critical reflection in relation to transformative learning. He spent a great deal of time differentiating between reflection and “critical reflection.” Brookfield argued that the word *critical*, based in the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory, is sacred. He wrote:

For something to count as an example of critical learning, critical analysis, or critical reflection, I believe that the persons concerned must engage in some sort of power analysis of the situation or context in which the learning is happening. (p. 126)

Further, Brookfield (2000) noted that people must try to determine which assumptions that they hold are destroying their own sense of well-being and serving

only the interests of others; which is another way of describing hegemonic assumptions. Ideologies, or values and beliefs that appear self-evident and morally desirable, need to be critically challenged. Brookfield argued that an examination of one's ideologies is really an examination of social constructs shaped by one's cultural group and social class. He wrote that critical reflection focuses on "making explicit and analyzing that which was previously implicit and uncritically accepted" (p. 131).

### *Critique of Transformational Learning Theory*

Mezirow (1991) acknowledged that not all learning is transformative. He wrote, "we can learn simply by adding knowledge to our meaning schemes or learning new meaning schemes...and it can be a crucially important experience for the learner" (p. 223).

Another constraint of Transformational Learning Theory is that it is derived from "conditions associated with democratic societies and with the development of adult education as a vocation in Western Europe and North America, a liberal tradition that depends ultimately on faith of the informed, free human choice and social justice" (Mezirow, 2000b, p. xiv). Other critics have noted that transformative learning does not take the greater context of society into account when looking at adult learning; it focuses too much just on the internal transformational change within the learner (e.g., Brooks, 2000; Clark & Wilson, 1991). Still another critique of the theory is that it does not automatically demand consequent social action. While action may indeed be the final component of the transformational learning process, for those who see the goal of

adult education as social action, Mezirow's theory is too egocentric (Brookfield, 2000; Cunningham, 1992; Newman, 1994; Taylor, 1997).

In the approximately 25 years that Transformational Learning Theory has been studied, there have been two important reviews of the literature. In 1998, Taylor's (2000) review found a supportive but critical picture of Transformational Learning Theory. It was found to be effective at explaining how adult learners make meaning, and it stressed the essential requirement of critical reflection and many of the phases of the transformative process. On the less conclusive side, it also was found that additional research needed to be done on: the role of context; the different nature of catalysts in transformational learning; the role of other ways of knowing; and the importance of relationships. The greatest criticism was that there had been little research into how to foster transformative learning, and how it could reasonably be applied as a guide for teachers of adult learners.

In 2007, Taylor published an updated review of the literature on Transformational Learning Theory. He found 41 peer-reviewed journal articles that addressed either transformative learning or related topics that were similar enough to speak to Transformational Learning Theory. In the intervening years between the first and second reviews, Taylor found that there had been less research done about the possibility or the process of transformative learning within a particular context or as the result of a certain life event and that there had been more research concerning the nature of a particular learning experience and how it served to inform our general understanding of transformative learning. There was more research looking at the

essential components of transformational learning such as critical reflection and characteristics of relationships. There also was a growing body of research from outside of the US; transformative learning has become international (Taylor, 2007).

Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning requires the adult skill of being able to reflect critically on one's thoughts and assumptions. It also accounts for the adult characteristics of the importance of life experiences and developmental concerns unique to adulthood. Mezirow's theory takes into account notions of context, learner and process. While it does not discount social change as an outcome, its emphasis is on personal psychological change. While there still are questions as to how comprehensive the theory is (Merriam et al., 2007, pp. 434-435), it is a respected and well-researched model and theoretical framework from which further research can be built.

#### Educational Leadership Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Standards

This chapter now moves from the theoretical questions about the adult learner and leader into the more practical question of what graduate educational leadership programs should look like. It will explore the history of these programs, and specifically how Ed.D. programs are different from (and similar to) Ph.D. programs in education. A critique of administrative programs follows, and this section concludes by describing professional standards for educational leadership programs. These topics set the stage for the next section of the chapter which presents a different model of educational leadership programs.

*The History of Educational Leadership Programs*

The formal administration of public schools in the United States is a little more than a century old, which is just a little more than half the age of common schools themselves (Daresh & Playko, 1991). During that time, a long tradition of what administrators should know, and consequently, what they should be taught has not been well developed. Over the years, there have been trends in the instruction of school administrators that have reflected the attitudes of the times and the philosophies of those in power. A brief history of how educational administration training programs came to be is instructive to understand how we arrived at the current state of those programs today.

In the 19th century, schools were largely rural, “unbureaucratized and unprofessionalized” (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 5). School leaders at the time were not trained and often did not devote their careers to education, but saw it more as one of several causes and occupations that they engaged in. It was not until almost the turn of the century that school leadership moved from a moral crusade to a professional endeavor (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

From 1890 to 1910, there were a handful of courses in administration at colleges around the country. They began to evolve into graduate degree programs during this period in response to the enormous expansion of the public schools, especially the success of the high school (Powell, 1976). Yet, there were strong differences emerging about what form educational administration programs should take. James Earl Russell, dean of Teachers College, for example, advocated a

practitioner-based program for experienced school administrators who would attend part-time and study a curriculum focusing on the practical aspects of their jobs. However, the dean of Harvard's education school, Henry Holmes, called for a preparation model like those of law and medical schools (Powell, 1976). Levine (2005) noted that Holmes "advocated a master's program with an academic curriculum that would educate very able, young students without experience who would attend full-time for two years" (p. 16). The deans could not agree on a single model, which set the stage for a century without a clear consensus of what the purpose and goals of educational administration programs should be.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the predominant educational administration philosophy stressed a scientific methodology (Daresh & Playko, 1991). This trend advocated a top-down approach to administration based on the "right way" of doing things. It was based on a bureaucratic structure to limit the span of decision-making; it was the right way because it was perceived to minimize error. From the perspective of preservice training, future administrators were told how to manage schools from those who already possessed the scientific facts. The first state licensing requirements came during this time right after World War I (Levine, 2005). Induction or inservice programs were generally not necessary because it was assumed that those in administrative positions had already learned all of the facts in their preservice programs. What little inservice training occurred was to provide assistance to existing managers in more efficient ways of carrying out their duties (Daresh & Playko, 1991).

In the mid-twentieth century, there was movement toward more of a human relations trend in school administrative pedagogy (Daresh & Playko, 1992, p. 7). The focus of this period was on helping future administrators develop interpersonal skills so that they could help to ensure that their staff was happy, and therefore, more productive. The beginning of the civil rights and other social justice movements at this time also forced school administrators to look at what Tyack and Hansot (1982) referred to as the “dream deferred”<sup>1</sup> (p. 213). Many of the “old boy” networks through which superintendents simply looked to their old professors to send over their latest administrative graduates began to dissolve at a time when women and people of color were insisting on being considered for administrative leadership positions (Levine, 2005). Inservice and preservice efforts focused much less on content and scientific measurements, and more on how to improve the feel and emotional well-being of the school as an organization (Daresh & Playko, 1991).

By the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st centuries, there was a new focus on human resource development and organizational effectiveness (Daresh & Playko, 1991). This period was characterized by vocal dissatisfaction with the public schools, and kicked off the school reform movement where the focus moved primarily to student outcomes (Levine, 2005, p. 17). As a result, educational administration programs also had to adjust their focus and become more responsive to public criticism.

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<sup>1</sup> Tyack and Hansot (1982) borrowed the term “dream deferred” from Langston Hughes’s poem of the same name.

*Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs*

While the previous section dealt primarily with the preservice training of school administrators and educational leaders, this section narrows that focus to educational leadership doctoral programs, and more specifically to Ed.D. programs. The participants in this dissertation's study are members of four cohorts of Ed.D. students at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Some of the participants are not currently school administrators, but most are. This section examines doctoral programs in educational leadership to be able to better examine (later in this chapter) the role that inner work can play within them.

Unlike other disciplines, the field of education uses the doctorate both to prepare scholars and to prepare the highest level of educational leaders (McClintock, 2005). While other fields may use doctoral degrees for credentialing purposes, only K-12 education formally applies the doctorate to a management or leadership role. Other professional doctorates, such as the MD or JD, were designed for highly specialized practitioners (Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). In contrast, most other public and private-sector leadership positions typically require a master's degree in business or public administration (Baker et al., 2007).

Also unlike doctoral students in the arts and sciences or engineering, doctoral students in education are older and typically have had careers before pursuing their doctorate. Shulman et al. (2006) reported that the median age when educational leadership students receive their doctorate is over 43. Given that most of these older



students continue to work while in doctoral programs, a majority of them attend classes evenings and weekends (Shulman et al., 2006).

Education is one of the few disciplines that has a history of providing two terminal degrees – the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. This fact speaks to the difficulty the field has had in finding a happy medium between research and practice in education (Shulman et al., 2006). In theory, these two degrees are expected to serve overlapping, yet distinct purposes. The Ed.D. was designed to prepare students for administrative and managerial leadership in education and to help them use existing knowledge to solve educational problems. The Ph.D., on the other hand, was assumed to be a traditional terminal academic degree that prepared university faculty, researchers and scholars in education in a more theoretical approach, similar to those in other academic professions (Shulman et al., 2006).

In reality, the difference between the Ed.D. and the Ph.D. in education is far from clear. The required performance experiences and expectations of each of these degrees is remarkably similar (Anderson, 1983; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2005). Rather than having two separate degrees that serve distinct functions within a given discipline (such as the medically-related degrees of M.D. and the Ph.D. in biomedical sciences), education has “a blurring of boundaries, resulting in the danger that we achieve rigorous preparation neither for practice nor for research” (Shulman et al., 2006, p. 26). The Ph.D. in education has a difficult time keeping research as its central purpose and the Ed.D. often underemphasizes the applied side of its purpose and becomes a watered-down Ph.D. or “Ph.D.-Lite” (Shulman et al., 2006, p. 27). Further

confounding the difference between the two is the fact that prestigious educational leadership programs, such as the Harvard Graduate School of Education does not offer a Ph.D., but offers an Ed.D. with the primary mission to prepare “students to assume roles as university faculty members, senior-level educational leaders, policy makers, and researchers” (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2008, p. 1).

One proposal for better clarifying the role of the doctorate in education has come from The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID). In 2001, the Carnegie Foundation launched the 5-year CID to attempt to align the purpose and practice of doctoral education in six disciplines, including education (Golde, 2006). Participating institutions of higher learning received feedback, support, networking, conferences and facilitation in order to effectively evaluate their doctoral programs. The result of the work of the Initiative has been to help universities to develop a clear distinction between Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs of study. At the University of Southern California (USC), for example, the number of new Ph.D. students was cut from 70 per year to 6 in 2004 as a result of working with CID (Shulman et al., 2006). Ph.D. students now receive 4 years of full funding and the focus of their program is on developing future faculty for major research universities. USC’s new Ed.D. program, on the other hand, is a 3-year cohort-based program that is completely based on practice (Shulman et al., 2006).

Researchers working with the CID have argued that the Ph.D. needs to be retooled and the Ed.D. needs to be reconceptualized (Shulman et al., 2006). The Ph.D. has to return to its roots as a terminal research-based degree that turns out strong

scholars who will become the researchers at major research facilities, institutions and universities of the future. Shulman et al. (2006) argued that the Ed.D. however, should be completely changed into something closer to the practitioner M.D. degree. They proposed morphing the Ed.D. into a new Professional Practice Doctorate (or P.P.D). Levine (2005) made the case for changing the Ed.D. into a new professional master's degree, parallel in many ways to the MBA. No matter what the title or even the level of degree, the clear focus of all of these initiatives is to bring what we now know as the Ed.D. back to its foundation as a professional practitioner's applied degree.

There are a number of proposed components to such a modified Ed.D. program. Shulman et al. (2006) argued that it would need to be an "extremely demanding, rigorous, respectable, high-level academic experience that prepares students for service as leading practitioners in the field of education" (p. 29). Berliner (2006) proposed that educational doctoral programs should take the following steps: rethink methods courses; consider the rationale for presenting big ideas; introduce doctoral students to the sites where students live and learn; and design a research internship in a complex environment. Many of these proposals described dropping the requirement for a dissertation, just as is true for the M.D. Shulman et al. argued that such a degree would be "prestigious, *sans* dissertation, but with substantive professional assessments at the end" (p. 29). Unlike the M.D., however, a modified Ed.D. would likely continue to be earned by those later in their career who have already engaged in professional practice.

Whether reconceived into a differently-named degree, or simply retooled, the Ed.D. has to be more clearly defined in order to differentiate it from the Ph.D. Shulman et al. (2006) argued that Ed.D.s have to learn how to conduct applied research and critically read research that has serious grounding in scholarship. Shulman et al. went on to note that in order to clearly distinguish the Ed.D. from the Ph.D., the former has to be seen as a “doctorate of practice” (p. 30). Without that clearly defined and operationalized distinction, confusion between the two degrees will continue to exist.

All of the proposed changes in educational leadership programs in general and doctoral programs in particular have been fueled by dissatisfaction with the status quo. A review of criticism of these programs follows.

#### *Critique of Educational Leadership Programs*

In a national study of more than 1,700 superintendents and principals across the country, Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, and Foley (2001, p. 31) found that more than 80% of superintendents and 69% of principals felt that graduate programs in educational leadership were out of touch with the realities of running a school. Many (45% of superintendents and 39% of principals) believed that “overhauling leadership training and education in graduate school programs [would be] very effective” (p. 31) at improving school leadership.

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration produced 30 research papers, six hearings, and involved more than 1,300 people in preparing a 60-page report entitled *Leaders for America's Schools*

(Lugg & Shoho, 2002). This report argued that fewer than 200 of the nation's 505 graduate programs in educational administration were able to meet their defined standards of excellence. They went on to say the remaining 305 programs should be closed (Lugg & Shoho, 2002). The Commission argued that these programs were marked by "lack of a definition of good educational leadership" (Milstein & Kruger, 1997, p. 100).

Murphy added to the criticism of educational leadership programs during a speech at the 1999 Annual Conference of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration. He stated that "the practice of educational leadership has very little to do with either education or leadership" (p. 55). Murphy added, "weaving together threads from practice to form a post-theory tapestry of school administration is a very questionable idea" (p. 55). He concluded that the search to stabilize and establish the center of the field of study should include "scientific inquiry, scholarly insights, and craft knowledge" (p. 55).

That same year, 1999, the U.S. Department of Education held a Policy Forum on Educational Leadership. This forum criticized university preparation programs for focusing too much on management issues such as finance, legal issues and state-required courses. The policy brief that came out of the forum argued that more emphasis should be placed on leadership for instruction and school improvement issues (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

In 2003, the Broad Foundation and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation issued a report entitled *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto* (Meyer &

Feistritzer, 2003), which added to the criticism of educational leadership programs (Meyer & Feistritzer, 2003). This report argued that current educational administration programs contained useless and outdated courses. It stated that programs should be closed and replaced with alternatives that would be developed and run by school districts and states. It further argued that state licensure requirements should be changed to allow promising candidates to enter the profession without having to jump through prohibitive hoops (Meyer & Feistritzer, 2003).

In 2005, Levine, the then-President of Teachers College at Columbia University issued a scathing report about educational leadership programs. The 4-year study entitled *Educating School Leaders* found that the quality of the majority of educational leadership preparation programs in the U.S. ranged from “inadequate to appalling” (p. 23). His study found that “collectively, educational administration programs are the weakest of all the programs at the nation’s education schools” (p. 13).

While the specific concerns may have changed over time, critics have all highlighted the fact that there still is no consensus on what educational leadership programs should look like. For more than a century, there has been no agreement on whom programs should enroll, what they should prepare future administrators to do, who should do the teaching, what degrees should be offered, and how educational administration should interact with teaching and research (Levine, 2005). Given that a standards movement has been afoot in public education, it is not surprising that the last

25 years have also ushered in a number of proposed standards for educational leadership programs as well.

*Standards for Educational Leadership Programs*

The lack of a unified direction by university educational leadership programs, the criticisms of the programs themselves, and the “excellence” or standards movement have all led to a push for standards in educational leadership programs. It is a relatively recent phenomenon that professional organizations have outlined standards or competencies that they feel educational leaders should know and demonstrate (e.g., National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002). Without standards, competencies or other program requirements, it should not be surprising to hear such strong criticism of educational leadership programs. What is unclear, however, is which specific skills most likely enable administrators to best perform their leadership functions, and what constitutes the best ways to train them.

As an example of the lack of cohesion of educational leadership preparation programs, Milstein (1993) outlined the academic offerings of five educational administration programs studied as part of a well-respected program called the Danforth project. Many of the subject areas had moved from topics such as “managerial survival skills” (p. 189) to content focused more on instructional leadership. There still were, however, standard curriculum topics including foundations, curriculum, management, supervision, law, finance, and instruction (p. 190). The traditional academic programs were based on behavioral sciences since the 1950s. They emphasized theory and content in a deductive approach (p. 213).

In 1983, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) took the first stab at defining what should be taught to aspiring school leaders by publishing *Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators* (Hoyle, 1987). They sought to provide guidance to program developers of school administration programs. This relatively early attempt at defining educational leadership standards included the following seven competencies and skills:

- Designing, implementing, and evaluating a school climate improvement program that uses mutual staff and student efforts to formulate and attain school goals,
- Understanding political theory and applying political skills in building local, state, and national support for education,
- Developing a systematic school curriculum that insures both extensive cultural enrichment activities and mastery of fundamental as well as progressively more complex skills required in advance problem solving, creative and technical activities,
- Planning and implementing an instructional management system which includes learning objectives, curriculum design and instruction strategies, and techniques that facilitate high levels of achievement,
- Designing staff development and evaluation systems to enhance the effectiveness of educational personnel,
- Allocating human, material, and financial resources to efficiently and accountably insure successful student learning, and



- Conducting research and using research findings in decisions to improve long-range planning, school operations, and student learning.

In 1993, the AASA looked more specifically at the role of the superintendents and created the Commission on Standards for the Superintendency. This commission developed eight standards (related to leadership and district culture, policy and governance, communications and community relations, organizational management, curriculum planning and development, instructional management, human resources management, and values and ethics of leadership) and 88 indicators for superintendency success (Busch, O'Brien & Spangler, 2005). The standards movement for school leaders was off and running.

In 1994, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), a consortium of numerous school administration organizations, including the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the AASA, commissioned the development of national standards for all school leaders. Working under the authority of the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was created and their standards were released 2 years later in November of 1996 (Murphy, 2002).

The ISLLC standards, like the AASA's *Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators*, were designed for all educational leadership positions, not just superintendents or principals. ISLLC stated that a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

1. facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
2. advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff and professional growth;
3. ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
4. collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
5. acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
6. understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (Murphy, 2002, p. 24)

In just 6 years after the standards had been released, more than 30 states had adopted them as their own. Other states drew upon the ISLLC standards or created their own from various sources (Busch et al., 2005).

It is interesting to look at the evolution in language and content between the earlier AASA standards of 1983 and the later ISLLC standards in 1996. Whereas the earlier standards spoke of using “mutual staff and student efforts to formulate and attain school goals” (Hoyle, 1987, p. 88), the language in the ISLLC standards looked at “facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community” (Murphy, 2002, p. 24). ISLLC looked at the social, political and cultural contexts of the learning environments, and perhaps most relevant to this dissertation, it included the standard of “acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (Murphy, 2002, p. 24).

English (2008) criticized the ISLLC standards as being nothing more than “codified beliefs, actions, and procedures that the framers believed defined good practice” (p. 29). He went on to say that “the methods used in verifying practice for the [ISLLC] standards offer us no assurance that the practices we believe are good are, in fact, *true*” (English, 2008, p. 30). Achilles and Price (2001) criticized the standards for failing to address research and theory on education-specific knowledge needed by educational leaders. They argued that ISLLC standards did not include the identification of a well-defined knowledge base related to student learning.

When an educational leadership program wanted to determine what it should include in its course of study, that program could try to look at all of the state standards (which mostly came out of the ISLLC standards) and then try to combine them with a specific knowledge base, but no professional organization had put the two together. In 2002, the Educational Leaders Constituent Council (ELCC) tried to remedy that by developing the *Standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership* (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). Based on ISLLC standards, these new standards were adopted by the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) for the purpose of reviewing preparation programs for future educational administrators.

Unfortunately, the NCATE standards did not make it much easier to decide exactly what courses should make up an educational leadership curriculum. NCATE standards did not provide guidance to universities about the specific content of courses designed to meet licensure standards. The ELCC proposal consisted of eight generic

standards (based on the ISLLC standards). Additionally, the proposal indicated that the enabling skills, knowledge and dispositions related to each standard should be tailored to specific school administrative positions, specifically principals, superintendents and central office staff (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002). Thus, professional organizations, states, and educational leadership programs were still left to define their own professional behaviors and indicators.

In the end, the standards movement in educational leadership preparation left the field with many different proposed standards, but still no clear direction. John Hoyle (2001) wrote a satirical piece called *I've got Standards, You got Standards, All God's Children got Standards* which emphasized this point.

Looking exclusively at professional organizations and the standards they propose may paint some broad strokes, but they do not provide us with many of the other critical elements that make up an educational leadership program. English, for example, has criticized a purely scientific approach to studying educational leadership (English, 2008). He argued that most standards, such as the ISLLC standards, do not address the “art” of school leadership. He further stated that they have “little if anything to do with establishing an educational leader’s personal sense of identity, place, and context, which is vital to lead an organization effectively” (p. 16). English emphasized that Dewey distinguished between leadership as knowledge and leadership as art, and that we cannot lose sight of these “artistic structures” in school leadership (Dewey, 1964, p. 144). English (2008) went to the point of arguing that

“research about educational leadership is not likely to lead to many new significant discoveries unless it includes aesthetics and the traditions of the humanities (the moral dimensions)” (p. 70).

It is important to note that both the criticism and the standards that grew out of that criticism were aimed at both preservice and Ed.D. educational leadership programs. When looking at problems and solutions, these two entities share a common purpose. Both programs are looking at the practical, applied side of educational leadership (Shulman et al., 2006), and therefore solutions, such as the model that is described next, are equally applicable to both programs.

#### The Tridimensional Model and Professional and Personal Formation

The next section of this chapter describes a model that presents a bridge between the science and art of educational leadership preparation. By incorporating the concept of “formation” into a traditional program of academic preparation and field study, Daresh and Playko (1992) have provided a model upon which standards can be addressed, but so can the “art” and “soul work” (Palmer, 2004) that make up an educational leader. While the model was designed for preservice preparation of educational leaders, it raises important issues and holds intriguing potential for educational leadership doctoral programs as well.

#### *Tridimensional Model of Administrator Preparation*

The AASA, NCATE, ISLLC and ELCC proposals all listed standards and some skills that educational leaders should be able to demonstrate (e.g., Murphy,

2002), yet none of them contained a specific model or framework for instructing future educational leaders. While created before many of the standards were published, Daresh and Playko's (1992) tridimensional model of administrator preparation provides such a design. It was a model for understanding how students can best be taught about educational leadership and it also serves as a foundation for this dissertation. Further, its notion of personal and professional formation is useful in framing the concept of inner work among school leaders that is expanded upon later in this chapter.

The three dimensions that make up Daresh and Playko's (1992, pp. 17-18) framework consist of academic preparation, field-based learning, and personal and professional formation. Their model also addressed three distinct phases of learning identified as preservice preparation, induction, and inservice education. The combining of these dimensions and phases make up the whole of the model.

Daresh and Playko (1992) based their model on the work of Lortie (1975), who proposed that three sources of occupational socialization consist of formal education, apprenticeship and "learning by doing." Daresh and Playko argued that potential school leaders must receive training and support through strong academic preparation (Lortie's proposal of formal education), realistic guided field practice (Lortie's components of apprenticeship and learning-by-doing); and "perhaps most important, attention to the typically ignored issue of the formation of aspiring administrators who will need to cope personally and professionally with the ambiguities associated with the responsibilities of school leadership" (Daresh & Playko, 1992, p. 18).

The first two dimensions of the tridimensional model (academic preparation and field-based learning) have been studied at length (Anderson, 1991; Daresh, 1986; Daresh & Playko, 1990; Erich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Levine, 2005). As noted earlier in this chapter, these two concepts have been central to the history of how future school administrators should be taught. The traditional approach used in preservice preparation was fairly simple: after a few years of teaching, the teacher enrolled in a graduate program in educational administration, took the requisite number of classes, participated in a practicum experience, and received the required license or endorsement in school administration (Daresh & Playko, 1992, pp. 53-54). This combination of academic and field-based training continues to be a central component of most school administration programs today (Levine, 2005).

### *Formation*

The third component of Daresh and Playko's (1992) tridimensional model, however, has not received the same level of research as the first two, and is central to this study. Their concept of formation refers to both professional and personal development of aspiring administrators. Most preservice programs are missing this important ingredient of providing activities that are "consciously directed toward helping people to synthesize learnings...and, more important, to develop a personal appreciation of what it means to be an educational leader" (Daresh & Playko, 1992, p. 54).

The concept of formation comes from the field of religious education where it has been used for centuries to teach children about faith and doctrine and to assist

novitiates in determining whether religious leadership was an appropriate path for them. Westerhoff (1987) wrote, “*Formation* implies ‘shaping’ and refers to intentional, relational, experiential activities within the life of a story-formed faith community” (p. 581). Westerhoff went on to describe formation as the shaping of individuals so that they gain a broader understanding of the social realities of the world and themselves.

Palmer (2004) defined formation as “soul work done in community” (p. 57).

He went on to note, however, that formation also has a less appealing historical definition in the form of:

A process in which the pressure of orthodox doctrine, sacred text, and institutional authority is applied to the misshapen soul in order to conform it to the shape dictated by some theology. This approach is rooted in the idea that we are born with souls deformed by sin, and our situation is hopeless until the authorities “form” us properly. (p. 57)

This chapter explores more aspects of formation in the next section. For the purpose of the Tridimensional Model, however, Daresh and Playko (1992) described formation as relating to five specific processes: mentoring, reflection, platform development, interpersonal leadership styles analysis, and professional action planning.

While many university and certification programs have traditionally ignored formational activities (Busch et al., 2005), recently a number of programs have moved beyond curricula and instruction based solely on the first two aspects of the tridimensional model. Some programs, for example, have included courses which address personal formation dimensions such as values, ethics and personal belief



systems of leaders (e.g., Beck, 1994; Metzger, 2006; Sergiovanni, 1992). The ISLLC standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002) included issues of integrity, fairness and ethics of educational leaders. As more states and educational leadership programs adopt these standards, these topics will need to be directly addressed in some form.

Busch et al. (2005) researched the effectiveness of one type of formation program for aspiring educational leaders. They found that when future administrators participated in a program that utilized Daresh and Playko's five components of formation (mentoring, reflection, platform development, interpersonal leadership styles analysis, and professional action planning), they improved their performance of tasks related to the role of school administrators. Their study looked at a specific preservice program and concluded that there was "evidence to support the use of formation activities from a practical perspective as well as from the theoretical perspective" (p. 107). Further, the researchers found that the results "demonstrated that formation activities may have an immediate positive effect on schools in that participants reported that they had accepted additional leadership responsibilities" (p. 107).

While Busch et al. (2005) focused their research on preservice programs; the concept that their findings might generalize to educational leadership doctoral programs is an intriguing idea. The expansion of the model in general and the formational component of the model in particular is what the next sections of this chapter describes.

*Expanding the Definition and Purpose of Formation*

English (2008) described educational leadership as a performing art. “There may be a science of leadership, but in its application, leadership is performance” (p. 58). Most of what is focused on in educational leadership programs (as driven both by history and by educational leadership standards) has been management, tasks and school-based responsibilities as they currently exist. There is not a focus on how to nurture the required artful performance of the future leader. Leadership is about morals and values and English argued that the “moral imagination has to become a centerpiece of leadership development and practice” (p. 59).

McGhee (2006) reported that a number of studies have found that many new administrators do not have much of a chance to establish themselves as individual leaders before they are acculturated and socialized to maintain the status quo within a couple of months of their new positions (e.g., Mertz, 2000). McGhee proposed that leadership preparation programs should consider teaching the “craft of personal advocacy” combined with professional responsibility. She argued, “expressly teaching units of study around the themes of proactivity, professional advocacy, and personal responsibility could aid the future school leader in aggressively challenging the barriers created by routine bureaucratic inertia and myopic thinking” (McGhee, 2006, p. 11).

Salazar (2007) found that rural principals were more concerned about the skills of leadership as compared to the skills of management. Collaboration, team commitment and creating learning organizations are were all listed as leadership skills

that principals valued. The participants in her study felt that they could learn the mechanics and managerial duties on the job or with minimal support from others; what they needed to know was how to lead, reflect, collaborate and create.

Formation fits nicely with Mezirow's (1991) notion of critical reflection within Transformational Learning Theory. Whether forming a new way of knowing or transforming from one aspect of being to another, the processes involve reflection, creation, and ideally some level of collaboration. Formation also honors Dewey's (1964) "artistic structures" in school leadership as well as English's more general notion of art within leadership (English, 2008). But formation cannot escape a connection to its spiritual origins. As noted earlier, formation comes from the field of religious education, and educational leaders who use the term (e.g., Palmer, 2004) relate it back to concepts such as "soul," spirituality and inner work. Using the concept of formation without linking it to its spiritual roots is an incomplete definition.

Metzger (2003) noted that there has been an absence of research on the role of spirituality, formation and inner work with educational leaders. She wrote that "overall there is a lack of research and a lack of emphasis on this topic in the literature of professional development and preparation of administrators" (Metzger, 2003, p. 658). She wondered if the lack of research on inner work might be as the result of "fear that one may be approaching a forbidden realm that gets too close to areas one is not supposed to talk about in governmental institutions – matters of soul, spirit, and the personal/inner dimensions of living" (p. 658). The remainder of this chapter explores inner work; its definition, connection to spirituality, and ultimately, how it connects

formation activities for educational leaders to what it is that educational leaders should know to be most effective.

### Inner Work

“But why assume that sensation and rationality are the only points of correspondence between the human self and the world?” Palmer (1983) asked in his book *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. “Why assume so, when the human self is rich with other capacities--intuition, empathy, emotion and faith, to name but a few? If there is nothing to be known by these faculties, why do we have them?” (p. 52).

While there is some research on the inner work of educational leaders, much of the writing on this subject has been in the form of essays and opinion pieces. These essays have helped to set the stage for the (albeit limited) research that has been conducted on the topic. In an effort to build an understanding of what inner work is and how it relates to educational leadership in particular, this section reviews the research and use some of the essays to help frame that research. Both of these sources are necessary to better understand exactly how inner work can be defined and how it can be applied to the lives of educational leaders.

### Other Definitions of Inner Work

So, what is inner work? As Metzger (2006, p. xiv) noted in her book *Balancing Leadership and Personal Growth*, there have been many different terms used by psychologists, philosophers, and theologians to describe what Metzger herself initially

called self/inner development and then later changed to personal growth or personal development. Metzger wrote:

C. G. Jung (Jaffe, 1989) called it *individuation*. Goleman (1995) called it *emotional intelligence*. Frankl (1984) described it as man's search for meaning. Covey (2004) made it the 8<sup>th</sup> habit of highly successful people, requiring what he termed *spiritual intelligence*. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) related it to the experience of *flow*. Senge (1990) labeled it *the fifth discipline*. Walsh (1999) referred to this as "central practices to awaken heart and mind." Bolman and Deal (1995) portrayed it as "leading with soul." Michael Thompson (2000) used the term the *congruent life* and defined it as following the inward path to fulfilling work and inspired leadership, connecting what we do for personal fulfillment and what we do for a living. (p. xv)

The few researchers who have attempted to bridge these concepts with educational leadership have looked for themes to help understand what this dissertation refers to as inner work. In her ethnographic study of four superintendents, for example, Sheff Kohn (1995) found the following universal themes (among others): Leadership in the superintendency is value-based; and superintendents experience a sense of isolation and loneliness on the job. One of her participants said, "Where you take your organization is who you are" (p. 311). This quote is very similar to Palmer's (1982, p. 2) notion that teachers teach who they are.

Sheff Kohn (2008) in a later study wanted to find out if that notion of teaching or leading "who you are" extended to decision-making by school leaders and again found that "the answer to my question about whether or not their decision making is based on 'who you are' is an unequivocal yes" (p. 108). Educators cannot leave their selves at the door of the school house. They make decisions based on their values and their belief systems. Sheff Kohn found that fairness, integrity, trust, and putting kids

first were commonly cited as values and beliefs that were primarily used to make decisions. All of the superintendents in her study pointed to family and religious upbringing as the primary contributors of their basic values. A few others also noted that they had seen other educators who served as mentors or models of doing the right thing.

When looking deeper at the role of values and beliefs in the workplace, Metzger (2003) cited a very appropriate quotation from Bolman and Deal (1995) who wrote:

In the workplace, all of us need a language of moral discourse that permits discussions of ethical and spiritual issues, connecting them to images of leadership...Heart, hope, and faith, rooted in soul and spirit, are necessary for today's managers to become tomorrow's leaders, for today's sterile bureaucracies to become tomorrow's communities of meaning, and for our society to rediscover its ethical and spiritual center. (p. 2)

Metzger (2003), drawing from her own experiences as a former principal and superintendent, studied the "self/inner development" of 128 superintendents from large urban school districts and deans of colleges of education. She used the term "self/inner development" to refer to aspects of personal development that emphasized inner dimensions of being (what this dissertation refers to as inner work). Specifically in her study, Metzger looked at a number of components of inner work including: the definitions of the terms self/inner development; the level of awareness related to the inner dimensions of leadership; terms used in the workplace; the role of crisis in creating an awareness of the need for self/inner development; the impact of a leader's personal/inner development on the organization; practices and activities used to attend

to self/inner development; the amount of time spent on these activities; and the implications of this topic for the preparation and inservice professional development of educational administrators.

The results of Metzger's (2003) study revealed six themes: balance, self-actualization, personal improvement, values, inner focus, and relationships. The following terms and phrases were used to describe each of these themes (as updated in Metzger's later book in 2006):

1. *Balance*: balancing life and work, professional and personal life, and knowing how to prioritize and use time.
2. *Self-Actualization*: self-confidence, being happier, taking care of myself, nurturing my mind and self, authentic existence, internal measure of success, and becoming a fully functioning person.
3. *Personal improvement*: growing, renewal, learning, and developing myself from within.
4. *Values*: clarity of personal beliefs, character, integrity, knowing and prioritizing my values, knowing who I am and what I can live with, being in tune with myself, and "to yourself be true."
5. *Inner Focus*: sense of inner peace, of heart, of being grounded, centered and focused; spiritual peace; having meaning in life; looking at the whole person includes the inner person, not to let surface things outside drive major decisions; and living with soul.
6. *Relationships*: leadership inspired by personal vision; being reflective about my relationship to my work; energy; attending to my own needs as well as serving others; knowing how to take criticism without being hurt; freedom; and identifying what I can control and living within that.  
(Metzger, 2006, pp. 15-16)

Metzger (2003) also found that there was a relationship between an educational leader's personal development and the impact on his or her institution. More than 82%

of the superintendents surveyed agreed that “if there is no transformation inside each of us, all the structural change in the world will have no impact on our institutions.” They believed that they needed to address inner work or transformation before the “outer work” could be done in their job.

Metzger (2006) began using the terms personal growth and personal development in her later research to address at the inner work of leaders. She described personal growth as “a process that involves the inner life, the heart and soul of the leader; it is his or her personal identity, the ground from which actions and decisions arise” (Metzger, 2008, p. 112). She also noted that “my premise is that when individual leaders pay attention to all dimensions of their being, they will be able to fulfill their purpose as leaders as well as find meaning in all aspects of their lives” (p. 112).

Metzger (2008) also defined the terms “internal process” and “external process” in her later research. She defined internal process as “engaging with the spiritual, mental and emotional aspects of your being” (p. 118). She cited examples of ways that educational leaders can use this process during work time to address conflict, stress or a dilemma. Metzger defined external process as “something that you *do* – an outward action that will enhance the success of the work you do internally” (p. 119). Again, she provided examples of ways that one could use external actions to practice personal growth in the workplace.

All of the strategies that Metzger cited to connect the internal and external processes came from her research. They were not just “copied from some book; they



show what leaders are actually doing in their daily lives” (Metzger, 2008, p. 121). This research has an important role to play in better defining terms, and demonstrating what educational leaders are doing in the workplace, both internally and outwardly. Some of the major themes of inner and outer work in the workplace to “center” oneself that came from Metzger’s (2008) research include: connecting with others; walking; listening to music; reflection and self-talk; using lunch time for inner work; closing the door; reading; taking breaks; keeping one’s work space as a meditative/personal space; physical activities; managing time effectively; meditating; praying; and taking alone time.

Bolman and Deal (1995) found that if managers neglect the spiritual dimension of themselves and their workers, they overlook an untapped source of energy and vitality and power. Through the use of art, ritual, quiet time, stories, music, meditation and icons, anyone can tap into that vital resource that serves to help not only the individual, but the very purpose of education.

#### *Spirituality and the Inner Work of Educational Leaders*

In the fall of 2002, the journal *School Administrator* published an edition focused entirely on the relationship between educational leadership and spirituality (Houston, 2008). The edition became one of the most popular editions that AASA has ever published and had multiple requests for additional copies (Houston, 2008). In that edition, Chopra (2002) wrote that school leaders are the symbolic souls of the groups that they lead and that great leaders respond from the higher levels of “spirit.” Only

people who “step out of darkness” and find wisdom in the midst of chaos will be remembered as a leader (Chopra, 2002, p. 12).

Spirituality plays a central role in the inner lives of school leaders. Wheatley (2005) wrote that “leadership today is spiritual” (p. x). Dirkx (1997) argued that spirit is always present in the learning environment and cannot be discounted. Tisdell (2003) noted that spirituality is slowly becoming accepted in the realm of higher education.

Spirituality has also been central to social justice issues related to education. Freire (1996), for example, drew upon liberation theology in his advocacy for social justice within education. He worked most of his life focusing on the education of those who are oppressed (particularly in his native Brazil), and being a deeply spiritual man, drew upon those aspects of his belief system while advocating for the oppressed. Hart and Holton (1993) broadened this perspective to focus on the importance of spirituality in the broader emancipatory adult education work. Indeed many writers have argued that spirituality has a role to play in the lives of educators, students, and educational leaders.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to discuss how researchers have attempted to define spirituality, especially within the context of public education. While Houston and Sokolow (2006) described spirituality as “each human being’s personal relationship with the Divine” (p. xxii), they wrote of many different manifestations of spirituality, especially for school leaders. Having intention with every decision and activity is an aspect of spirituality (p. 3). They also linked spirituality with integrity, or an alignment between what people say and what they do

(p. 9). When that integrity is focused on one's intention, there is a closer spiritual link

(p. 15).

Thompson (2005) looked at spirituality and spiritual leadership and concluded:

My short definition of spiritual leadership goes like this: *Spirituality* is a state of mind or consciousness that enables one to perceive deeper levels of experience, meaning, values, and purpose than can be perceived from a strictly materialistic vantage point. Spiritual leadership, then, is leading from those deeper levels. (p. 5)

In their national study of spirituality in American corporations, Mitroff and Denton (1999) found that there was agreement on the definition of spirituality and on its importance in people's lives. According to their study from the business world, "spirituality is the basic desire to find ultimate meaning and purpose in one's life and to live an integrated life" (p. xv). For the purpose of this dissertation, this definition of spirituality is used. Mitroff and Denton concluded from their study that the underlying cause of dysfunction, ineffectiveness and human stress within organizations comes from a lack of spiritual foundation in the workplace (p. xi).

Mitroff and Denton (1999) also found that there was a clear distinction made between spirituality and religion. While these two terms have sometimes been confused and even been used interchangeably, the subjects from this study expressed a view that religion was a highly inappropriate topic and form of expression in the workplace, but spirituality was seen as being highly appropriate. Metzger (2003) found that this differentiation was consistent among superintendents and deans of colleges of education as well. Sheff Kohn (2008) found that superintendents in her

study also did not have a difficult time differentiating between spirituality and religion.

Houston and Sokolow (2006) used a metaphor of pipes to distinguish between religion and spirituality. They differentiated the two in the following way:

There's some confusion about spirituality. Many people see spirituality and religion as being the same thing. We suggest a different lens, one that uses a metaphor of the pipes. You can have different kinds of pipes: copper pipes, plastic pipes, lead pipes, round pipes, oval pipes, big pipes and small. As we see it, the pipes represent religion in all its forms, with different specifications to those forms based on theology, history and practice. Only one substance, however, flows through those pipes, and what flows through is the essence of spirituality...the difference between religion and spirituality is the difference between form and substance. (p. xxiii)

Hamilton and Jackson (1998) discovered through their research that three main themes developed when asking participants (educators) how to describe spirituality: the development of self-awareness; interconnectedness between all things; and relationships to a higher purpose or power. Other researchers have focused on the role that spirituality has on making meaning in our lives – it is central to how many adults, including educational leaders, decide their life purpose or vocation (English & Gillen, 2000).

Vella (2000) closely connected spirituality and education in her definition of “spirited epistemology,” which is a view of knowledge that incorporates the spiritual. She noted that spirited epistemology is based on the concept that all education is directed toward a transformation of the passage from alienation to a deeper awareness of oneself. This passage from alienation to awareness is referred to as a “metanoia” (p. 10). Metanoia points to the nature of spirituality being about moving people “toward a

sense of greater authenticity or a more authentic identity” (Tisdell, 2003, p. 32). This notion of a spiritual transformation ties well to Mezirow’s (1991) Transformational Learning Theory.

Tisdell (2003) researched the nature and relationship of spirituality among 31 educators. Her conclusions supported the descriptions of the inner work of school leaders as described above. Specifically, Tisdell concluded:

1. Spirituality and religion are not the same, but for many people they are interrelated.
2. Spirituality is about an awareness and honoring of wholeness and the interconnectedness of all things through the mystery of what many I interviewed referred to as the Life-force, God, higher power, higher self, cosmic energy, Buddha nature, or Great Spirit.
3. Spirituality is fundamentally about meaning-making.
4. Spirituality is always present (though often unacknowledged) in the learning environment.
5. Spiritual development constitutes moving toward greater authenticity or to a more authentic self.
6. Spirituality is about how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes, often made more concrete in art forms such as art, image, symbol, and ritual which are manifested culturally.
7. Spiritual experiences most often happen by surprise. (pp. 28-29)

Tisdell’s (2003) findings, especially her third and sixth themes, are consistent with Mezirow’s theory of Transformational Learning (Mezirow, 1991). Adults use art, images, external experiences, reflection and symbols to create frames of reference and

points of view. Her conclusions also tie together the connection between inner work, formation and spirituality.

### *Reflection*

Reflection is a critical component of inner work, just as it is to Transformational Learning (Brookfield, 2000). Houston and Sokolow (2006) wrote of reflection as “awareness that a lesson is unfolding” (p. 78). Inner work consists of reflecting on the lesson or awareness that can be learned from any given situation. When this reflection leads to a transformation or a change in behavior then we operationally know that inner work has had an influence on our lives, relationships and jobs.

Another way to speak of reflection within the context of inner work is related to the concept of wonder. Markova (2008) wrote:

Wonder is not a disorder, deficit, or a waste of our time. It is one of our birthrights, one of our natural freedoms. It is how we can come to our senses in order to find and follow the meaning we want to make with the moments we have been given. (p. 37)

Other writers have also connected inner work and reflection to each person’s unique gifts. Houston and Sokolow (2006), for example, noted that one of the principles of spiritual leadership among educational leaders is recognizing one’s unique gifts and talents and using them to their utmost (p. 43). Palmer (2000, p. 12) wrote about everyone having “birthright gifts” and the importance of learning how to recognize them, reflect on them, celebrate and use them.

*Why Inner Work is Important*

There is a great deal of pressure on school leaders. In a study of 909 public school principals and 853 public school superintendents from across the country, Farkas et al. (2001) found that 81% of superintendents and 47% of principals felt that politics and bureaucracy were the most common reasons that educational leaders leave the field. Principals were almost as likely (34%) to cite unreasonable demands brought about by higher standards and accountability. Among principals, 41% felt that standardized tests were important, but only 25% felt that they were used appropriately (p. 17). A vast majority of superintendents (88%) believed that “keeping up with all the local, state and federal mandates handed down to the schools takes up way too much time” (Farkas et al., 2001, p. 9). Additionally, 81% of superintendents and 70% of principals reported that “managing harsh public criticism and ‘political heat’ has become a routine part of the job” (p. 9).

Farkas et al. (2001) found that there was also a perceived shortage of qualified applicants for educational leadership positions. The demands of the job, pay, prestige, and a perception that there is limited ability to influence staff development or impact poor teaching were all cited as reasons that educational leadership is not as effective as it could be (pp. 26-27).

Educational leaders also reported that their jobs can be lonely and isolating. Sixty-three percent of superintendents in that national study agreed that “the superintendency is an isolating profession that affords few chances to discuss problems and share advice with colleagues” (Farkas et al., 2001, p. 30). Sheff Kohn

(1995) also found in her research that superintendents experience a sense of isolation and loneliness on the job. Almost half of superintendents in the national survey conducted by Farkas et al. (2001, p. 30) said that creating a support system for superintendents where they could network and share ideas would be very effective in improving school leadership at a national level.

With all of the stress and isolation that comes with these jobs, educational leaders look for ways to balance their lives. In Metzger's (2003) earlier study, she asked school leaders how they found time for activities that focused on inner work development. While there were examples cited of strategies that leaders used to focus on inner work and decrease stress, a number of respondents related that it was very difficult to find and make time for such activities.

#### *Professional and Personal Development*

Many school leaders wonder whether professional development could be used to assist them in finding balance and learning more about inner work. Farkas et al. (2001) found that 60% of superintendents and 66% of principals believed that "too much of the professional development offered administrators is impractical and focused on the wrong things" (p. 31).

When Metzger (2003) looked at professional development implications as a result of her research, she found a number of surprising results. There was "overwhelming agreement that this topic [inner work] must be addressed and included both in the preparation of future administrators at the university level and in on-the-job staff development of administrators" (p. 679). She found that there were several



themes related to looking at the “whole person” in preservice and inservice training. Another major theme was related to the importance of “giving aspiring administrators more knowledge about themselves, about their culture, their values and beliefs, about character and ethical dimensions, and then helping them reflect on these and discovering their ‘sources of strength’” (p. 680). There were suggestions made about courses, trainings, activities and discussion activities in order to meet the goals of these suggestions.

Metzger (2008) expanded her study in 2007 to include administrators from all levels of schooling, including K-12 administrators, central office staff, and higher education faculty and administrators. She also interviewed a small group of business executives looking at their personal and professional growth strategies.

Comments about the implications for professional development from Metzger’s (2003) work included:

*Importance.* Administrators must learn to practice self-examination, life-long growth, and “set the context of their educational experiences into development of self.” Resources—time and energy—must be invested in renewal...

*Challenges.* Time management, setting priorities, and making their belief system a part of their decisions were most frequently mentioned comments... People need time to be reflective—on who they are, on their relationships. Leaders must provide time and a knowledge base to equip administrators to be reflective practitioners... The current emphasis on accountability and cost efficiency was thought to be “counterpoint to this topic.”

*Strategies.* Modeling and teaching by example was a major theme in the comments... Mentoring was another strategy mentioned—spending one-on-one time with individuals. In-service workshops or retreats on specific topics, such as time management, stress management, listening skills, self-management, crisis management, interpersonal support, and humor were mentioned. However, there was general agreement that such one-shot staff development

activities were not enough by themselves, but that self/inner development had to be ongoing and incorporated into the culture of the organization. (pp. 681-682)

It is also worth noting that Metzger (2003) heard from many of her study's participants that they were glad that such research on the inner lives of educational leaders was being conducted. They agreed on the importance of the topic and that leaders need to find ways (and get help doing so) to put these activities into their daily lives.

It is clear that educational leaders are under a great deal of stress (see Farkas et al., 2001). They are seeking ways to access inner work in their professional lives, but they are asking preservice and inservice programs to address inner work as well (Metzger, 2003). While there has not been agreement as to what educational leadership programs should teach, Busch et al. (2005) found that the inclusion of personal (and professional) formation activities in educational leadership programs has proven effective.

### CTL

The remainder of this chapter reviews another educational leadership formation process (called CTL) that incorporates inner work. Based upon the writings and work of Parker Palmer, CTL melds all of the foundational components outlined in this chapter.

#### *History and Tenets of CTL*

For more than 10 years, educators across the United States have participated in retreats based on the concepts that are contained in Palmer's (1998) book *The Courage*

*to Teach*. At these retreats, 20-30 educators gather for 3 days to explore their inner work as educators. The focus of the retreats is on personal and professional formation through inner reflection (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

In 1991, the Fetzer Institute invited Palmer (2007) to work with them to create a program for K-12 public school educators that was different from typical teacher trainings. The outcome of that work was a retreat series that invited teachers to renew and deepen their inner sense of purpose and to explore what is truly important in their work (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006). Palmer piloted the series with a group of Michigan teachers between 1994 and 1996. It was replicated in four locations around the country between 1996 and 1998, and as of the Spring of 2007 there were more than 150 facilitators in 50 cities across 30 states (Palmer, 2007).

One of the central tenets of *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998) is that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; it comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. Almost all other preservice and inservice trainings that teachers receive focus on what and how teachers teach (i.e., curriculum and instruction). Occasionally, teachers will be asked to dive deeper and ask why they teach. Seldom, however, are teachers asked the who question of teaching: who is the self that teaches? The focus of “Courage work” is to leave the what, how and even why questions to others, but instead to explore what Palmer (1998) has called “the heart of a teacher.” Truly, its focus is on inner work as defined in this chapter.

As retreats with K-12 educators became more widely known, people in other professions began to ask why they too could not “reconnect who they are with what

they do” through Courage work (Palmer, 2007). Retreats designed just for school administrators were formed and called CTL retreats. Groups of physicians, lawyers, clergy, philanthropists and nonprofit leaders requested and helped create Courage retreats for their own professions as well (Palmer, 2007).

Another bulwark of Courage work addressed the need for educators to embrace opposites and paradoxes rather than separating themselves and their beliefs from the larger world (Livsey & Palmer, 1999). Toward that end, Palmer wrote the book *A Hidden Wholeness* (Palmer, 2004). In this later work, Palmer (2004) described the search for ways in which one’s professional work and vocation are consistent with that person’s core values, beliefs and truths. Palmer called this goal of aligning one’s inner and outer work “undivided lives” (p. 11). In addition to describing the philosophy behind this tenet, *A Hidden Wholeness* outlined strategies to achieve an undivided life through Courage retreats. The book described Circles of Trust that are formed at Courage retreats, and it provided readers with a description of the composition and activities of courage retreats. In 2005, cross-professional Circle of Trust retreats invited any professional to benefit from Courage work (Smith, 2008).

One paradox of Courage work is the concept of doing inner work in a retreat setting with other participants. Palmer (2004) has referred to this concept as “being alone together” (p. 55). The focus of the work is each person’s inner work, but it is done in a setting with other people who help to create an environment that invites everyone to feel safe and comfortable enough to explore who they are. Courage participants use personal stories, poetry, reflections on professional practice, literature,

and various wisdom traditions to reconnect to the roots of their teaching (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

### *Research on Courage Work*

There are a number of studies that have explored the impact of Courage to Teach (CTT) programs, but there is very little research published specifically on CTL. Given the limited research on either program, studies focused on Courage work in any form (including recent Circles of Trust research) were reviewed. Though the number of studies is small, the research on Courage work that has been done is overwhelmingly positive.

Intrator and Scribner (2000) compiled the first longitudinal program evaluation for the Center for Teacher formation (which has since evolved into the Center for Courage and Renewal). Looking exclusively at CTT programs, Intrator and Scribner found that of the 50 participants surveyed, 100% called the CTT program “the most influential professional development experience they had had in education” (p. 5). The evaluation also noted the positive impact that CTT had on teacher overload, teacher isolation and other obstacles to effective education reform. In addition, Intrator and Scribner reported seven findings related to CTT’s direct impact on the teachers who attended CTT retreat series:

1. CTT teachers showed a strong rejuvenation in their passion for teaching;
2. CTT teachers undertook new leadership roles;
3. CTT teachers sought out interactions with colleagues;
4. CTT teachers practiced reflective inquiry;

5. CTT teachers changed the way they taught so as to be more connected and heart-oriented;
6. CTT teachers saw tangible benefits for their students; and
7. CTT teachers practiced more mindful living. (Intrator & Scribner, 2000)

Poutiatine (2005b) reviewed teacher formation and renewal programs, including CTT, as a part of his dissertation. His research found that teachers who participated in these programs articulated a new sense of passion for their work. They also focused more on creating hospitable learning environments for their students, devoted more time to framing effective questions and listened to their students more. They clarified and renewed core beliefs about students and teaching. Finally, they took on more leadership roles in their schools and expressed a deeper appreciation for collegial relationships.

Poutiatine (2005a) also published a summary of all research on CTT up to August 2005. In his report, Poutiatine reviewed three primary studies on CTT and teacher formation; five secondary studies on principles, practices and conceptions of inner work as teacher development; and six evaluative studies of CTT programs. Five themes were found in almost all of the research completed on CTT at that time. Specifically, Poutiatine (2005a) found that CTT fosters: the development of professional teaching skills; the development of professional teaching dispositions and attitudes; professional and personal growth; personal and professional life integration; and personal and professional renewal and transformation.

Smith (2008) evaluated Circles of Trust retreats, which Palmer (2005) described in his book *A Hidden Wholeness*. Rather than retreats that focus on a specific profession such as teaching (CTT) or educational administration (CTL), Circles of Trust are cross-professional retreats based on the same principles, philosophies, tenets and processes as both CTT and CTL. Smith's survey and interviews yielded similar results as previous evaluations on CTT. Specifically, she found that Circle of Trust exceeded the expectations of participants, allowed participants of all professions to apply what they learned to their personal and professional lives, and generated positive outcomes for a vast majority of the respondents (Smith, 2008).

Henderson (2007) has produced the only research up to this point exclusively looking at CTL work. He studied the inner lives of 15 school leaders who attended CTL retreats in the Seattle area. Through his dissertation research, he found that the CTL experience was extremely profound for the participants. The retreats provided a powerful environment to encourage participants to explore who they were inwardly (their "Identity"), how that identity surfaced in their lives (their "Integrity"), and what specific behaviors and attributes made their identity real in their world (their "Authenticity"). This research served to empirically validate that CTL helped participants explore "an outward direction to their journey as well as the critical inward journey" (Henderson, 2007, p. 165). Participants recognized that their inner work was only as meaningful as their outer work manifested itself in behaviors, attributes and relationships.

Henderson (2007) also found a number of unexpected themes in his dissertation research. First, the idea of risk surfaced both in leadership and in implementing behaviors learned in the CTL experience. Second, participants made multiple references to the idea of transparency and vulnerability in leadership. Four other themes from this research were: purpose and meaning in life and leadership; identity as a concept often described with such words as “core” and/or “deep;” listening as a crucial practice in leadership; and unprompted references to the CTL program and/or Parker Palmer’s thinking and writing (Henderson, 2007, p. 111).

In 2004, Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon introduced three CTL retreats to its new educational leadership doctoral program. As part of the course of study, students are required to attend a summer, winter and spring retreat based on the CTL model. Students from each new cohort travel away from campus to a retreat center where they are invited to participate in circles of trust to explore formation and inner work. This program, then, has used a specific strategy (CTL) to incorporate formation and inner work within an educational leadership doctoral course of study. While the opportunity for transformational learning and leadership may be present, there has been no research to determine what the outcomes of these required retreat courses have been.

### Conclusion

Educational leadership has been described by Houston (2008) as “soul-wearying” (p. 11). He argued that the work of school leaders is closer to the work of ministers than CEOs as he believes “our authority comes not from our position, but



from the moral authority we are entrusted to carry as we build a future through the children of our community” (p. 11). Some call the work of school leadership a mission or a calling. Cornelius West (cited in Houston, 2008) once described it as more than a job, but as “soul craft” (p. 8).

For more than a century, debates have played out over how new educational leaders should be taught and what it is they should learn. Management, leadership, ethics, morals, and social justice have all been cited earlier in this chapter as concepts that should be incorporated in educational leadership programs. A question that has not been fully explored, however, is whether educational leadership programs should provide opportunities or even require their students to explore inner work? This dissertation addresses that very question within the context of Transformational Learning Theory, personal and professional formation, and what inner work really means to educational leaders.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore the inner work of educational leaders. The study researched the impact of CTL retreats on the lives of educational leaders who were also Ed.D. students at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. It employed a qualitative research design to examine the formal research question, “How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students?”

In this dissertation, a qualitative phenomenological design (or approach) using primarily interview data was selected as the perspective and tool best able to address the research question. The framework, approach and methodology are examined in detail in this chapter to demonstrate why they were selected.

#### *Qualitative Research Framework*

Creswell (2003) described three basic frameworks for designing research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. He also used the term “approach to research” (p. 18) interchangeably with “framework” (p. 3). This study used a qualitative framework or approach. Maxwell (2005) noted that one of the best research goals suited for qualitative research is “understanding the *meaning*, for participants in

the study, of the events, situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with or engaged in” (p. 22). Maxwell later drew a distinction between variance theory research questions (which focus on difference and correlation, such as “to what extent...”) and process theory research questions (such as “how...”) (p. 74). Questions based on variance theory are better suited for quantitative approaches, whereas Maxwell made the case that process theory questions, such as the research question in this study, are best suited for qualitative research design (pp. 74-75). Stake (1995) supported that notion by noting that qualitative research is the better choice for “understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists” as opposed to quantitative research which is more about providing “explanations and control” (p. 37).

Stake (1995) went into more depth in comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches by distinguishing three basic differences: “(1) the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of the inquiry; (2) the distinction between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher, and (3) a distinction between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed” (p. 37). For Stake, qualitative research is “experiential understanding” in that it is “inquiry for promoting understanding” as opposed to quantitative research which is more about providing “explanations” (p. 37).

Miles and Huberman (1994) outlined common features of all qualitative research. They noted that qualitative research is conducted through intense contact with a field or life situation, and the role of the researcher is to gain an integrated,

encompassing overview of the context under study. The researcher is the main measurement device in the study and attempts to capture data on the perceptions of others through a process of deep attentiveness or empathic understanding, while suspending presuppositions about the topic. The researcher isolates certain themes, and then uses the data to attempt to understand ways that people come to experience their situation or lives. Many interpretations of the data could be possible, but in the end, “some are more compelling for theoretical reasons or on grounds of internal consistency” (p. 7).

The purpose of this study is to examine and better understand the experience, meaning and impact of CTL retreats on educational leaders in a doctoral program. Based on all of the definitions and criteria noted above, a qualitative approach best fit this study.

#### *Phenomenological Research Design*

Patton (2002) wrote that the definition of Phenomenology can be understood in a variety of ways, which also makes the term very confusing. He noted that phenomenology can refer to a philosophical tradition, an inquiry paradigm, an interpretive qualitative theory, a social science analytical perspective, a major qualitative tradition, or a research design (p. 104). For the purpose of this study, the term Phenomenology is used in reference to a specific design or strategy for doing qualitative research.

In defining phenomenological research, Creswell (2007) wrote that “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived

experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (p. 57). Patton (1990) elaborated by stating that such a study comes from an “assumption that *there is an essence or essences to shared experience*. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced” (p. 70).

The definition of “phenomenon” for the purpose of qualitative researchers is an “object of human experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 163). Moustakas (1994) gave examples of phenomena that meet this definition, such as insomnia, anger, and undergoing coronary bypass surgery. Patton (2002, p. 105) added other examples such as a relationship, a job, a program, an organization or a culture.

As noted earlier, the purpose of the research described in this dissertation is to examine the common experiences that members of four doctoral cohorts had as they explored inner work through the experience of CTL retreats. The exploration of inner work through CTL retreats constitutes the phenomenon being studied.

One of the caveats of phenomenological research has to do with its basis in reality. Dreitzel (1970) noted that for some phenomenological researchers (as well as other interpretive and constructivist researchers) there is no social reality to be accounted for “out there,” so there are no relevant laws or canons to discover. In this view, “social processes are ephemeral, fluid phenomena with no existence independent of social actors’ ways of construing and describing them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 2). In other words, the phenomenological researcher has an obligation to tie his or her research to application in reality, for fear of begging the question, “so what?” This dissertation avoids this pitfall by linking the research to the

lives (inner and outer) of educational leaders, and also to decisions about courses of study at institutions of higher learning.

*Data Collection Methodology: Interviews*

This study predominantly employed an interview format for data collection. Other sources of data, such as previous journal writing by the participants, were also used as secondary sources to help validate the researcher's conclusions.

Dexter (1970) described an interview as a “conversation with a purpose” (p. 136). Merriam (1998) noted that interviewing is necessary when the researcher is unable to observe the behaviors, feelings, events, or phenomena under study. “It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). Such was the case in this study. The purpose of the research in this dissertation is to look back at a specific activity (CTL retreats) and to examine the phenomenon of inner work that occurred at that time. For that purpose, interviewing was an appropriate research procedure.

While the role of the researcher is covered in much more detail later in this chapter, the methodology of interviewing participants lends itself well to a researcher who knows the topic and the context in which it occurred (as was the case in this study). Spiegelberg (1969) noted that the phenomenological researcher has to start with a grasp on the phenomenon being studied. Dexter (1970) expanded on that notion by indicating that no one should embark on a study based primarily on interviews “unless the interviewers have enough relevant background to be sure that they can

make sense out of interview conversations” (p. 17). The researcher in this study is a member of one of the cohorts being studied, as well as a CTL facilitator.

Maxwell (2005) noted that in addition to the primary means of data collection in a qualitative study, a researcher is encouraged to add anything else that is seen, heard, or in other ways communicated during the study. “There is no such thing as ‘inadmissible evidence’ in trying to understand the issues or situations you are studying” (p. 79). He noted this is especially true in an interview study, where such information helps to provide context for what is said. For that reason, the use of participants’ written materials (including journals at the time of the CTL retreats) were used as a part of the study as well.

#### Research Question and Subquestions

Maxwell (2005) noted that research questions are at the heart of a research design. They directly link all of the components of the research design and they state what it is the researcher wants to learn.

The central research question for this study is: How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students?

In addition there are four subquestions that support the main research question. They are:

- What is the experience and impact of these retreats from the perspective of the students?

- In what ways do students apply elements of these retreats directly to their personal, professional and academic lives?
- How does the fact that the retreats function as required coursework increase or diminish the experience for the students?
- In what ways do some students find the retreats more valuable and relevant than others?

#### *Central and Subquestions Rationale*

Creswell (2007, p. 108) wrote that a researcher should reduce his or her entire study to a single central research question and several subquestions. Creswell further noted that these research questions and subquestions need to be “open ended, evolving, and non-directional; restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms; start with a word such as ‘what’ or ‘how’ rather than ‘why’; and are few in number (five to seven)” (p. 107). When applying these criteria to the central question of this study (“How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students”), it is clear that the central question meets Creswell’s definition of a research question. The central question is open ended and does not point to any particular conclusion. It addresses the purpose of this study in more specific terms. It starts with the word How. And the central question and subquestions are few in number (five).

Marshall and Rossman (2006) broke research questions into four different types. There are exploratory questions, which investigate phenomena that are little



understood; explanatory questions, which explain patterns related to topic; descriptive questions, which describe the phenomenon studied; and emancipatory questions, which engage in social action about the issue. The central question in this study explores a little understood phenomenon (the inner work of doctoral students), but its primary purpose is to describe the experience of that phenomenon on the lives of the participants.

Subquestions can also be broken into different types. Stake (1995) described *issue* subquestions as those that “draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems” (p. 17) of the central question. While Stake was focusing on case-study design, the concept of issue subquestions is also applicable to a phenomenological approach. The essence of an issue subquestion is that it breaks down the central research question into more detailed parts that allow for further examination (Creswell, 2007, p. 109). Two of the four subquestions (the first two listed above) in this study serve the function of breaking down the central question into smaller parts to better get at the details of the issue being studied; they are, therefore, *issue* subquestions. Specifically, these subquestions are: What is the experience and impact of these retreats from the perspective of the students; and in what ways do students apply elements of these retreats directly to their personal, professional and academic lives?

The other type of subquestion that Stake (1995) described is what he called “topical information questions” (p. 25). These are subquestions that “call for information needed for description of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 25). Creswell (2007)

described these as advancing the “procedural steps in the process of the research” (p. 109) and stated that he preferred the term “procedural subquestions” (p. 110). The other two of the four subquestions in this study are *procedural* subquestions. They are the third and fourth subquestions: How does the fact that the retreats function as required coursework impact the experience; and, in what ways do some students find the retreats more valuable and relevant than others?

### *Transformational Learning Theory and Research Questions*

Part of the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study (as detailed in chapter 2) is the role that Transformational Learning Theory plays. The research questions outlined above fit well into this theoretical framework. The basic tenet of Transformational Learning Theory is that learners do not just add new information; they literally transform their ways of knowing (Mezirow, 2000a). One purpose of the research questions is to examine whether (and how) the experience of CTL literally transformed the participants’ lives. The second subquestion (“in what ways do students apply elements of these retreats directly to their personal, professional and academic lives”) is intended to directly address that connection. The interview questions (which is detailed later in this chapter) further connect the research questions to the basic theoretical framework of this study.

### *Implications of the Research Questions*

There are a number of implications that link the central research question and subquestions back to the very purpose of the study. If the experience of exploring inner work through CTL retreats is powerful and meaningful to the doctoral students,

then the inclusion of these retreats as part of the course of study would be justified. Another implication from that conclusion might suggest that more educational leadership graduate programs should consider adopting inner work as part of their course of study. Conversely, if the conclusions of this study find that inner work and the inclusion of the CTL experience are not valuable to the students, recommendations should address why it is currently a part of a required course of study at Lewis and Clark College.

Other specific implications may come from the research conclusions as well. One implication relates to the CTL program itself – perhaps inner work is still a valuable component of a doctoral program, but CTL is not an effective way of getting there. Another implication has to do with which students find the exploration of inner work valuable and which do not – there may be a gender, cultural or other component to its perceived value. Finally, there may be an implication related to the involuntary nature of required coursework. CTL was designed to be completely voluntary (Palmer, 2004), and the nature of making the retreats 3 of the 60 credits required for the doctoral course of study at Lewis and Clark College may impact the experience for some or all of the cohort members.

### Participants

Study participants consisted of current and former educational leadership doctoral students at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. There have been four cohorts of doctoral students between 2004 and 2007, and each cohort has consisted of between 11 and 16 students. Of the 53 possible student participants

(across all cohorts, and not including the researcher) who have attended the CTL portion of the doctoral program, 22 were selected as participants in this study. Additionally, 2 other students were selected to be part of semi-structured pilot interviews to refine the interview protocol; these two initial interviews were not included in the final data analysis. Two facilitators were also interviewed at the request of the researcher's committee.

### *Recruitment*

The researcher attempted to email all 53 current and former doctoral students to invite them to participate. Some of the emails were returned for being noncurrent addresses; if alternative email addresses were publicly attainable, the email was resent to the second address. A copy of the invitational email is in Appendix B. The email described the purpose of the study, stressed that participation is completely voluntary, and asked those who were interested in participating to respond by e-mail or phone.

Given that 30 people responded to the email, follow-up phone calls were not necessary. Selection of the 22 participants is described below.

### *Selection*

Maxwell (2005) noted that qualitative researchers do not sample the general population the way that quantitative researchers do. He used the term "purposeful selection" (p. 88) when referring to the strategy that qualitative researchers use. Purposeful selection is the process of choosing participants in order to gather information that will best inform the research question. Maxwell described four goals for purposeful selection: achieving representativeness or typicality of participants;

capturing heterogeneity of a population; examining cases that are critical to the theory of the study; and establishing particular comparisons to illuminate key differences between people, settings or situations.

There are different opinions about how large the number of participants should be in a phenomenological study. Mertens (1998) suggested using “approximately 6 participants” (p. 271). Polkinghorne (1989), however, broadened that number and recommended interviewing between 5 and 25 individuals who had experienced the phenomenon. Given the number of variables in Maxwell’s (2005) goals for purposeful selection, and the fact that the phenomenon in this study was experienced by four different distinct cohorts, this study interviewed 22 participants, a number on the high end of Polkinghorne’s recommendation.

As noted above, there were more than 50 current or former doctoral students at Lewis and Clark College. In order to consider Maxwell’s (2005) purposeful selection goals, a number of variables were addressed in deciding who would participate. Thirty current or former doctoral students replied to the invitational email and expressed interest in participating. Selection, therefore, attempted to even out the following variables: (a) cohort representation (in order to address Maxwell’s goal of representativeness or typicality of participants) and (b) gender and cultural background (in order to address Maxwell’s goal of heterogeneity of a population). This purposeful selection provided the study with 22 participants (and 2 pilot participants) who best informed the research question.

One man and one woman were selected to participate in the semi-structured pilot interviews to refine the interview protocol; these two initial interviews were not included in the final data analysis. In the main study, five participants were chosen from the two smaller cohorts, and six from the two relatively larger cohorts. Additionally, of the 54 current and former students (including the researcher) 17 (or 31%) are men. Of the 22 participants in this study then, 7 (or 32%) men were selected. Three of the 22 participants (or 14%) were people of color. Based on information given to the researcher, about 17% of the 54 cohort members were people of color, so the participants met Maxwell's (2005) purposeful selection goals.

The participants chose pseudonyms and the four cohorts were masked with four different Greek letter names (Iota, Kappa, Lambda, and Theta) so that those close to the program could not unmask cohorts or participants. Table 1 lists each participant (and their gender) by masked cohort.

Table 1

*Participants' Pseudonyms (with Gender) Listed by Cohort*

Iota	Kappa	Lambda	Theta
Abraham (man)	Alena (woman)	Helen (woman)	Gueneviere (woman)
Fiona (woman)	Christine (woman)	Jay-Z (woman)	Nickie (woman)
Harold (man)	Cleopatra (woman)	Jerry (man)	Ralph (man)
Jane (woman)	Fred (man)	Laura (woman)	Sybil (woman)
Madalina (woman)	Marie (woman)	Louise (woman)	Wanda (woman)
Nicholas (man)		Roadrunner (man)	

Those who were not selected to participate were contacted to thank them for their interest and willingness to participate. Those who were selected received an email from the researcher setting up the interview and attaching a copy of the consent form (see Appendix C). Interviews were conducted in neutral locations, deemed comfortable and convenient for the study participants. Consent forms were reviewed and signed before conducting interviews.

### *Risk and Benefits*

Participants in this study were considered to be at a low to intermediate level of risk, due to the fact that recorded interviews were conducted. There was a possibility that the interviews may have caused feelings of regret, disappointment or disconnection among some participants who may have been struggling with current or past challenges in their lives. Participants were reminded that they could end the interview at any time.

Benefits to participants may have included feelings of reconnection to the work they started in their previous CTL retreats. They may also have felt encouraged to continue exploring this work in their personal and professional lives. This encouragement may have led participants to seek out additional retreats, to reconnect to spiritual communities, or to explore other strategies to address inner work. Benefits to participating and the importance of the knowledge to be gained outweighed the low level of risks.

### *Participant Confidentiality*

Routine research precautions were taken to maintain the confidentiality of data throughout the study. Confidentiality was maintained by substituting pseudonyms for participants' names in this study. The researcher and one member of his committee are the only people with access to identifiable data. All transcripts, documents, and reports are stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home.

All participants in this study are over the age of 18. Consent forms were provided for review before participation in the study occurred. Additional forms were available at the first interview as well. Before initiating the first interview, the consent form was reviewed and signed by participants in the presence of the researcher.

No deception or manipulation of the environment was included in this study. The participants did not share that they experienced any feelings of distress at any time during the study. Should the research have revealed the possibility of potentially troubling outcomes for a given participant, the researcher would have provided that participant with information about how to access counseling services.

### Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted in comfortable and convenient locations for the study participants. In addition, data collection included analysis of participants' journals and any other written accounts of their experiences with CTL retreats or inner work.



### *Interviews*

Maxwell (2005) described both structured and unstructured methods of collecting data in qualitative research. Structured approaches allow for comparability of data across time, people and settings, and are very common in quantitative research. Unstructured approaches allow the researcher to “focus on the *particular* phenomenon being studied” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 80). He added that unstructured approaches “trade generalizability and comparability for internal validity and contextual understanding” (p. 80). Miles and Huberman (1994) cautioned, however, that “if you’re new to qualitative studies and are looking at a better understood phenomenon within a familiar culture or subculture, a loose, inductive design is a waste of time” (p. 17). Ultimately, Maxwell (2005) agreed with this notion and concluded that the decision that a relatively novice researcher faces is not whether or to what extent the researcher structures the study, but in what ways it is done and why.

This study used a semi-structured interview format with questions closely tied to the research question and subquestions. Maxwell (2005) wrote that “your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (p. 92). This study included five open-ended interview questions. In addition, probing questions were asked if specific topics were not discussed after just the general questions.

### *Interview Questions*

The interview protocol (including the specific questions that were addressed in the interview) can be found in Appendix A. The questions (without the entire protocol) are:

1. What do you recall about the CTL retreats from the first year of your doctoral program?
  - a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What feelings come up when you think about the retreats?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What specific activities or events stand out for you from the retreats?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What quiet, reflective, or “inner” times do you recall from the retreats?
  - d. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What stories come to mind when you think back to those retreats?
2. What had been your exposure to Courage work before you started your doctoral program?
  - a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...If you had exposure to Courage work before, how did the fact that this program included Courage work influence your desire to apply to the program?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...If you had not had exposure to it, what do you recall wondering about CTL before any of the retreats?
3. How do you find meaning and purpose in your personal and professional life?

- a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How does reflection play a role in helping you find meaning or purpose?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What role (if any) does “spirituality” play in that meaning or purpose?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What do you do to take care of yourself when you feel stressed or beaten down by work or life?
4. How did CTL fit into the overall doctoral curriculum?
- a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did it integrate or connect to other aspects of the program?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did it seem different or separate from other aspects of the curriculum or program?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did the fact that the retreats were required classes impact the experience?
  - d. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did the CTL impact your research?
5. How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?
- a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...In your professional life, how have you used any aspect of Courage work, either for yourself or with your staff?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What aspects of Courage work have played a role in your personal life?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What stories come to mind when you think of how you have integrated CTL into your own life?

### *Relationship between Interview Questions and Research Questions*

Table 2 demonstrates how the interview questions relate back to the research questions and subquestions. For each research question and subquestion, the table lists the corresponding interview questions that best address the research question. Some of the interview questions address more than one research question. Probing questions are included in the table only when the main interview question does not fully encompass the research question.

### *Transformational Learning Theory and Interview Questions*

Just as the relationship between Transformational Learning Theory and the research questions is important, so too is the theory's relationship to the study's interview questions. The interview questions outlined above fit well into this theoretical framework.

As noted above, Maxwell (2005) wrote that the "research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding" (p. 92). Given that one of the foundational notions of this study is that any change that occurred within the participants as a result of inner work at the CTL retreats would have been through transformational learning (Mezirow, 2000a), the interview questions served as the tool to help the researcher to ascertain if that indeed happened. The interview questions connected the research questions to the basic theoretical framework of this study. All of the interview questions (either by themselves or through their related "probe" questions) sought to

find out if an actual transformation occurred in the way that the participants look at who they are, perform their work, and live their lives.

Table 2

*Relation between Research and Interview Questions*

Research Question and Subquestions	Interview Questions
1. How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you recall about the CTL retreats from the first year of your doctoral program?</li> <li>2. How do you find meaning and purpose in your personal and professional life?</li> <li>3. What role (if any) does “spirituality” play in that meaning or purpose?</li> <li>4. How did CTL fit into the overall doctoral curriculum?</li> <li>5. How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?</li> </ol>
2. What is the impact and experience of these retreats from the perspective of the students?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you recall about the CTL retreats from the first year of your doctoral program?</li> <li>2. How did CTL fit into the overall doctoral curriculum?</li> <li>3. How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?</li> </ol>
3. How does the fact that the retreats function as required coursework increase or diminish the experience for the students?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did CTL to Lead fit into the overall doctoral curriculum?</li> <li>2. How did it integrate or connect to other aspects of the program?</li> <li>3. How did it seem different or separate from other aspects of the curriculum or program?</li> <li>4. How did the fact that the retreats were required classes impact the experience?</li> <li>5. How did the CTL impact your research?</li> </ol>
4. In what ways do students apply elements of these retreats directly to their personal, professional and academic lives?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you find meaning and purpose in your personal and professional life?</li> <li>2. How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?</li> </ol>
5. In what ways do some students find the retreats more valuable and relevant than others?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What had been your exposure to Courage work before you started your doctoral program?</li> <li>2. How do you find meaning and purpose in your personal and professional life?</li> <li>3. What role (if any) does “spirituality” play in that meaning or purpose?</li> <li>4. How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?</li> </ol>

### *Procedural Steps*

In the first phase of this study, the researcher interviewed two current Lewis and Clark College doctoral students to assist the researcher in refining the semi-structured interview protocol. These two interviews were not included in the final data analysis. The purpose of these pilot interviews was to ensure that the protocol did not need to be revised; it did not. See Appendix A for the protocol.

In the second stage, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the 22 selected participants. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. The first recorded question in the interviews established the pseudonym by which the participant wished to be called for interview purposes. A key to coded names was maintained by the researcher to enable linking interview data to journal entries. The key to identify participants was separated from the research data as much as possible and stored in a separate locked file cabinet.

Follow-up e-mail correspondence was used for clarification of any of the information from the initial interviews. The purpose of the follow-up was to allow the participants to add anything to their interview, to clarify any information provided, and ensure accuracy of transcriptions.

Transcription of the two initial interviews was done by the researcher using Dragon Naturally Speaking software (standard version 9.0). Software transcriptions were thoroughly reviewed by the researcher for any errors.

A paid on-line confidential medical and research transcription service was used for the remaining 22 interviews (including both facilitator interviews). The two

interviews transcribed by the researcher established notation systems and conventions for transcription. Verbal tics or fillers (such as “um,” “you know” and “sort of”) were deleted from the transcription. The researcher shared these conventions with the on-line transcription service, as well as issues of confidentiality and the concept of clearly and carefully reproducing what was said. All transcripts were completely reviewed by the researcher while each recording was played to ensure the reliability of the transcription. At the conclusion of the dissertation study, audio recordings were promptly destroyed.

#### *Written Documents*

All participants were invited to bring any written documentation of their inner work or CTL experiences (e.g., journal entries, poems, or reflections on inner work they have done). Providing this written documentation was not a requirement for participation. Seven such documents were collected, copied by the researcher and then returned to the participant. The researcher blackened out the names on all copies and replaced them with the pseudonyms noted earlier. Strict confidentiality was observed in all cases.

#### Validity

Validity is a term rooted in quantitative research design, and consequently is occasionally renamed, redefined, or outright rejected by qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2007). The essence of this concept, however, is as critical in qualitative research (no matter what it is actually called) as in quantitative studies. Stake (1995)

referred to the essence of validity when he wrote that the role of the researcher is to “get it right” (p. 107).

Polkinghorne (1989) addressed what he referred to as “validation” (p. 57) directly within phenomenological research when he asked, “Does the general structural description provide an accurate portrait of the common features and structural connections that are manifest in the examples collected?” (p. 57). Creswell (2007, pp. 215-216) translated Polkinghorne’s question into a number of standards that the phenomenological researcher can use to assess the quality of the design. The standards ask whether the researcher clearly states the phenomenon being studied, uses phenomenological data analysis procedures, conveys an overall essence of the experience of the participants (including its context) and stays “reflexive throughout the study” (p. 216). The next two sections of this chapter detail how this study uses Creswell’s standards, as well as other tools to ensure validity.

### *Validity Threats*

“Validity threats” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 106), or ways that the researcher’s conclusions might be wrong, are essentially “rival hypotheses” (Huck & Sandler, 1979). The qualitative researcher uses data collected during the study to make alternative hypotheses implausible. Maxwell (2005) noted that “validity threats are made implausible by *evidence*, not methods; methods are only a way of getting evidence that can help you rule out these threats” (p. 105).

Maxwell (2005) noted that the researcher needs to list out how he or she plans to rule out specific plausible alternatives to interpretations and explanations. As



opposed to a quantitative framework which attempts to design controls that will deal with both anticipated and unanticipated validity threats, qualitative researchers do not have the benefit of “sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that ‘control for’ plausible threats” (p. 107). Instead, qualitative research design requires the researcher to consider methods, evidence and procedures (or validity tests) that will significantly decrease, if not rule out, validity threats. Specific methods and tools used in this study are described next.

#### *Validity Tests*

As noted above, specific qualitative methods and procedures do not guarantee validity, but they do make it more likely that the process used helps rule out validity threats and thereby increase the credibility of the conclusions. This study employed a number of these strategies (or validity tests) to enhance the likelihood that the stated outcomes are not due to alternative theories or hypotheses.

*Triangulation.* Collecting data from a variety of sources and methods (also called triangulation) is one strategy in qualitative research that helps to better ensure that the researcher’s conclusions are valid (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). Triangulation reduces the risk of chance associations and systematic biases due to a specific method, and it allows a better assessment of the generalization of the explanations that are developed (Maxwell, 2005).

This study achieved triangulation in a number of ways. First, it used face-to-face interviews as a primary source of data.

Second, this study used participants from all four cohorts, which each began in successive years from 2004 to 2007. Each participant experienced the CTL retreats with his or her own cohort, but independent of the other cohorts. The interpretation of the inner work that each participant experienced at those retreats will be expressed through different cohort experiences and lenses.

Third, data collection included the written records of participants. While participants were not required to bring journals and other writings from the CTL retreats, they were encouraged to do so; and seven did. Journal writing was a central activity to CTL retreats. These writings from the time of the retreats helped to lend voices from the experiences at the time they occurred. The participants' current perspectives of their CTL experiences (their interviews) were compared with words from the time of the original CTL retreats. Any inner work that participants had done since their CTL experiences was also compared to what they were writing about at the time.

Fourth, the researcher's own journal entries, narrative (chapter 4), and personal identity memo from participating with the third cohort was taken into consideration as well. This topic is covered in more detail in the role of the researcher later in this chapter.

Fifth, two facilitators were interviewed at the suggestion of the researcher's committee. Their perspectives were also used to support or refute outcomes from the study participants.

*Bracketing.* In addition, the researcher used bracketing during the interview process to attempt to distinguish between what happened from the participants' perspectives, versus the researcher's own perspectives, thoughts, intuitions, and analyses. Merriam (1998) noted that in phenomenological research, prior beliefs are "temporarily put aside or bracketed, so as not to interfere with seeing or intuiting the elements or structure of the phenomenon" (p. 16). Moustakas (1994) described the process of bracketing as being central to phenomenological research. He noted that its purpose is to have the researcher acknowledge previous experiences, but to then take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon being studied.

Maxwell (2005) recommended using a "researcher identity memo" (pp. 27-28, 39). The purpose of this memo is to have the researcher explore his or her own experiential knowledge and assumptions. A copy of this researcher's identity memo (or initial bracketing) is included in Appendix D, and was with the researcher throughout the interviews, analysis and evaluation of data. In addition, chapter 4 is a narrative description of the researcher's experiences, beliefs and perspectives and serves as more detailed bracketing.

*Respondent validation.* Respondent validation (Bryman, 1988, pp. 78-80) solicits input and feedback from the participants about the data and conclusions of the researcher. This process is the "single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say...as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings of what you

observed” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 111). This is also referred to as member checking (Creswell, 2007).

All participants were invited to review the data that they provided so that they could offer additional explanations or correct misconceptions by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) called this process “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). Twelve participants chose to take part in member checking. Only one of those participants asked that information be changed, which the researcher did. All others were satisfied with what was presented about them.

*Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases.* Maxwell (2005) noted that “identifying and analyzing discrepant data and negative cases is a key part of the logic of validity testing in qualitative research” (p. 112). The concept of this validity test is to continuously look for both the supporting and the discrepant data in order to support, modify or reject the researcher’s suspected conclusion. Instances that cannot be accounted for by a particular explanation or conclusion, can point to significant problems or defects in that conclusion, and need to be reported. Creswell (2007) added that “the researcher revises initial hypotheses until all cases fit, completing this process late in data analysis and eliminating all outliers and exceptions” (p. 208).

During the data analysis phase of this study, negative case analysis was used to constantly revise and refine working hypotheses.

*“Rich” data.* Becker (1970) argued that intensive interviews with different participants enable the researcher to collect “rich” data, which is described as data that are so detailed and varied, that they provide a full, revealing picture of what is

happening. Interviews that involve verbatim data and not just notes on what the participants said make the data richer. Detailed note-taking on the experience of the participants (in addition to the verbatim data) also lends to the richness of the data (Maxwell, 2005). This study included digitally recorded interviews with verbatim transcriptions. In addition, the researcher took detailed notes and memos during the interviews and the analysis of participant journals and other writings. One planned interview was scratched because the recording device would not work, and therefore rich data could not be guaranteed. That participant (pseudonym “Don”) was not included in this study; he is not one of the 22 student participants listed in Table 1.

#### Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a member of the third cohort of the Lewis and Clark College educational leadership doctoral program, and is known to some potential study participants. He participated in three CTL retreats with the other members of his cohort as part of his coursework. The researcher has also participated in approximately 11 other CTL retreats and recently completed an apprenticeship to become a national CTL facilitator.

Miles and Huberman (1994) noted that phenomenologists are no more detached from their topic of study than are those whom they interview. Researchers “have their own understandings, their own convictions, their own conceptual orientations; they, too, are members of a particular culture at a specific historical moment” (p. 8). Rather than looking at the role of the researcher as a biased position,

the phenomenologist embraces the perspective of the researcher as part of the process and part of the interpretation of the research topic.

Maxwell (2005) wrote that “traditionally, what you bring to the research from your own background and identity has been treated as ‘bias,’ something whose influence needs to be *eliminated* from the design, rather than a valuable component of it” (p. 37). He went on to note that this perspective has changed in qualitative research and that “separating your research from other parts of your life cuts you off from a major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks” (p. 38). He summarized that “the explicit incorporation of your identity and experience in your research has gained wide theoretical and philosophical support” (p. 38), citing numerous prominent researchers and writers.

The fact that more researchers have come to accept that one’s experiences, perspectives and identity should not and cannot be totally separated from the research itself does not excuse the researcher from assessing the effects of that experience and identity on the process and outcomes. As a former participant in a CTL retreat series and as a current facilitator of CTT and CTL work in Oregon, the researcher has many experiences, perspectives and assumptions concerning the program. Because of these potentially significant perspectives, assumptions and experiences, the researcher will use the following validity tests and tools to keep them in check: (a) Maxwell (2005) recommended using a “researcher identity memo” (pp. 27-28, 39) to help the researcher to explore his or her own experiential knowledge and assumptions; a copy of this researcher’s identity memo is included in Appendix D, and was present for the

researcher throughout the interviews, analysis and evaluation of data; (b) in addition to the memo, the researcher used his research journal to constantly note experiences, perspectives and thoughts about the process and to explore personal perspectives versus those generated by others; (c) additionally, the researcher used the process of bracketing (Moustakas, 1994) to set aside, as much as possible, all previous experiences in order to best understand the experiences of the participants; and (d) the researcher's committee diligently checked that all of these issues (researcher's experiences, identity, perceptions, and membership as a cohort member) were taken into appropriate consideration.

#### Data Analysis Plan

Maxwell (2005) wrote that analysis of the data should start occurring immediately after finishing the first interview and continue until the research is complete. The researcher listens to the interviews after they have been transcribed to take notes on what is heard (and seen in the data), which serves to augment the original interview notes. Maxwell spent a great deal of time extrapolating on analysis beyond what is traditionally done in qualitative research. He wrote:

Unfortunately, many texts and published articles deal explicitly only with coding, giving the impression that coding *is* qualitative data analysis. In fact, most researchers informally use other strategies as well; they just don't describe these as part of their analysis. I want to emphasize that reading and thinking about your interview transcripts and observation notes, writing memos, developing coding categories and applying these to your data, and analyzing narrative structure and contextual relationships are *all* important types of data analyses. (p. 96)

Creswell (2007) noted that the phenomenological researcher uses data to develop a composite description of the essence of the experience for every participant. Moustakas (1994) expanded that the description is both “what the participants experienced and how they experienced it.

Phenomenology is an interpretivist approach to qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Its very purpose is to interpret through deep understanding, empathy or “indwelling” (p. 8) with the subject of inquiry. The purpose of it is not to uncover laws, but rather to come to a practical understanding of actions, meanings and experiences.

Spiegelberg (1969), one of the early founders of phenomenological research approach (and a chronicler of the history of philosophical phenomenology), described the basic process of using this research design. A researcher starts with an “intuitive grasp” (p. 659) of the phenomenon and then gains a sense of its general essence by exploring several instances or examples of it. The researcher then looks for relationships and connections among several essences to determine both the what and the how of the phenomenon. The meaning is ultimately interpreted by linking the essences to consciousness of the participants and bracketing out the researcher’s own beliefs and presuppositions.

Creswell (2007, p. 159) reviewed Moustakas’s (1994) specific, structured method of phenomenological data analysis and simplified it into six steps. The researcher plans followed those steps in his data analysis plan. Specifically, using Creswell’s method, he:



1. Bracketed his personal experiences (which was begun in his researcher identity memo in Appendix D), so as to set aside those experiences (as much as is possible) to better focus on the participants in the study.
2. Developed a list of significant statements from the data. The researcher focused on statements that addressed how the participants experienced inner work and treated each statement with equal worth. He developed a list of “nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).
3. Took the statements from the previous step and grouped them into larger units of information called themes or “meaning units” (p. 159).
4. Developed a description of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. This “textual description” of the experience included verbatim examples (p. 159).
5. Developed a description of how the experience happened. This “structural description” reflected on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced (p. 159).
6. Finally, wrote a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textual and structural descriptions above. “This passage is the ‘essence’ of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of the phenomenological study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159), and is contained in chapter 6.

#### Delimitations of the Study

Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) defined delimitations as “the boundaries of the study, and ways in which the findings may lack generalizability” (p. 168). Creswell

(2003) stated that the researcher should “use delimitations to narrow the scope of a study” (p. 148). This qualitative study limited itself to the interviews of 22 educational leadership doctoral students and 2 facilitators at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon who attended CTL retreats as part of their course of study. These 22 participants were members of four doctoral cohorts that attended CTL retreats in the summer, winter and spring of the first year of their doctoral program in the years from 2004-2008.

### Summary

This purpose of this study is to explore the role that inner work plays in the lives of doctoral students. Specifically, it used a qualitative phenomenological approach and interview data to address the research question, “How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students?”

Five interview questions (with additional probe subquestions if needed) were used to discover the answer to the research questions. Both the research and interview questions relate directly to each other and to Transformational Learning Theory.

Twenty-two current or former Lewis and Clark College educational leadership doctoral students were selected to participate. Two facilitators were also interviewed as part of this study. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

Validity threats were virtually eliminated through a number of validity tests during the course of this research. Triangulation, bracketing, respondent validation,

negative cases, and rich data were all used to greatly decrease the likelihood that the researcher's conclusions might be wrong.

A phenomenological data analysis was outlined in this chapter. Once data were collected, the researcher used this process, along with the validity tests mentioned above to ensure that the outcomes of this research "get it right" (Stake, 1995, p. 107).

This chapter described the methods and procedures that were used in this qualitative study. The next chapter presents a narrative description of the author's experiences, assumptions and beliefs related to CTL and inner work.

## CHAPTER IV

### PERSONAL NARRATIVE

This chapter describes, in first-person narrative form, the author's experience with CTL work before and during the doctoral program. Mortola (2006) wrote that the intent of a narrative account is to represent what happened as descriptively and coherently as possible. More specifically, he stated that narrative provides a "window' into a world to which [the author] had access and to which others...may also benefit from having access" (p. 315). Mortola added that narrative also creates a foundation for the researcher to analyze the data.

This narrative account also serves as the author's bracketing process (Moustakas, 1994), which is central to a phenomenological research approach and was described in more detail in chapter 3. Appendix D (Researcher Identity Memo) contains some of the same information in much less detail. The Researcher Identity Memo was brought to every interview as a more concise bracketing document. The end of this chapter includes the author's observations, assumptions, beliefs and perspectives based on experiences both within the doctoral program's CTL retreats and those retreats outside of the Lewis and Clark curriculum.

#### Experience with CTL before the Doctoral Program

I was first exposed to CTL activities in the fall of 2002. As part of a half-day retreat at my work site, David Hagstrom, a local CTL facilitator, had been invited as

one of the presenters. While relatively brief, I recall that the presentation included concepts such as discovering who we are as professionals, learning about open and honest questions, and trusting extended periods of silence. I remember that he used activities such as reading a poem and then sharing perspectives of the poem with someone sitting next to you. He also used visual activities such as an expandable sphere to demonstrate inner and outer work.

I recall that at the end of the presentation, David asked me if I would be interested in attending CTL retreats. At the time I was completing my initial administrative license and did not have the disposable income to be able to afford such a retreat. I thanked him for the invitation and assumed that would be the last I heard of CTL.

Later that fall I began my principalship practicum with Yvonne Curtis in Redmond, Oregon. She shared with me that she had decided to become a national facilitator for CTL. She told me this meant that she would be traveling to Michigan a few times for a year and that she would be missing some days of school as a result. This was the second time in a few months that I had been exposed to the concept of CTL; by two people I had come to respect. Yvonne strongly encouraged me to consider attending a series of CTL retreats that was planned for the following Spring.

In January of 2003, I attended a 1-day CTL "sampler." On a Saturday about 25 participants joined David Hagstrom and Yvonne Curtis at a golf clubhouse restaurant which provided an accommodating environment. It was snowing outside and I remember it being quite idyllic. While I do not remember many of the specific

activities, one does stick out in my mind. We were asked to get into groups of three or four and to share our “soul stories” around a topic given to us earlier. While we each took turns telling our stories, the other members of the group used watercolors to express what they heard from that person. After people were done painting, they explained what they had painted and gave the watercolors to the person whose story the painting represented. I still have the three paintings that I received that day almost 6 years ago.

What I remember most about that January sampler is it being restful and rejuvenating. I remember long periods of silence, and spending time thinking about just one thing. In my role as a school leader, those were both luxuries. I also remember sitting at lunch and sharing stories with people I did not know well. I knew that they were also school leaders and while the specifics of our stories were different, there was a bond in recognizing that we all needed time to breathe, be quiet, and share stories with others who would understand. I was beginning a journey of truly examining who I am as an educational leader, and I was enjoying it.

A few months later, I found out more about the retreat series. It was to be facilitated by David Hagstrom, Gloria Gostnell, and Caryl Hurtig Casbon. It was sponsored by Lewis and Clark College and was being funded primarily by a Ford Family Foundation grant. As a result of this grant, the cost per person would be just \$250 for all five retreats. Given the relatively inexpensive cost, and the great experience I had had at the sampler, I decided to attend; my wife decided to attend as well.

As opposed to the 1-day sampler, CTL retreats consist of truly getting away and spending 2 nights and 3 days in retreat. Typically, they begin on a Thursday afternoon at about 4:00 PM and end Saturday afternoon at about 1:00 PM. Sometimes they begin Friday afternoon and end on Sunday. Our first retreat was in May 2003 at the Flying L Ranch near Mount Adams in Washington state. All of the participants were school leaders from rural parts of Oregon. Apart from my wife, I knew about five participants. Most of the 20 to 25 other school leaders were unknown to me at the beginning of the retreat.

What struck me most was the physical setting of the retreat site. The outer beauty combined with the safe, connected space that the facilitators created with us during our times together made for a perfect environment for this work. I recall arriving after having driven for about 4 hours and having David come over to greet me near my car. He showed my wife and me where our room was, encouraged us to relax and then meet for dinner at about 6:00 PM.

The food was always outstanding. I recall that we sat at long tables together and ate family-style. There were only the 25 of us at the entire retreat site, so the cooks prepared meals just for us. There was always plenty of food and the family-style setting made for comfortable, inviting conversation.

After dinner, we went into the main lodge where couches and chairs were arranged in a large circle. There were some candles lit, and a fire had been prepared in the fireplace on the other side of the room. As with the sampler, I was struck by the fact that we did not introduce ourselves right away. We read a poem or two and then

spent time journaling and sharing what we had written with a person sitting next to us. After about an hour, we were invited to introduce ourselves from the perspective of what we had written, if we chose. Introductions were not based on our current job title, and in fact there were a number of participants whose specific jobs I did not know until the second or third retreat. While we knew we were all school leaders, it was clear that the focus of these retreats was not on our current roles or titles, but on other aspects of who we truly are.

I also remember from that first night that we shared norms for our time together. CTL refers to these norms as Touchstones. They included concepts such as: presume welcome and extend welcome; every activity is by invitation only, there is no required participation; honor the silence; when the going gets tough, turn to wonder rather than judgment; be present with 100% of yourself; believe you can leave more refreshed than when you came; no fixing, advising, or setting others straight; speak for yourself; and observe confidentiality.

After about 2 hours reading poems and prose, introducing ourselves, learning about the touchstones, journaling and sharing, we closed the circle for the first night. Some people had brought wine and beer as well as some snacks and we had an informal social time into the evening. This was an opportunity to get to know each other in a subdued, unstructured setting. Most people stayed up for about an hour or two before going to bed.

The second day was the only full day at the retreat. Those who chose, could join the facilitators for 30 minutes of quiet meditation before breakfast. I chose to do



so most mornings. Breakfast was served family style and I recall feeling taken care of knowing that I did not have to prepare my own food. After breakfast, we had 3 hours together. While I do not remember all the specific activities of the retreat that day, this first retreat used the season of Spring as a theme; the entire retreat series was based around the four seasons. Courage work uses what are called “third things” to help participants connect to the theme. Third things might be poems, music, prose or essays. They are things external to the participants that are designed to encourage them to reflect and do inner work (as defined in chapter 1 of this dissertation) through activities such as journaling and sharing in small groups or one-on-one.

After lunch, we were given 2-3 hours to spend quietly by ourselves. I recall at my first retreat, I picked up a book that one of the facilitators had brought and spent 2 hours just enjoying reading. I recall at other retreats I used this time of the day to take a nap, go for a walk or a hike, or sit and meditate. One advantage of being at retreat sites is that it is hard to access wireless connections and cell phone connectivity. Participants are forced to unplug. As educational leaders working 50 to 60 hours a week, the invitation to spend 2 to 3 hours in silence is truly a gift. It almost forced me to be introspective and to explore inner work.

After the quiet time, we spent a great deal of time learning how to ask open and honest questions. Open and honest questions are based on the touchstone that does not allow fixing, advising or correcting other people. They are questions to which the questioner could not possibly know the answer. They are designed to help someone explore an issue about which they may feel confused or stuck. Questions are not

allowed to be leading or suggestive of solutions; they are crafted to help the person think about the situation or topic in a different way. Open and honest questions are based on the belief that we all have the answers to our challenges within us, we just need help approaching the problem differently to be able to find the answer. As school leaders who are charged with fixing, advising, and setting others straight every day, learning how to ask questions in a different way can be very challenging. I recall that it took some of us two or three retreats to fully master the concept of open and honest questions. We practiced using this strategy on “walks and talks” with one other CTL participant while walking through the beautiful retreat setting. We took turns presenting our topic or issue and having the other person ask open and honest questions.

After dinner, the evening of the second day was devoted to Clearness Committees. Parker Palmer drew upon a 17th century Quaker tradition to introduce this process to courage work. Clearness Committees require participants to have truly mastered the ability to use open and honest questions. A Clearness Committee consists of one person, called the focus person, and three to five other people making up that focus person's committee. The committee gathers in a quiet comfortable place, and starts by sitting in silence. The focus person breaks the silence by spending about 10 minutes talking about a topic that has been weighing heavily on him or her. The next hour and a half is spent with the committee asking open and honest questions of the focus person. The focus person is not obligated to answer any question but is encouraged to use the open and honest questions to reflect upon the concern. After 90

minutes of open and honest questions, the committee mirrors back, without interpretation, a number of the things that the focus person had said. This is followed by affirmations. Clearness Committees are governed by the principle of double confidentiality. This means that every committee member will not only keep the topic of the Clearness Committee confidential, they will also never bring it up to the focus person. Only the focus person may ever bring up the topic up again.

Clearness Committees are sacred times. They are not therapy sessions. The committee is there to create a space or environment in which the focus person feels held. It is critical that nothing the committee says comes across as advising or fixing. The goal is to have the focus person feel so safe, that his or her “shy soul” - as Palmer (2004, p. 59) has referred to it - is able to emerge. It truly is based on the belief that we have the answers within us, we just need a safe, inviting, caring environment to explore and discover the answer.

After the Clearness Committees, there is an opportunity for more informal socializing. Often, both the focus people and the committees are quite tired from the experience. It has been my experience that the second night of socializing can be quite subdued, which was true at the Flying L Ranch during that first retreat.

The morning of the third day of the retreat began with optional meditation and then breakfast. Afterwards, we gathered in the circle again and spent time debriefing or “unpacking” the Clearness Committees. The content of the committees is never discussed; rather the purpose is simply to talk about the experience or the process of the committees. In all my recollections, the focus people have shared a strong sense of

gratitude and appreciation to their committees. I recall at the first retreat that the committee members talked a great deal about the difficulty of just asking open and honest questions; the desire to try to advise or fix was strong for them. This became easier with the practice of each consecutive retreat.

After unpacking, we closed out the theme of the retreat (the season of Spring) by reading a poem, journaling and sharing in small groups. The morning ended with a closing circle. Participants were invited to share their thoughts, experiences and perspectives about the retreat into the circle but not necessarily directly to another person. I remember expressing thanks for feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. Everyone then has lunch and heads home at about one o'clock in the afternoon.

The other retreats in my first CTL series followed a similar format at different retreat sites. They used the particular season of the retreat as a theme, so the third things such as poems, music and prose changed based on the different theme. Examples of themes included essays on summer's "Abundance in community," and autumn's "Seeds of True Self." While the types of specific "inner activities" were modified each retreat, the format and central activities such as the Clearness Committee, the touchstones, reflection, quiet time, meals and opening and closing circles remained the same. The outcome of all of them was a sense of rejuvenation, relaxation and reflection. I enjoyed the experiences immensely.

After the retreat series, I attended approximately three or four individual retreats over the next 2 years. These were not part of a series, however; they were

“stand alone” retreats. They exposed new people to the concept and process and served to reinvigorate and reconnect me to who I am and to my work.

#### Apprenticeship to Become a CTL Facilitator

In the Spring of 2006, I was asked if I would be interested in apprenticing to become a national CTL facilitator. The normal process for facilitator training is to attend a “gateway retreat” in Washington state and then to attend training in Michigan over the course of a year. Given my job, and the fact that I was starting my doctoral program that summer, I could not commit to the time and cost of traveling over the next year. Another option at the time (this process is apparently no longer used by the Center for Courage and Renewal) is to apprentice with one or two experienced and skilled facilitators; I agreed to explore that route.

I did attend the gateway retreat in June 2006 at Bainbridge Island, Washington with Parker Palmer, and other national facilitators. The main purpose of this retreat was to discern whether we were interested in continuing to train to become facilitators. I had enjoyed all of my Courage experiences and wanted to share the experience with others. I came to the conclusion that, as long as I could follow the apprenticeship route, I would work toward becoming a facilitator. David Hagstrom and Caryl Hurtig Casbon were my mentors for this process.

We put together a CTL retreat series for central Oregon school leaders over the next 2 years. After a 2-day stand-alone retreat in the fall of 2006 and a 1-day sampler in January of 2007, we started the series with 24 participants in May of 2007. David, Caryl and Candace Brey were the primary facilitators and I was the apprentice. We

held the first four retreats at the Rock Springs Guest Ranch in Tumalo, Oregon, and the last one (in August of 2008) on the Oregon coast in the town of Yachats.

I enjoyed being able to learn from three very skilled facilitators. I did not have major revelations about how to facilitate; it was more about the subtleties of putting together the right activities with the right third things to create a space where people could deeply explore their inner work. I was a part of the planning for all of the retreats and I gradually took on more and more responsibility with each retreat. By the summer of 2008, I had completed my apprenticeship and felt prepared to be a national facilitator.

#### Doctoral Program Courage in Leadership Retreats

One of the main reasons that I decided to apply to the Lewis and Clark doctoral program was the fact that retreats based on the CTL model were incorporated into the course of study. Had Courage work not been a part of the Lewis and Clark program, I would not have applied to a doctoral program at all. I was, therefore, looking forward to the one-credit class entitled Courage in Leadership.

My doctoral cohort of 16 students began our program in the summer of 2006. We spent almost the entire month of July attending classes on campus in Portland, Oregon, from 8:00AM - 5:00PM Monday through Friday. The four classes we took together required a great deal of work outside of class time as well. It was an intense month. At the end of those 4 weeks together, we left campus and met on the Oregon coast for our first CTL retreat. Given the amount of time we spent in class, we were all pretty exhausted.

I was struck by how many people had no idea what they were entering. While I had spoken about my CTL experiences with others in my cohort, very few had any knowledge of what CTL was or why they would be doing it. Everyone was happy to be away from the content classes and the classroom, so a retreat of any sort would have been welcomed. It was clear to me that the real purpose of CTL itself, however, was not clear to most of the cohort.

I was also aware that there was only one facilitator with us. While there was another faculty member present, he had never been to a retreat and did not facilitate. All of the retreats I had attended in the past, had at least two facilitators and most of them had three (which is actually highly unusual nationally; two facilitators is most common). Another cohort member and I offered to help the facilitator in any way we could, as we both had experience with CTL retreats in the past. I wanted to be able to enjoy the retreat as a participant with my cohort, but I also wanted to offer support so that the experience was as meaningful as possible for all participants. The facilitator was very gracious in wanting to make sure that we experienced the retreat as participants, but he was open to us talking to cohort members about being focus people for the Clearness Committees (and explaining what the process was). Apart from educating others about the Clearness Committee, I exclusively played the role of a retreat participant.

While the experience was new to most of my cohort members, I found that they were very willing to do all that was asked of them. It seemed to me that most of them enjoyed the activities and participated in ways similar to my experience in

previous CTL retreat series. They got it, and expressed being reconnected and rejuvenated by the experience. I talked to other cohort members, however, who were unsure of the process, and wondered how the retreats fit in to the overall doctoral program. These participants did nothing to disrupt or take away from the experience, but it seemed to me that their own experience was different from what I have known CTL retreats to be.

Given the many weeks of classes together before the retreat, another major difference between the doctoral cohort and my previous experience with CTL retreats, was the amount of partying, playfulness and laughter that occurred at night after the sessions. There was more drinking, and participants played a number of games together that got quite raucous at times. They were never inappropriate, or disrespectful in anyway, but the general atmosphere was cathartic; one of a group of people wanting to let their hair down together. It was significantly louder, more jovial, and more playful than any previous retreat I had attended. This did not extend into the courage activities themselves; it was relegated to the evening times only.

Another observation about the doctoral CTL retreats, was that the experience appeared to bond the cohort more strongly. After the retreats, many discussions and conversations in later classes went to a much deeper level due to the relationships and experiences we had developed as a cohort at the Courage retreats. I got to know many of my cohort members on a level that was not possible simply through our class work. This allowed later intellectual (and emotional) conversations to be much richer, in my opinion, because we knew more about each other, and about ourselves. I found this



relationship between the CTL retreats and the rest of the doctoral program class work to be a benefit that I had not expected.

### Observations, Perspectives and Perceptions

One of the main purposes of this chapter, is to provide the reader with a general understanding of what occurs at CTL retreats. It is also to “bracket” the author's opinions, observations, perspectives, assumptions and beliefs so that the phenomenological outcomes from this research are clearly distinguishable from those of the author (Moustakas, 1994). To that end, this next section of the chapter outlines those perspectives that the author walked into this research project already having.

#### *Cohort Building*

One of the central concepts of CTL is that the work is about being alone with others. That is to say, the primary purpose of gathering a group at a CTL retreat is not to build that group into a cohort, the purpose is to have a group of people create a space where all participants can safely do their own inner work. If friendships and a sense of community develop from that, it is a wonderful byproduct, but not a central purpose to the work.

While cohort building is not a designed outcome of courage work, it has been my experience that it almost always happens. Both within the doctoral cohort and in previous retreats, I have found bonding, friendship and deep connections to be a central outcome of the process. It was not surprising to me that my doctoral cohort became much closer and valued not only the inner time shared together, but the opportunity to socialize as well. While previous CTL retreats have been more

subdued, the connecting, social aspect of them felt quite central to me and added a great deal to the overall experience. I stay connected to many of the people with whom I attended previous retreat series and I value their friendships.

To me, the possibility of doing inner work with other people and building a strong, bonded cohort of friends are not mutually exclusive. In fact, I believe that for most people, it is difficult for the first not to lead to the second. I appreciated that the doctoral program appeared to consciously build cohort cohesion through the CTL process. It was my experience that it worked well and that it was a good tool to achieve that goal. While I do not believe that cohort building should be the sole purpose of courage work (any number of teambuilding or group facilitation activities may achieve that end), I think it can definitely be one of many planned outcomes.

#### *Social Activities and Courage Work*

As noted above, it was my experience that the doctoral CTL work was much more social, jovial, and at times raucous after the planned daily activities were finished. Upon reflection, this makes a lot of sense. With most CTL retreat series, the group has not been together before the first retreat. With the doctoral program, however, the cohort has been together for a full month in intensive classes for more than 8 hours a day. After weeks of reading, assignments, group activities, debate, and shared class time, it seems reasonable that a cohort would use the evenings of a retreat setting to create a festive atmosphere.

It is important for me to note that this did not take away from the specific planned activities by the facilitator. Everyone participated fully, in my experience, and

was able to separate the serious times designed to hold a sacred space, from those that were more jovial. I have wrestled with whether some of the activities, in which I fully participated, had a diminishing effect on the space the group created earlier that day. In the end, I have concluded that they actually served to support that space by deepening relationships in a holistic, humanistic and interconnected way.

I also want to stress that the CTL retreats that I had attended before the doctoral program were in no way synonymous with ascetic, monastic retreats. While the after-hours activities were more often subdued, there were still games, spirited conversations, and beer and wine was often available to anyone who chose to partake. It was my experience that most, if not all, did choose to participate, and that occasionally some of those activities moved well beyond anything that could be described as “subdued.”

### *Inner Work*

One of the reasons that I chose this dissertation topic was my interest in how others use experiences such as CTL to explore inner work. I have heard participants talk generally about revelations, epiphanies, and reflections at Courage retreats, but I have never asked them about the role that inner work plays in their lives and its connection to the retreats. I am intrigued with that phenomenon.

My own experience with inner work at CTL retreats has been profound, yet rather simple. My biggest revelation was that I already knew how to do much of the work; I just needed to make time to do it. I almost always took advantage of the optional meditation times in the mornings of the retreats, which reminded me of my

own intermittent meditation practice. Sitting in silence and deeply reflecting while in the presence of others was not an activity I had experienced before, but engaging in CTL retreats, it came rather easily to me. I found a kind of synergy when I was aware that others were meditating as well; it allowed me to go deeper in the space that we were creating together. It appeared that most others had a similar experience to mine.

Some of the skills central to the Clearness Committee were new to me and I found the entire experience to be powerful. Open and honest questions do not appear to come quickly to some in leadership positions. Like other school leaders, I find myself enmeshed in trying to quickly solve a problem, fix another person, or set another straight. Consequently, I do not take the time to honor the belief that those I work with can solve their problems themselves, and in fact will come up with better answers than my quick fixing answers. While I found that I was able to learn the concept at my first retreat, it took awhile for me to transfer it from an intellectual exercise to a well-practiced skill that I could easily draw upon. I find now that I ask open and honest questions every day at work; I look for opportunities to have others find the solutions themselves.

Revisiting the skills and memories of CTL has helped me at times when I have felt overwhelmed with work or personal responsibilities. Recently, for example, I have felt on a razor's edge trying to balance working a full-time job as an educational leader (50+ hours per week), researching and writing a dissertation daily, facilitating CTL retreats, and having a balanced home and social life. CTL reminds me that I am most connected to what is important when I do one thing at a time. I look for opportunities

to slow down, breathe, and embrace silence. I have found that my writing is most effective when I get up early and just write, when there is nothing else to distract me. As I noted above, I have drawn upon CTL to let others address their own problems or issues. If there are factual questions that I can quickly and easily answer, I do, but if others are asking me to solve their problems, I use open and honest questions to allow them to find the answers they have within them. While it can take more time, it removes a great deal of the burden from me, and I believe gets to a much better answer than if I had just tried to fix them.

I am very interested in the relationship between a voluntary process such as CTL to address inner work, and essentially a required course of study. I have suspected that the participation requirement may have an impact on some participants' abilities to fully explore inner work. I also wonder whether people who would not have normally chosen to participate in CTL work would be able to both create a sacred space for other people, and to explore their own inner work in such a setting. My experience with my own cohort (before interviewing or analyzing any of the data from this research project), however, was that this was not a problem. Informally, I heard from a few cohort members that they were unsure of what CTL was or why we were doing it, but that they enjoyed the overall experience. I could not tell if they truly were doing inner work, but they fully participated and did not seem to take anything away from anyone else in the space that was created.

### *Creating Space and Facilitation*

One of the central ideas of CTL work is the concept of creating an environment in which participants feel safe to do their inner work. When compared to other professional retreats or similar activities with school leaders, this aspect of Courage work may be unique. The purpose of this space is to look at the who of each individual, rather than focus on what they do or how they do it (as is often the focus of most educational retreats or professional development activities). The role of the facilitator in CTL, then, is to guide the participants, through an understanding of the touchstones in the central tenets of courage work, in creating this safe, inviting environment.

Before 2004, the only way one could learn to become a CTL facilitator was through the facilitation program sponsored by the Center for Courage and Renewal. In 2004, however, Palmer wrote *A Hidden Wholeness*. This book outlined all of the concepts and tenets that Palmer used to create Circles of Trust and courage retreats. It is my belief that *A Hidden Wholeness* has opened the door to explain to anyone how to create the space that CTL retreats are designed to create, and the purpose behind the work. I believe this has been a positive development rather than a threatening one. The more people understand the work and the reasons behind it, the more likely it is to get to the people who most need it.

It is my experience that some people are naturally skilled at creating a space where people feel safe, open, and able to reveal their true selves. CTL facilitator training is not the only way to gain those skills, and in fact there are CTL facilitators

who are less skilled at it than people I have met who have no experience with CTL at all. I believe that Courage facilitators have been exposed to the skills in a way that should allow them to generalize them to a variety of settings, but that others have similar concepts and apply them in their daily lives as well.

### Summary and Concluding Thoughts

As I have done in my research identity memo (Appendix D), I have decided to end this narrative with a bulleted summary of my current beliefs and thoughts around CTL work based on my personal experiences. I have come to believe the following perceptions and assumptions from my own CTL experiences:

- CTL helps school leaders to slow down and look inside themselves.
- CTL has literally saved some educators' professional lives. It has helped a few people I know decide that it was time for a professional change. It has helped many others rediscover the passion or spark that got them into education and leadership in the first place.
- CTL impacts both the professional and the personal aspects of a participant's life. Participants explore who they really are and how they take their "real selves" to their work, their relationships, their leisure time, their spiritual lives, and every other aspect of their lives.
- CTL sustains people through stressful and difficult times. In getting to better know their inner work and real selves, participants are able to carry these reflections, skills and revelations through tough times. Educational leaders

and teachers have very stressful jobs and this work is a powerful way to help them with that stress.

- CTL is additive to any other inner work participants might do. It does not diminish their existing spiritual, religious or mind-body work. If anything, it serves to enhance that work.
- The work is designed to be voluntary (based on Parker Palmer's writing), so I have always wondered what the impact of "requiring" people to attend retreats or CTL trainings has on the experience and the outcomes. This requirement can come in the form of teachers having to attend mandatory Courage inservice trainings, or Ed.D. students having to enroll in CTL classes as part of their course of study. I have assumed that this requirement diminishes the experience for some (if not all) participants, but other people I have talked to informally have said they never would have gone if they had not been forced to attend and that they really enjoyed it. I am intrigued to know participants' experiences and perceptions when they are required to attend.
- CTL strengthens the cohort experience in a doctoral program.
- Many CTL participants seek out opportunities to attend more retreats and CTL activities after their initial involvement and some become long-term participants.

I chose this topic of study due, in large part, to my own experiences, assumptions, and interest. There is inadequate research on CTL. There is no research



on how it relates to preservice, administrative licensure or doctoral programs. There is also no research on the issue of people being required to attend CTL trainings or retreats. These topics are relevant and require careful analysis. This research study analyzes these relevant topics.

This chapter presented a narrative of the author's bracketing of his experience, assumptions and opinions about CTL. The next chapter presents the results obtained from the methods outlined in chapter 3.

## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS

This chapter reviews the results from this study. It begins by describing the data collection, management and reduction strategies that were used. Three major themes of cohort building, reflection and specific activities are then described and analyzed in detail. The chapter then turns to the themes that came from specific interview questions. Three additional results that were not directly related to interview questions – the perceived purpose of Courage work, what participants thought their doctoral programs would have been like without CTL, and negative experiences from the retreats – are then detailed.

Most of the data in this section are separated out by cohort. While there is not an expectation that the four cohorts' experiences were necessarily different from each other, this presentation allows the researcher and the reader to assess if that's true. Chapter 6 discusses apparent differences between cohorts. Chapter 5 also presents differences between male and female responses when the data seem to indicate that their experiences were different. In addition to the 22 current or former doctoral student participants, both facilitators were also interviewed for this study. Some of their responses are included within topics below where appropriate.

### Data Collection and Management

During each of the recorded interviews, the researcher took notes and memos to address observations, bracketing and internal thoughts. Topics that recurred or stood out to the interviewer were noted in the observation sheet, or on a separate notepad. If there were topics that were out of context or did not seem consistent with the frame of reference being discussed, the interviewer asked clarifying questions of the participant. The interviewer followed the advice of Merriam (1998) in consciously working at “being respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening” (p. 85). All of these interactions were recorded and their responses were transcribed verbatim.

Some of the participants were better respondents than others. Merriam (1998) noted that a good respondent is called an informant and is defined as “one who understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and articulate for the researcher what is going on” (p. 85). The researcher in this study used numerous probes to try to extract key information from every participant in the form of “thoughts, feelings, opinions – that is offer a *perspective* – on the topic being studied” (p. 85). Again, all of these interactions were captured in the transcriptions as well as the researcher’s notes and memos.

Creswell (2003) stated that the process of data management involves “preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (p. 190). Once all of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions for accuracy. He listened again

to each of the 24 interviews while reading the transcriptions in order to correct any errors. The researcher also reviewed all of the supporting documents that participants provided from their retreats and scanned them into PDF format.

Once all documents were clearly in digital form, the researcher printed out each document. He color-coded the printouts so that he could easily distinguish the four cohort groups. This allowed the researcher to easily reread interviews within the context of each cohort.

#### Data Reduction

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined data reduction as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions” (p. 11). Summaries, memos, field notes, and lists of possible themes and codes were all examples of early data reduction that occurred while data collection was not yet complete. As concepts were mentioned during interviews that the researcher felt he had heard before, he made notes about them. As topics came up in different ways during the interviews, the interviewer spent time ensuring that questions were posed in ways that were clear to the participants. When this did not occur, the interviewer probed in more detail to see if the participants would clarify their responses.

Once completed, the researcher read every transcription and supporting document in its entirety twice (in addition to the time he listened to them while correcting any errors in the transcription). He again noted possible codes, themes and concepts that seemed to emerge as he read each transcription and included them in his

memos. Tally marks were kept next to possible themes that could then be coded in the text. These notes then drove the coding process.

### *Coding*

The researcher purchased and used the software program ATLAS.ti (version 5.5) to assist in the data reduction process. This program allows complex amounts of data (such as the 24 interviews, pages of field notes, memos, and the documents that participants provided) to be reduced, coded, organized and more easily analyzed.

After uploading all of the data into ATLAS.ti the researcher reviewed all of the interviews a fourth time to further speculate on themes, assertions, phenomenological statements and meaning units, and to assign codes. Miles and Huberman (1994) defined codes as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56), and described three different types. Descriptive codes involve attributing “a class of phenomena to a segment of text” (p. 57) and simply apply a description to that segment of text. Interpretive codes allow the researcher who is more knowledgeable about the context and dynamics of the topic to interpret the text or quotation and group those interpretations. Finally, Pattern codes are “even more inferential and explanatory” (p. 57), in that they allow the researcher to link text segments to specific themes, motifs or inferred patterns. All three types of codes made up the phenomenological meaning units.

The researcher developed a list of 80 codes for the purpose of reducing the interviews, memos and participant documents. The list of codes is included in Appendix E. The first grouping of codes was simply the answers to the interview

questions. The answers were labeled by their Interview Question (IQ) number (e.g., “1a:IQ - what do you recall?”). Many of the remaining codes were descriptive such as “silence/quiet” and “poetry.” Interpretive codes such as “reflection,” “conflict,” and “integrity” were also derived from the data. Finally, some of the codes also incorporated patterns that were central to this research. For example, “Inner Work – Professional” and “Cohort Building” were codes that developed out of patterns derived from the responses in the interviews. Many of the themes were deduced when the researcher listened and read through the interviews the first three times. Others (such as “perseverance”) came as a result of other codes simply not capturing some of the concepts expressed by the participants.

Using ATLAS.ti, the researcher coded all available data. He coded 1,783 segments of text from the interviews, memos, notes, and documents. Many of those text segments had numerous codes attached to them, so there were a total of 4,943 codings of the data. It is important to restate that since this study was based in phenomenological methodology, the coding was simply a tool to help the researcher organize all of the data into segments, groups and categories so that phenomenological statements and meaning units could more easily emerge or be discovered. Creswell (2005) noted that the goal of coding in qualitative research is to rearrange the data “into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts” (p. 96).

### *Matrices*

After coding, the data were further reduced into matrices. Miles and Huberman (1994) define a matrix as essentially a condensed table of comparable lists “set up as rows and columns” (p. 93). They can be organized in a variety of ways, and for the purpose of this study, the majority of the matrices created were ordered by cohort. Each research question contained matrices of the various interview questions that informed the greater research question. Each interview question, then, contained its own matrix of answers split into four columns (addressing each of the four cohorts). In addition, there were matrices created for codes that described themes, patterns or meaning units that were cited frequently.

Each matrix was a reduction of all of the interviews, field notes, retreat documents, journaling, and memos into a single page. ATLAS.ti allowed the researcher to quickly access all of the coded data by interview question or specific code. The data were evaluated for similar concepts, themes and ideas. Verbatim quotes that supported recurrent topics were included to substantiate assumptions. The purpose of the matrices was to reduce the data into a format to make analysis more manageable.

Matrices were also used to examine the relationship between men and women addressing the same questions. The answers that facilitators gave were also placed into their own matrices for analysis.

## Drawing Conclusions

There are a variety of strategies for drawing meaning from all of the data that has been collected. In qualitative analysis, the researcher does not have quantitative or statistical tools to draw upon. Miles and Huberman (1994) described 13 specific tactics for generating meaning from qualitative data. Creswell (2007) noted that phenomenology focuses primarily on verbatim statements to establish themes (also called meaning units) to describe the essence or phenomenon of the participants' experiences. The data in this chapter are presented as themes, supported by verbatim examples. The results are presented by cohort to describe how the 22 participants responded within the context of those who attended the retreats at the same time they did. The complete composite description of the experiences is presented and discussed in chapter 6.

## Major Themes

There were three major themes that rose above all others in this study as being central to the CTL experience. Cohort building, reflection, and specific activities were cited over and over by the participants' interview answers and supporting documentation. This section examines each of these three themes by cohort, and it further expands on the third theme (activities) to list out the four specific activities that distinguished themselves as being cited by at least half of the participants – Clearness Committees, poetry/music/prose, artwork, and evening social activities. These themes are outlined in Table 3.



Table 3

*Major Themes and Activity Subthemes*

Major Themes	Activity Subthemes
Cohort Building	
Reflection	
Specific Activities:	Clearness Committees
	Poetry/Prose/Music
	Artwork/Watercolors
	Evening Social Activities

*Cohort and Relationship Building were Central to the Experience*

Every participant in this study identified cohort and relationship building as central to his or her experience. Across cohorts, it was the most frequently cited answer to the interview question asking what the participants recalled about the CTL retreats. In addition, it was discussed by all participants at other times throughout the interviews in answer to other questions or simply as part of their overall narrative. Men and women both cited cohort building as a main theme, as did both facilitators who were interviewed.

In the Iota Cohort, for example, Jane felt that the Courage retreats “gave our cohort a chance to work together, to understand each other better [and] to work out issues that the cohort had.” Harold recalled a “deep emotional connection to the people I was with.” Even Abraham, who expressed some of the most negative sentiments about the Courage retreats, noted that “probably the most positive thing about...the Courage retreat was the relationship building that went on.” Every

participant from this cohort expressed a sentiment similar to Madalina who noted, “I strongly believe that it brought our cohort together; that we would not have been the cohort that we became if it was not for the Courage work.”

The Kappa Cohort also cited relationship and cohort building as the most positive aspect of the Courage in Leadership classes. Alena opined that “if we didn’t have the Courage piece, you would not have had the development of group dynamics. I think that really is a critical piece.” Christine added that the retreats allowed cohort members to “get to know people on a more personal basis than just within the confines of an academic class.” Marie agreed, noting that she felt that without the retreats, she “would not have had the opportunity to get to know people on a different level – as people not just students.”

The Lambda Cohort described cohort building as central to their experience throughout their interviews as well. Laura, as a result of the retreats, “felt a real connection to people.” Jay-Z “had a really great experience collaborating and learning about peers and my cohort.” While Roadrunner expressed one of the few negative sentiments related to cohort building at the retreats by stating that “if the purpose was to bond with the cohort, I’m not sure it was totally successful in that area,” he also felt that the cohort did use those opportunities to “get to know each other.”

The Theta Cohort also saw cohort building as a primary purpose of the Courage retreats. Ralph felt that retreats were “an opportunity for camaraderie and development of friendships.” Nickie recalled the retreats as “an opportunity to get to

know my cohort members,” and Gueneviere reflected that part of cohort building also included “time to speak as a cohort about problems that we saw.”

When looking more deeply across all cohorts at the topic of cohort building, there were three subthemes that were present. First of all, the simple fact that friendships were formed at these retreats was cited by more than half of the participants. Jane, for example, stated that “I’ve stayed friends with people from my cohort who I do not think I would have stay connected with had the Courage work not happened.” Second, participants saw the retreats as places where trust and support were fostered instead of competition. Helen said, “I don’t think that there is the sense of competition at the Courage retreats. It is more of a level playing field.” Madalina added, “I can go to any cohort member and get direction from them, get advice from them and also if I don’t want any of that, have them just listen. So, it’s a different relationship than it would be with anybody else.” Third, the retreats were seen as a safe venue to work out conflict or issues that the cohort was having, and that feeling persisted after the retreats as well. Wanda, for example, noted that “I think it would have been easier for people to break away from each other during difficult cohort moments, had they not had Courage as a background.” Jane underscored that by stating that “our cohort actually used some of the courage time to directly address some of the issues that we were having as a group.”

All three of these subthemes help to inform the basic research question of describing the overall experience for these participants. The two latter subthemes of support/trust and conflict resolution, however, serve to connect the relationship

between the Courage classes and the rest of the doctoral work. Participants from all four cohorts spoke of how the retreats enhanced the experience of the other classes the cohort took together, and therefore, how they integrated into the overall doctoral program. Ralph summarized that best with his belief that the Courage retreats “served the purpose of building and strengthening cohort, allies, and confidantes that lasted through the program.”

The Courage in Leadership retreats served to strengthen the cohort model according to the students who participated in these interviews. Study participants from all cohorts described closer relationships, stronger bonds and a more supportive cohort experience as a result of the Courage classes. Jerry summed up the role that they played by stating that the retreats fostered “conversations with people that I would never talk to. It enhanced some friendships and I think overall, it made the classes go better the following year because we knew the people more.”

#### *Reflection was Central to the Experience*

Reflection was the second most prevalent theme that arose from the CTL retreats. Every participant spoke about reflection and the role it plays in their lives. Half of the participants specifically cited reflection playing some role in their answer to the first interview question: What do you recall about the CTL retreats? All but two participants described specific memories of quiet or reflective times at the Courage retreats when asked. Reflection was central to the Courage experience for every cohort.

Abraham, from the Iota Cohort, noted that “CTL was encouraging us to take some time to really ponder and think about what we’re doing and why we’re doing it.” One of Fiona’s strongest recollections from the retreats was “the strengthening of reflective practice.” Jane added that “They were fabulous about giving you time to spend an afternoon thinking about an issue or having some sort of quiet time to think about what you really were passionate about.” Harold, also from the Iota cohort, described some of his reflective experiences at the retreats this way:

Oftentimes I would find myself drawing in my journal...the drawing would be really very rudimentary but it just was a way of my brain thinking and opening and the ideas that came, so it was a very generative kind of process for me. And I never would have expected that because I never saw myself an artist and actually this wasn't about being an artist.

From the perspective of the Kappa Cohort, Christine noted that “the Courage retreat facilitated the practice of very deep reflection.” Alena also felt that central to the CTL experience was “time to reflect. It seems like that was interspersed with all of it.” She added, “I process a lot by writing, and I remember I wrote a lot in those first meetings.” Fred described one particular reflective time during one of the retreats:

I remember climbing down the stairs and going down to the beach and walking. And I spent a good hour just walking, picking up stones and sticks, tossing them into the ocean and I really reflected on my life and the direction that I have been taking, or have taken.

Within the Lambda Cohort, Jay-Z noted that “every single time we had a retreat, there was a reflective time built in.” Helen described the retreats as a time when she had “just a real sense of needing to dig deep, I guess, and think; think internally a lot; process.” Jerry said it a little more colorfully: “Reflective time...it’s

like you are forced to do this; kicking and screaming, you're still going to do it...I like that."

Gueneviere, from the Theta cohort, also found that the retreats "allowed you to reflect on many things." Ralph recalled "in my little cabin room writing in my journal. I remember, I do a lot of doodling and journaling." Wanda encapsulated the experience with her recollection of "how good I felt at the end of the weekend that there's kind of that rejuvenation piece where you do get the time to sit down and reflect."

Participants in this study reported that this reflective time was powerful for them for a number of reasons. Some mentioned that their lives are so busy that this was one of the only times they had to reflect. Jerry shared that sentiment when he said, "it was a time for self reflection and you just don't get that anywhere else." Harold added that he appreciated it being obligatory: "What I really liked about it was the permission to relax and reflect; and actually the obligation to do something for myself. It was my task." Nicholas liked the focus on writing during the retreats. He recalled that "they had the journaling, they had the reflection piece required and that was important because we would write a lot and we don't get a chance, in my opinion in leadership, to write as much as we should." Christine summarized the importance of reflection in her busy life when she said:

There was built-in time for us, whether it was to meditate in the morning, or just open time in the afternoon. That was such a luxury to me personally, having very young children, to be able to think about the work that I do in the program, my practice as an educator, my self as a cohort member and a family member.

Also very relevant to this research study on inner work, a number of participants tied reflection to the doctoral program to their roles as educational leaders. Fifteen of the 22 participants, and both of the facilitators, spoke to the role that reflection played in connecting them to the rest of their lives. Abraham, for example, noted that “when I do walk away from the courage work, I am reflecting for a period of time because you’ve been in a process of 48 hours of reflection and so that tends to carry over.” Madalina, described the retreats as opportunities to do “soul searching; an opportunity to really look at why I am in the profession that I'm in; an opportunity to look at purpose, passion, my leadership strengths, and the reason that I do the work that I do.” Ralph found that the retreats allowed everyone to try “to figure out the essence of leadership, wrestling with the content of leadership, wrestling with the processes of leadership.” Louise added, “I think that both reflection and being in the moment are two things I could get much better at and I have appreciated the Courage work in helping me with that.” Alena summed up how reflection from the CTL retreats translates to her life:

I come to understand things by talking about them. And then I need to write about them, and through writing about them I get clearer about what they mean, and then I think that moves me into the next place of kind of building a theory around it. So, talking about it to get clear, writing about it to get even clearer, and then kind of building a model of it to sort of say, “so what? What does that mean?”

Reflection is at the core of the definition of inner work, and it was central to the experiences of every participant in this study. Participants found reflection valuable at the actual retreats, and they generalized reflective practices to their

personal, professional and academic lives. These data directly address the central question of this study. They indicate that the inclusion of inner work, in the form of CTL retreats, significantly impacted the professional, personal and research lives of the participants in this study.

*Specific Activities were Central to the Experience*

There were four major activities that occurred at the Courage retreats that stood out as central to the experience for most participants in this study. They make up the four activity subthemes of this chapter. Three of those – the Clearness Committees, the poetry/prose/music, and the art/watercolor activities – were all cited by more than half of all participants interviewed as being CTL activities that resonated with them. In addition, the after-activities socializing was also noted by more than half the participants (and both facilitators) as being an important aspect of the experience for many (though not all) of the participants in this study. These four activities together form the third main theme of this research.

*Clearness Committee.* The Clearness Committee was cited by every participant as being an important part of the overall CTL experience. As detailed in chapter 4, Clearness Committees generally occur on the second night of the retreats and are a structured format for supporting someone struggling with an issue in his or her life. Whether they were the focus person or a committee member, participants felt that Clearness Committees exposed them to a process that was unique and powerful. Some participants attempted to generalize them outside of the cohort or retreat setting as



well. The Clearness Committee is a critical part of Courage work, and every participant in this study saw it as such.

In the Iota Cohort, Fiona stated that of all the activities she could remember from the CTL retreats, “the most significant was the Clearness Committee.” She went on to say that the other retreat activities “on their own would not have sustained [the overall CTL experience]...but the Clearness Committee definitely would.” Harold agreed when he said, “without question, the Clearness Committees were exceptionally important.” Jane spoke to her experience as a focus person: “I thought it was a fabulous process...I got a lot of useful information. And actually, it really helped me kind of wrestle an issue that had been bothering me...it cleared my head.” Madalina concurred when she said, “the benefits were absolutely tremendous both for the group and for the individuals.” Nicholas added that the “Clearness Committee really helped me because it focuses you to sit and write and listen.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Alena noted that the “Clearness Committees were very interesting...I really enjoyed that aspect of the work.” While she was not a focus person herself, she noted that “the kinds of questions that help people deepen their thinking – I think that seemed to be what they valued.” Alena added that “it was all about them being able to explore their thoughts and ideas based on people reflecting back to them what they were saying.” Christine’s perspective was that Clearness Committees were “just a great way to kind of clear the head and get some fuzziness out and have some time to reflect on issues that you may not in other situations feel safe discussing.” Cleopatra added that “I think it’s an incredibly good thing.” Fred

concurred that the Clearness Committee “was a good tool for me to get [my issue] out in the open. All in all it was a very meaningful experience for me. It was life-changing in a way; at least life-anchoring.”

It is important to note that Marie had a different take on the Clearness Committee experience within the Kappa Cohort. She stated that, “I don’t think that the doctoral students were really prepared for the process of the Clearness Committee, nor did they enter it in good faith...they just didn’t know how important that was.” She went on to say that, “I don’t believe that they saw the importance of trying to honor a process...that the experience of the Clearness Committee was likely not to be what it could be unless they honor the process.” So, while Marie shared that she believes that Clearness Committees are extremely valuable, she did not feel they were carried out well at these retreats. She was the only participant interviewed who expressed this opinion, and it is interesting to note that others (from all four cohorts) reported that they greatly valued the process.

In the Lambda Cohort, Louise felt that Clearness Committees were “the single most powerful part of the Courage work.” Helen pointed out how challenging, but rewarding a process the Clearness Committee is. She said, “What hard work it is – hard work for the person raising the dilemma, and also hard work for the people who are there.” She added, “It is very challenging for us who are in the business of fixing things, to not fix it for someone else.” Laura noted that the Clearness Committee “brings another perspective of how to handle a situation.” Helen called the process a gift: “I would use this word very, very pointedly - that gift - it is a gift of time and of

attention that we don't generally receive." Louise underscored that when she said, "My husband is a great companion and that's what I was thinking about with the Clearness Committee. I think he is the only person that I would talk to in the depths that I talked to a Clearness Committee."

The Theta Cohort also found great value in the Clearness Committee. Gueneviere appreciated the process both "for the person that has asked to have one" and for those who are learning "how to do that questioning." She added, "Our questions are usually so value-laden and to not do that and to see what it draws out in the whole little group...I was just amazed at what that can accomplish." Nickie found that the questioning technique by others provided "guiding questions that helped me discover the route I should take." Wanda was struck by how respectful the process was:

Nobody talked about it afterwards, which was one of the rules, but I kind of thought, "Hah, well let's see how well that one works." But nobody really did and...I think people were highly respectful of that idea that you walk into a room and you leave it there.

The main relevance of the Clearness Committees to the overall research question was that they were central to the experience. Additionally, many people sought ways to generalize the lessons and skills from the committees. Nicholas, for example, noted that "I have actually used it in our district." Wanda reflected that she "definitely transferred that back on probably more of a subconscious level than a conscious one." Fiona added:

One skill that I learned that has made me a better leader more than anything else was acquiring the ability to ask open and honest questions that I did not

have a preconceived answer for. And, you know, that's the core of Clearness Committee. But that skill can be used in so many other settings whether it's talking to kids, talking to teachers, talking to parents. I think that one piece really allowed me to let go of a mindset that I kind of had to know what I was going to hear before I asked the question. That was extremely powerful skill for me.

Fiona was not the only participant to apply these skills back home. Jane also described how she has used them in her work setting:

I've used it, a kind of a mini-version with staff, in the sense that I really try not to solve their problems but to be an ear and sort of reflect back so that they can make their own decisions. I think especially in administration, we like to be rescuers and tell people how to do things, and I think it's a good reminder that it only makes us feel good. It doesn't really necessarily make the staff members feel good.

Helen reflected that just realizing the impact of Clearness Committees on others can change one's behavior. She said she never ceases "to be amazed at how much people appreciate the time to truly be heard." That suggested to Helen that "we spend a lot of time in our professional life talking, and we say that we do lots of listening, but the reality is, I do not think we do."

Nicholas also pointed out that the Clearness Committees have impacted more than his work setting. He said that "the Clearness committee has helped me in my personal relationship with my family and with my extended family and also with my spouse."

Clearness Committees were central to the overall CTL retreat experience. Additionally, skills and lessons from the committees were applied to other aspects of the participants' lives. Clearness Committees, therefore, appeared to clearly impact the personal and professional lives of those interviewed for this study.

*Poetry, prose, music.* Poetry, prose and music were also described by 18 of the 22 participants in this study as being central to their CTL experience. While not everyone fully connected with the pieces chosen, there was a general appreciation for their inclusion in the retreats.

In the Iota Cohort, Jane felt that “many of the readings that we had really encouraged inner reflection.” Fiona added, “Some of the poetry pieces were cause certainly for personal reflection. I’m right here looking at William Stafford’s [*The Way It Is*], which in some ways [was a] recurring theme that we’ve had.” Harold recalled an experience at one retreat where he “wrote a poem at the time” about an incident that occurred; writing poetry to capture his feelings was a relatively new experience for him. Madalina shared a story from another retreat where they had to choose “a song and we had to share that song with other people in our group...that was kind of a quiet time of going deep within ourselves to where we would connect our passion with our work.” Nicholas summarized the retreat experience by noting, “People shared books, shared thoughts. It really increased dialogue.”

The Kappa Cohort was a little more tepid about the experience with the writings, and did not mention music at all. While Christine shared that she “enjoyed reading the poetry,” and Alena added that the poetry “is really strong,” not everyone felt positive about it. Cleopatra shared that “we were reading poems, a poem by William Stafford and it made me sob and sob and I have no idea why.” When asked what that experience was like for her, Cleopatra replied, “horrible.” None of the other two participants from this cohort spoke about any of these activities or topics.

Helen, from the Lambda Cohort, found the poetry to be powerful. Her mother had passed away earlier that year, and she recalled that “some of the seasonal poetry, in particular...made me very contemplative.” Contemplation connected to poetry was something new for Jerry:

What was amazing about that was, I’m one of those that will take a piece of paper and check off a list. But, you had to read them and we read them three or four times and...if I’m going to be here, I’m going to be present, I’m going to get what I can out of it; and actually reading it three or four times, got a deeper appreciation for what they are.

Laura, also from Lambda Cohort, found through the poetry that “there were always things that just kind of just warmed your soul and brought back some of these memories from the past that maybe you haven’t thought about in a long time.” Louise also enjoyed these activities; she shared, “I love language and poetry, I love the sharing of the readings and talking about emotions and ideas that come out and how people interpret the readings that we do.”

The Theta Cohort, similar to Kappa, was more staid in its response to these activities. Gueneviere did note that “I love poetry and so I really love that someone searched out those for me.” Nickie recalled “several times where we read something, it was a short story or prose and we had time to kind of let it sink in and let it rumble around and be able to consider what that meant to us.” Wanda, however, recalled that “not everyone has a good comfort level with poetry,” and that it was an unpleasant experience for some in her cohort.

How the poetry, prose and music applied to the research question of this study, is perhaps not very obvious. Apart from looking at these activities as being central to

the overall experience, a number of participants described ways they shared the activities or lessons they learned in their personal and professional lives. Christine, for example, said that she spent time “reflecting on connections with the poem and with [her] life.” She added that doing so got her “thinking about people who have had a personal impact on my life.” Harold also generalized these activities to his life; he shared that now he reads “poetry more than I used to and...there's a more contemplative nature that I find myself going to.” Harold also connected the poem he wrote at one of the retreats to struggles he’s still having:

I mean the issues that I'm wrestling with in that poem...are still the same ones that are putting me in the hospital. And I'm at a point in my career right now in the last month where I'm trying to make some significant decisions about what I want to do again. Spending time in the hospital with these kind of...issues is a great time for reflection.

Others have generalized these activities to their professional lives as well. Jane noted that she has done some of her own “Courage sort of retreats when we had money for such things.” She would go “back to the readings – some of it is just taking a piece and having [staff members] reflect on it.” Jerry found that he turned to the Courage readings when he had to deal with a crisis at work. He shared:

to be able to have materials to draw from when you yourself are not thinking clearly; to be able to say, here's something I can take that I know will work and to be able to come up with those materials: Incredible.

Madalina noted that she often reviewed writings from the Courage retreats “to give me that extra strength because in my district, in my work, there were some tough spots.” She specifically cited *The Soul of Teaching* as a “book that I have used to go back and reflect.”

Each of these third things (as Parker Palmer calls them) was seen as central to the experience of the CTL retreats. They also served as tools for some study participants to learn more about their own personal or professional lives.

*Art/watercolor activities.* One activity that every cohort participated in was called “soul stories.” For this activity, the cohort was divided into groups of about four people. Each person took a turn telling the others an important story about his or her life. The others listened carefully and then used watercolors (or other art supplies if they preferred) to reflect back what they heard. Each person left the activity with three or four small art pieces expressing their story as heard through others.

Twelve of the 22 participants in this study specifically recalled the art or “watercolor activity” when asked what activities they remembered from the retreats. These activities were cited by some cohorts much more powerfully than others, but at least one person from every cohort described the activity’s relevance.

In the Iota Cohort, Fiona shared, “I remember we did the painting. We did a lot of artwork, which I enjoyed.” Harold noted, “one aspect that I never expected, but really found opening (but have not really incorporated into my life) were all the art kinds of projects that we did.” Abraham reflected on what that experience was like for him:

We had some watercolors and were asked to paint...I still recall there was some positive feedback that came to me that I really didn’t see in myself that the others saw. So I mean it was a good activity but again having never been a real arty type of a person and expressing my feelings through art or poems, it was difficult for me.



Apart from one recollection of the art activities by Alena, the Kappa Cohort had nothing to say on this topic. As compared to the other three cohorts, this was not a significant experience for the participants from this cohort.

Half of the participants from the Lambda Cohort, however, did fondly recall the art activities. Helen summed up her memory:

We did a watercolor in groups and I feel as though I am about the least artistic person on the planet and yet, I remember feeling quite inspired by it. And just the reception that my colleagues gave of my work was quite a surprise to me. I held on to those.

Four of the six participants from Theta Cohort recalled the art and watercolor activities. Ralph recalled “experiences of painting and...expressing ourselves in different kinds of formats.” Wanda described the experience as “where we got our little water colors and we drew pictures, and we were projecting how you saw somebody else. That one sticks out in my mind.” Sybil recalled the experience fondly, “I’m not an artist...but doing the little paintings was somehow special for me -- that seeing yourself reflected in other people’s kind of artistic rendition of what you’re all about. I liked that.”

While there were descriptions of how some participants brought these activities back to their workplaces (e.g., Jane said, “I’d have staff paint and draw”), that by itself was not prevalent enough to be thematic. What struck the researcher more than anything else was how many people described having kept the art others had painted for them. Five of the participants stopped the interview to show those specific art pieces to the researcher in the interviewee’s place of work. Harold, for

example, said, “Here's mine. I still have it right there.” Two others did not have the artwork at the time of the interview, but did share their importance. Jerry, for instance, described:

I remember giving my story and I think there's some power in that, to have somebody actually sit and listen to you. And so impactful that I actually took those three cards...I got a frame that held three pictures and it's up in my office right now so I can remember that, no matter how hectic things are or how lonely my job feels, that there was actually somebody that took some time to listen. And that given the time, people actually do care.

One final point of interest related to the subtheme of artwork relates to the difference between men and women. Six of the seven male participants (86%) in this study recalled the watercolor or other art activities, however, only 40% of the women (6 out of 15) brought up the topic. In addition, five of the men (71% of male participants) either shared the artwork from the retreats with the researcher during the interview, or described where they have the artwork at their home or office. Yet only two of the women (13% of female participants) did the same. After reading the interviews numerous times, possible reasons for this discrepancy were not strongly evident in the data. Most of the men (and two women) expressed surprise about the impact these activities had on them (as illustrated above). Perhaps this is nothing more than the experiences of the particular study participants, but the gender differences seem stronger than one might expect.

*Social/evening/fun activities.* Fifteen of the 22 participants, and both facilitators, commented on the evening social times being a significant part of the overall experience of the retreats. While these activities are not specifically designed

to be a part of CTL retreats, they clearly made up part of the phenomenon and were central to every cohort's retreat experience.

The Iota Cohort was described as "the party cohort" by Fiona. She said that they would "party until dawn pretty much...but in the positive way, I mean, we had a ton of fun." Jane added that the experience involved a "serious amount of partying or inner bonding, songs – it was very multisensory." One of the facilitators made special mention of this cohort as well. He noted that "I just remember it being quite the vibrant group." He added, "They're the all-time winner as far as late night community people. I don't think I have ever been with a group that stayed up so long and were so jovial late at night."

Kappa Cohort also had a lot of fun. Christine saw part of the purpose of the retreats to be "a time to celebrate." She added they were a "cathartic release of stress and energy and a time to get to know the cohort members at a deeper level and to have a lot of fun." Marie added that the evening times "were great activities that brought people together." She added that though these times "weren't part of the Courage work -- the games afterwards; that was great fun, just getting to know people again on a different level." Fred summarized his experience when describing the evening activities as:

fun...that really added value to the experience in terms of sitting around together talking about life experiences; sharing stories, the good stories the bad stories...and I think that collaboration allowed people to come...out of their shells and participate.

It should be noted that Alena did not find the social times with Kappa Cohort fun at all. When asked to expand on her experience with those social times, she replied simply, “that was just really hard for me.”

The Lambda Cohort also described a festive time in the evenings after the scheduled activities. Helen saw the evening times as “opportunities to socialize.” Louise described how “we’d stay up into the night and talk after we finished Clearness Committee work...those unofficial moments were really wonderful.” Four members of this cohort mentioned campfires into the evenings. Roadrunner, for example, said, “there were fun things that went on that weren’t organized as much -- like at night... we all sat around a fire and we sang camp songs and stuff on our own.”

Theta Cohort also enjoyed its evenings. Wanda spoke about “that social time, just getting to know people.” Sybil was even blunter in her assessment of the evening times by stating that “the important parts of those retreats were not the structured activities. They were the being silly, pajama party aspect of it.” Nickie described one of those “pajama party” activities with the women in her cohort as similar to:

having a sleep-over when we were teenagers. We were giggling, people were telling stories about themselves, when they were teenagers, and they were pretty hilarious -- not completely the pillow fight, but close. People were pulling out their “Hey, I’ve got some chocolate”...and it really was lots of fun.

The connection of this subtheme to the greater research question is summarized above in the “cohort building” theme. A vast majority of those who spoke to this topic described it as a time to increase friendships, get to know others in a fun,

non-academic setting, and to support each other. Buckwheat, one of the facilitators, encapsulated the role this subtheme played for the cohorts:

I think that the Courage experiences, both individual weekends and the experience as a whole, became part of the oral history of each cohort. I would hear people talk about an event or a game or a conversation, or something that happened at a Courage retreat that was unique for their particular cohort and that became one of those shared experiences not unlike a graduation ceremony. So that collective memory of certain events rang true for them as members of the group.

As noted above, however, these events were not for everyone. Buckwheat also summed that up by saying, “There were idiosyncrasies about the way people choose to recreate that may or may not be compatible with everyone.”

#### Themes that Addressed Interview Questions

The interview questions were designed to address aspects of the main research question and its sub-questions. This section of the chapter reports on themes or perspectives related to four of the interview questions. Specifically, previous experience with Courage work by the participants (as outlined in interview question number 2) is explored. How CTL fit into the overall doctoral program (interview question number 4) is analyzed, including examining the impact of it being perceived as a required class. Also, how CTL was seen by some not to fit into the doctoral program is described. Additionally, the means by which CTL may have impacted participants’ personal, professional or research lives are described (interview question 5). Finally, interview question 3 (how participants find meaning and purpose in life) does not reveal clear themes; this is discussed at the end of this section.

*Previous Experience with CTL*

Six of the 22 participants in this study had attended Courage retreats, classes or trainings before their doctoral program. With the exception of one participant (Marie) who had been to more than 10 CTL retreats before her cohort experience, most of these experiences were in classes, CTT retreats, or one or two “sampler” retreats or trainings. These participants are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

*Participants who have had Previous Experience with Courage Work*

Type of “Retreat”	Participants (and cohort)
1. Class where Courage work was a component	Gueneviere (Theta) Helen (Lambda)
2. Trainings or “mini-retreats” by CTL facilitators	Louise (Lambda) Nicholas (Iota)
3. CTT Retreat Series	Laura (Lambda)
4. CTL Retreat Series	Marie (Kappa)

Of the 16 remaining participants, 10 reported that they had never heard of Courage work until their doctoral program. Of the 6 other participants, 3 had read at least one of Parker Palmer’s books or had heard him speak. Fiona, for example, shared that she “had read Parker Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach* and I had actually heard him speak when he was at Pacific University and he was really wonderful. So, I was familiar that it existed.” Three others had had a relative, friend or colleague who had participated in Courage retreats and shared their experiences with the participant. Some participants also reported having been interested in attending earlier retreats, but

did not have either the time or money to be able to attend. Christine, for example, reported:

I actually had a few friends who had participated in it and they had said that they enjoyed it. But to be honest, I just felt like it was a luxury and almost like an indulgence that I just couldn't financially afford and also just didn't feel like I had time for in my life before being part of this program.

Of the six participants who had previous experience with Courage work, four said that the inclusion of the Courage in Leadership retreats was a factor in their decision to apply to Lewis and Clark's doctoral program. Marie stated, "Oh, it was huge...I probably wouldn't have joined the program, had it not been a part of it." Nicholas added, "Yes, it's the reason I went there. I could actually say it was the reason." Gueneviere agreed that it was a factor in her decision to apply. Laura was more reflective when asked whether the Courage work influenced her applying to the program. She stated, "You know, I think I did. Yeah, because I did look at the curriculum and...it was definitely a plus." Of the two remaining participants who had experienced Courage work, Helen described it as "a non-player" in her decision to apply. Louise could not remember if she knew CTL was part of the program when she applied, "I don't know if I knew that when I applied to the Lewis and Clark program. To be honest, I can't remember."

During the interviews, two of the six participants who had experienced Courage work earlier expressed some confusion between their memories of the doctoral retreats and their earlier experiences. Laura, for example, answered the interview question related to recollections of quiet or reflective times by stating, "I

can't remember exactly. It's all a blur because I've been in the Courage before...in previous years, so I don't remember the actual connections with this retreat versus the ones in the past." Helen stated something similar:

I am trying to keep that separate from the work around the Doctoral Cohort and Courage work, but, I don't know 100% that I am doing that...because there are such similar themes, that it sort of draws together.

Marie is the only participant of the six who purposely compared the earlier retreats with the ones she experienced within the doctoral program. All the other participants worked very hard to keep their recollections separate and not to compare them. Marie's recollections, while those of only one person, are worth noting because she fully understood the philosophy, process and purpose of Courage work before beginning the doctoral program retreats. Her perspective follows.

Marie was critical of the doctoral retreats. Her perception was that her cohort members "were there because they had to be there, compared to the other programs which everybody joined because they wanted to be there." That led her to question whether those in her cohort really understood the process and took it seriously. For example, she wondered if "sometimes people felt like they had to participate. And I don't know why; if they just didn't truly understand, trust the process, or if it had to do with being a cohort maybe." She also observed that "people were hesitant, not really trusting the process because they didn't know it."

Marie also worried that those who did not know about Courage work outnumbered those who did, and may have negatively influenced the minority. She said:



I also think that sometimes, when you have so many people that don't really get it, that influences those that do. Some folks that were in the group, either for the first time experiencing this, really got it, or others that, like myself who had participated before, maybe felt a little peer pressure to, "Okay, let's just get this rolling because we really want to share that glass of wine after it's all over."

Marie felt that the biggest issue was one of time. She suggested that only three retreats (instead of the traditional four to six in a series), made it so "that there just wasn't enough time to cultivate the processing that is required for one to do the inner work, and had the doctoral retreats gone on longer, maybe people would have developed." Given that the each individual retreat was exactly the same time span as those of her previous retreats, the researcher asked her to go into more depth on that issue. She described her recollection from one of the retreats:

One night we presented PowerPoint presentations for a project [from our] action research class. So, if you will, business and pleasure were mixed; business being school work, pleasure being the retreat, the Courage work. And so it felt like we had to talk about business. We had to talk about schedules with our course work, due dates, projects that were due, how to get things lined up....and time for question and answer based on that kind of stuff we were discussing. So I never felt that the entire time frame was all about Courage work. It was shifting hats. "Okay, let me take off my Courage hat now, and I'm going to put on my doctoral student hat and let me take notes about this schedule that they're talking about."

Marie also had concerns about the Clearness Committees. As noted earlier in this chapter, she stated, "Compared to the other Courage retreats, I don't think that the doctoral students were really prepared for the process in the Clearness Committee, nor did they enter it in good faith." She felt that others did not completely understand how to ask open and honest questions. She opined that:

A lot of people had a difficult time leaving the role of leader behind. Specifically, it was difficult to believe in the premise that we each have the answers – really! We just have to perhaps be asked the right questions to find those answers within, the strength within, to believe in ourselves, and that we will arrive at the right answer.

In summarizing, Marie wondered “how many people walked away with a true understanding of the Courage work.” She captured her feelings with:

I was concerned that they might judge it negatively and that wouldn't be fair, because...the time issue really didn't allow it to be done right, and the fact that people were required to be there....The Courage work is so important in my life that I just didn't want people walking away with the wrong impression, and if down the road they were given the opportunity or the invitation to join, they might say “no” because of a bad experience – that just wasn't warranted.

Most of the participants in this study judged the Courage retreats quite positively, so Marie's concerns may not have played out in the end. Her knowledge of what her previous CTL retreats had been, however, had a significant impact on her doctoral CTL retreat experiences.

#### *How CTL Fits into the Doctoral Program*

Twenty out of the 22 participants in this study felt that the CTL retreats fit into the overall doctoral program quite effectively. They used terms and phrases such as “essential” (Harold), “key piece” (Jane), “perfectly” (Louise), “important work” (Fred), and “well, I thought it fit quite well” (Ralph). The way in which they saw CTL integrating into the doctoral program, however, was quite varied. This section outlines the three subthemes that emerged from this topic.

*Academics and CTL complemented each other.* At least 3 people from every cohort, and 17 participants in all, commented that they saw the Courage retreats as an

important and necessary complement to the academic classes in the doctoral program. Many said that both parts were needed in order to make the experience complete, unique and truly valuable. Madalina was concise and articulate when she stated, “the academic part is the ‘doing’ and the Courage part is the ‘purpose for the doing’ – simplest terms.”

Exactly how the two aspects of the doctoral program went together, however, was difficult for many participants to articulate. Some struggled to find the words or descriptions they wanted. Fiona, for example, reflected:

[CTL] was tremendously driven by intrinsic motivation. This is...it’s almost like this is who I want to be, and I want to be this person who listens in this open and full way and who reflects and who focuses on relationships. Where typical parts of a curriculum, you know, you’re learning, you’re learning skills, you’re learning information, they’re all important. And maybe we’re touching on the spiritual side here a little bit.

Members of Iota Cohort (including Fiona) drew parallels between the academic work being the practical side of the program, and the CTL retreats being a spiritual component. Later in her interview, Fiona articulated that CTL was “the spiritual side of being an educational leader and most classes are the practical, technical side.” She added, “You really can’t have one without the other and be the person as leader that you want to be.” Madalina agreed: “There’s no way you could really get to the hard work of the doctoral program until you take care of the spiritual, purposeful work because it’s intense; it’s hard.”

Kappa Cohort did not use the term spiritual, but instead focused on the heart or the feeling part of the brain. Fred, for example, stated, “It’s the academics versus the

heart matter.” Cleopatra felt that CTL made her listen “with a different part of my brain. I wasn’t trying to be really intellectual.” She said she was trying “to feel a little bit more.” Alena summarized that both of these pieces were important parts “of helping to grow strong leaders.”

Louise, in the Lambda Cohort was drawn to the Yin and Yang metaphor as she tried to articulate how the two parts of the overall doctoral program went together. She said, “I think it’s the Yin and the Yang – kind of the inner and outer part of leadership ...the Courage really works on that inner part.” Laura added that she felt they complemented each other because “we need to take care of ourselves and our minds and our bodies.” Roadrunner agreed with Fiona and Madalina from the Iota Cohort when he said, “I think it was about...the spiritual part of leadership.”

Theta Cohort was a little more analytic when examining how the two components complemented each other. Ralph felt that, “the idea here is to stretch people in different ways and to move them into some uncomfortable spaces so they can actually learn. That’s why I would say that I think that it is a strong program element.” Wanda reflected that CTL was “that affective domain that’s important... just as important as the academic where you’re talking about somebody’s education.” Nickie concluded that, “because of the integration, we became better holistic thinkers; [the program] kind of linked those two areas together.”

Many of the participants felt a need to defend the “inner part” that CTL retreats provided. Everyone appeared to take for granted that the academic classes would be a part of the doctoral program, but the Courage work was not taken for granted at all.

One way that participants defended CTL was by looking at it as necessary preparation for the rest of the program. Roadrunner, for example, stated, “It kind of helps calm you mentally so that you’re better prepared to face the challenges of the program and life in general.” Most participants were very clear in their defense of CTL being an essential part of the experience. As Jerry put it, “No, this is just as important, if not more important, than your policy class or your systems class or whatever class.”

Whether participants used the term spiritual, affective, or heart, the vast majority saw value in incorporating this work into the overall doctoral program. They appreciated the role CTL played in complementing or balancing the academic or intellectual aspects of the program.

*Cohort and relationship building.* Fourteen participants specifically cited cohort or relationship building as one of the main ways in which CTL fit into the overall doctoral program. This concept was fully covered earlier in this chapter as one of the major themes from this research and is not detailed again here. It is sufficient to say that the theme and the conclusions drawn above are applicable to this section as well.

*Perspective and social justice.* While a minority of participants cited these two topics, perspective-taking and social justice resonated loudly with nine of them and warrant comment. These nine participants (including at least one person from every cohort) felt that CTL gave them a different way of looking at others and the world. Further, they felt that Courage work promoted social justice (which is a central tenet

of the overall Lewis and Clark program) thereby greatly enhancing not only their doctoral program experience, but also their life experience.

Jane, for example, stated, “I think Courage helped me see other perspectives.” Roadrunner liked that CTL is “a way to contemplate new ways of viewing the world ...that aren’t just read the book, read the article, regurgitate, do the assignment.” Cleopatra added that the Courage work “allows me to put on some lenses that I wouldn’t have looked through.” Harold felt that CTL “provides a lens for me to look at my decision-making and choices that I make.” Wanda summarized the notion of perspective taking when she said, “not only did Courage kind of get you to see things from certain perspectives, but you got to know people...everybody as a person.”

Jay-Z linked the idea of perspective-taking to the bigger issue of social justice. She reflected that “social justice to me was how we...look at the whole child; we can’t just look at the label, so those Courage retreats kind of helped me look through different lenses.” Helen also felt that CTL was directly linked to social justice issues. When asked how the CTL retreats fit into the overall doctoral program, she said, “The first connection that I make is to the concept of social justice...I think they provided a context to see the inequities, to see the issues that need solving.” Madalina stated, “I think some of that diversity awareness would never have come about had it not been for Courage.” Helen summarized her feelings by adding:

That was one of the reasons that I chose the doctoral program [at] Lewis and Clark, because of their commitment to social justice. And so, in that respect...the Courage retreat seems like a natural extension of that – of that philosophy or that work.

Participants shared how this work impacted their doctoral work, their professional lives and their personal lives. Again, the topics of perspective-taking and social justice were not cited by a majority of participants, but they were cited by 9 of the 22. Those who did cite it felt that it was a significant aspect of their experience and also generalized to their personal and professional lives in positive ways.

### *CTL as a Required Class*

One of the central research questions of this study has to do with the notion of Courage work being 3 one-credit courses within the doctoral program at Lewis and Clark College. The perception of whether the experience was “required” is one that needs to be explored. As noted in previous chapters, a central tenet of Courage work is that it is completely voluntary. Whether this experience meshed with that tenet is a central question this study hopes to answer.

Buckwheat, one of the facilitators, made it clear to all students that this was not a truly mandatory class. He stated:

There was attention to preparing them for an experience that was required in terms of the curriculum design but not required if they chose not to participate. I asked everyone to try it the first time, and if they didn't find that it met their needs or was outside of their utility that we would certainly adjust to that. So, I was very aware that in the CTT/CTL facilitator development, there was always the notion of invitation, and not that this should be a required experience. I tried to balance that paradox retention by inviting people and then giving them a way out after the first one.

Songster, the other facilitator, added:

I was never aware of anyone fussing about this being required. I was never aware of it, and...I know for myself in email messages that I sent out before the retreat and almost the first thing I said in every retreat, I put a disclaimer out there. In the email messages I said, “Just know that I don't want you to

come to this retreat if you feel it's an obligation." I used that word all the time: "If you think this is an obligation, please stay home."

The perception of the vast majority of the participants of this study was that the Courage in Leadership classes were indeed a requirement, but that the requirement was critical to its success. Eighteen of the 22 student participants in this study stated that the class requirement was a real and positive thing. Only one participant felt the requirement was a negative aspect of the experience. Of the other three (out of 22) participants, two felt that the requirement made no difference and the other did not comment on this topic at all.

The biggest theme that arose from this notion of required participation was that participants believed that the experience would have been negative if cohort members were able to opt out. At least 2 members from every cohort and 14 participants in all stated that the class requirement made it a positive experience. They felt that the retreats were valuable and they only worked because the entire cohort was present.

Fiona, in the Iota cohort, for example, stated that "the experience would have been less if we hadn't all been there." Jane added that if it there had not been a requirement, it "would have weakened the cohort." Harold summed it up by saying, "They needed to be there – Absolutely."

In the Kappa Cohort, Cleopatra stated that "if it were optional...[that] would really bother me." Christine noted that everyone being at the retreats "was a crucial factor for the development of our cohort as a cohesive...strong, caring unit." Fred agreed. He stated that without the requirement, "I don't think we would have gotten



the collectiveness.” He added, “I think the CTL retreats [are] what set Lewis and Clark apart from other programs...it required me to be present, it required me to contribute.”

The Lambda Cohort also felt that participation needed to be required because the experience would have been diminished if anyone chose not to attend. Jerry, for example, stated that Lewis and Clark needed “to make it a requirement.” Laura added that it was important to have everyone there, because the experience “was a unifier.” She felt that the retreats were Lewis and Clark’s “way of taking care of us.”

The Theta Cohort also felt that the experience would have been diminished if everyone were not present. Ralph felt that without the requirement, “it would have ultimately weakened the group.” He added, “it would have created factions of people who attended the retreats and those who didn’t. I think [that] would have divided the group.” Wanda added that as a result of the class requirement, “people took them more seriously. Everybody attended. I think the fact that everybody attended was important.” Gueneviere agreed, by stating that “if everybody wasn’t there, there would be missing voices.” Nickie concluded that if everyone had not been present, “it wouldn’t have allowed for us to be a real cohort.”

While a vast majority of the participants in this study agreed that everyone needed to be present at all of the retreats, there was not complete agreement about whether the classes needed to be required in order for that to happen. Seven of the participants in the study clearly stated that the fact that CTL was a class had no impact on their own attendance. Helen, for example, stated, “I do not think it did, because I didn’t think of it as a class. I thought of it as an experience, something that I could

gain and it is a memory maker.” Jay-Z added, “Not at all; I went into the program with an open mind.” Fourteen of the 22 participants, however, felt that the fact that it was 3 one-credit courses forced others in their cohort to attend who would not have otherwise gone. Nickie, for example, predicted that “had it been [a] choice, there may have been half, two thirds, people there.” Madalina concluded:

I don't know if there would have been anybody there who would have really done it without it being required. I kind of doubt it because as you're going through the program, the work is so intense that that's just one more thing to do.

Five participants of the study admitted that they would not have attended the retreats had it not been part of the curriculum. The main reason given was the number of other demands on their time. Christine stated that “it would have been tempting to not participate.” Fred added that “there are 110 reasons why one person can't make it. I was one of those people.” Nicholas also agreed that it had to be required because everyone is “so busy that we would come up with millions of excuses to not do so.” Madalina’s admission however came from more of a place of fear. Initially, she agreed with the previous people quoted above by indicating that all she wanted to do was to “go back to my home, to my work...and this was an additional load and time that I didn’t have, and if there was a way to get out of that, I would have.” A little later, she added that if she had been asked to voluntarily be part of a CTL retreat series, “It would frighten me. I would feel uncomfortable with it. To volunteer to do it -- absolutely no.” Having had the experience, however, Madalina became one of its

biggest advocates in this study. She said, “Do I think I have personally gained from it? Oh, man! Tremendously so.”

Some participants noted that the requirement caused others in their cohort (similar to Madalina) to try something they never would have known they liked otherwise. Harold, for example, referred to some in his cohort who initially did not want to go, and said that later, “I know from talking to them they really felt great about it.” Madalina told of another cohort member who initially (like her) did not connect with CTL, but “he did connect at the end through the process and understand the benefits.” Laura noted that “even people who were hesitant perhaps going into it came away with a sense of being comfortable.”

Overall, the fact that the retreats were 3 one-credit courses and part of the doctoral curriculum was seen as a positive thing. Participants in this study felt that the perceived requirement made everyone in the cohort attend, and that was critical to the retreat experience being a positive one. Many felt that without attaching credit to the retreats, they or other in their cohort would not have chosen to experience the cohort building, reflection and impactful activities that were cited as main themes in this study. Jerry summarized best by stating, “I think you need to make it a requirement. You need to attach credit to it to make it a legitimate part of the program.”

#### *How CTL May Not have Fit into the Doctoral Program*

While clearly most of the participants in this study felt that the Courage retreats fit well into the overall doctoral program, there were a number of perspectives that did not agree with that assessment. Four participants said the Courage retreats did

not clearly integrate into the overall doctoral program (though two of those later expressed ways they felt that the retreats did integrate), and 11 participants had questions about the purpose of the retreats. Those perspectives are outlined in this section.

The four responses that indicated that CTL did not fit into the curriculum were not strident arguments, but they are important to describe in this study. When asked whether the Courage in Leadership classes fit into the doctoral program, for example, Abraham replied, “My initial response to that is, ‘no it didn’t to me.’...I felt that wasn’t part of the whole.” He later added, “I just haven’t quite figured out how it fits into the whole program.” Cleopatra’s response was “I don’t think it did. But that was okay with me.” Helen added, “Did I see the Courage work integrating to other aspects? If by that we mean specific content, course content, not specifically.” Marie had an interesting take on this topic; she approached the question from the other direction. She assumed that the rest of the classes should have fit into the Courage framework, and they did not. She said, “I didn’t feel they integrated at all, except for the course that [one of the professors] taught...I can’t think of another one that really integrated the Courage work.”

The bigger issue with program integration had to do with the real purpose of the CTL retreats. Eleven participants expressed the opinion that the purpose of Courage work either was not clear to them (or others), or that it should have been made clearer at the beginning of the doctoral program. Because of that ambiguity, participants had difficulty fully reflecting how well the retreats integrated into the

overall program. Every cohort had at least two people who expressed confusion over the real purpose of the Courage retreats.

In the Iota Cohort, Abraham said, “It’s probably my lack of understanding why, but I really didn’t make the connection.” During the retreats he asked himself, “Why are we doing this?” He later added, “Maybe we didn’t really understand why.” Nicholas could articulate the purpose of the retreats himself, but he observed that “some of the faculty felt it was a waste of precious academic time.” Jane was not completely clear on the purpose, but she was not bothered by it as much as other cohort members. She stated:

I could see that being a rub for people who need to feel like it has to have some sort of clear goals and clear specific tasks that you're learning. Since I think I'm more comfortable than many with ambiguity, I didn't feel the need for specific outcomes from it...or maybe they were there and I didn't even know it.

In the Kappa Cohort, Alena also was never fully clear of the purpose or outcomes of the Courage work. She stated, “I don’t know that I really understand the work.” Fred believed that he came to understand it, but was frustrated that it was not clarified for him earlier in the process. He stated, “I don't think it was communicated clearly.” He would have preferred for the purpose, goals and outcomes “to have been more of a conversation upfront.” Marie was always clear about the purpose of Courage work, but she was frustrated that others did not fully grasp it. She gave the example, “I think sometimes people felt like they had to participate, and I don’t know why – if they just didn’t truly understand [or] trust the process.” As quoted earlier in

this chapter, Marie assumed that others judged the experience negatively because they did not fully understand its purpose:

I was concerned that they might judge it negatively and that wouldn't be fair, because...the time issue really didn't allow it to be done right, and the fact that people were required to be there...I just didn't want people walking away with the wrong impression, and if down the road they were given the opportunity or the invitation to join, they might say "no" because of a bad experience – that just wasn't warranted.

The Lambda Cohort had less of an issue with the purpose of the Courage retreats. Jerry, however, was aware that others have debated the relevance of the retreats. He stated, "some people say, 'why are we doing this?' and I think that's been in debate at Lewis and Clark." Louise, similar to Marie, had hoped that more of the academic classes would have incorporated the CTL philosophy. She shared, "I think that we have people teaching our classes who don't really understand the Courage work, so they're not always making a good connection."

Nickie, in Theta Cohort, shared, "I know it was purposeful; it was put in there for a reason and a purpose. But the purpose to my knowledge (maybe I'm the only one who didn't get it) was never laid out with some solid definition." Ralph added that a number of cohort members at the retreats "wondered sometimes about when we were going to get into the content of leadership." He added, "I did have some colleagues who couldn't quite understand what the hell was really going on." Sybil felt she understood the purpose, but it left her wanting something else. She said:

I would have liked to have...each Courage [retreat] focus on something; whether...we took a different leadership style each time and kind of dug into what it meant for us...something more intellectually challenging.

When participants made suggestions about how to improve the integration of Courage work into the overall program, most suggested that the purpose of the retreats needed to be clearly stated from the beginning. Abraham, for example, suggested, “I might do a little more instruction on what are these things. What is the goal? What is the purpose of these things? And maybe they gave that to us but I don’t recall receiving them.” Fred concurred. He stated that “as a student it would be nice to know from day one that at the end of...4 weeks of study we’re going to have a CTL [retreat] and the purpose of that is...” Another solution offered by Sybil was to better blend academics into the Courage model. She concluded:

I really think that the Courage idea has so much potential and...I would really like to see what would happen in kind of a blended model of just having ...some kind of an academic or intellectual question, challenge, [or] focus.

While most participants in this study felt that the CTL retreats fit into the doctoral program, a few did not. More important, however, many cohort members were not clear (at least early on in their experience) what the purpose of the retreats was. A number of participants suggested that more information up front would have made the experience clearer, and presumably more enjoyable.

#### *Integration of CTL Work in Personal Lives*

One of the interview questions asked participants to share how they have applied or integrated Courage work into their own lives. This is at the heart of the main research question of this study. This section of the chapter reviews how members of each cohort addressed the application of Courage work specifically into their personal lives.

*Communication and personal relationships with others.* Sixteen of the 22 participants indicated that their communication and personal relationships with others improved as a result of the Courage in Leadership retreats. There is an interesting twist to this theme, however, because every member of Iota and Kappa cohorts mentioned this theme, and all but one member of Lambda mentioned it; yet absolutely no member of Theta Cohort mentioned the application of improved communication or personal relationships at all in their interviews. Members of Theta cohort were more likely to indicate that the retreats had no application to their personal lives, as described later in this section.

Every member of Iota Cohort spoke to the role that CTL played in improving their communication and personal relationships. Jane, for example, said, "I feel like it's helped me being more tolerant with other people; to be a better listener." Abraham shared that while at the retreats, "I have reflected on my family, how I might have handled things differently, what can I do better, because I think all of that Courage work is really service oriented. It's helping other people." Nicholas added that the Courage work "has helped me in my personal relationship with my family and my extended family, and also with my spouse."

Everyone in the Kappa Cohort also reflected on ways that CTL improved their communication skills and their relationships. Fred, for example, said, "I've actually utilized this in my personal life; not only with my children but with [my wife]." He added, "I learned a valuable lesson in terms of really hearing and suspending judgment." Marie shared that with her own children she has learned to trust "that they



too will find their way and it has to be their truth, and I can just be who I am and fully aware of who I am, and hope that is a model for the kids.” Christine described how activities from the retreats impacted her marriage because she enjoyed “sharing the poems with my husband and just talking about...some of the silly fun things.”

Cleopatra reflected that CTL has helped her to “respect other people’s opinions.” She added, “I’ll wear the CTL lenses and if somebody doesn’t want to do something I might be able to say, ‘I get it and you don’t have to.’”

Lambda Cohort also discussed the application of communication skills in relationships. Louise shared that she has “tried to get better as a listener and to ask those open and honest questions that help people find their own truths.” Laura gave the specific example of “a friend who is going through some really hard times and the questioning from the Courage really helped me help her in trying to come to her own...decision.” Roadrunner shared that he has “applied some of it to my own family.” Jerry was more specific in telling how the work at the retreats helped him to share a difficult issue with his wife: “I think it’s helped me explain where I’m at with my wife...I don’t think I would’ve talked to her about it without the Courage retreats.”

Members of Theta Cohort, as noted earlier, did not speak about applying any new CTL skills to their personal lives other than self-reflection. In fact, three of the members of this cohort did not feel they have applied anything new from CTL to their personal lives at all. Sybil answered the question about whether she has integrated anything from the retreats into her life by stating, “not that I can recognize.”

Gueneviere and Wanda both felt that the personal skills that CTL spoke to were

already present for them before the retreats. Gueneviere stated, “I don’t think [the retreats added] a lot of new [skills] to my personal life because I think that was there anyway.” Wanda added, “I don’t know that I’ve integrated anything from Courage that wasn’t already there. I think a lot of what we did there was already kind of within you. The nice thing about Courage was they focused you on it.”

While the vast majority of participants noted that their experience with the Courage retreats positively impacted their communication and relationships, this was not true for six of them. Five of those six were in Theta Cohort. In reviewing all of the interviews again, it is clear that members of Theta Cohort have applied skills related to self-reflection from the retreats, and that they have shared many activities from CTL with others in their professional lives (described in the next few sections). The participants in this study from Theta Cohort, however, did not discuss their personal lives and families as much as those in other cohorts. Wanda and Gueneviere were two who did discuss their personal lives, and as noted earlier, they valued the skills and lessons shared through CTL, but they both felt that they already had those skills before taking the Courage in Leadership class.

*Reflection.* Twelve of the 22 participants indicated that the way that they have applied Courage work to their personal lives is through increased reflection. At least two participants from every cohort (and notably three from Theta Cohort) mentioned self reflecting more as a result of CTL. Statements such as Harold’s “there’s a more contemplative nature that I find myself going to,” Louise’s “I think that both reflection and being in the moment are two things I could get much better at and I have

appreciated the Courage work in helping me with that,” and Marie’s “The reflection pieces have been huge, and letting go, just knowing that I don’t have to be in control over everything” are all examples of this theme. Given that the theme of reflection was covered completely earlier in this chapter and can fully apply here as well, details are not repeated here.

*Cohort building and friendships.* Seven participants in this study specifically cited the friendships they made at the retreats as one way they have generalized themes from CTL into their daily lives. They noted that they still call upon others, even those who have graduated from the program. This concept was covered fully earlier in the cohort building section of this chapter, which is one of the major themes from this research and does not need to be detailed again here. It is sufficient to say that the theme and the conclusions drawn above are applicable to this section as well.

#### *Integration of CTL Work in Professional Lives*

The second part of the interview question asking participants to share how they have applied or integrated Courage work dealt with their professional lives. This section of the chapter examines how skills and activities from the Courage in Leadership classes were generalized or integrated into the professional lives of the participants. It is noteworthy that there was less consensus over professional application than was true for the participants’ personal lives.

*More respectful and trust-building communication.* Half of the participants (11 out of 22) described ways in which they have applied more respectful, open and honest, trust-building communication skills that they learned through the Courage

work. They found that these skills have improved their work relationships. At least one member from every cohort shared that they had integrated these skills into their work life.

In the Iota Cohort, Fiona shared that, “the skill of open and honest questioning - that’s affected my professional practice more than anything else I did in the program.” Jane described how she has also has used open and honest questions with her staff. As noted earlier in this chapter, she said, “I’ve used it, a kind of a mini-version with staff, in the sense that I really try not to solve their problems but to be an ear and reflect back maybe so that they can make their own decisions.” Madalina also thought back to the CTL lessons of open and honest questions: “there are many occasions where I use that strategy with my [staff]. We’re working through something and I ask that question just like [one of the facilitators] asked it.” Nicholas also shared that with his staff, “I don’t provide the answers, I ask a lot of open-ended questions and help them guide to it...because then they have the ownership of the answer.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Fred shared that, as a result of the Courage retreats, he has “tried really hard to be an inquiry listener. To not say what’s on my mind and allow the other person to really speak his or her mind.” Cleopatra has determined, as a result of Courage work, that she “will respect other people’s opinions.” Marie added, “In my professional life, I really am working harder at trusting that the children and their parents and the teachers will find the answer within, and will find the leader within.”

Louise, from the Lambda Cohort is committed to using open and honest questions, as well. She elaborated that:

One of the things is that I have tried (and this is a long journey for me); I've tried to get better as a listener and to ask those open and honest questions that help people find their own truths. That is a very difficult thing for me. I'm a fixer. I like to go in and fix things for other people and tell them how to do it. So, I have along way to go in that work, but I believe that to be a powerful practice, so I've really tried to get better at that.

Wanda, in the Theta Cohort, also spoke of the importance of respectful communication leading to stronger relationships in one's professional life. She shared:

I think part of what I brought back from that was how important those relationships really were. You can be a taskmaster, but it doesn't matter how good you are at checking off the boxes. If you don't have a relationship with the people around you, then you are not going to get anything accomplished that you want to have accomplished.

Half of the participants in this study reported having integrated into their work lives skills they said they learned at the Courage in Leadership retreats. The basic research question of this study asks how the experience of those retreats has impacted the lives of each cohort member. Improved communication is a tangible way that 11 of the participants reported that occurred.

*Activities and materials shared in professional settings.* Nine of the 22 participants described how they shared specific Courage activities, materials or complete retreats in their professional setting. At least two people from every cohort mentioned this practice. Some described hiring facilitators to do full-blown Courage retreats in their districts, while other examples were on a smaller scale. These activities are described by cohort.

Three participants from the Iota Cohort mentioned that they used activities or materials from CTL in their professional setting. Nicholas described how he has set up a full “CTL [retreat] with [my staff]. So we do a once-a-year retreat and I hire an outside facilitator who comes in and runs it for us.” Similarly, Madalina described that “at the beginning of every year, I have a retreat with my [staff] and it tends to always go in that direction to some extent.” She said that the focus of the retreat is to help her staff “understand their purpose and their passion and their connection for what they're doing because it benefited me.” Jane described how she has “used many of the materials from Courage. It's the only folder, actually, that I have here at school because I've used many of the readings and practices from it with my own staff.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Marie described a professional learning community that she is a part of and has influenced. She said, “Our leadership program that we ramped up again this year has aspects of Courage work in [it].” Alena noted that she is planning on developing a program within her worksite and she would like to incorporate aspects of Courage work in it. She said, “if I continue building programs like I have in the past, it could become an element of the program work.”

In the Lambda Cohort, Jerry said that he has drawn from the Courage materials to help address professional concerns. He bought a number of books suggested by facilitators, and he said that he has “used them, especially when we've gone through some difficult times.” Helen described how she put together trainings for her staff based on Courage work. She said, “I found value enough in it that I helped to organize experiences for others.” She elaborated that at her worksite:

We found ourselves in a particular circumstance, where [about 75%] our secondary administrators were within their first 2 years of experience. And so, one of the things that we did was to craft a monthly connection with Lewis and Clark and [a Lewis and Clark professor] facilitated that process and part of that, included a weekend away at [a retreat site] with this group of new administrators.

In the Theta Cohort, Gueneviere shared that “professionally, I use pieces of it. I used the concept of it and some of the framework.” Ralph has also shared Courage work beyond his doctoral program. He said, “I am paying for and supporting two different kinds of approaches – one directly hits CTL and the other one indirectly hits CTL with the coaching piece.”

It is perhaps not surprising that four of the six participants who had experience with Courage work before their doctoral program have applied CTL activities or materials in their workplace. Five others, however, were moved by the work enough to integrate it into their worksites. It is clear by the number of people who hired trained facilitators to do mini-retreats that a sizeable minority of study participants felt that this work was worth emulating. They have sought ways to share with those they work with what they found to be valuable.

#### *Integration of CTL Work in Research*

The third part of the interview question asking participants to share how they have applied or integrated Courage work into their own lives deals with their research as doctoral students. While 5 participants said that the Courage in Leadership class had no impact on their research, and 2 others were unsure if it did, the remaining 15

described ways in which CTL had an impact. One fairly impactful subtheme (relationships) and one minor subtheme (reflection) are described.

*Relationship and cohort support.* Eleven of the 22 participants felt that an appreciation for relationships that was fostered at the retreats impacted their research. At least two participants from every cohort cited this theme during their interviews.

Nicholas, in the Iota Cohort, said that CTL impacted his research because it “deals with the interpersonal communications that distance people rather than unite them and CTL reminds me that [relationship is] the real work.” Harold noted that his topic is the “connection-between-people sort of research, and I don’t know that I would have gone that way without Courage.” Relationship within the cohort was also emphasized. Jane felt that CTL impacted her research “in the sense that it definitely improved my relationship with other people in the cohort which I believe made it easier for me to ask them for help or for information.” Fiona concurred when she said that “the relationships that were strengthened from CTL definitely impacted the completing of my research...A few cohort members in particular who cheered me on as I did for them -- that was significant.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Christine indicated that “my dissertation’s about relationships...so, I imagine that there has got to be some kind of a piece of Courage in there somewhere. But it’s not something I was really conscious about.” Cleopatra noted that CTL has impacted how she relates with participants in her study. She said, “I’ll wear the CTL lenses and if somebody doesn’t want to do something [or] doesn’t want to participate, I might be able to say, ‘I get it and you don’t have to.’”



Louise, in the Lambda Cohort noted that CTL impacted her research because “it’s collaborative...it’s using the wisdom of the people who are already around the table.” Roadrunner also indicated that his topic had “to do with something called Supportive Communications....So in an odd way, those retreats gave me supportive communications...I got to know people [that] I could call on for help.”

Members of the Theta Cohort also found that relationships through CTL played a role in their research. Gueneviere, for example, stated that the retreats “gave me permission (never really thought about it twice) to do the kind of study that I did, which is looking at how those interactions in the classroom affect learning.” Cohort relationships also aided members of this cohort. Nickie indicated, “you had developed such trust with people.” Wanda summarized that notion by saying, “you could talk about your research and what you’re finding and what you’re thinking and that sort of thing. So, I think that...it did impact it.”

At least two participants from every cohort indicated that the relationships that were either fostered in the CTL retreats, or which were emphasized through that process, impacted their research. They leaned on each other to help them to get through the grueling dissertation process, but they also used the theme of relationship to inform or support their research topics.

*Reflection.* Six of the 22 participants indicated that the way that Courage work impacted their research had to do with reflection. Fred, for example, stated “It has caused me to be more reflective and to think about how meaningful the work is to me.” Roadrunner shared that reflecting at the retreats helped to solidify his research

topic: “I think I had the concept, I just didn’t have the words and reflecting on CTL... is exactly what I’m thinking about.” Sybil added:

It made me realize how important it is...to do your dissertation on something you really care about. And by hearing what was important to other people and what they’re passionate about, it made me realize that I wanted to do my dissertation on something that was really important to me.

At least one participant from every cohort mentioned that reflection from the CTL retreats impacted their research. The conclusions from the main theme of reflection, covered at the beginning of this chapter, apply to this section as well.

### *Meaning and Purpose*

The third interview question asked how participants found meaning and purpose in their lives. There were no prevalent themes that emerged from this and its related probe questions that have not already been incorporated into other sections of this chapter (e.g., the first probe question had to do with reflection related to meaning and purpose and some of those data are reflected in the main theme of reflection earlier in this chapter). Topics such as family, children, faith, and impact on others were all mentioned, but none to the degree that rose to the level of a thematic response.

### Other Noteworthy Themes

There were three themes that arose from the interviews that were not tied to planned interview questions. The perceived purpose of CTL, what the doctoral program would have been like without Courage work, and negative reactions to the retreats are all worthy of note. They are dealt with in this section of the chapter.

*The Purpose of CTL*

The purpose of the Courage work was never explicitly solicited during the interviews, yet every participant addressed this topic. As described earlier in the “How CTL may not have fit into the Doctoral Program” section of this chapter, many participants expressed the opinion that the purpose of Courage work was not clear to them (or others), or that it should have been made clearer at the beginning of the doctoral program. Many of the participants (including some of those who were not clear of its purpose) hypothesized what they thought the purpose of the Courage in Leadership class was. This section addresses the themes that arose from their hypotheses.

*Inner work and reflection.* Seventeen of the participants and both facilitators in this study expressed their belief that inner work and reflection consisted of the primary purpose of the Courage in Leadership retreats. Many of the supporting quotations in this section have been cited already in this chapter, and not every citation used the term inner work but they nonetheless serve to demonstrate that the vast majority of study participants saw inner work as the primary reason that CTL exists.

In the Iota Cohort, Jane pointed out that CTL is about “the experience of being there...and the inner work, not the actual product so much.” While in an earlier section of this chapter Abraham indicated that he did not know the purpose for Courage work, later in the interview he stated it quite clearly and succinctly when he said that what “CTL was encouraging us to do was to take some time to really ponder and think about what we’re doing and why we’re doing it.” Harold also articulated the

purpose of the retreats when he shared that they “helped me explore why I was a leader. What leadership meant. What I wanted. Why I wanted to be doing this sort of work.” Madalina at first was unsure and skeptical, but “then I realized the benefit...really looking at ourselves, looking within ourselves, looking at why we are the way we are.” Nicholas also came to understand the purpose of Courage when he explained that “CTL helped me set a foundation to make me go back and ask why am I doing this. Is it worthwhile? What is the real work?” Harold summarized his interview by realizing, “I need to go reflect. I need a CTL workshop.” Madalina concluded:

I don't think to this day that I would realize my passion for the work that I do and I think when we do realize our passion and our purpose for our work that we gain energy, stamina, endurance, and we're able to carry on far beyond what we would be able to do in our work.

In the Kappa Cohort, Alena looked at the purpose of Courage work from a couple of different perspectives. She described it as “that string that goes to your core,” “a curriculum for trying to help people to think about balance in their lives” and “an important part of helping to grow strong leaders.” All of those encapsulate inner work, as does her summary statement that CTL was “something to remind us along the way of where we are.” Marie also had snippets of quotes that spoke to the process of inner work. She described “trusting that if you just hold the space that the right question...would come up” and then trusting the “premise that we each have the answers...within. [If] we believe in ourselves, we will arrive at the right answer.” Ultimately, Marie, said, “it’s recognizing the uniqueness in each individual.”

Fred (also from the Kappa Cohort) captured the concept of inner work when he described it as “an opportunity for me to really share what I was really thinking. It wasn't so much academics, it was about the inner person.” Fred also hypothesized that the purpose of the work is to “take all of your learning and then you internalize it; you bring it in to you, instead of keeping it up in the mind you move it down to your heart.” He summarized by stating that:

the purpose of that is to take all of this work and then...not so much the head knowledge but take the “where you are,” kind of trace your growth as a person; how far you've come along and then at the retreat you will have an opportunity to: number one, reflect on that growth; and number two, use it as a staging area for the next step.

Louise from the Lambda Cohort stated “courage really works on that inner part.” Jerry added “the retreats were focused on cycle and the innate questioning of why we are here and what are we doing.” Helen connected with the Courage theme of cycles as well by reflecting her “own values and meaning through paying attention to the cycles of life and perhaps, that is an element of the Courage work that really appeals to me.” Jay-Z observed that during the retreats “you become more open about what your thoughts are and that obviously helps you think greater and in more depth about where you are in your leadership and if that's really where you want to be.” She added that Courage work “really forced you to look at yourself.” Laura summarized, “I think that's the real benefit...really contemplating life.”

Many in the Theta Cohort also hypothesized that the purpose of CTL was inner work. Gueneviere, for example, said that the basic purpose of the retreats was “to reflect on many things.” Nickie added that “CTL was provided as an outlet, a

reflective outlet, a social-emotional outlet.” She added that it existed to provide “reflective personal balance between the rigorous work we were doing academically ...to keep us on a path of sanity.” Ralph said that he believed CTL existed to “explore personal and inner thoughts and assumptions and beliefs about us as individuals as well as leaders.” As cited earlier in this chapter, he added, “the idea here is to stretch people in different ways and to move them into some uncomfortable spaces so they can actually learn.” He summarized by saying that the purpose “has a lot to do with the calling of the individual to be a leader and responding to that.”

Given that the purpose was not clearly stated (as indicated by 11 participants earlier in this chapter), it is noteworthy that a vast majority of participants saw the purpose of CTL linked to reflection and inner work. The facilitators shared that inner work was indeed the primary purpose for them. Buckwheat, for example, said “the retreat notion was a very intentional part of the Courage work which allowed people to do what you called inner work, and to find a time of reflection.”

*Cohort building.* Not surprisingly (given that this was detailed as one of the major themes of this study), the second most common hypothesis about the purpose of Courage work was cohort building. While not surprising, it is interesting because, as described in chapter 4, cohort building is not a stated purpose of Courage work. Sixteen of the 22 participants in this study, however, offered their opinion that it was central to the purpose (even though these opinions were not explicitly solicited by the interviewer).

This section does not provide quotes to support the assertion that cohort building was a predominant theory, as that would repeat what has already been demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter. It does, however, cite participants and facilitators in an attempt to explain why so many assumed cohort building was a central purpose of the retreats. To begin with, while cohort building is not a stated purpose of the Center for Courage and Renewal, it was a stated purpose of these particular incarnations of retreats. Buckwheat, one of the facilitators, shared that he “hoped that the Courage retreats would enable the participants to form a strong bond interpersonally that would serve as a support during the program to enable people to complete their studies and their dissertation.” He said that the doctoral program purposely had “community building activities that I deemed and felt were essential for a program that was to support the whole scholar.” Songster (the other facilitator) felt that “there was never a problem with these two living together - cohort model, CTL - never any clashes. It seemed to me as the facilitator, they rested easily together.” Interestingly, Nickie (a participant from the Lambda Cohort) hypothesized that CTL was there to help the cohort “bond and know each other, which I do think, absolutely, was a part of the purpose, but I don’t think that was the [overall] mission.”

Given that each cohort had spent 8 hours a day for more than 3 weeks together in summer classes before the first retreat, it is not surprising that cohort members had developed relationships prior to the Courage work. While they had come to know each other in an academic setting, CTL helped everyone, like Jane, get “to hear how people grew up and how...that affected their life and better understood where some of their

insecurities came from.” Helen compared the academic time to the retreat time and concluded “at the Courage retreats I think there is a great deal more of just humanness.” Christine added “I’m able to do much better work with my colleagues when I know them on a more personal level, and I think of that that’s from Courage.”

Nicholas theorized that just as “sports are artificially designed to help people understand and work with teams; I think CTL is an artificial way to do the same thing in an academic setting.” Trust is central to teamwork, and Helen assumed that the retreats “also built, in a much more rapid fashion, a sense of commitment and trust of one another.” Jay-Z added, “Courage is really around trust and we all trusted one another that we really were in this as a group.” Ralph stated, “The friendships that developed from those experiences probably helped to deal with some of the pressures and the stress of the experience.” Nicholas also used a lighthouse and beacon metaphor to share his belief that relationships are what keep us drawn to the beacon. He said that we all “have to go back to the beacon and that beacon is relationships.”

Trust, support, relationship and connection can all be described as critical components of a cohort model. Those who theorized why CTL was a part of the Lewis and Clark doctoral program assumed it was there to provide those traits that would help each cohort grow over the 3 years together. Most participants felt that it very much served that purpose.

*Rejuvenation.* Thirteen participants mentioned the importance of rest, relaxation and rejuvenation as a central purpose of the CTL retreats. At least two



participants from each cohort found this to be true and therefore assumed they were purposeful. Each cohort is broken out below.

In the Iota Cohort, Fiona noted that the retreats “were very restorative. When I came back, I always felt a sense of renewal to re-enter my work and the desire to continue to grow and do a better job.” Jane added that rest and relaxation added to “a really clear and apparent sense of how things change when people feel like they're understood and their longings are kind of met.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Alena stated that “Courage, to me, is one of the vehicles through which we find renewal.” She added “it is consistent with my own beliefs about how to help keep yourself healthy as a professional.” Christine also found the retreats refreshing. She shared, “I realize that I really need the time and I do leave feeling refreshed and renewed and ready for whatever may come my way.” Fred hypothesized that “when it was designed, it was: this is needed. We drag the students through 4 weeks of studies; they’re going to need this time, and I think that was brilliant.”

In the Lambda Cohort, as cited earlier, Roadrunner felt that each retreat “kind of helps calm you mentally so that you’re better prepared to face the challenges of the program and life in general.” Jay-Z added that each retreat “was always a relaxing... verging on a spiritual experience.” Laura shared, “I just remember being relaxed and reinvigorated....It’s just a release.” Her theory as to why the retreats existed was that “it was their way of taking care of us.” Louise agreed, “each time it was just a really enriching and wonderful experience and I felt more renewed than tired at the end of

them, even though they're quite demanding emotionally." She also shared that at one of the retreats:

I bet it didn't take 40 minutes into the evening or late afternoon or whenever we started that day before people just (and we had fire in the fireplace) and the people...you could just feel them letting go of that. It was such a delicious feeling and several people expressed that.

Within the Theta Cohort, Sybil noticed that once the retreats got started, "you could see [everyone] relaxing." Wanda added that each retreat purposely slowed everyone down. She described quiet time on the second day of each retreat: "that 2 hours of time was just precious. I just remember there being a lot of quiet time...when we were gathered as a group and how peaceful that was." She felt that each retreat refreshed the participants and "it helped center people again with the fast pace...of the job plus the doctorate."

The facilitators also supported the notion that one of the purposes of the retreats was to refresh the participants. Buckwheat shared that he "envisioned a retreat atmosphere for relaxation" because "the addition of this intense academic experience with a highly demanding professional experience could bring people to a place of over-exhaustion or over-commitment." Songster added that his "hunch is not many, if any, ever thought of it as an obligation. My hunch is most, if not all, thought of it as salvation."

#### *What the Doctoral Program Would have been like Without CTL*

As participants were asked about their experience, a question arose that was not originally planned. In order to fully capture what the experience was for each

participant, the researcher asked what the experience would have been like had the Courage in Leadership classes (all three retreats) not been a part of the overall doctoral program. While three participants said that the experience would not have been any different, and one person said she would not have applied in the first place, there were two themes that arose from this question. Those themes are described in this section.

*Less cohort connection.* Given that one of the main themes of this study consisted of relationship and cohort building, it is not surprising that if you took the Courage work away, many participants assumed that there would be less cohort connection. Indeed 11 of the 22 participants assumed that their cohorts would not have grown as close had they not had the CTL retreats. At least two participants from every cohort gave this as an answer.

In the Iota Cohort, Fiona believed that she “would have not formed both professional and personal bonds that I have.” Nicholas concurred, “I would have been just more academically focused. I mean just go through the hoops and focus and not had relationships.” He added, “unless we really went through some major sharing opportunities or some intimate, intense conversations I think that it would have been just another program.”

In the Kappa Cohort, Alena said, “I think that if we didn’t have the Courage piece, you would not have had the development of group dynamics. I think that really is a critical piece.” Marie reflected, “I suppose I would not have had the opportunity to get to know people on a different level, as people not just students.” Christine added,

“I just don’t know that we would have made the time to get to know each other without this experience.”

In the Lambda Cohort, Laura felt that not continuing the CTL retreats beyond the first year of the program hurt her cohort. She said that without the retreats continued into the second year of the program, there was “a real disconnect in my cohort.” Helen pointed out that “they were really opportunities to socialize.” Louise added, “I definitely think even though we had a cohort program, I definitely feel like our cohort would not be as close without the Courage work.”

In the Theta Cohort, Nickie felt that if the Courage program had not been present, she would have lost “the guidance and the camaraderie and the experience, and the trust that we had built with one another.” Sybil, who voiced concerns about the retreats, still felt that “maybe a couple of people I would not know as well and not felt that...bond of friendship that came out of that.” Wanda was more descriptive. She said, “I think had we not had the Courage that I think people would have been much more dismissive of the few in our cohort...that weren’t coming along with the majority.” She added, “I think we could have had some very awkward and aggressive interactions had it not been for CTL.”

This response strengthens the main theme of cohort building by hypothesizing that this theme would not have been present had the retreats not occurred. Half of the participants felt that their cohorts would not have grown as close as they did without the experience of Courage work. There is no question that cohort building was indeed central to the overall experience based on the participants in this study.

*Less satisfying or impactful.* Twelve of the 22 participants mentioned that the overall doctoral experience would have been less satisfying and they would have learned much less had CTL not been a part of the program. At least two participants from each cohort described how the experience would have been less impactful and that they would have learned less. Their responses are summarized by cohort.

Harold, from the Iota Cohort asserted that without CTL, the overall program would have been “less impactful.” He added, “It's hard for me to imagine....It was so central I can't even imagine it not having been a part.” Fiona felt that she would not have gained the skills she now uses. She shared, “I would not have learned the skill of open and honest questioning that's affected my professional practice more than anything else I did in the program.” She added, “It would not have been as satisfying or rewarding of an experience.” Madalina was even more poignant in declaring, that without the Courage work, “I don't think to this day that I would realize my passion for the work.”

Cleopatra, from the Kappa Cohort, said that if CTL had not been a part of the program, “I don't think I would have liked it as much.” She added:

I liked having to push that “thing” in me. I liked seeing how other people responded, some people really embraced it and that was kind of cool. I liked it...I'm glad it was a part of what I did.

In the Lambda cohort, Louise shared that “I think that it really helped me keep my sanity and to keep me grounded in that first year of the program.” Roadrunner concurred. In reflecting about the program without CTL, he said, “I think it would be dry.”

In the Theta Cohort, Gueneviere shared “For me, I would have hated to do my terminal degree without having the deep look at the purpose of where we’re going with this title of educational leadership.” She added, “I think we would have missed learning a lot of different skills on how to communicate in many different ways.”

Wanda summed up both this subtheme and the main theme of this section when she said, “not only did Courage kind of get you to see things from certain perspectives and that sort of thing, but it was a relationship building and you got to know people...everybody as a person.”

Every cohort had someone who summarized this theme by stating that without CTL, they might as well have gone to a doctoral program at any college or university. Fiona, from the Iota Cohort, for example, believed that the program “would have just been an academic program and I could have gotten that anywhere.” Nickie (from the Theta Cohort) agreed, “I think, it would be like any other doctoral program where only 60% or less, complete.” Fred, from Kappa Cohort, felt he might as well have gone to a large university if Lewis and Clark did not have CTL. He said, “I think the CTL retreat is what sets Lewis and Clark apart from other programs.” Jerry, from Lambda Cohort, summarized by saying, “this is who we are, and this is what we do, and this is what makes Lewis and Clark special as compared to other doctorate programs.”

### *Negative Experiences*

A number of participants expressed negative feelings about some aspects of the Courage in Leadership retreats. Some of those have already been presented in this chapter (for example, Marie’s comparison of the doctoral retreats to ones she had

attended earlier). This last section of the chapter captures other concerns that participants expressed so that a true composite of the experience can be drawn in the following chapter. Given how personal these issues are, rather than describing negative experiences by theme, the author chose to present them by individual within each cohort.

Note that brackets within quotations are used to conceal information that may serve to unmask the participant to someone close to the program. Participant confidentiality is the paramount purpose for their use.

*Iota Cohort.* Abraham felt he never fully connected to the Courage work. As noted earlier, he was not completely sure what the purpose of the work was. He felt he “didn’t exactly catch the connection,” and he wondered if “maybe we didn’t really understand why” the retreats were a part of the program. Because of that lack of clarity, Abraham felt that “some of the time was just wasted time.” Nicholas may have been referring to Abraham when he said, “I do feel that some of my colleagues might have thought it was a waste of time.” Abraham noted that “we’re all very busy people,” and he resented how much time the retreats (on top of the rest of the doctoral program) took. He said:

I quit doing the things around the house, repairs. I did the essentials - the mowing the lawn - but my weekends were spent particularly [doing doctoral program work]. Over the last year and a half every weekend, I spent hours on it. So maybe that was a little bit of my resentment [toward CTL].

Abraham concluded that he would not seek out opportunities to take part in Courage work again. He shared that “recently, we were asked if [school leaders in my

region of the state] would like to do a CTL...and I have no interest.” He added, “For me, I just couldn’t see spending the money, nor the time away to do that.” Nicholas observed others in his cohort (perhaps Abraham?) had concerns about the time commitment when he shared, “people were apprehensive about taking that much time away from work because it was...a large, large commitment and also it took travel.”

Madalina was the only other person in Iota Cohort who personally had negative experiences with the Courage retreats. Madalina’s story, however, is one of transformation. While she started out frightened, confused and very apprehensive, she became one of Courage’s biggest advocates through the process.

Initially, however, Madalina shared that as “a very private person,” what was running through her head was, “I want out of here, I’m uncomfortable with this.” She added, “I don’t think that I would have ever chosen to do that Courage work. Ever. It would frighten me. I would feel uncomfortable with it. To volunteer to do it, absolutely no.” When the retreats began, “I was generally the very last to share.” She had concerns about the “close quarters” and the “extra load” of the retreats during “time that I didn’t have.” She concluded, “if there was a way to get out of that, I would have.”

Over the course of the retreats, however, Madalina transformed. She started to realize that “the benefit was huge.” While she still felt it was “intense,” she figured out that it was an opportunity “to do soul searching, an opportunity to really look at why I am in the profession that I’m in...to look at purpose, passion, my leadership strengths, and the reason that I do the work that I do.” She started to discover, “passion,”



“connection,” “devotion,” and a “deep-rooted love for doing work.” As noted earlier, one of her concluding remarks was “Do I think I have personally gained from it? Oh, man! Tremendously so.”

It is interesting that a number of participants noted that others in their cohort started out with negative attitudes, but changed over time. Jane, for example, noted that “a person in my cohort, who started out, ‘I don't want to do this mumbo-jumbo stuff’ ended up being one of the biggest supporters of it at the end.” Madalina also described someone else in her cohort who “definitely did not connect. It was my opinion that [that person] did connect at the end through the process and understand the benefits.” Indeed, Abraham was the only person interviewed in Iota Cohort who never fully connected to CTL.

*Kappa Cohort.* Kappa Cohort was different from the other three cohorts in that four of the five participants interviewed reported some level of negative experiences, but all for very different reasons. Marie, as noted earlier, compared the doctoral Courage retreats to ones she had attended earlier and found them wanting. Her perspective is detailed in the “Previous experience with CTL” section of this chapter and is not repeated here. Fred, Cleopatra and Alena had different concerns that are described below.

Fred’s negative experience had to do with the added cost of the retreats. He said, “if there was a negative comment that I heard or at least that crossed my mind [it] was about the credit hours and the tuition.” He played it down, however, when he said, “that's a little chunk of change but I would say that was probably a .5% of my whole

experience.” He concluded the interview with, “note to anyone who listens: maybe you could still require it but not have to pay tuition.” Other than the cost, Fred’s experience was quite positive.

Cleopatra’s concerns were based on fear of the unknown and what she called the “woo-woo” aspect of the work (a term she used six times in her interview). When asked what she meant, she said that there were times where she thought, “Whoa, this is weird.” She said, “there was definite woo-woo associated with CTL and that scared me.” She added, “I remember feeling nervous not knowing what was going to happen.”

As reported earlier in this chapter, Cleopatra also had a specific experience that she found very uncomfortable. She said, “We were reading poems, a poem by William Stafford, and it made me sob and sob and I have no idea why.” When asked what that experience was like for her, she said, “Horrible.” She added, “I mean everybody [was] really nice, but I just don’t like going to that spot.”

Cleopatra warmed up to the experience once she came to understand it, but that did not happen immediately. She said that once she truly understood that “you don’t have to talk if you don’t want to...that made me more comfortable.” In the end, she also saw that the woo-woo aspect of the work was actually a plus. She shared that she “really liked the concept because I felt like I’m coming from a really structured science point of view, and this opened that woo-woo door just a little bit...that was good.”

Alena's experience was much more challenging due to circumstances in her own life. When asked about what she recalled about the retreats, Alena said, "The CTL...what I recall is, they were very painful for me. They were very difficult." When asked to say more, she said that they were painful because "the group was not safe for me, and I think that it wasn't safe for me because of my own emotional fragility." She said that had the retreats "happened at a different time in my life that I wasn't feeling so uncertain, it might have been different. So I think it was just timing."

One similarity that Alena shared with Cleopatra was that she was unsure of what the retreats were going to be, and she was not clear about their purpose. She said that she needed "to have had preparation time to know [what] was going to happen." She added, "I was not ready for them personally. And I was still very much in therapy at that point, and there were some triggers that I had no control over." She also noted that Courage work provided "the invitation to allow those things to surface...and I really did not want those things surfaced."

Alena was clear to say "I don't think it was Courage's fault," but she did have some suggestions or perspectives for those who facilitate Courage retreats. She said that, "this was a really important reminder of how we need to be careful when we deal with touching these people's personal lives, and it was not a bad thing. But it could have been a bad thing." Alena's concluding recommendation was:

I think if there's a lesson to be learned here for people who are doing Courage work, I mean, certainly your job is not a therapist, but your job is I think, as a leader, to be understanding of individuals' contributions and how to bring people into group, how to bring people into the circle.

*Lambda Cohort.* Generally speaking, Lambda Cohort found the retreats quite positive. Helen noted that were others in her cohort who felt uncomfortable with the silence, but that slowly changed over the course of the retreats. Jay-Z used the word woo-woo four times in her interview, but generally in a positive way. It took a little while for Jerry to warm up to the work, but in the end, he found it “incredible.” Louise, like others, felt as though she could not afford the time away from work or family, but she was always happy she did. Roadrunner found parts of the work “boring” and he had a hard time relating to the poetry, but ultimately, he found that “it helped me be more patient.” On the whole, there was no one in the Lambda Cohort who felt that the experience was predominantly negative.

*Theta Cohort.* Sybil was the only participant from Theta Cohort who reported having a negative experience as a result of the Courage work. Others did mention that they were not always sure about the purpose of the work (as outlined earlier), that they felt that the amount of time was burdensome, or, as Wanda shared, that initially “there was sarcasm around the ‘Kumbaya’ thing.” They were mostly referring to others, and always in the end were pleased with their overall experience. Sybil, however, found the experience frustrating.

When asked what she recalled about the retreats, Sybil stated, “I recall it seems in retrospect, a very unfocused and maybe uncomfortable and kind of, maybe, frustrating time.” She felt that the “internal work, I think...didn’t seem to work for a lot of people,” and she was “kind of frustrated by feeling like there was so much that I

didn't know and so much that we could have been doing during those times that we weren't doing."

Sybil shared that she would have liked to have had "a focus for each of those Courage sessions and to have it more connected to...our core coursework." She felt the retreats could have been "more intellectually challenging I guess is what I'm trying to say." She thought that each retreat "could have revealed people's strengths as different types of leaders more than it did and...that to me would have connected it more to educational leadership." As stated earlier in this chapter, Sybil added:

I really think that the Courage idea has so much potential and...I would really like to see what would happen in kind of a blended model of just having ...some kind of an academic or intellectual question challenge, focus.... blended with comparable activities of related readings and reflections and creative activities that might...draw on both sides of the brain.

One thing about the retreats that made Sybil uncomfortable was how closely she felt they brought people to the topics of religion and spirituality. She felt that "a difficult part of...Courage is the balancing of people's own formal religions, spirituality, belief systems with what borders on something close to that and can make people feel uncomfortable." She wondered "if you could just more intentionally recognize it instead of kind of pretending it's not there." She added, "I think that people who had a strong connection to some traditional church...sometimes that would come out and make other people feel uncomfortable or seem inappropriate or maybe just make me feel uncomfortable." She felt that "although I am a spiritual person, I'm not comfortable with other people...laying out their spiritual beliefs."

Additionally, Sybil shared that she was going through some challenging family issues at the time of the retreats, and she had a difficult time relating to other people's topics during the Clearness Committees. She shared, "I had some genuine family crises going on in my life and it was hard for me to listen to other people." She added, "that discrepancy made it just seem like whining instead of compelling stories that people had to tell about their life and struggles because they just didn't seem like that big of a...struggle to me." Other people's issues "were so not on the scale of what seemed important to me at that time." She concluded that it was "annoying to listen to people whine about what to me seem like... 'you have no idea, honey'."

After reflecting awhile longer, Sybil shared that the overall experience "was fun and it was fine and some people were clearly uncomfortable at first and seemed to get over that and I don't want to speak for them, but you could see them relaxing." She added, "I've done a lot of that retreat and 'find yourself' work over the years and maybe I'm older and already have a sense of who I am; maybe I was already comfortable in what I was doing." By the end of the interview, Sybil shared, "you know, it sounds like I was very negative about Courage and it was not my experience at that time. You know, I was fine." Interestingly, Sybil was one of the five people who shared the artwork that others had done for her to the interviewer; she had placed the three pictures in the sails of a model sailing ship and put it on her desk at work. She concluded the interview by saying:

Obviously they became meaningful to me because I immediately took them home and put them on my ship and they sailed with me right through my whole dissertation, so...[LAUGHS] I guess, I must be conflicted...about

Courage, something about it. Some things just annoyed me and on the other hand, I took away some strength or something.

### Recommendations and Chapter Summary

With four cohorts and 24 perspectives (including the two facilitators), there were many stories that comprised the entire experience. The themes described in this chapter were those that rose to the surface after an exhaustive review of the data. The conclusion of this chapter consists of recommendations that participants made about the Courage retreats. This was a topic that was not solicited, yet many participants offered suggestions on their own.

#### *Recommendations*

The most common recommendation was to keep the current retreats as part of the doctoral program. Only 2 of the 24 participants felt that CTL should not be continued. Some interviewees wondered if this dissertation would be used by Lewis and Clark to determine if Courage work should be a part of the doctoral program. Jerry, for example shared, “some of the rumors I heard was this retreat system was under fire – [Lewis and Clark is] questioning the existence of it and I think that’s a mistake. I don’t think that it should be questioned.” Nickie was a little more forthright when she said, “I think it is a huge piece, and the more we talk about it, darn it, it better stay.”

Six participants recommended not only keeping the existing retreats, but expanding them beyond the first year of the doctoral program. Nine participants described how their cohorts had done that on their own (they created their own retreats

that they called “Courage to Endure” and “Courage to Write” during the last 2 years of their programs). Wanda encapsulated this recommendation when she shared:

I would have liked, and I think other people would have liked, to have seen a Courage-type activity after that first year when people were actually writing ...where it was something with writing support and then coming back and doing some more reflective activities on the actual work you were doing.

### *Summary*

This chapter presented the results from this study. It discussed themes and outcomes that came directly from interview questions, as well as those that were not directly sought out. Some of those themes addressed the overall research questions directly, and others were more organic from the conversations, documents and follow-up.

The data revealed three major themes from this research. Participants felt that cohort building was central to the CTL experience. They also believed that reflection was a powerful phenomenon at the Courage retreats. In addition, they identified specific activities as central to the experience, which made up the third theme. Those specific activities included the Clearness Committees, poetry/prose/music, art/watercolors, and social activities.

Six participants in this study had previous direct experience with Courage work before the doctoral retreats. Most of them felt that their previous experience was very positive and it influenced their decision to apply to Lewis and Clark’s doctoral program. Marie was critical of the Courage in Leadership doctoral classes when she



compared them to previous Courage experiences, but none of the other five expressed similar negative comparisons.

Most participants felt that the Courage work fit into the overall doctoral program quite effectively. Many talked about how the heart or spiritual work at the retreats complemented the intellectual work of the academic classes. The cohort building that occurred at the retreats was also seen as having a positive impact on the other classes in the program. Finally, an impassioned minority of participants felt that social justice issues and perspective-taking also linked the Courage retreats to the rest of the program.

The retreats were perceived to be a requirement by the vast majority of participants, but they saw that as positive. Those interviewed for this study felt that it was critical that every member of their cohort be at the retreats and that would only happen if the retreats were required. Participants believed this led to more connected cohorts and deeper experiences.

Participants reported that they have integrated Courage work into their personal, professional and academic lives. They described better communication and relationships with others, increased reflection, and the sharing of activities with family and colleagues. A vast majority felt that skills they learned at the Courage retreats transformed how they look at their lives and interact with others.

While a minority of participants in this study shared some negative experiences that were detailed in this chapter, the majority felt that their doctoral experience would have been less satisfying or impactful without CTL. They believed that the purpose of

the retreats was to increase reflective practice, strengthen the cohort, and rejuvenate those who attended. They felt that the retreats achieved that purpose.

The next chapter uses the results from this chapter to draw a composite description of the essence of the experience for every participant and cohort. It also discusses the implications of these results.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was designed to explore the impact that CTL retreats had on educational leadership doctoral students. It used a qualitative, phenomenological approach to describe the essence of the experience for 22 present and former Ed.D. Educational Leadership students at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. It also used written documentation, facilitator interviews and researcher narrative to triangulate the results and ensure validity in the findings. This final chapter further describes, discusses and summarizes those findings.

A number of significant themes, described in the previous chapter, arose from the CTL retreat experiences. Those themes indicated that the framework outlined in chapter 2 of this dissertation may be a limited lens with which to view the entire experience. In order to fully understand the results of this study, a wider lens is required to frame the results. The third section of this chapter describes a broader framework for what occurred.

The first part of this chapter presents conclusions to the research question by providing a phenomenological composite description of Lewis and Clark College's CTL retreat series. The section then groups the data by specific participant characteristics to explore how group experiences may have been different. The second section of the chapter addresses what difference the retreats made in the lives of the

study participants. Third, the literature is reviewed and a new framework for understanding the results is presented. Fourth, fidelity to Courage work is explored. Fifth, the chapter discusses implications of this work and recommendations for future research. The final section concludes the study.

### Composite Description and Characteristic Differences

The main research question for this study was: How does the inclusion of inner work in the form of CTL retreats, impact the professional, personal and research lives of educational leadership doctoral students from the perspective of those students? It used a phenomenological research approach to address that research question.

Creswell (2007) described the culmination of phenomenological methodology as writing a composite description of the phenomenon that essentially answers the research question. “This passage is the ‘essence’ of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of the phenomenological study” (p. 159). The composite for this study is written in vignette form and it will return to the fictional character “Sarah” who was introduced at the beginning of chapter 1. Sarah and her cohort make up a composite of all four cohorts researched in this study. After her vignette, the specific cohorts and other groupings of participants are examined.

### *Composite*

Sarah was excited about her cohort’s reunion. It had been 6 months since she had walked across the stage with most of her cohort, shaken the dean’s hand, and been officially given the title “doctor.” Now her cohort, known to each other as the “Enduring Spirits” was gathering to reminisce and catch up. She could not wait.

As Sarah entered Bill's home, she heard Barb's familiar voice rang out, "Hey – It's Squeaky." Sarah ran up to Barb, Jill, Frank, and seven others from her cohort and gave each of them a big hug. While Bill went over to the counter to get them all drinks they settled into the overstuffed sofas still laughing, hugging and exchanging pleasantries. It felt like she was home again.

After 15 minutes of catching up on how everyone was doing, Sarah pulled out her photo album and others gathered around. Three years together and they were all excited to see what the self-designated cohort photographer had compiled. They were not disappointed. She had a way of showing just what was on everyone's mind with her Cannon. During their doctoral program, Sarah seemed to be everywhere with it. This album was the culmination of their stories together and they were going to savor it. She turned to the first page.

Ah, that first summer together. They arrived on campus feeling somewhat out-of-place, unsure, anxious, but excited. There were two pages of pictures from those first 4 weeks together. There were shots of small groups doing projects in the Systems class, intense discussions from the Contemporary Leadership class, and the occasional shot of three or four people taking a break and eating lunch together. They all smiled as they looked over the pictures. Then Sarah turned the page...

"Wow, look at that scenery." "Hey Bill, remember that story you're telling there?" "Look at the campfire – that night was incredible." "You know, I've done those Courage activities with my staff – they loved it." "I haven't laughed that hard since." "Is that where I had my Clearness Committee?" "Remember when Sue and I

got stuck on those rocks during high tide – we were so engrossed in that poem that we didn't even pay attention to the water.” And on and on.

Frank pointed to one of the pictures and shared a story from it that some in the group did not know.

That first Courage retreat happened at the end of our first month together and I did not want to be there. My Board Chair was emailing me about high school maintenance issues, my family was wondering when they'd see me again, and I hadn't had a real vacation in more than a year. I had no idea what those retreats were all about and, as you can see from my face, I was not excited about having to sing Kumbaya with all of you for 2 days.

The others laughed. Frank broke from his reverie and chuckled with them. He went on,

that picture was taken as we were gathering for our very first opening circle and I didn't have a clue what we were supposed to be doing, and why I couldn't go home. I was pretty upset that there wasn't wireless there – I was off the grid and starting to fume. That's the expression you're seeing in that picture.

His voice faded as he got lost in thought again.

Sue pointed to another page.

That's great that you included copies of every poem we did in this album. Some of those poems just caught me by the heartstring and didn't let go. I remember when that one poem made me tear up for the first time and I wasn't sure what to do. I looked around the circle and saw that Squeak was also lost in the poem, but then she started to just read it aloud again and I heard it in a different voice. The words floated in the air and I remember thinking about my first year of teaching almost 25 years earlier. I remember connecting my sense of confusion and excitement over not really knowing what I had gotten myself into – back then as a new teacher and in this picture as new doctoral student cooped up with you clowns for some retreat. I was pretty excited and scared.

Barb piped in,

I wish we had discussed more about what CTL was before that weekend. Jesse and I had been to a retreat series a few years before our program, so we knew what it was all about, but I felt bad for the rest of you. When I heard some of you worrying about how touch-feely you thought it would be, I wanted to cringe. The main reason I applied to our doctoral program was because Courage work was a part of it, and I didn't want it to be a negative experience for anyone.

Frank said,

We're all grown ups, Barb. I think I would have been less cynical and skeptical that first day if we had talked about it, but I was fine. And I did get the general idea. I'm still not sure what a few of those poems were all about, but I'm just not a poetry kind of guy. I really liked the walks and the evening times a lot, though.

Jill pointed to another picture and started laughing. "I think that's when you got your nickname, Squeaky." They all joined in the laughter. Someone had turned Sarah's camera on her at the retreat and there was a picture of her laughing so hard her face was almost purple. It was during one of their late evening gatherings and someone had said something so funny that Sarah started to "Squeak" from laughing so hard. No one outside of their cohort knew that nickname; it was their own inside joke that had carried on for 3 years.

The stories started about the partying that went into the evening. "Remember that game we played that was like charades?" "That one retreat site had a hot tub and we got pruned sitting, soaking and talking for so long." "It was so cathartic to be able to let down our hair after a whole month of classes together." "That's the night we first learned about your granddaughter's medical issues, Sue -- How is she doing?" "We ran out to get a couple more bottles of wine before the second night -- we knew how to have fun."

They turned the page and there were three little watercolor paintings on the page. Bill smiled.

I loved that activity. I remember being really touched by what the three others in my group painted. I really didn't see myself as someone as reflective and caring as they all portrayed in the artwork they did for me. I took the three cards that they gave me and put them in a frame over my desk.

Frank added,

I was surprised how much I liked doing the artsy stuff too. I never do that in my real life, and when I heard the other people's stories, I just let myself go. I felt like I was in Kindergarten again, but with an adult's experiences. If you all pulled out some art supplies right now, I'd get right back into it.

"You should do something like that with your staff, Frank," Sarah said. "I went back to my school during the second year and shared a lot of the poems and some of the activities with my staff and they liked it. It also was an excuse for me to do some watercolors." They laughed.

Barb said,

You know, I never took any of the activities back to my job, but I use open and honest questions all the time. Rather than always thinking I have to solve everything and fix my staff, I use those questions to help them look within and figure stuff out. It's amazing how well it works and how well they respond to it.

Joy smiled, "I use it with my husband children at home too. I think my communication is more trusting and open than it was before Courage work. It's changed my home life."

On the next page, there was a picture of a darkened room with a small candle on a coffee table. There were four chairs around it and a box of Kleenex near one of



the chairs. Judy spoke for the first time. “I think that was after my Clearness Committee.” Everyone was quiet.

I know those of you who were part of my committee will respect my confidentiality, but I want to share with all of you that that was a really amazing experience for me. I was going through some really difficult stuff and I wasn't sure I wanted to share any of it with you. I was seriously considering dropping out of the doctoral program and quitting my job. That night, however changed my mind in a really powerful way. The open and honest questions that people asked really got me thinking about what was going on in ways that hadn't occurred to me before. After the retreat I told my husband about it and it really opened some doors that I knew needed to be opened, but I had never been courageous enough to do before. I was really thankful we did that.

Sue went over to hug Judy, “and you stayed in the program – we're glad you did.”

Bill said,

You know I was never a focus person for the Clearness Committees, but I got a lot out of being one of the committee members. The discipline of having to ask questions in a certain way and being told that we needed to hold the focus person like they were a little bird in our hands really worked for me. I always came out of that experience exhausted and a little worried I didn't do it right. But it also got me reflecting on my own stuff. I agree with Judy that the Clearness Committee process was so unique and powerful, I'm glad it was a part of our program.

Barb said,

I always worried that you all wouldn't really get the Clearness Committees. It seemed different from the other Courage retreats I had been to, but I couldn't tell if that's just because we were in a cohort together, or because we were all required to be there, or if it was something else. I'm glad to hear that you all got so much out of it. It really is an amazing process.

Sally said, “I wish we had tied more of our other classes into those retreats. I was never clear how they all fit together.”

Judy replied,

I kind of thought that was on purpose. I thought the idea of getting away to a retreat center and reading poetry instead of academic theory was one of the purposes of Courage work. I kind of saw it as the heart part of the work. I included what I learned from Courage work in my Doctoral Advancement Project. I said that the retreats were the heart piece of leadership and the other classes were the intellectual or head piece.

Jill agreed.

I guess I thought it was more of the spiritual side of the work we do. Given that most of us work in public education, we don't always get to openly explore that side of who we are. I welcomed it and felt refreshed about being able to talk about it with others.

Jesse piped in,

I wish the other classes were more like Courage work. Since I had done a Courage series before this program, I guess when I applied I thought that all of the professors would integrate Courage work into their class styles. It felt a little disjointed that way. I didn't want the retreats to fit into the classes; I wanted it the other way around.

Cindy talked for the first time.

That wouldn't have worked for me. I never really got into those retreats. I loved joking around with everyone in the evenings, but I went into this doctoral program to get my doctorate. It felt like a waste of time to me to sit around, read poetry, paint and have mini Dr. Phil sessions. I had plenty of other stuff I could have been doing. I wish they hadn't been required.

"Oh, come on, Cin, you told me you enjoyed that time," Sarah said.

They weren't therapy sessions, they were times to really reflect on who we were as educational leaders, as well as to just relax and be with each other. We all needed to be there in order to become such good friends and a real cohort. Why did you choose a program with a cohort model if you didn't want to get to know your cohort better?

"Don't get me wrong," Cindy replied,

I loved getting to know all of you better. And I think that because we got to know each other better the discussions and debates in our other classes were

much deeper and richer. Those retreats just weren't my style. If we could have just partied all weekend instead, I would have liked it more.

"I thought you said you just went into a doctoral program just to get a doctorate," Bill said. They all laughed some more.

Sarah kept turning pages in the book and the group talked, shared and laughed. There were quiet reflections, funny confessions and inside jokes. A few suggested that they should get together for their own Courage retreats at one of the retreat sites. Others liked the idea, but wondered about the time and logistics (it had taken them 4 months to find this one evening to get together). They spent another 2 hours eating, drinking and telling stories about what had happened to them since those pictures were taken. As they prepared to leave, they hugged, promised to call and email, and then went their own way.

As Sarah got into her car, she sat for a moment. "What a group of 'enduring spirits,'" she thought. She knew she'd see them all again and call on a few of them in the next few weeks. She smiled and drove away.

### *Differences*

While Sarah's composite description captures the overall experience of the CTL retreats among all participants interviewed for this study, there certainly were idiosyncrasies and unique characteristics for each of the four cohorts as well as other groupings of the participants. The reason for presenting the cohorts separately throughout chapter 5 was to give the reader a sense of some of those differences. In addition, the last research sub-question of this study asked if there were other

characteristics that allowed some students to find the retreats more valuable and relevant than others. This section summarizes any apparent differences by cohort, sex, culture, and previous experience with CTL.

It is important to note that the purpose of this study was to look at the phenomenon of the retreats and the impact they had on the participants. It was not directly designed to look at what caused the differences between different individuals or groups, so questions to that end were not included in the interviews. As a result, participants often did not have the context to address differences, and the researcher did not have direct information to draw inferences as to why they occurred. Individual differences that were described by the participants are noted, but other than that, simply the essence of each group is described.

*Iota Cohort.* Iota Cohort embraced the full cohort building experience. While not every member of the cohort fully connected to the essence of CTL retreats, most of them transformed as a result of the experience (e.g., Madalina moving from trepidation to full embrace - “Do I think I have personally gained from it? Oh, man! Tremendously so”). They tried all of the activities and every member of Iota reported how these activities impacted them (no other cohort had every participant describe them). They felt that the two main purposes of the retreat series were “the relationship building that went on” (Abraham) and “the strengthening of reflective practice” (Fiona). As a result, they became a very close, reflective cohort.

Members of Iota Cohort reflected deeply on who they were as people, educators and leaders. They valued the “quiet time to think about what [they] really

were passionate about” (Jane). They then took what they learned and integrated it into their personal, professional and research lives (Nicholas, for example told about using open and honest questions “in my personal relationship with my family”). They found the Clearness Committees to be “exceptionally important” (Harold), the poetry to be useful tools because it “increased dialogue” (Nicholas) and the art-related activities to be surprisingly “opening” (Harold) and resonant (especially among the men). They explored “the spiritual side of being an educational leader” (Fiona) through the retreats more than the other three cohorts, and they saw a connection between the retreats and the issue of social justice.

More than anything else, however, Iota Cohort was close. They enjoyed “party[ing] until dawn” (Fiona) and challenging each other to go deeper during the retreats. They described a “deep emotional connection” (Harold) to their fellow cohort members as close friends. They would “go to any cohort member” (Madalina) for anything and they would “share anything they have” (Nicholas). They deeply respected each other – what they have done, how they have grown professionally, and the research they are working on. They clearly care about each other and they credit much of that connection to the CTL retreats.

*Kappa Cohort.* In contrast to the Iota Cohort, the experience of the Kappa Cohort was not as powerful. Participants from this cohort spoke of the importance of the retreats allowing them to “get to know people on a different level” (Marie), and they appreciated that the retreats “facilitated the practice of very deep reflection” (Christine), but the retreat experience did not resonate with this cohort as much as it

did with the other three. Four of the five participants from this cohort had notable negative experiences from the retreats (all for different reasons) and they were reflected in the overall essence of the experience. Every participant had positive things to say about Courage work, but they did not have as positive an experience as the other three cohorts.

The specific activities that the other three cohorts found to be powerful central themes were not so for Kappa Cohort. The artwork, though a part of their experience, was mentioned in passing by only one participant. The poetry was not cited as a central aspect of the experience by anyone. The Clearness Committees were seen as an “interesting” (Alena) “good tool” (Fred), but they did not have the same impact on this cohort as with the others. Even the evening partying, while a great deal of fun for most of the participants had a pall over it due to the negative experience of one of the interviewees.

Of all of the cohorts, Kappa’s experience was the least fulfilling. This cohort reflected, communicated, connected and explored head and heart relationships during the retreats, but the cohort’s five representatives who were interviewed for this study were more critical of the experience than other cohorts. Ironically, they did express a desire to do more retreats in the future, and they integrated skills that they learned from Courage work. They loved the camaraderie and the relationship building, and individuals got a great deal out of CTL, but overall, their experience was not as strong as that of the other cohorts.

*Lambda Cohort.* Lambda Cohort was a very work-oriented, reflective cohort that greatly valued CTL work. More than any other cohort, they saw the retreats as “hard work” (Helen) that paid off in the end. Some participants from this cohort had the initial attitude similar to Jerry who said, “if I’m going to be here, I’m going to be present, I’m going to get what I can out of it,” and they did. They found the Clearness Committees to be a gift, but they also shared “what hard work it is” (Helen). They enjoyed the poetry, though some, such as Roadrunner “had a hard time relating to it” and others used it to reflect on difficult situations such as recent deaths in their families. The artwork was described as inspired, but also a reminder that, as Jerry put it, “people really do care” when life is difficult. The theme of this cohort was doing hard, reflective work pays off in the end.

Participants from Lambda Cohort used the lessons from Courage work to tackle difficult life issues. More than any other cohort, they linked CTL to “the concept of social justice” (Helen) and applied the relationship skills they learned to difficult topics in their own lives. They used the poetry and prose from the retreats during difficult times at work when they were “not thinking clearly” (Jerry) and they “helped to organize experiences for other” (Helen) by bringing Courage work to their worksites when they were faced with conflict. When they came upon difficult life circumstances, they turned to Courage to deeply reflect, and then to apply many of the CTL lessons or skills to the situation. Lambda did not shy away from hard situations or the hard work it takes to tackle them.

All of this is not to say that Lambda was an overly serious cohort. There certainly “were fun things that went on” (Roadrunner) and they enjoyed being with each other, but even there, when things got difficult within the cohort, they looked to Courage work to solve their issues. More than any other cohort, they felt that their cohort could have used more CTL retreats to rebuild their relationships with each other; Helen, for example, felt that an additional “courage retreat could have helped” get through cohort conflict. They wanted to do the work that it took to be as strong and effective as they could be, and they saw Courage retreats as a tool to help them get there.

*Theta Cohort.* Cohort Theta was more analytical than any of the other three cohorts. They spent a lot of time stepping back and asking why they were doing what was asked of them, and “wrestling with the processes of leadership” (Ralph). Most of the participants from this cohort liked the answers they discovered to their analytical questions about the retreats, but at least one found the results to be wanting. Overall, their reflections were positive, deep and fun.

Whereas other cohorts talked about the outcomes and emotional experiences of the Clearness Committees, Theta Cohort focused on the process, such as “how to do that questioning” (Gueneviere). Whereas others used terms such as “intimate,” “intense” and “friendship,” participants from Theta Cohort talked of “camaraderie” (Nickie) and “allies” (Ralph). Theta Cohort analyzed the purpose of CTL more than any other cohort, as well as the purpose of the poetry and artwork. Whereas other cohorts talked about spirituality and “heart connections,” participants from Theta



spoke about the affective domain (Wanda) and stretching people (Ralph) to learn more about leadership. Also noteworthy from this cohort was that none of the participants integrated the lessons of communication and personal relationships into their personal lives whereas 16 of the other 17 interviewees (from all three other cohorts) mentioned this concept. Theta Cohort integrated skills and lessons about self-reflection and friendships into their personal lives, so they were not unable or unwilling to generalize skills to their personal or work lives, just not the aspects of communication and personal relationships.

Theta Cohort was not made up of unfeeling analysts. While they were indeed very analytical in how they looked at CTL work, they also valued the lessons, skills and the fun they had at the retreats. Even Sybil, the one participant who had a generally negative assessment of the retreats, shared enjoyment about the “silly, pajama party aspect” of the retreats and the great deal of laughing that occurred. Theta’s experience was fun, deep, and very reflective. They sought out the why to every question more than any other cohort, and that led them to reflect on what was most valuable to them.

*Men and women.* There were no major differences between almost all of the responses by men and women in this study. Apart from the soul stories artwork project described in chapter 5, men and women were just as likely to describe all of the themes in this study in a similar way. They were also equally represented in their critique of the program. The watercolor artwork project is an interesting aberration to this similarity, however. As described in detail in chapter 5, 86% of the men, but only

40% of the women discussed the artwork. In addition, 71% of the men and only 13% of the women discussed displaying the artwork at home or in the office. This discrepancy was not discovered until the data were analyzed, so there were no interview questions related to it. Additionally, possible explanations were not offered in response to the questions that were asked. This would be an interesting topic for future study.

*Different cultures.* People of color made up 14% of the participants in this study. There were no noticeable differences in the descriptions of their experiences as compared to participants who were Caucasian (hence there was no separate discussion of their results in chapter 5). The researcher looked for differences in every topic and theme described in chapter 5 and could not discern any expressed differences in experience.

It is worth noting that Madalina (who is Caucasian) shared stories about what she perceived to be diversity conflict within her cohort. She felt that people of color in her cohort were not initially treated well and that one of the Courage retreats was used as tool to address those concerns. The people to whom she referred were not interviewed for this study, so their perspectives were not a part of the data.

*Previous experience.* Six of the 22 participants in this study had previous experience with Courage work (as detailed in Table 4 in chapter 5). For ease of description, this section refers to those with previous experience as “veterans.” Not surprisingly, veterans were much more likely to feel they knew the purpose of CTL retreats as compared to their 16 other participants. They were just as likely, however,

to experience reflection, Clearness Committees, cohort building, and poetry/prose/music in the same way as their peers.

Of some interest, however, is that veterans were slightly more likely to have a positive response to the social activities/partying (83%) than their peers who did not have previous experience (68%). However, veterans were slightly less likely to have discussed the value of the watercolor/art activity (33%) as compared to their peers (55%). There were no indications in the interviews as to what might have led to these slight differences.

Four of the six veterans said that CTL was the reason they applied to Lewis and Clark doctoral program. Given their previous experience with Courage work, they chose a doctoral program that incorporated that work into the program. Both Marie and Louise shared that they wished that their other academic classes had been better integrated to the CTL program – they had hoped that all of the professors would be conversant and based in Courage work as they taught their classes. This was not the case.

As noted in the results chapter, Laura and Helen both reported difficulty recalling whether some of their memories were from the doctoral retreats or from previous Courage retreats. This lack of certainty may have confounded some of the data by these participants. They reported that they worked hard to keep their recollections cleanly separated, but they were not 100% sure they did.

Marie's previous experience with CTL had a significant impact on her perception of the Courage in Leadership classes. She felt that the belief that everyone

was required to be there and that others had no experience with courage work was a detriment to the doctoral retreats. She thought that her peers did not fully appreciate or trust the process, and she feared that had an influence on those who did understand it. Marie was also disappointed that some of the retreats were a mix of “business and pleasure.” She did not like that there was an assignment from another class that was to be presented at one of the retreats. This was an issue for two of the four cohorts.

Buckwheat (one of the facilitators) shared Marie’s frustration with this issue as well:

Other members of the college faculty were not as willing to embrace the complete separation of the Courage content from the program content, and especially with [one of the cohorts], we compromised and designed an actual research presentation at one of the retreats. So it became a half-Courage half-something else. And I recall people saying very specifically that having the presentation and worrying about getting the presentation ready and some of them even showed up not quite finished, and so they were never fully able to enjoy and participate in the Courage-half of that event.

It appears that those involved recognized that the incorporation of “business with pleasure” was not a good decision, as Buckwheat described that they have since eliminated that “compromise” from the retreats. Only members of two of the four cohorts were impacted by this temporary experiment.

The six veterans in this study had a slightly different experience than those who had not been a part of CTL retreats before their doctoral program. They walked into the program knowing what to expect of the retreats. There was some disappointment for a few of them as a result of those expectations, but overall, this group found the experience to be positive and impactful.

### What Difference did the CTL Retreats Make?

While the composite and other descriptions above described what happened, the obvious next question is (as Alena put it) “so what?” This section describes two of the main themes of this research and the impact those themes had on the individual participants. The next section of this chapter then explores a different way of framing the results and the difference they made for the participants.

#### *Cohort Building*

The most prevalent theme from this research was that CTL retreats led to cohort and relationship building. When addressing the difference that cohort and relationship building made in the lives of the participants in this study, there are three main issues that come to light. The first is that cohort building augmented the learning that occurred in the other classes that were part of the doctoral program. Second, participants used the actual relationships they made with other cohort members outside of the classroom to network and improve skills in their main jobs. Third, participants took these relational skills into their lives outside of the doctoral program and applied them in their personal and professional lives.

It is important to note that every participant in this study self-selected a program that was based on a cohort model. It is reasonable to assume that the topic of cohort building would resonate more with these students than perhaps those who chose a doctoral program that did not include a cohort model. While the full examination of that assumption is outside the scope of this study, it is noteworthy to realize those who participated in this research project consciously chose a program

that was based in a cohort model and that may have impacted their perspective on this topic.

*Cohort building within the program.* The main reason that cohort building at the CTL retreats made a difference was that it allowed students to learn more from the other classes they took together. Participants believed they learned more due to those relationships, and that later discussions, debates and difficult topics were given a different perspective because cohort members knew more about each other and trusted each other more due to the retreats. As Jerry put it, “the classes ask you to debate things and you can’t debate things unless you have a level of trust and comfort.” He added that CTL “made the classes go better the following year because we knew the people more.” Many study participants spoke about how they got to know each other on a deeper, more personal level than their academic classes could have provided on their own. Participants talked of getting to know each other as “people, not just students” as Marie put it. Ralph summarized this concept when he said that the Courage retreats “served the purpose of building and strengthening cohort, allies, and confidantes that lasted through the program.”

Cohort building in the retreats also allowed the cohorts to work out their differences more effectively than an academic setting alone could have. Many participants noted that their cohorts went through trying times, but that the retreats helped to address those conflicts. Gueneviere, for example, saw the retreats as “time to speak as a cohort about problems that we saw.” Participants saw the retreats as opportunities to solve those issues so that they could continue to trust and learn from

each other. Jane shared, “our cohort actually used some of the courage time to directly address some of the issues that we were having as a group.” Wanda added:

When things got a little shaky, you kind of drop back into the respect you had for people at Courage. And whereas I don’t think you could have built that even when you were in the what...4 or 5 weeks during the summer, you are spending a lot of time with people, but it ends and...I think it would have been easier for people to kind of break away from each other during difficult cohort moments had they had not had Courage as a background.

*Cohort connections outside of the program.* Some cohort members shared that the close relationships that they made through the CTL retreats allowed them to turn to each other outside of the doctoral program as well. They spoke of lifelong friendships that will improve their professional practice by simply calling on each other.

Educational leadership can be a very isolating profession, and having others to turn to after the program is over was seen as a means of decreasing that isolation. From the retreats, Nicholas came to the “realization that we’re not just here to learn but we are here to network and build relationships that will, I think actually make...not just our own personal districts or individual self stronger but make our state stronger.”

Madalina, added that because of CTL she could “go to any cohort member and get direction from them, get advice from them and also if I don't want any of that, have them just listen. So, it's a different relationship than it would be with anybody else.”

Nicholas summarized:

I go to meetings today and all the people I have in my cohort are major leaders now in the state. I have, I guess an instant trust. We are able to share documents that I would not have shared with any other...administrator in the state. [If someone from my cohort were to] call me, though, and ask -- I will share anything I have...and I think that is the part that you can't put a value on.

*Relationships outside of the cohort.* The third aspect of relationship building has to do with the application of the skills outside of the cohort completely. As noted in chapter 5, a large majority (16 of 22) of the participants in this study talked about how they have applied skills they learned from CTL to their personal lives. They talked about these skills making them “more tolerant” and “a better listener” (Jane). They helped them in their personal and familial relationships (Nicholas). They helped teach the valuable lesson of truly listening “and suspending judgment” (Fred). They helped them “respect other people’s opinions” (Cleopatra). And they taught lessons that allowed them to listen more to friends and family members in need (e.g., Laura, Fred and Nicholas). All of these changes were perceived to be positive and important to those who cited them. They made a difference.

Additionally, half of the participants talked about applying the skills they learned through CTL in their professional lives. Many talked about using the skill of open and honest questions with their staff. Fiona made the point that “open and honest questioning - that’s affected my professional practice more than anything else I did in the program.” Jane noted that the skill of open and honest questions helped her to “be an ear and reflect back...so that they can make their own decisions.” Louise reported trying to “get better as a listener and to ask those open and honest questions that help people find their own truths.” Fred has tried to be more of “an inquiry listener.” And Marie shared that she is “working harder at trusting that the children and their parents and the teachers will find the answer within.”



All of these examples speak to how participants feel they have tried to improve themselves personally and professionally as a result of the skills they believe they learned from the Courage retreats. CTL made a difference in their lives. The “so what” in these examples is that the participants believe they are becoming better family members, friends and school leaders by directly applying what they learned in their Courage in Leadership classes.

### *Reflection*

The second most prevalent theme in this study was reflection. As noted in chapter 5, participants reflected about a significant number of topics. They reflected about their jobs, their families, their professional practice, issues they were having and their future. When looking at the difference that reflection made in the lives of the participants (or the “so what” question), the focus is placed on whether those interviewed for this study translated or transferred their reflections into actual change in their lives (i.e., did Transformational Learning occur). Many participants reported that the reflection they did at the CTL retreats did indeed translate into real change in their lives.

Many participants linked reflection to a renewal or rejuvenation for their work and for life in general. While for some the retreats were just a brief respite from their otherwise busy lives, for others CTL helped them feel renewed to thoroughly embrace their lives and their work. Madalina, for example, shared a deep examination of practice that involved “soul searching; an opportunity to really look at why I am in the profession that I'm in; an opportunity to look at purpose, passion, my leadership

strengths, and the reason that I do the work that I do.” That translated for her into different ways of interacting with her staff and her school board. She used CTL writings and reflections for “extra strength” to work through “some tough spots.” She shared her reflections and used retreats with her staff to help them “understand their purpose and their passion and their connection for what they're doing because it benefited me.” The rejuvenation and refocus that Madalina gained was so important to her, she wanted those she worked with to discover its benefits. She summarized how Courage work has refocused and re-energized her:

I don't think to this day that I would realize my passion for the work that I do and I think when we do realize our passion and our purpose for our work that we gain energy, stamina, endurance, and we're able to carry on far beyond what we would be able to do in our work.

Harold also felt that Courage work “helped me explore why I was a leader, what leadership meant, what I wanted, why I wanted to be doing this sort of work.” He described reflective times as being a “generative process” where he was able to examine what was happening in his life and begin to create different ways of thinking about them and responding to them. Harold reported that now he reads “poetry more than I used to and...there's a more contemplative nature that I find myself going to.” He wrote a poem at one of the retreats that he shared during the interview and he later reflected on how that poem still impacts his life:

I mean the issues that I'm wrestling with in that poem...are still the same ones that are putting me in the hospital. And I'm at a point in my career right now in the last month where I'm trying to make some significant decisions about what I want to do again. Spending time in the hospital with these kind of...issues is a great time for reflection.

Many participants in this study were reminded of a practice they have since reincorporated into their lives. The practice of writing or journaling, for example, was cited by Ralph, Alena, Harold, and Nicholas (among others) as being something that is central to who they are, but had not been doing as often as they'd like. They were reminded how important it was and they chose to make it a regular practice in part because of the Courage retreats.

Other participants were introduced to a completely different practice of reflection that they then carried on into their lives. Nicholas, for example, was introduced to yoga by a fellow cohort member during one of the quiet, reflective times at a CTL retreat. While yoga is not a practice that is taught or even mentioned in Courage work directly, Nicholas felt he was opened to it because of Courage work and so when a cohort member was practicing yoga during her free time at one of the retreats, he was interested in learning it. He reported that he now does “yoga a couple times a week...and it’s been wonderful.” Others cited new reflection that they gained from the Clearness Committees, as well as the skill of asking open and honest questions as practices that they take into their daily lives and try to share with others.

Every participant in this study discussed the role that reflection plays in their lives and how CTL taught them new skills or augmented those they already had. They spoke of how reflection helps them find purpose in what they do and why they do it. As Alena put it, reflection is the tool you use to figure out “how do you move to the next place, or how do you make meaning of something in a new way.” Participants in

this study found that reflection was not just an activity at a retreat, it is a tool that they use to refocus and share meaning and purpose within themselves and with others.

### Reframing the Results

This study was based in a theoretical framework that assumed that inner work, formation and transformational learning would inform the results (see chapter 2). It is intriguing, however, that the results are not completely explained by these concepts. While aspects of these ideas certainly were present for some of the participants, they alone do not completely explain the strong impact that cohort building and the social/partying activities had. This outcome was not foreseen by the study. A wider lens is needed to fully grasp the results.

This section of the chapter begins by briefly reviewing how Inner Work/Formation and Transformational Learning Theory were present in the results of the study. It then explores how Contact/Gestalt Theory may be a better lens for explaining what occurred.

#### *Inner Work/Formation*

As described in chapter 1, for the purpose of this study, the definition of inner work (drawing upon the work of Palmer and Metzger) is any activity (whether alone or with others) that causes an individual to discover, explore or feel connected to his or her sense of values, faith, meaning, spirit or soul. Additionally, Palmer (2004) defined formation as “soul work done in community” (p. 57). When defined this way, inner work and formation occurred to some degree at the CTL retreats in this study.

Seventeen participants assumed that the purpose of the retreats was inner work and reflection. Reflection was central to the essence of the experience and many participants in this study shared that the reflection that they did during the retreats touched upon values, soul and meaning in their lives. Madalina, for example, specifically used the term “soul searching” when she described her reflections at the retreats. She saw the process as “an opportunity to look at purpose, passion, my leadership strengths, and the reason that I do the work that I do.” She used reflection and inner work to reconnect who she is to what she does, which is the essence of Courage work (Palmer, 2007).

Participants used the terms “spiritual, purposeful work” heart, affective domain, and Yin versus Yang to describe the Courage experience as compared to the rest of the doctoral curriculum. They described quiet, reflective, spiritual work done in the presence of others at the retreats. They discovered new passion for their work and personal lives. They took what they learned in the retreats and applied the skills and lessons to their personal and professional lives. Clearly, many participants experienced inner work during and after the retreats.

The results of this study, however, demonstrated that something else was going on other than just inner work. Two of the most prevalent themes in this study were cohort building and social/fun/partying. While the Courage concept of “being alone together with a community of solitudes” (Palmer, 2004, p. 56) does speak to community, the type of community described in this study was quite different from what Palmer had in mind. Additionally, a draft document by the Center for Courage

and Renewal stated unequivocally that formation and Courage work is “*not* teambuilding” (D. Hagstrom, personal communication, April 4, 2009). Inner work, as defined by the Courage community, was not the overarching theoretical framework that grounded the results of this study.

Given that what occurred in this study was something other than inner work, a different way of framing the results is required. The next section of this chapter explores the role that transformational learning played in the results, and then a Gestalt notion of Contact is presented to more effectively reframe the theoretical framework of the results.

### *Transformational Learning*

None of the interview questions in this study specifically asked about Transformational Learning, but it was central to the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The basic tenet of Transformational Learning Theory is that learners do not just add new information to their lives; they literally transform their ways of knowing (Mezirow, 2000a). The discussion about how reflection made a difference in the lives of the participants in this study demonstrated this theoretical framework in action.

The overall purpose of adult learning, according to Transformational Learning Theory, is to “realize one’s agency through increasingly expanding awareness and critical reflection” (Brookfield, 2000, p. 142). Participants in this study reported that the CTL retreats provided them with ample opportunities to reflect critically. This led many of them to fully explore who they are as leaders, family members and human

beings. Abraham shared, for example, that he “reflected on my family, how I might have handled things differently, what can I do better.” Nicholas reflected on his professional side: “CTL helped me set a foundation to make me go back and ask why am I doing this. Is it worthwhile? What is the real work?” These examples, along with many others in chapter 5 described critical reflection within Transformational Learning Theory being central to the Courage in Leadership experience in this study.

Mezirow (2000a) also argued that the two central elements of transformative learning are objective reframing and subjective reframing. Objective reframing involves critical reflection on others’ assumptions when experienced through a narrative or in task-oriented problem solving. The soul story watercolor activity was a strong example of this. Sybil for example, shared, “doing the little paintings was somehow special for me...seeing yourself reflected in other people’s kind of artistic rendition of what you’re all about.” Helen was also “quite inspired by it and just the reception that my colleagues gave of my work was quite a surprise to me.” Alena summarized objective reframing when she asked, “So what am I learning from [others] that is helping me expand my world view?”

Subjective reframing involves critical self-reflection of one’s own assumption about a narrative, system, organization, feelings or relationships, or personal epistemology (Mezirow, 2000a). Many participants gave examples of how subjective reframing occurred for them at the Courage retreats. Helen for example, shared that reflection led to her “going back and looking at the work that was strictly personal ...personal in the sense of how am I fitting in to this work, and as well as how am I as

a person.” Jerry felt that Courage work forced reframing to occur: “The materials that were presented, even if you were going to go in resisting the whole way, they forced you to look at some of those things.” There were numerous other examples (described in chapter 5) that further support the process of subjective reframing during the CTL retreats.

While there are many quotes throughout this dissertation that support that Transformational Learning occurred, Madalina’s experience seemed to embody this theoretical framework more than any other. She entered the CTL retreats frightened, confused and very apprehensive. She shared that, “if there was a way to get out of [the retreats], I would have.” Over the course of the retreats, however, she started to discover “passion,” “connection,” “devotion,” and a “deep rooted love for doing work.” Madalina’s summative quote has been used twice before in this paper, but it bears repeating as it truly encapsulates how she critically reflected and literally transformed. She described the retreats as:

Soul searching; an opportunity to really look at why I am in the profession that I’m in; an opportunity to look at purpose, passion, my leadership strengths, and the reason that I do the work that I do.

I don't think to this day that I would realize my passion for the work that I do and I think when we do realize our passion and our purpose for our work that we gain energy, stamina, endurance, and we're able to carry on far beyond what we would be able to do in our work.

Transformational Learning, therefore, truly was present in this study. Many of those who learned skills from the CTL retreats took them and literally transformed how they approached their jobs, their families and their lives. It is important to note,



however, that Transformational Learning Theory alone does not describe the entire experience. It is foundational, but not everyone reported a transformational learning experience from the CTL retreats. Something more encapsulating than just Transformational Learning Theory is needed to ground this research. The next section of this chapter presents a different way of framing the results.

### *Gestalt Notion of Contact*

We all crave contact with our self and with others (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). While inner work (as defined in this study) may use what some participants described as “deep reflection,” “spiritual work” or simply “retreat” to address the craving for contact with self, it alone does not capture the need for contact with others (in the way it occurred in this study) as well. It may not be surprising, therefore, that the data from this study indicate that more than just inner work occurred. This section of the chapter frames the results of this study with a different lens – one using a Gestalt notion of Contact (Mortola, 2006).

Gestalt theory argues that healthy contact occurs at the boundary where the individual meets the world (Perls et al., 1951). Gestalt Therapy, the primary application of the theory, has the goal of “improving one’s contact in community and with the environment in general” (Bowman, 1998, p. 106). Contact is made with the world “using all of the aspects of our organism: our senses, our emotions, and our minds” (Mortola, Hiton, & Grant, 2008, p. 3). Further, “good contact is necessary for us to engage with the environments that surround us – both natural and social – and to get our needs met” (Mortola et al., 2008, p. 3).

Lobb (2005) wrote that Perls et al., authors of *Gestalt Therapy*, conceived the *self* as “the capacity of the organism to make contact with its environment – spontaneously, deliberately, and creatively. The function of the self is to contact the environment” (p. 27). What makes Gestalt theory unique is that it “studies the self as a function of the organism-environment field in contact, not as a fixed structure” (p. 27). The very purpose of the self is to make contact both within and without.

Gestalt theory looks at contact in a number of ways. Making contact can be seen as “a constant activity of the self (the self being in continuous contact with the environment)” (Lobb, 2005, p. 28). Lobb (2005) wrote that Gestalt theory describes this type of contact as “assimilated contact” and it is similar to sitting in a chair; we do not analyze most chairs before we sit in them, we have assimilated the motor movements and what the “contact” experience with a chair will be. This perspective of contact draws upon concepts of psychophysical development (Piaget, 1950) and of bodily experience (Kepner, 1987). There is, however, another way contact can be described, which is more relevant to the results in this study. Contact can also be described as “a significant experience capable of changing the previous adjustment of the self” (Lobb, 2005, p. 28). Gestalt theory refers to this type of contact as “contact with novelty, which leads to growth” (Lobb, 2005, p. 28).

Mortola et al. (2008) described “good contact” as “the ability to be fully engaged with the world. Good contact with the *self*, however, is also a necessary aspect of making good contact” (p. 4). They argued that contact:

Looks like presence and may reflect a multitude of feelings, it is animated, and it is an honest representation of a person's inner world. Contact is knowing who you are inside and bringing that knowledge to interact with others. It is showing up fully, being present, allowing others in, and letting yourself out. Contact is possible when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, to be "in touch." (p. 4)

The data from this study show not only that individuals made contact with their self through reflection, but also that they sought contact with others through cohort building and social activities. In other words, they sought contact with and were enriched by themselves and the world. Participants in this study participated in and fully integrated activities such as poetry, art, Clearness Committees, and fun. They reported that contact through these activities led to deeper understandings of themselves, closer friendships, conflict resolution, and personal and professional application of the skills and lessons they learned.

The participants' responses to the topic of required participation is a clear example where inner work alone does not explain what happened, but contact theory does. If indeed inner work was all that was going on, it would not necessarily matter whether everyone else from the cohort was present or not – as long as those present could provide a space where participants could "be alone together" (Palmer, 2004, p. 51). But participants felt very strongly that everyone from their cohort needed to be there. They craved contact with their entire cohort and felt it would not be complete without everyone there. Participants believed that the experience "would have been less" (Fiona), "would have weakened the cohort" (Jane), "would be missing voices" (Gueneviere), and "would have created factions" (Ralph), if it had not been required.

The vast majority wanted everyone to be there so that their cohorts could become, as Christine put it, a “cohesive, strong, caring unit.”

The fact that the social activities in the evening were so central to the experience also points to contact being a more apt descriptor of what occurred. It is interesting that Jane described the evening times as “partying or inner bonding,” and Christine described those experiences as “a time to get to know the cohort members at a deeper level and to have a lot of fun.” Marie described the time as “great activities that brought people together.” Perhaps Fred fully captured the notion of how people sought true contact during those social times when he described them as:

fun...that really added value to the experience in terms of sitting around together talking about life experiences; sharing stories, the good stories the bad stories...and I think that collaboration allowed people to come...out of their shells and participate.

If contact is “knowing who you are inside and bringing that knowledge to interact with others” (Mortola et al., 2008, p. 4), then that is what happened at the CTL retreats as described in this study. Participants described spending time truly reflecting on who they are, why they are in the profession that they chose to be in, and how they want to improve how they do their work. Just as important, however, participants shared that they needed and wanted to bring that information to others and to truly interact, connect and make contact with others in their cohort.

It is worth noting that contact addresses many of the issues that those with negative experiences from the retreats had as well. Abraham, for example, said he felt that he never quite got what Courage work was about, yet he used the retreats to

reflect about his work and family, and he saw the most important aspect of the retreats to be the “relationship building that went on.” While he thought he did not “get it,” he reported that contact with himself, his family and his cohort members were all central to the experience. In another example, Cleopatra described the experience as too woo-woo at first, which she defined as “weird.” Another way of saying that is that she did not understand enough of what was occurring to know how to make contact. Over time, however, Cleopatra described that she came to understand the retreats better and warmed up to them. Once she understood what the activities were and she could integrate *herself* within them, Cleopatra came to enjoy the retreats a great deal. She described warm interactions with others and eventually even embracing the woo-woo as a way of stretching her more “structured scientific point of view.” Once she was able to make contact within the CTL environment, Cleopatra no longer found it to be a negative experience.

Inner work did occur at the CTL retreats, but it alone does not fully describe the experience. When the data from this study are reframed in the context of the Gestalt notion of Contact, however, both the inner growth (through reflection, poetry, Clearness Committees, and artwork) and the outer work (through cohort building and social activities) can be understood as a whole. Participants made contact with their *self*, but they then consciously chose to bring their *self* in contact with others in a way that was “showing up fully, being present, allowing others in, and letting [themselves] out” (Mortola et al., 2008, p. 4). The Gestalt notion of Contact is a wider lens that more completely encapsulates what occurred in this study.

### Fidelity to the CTL Program

The Courage in Leadership retreats were based on the principles that Parker Palmer wrote about in *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998) and *A Hidden Wholeness* (Palmer, 2004). Given some of the results described in chapter 5 (Marie's concerns, the theme of partying, and the inclusion of other class assignments during two cohorts' retreats) and that inner work alone does not describe what occurred in this study, it is fair to ask how well these retreats strictly adhered to Courage principles and philosophy. This section discusses the role that requirement, cohort or community building, and the principles of a Courage retreat played in this study. It examines them within context of fidelity to Courage work itself.

#### *Required vs. Voluntary Participation*

As described in chapter 5, while the facilitators did not intend for participation in the retreat series to be seen as obligatory, the participants perceived that the classes were indeed required. It consisted of 3 one-credit courses called Courage in Leadership and was part of each cohort's course of study. Parker Palmer (2004) wrote that a condition for Courage work is that "everyone's participation in it be a voluntary response to an open invitation, without a hint of the manipulation or coercion" (p. 78). So, did the perception that participation was required lead to a different experience than Palmer intended? This question goes to the heart of Courage work being done with fidelity, and to the relationship of inner reflective retreat work within a doctoral cohort.

More than 80% of the participants in this study (18 of 22) felt that the class requirement was real, but that it was also critical to ensuring that cohort relationships were well-established. Every participant mentioned the importance of reflection; most participants shared that reflection was an important part of their CTL experience, and was achieved at the retreats. The question of whether the perceived class requirement led people to feel they were also required to fully participate once they were at the retreat site is a hair worth splitting. Palmer (2004) was very clear that circles of trust can only be formed when it is understood by the participants that it is not “share or die” (p. 78). Is it possible that people felt that going to the retreat was mandatory, but that once they got there it was an open invitation to participate, but not a requirement?

Marie, who had attended more than 10 CTL retreats before applying to the doctoral program, did not think so. She wondered if “people felt like they had to participate. And I don’t know why, if they just didn’t truly understand, trust the process, or if it had to do with being a cohort maybe.” She speculated that others “didn’t feel free to be who they were or to share or not share.” She had the sense that her cohort members “were there because they had to be there, compared to the other programs which everybody joined because they wanted to be there.”

Interestingly, no other participant echoed Marie’s concerns (including those who had attended previous Courage work). While there were some participants who did not understand the process at first or who took a little while to warm up to it, no one felt compelled to participate. Christine (who was in Marie’s cohort and had never been to a retreat before) said, “It was the optional participation as one of the

components of the retreat. So, it wasn't feeling like you must do this or that." She added, "if it doesn't work for you that's okay, pass or just feel free to move away from the circle or you can walk or whatever." Cleopatra, also in Marie's cohort said that she "realized that we didn't have to talk or react; I felt like that was acceptable...I wasn't ever put in bad spot." She added, "You don't have to talk if you don't want to so that made me more comfortable." Christine explicitly used the "share or die" term when she described her first retreat:

I really respect and trust [the facilitator] and I felt like he had a way of structuring especially on our first retreat so that it was just really respectful of participating what feels comfortable for you and feel free to not participate. I like that it's not share or die. So, that felt good because I think when you force people to participate it's so artificial.

Other cohorts were also clear that while they were expected to be at the retreats, it was not share or die. Jay-Z spoke of her facilitator being someone who "allows that wait time and if you're feeling uncomfortable, he doesn't force you to share or participate and I think that's so important especially as adults." Helen was also clear that the rule was, "Participate if you want, don't if you don't want." So, the message appeared to get through to those interviewed that participating in any given activity was completely optional.

It is worth noting that Marie's opinions were speculations. She did not say that she specifically heard anyone say that they felt compelled to participate, she just wondered if they did. She surmised that because they were a cohort and because they were all were expected to sign up for a class together that others might have felt



compelled to participate. In reality, no one in the study said that was true for them, and those who spoke of it mentioned the opposite.

Additionally, while participants did not feel they had to participate, reflection and inner work were seen as central to the experience. Participants described trustworthy spaces that were created at the retreats where they listened to others without trying to fix them or rush to judgment. Not only did those interviewed feel invited either to participate or not, they also used retreat time for “the strengthening of reflective practice” as Fiona put it. Christine said, “The Courage retreat facilitated the practice of very deep reflection.” Further, as noted numerous times earlier, that deep reflection included, as Madalina put it, “an opportunity to look at purpose, passion, my leadership strengths, and the reason that I do the work I do.” Certainly every participant “didn’t make the connection” (as Abraham put it), but it appears that the space was created where a vast majority felt they did.

The data from this study appear to indicate that participants can feel required to attend a retreat series, yet still feel that participation in the experiences created were a voluntary response to an open invitation. This concept has not been explored in the literature before and is central to Courage work. Additionally, because those interviewed (including five who had experienced CTL work before) felt that participation in the Courage activities was voluntary, they were able to create a space where deep reflection occurred within a circle of trust and through the Clearness Committees.

*Cohort-Building and Relationships within CTL*

The role of cohort or relationship building is challenging to explore within Courage work. Palmer (2004, p. 22), whose books *Courage and Renewal* work is based on, wrote about needing to create a community in whose presence one's soul can speak. He put it, "we need community to find the courage to venture into the alien lands to which the inner teacher may call us" (p. 26). He added, "A strong community helps people develop a sense of true self, for only in community can the self exercise and fulfill its nature" (p. 39). One of the functions of the soul, according to Palmer is "to keep us connected to the community in which we find life, for it understands that relationships are necessary if we are to thrive" (p. 33).

But while the concept of community is central to circles of trust (or Courage work) it is a very specific type of community. Community in this sense "does not necessarily mean living face-to-face with others; rather, it means never losing the awareness that we are connected to each other" (Palmer, 2004, p. 55). A circle of trust is a "community of solitudes where we can be alone together" (p. 56). Palmer wrote:

A circle of trust is community in a different key. *Community*, an elusive word with many shades of meaning, sometimes points to a group of people with a shared commitment to making an explicit impact of some sort, from changing one another to changing the world. But a circle of trust has no such agenda... its singular purpose is to support the inner journey of each person in the group, to make each soul feel safe enough to show up and speak its truth, to help each person listen to his or her inner teacher. (p. 54)

So, are cohort-building and Palmer's version of "community" compatible? In their purest forms they clearly are not the same thing. In a draft document by the Center for Courage and Renewal, it clearly states that formation and Courage work are

“*not* teambuilding” (D. Hagstrom, personal communication, April 4, 2009). Yet the data from this study appear to show that groups based in a cohort model were able to create many elements of circles of trust. Participants reported that they created an open and trustworthy environment where they were able to examine who they were within the work they do. The fact that participants reported that their cohorts were strengthened by the process, while not an intended outcome of Courage work, seems logical. Palmer (2004) wrote of the importance of creating “trustworthy relationships, tenacious communities of support” (p. 10), which is a reasonable definition of a healthy, working cohort.

Songster, a very experienced Courage facilitator, shared that “there was never a problem with these two living together - cohort model, CTL - never any clashes. It seemed to me as the facilitator, they rested easily together.” So while the community that makes up a circle of trust “need not be the constant context of our lives” (Palmer, 2004, p. 74), it certainly can be made up of one that is central to the lives (at least on an academic level) of the participants.

A stated goal of the Courage in Leadership retreats (as reported by Buckwheat, one of the facilitators) was to “enable the participants to form a strong bond interpersonally that would serve as a support during the program to enable people to complete their studies and their dissertation.” Purists of Palmer’s philosophy would argue that given that CTL is “*not* teambuilding,” this goal made it so that the retreats in this study were not truly CTL retreats. Both facilitators and most of the participants, however, were clear that the purpose of the retreats was also to provide a safe, caring,

space where soul work could happen; and that happened. Clearly this was not the experience for everyone at every retreat, but the data do show that for many participants, cohort building and inner work (both as stated purposes) existed together effectively in the doctoral Courage in Leadership retreats.

*Other Central Elements of Courage and Renewal Work*

In private correspondence with the researcher, Marcy Jackson, co-director of the Center for Courage and Renewal, shared a *draft* that she was working on with Parker Palmer (and others) to define Key Principles and Practices for Courage and Renewal (M. Jackson, personal communication, March 9, 2009). Some of those draft principles have already been discussed (e.g., community and solitude, and the invitation principle). There are six other draft “principles and practices that distinguish ‘courage and renewal’ work—in whatever form it takes—from other approaches” (M. Jackson, personal communication, March 9, 2009). These include: Universal Metaphors and Personal Stories; Quiet and Focused Space; No Fixing; A Movement Model of Change; The Inner Teacher; and Skilled Facilitation.

Some of these principles were explicitly cited by study participants as being present at the Courage in Leadership retreats. The poetry, artwork and other writings are part of the principle of Universal Metaphors and Personal Stories, for example, and were cited in some form by every member of this study. They are covered in detail as a main theme in chapter 5. Quiet and Focused Space was also mentioned by a vast majority of the participants. Jane, for example, shared, “They were fabulous about giving you time to spend an afternoon thinking about an issue or having some sort of

quiet time to think about what you really were passionate about.” Gueneviere added that her facilitator had “this wonderful strategy that he uses where you sit with the silence, which most of us aren’t comfortable doing.”

The participants of this study were also clearly exposed to the “No Fixing” rule. Helen, for example, described the Courage process of reminding “ourselves that our job is not to fix something, but rather, just to help the person fix it for him or herself.” Marie, however, was concerned that some of her cohort members did not fully grasp this concept. She shared that some people “were really trying to fix things. They did get a little better over time, depending on the people that were participating in the Clearness Committees that I was in. I did see some growth, but not a tremendous amount.” Louise discussed how hard it is for school leaders not to fix others, but also that it is a practice that she values and is trying to get better at. She shared:

I’m a fixer. I like to go in and fix things for other people and tell them how to do it. So, I have along way to go in that work, but I believe that totally to be a powerful practice, so I’ve really tried to get better at that.

So while, the participants may not have mastered the skill of “No Fixing,” they were clear that it was a touchstone of the work and needed to be present. They saw their task as working against the grain of most educational leadership training by actively letting others “fix” themselves.

The Movement Model of Change was not directly cited by any participant, but it was indirectly. As described in chapter 5, nine participants mentioned social justice and perspective taking as an important aspect of the Courage retreats. When asked

how she saw the Courage in Leadership classes fitting into the overall doctoral curriculum, for example, Helen shared, “The first connection that I make is to the concept of social justice.” She described in more detail:

And I say that because I think those retreats do provide time and they raise questions and issues...by the sorts of open-ended questions and by the poetry and sort of mood...I think they provided a context to see the inequities, to see the issues that need solving. And that was one of the reasons that I chose the doctoral program of Lewis and Clark, because of their commitment to social justice.

The principle of the Inner Teacher was also a term that no participant used directly, but most participants alluded to the retreats creating a space where they could “really ponder and think about what we’re doing and why we’re doing it” as Abraham put it. Fred also described the pleasure in being able to take a long walk where he “reflected on my life and the direction that I have been taking, or have taken.” While they do not say so directly, these participants imply that they are listening to their inner teacher when they reflect on what they have done and why they have done it.

The final principle mentioned in the draft “principles and practices” was Skilled Facilitation. The memo elaborated by stating, “Creating, holding and protecting this countercultural space requires a facilitator who is grounded in these principles and skilled in these practices” (M. Jackson, personal communication, March 9, 2009). This topic is challenging because one of the facilitators in this study was not formally trained by the Center for Courage and Renewal. The perception of all but one of the participants, however, was that the facilitation by both facilitators was very strong. Jane, for example, described both facilitators as “phenomenal in their

abilities.” Jay-Z said that if the facilitator with whom she was most familiar “hadn’t been leading it, it wouldn’t be what it is. I really think, I know, many people believe the same.” Nickie added that she trusted that the retreats would be positive because she entered the program with a great deal of respect for the facilitator she knew best: “I just think the world of him...I knew [CTL] had to be something good.” Wanda added, “I think he really did a good job of setting the tone for the group...he did a really nice job of just leading the group through each activity.”

Marie, who had the most experience with CTL outside of the doctoral program, however, felt that one of the facilitators struggled at times. She shared that she remembered him “leading one of the groups and working really hard at honoring the process, the real Courage process...but, he struggled with that.” She said, “I don’t know if he was just simply struggling because he was not feeling confident about facilitating, or if the setting was just not right.”

Apart from Marie’s critique of one of the facilitators, participants reported that the Courage in Leadership retreats at Lewis and Clark included elements of all of these principles and practices. A fair question would be to ask how the participants would truly know whether the retreats were faithful or not. In response, it is worth noting that five participants (in addition to Marie) and both facilitators had a context for understanding Courage work due to previous participation; their perspectives were consistent with the vast majority that these retreats were generally faithful to Courage principles. The core elements were reported by members of all four cohorts.

Yet, clearly there were aspects of the retreats that did not strictly follow Courage principles. The fact that cohort building was one of the stated purposes of the retreats has been discussed already. Additionally, Buckwheat shared that “other members of the college faculty were not as willing to embrace the complete separation of the Courage content from the program content, and...we compromised and designed an actual research presentation at one of the retreats.” During that one retreat (out of more than 12 retreats between the four cohorts), fidelity to Courage principles was clearly not adhered to. Buckwheat added that “what we settled on later was to take a portion of the final day which had been a Saturday morning and spend an hour and a half to 2 hours in program-advising like activity.” This compromise is also outside of the standard Courage retreat practice.

It is fair to say that there was a strong effort made to have the Courage in Leadership doctoral retreats be consistent with the principles and practices of the Center for Courage and Renewal. However, it is also fair to say that the stated purpose of cohort building, and the requirement by the doctoral program that other class components be integrated into some of the retreats created a focus wider than what a purist would call a true Courage retreat. The need to reframe the theoretical basis of this study as something other than inner work supports this idea as well. While the vast majority of participants felt that experience was overwhelmingly powerful and positive, this wider focus presents implications both for Educational Leadership programs and for the Courage community. Those implications are discussed in the next section of this chapter.



## Implications

The implications of this study extend to those who currently run educational leadership doctoral programs (including at Lewis and Clark College), those who work within the “Courage Community,” and to those looking to do further research in this area. This section describes the implications of reframing the study and then outlines the implications to the three communities mentioned above.

### *Reframing*

The fact that inner work alone did not fully capture what occurred in this study has important implications. The previous section of this chapter explored fidelity to Courage work, in part, to help determine how well the results of this study could be extrapolated and generalized to Courage work in general. If the Lewis and Clark Courage in Leadership retreats demonstrated 100% fidelity, then is the Gestalt notion of Contact applicable to all Courage work? Or, were the retreats in this study different enough from traditional Courage work that a different framework was applicable for this study alone? This section addresses these questions and then explores the implications of the answers.

First, if it were to be assumed that the retreats in this study demonstrated 100% fidelity to Courage work, then it would be fair to ask whether Courage work has been fully framed in the first place. That is to say, perhaps the results of this study were not truly different from traditional Courage retreats; it is just that research had not been done to explain the overall work from a different perspective such as the Gestalt notion of Contact. Such a conclusion, however, cannot be made by the results of this

study; the claim of 100% fidelity simply is not possible. There were enough differences in the Lewis and Clark retreats that generalization of the theoretical construct of Courage work would be well outside the results of these data. Reframing Courage work was never an intention or purpose of this study. Additional research that directly addressed these potential implications would be required to draw different conclusions about the basic theoretical framework of Courage work in general.

A second perspective is that the results from this study required a broader theoretical framework (specifically of the Gestalt notion of Contact) because the retreats were unique; they were not defined by Courage work alone. The purpose of this study was to describe the impact of these retreats on doctoral students. The Lewis and Clark Courage in Leadership retreats had many of the principles and practices of formation and Courage work, but they also had a focus on cohort building, and a theme of social/fun/partying that was different from other CTL retreats. They therefore became something different –something that was more focused on Contact with the self and with others. Participants reflected, walked and talked, built friendships, participated in Clearness Committees, strengthened collegial bonds, explored their purpose in work and life, and partied. They took what they learned from the retreats and enhanced their other classes, as well as their personal and professional lives. Indeed, if contact is “knowing who you are inside and bringing that knowledge to interact with others...showing up fully, being present, allowing others in, and letting yourself out” (Mortola et al., 2008, p. 4), then contact is an effective way of framing what was created.

An implication of these retreats being unique is that they require a clearer statement of purpose and outcome to the participants. They cannot rely on Courage principles alone to explain them; they need something broader such as the notion of Contact to fully encapsulate them. Many of the participants in this study indicated that they were not clear what the purpose of the retreats was (at least initially). While many assumed (after the fact) that reflection, inner work, cohort building and rejuvenation were the four primary purposes of the retreats, they used idiosyncratic terms to describe them. Some described the retreats as spiritual, others used the words heart, Yin and Yang affective domain or the term listening “with a different part of my brain.” Absent a clear purpose and language, participants created their own. Many of the participants recommended that the purpose and process of the retreats needed to be clearly stated and defined before the first one occurred. The results of this study support that recommendation, both for clarity to the participants and for clarity to the work itself.

A different implication of having created something different from pure Courage work speaks to a missed opportunity. What would have happened if all four cohorts had been exposed to retreats that demonstrated 100% fidelity to Courage work? What if the doctoral program had not required class presentations during some of the retreats, or other program discussions during any of the retreats? In fact, what if many of these principles had been present not only at these retreats, but also in every other class that the students took as part of their course of study. Marie and Louise both expressed disappointment that more of their classes were not integrated with the

Courage philosophy. Louise stated, “I think that we have people teaching our classes who don’t really understand the Courage work, so they’re not always making a good connection.” Marie said that she could think of only one class “that really integrated the Courage work.” It would be interesting to see if the results of this study would have been different if Courage work were fully integrated throughout the program.

The uniqueness of the retreats in this study required a different way of framing the results of this study. The implications of that reframing were outlined above. The next section broadens the scope of implications beyond just those who were part of the retreats in this study, to educational leadership programs in general.

#### *Implications for Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs*

There are a number of implications from this research for directors of Educational Leadership Doctoral programs. On a very basic level, this research addresses whether activities such as Courage in Leadership retreats even belong in doctoral programs. This section speaks to those implications.

First, if an educational leadership doctoral program is based in a cohort model, the data in this study strongly support including retreats that integrate deep reflection and cohort building as part of that program. It is important to note that every participant in this study self-selected to attend a program that was based in a cohort model. Given that, the vast majority found that the Courage in Leadership retreats emphasized reflection and relationship building that had many positive outcomes for the cohort model. Participants felt more connected to and supported by each other, and friendships developed that they felt would not have happened otherwise. Another way

to say that is, good contact occurred. Individually, participants indicated that they felt more rejuvenated and refreshed as a result of the retreats, which positively impacted both their academic work and their professional work. There was strong evidence that the participants in this study felt that reflective retreats strengthened relationships and cohort cohesion.

Second, there is evidence that retreats that incorporate the principles of Courage and formation work result in a positive, reflective experience. The vast majority (17 out of 22) of those interviewed for this study saw reflection as being the main purpose of Courage work and felt that reflective time and activities helped them in their personal, professional and academic lives. They found the retreats to be powerful, reflective, cohort-building experiences. The specific Courage activities of Clearness Committees, poetry and soul story artwork were all cited as tools that resonated greatly with those in this study.

Third, the data indicate that making Courage in Leadership retreats part of the course of study was seen as an important aspect of the overall program. While there was not agreement as to whether or not the classes were intended to be “required,” it is clear that a vast majority of participants in this study saw them that way. Additionally, a vast majority felt that requiring everyone in their cohort to attend was a positive and important aspect of creating a space where cohort building and reflection could best occur. This implication is counter to a central tenet of Courage work, yet only one participant felt it was negative. The overwhelming majority of those in this study strongly supported the required perception of the retreats.

Fourth, there were four recommendations made by the participants in this study that resonated above others. First, as noted earlier, many participants felt that the purpose and process of Courage work should have been explained at the very beginning. Many interviewees ended up relaxing and enjoying the retreats once they understood what they were, but they felt many of their uncertainties would have been allayed if they understood more about the principles, purposes and framework of the retreats before they happened. Second, a number of participants felt that the retreats should have continued beyond the first year to support the students through their dissertation writing. Two cohorts essentially developed retreats on their own, but they would have preferred that these retreats had been a part of the program and not something they had to plan and arrange themselves. Those in the other two cohorts also would have liked to have had more Courage retreats as well. Third, a number of participants felt that the retreats were lessened when other academic classes were combined with the reflective retreats. It was recommended that other classes be kept out of the CTL retreat weekends, and that the time be focused exclusively on reflective retreat.

The final recommendation is based on just three experiences, but it leads into the next implication topic – that of the Courage Community. Alena, Sybil and Cleopatra all shared that they were going through difficult issues in their lives during the time of the Courage retreats. Alena shared that Courage work provided “the invitation to allow those things to surface...and I really did not want those things surfaced.” All three were uncertain about how their issues would come out and how

their cohort would react if they did. They wanted to be a part of their cohort, but they did not want to have to share every detail of what was going on in their lives in order to do that. Alena's recommendation was:

I think if there's a lesson to be learned here for people who are doing Courage work, I mean, certainly your job is not a therapist, but your job is I think, as a leader, to be understanding individuals' contributions and how to bring people into group, how to bring people into the circle.

Alena's suggestion speaks to ensuring that facilitation of this work is done carefully. There have been questions about who should be facilitating this work, and who gets to decide that someone is a qualified facilitator (e.g., do they need to be a licensed counselor, or approved by the Center for Courage and Renewal?). With few exceptions, the participants in this study believed their facilitators created a safe, reflective, cohort-building environment. Had the purpose of the work been more clearly detailed to those who did not have prior experience with it, however, it is more likely that those who had challenging issues going on in their lives could have experienced the retreats less tentatively. Preparation and skillful facilitation were seen as important elements for the participants.

#### *Implications for the Courage Community*

Some of the findings in this research may have implications for the Center for Courage and Renewal and the Courage Community in general. The findings clearly support that Courage retreats are a powerful means of encouraging the type of reflection that leads to truly transformed lives. They also support the incorporation of this work into other institutions (such as higher education). There are other outcomes,

however, that may challenge some basic assumptions of the Courage Community. Those are outlined in this section.

As outlined above, the theoretical framework of Courage work did not fully encapsulate what occurred in this study. That may have been because the retreats did not demonstrate 100% fidelity to Courage work. An alternative hypothesis is that there may be more going on at the retreats than just what is described in *A Hidden Wholeness* (Palmer, 2004). The Gestalt notion of Contact is just one example of an alternative framework of describing what occurred at the retreats. An implication for the Courage community is that there may be other ways to frame the work. If it were to augment or better define the work for more people (without diminishing it in any way in the process) this may be a useful implication.

Second, the fact that participants in this study believed that they were required to attend the retreats as part of their course of study, and that they still were able to deeply reflect and fully participate in activities such as Clearness Committees and other inner work was an interesting finding. Institutions of higher learning are offering courses and retreats that are based in Courage principles and practices. Principals are bringing Courage work back to faculty meetings (that presumably are required). Before this study, there was no research exploring whether these activities were incompatible with Palmer's (2004) statement that "everyone's participation in it be a voluntary response to an open invitation, without a hint of the manipulation or coercion" (p. 78). It is interesting to note that everyone in this study felt that once they got to the retreats their participation in any and all of the activities at the site was



completely voluntary. Indeed, this may support Palmer's tenet while also opening up the work to situations that previously may have been seen as manipulative or coercive. Skilled facilitation and adhering the practices and principles once people arrived at the retreats appear to be critical components to making the experience work for the participants in this study.

It is worth noting that Marie's experience from this study lends support to the notion that cohort members may not have gone as deeply or may not have as quickly grasped the tenets of Courage work because of the requirement. As someone who had extensive experience in CTL retreats before her doctoral study, Marie felt that some in her cohort never quite "got it." So, it may be that those without a frame of reference still felt the experience was powerful and important, but the course requirement and the lack of some understanding of the purpose of the work did not allow circles of trust to develop as fully as they could have at these retreats.

Third, this study appears to support the notion that cohort building and Courage work can coexist. Community building within Courage work was primarily about creating a "community of solitudes where we can be alone together" (Palmer, 2004, p. 56). The data from this study indicate that such a community can exist and can also carry on as a cohort outside of the retreat setting. The two are not mutually exclusive.

These implications help to inform the Courage community about the greater "movement model" for Courage and Renewal. It appears that retreats can be made up of previously established cohorts that exist for a different purpose. They can also be

incorporated with existing courses of study. Parker Palmer wrote that it is obvious that “Employers, for example, cannot require employees to join a circle of trust” (Palmer, 2004, p. 78). The data from this study do not refute that assertion, but they do appear to indicate that once participants arrive at a retreat site, as long as it is clear that participation from that point on is 100% voluntary (and everyone truly believes that), circles of trust can still be established.

### *Implications for Further Research*

A number of implications for further research were revealed by this study. Because this was a phenomenological study looking at the impact of the experience, it did not fully explore the reasons for what occurred. Most of the recommendations for future study revolve around answering the question why: Why did the study need to be reframed?; and Why did some groups get more out of some aspects of the retreats than others?

The biggest implication for further research has to do with the Gestalt notion of Contact and why the theoretical framework of this study needed to be reframed. As noted numerous times in this chapter, inner work alone did not fully capture all that occurred in this research. The results of this study needed to be examined through a different lens. Was that because these retreats were so different from traditional Courage work that the basic tenets of that work did not apply? Or was it because Courage work itself can reasonably be framed differently without diminishing anything that is central to that work? Additional research in this area would be intriguing.

Another implication for future research involves examining why there were significant differences between cohorts in this study. There are a number of variables that could play into these differences. The previous experience of cohort members, the amount of preparation before the retreat, differences between facilitators, and the desire of some cohort members to add additional retreats to the series are all possible variables that were partially informed by this study. Examining what makes an effective cohort could help higher education programs augment the cohort experience for their students.

Third, the discovery that men were much more likely to mention and display artwork from the retreat was a compelling finding. It would be interesting to explore why that was and whether there are certain activities that are a part of Courage work that appeal to one gender more than the other. While not necessarily referring specifically to the art activities, a couple of participants in the study wondered if left and right brain differences were a part of the appeal for some activities. Exploring connections between brain research, gender differences, and Courage work would be an interesting study.

Fourth, it would be interesting to explore whether a retreat series designed for a doctoral program that is not based in a cohort model would yield similar results. Presumably, different participants would attend each retreat; there would not be a single cadre of participants attending a series of retreats together. A reasonable hypothesis would be that cohort building would not be a major theme for such a series of retreats. It would be intriguing to compare the non-cohort retreats with the results

from this study to further understand the effect that a cohort model has on educational leadership doctoral students.

Fifth, there is more that can be explored relative to voluntary versus required attendance. If employers required their employees to attend a retreat, but then allowed participation in activities to be completely voluntary, would the result mirror the findings from this study? Is the experience powerful when teachers are exposed to Courage work at a required faculty meeting? Courage work is being used in a variety of settings and formats now, and learning what variables allow (or prevent) fidelity to exist would be interesting to explore.

Sixth, there is more research that can be done on facilitation. Currently, the Center for Courage and Renewal oversees facilitator preparation for Courage work. Ever since Palmer (2004) wrote *A Hidden Wholeness*, however, anyone can read that book and theoretically “do” Courage work. Is specific facilitation training required to create the space that Palmer writes about? If not, what qualities are required?

Finally, there is still room for much more research on CTL in general. Before the start of this dissertation, there was only one other research study looking specifically at CTL, and one other study specifically examining Circles of Trust. The experiences, principles, practices and outcomes of this work still merit more research.

### Summary and Conclusion

For 4 years, the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon has included a retreat series entitled Courage in Leadership as a part of its course of study. These retreats are based on the principles

and practices of CTT, CTL and Circles of Trust that are described in the books *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer, 1998) and *A Hidden Wholeness* (Palmer, 2004). The retreats are an opportunity and invitation for the doctoral students to explore who they really are and how that impacts their work as school leaders. They are a chance to engage in reflective inner work and make contact with others.

This study explored the experience of the Courage in Leadership retreats for participants from all four cohorts of the doctoral program. Its purpose was to discover the impact the retreats had on the professional, personal and research lives of those students. Twenty-two participants (and both facilitators) were interviewed, and many documents were reviewed. A phenomenological research methodology was used to collect, reduce, and analyze the data. All of this information was used to discern the essence and impact of the retreats.

The results indicated that the experience overall was a positive one for those who were interviewed for this study. The most surprising finding was that cohort building was described by every participant as being central to the experience. This was not expected because the Center for Courage and Renewal (the national nonprofit organization that supports Courage work and facilitator training) describes Courage and formation work as “*not* team building” (D. Hagstrom, personal communication, April 4, 2009). Everyone in this study felt that the connections, friendships, and interactions with those in their cohort were greatly enhanced as a result of these retreats. They also felt those relationships had a positive impact on their personal, academic and even professional lives.

A second major theme that emerged was that reflection was central to the experience of the retreats for the vast majority of participants in this study. There were many quiet, reflective times at every retreat, and participants used those times to explore their personal and professional identities. They took the time to walk, journal or just sit and reflect. Many of the participants also generalized the reflective skills and practices they learned at the retreats. They reported that they enhanced their personal, professional and academic lives.

The third major theme from this research came from specific activities that were elements of the retreats. The Clearness Committees, poetry, artwork, and social activities were all cited as important aspects of the experience. The skills of open and honest questioning and active listening were discussed by a majority of the participants; they appreciated learning and applying those skills. The connection between all four of these activities, cohort building and reflection were also discussed. They were all seen as central to the Courage in Leadership experience.

The four cohorts reported slightly different experiences from each other. Each cohort had a distinct personality that was reflected in the retreats. One was very analytical, another deeply connected, a third did not experience the retreats as powerfully as the other three, and the last worked hard at all elements of the retreats and appreciated the pay off. Men and women of all four cohorts generally experienced the retreats in a similar way, although the artwork was described in more depth and detail by men.

Participants with previous exposure to Courage work also had a slightly different experience than those who had not attended CTL retreats before. This group of veterans expressed more initial comfort with the retreats than those who were new to the experience. Interestingly, the veterans appreciated the partying slightly more than those without previous experience as well. Additionally, one member of veteran group was very descriptive in her concerns about how different the doctoral retreats were from her previous CTL experiences.

The results of this study challenged the theoretical framework described in chapter 2 of this dissertation. Inner work alone was not able to fully capture all of the themes that emerged from the study. While inner work certainly could address the concepts of reflection, Clearness Committees, artwork and poetry, the major themes of cohort building and social activities were not expected and were outside of the theory of inner work. The Gestalt notion of Contact was introduced as a viable framework that could capture all that occurred in this study. Participants sought contact with their inner selves (through reflection, and indeed through what was described as inner work), but they also sought contact with their environment and with others. They made deep connections with those in their cohort and they carried those connections to their other classes, as well as to their personal and professional lives. They also connected with the natural beauty of the retreat sites. The essence of these retreats was all about deep, strong and meaningful contact.

One implication of this finding was the necessity to thoroughly assess whether the Courage in Leadership retreats demonstrated fidelity to Courage work. Given that

some of the outcomes were different from what was expected, fidelity helped to determine whether these results could be generalized. While all of the principles and practices of Courage work were present in the Courage in Leadership retreats, there were other confounding elements. Inclusion of outside coursework in some of the retreats and a stated goal of relationship building both prevented assumptions of generalization to be made.

Other implications of the findings addressed how courses such as Courage in Leadership fit into an overall educational leadership doctoral program. The retreats were found to be a positive, powerful, reflective and cohort-building experience. If those are goals for a doctoral program, this study supports the inclusion of Courage retreats (with some minor recommendations) as a part of the course of study.

Implications for further research and for the Courage Community were also described.

Educational leadership is critical for schools to succeed. Preparing future leaders and supporting existing ones are essential roles that graduate programs in educational leadership play. This study explored whether a unique component of Lewis and Clark College's doctoral course of study had an impact on the lives of students there. The study found that it did. Students were more reflective, connected, rejuvenated, and interactive as a result of the Courage in Leadership retreats. They applied what they learned from these retreats not just within their doctoral program's cohort, but also in their personal and professional lives. It enhanced their educational leadership skills.



Education has an obligation to support the whole student. Programs that just focus on theory and academic study do not address other critical components of a student's life. Deep inner reflection, connection to self and others, and indeed exploration of the spirit and soul are other ways our humanity expresses itself. If we are to give students of educational leadership the tools they need to be as effective as they can be, we need to look beyond just academics and theory. When educational leaders come to truly understand how reflection, introspection, and connection to others make up who they are and how they lead, then perhaps they will share that with the teachers and staff they supervise. If the teachers and staff reflect this upon their students, then perhaps, just perhaps, we will truly educate the whole child. That is the hope of this study.

## EPILOGUE

During the defense of this dissertation, an engaging discussion occurred about the framing of the study. The research finding that inner work did not fully inform the results was at the center of this discussion. The way in which the research was reframed in chapter 6 was accepted by the committee, but everyone wondered whether there was a more descriptive and accessible way to explain what occurred that could further the discussion within educational leadership programs, the Courage Community, and academia. This brief epilogue serves as a summary of that discussion and perhaps a prologue to future research and discussions about this work.

### Integration and Adult Development Theory

The focus on inner work alone proved to be conceptually limiting in this study. While inner work occurred, the retreats were better described as an integration of inner and outer work. The retreats served as a venue or a tool to integrate the whole being of the participants. A suggestion was made that the title of this dissertation might have been changed to the *Courage to Explore an Integrative Process of Educational Leaders*.

In order to capture the concept of integration, the discussion turned to the topic of adult developmental theory. By focusing on adult developmental theory (and not just learning theory), the themes in this study may become more accessible to a broader audience while clarifying the underlying framework. The integration of inner

and outer work for educational leaders (and doctoral students) is really about facilitating the healthy development of adults personally and academically. There are developmental concepts and theories (in addition to the Gestalt notion of Contact, which was covered in chapter 6) that describe a deeper and broader perspective of what this research is about. Descriptions of three of those themes follow.

The theme of integration and differentiation is central to what occurred in this study and central to adult developmental theory itself. Werner (1957) described normal adult development as going from “an initial state of globality and lack of differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation, articulation and hierarchic integration” (p. 126). Piaget (1952) and Erickson (1980) also described how human development includes the concept of differentiating and integrating oneself through life experiences. The major themes in this study can be described through the lens of differentiation and integration as well. Cohort building, for example, asks “how do I fit in” by addressing differentiation and integration of the group. Reflection asks “who am I” by addressing differentiation and integration of the self. The CTL retreats provided both – they helped participants differentiate and integrate with the group and with the self.

The adult developmental theme of support and risk was also central to what occurred in this study. CTL provided support both internally (an opportunity to reflect and explore inner work safely) and externally (through the strengthening of a cohort) in the face of potential risks. Attachment Theory speaks to these concepts, and is encapsulated in Bowlby’s (1988) quote, “All of us, from cradle to grave, are happiest

when life is organized as a series of excursions, long or short, from the secure base provided by our attachment figure(s)” (p. 62). Earlier, Bowlby (1982) described attachment behavior as a “safety-regulating system, namely a system the activities of which tend to reduce the risk of the individual coming to harm” (p. 374). The developmental theme of support and risk within the developmental framework of Attachment Theory may provide a broader and more accessible lens to a wider audience of what occurred in this study.

The third concept in adult developmental theory that was discussed at the dissertation defense and that may be connected to the results of this study is organismic development and self-regulation. Werner (1957) was a central theorist in this psychological notion, though Piaget (1952) also described it as a fundamental theme in development. The essence of this theory is the tendency of the organism to right itself; to make meaningful wholes and try to heal what is in pain. Humans do not have to learn that when they’re thirsty, they need to drink; it is a basic developmental framework. During the discussion at the defense of this dissertation, the role of the Clearness Committees and why they were so powerful was framed by organismic theory. The participants in this study may have been looking for ways to find closure or understanding to what was confusing or frustrating them; where there was pain or discomfort, they sought a means of finding a solution. Whether this truly applies could be subject to further study, but exploring different ways of understanding and explaining what occurred is a valuable exercise.

Education needs to be grounded not only in what we know about learning, but also in what we know about development. How we fit in with others and how we come to know ourselves, our values, our belief systems, our spiritual and religious beliefs, and our professional ways of being can all be framed and grounded in developmental theory. Sense making, emotional connection, integration of who we are with what we do, and various learning theories and strategies should all be aspects of doctoral programs in educational leadership. Our discussion ended with an agreement that all of these components are important.

If the final outcome of this dissertation is that a richer dialogue around educational leadership programs, Courage work, and the role of adult developmental theory in both programs occurs, then it will have been a worthy endeavor. Programs should constantly ask why they are including specific components, and within what theory or framework they are working. They also should be looking for ways to explain what they do in language that is accessible and understandable. Critical self-examination is central to education, to Courage work, and to the true human experience. It is the hope of those who participated in the defense discussion that this dissertation will aid in that critical evaluation and examination.

#### Concluding Thoughts

My personal experiences with Courage Work and with The Center for Courage & Renewal have been powerful and life-changing. They have significantly informed my educational leadership practice and increased my awareness of professional development resources. I have been transformed by the deep, soul-searching

experiences of creating a safe place where I could explore the reasons I became an educator and a school leader in the first place. Knowing how and when to ask honest and open questions has made me a better, and more empathic, school leader.

I love this work. The research study that I have now concluded has not resulted in any information that lessens my respect nor my appreciation for CTT or CTL. However, my experiences of the past year, especially my sense-making moments here in this concluding time of looking back and looking forward, tell me that I may have a gift to offer the Courage Community.

It seems to me that Courage Work might benefit from positioning itself within a larger and more universal world of educational and developmental theory. I believe that such a description might make this work more accessible to many who have not yet come to understand or appreciate it. The connection between Courage Work and human development, value development, and learning development already exists (as this research has shown), but embracing those connections within the Courage Community and making them brighter might invite more people into this work.

Over this past year, I have come to believe that courage work is unique *and* it is a part of a larger learning and developmental universe. My wish and (I hope) my gift to the Courage Community is that they are open to that notion, and that all of us in this community continue to find ways to make this work as open, inviting and accessible as possible.

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APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

### Interview Protocol and Questions

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Cohort Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Protocol*

1. Review informed consent form; ask participant to sign in agreement.
2. Collect current demographic information for follow-up interview.
3. Disclose about Tom and David being on my committee. Stress that names and cohort number will be masked to Tom and David.
4. Request journal or other written materials from Courage Retreats.
5. Start recording.

#### *Questions*

Let's start by confirming the name you would like to use for this interview. Is

\_\_\_\_\_ the name you would like to use?

Can you please answer a few questions about yourself?

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in education: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in a Formal Educational Leadership Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience in leadership roles other than education: \_\_\_\_\_

*Interview Questions*

- 1) What do you recall about the CTL retreats from the first year of your doctoral program?
  - a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What feelings come up when you think about the retreats?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What specific activities or events stand out for you from the retreats?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What quiet, reflective, or “inner” times do you recall from the retreats?
  - d. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What stories come to mind when you think back to those retreats?
  
- 2) What had been your exposure to Courage work before you started your doctoral program?
  - a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...If you had exposure to Courage work before, how did the fact that this program included Courage work influence your desire to apply to the program?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...If you had not had exposure to it, what do you recall wondering about CTL before any of the retreats?
  
- 3) How do you find meaning and purpose in your personal and professional life?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How does reflection play a role in helping you find meaning or purpose?
  - d. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What role (if any) does “spirituality” play in that meaning or purpose?
  
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What do you do to take care of yourself when you feel stressed or beaten down by work or life?
  
- 4) How did CTL fit into the overall doctoral curriculum?
  - a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did it integrate or connect to other aspects of the program?

- b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did it seem different or separate from other aspects of the curriculum or program?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did the fact that the retreats were required classes impact the experience?
  - d. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...How did the CTL impact your research?
- 5) How have you applied or integrated aspects of CTL work into your own life?
- a. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...In your professional life, how have you used any aspect of Courage work, either for yourself or with your staff?
  - b. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What aspects of Courage work have played a role in your personal life?
  - c. *(Probe if not mentioned)*...What stories come to mind when you think of how you have integrated CTL into your own life?

Do you have any questions or final thoughts?

APPENDIX B  
INVITATION LETTER

[Date]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a member of the third cohort of Lewis and Clark's educational leadership doctoral program, and I am preparing to begin my dissertation research project. I am very interested in the CTL retreats that we all participated in during the first year of our programs. I have decided to focus my research on the experience of those retreats on doctoral students' personal, academic and professional lives. Given that you were a member of a cohort that included Courage retreats, I would like to invite you to participate in the study.

#### *Purpose and Time Involved*

The purpose of the study is to explore how CTL retreats and other inner work activities have impacted the lives of practicing educational leaders who are (or were) also doctoral students at Lewis and Clark College. Participation will include a face-to-face interview that will take no longer than 60 minutes and a follow-up interview by phone or in person that will take no longer than 20 minutes. In addition, I anticipate about 10 minutes of your time spent through e-mail correspondence. There will be some time required to set these up, but all together your involvement will not require more than 90 minutes of your time. I will also be asking for your permission to use any journaling or other writing done at the Courage retreats that you may have kept, though this is not a requirement for being a part of the study.

#### *Why be Involved?*

Your participation is completely voluntary, and there is no monetary award for doing so. However, I would like to invite you to be a part of the study to contribute to the research on the role CTL and similar activities have on participants. Potential benefits for you include a chance to reflect on the role that retreats such as these and similar inner work has on your own personal and professional lives.

#### *Confidentiality*

If you choose to participate, I will not be using your name in any publications from the dissertation study. All the participants will have pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality and you will be given the opportunity to select your name that I can use in the publication of my dissertation study. I want to assure you that you may end the discussion at any time during the interview process. You may also choose not to



respond to particular questions, even though you continue participation. Your current or future involvement with Lewis and Clark, Courage to Lead, or any other programs will not be impacted in any way if you choose to not participate in this study.

*Next Steps*

Please let me know *whether or not* you are interested in participating by e-mailing me or calling me by phone. I am hoping to do the interviews in October or November, 2008 at a convenient time and place for you. I have also attached the consent form for you to review and if you are willing to participate, you will need to sign the form at the time of the interview.

I hope you will consider participating because your perspective and experience would make a valuable contribution to the study. Please let me know by [date=1 week after receipt of letter] if you would like to participate or not. In either case, I hope you are doing well. I will look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Paul Andrews  
Doctoral Candidate, Lewis & Clark College  
[email address]  
[phone number]

APPENDIX C  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

## Participant Consent Form

I consent to participate in this study concerning my experiences in Courage to Lead retreats at Lewis and Clark College and other inner work activities. This research is being conducted by Paul Andrews as a part of his doctoral dissertation at Lewis and Clark College. I understand I will need to meet in person for a face-to-face interview. The interview session will not exceed sixty (60) minutes. Correspondence through e-mails will include another ten (10) minutes. The follow-up interview may be conducted in person or by telephone. It will not exceed twenty (20) minutes. The total time I am being asked to participate in this study will be about ninety (90) minutes.

I understand that the face-to-face interview will be digitally audio-recorded and that audio records will be used only by Paul Andrews and his dissertation committee member, Dr. Peter Mortola, for research purposes and kept in a locked file cabinet at Paul Andrews's home. I understand that I can stop the recording at any time during my interview.

I understand that aspects of the interview will ask me to reflect on my experiences with Courage to Lead retreats at Lewis and Clark College. I also will be asked questions about my spiritual beliefs, "inner work" I may do or want to do, basic demographic information, as well as my professional and personal connections to spiritual and inner work.

I understand that I will not be paid for my participation and that there are no other planned personal benefits for participating in this study. I understand that this research may assist doctoral programs in determining the role inner work might play in their curriculum.

I understand that I may feel uncomfortable discussing some of my experiences. Feelings of discomfort should not last and I can take a break or stop the interview at any time. Paul Andrews can provide me with information about how to access the Lewis and Clark or other counseling center.

I understand that I may end my involvement in the study for any reason without penalty of any sort.

I understand that Paul Andrews will answer any questions that I might have after I have participated in the study. However, he may not be able to answer some questions until after the project is completed.

I understand that participant codes and pseudonyms will be used to maintain confidentiality and my name will not be used in any publication from this study.

I permit publication of the results of the study with the agreement that participant confidentiality is ensured.

I permit use of any personal journals or other writings that I have provided to be used as a part of this study.

I permit direct quotes from interviews and writings to be used in publications, provided that pseudonyms are used.

I understand that matters relating to this study can be directed to Paul Andrews ([phone number] or by e-mail at [email address]). If I have any questions regarding this research, I can also call Dr. David Hagstrom (retired Adjunct Instructor in Educational Leadership at Lewis and Clark College) at [phone number]; or Dr. Peter Mortola (Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology at Lewis and Clark College and a member of Paul Andrews's dissertation committee) at [phone number].

If I have additional questions or concerns about this study or my rights as a research subject, I can contact the Lewis & Clark College Human Subjects Research Committee at [phone number] or by e-mail: [email address].

I am eighteen years of age, or older. I have read and understand the above explanations and declare that I am a fully informed participant.

Again, I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I have the ability to withdraw at any point without penalty.

---

Participant's Name (print)

---

Participant's Signature

---

Date

I have presented this information to the participant and have obtained his or her voluntary consent.

---

Researcher's Signature

---

Date

*The extra copy of the consent form is for you to keep*

APPENDIX D  
RESEARCHER IDENTITY MEMO

My first real exposure to Courage to Lead (CTL) was in 2003. David Hagstrom invited me to a one day introductory “sampler” on a Saturday early that year to learn about what CTL was. I enjoyed the experience and jumped at the chance to participate in a series of five Courage to Lead (CTL) retreats that started later that year. The series was funded by the Ford Family Foundation and it met once each season over fifteen months (two spring retreats and one for each of the other three seasons). I found the retreats to be very personally and professionally powerful and I became very interested in learning more about the work.

After attending a few more one-time weekend retreats and day-long “samplers,” I was asked to apprentice to become a national CTL (and Courage to Teach) facilitator in 2006. I accepted and began my apprenticeship by attending the national “Gateway Retreat” with Parker Palmer (and others) at Bainbridge Island, Washington in June of that year. I continued to apprentice with 3 facilitators during a five-retreat series that was completed August 10, 2008. I am now a facilitator.

I was also accepted into the third cohort of the Lewis and Clark Ed.D. program beginning the summer of 2006. As part of the doctoral program all cohort members attend a three-retreat series based on Parker Palmer’s Courage to Lead work (my cohort had retreats in July 2006, December 2006, and May 2007). I found these retreats to be different in a number of ways from the previous retreats I had attended. One of the main purposes of these retreats appeared to be to help the cohort bond together. The free time at these retreats was much more playful (and raucous) than that of previous retreats. And the fact that there were a number of cohort members who had never been exposed to the work seemed to cause them some level of confusion, lack of connection to the work, and trepidation. All of them participated, and everyone appeared to enjoy the process and the time together, but it felt different from previous experiences. It intrigued me.

I have truly enjoyed getting to know and sharing time with the members of my cohort. I love the cohort model as the basic structure of a doctoral program and I realize that I would not have even considered applying for any program that did not use such a model. Another strong draw for me at Lewis and Clark was the fact that each cohort attends CTL retreats together. That was the deal-maker for me in deciding to apply to a doctoral program (and to choose Lewis and Clark – the only program to which I applied). I value the friendships, collegial relationships, and the support I have within my cohort. While I am closer to some members of my cohort than others, I enjoy all of them and consider them all friends.

I have the following perceptions and assumptions from my own CTL experiences:

- CTL helps school leaders to slow down and look inside themselves.
- CTL has literally saved some educators’ professional lives. It has helped a few people I know decide that it was time for a professional change. It has helped many others rediscover the passion or spark that got them into education and leadership in the first place.

- CTL impacts both the professional and the personal aspects of a participant's life. They explore who they really are and how they take their "real selves" to their work, their relationships, their leisure time, their spiritual lives, and every other aspect of their lives.
- CTL sustains people through stressful and difficult times. In getting to better know their inner work and real selves, it helps participants to work through tough times. Educational leaders and teachers have very stressful jobs and this work is a powerful way to help them with that stress.
- CTL is additive to any other "inner work" participants might do. It does not diminish their existing spiritual, religious or mind-body work. If anything, it serves to enhance that work.
- The work is designed to be voluntary (based on Parker Palmer's writing), so I have always wondered what the impact of "requiring" people to attend retreats or CTL trainings has on the experience. This requirement can come in the form of teachers having to attend mandatory Courage inservice trainings, or Ed.D. students having to enroll in CTL classes as part of their course of study. I have assumed that this requirement diminishes the experience for some (if not all) participants, but other people I have talked to informally have said they never would have gone if they had not been forced to attend and that they really enjoyed it. I am intrigued to know participants' experiences when they are required to attend.
- CTL strengthens the cohort experience in a doctoral program.
- Many CTL participants seek out opportunities to attend more retreats and CTL activities after their initial involvement and some become long-term participants.

I have chosen this topic of study due, in large part, to my own experiences, assumptions, and interest. There is not a lot of research on CTL. There is no research on how it relates to preservice or doctoral programs. There is also no research on the issue of people being required to attend CTL trainings or retreats. It feels as though the subject is ripe for study.

APPENDIX E

CODE LIST



## Code List

1a:IQ - what do you recall?  
 1b:IQ - Feeling Words?  
 1c:IQ - Quiet, reflective times?  
 1d:IQ - Stories from the retreats?  
 2:IQ - CTL - reason for applying?  
 2a:IQ - Yes CTL Experience  
 2b:IQ - No CTL experience  
 2c:IQ - CTL - 1st experience  
 3:IQ - Meaning & Purpose in life  
 3a:IQ - Reflection in M&P  
 3b:IQ - Spirituality in M&P  
 3c:IQ - Stressed/beaten down  
 4:IQ - CTL fit in doc curric?  
 4a:IQ - CTL integrate in doc curric  
 4b:IQ - CTL separate from doc curric  
 4c:IQ - required classes  
 4d:IQ - CTL impact research  
 5a:IQ - integrate CTL in Professional  
 5b:IQ - integrate CTL in personal  
 5c:IQ - Integration stories  
 6:IQ - final thoughts  
 6a:IQ - doc program w/o CTL  
 Academics  
 Books/other writing  
 Burden/Sacrifice/Time commitment  
 Camaraderie/Friendship/Relationship  
 Clearness Committee  
 Cohort building  
 Comfort/Discomfort  
 Communication  
 Competition  
 Conflict  
 Connection  
 Courage  
 CTL - fixing the cohort  
 CTL - Purpose of it  
 Difference - doc vs. other CTL  
 Display of something from CTL  
 Dissertation  
 Exercise  
 [Facilitator 1]

[Facilitator 2]  
Family  
Food  
Fun/Play/High Spirit  
Getting Away  
Heart  
Inner Work – personal  
Inner Work – professional  
Inner Work – research  
Integrity  
Jobs - professional issues  
Journaling/writing  
Kumbaya - touchy/feely  
Leadership  
Lens  
Lewis & Clark  
Listening  
Maslow  
Men and Women  
Music  
Negative/painful/Difficult  
Parker Palmer  
Partying/evening time  
Perseverance  
Poetry  
Recommendations  
Reflection  
Religion  
Respect  
Rest/relaxation/rejuvenated/restored  
Self-care  
Silence/Quiet  
Sites - location, beauty, outdoors  
Sleeping Quarters  
Touchstones  
Transformational Learning  
Trust  
Walk & Talk  
Watercolors/artwork