LEARNING FROM DISASTER: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE 2006

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF PROJECT AND HOW

SERVICE LEARNING GENERATES TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY

By

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the 82 students, staff and guests of the Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Project. You have been an inspiration to me and my experience with you was nothing short of Transformational. I hope that I have written this story well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EDWARD LEVY: Associate Dean of Students, Director of Recreation Cook College-Rutgers University. Educator, leader, colleague, and mentor. There is so much about this group photo that says it all.

Dr. LEE SCHNEIDER: Dean of Students, Rutgers-Cook College. When I needed a hand, you reached out with yours. My educational message and philosophy will always be based on my experience at Cook College and the example that you set.

MY COMMITTEE: Dr. JAMES GIARELLI, Dr. ALISA BELZER, Dr. TANJA SARGENT: My experience with this project has been made infinitely better, more professional and more enjoyable through your relentless insistence on improvement.

You have begun to change me from student to scholar. Hopefully I can someday reward you for that effort.

Dr. DAVID MUSCHINSKE: You seemed to have had an endless reservoir of patience. I wish you could have read this story. I hope I can be half as good a teacher.

DONALD B. BUD HEILMAN: Teacher, coach, father. Your legacy at Rutgers and Kutztown has proved enduring. Your students and players continue to seek out your company and advice after 62 years – by my count 58 years in the classroom and on the practice field. I, on the other hand, am just getting started.

DIANE HEILMAN: Classroom teacher, wife, friend, center of our family. We first met in 1968. It seems like we have been on an adventure ever since. All I can ask is, "What's next?"

ABSTRACT

ABSRACT OF DISSERTATION

<u>PROBLEM:</u> The study primarily focused on how a Service Learning project resulted in a Transformative Learning experience. The sample was drawn from 82 participants from Rutgers University who took part in a week-long alternative Spring Break community service project in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina in 2006. Interviews were conducted about their experiences, their perceptions of the learning environment encountered, and its resultant perceived impact on their previously held beliefs, assumptions and perceptions as a result of the experience. Using purposeful sampling, the richest examples and a descriptive case study methodology described in greater detail below, the study was conducted to better understand how specific elements of the experiential learning environment of this experience generated, stimulated or facilitated those changes in previously held beliefs, assumptions and perceptions reported by the participants. Of particular interest was an effort to determine how participants described experiences derived from the actual setting, living and working conditions created by the Service Learning experience and its relationship to, and effects on, their own Transformative Learning experience.

<u>METHODOLOGY:</u>   Participants were interviewed by various methods over a three-year period following the experience. Sixteen participants responded to an email interview. Using grounded theory, 28 semi-formal audio and audio/video interviews were conducted. Of these two prime sources, interviews from 26 different individuals who went to New Orleans as part of the Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Project were selected for value. Private journals, field notes, articles and photographs

produced by the participants as well as the field notes, articles and journal of the primary researcher were used. The data was coded for relevance to specific examples of elements of the experiential learning environment, which the participants claimed, created, stimulated or facilitated their individual Transformative Learning experiences. Once these elements of the learning environment were identified, purposeful sampling and the richest examples were extracted from the data to describe these elements and their claimed impact. Photographs that depict the elements were selected for their illustrative value using the same method. These specific examples of the learning environment and their relationship to impact were then also evaluated for relevance to the model for processing Transformative Learning as a result of Service Learning experiences developed by Kiely (2005) and evaluated for their relevance to specific Phases of Transformative Learning as defined by Mezirow and Associates (2000) and Mezirow (2003).

SIGNIFICANCE: Transformative Learning is a relatively new field and not well understood. Its exploration remains in a state of discovery. Kiely (2005) states that it is not well understood how Service Learning experiences generate Transformative Learning experience. The current study is an effort to answer such questions as: "How did certain elements of the learning environment of this particular Service Learning experience produce a Transformative Learning experience for these individuals?" Kiely writes that (a) few studies have dealt with traditionally-aged college students (18-23 years old), (b) all the studies that he could locate dealt with experiences related to in-class subject matter, (c) all seemed to have been pre-planned to collect Transformative Learning-relative data and, (d) emphasis was always on impact, as opposed to the learning

environment or generating elements, because continued funding was always based on

impact. This study addresses each of these four issues.

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INTRODUCTION
Problems Within the Field

Transformative Learning (TL) experiences are often hard to capture, often requiring a marked amount of deep introspection and reflection. Self-analysis is critical, and relating a life-altering experience is often accompanied by powerful emotions. According to Mezirow (2005, pp. 3-5) a TL experience requires a person to examine previously closely held beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions. These beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions are usually guarded by strong defenses to prevent their erosion or dissolution. Overcoming such closely held beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions is often met by internal conflict and resistance – hence the difficulty in discussing what has changed and why it has changed. Transformative Learning forces individuals to critically examine some of their most closely held beliefs about how they perceive their own reality. Often these beliefs, perceptions and assumptions have been imposed on them by individuals or institutions that have significant influences on their lives. The experience, therefore, can be both emancipatory and anxiety-producing at the same time. It has proven difficult for researchers to understand both the manner in which these experiences are generated, and then how the elements that generated a Transformative Learning experience continue to play a role in the outcomes or lessons learned from such an experience or combination of experiences.

Questions of the Study

How does a Service Learning experience generate, create, stimulate or facilitate a Transformative Learning experience?

Kiely (2005, p. 5) writes that previous efforts to develop a theoretical framework to explain how students experience the process of Transformative Learning in Service Learning settings have tended to focus on the outcomes or impact, and not on the context and the process. Thus, most studies have asked "what" the results of the experience were, rather than "how" the Transformative Learning experience grew out of the context of a Service Learning Experience. This focus has resulted in what he terms the "black box", or what he calls, "the how" of Transformative Learning regarding the process and mechanisms that tend to enhance certain cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes-- particularly those that are transformative in nature

Since this study primarily focused on how a Service Learning project can result in a Transformative Learning experience, particular attention was paid to the 10 phases, grouped into four stages of a Transformative Learning experience as developed by Mezirow (1978, 2004) and Mezirow and Associates (2000, p. 22) over the past 30-plus years. Kiely's (2005) organizational approach to processing Transformative Learning data was also used in order to better understand the mechanisms of setting and experience that could generate or facilitate Transformative Learning out of Service Learning experiences. Importantly for this study, Taylor (2000 p. 300), says that to date there has not been a comprehensive compilation of the factors that give rise to Transformative Learning experiences--what he terms "the triggering process"--and calls for more research specifically on what factors contribute to Transformative Learning. This study attempts to answer both Kiely's and Taylor's calls to catalogue and understand some of these generating and facilitating elements and how they relate to the Transformative Learning process. To answer these questions, this study used analysis of the data to (a)

understand how specific experiences, or elements of the learning environment, generated, created, stimulated or facilitated a Transformative Learning Experience; (b) if and how these served to generate, create, stimulate or facilitate, at least in part, any of the 10-phase model of Transformative Learning currently used by Mezirow and Associates; and (c) if and how any of these elements described, at least in part, could be better understood by applying any of the five-themed Transformative Service Learning processing model designed by Kiely.

Framing the Study

This research studied the Transformative Learning experience of a sample of individuals who participated in a week-long community Service Learning project in New Orleans in March of 2006 following Hurricane Katrina which occurred in August-September of 2005. The participants were interviewed about their experience and its perceived impact on their previously held beliefs, assumptions and perceptions over a three-year period following the experience. As a result, a repository was created that included audio and video interviews, email interviews, journals written by participants, articles written by participants, photographs taken by participants and a documentary film made by one of the participants. Using purposeful sampling, the richest examples (Cresswell, 2007; Bryman, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Hoffman, 2009; and Patton, 1990), and a descriptive case study methodology the study was conducted in order to better understand some of the specific elements of the learning environment of this experience that generated, created, stimulated or facilitated those changes in previously held beliefs, assumptions and perceptions reported by the participants. The study was undertaken in order to better understand: (a) how the experience, and specifically, what elements of the

experiential learning environment created by the experience generated those perceived changes; and (b) the self-perceived impact, lessons learned, changes of habit of mind or frames of reference those experiences had on the way they viewed themselves and others.

Kiely (2005, pp. 5-6) states that it is not well understood how Service Learning experiences generate Transformative Learning experiences. Taylor (1998) indicated that he found 40 unpublished doctoral theses and six other studies that represented empirical studies of TL. In 2007, he reported that he was able to locate an additional 40 studies published in peer review articles where TL was the major lens of analysis. (Taylor, 2007). Taylor (2000) writes:

> It is imperative, in this new millennium, that we set a new direction
> for research for transformative learning theory that focuses on
> understanding with greater depth its inherent complexities, that
> engages a wider range of research designs and methodologies, and
> that investigates most thoroughly transformative learning as a viable
> model for teaching adults. (p. 286)

In addition Kiely (2005) points out that: (a) few studies have dealt with traditionally-aged college students (18-23); (b) all the studies that he could locate dealt with experiences related to in-class subject matter; (c) all seemed to have been pre-planned to collect Transformative Learning-relative data; and, (d) emphasis was always on impact, as opposed to the learning environment, because continued funding was always based on impact.

Addressing the issues outlined by Kiely above, this study produced data that possessed the following characteristics: (a) Nearly all of the participants (74) were traditionally-aged undergraduate college students between 18 and 23 years old. One undergraduate student was 25; (b) this trip was not related to an in-class subject, it was open to all undergraduates at Rutgers University, and no effort was made to make the trip

relevant to any subjects currently being studied by the students; (c) this particular Service

Learning trip was clearly going to be "life changing" by its nature, however, no pre-

planned method of gathering data, or of having the participants process their thoughts and

reflections was in place at the time of the trip. Therefore, the "pump was not primed" by

the objective of any study; and (d) this study specifically looked at causes--the "how" of

Transformative Learning called for by Keily (2005). This was a stand-alone Service

Learning experience not designed to be repeated, and no funding for the trip was

provided by Rutgers University. The participants raised all funding through donations. As

a result, the usual dependency on future funding by demonstrating impact was rendered

irrelevant.

Kiely (2005) has created a model (see Figure 1) for assessing Transformative

Learning in Service Learning experiences. The model is centered on five categories that

explain how students experienced Transformative Learning on a Service Learning trip:

(a) Contextual border crossing, (b) dissonance, (c) personalizing, (d) processing, and (e)

connecting. The results of open coding were reconsidered and evaluated with these

classifications in mind, again, to see how the results could be further explained, or assist

in explaining the processing model.

In his conclusion Kiely (2005, pp. 17-19) states that the vision of his study is that

it should reveal the learning process and how it explains the uniquely transformative

quality of Service Learning. Kiely also stated that his study, as does this one: (a) Draws

on Mezirow's theoretical framework; and (b) provides substantial empirical

documentation from multiple sources.

Of particular interest, therefore, was the effort to determine how participants described the actual setting, living and working conditions created by the Service Learning experience and their relationship to, and effects on, their own Transformative Learning experiences. However, while it is this description of the learning environment that Kiely (2005) says is missing from the literature to date, it seems marginally productive to talk about the environment that produced the impact without discussing the perceived results. This study therefore linked the perceived impacts, or what is also called in this study lessons learned, to their respective generating causes.

Individuals reach adulthood with an accumulated set of beliefs, assumptions and perceptions. This set is often imposed on them by factors such as culture, family, environment, religion, and education. These beliefs, perceptions and assumptions are often closely held and are not always the result of critical self-reflection or analysis. Adults, however, may begin to critically examine these closely held beliefs upon exposure to experiences that directly confront these beliefs. When these closely held beliefs, perceptions and assumptions are changed as the result of experience followed by reflective introspection, it is often difficult to articulate how these changes arose and what drove them forward. People may recognize that they have changed, but not exactly how or why. These interviews may represent a special case of first impression specifically because these interviews may be the first recorded reflections of a Transformative Learning experience for these individuals. Therefore, the purpose of the study will be both descriptive and exploratory in nature.

The study will be specific to these individuals' experiences in New Orleans, but may also have a generalizable application to the further understanding of the relationship

between the learning environment created by Service Learning opportunities, attainment of adult ways of learning, the accumulation of experiences, and resultant Transformative Learning experiences.

In an effort to uncover the relationship between experience and learning, the study attempted an accurate portrayal of a complex experience and how it related to the Transformative Learning experience described by each individual. Therefore, it was essential to the study that the questions asked individuals to describe physical elements of the trip such as the plane ride, the bus rides, living in a tent city, the working conditions, the destruction of New Orleans, the living conditions, the sights, the sounds, and the smells. The study then elicited their reflections on the impact to them, if any, of each of these physical elements. Furthermore, it was essential to learn their own reflections of internal elements like motivation, satisfaction, fear, shame, and guilt in order to develop an understanding of how these internal elements were impacted by the physical elements of the trip. The study additionally sought to learn how these participants believed that the physical elements and the internal elements were impacted by their experience with others who went with them on the trip, as well as others they met or encountered on the trip. Finally, the study presents how the physical elements of the experience, the internal elements described, and the exposure to others combined to produce a change in understanding of previously held beliefs, perceptions and assumptions.

The interviews specifically asked the participants what they perceived they learned about themselves that they recognize as a change(s) in previously held beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about themselves or others, and specifically what created those learning experiences. In this way, it was hoped, that the case study effectively

captured what some writers call "the messiness," as it has been described by writers such as Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993), of a complex experiential learning situation and the interrelationship of the many components that form the environment of this learning experience. In this case taking place in the context of a large-scale natural disaster of ongoing historical importance.

Background

The Service Learning experience for this project involved a trip to New Orleans from March 11 to March 18, 2006 following the almost total destruction of parts of that city by Hurricane Katrina when it reached land on August 29, 2005 and remained there for the next two days. The participants were from Rutgers University, most of them students at Cook College of Rutgers University, a college of about 3000 undergraduate and 500 graduate students centered on studies of environmental and biological sciences. They lived in what the media had termed a tent city for volunteers called Camp Premier, and worked demolishing homes for Habitat for Humanity, which would then come in and reconstruct the homes. The daily living conditions were novel for most; living in a tent, eating in a common mess hall, and using portable common showers and toilets, often without regard for gender. The daily work was also extremely new for most. The homes being demolished and emptied had been destroyed or severely damaged by the storm. They worked in neighborhoods without electricity, sewerage or water. For these homes, there had been no cleanup attempts since the storm and everything such as food, clothing, furniture, and even pets, for example, were where they landed on the day of the storm.

The story at the center of this study of Service Learning and Transformative Learning is about how participants described their reactions to being confronted with the

effects of the massive destruction to a U.S. city and their efforts to take part in its rescue. While similar efforts may have been reported in the press, no study has been attempted to organize and categorize the reaction of the many college-age students who devoted their time and energy to assist in the clean-up efforts in New Orleans. Their story is not only a valuable lesson to educators interested in understanding the Transformative learning process, but also part of the history of New Orleans after the storm. It is a story that generated interest on the local, state, federal and global levels, but this study is unique in that the experiences of these participants were recorded on an individual basis and with a personal view of their relationship to this event and its aftermath. Theirs is a part of this story that dominated world news on an undeniably large order.

Guiding Assumptions

Since the proposed methodology for data collection analysis is based on grounded theory, as such there is no hypothesis, but rather a set of guiding assumptions. These are: (a) That participants, the vast majority of them 18-23 year olds, were capable of articulating aspects of a Transformative Learning experience; (b) that their Services Learning experience in New Orleans generated a Transformative Learning experience; and (c) that the data obtained would aid in understanding how their experiences and the driving force of the learning environment of a Service Learning experience generated a Transformative Learning experience.

Implications of the Study

The value of the study is that it responds to the call of Taylor (1998, 2000, 2003, 2007), Kiely (2005) and others such as Eyler (2002) and Furco & Billig (2002) for (a) descriptions and analysis of the learning environment that gave rise to the experience;

(b) a study that was not related to any specific class or curricula; (c) a study that was not pre-planned specifically to investigate a Service Learning experience; and (d) a study of a Service Learning experience not designed to justify funding for future Service Learning experiences--something that does not currently exist in the literature-- in order to provide a look at Service Learning within the larger context of Transformative Learning without it being based on a study pre-disposed to promote another Service Learning experience as a direct result. As a consequence, this study provides a rare, if not unique, look at Transformative Learning arising from a Service Learning experience without a pre-determination to do so, providing a chance to see if and how TL theory applies.

Limitations

The study is bounded by date and place--New Orleans, March 11-18, 2006; by circumstance--the Rutgers University–Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Project; and by the three-year post-experience interview period.

Other limitations includes:

1. Purposeful selection of data was utilized in order to get the richest text and best examples.
2. The sample was limited by the number of interviews conducted, journals, articles and photographs obtained.
3. Not all project participants were interviewed.
4. The audio tapes are not reflective of body language and facial expression as is videotaping.

Context and Setting

Setting the Stage in New Orleans: The Learning Environment

When Hurricane Katrina crossed the Florida Peninsula in late August 2005, it was rated as a Category 1 storm by the National Weather Service, but by the time it approached the Gulf Coast, it had risen to a Category 3. Nonetheless, it had already left 500,000 Floridians without power (Brinkley 2006 p. 3). By the time it hit New Orleans it was a Category 5 with sustained winds in excess of 115 mph (Brinkley 2006 p. 17). The Saffir –Simpson Scale has been used to rate hurricanes since 1969 and has five levels in ascending order using various criteria including wind speed, rainfall and storm surge and is used, in part, to predict the need for evacuation. Among the many allegations and recriminations that came later, the failure to adequately heed established protocol and provide for adequate relief was one that was front and center in analysis of the response to Hurricane Katrina (Brinkley 2006 pp. 16-17). The resultant storm surge of 25-28 feet along the Mississippi Coast (Knabb, Rhome & Brown 2005) caused massive flooding and widespread destruction. At its height Katrina clocked winds of 175 mph (Brinkley, 2006, p. 221). Evacuation efforts began late, could not accommodate the thousands who had no access to vehicles, and was poorly, some claimed incompetently, coordinated (Cooper & Block, 2006, pp. 102-104). Evacuation centers were not adequately supplied, staffed or policed (Brinkley, 2006, p.241), and allegations included the withdrawal of Red Cross personnel from the Super Dome (Hartman & Squires 2006, p. 1; Strom 2005, 2006; Salmon 2006a, 2006b; Nossiter, 2006) and that unscrupulous nursing home personnel dropped off helpless patients at the Super Dome as they fled for their own safety (Horne 2006, p. 50; Powell, Jeffries, Newhart & Steins, 2006, p. 61).

There were almost immediate allegations that the inadequate response by the Bush administration and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were the direct result of the lack of concern that the Bush administration had for poor Blacks. Jesse Jackson, Colin Farrel of Access Hollywood, and Nancy Giles of CBS Sunday Morning were just three of the many prominent individuals who alleged that the inadequate response by the Bush administration was the result of its lack of concern for Blacks and civil rights (Dyson, 2006 p. 17-18). Hartman and Squires (2006, p. 3-6) state specifically that the response, or lack of it, was racially motivated

There were historical reasons for the lack of trust in the government by New Orleans and Gulf Coast Blacks. New Orleans' population at time of Katrina was 460,000-465,000 (Brinkley, 2006 p. 27, GAO, 2006). In New Orleans, 67.9% of the population was Black, ~103,000 poor, and with its 26% poverty rate compared poorly to a national rate 13.1%; New Orleans was ranked seventh out of the 290 largest cities in the United States as poorest in nation (Dyson, 2006, p. 5; Berube, Katz, 2005). In 1927 the New Orleans' Levee Board dynamited a levee in St. Bernard's Parish, a poor Black neighborhood, in the "interest of protecting the rest of the city" (Brinkley, 2006, p. 8). It was in St. Bernard's Parish where the Rutgers contingent was tented and where it worked on homes and neighborhoods. The nearby Ninth Ward was similarly wiped out by Katrina and drew national media attention when its entire poor Black population was displaced, their homes and neighborhoods totally destroyed.

The chaos that ensued went on for weeks, and almost all remnants of it were still present when the Rutgers contingent went to New Orleans in March of 2006--six months post-storm. In 2006, Brinkley said in his forward, "Hurricane Katrina created widespread

anarchy" (p. xxii). Brinkley's research includes descriptions of rape, stabbings and drugs

at the Superdome, which also ran out of basics like food, water and toilet paper, all before

Hurricane Katrina actually struck (Brinkley, 2006, pp. 240-241). FEMA workers were

accused of accepting bribes (Lipton 2006c in Hartman & Squires, 2006, p. 1).

Widespread looting, common after disasters, was reported and shown on TV even before

Katrina struck land (Frailing & Harper, 2007, pp. 53-54).

　　　Others agreed that FEMA had failed by every standard, and for many, the reasons

were politically motivated:

> FEMA's often invisible and incompetent reaction to the devastation
> in New Orleans stands in sharp contrast to the way the relief agency
> and entire Bush administration sprang into action last summer as a
> deadly series of hurricanes – Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne –
> battered the crucial swing state of Florida just weeks before election
> day. Partisan politics were certainly in the air during the busy (2004)
> hurricane season. (Boehlert, 2005)

　　　The real cause of the disaster was not the storm, according to many writers, but

that the disaster was "man-made" Mann (2006 p. 87-88).

　　　Still, others saw the hand of God in the mass destruction to New Orleans and the

Gulf Coast. Al Quaida, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef--a former chief rabbi and the spiritual leader

of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Movement, and Reverend Louis Farrakhan all claimed that

the storm was punishment by God of America for its evil ways (Dyson, pp. 179-180).

Hyperbole was almost impossible to avoid. Two million persons were displaced

(Hartman & Squires, 2006, p. 1). Katrina impacted 90,000 square miles equal to the

geographical area of Great Britain (Dynes & Rodriguez, 2007, p. 23). The scale of

destruction was constantly compared to Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the media, and for

good reason, so widespread was the disaster. Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour said to

FEMA Director Michael Brown, "You've never seen anything like this" (something often repeated by participants interviewed for this study). "We're talking nuclear devastation," he said (Brinkley, 2006, p. 248).

In fact, a pre-storm Homeland Security/FEMA disaster model called "Hurricane Pam" was initiated to specifically study and predict the impact of a major hurricane strike on the City of New Orleans and listed such an occurrence in the top 15 disasters nationwide, right alongside a nuclear bomb or coordinated biological attack (Cooper & Block, 2006, p. 102-104). As the storm approached, the mayor predicted 10,000 deaths and FEMA ordered 25,000 body bags (Dynes & Rodriguez, 2007, p.25). The official number of deaths was put at 1,846 (Dynes & Rodriguez, p. 26). Other pre-storm predictions proved eerily prescient as they included descriptions by reporter Mark Schleifstein of the local Times-Picayune, who foresaw the floating and bloated bodies (including pets), causing plague and pestilence should the city ever be hit directly by a hurricane of high magnitude force (Horne 2006, p. 16). FEMA, says Horne (2006, p.51), ignored its own predictions.

Camp Premier and the work area assigned to the volunteers from Rutgers were located in the town of Chalmette in St. Bernard's Parish, which is located just south of Lake Pontchartrain and just north of the Mississippi River. When the storm hit, it caused a chain of levee failures along Lake Pontchartrain and the Industrial Canal, a part of Mr. Go (MRGO – Mississippi River Gulf Outlet) a 70-mile canal that runs from Pontchartrain in New Orleans to the Gulf, right through St. Bernard's. St. Bernard's Parish was totally flooded. According to Salaam (2007, pp. x-xi), 40% of "The East" – that area of New

Orleans which included the Ninth Ward and St. Barnard's, was extensively flooded.

According to Salaam every building in St. Bernard's received flooding.

In March of 2006, 82 students and staff from Rutgers University made their way

to New Orleans to help in relief efforts following in the wake this devastation. With an

officially estimated 87,000 homes totally destroyed and abandoned according to the

General Accounting Office (GAO, 2006), volunteers were called upon to demolish

homes coated in a toxic sludge of mud, pesticides, petroleum products, and rotting

garbage while dealing with communal living, long common food lines, toilet lines,

shower lines and laundry lines. Living in a major U.S. city with little fresh water, no

sewers, a severely reduced medical infrastructure; the constant threat of looting and

violence; and, amidst allegations of governmental corruption, incompetence and

institutional racism, participants had an experience like no other.

This trip was the brainchild of Edward Levy, Associate Dean of Students and

Director of Recreational Services at Cook College of Rutgers University and designed to

be transformative in nature from its inception. Its Student Affairs Department had created

a Student Leadership Program in the mid 1990's that drew between 200-400 students,

faculty and staff to its monthly Leadership Breakfasts. Committee work was on a

volunteer basis and varied greatly in design and goals every year. Faculty and staff were

heavily involved. It was this infrastructure with its long experience of programming

design and execution that made it possible to undertake such a large-scale, student-driven

effort. Student buy-in for the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project was present from the very

beginning.

Levy saw the trip as a unique opportunity for students to assist recovery efforts resulting from a large-scale natural disaster. It would give these students a chance to not only witness the effects of disaster on an unprecedented scale in America, but to involve themselves in something so much larger than anything they had been involved with before.

It was at the first monthly meeting in October of 2005 that a trip to New Orleans was first proposed. Committees were set up to explore and refine the needs for such a trip. The first Katrina-specific meeting conducted by Levy had approximately 200 students in attendance. It was the Cook College Student Leadership Program that generated, designed, planned and executed this Service Learning experience. Specifically, and importantly, this trip was not the result of a department or class specifically designated or tasked with creating Service Learning opportunities. It was a stand-alone operation from the beginning.

This study reports on the descriptions of the Transformative Learning environment and the Transformative Learning experiences of individuals who went on the trip. These persons encountered and dealt with a wide-range and large number of new experiences that required their immediate attention, analysis, synthesis and reflection in a dramatically new social setting. Nearly every waking moment offered a chance to have new experience and reflection, leading to evaluation, learning and change.

The trip lasted eight days. Five of those days were spent in hard, and sometimes, dangerous, physical labor in a city not only with nearly no electricity, water, sewerage, hospital beds, or medical supplies, but also without standard conveniences like retail stores, doctor's offices, or gas stations. No schools or office buildings were open. There

was often spotty communication access, and the city had severely limited access by road, rail or air. New Orleans had quickly become a city of rot, corrosion and rust – as predicted by journalist Mark Scheifstein (Horne 2006, p. 16). Hundreds of thousands of vehicles remained where they were at the time of the flood leaking fluids, oils and decomposing rubber. Hundreds of thousands of refrigerators remained where they had been turned over, dumping their contents on the floor. The remains of pets and other animals were mixed in the rubble. Rodents, poisonous snakes and other poisonous animals were also potentially in every building. During a pre-trip meeting, volunteers signed a legal waiver acknowledging their potential exposure to these conditions, many of which were encountered (Appendix D).

Most of the students were receiving no credit for this experience and all were volunteers, giving up their spring break to attend the trip. They were among the first to fly into New Orleans on a commercial air flight. FEMA had yet to effectuate any real observable assistance to the area. Over half the city's 485,000 residents had moved away (GOA, 2006).

Camp Premier: Home Away from Home

The tent city where the group lived for eight days was home to an estimated 1400 students and other persons from all over the country. Inside an enormous tent were smaller tents set on "streets" made of wooden pallets, and a large mess tent with the capacity to feed everyone at the same time. Camp Premier was completely fenced in and patrolled by armed guards 24 hours a day. Photographing inside the compound was not allowed. This rule, however, was ignored by some. Lockdown occurred at midnight; the camp re-opened at 6 am, no exceptions. The group was advised that this was for their

own protection from looters. The area around this large tent was populated by other

smaller structures that included tents for training and lecturing, storing equipment and

housing people who had yet to be evacuated or resettled. Everyone ate inside the large

mess area. Also surrounding the large tent were piles of work shoes, piles of hard hats,

piles of boxes and barrels containing gloves, and face masks and goggles. Although

everyone was asked to bring their own protective clothing and equipment, it was soon

obvious that Howard University and its large contingent of students brought nothing in

the way of protective clothing. Those few Howard students who were permitted to go out

of camp had to assemble their protective gear from these piles. When the Rutgers

contingent left at the end of the week, most persons donated their extra gear to these

piles.

In the evening, this large mess area would become something akin to an enormous

community center, with all volunteers gathering to tell stories, play board games, play

cards, read books, write in journals or just hang out. Students and staff from the various

schools mingled freely in an atmosphere of common purpose. Noise, music, laughter and

lights never seemed to die down in the mess tent until about 2 am.

The camp itself was constructed on a large field adjacent to an oil refinery in St.

Bernard's Parish with the Mississippi River itself not far removed. Although not in view,

the site of the famous Battle of New Orleans, where Andrew Jackson and a collection of

militia, pirates, slaves and ne'er-do-wells defeated the British in 1815 in the last battle of

the war of 1812, several months after the documents ending the war had actually been

signed, was a late afternoon group walk away (Borneman, 2004; Remini, 1999).

The enormous tent complex that served as home for the next eight days was ringed by portable toilets and portable showers brought in on trailers. Some of the smaller tents surrounding the large ones served for essentials such as a laundry, while another acted as the make-shift lecture hall, where volunteers received instructions on the work routine and procedure from Americorp workers. The walkway and driving surfaces were mud and gravel.

The smaller tents where the volunteers slept were large in their own right, sleeping 22-24, but otherwise spartan in nature, with a couple of naked light bulbs hanging from wires suspended from the center roof pole, and perhaps a chair or two. Privacy, in general, was dispensed with. Lights-out in sleeping tents was at 10 pm, enforced by the guards who made sure that the sleeping area was darkened, if not quieted, at that hour.

Connected to the same tent complex at Camp Premier was another tent complex housing families who, even at six months post-storm, had not been placed in permanent dwellings somewhere. These families came and took their meals with the volunteers and received the services of the same laundry tent.

The Daily Routine: Hard Work and No Pay

Beginning on Monday of the week our group arrived, most students woke up before 5 am. This was so they could get in long lines to pick up or drop off laundry; get in long lines to use the portable bathrooms; get in line to get breakfast, and then get in line to pick up their bag lunch. The volunteers were divided into work groups named with a color and number for organizational purposes (for example Black 10). Each team had 12-14 people. Each team had a team leader and a "Tool" who was assigned to leave by

bus for the work site early each day, and then go to the common storage area and collect the wheelbarrows and tools to be used by the team. The rest of the team would follow on a second bus, along with coolers of ice to store drinks and lunches.

The worksites were houses whose insides had been destroyed by flooding. The teams had to examine the house for safety before entering, such as making sure that gas and electricity had been shut off, and no signs of roof collapse were obvious. Once inside, volunteers had to devise their own plan of demolition and use what tools were provided. Typically, each group had two wheelbarrows, two sledge hammers, a crow bar, two shovels, two rakes and two brooms. Equipment also included a pair of wire snips, a screwdriver, a stepladder, and utility knife. The Tool was responsible to for ensuring that all equipment was returned each day and then take a later bus back to camp. Equipment was scarce and, in many cases, irreplaceable. Rutgers brought its own medical supplies and left all that was unused with camp security when it was learned that they had been operating for weeks without so much as one first aid kit.

The basic task of each group was to take everything out of the house and pile it up on the front lawn to be carted away at some future date and in some, as-yet to be determined manner. Everything included all personal items, rugs, furniture, clothes, food, drapes, dishes, cups, utensils, books, entertainment equipment, washers, driers, dishwashers, refrigerators, pictures, jewelry, decorations, keepsakes, money, guns, ammunitions, household chemicals, motor oil, insecticides, and telephones. It also meant tearing down all the sheet rock, ceiling tiles, ventilation fixtures, light fixtures, and floor coverings. Windows had to be broken for ventilation. Sometimes windows had to be broken to get in and out because doors were unusable. After about two days of working

on a house, the piles of refuse in front were higher than the roof of the house itself. The entire week was warm and humid with occasional rain.

The houses had no power or water. Volunteers had to use portable toilets set near the houses. These turned out to be few and far between. All volunteers were required to work at all times in their hard hats, masks, goggles, work boots, and gloves. In addition, Rutgers students were instructed to wear long sleeve shirts, long pants and to wear bandanas under their helmets to keep dust and grime out of their hair as much as possible. Many volunteers took to duct-taping their pants to their boots, and sleeves to their gloves. No Habitat for Humanity personnel were on site. Americorp provided transportation coordination and a minimum of neighborhood surveillance. Americorp personnel were in communication with each other by radio. New Orleans had been mostly abandoned since there was nowhere for anyone to live, work or go to school. For the same reasons, not many had been able to return since the flood.

The actual on-site workday began as soon as the team members arrived, approximately 8:30 am, and lasted until about 4 pm. A bus would then pick up everyone but the Tools, and head back to camp where volunteers then stood in line to shower outside. No one was permitted inside the sleeping or eating area until they showered, changed cloths and put their dirty clothing in plastic bags. Each volunteer took their change of clothes with them to the worksite, where it remained on the bus. Rutgers volunteers were not permitted to keep their boots in the sleeping area, and instead, after cleaning them off, they were wrapped in plastic bags and set outside the sleeping tent. All efforts were made to keep only clean clothing inside the sleeping tents. Volunteers who violated this approach were quickly addressed by fellow volunteers.

Shower and bathroom trailers, while designated by gender, soon became intermingled – especially at the end of the work day when hundreds of volunteers returned at once and needed to shower and use the bathroom before going into their tent. Dinner lasted from 6-8 pm. Lights-out inside the sleeping tent was a 10 pm. Although the outside gate was locked at midnight, things never seemed to quiet down until well after that time.

Researcher's Role

I was a direct participant in every major aspect of this learning experience. My role was to serve as Edward Levy's assistant, taking part in planning, organizing and directing the project. At the time, I was in my second year as the Director of Judicial Affairs and Assistant Director of Residence Life at Cook College of Rutgers University. I was also working on a Master's degree in education and teaching an advanced class in management for the Department of Agriculture, Foods and Resource Economics at Cook College of Rutgers University called Management: Human Systems Development. I had been an attorney for 23 years. I kept a daily journal while in New Orleans and wrote my observations. I later began a collection of thoughts and memories as the impact and importance of the trip revealed itself to me. I later produced several articles and independent research papers as part of my graduate work, which I accumulated in a research journal that served to help set the framework for this study. While there, I took 104 photos with disposable cameras. Afterward, students sent me digital copies of their own photographs, and so a repository of photographs evolved.

The validity of papers or studies written by the object or participant in the study is controversial, but eloquently deflected by Magubane (2004, pp. 1-9). Her defense of this

research method is simple and effective: (a) It is the process that is being studied, not the lives of the writers. The writers, in fact, do have something new and valuable to say and add to the literature, she writes. It is a process (in this instant case Transformative Learning) that has a very real effect on people, and one that needs to be much better understood if we are to progress in the trend toward greater access to all for higher education and educational opportunities; and (b) to "objectify" the role of the writer, or to emphasize the "emotional distance" of the writer to the object of the study, is to "devalue" the emotional life of the writer (Magubane, 2004, pp. 2-3).

Abrahams (2004, p. 13) further defends the use of her own reflections and observations, asserting that her research diary could be a valid form of research method in its own right. By analyzing her own mental processes, Abrahams discovered that her paradigms were wrong; that she was trying to justify research of Sarah Bartmann in terms that rebutted prior misconceptions about Bartmann perpetuated by scholars for years, including respected anthropologists like Jay Gould. By assessing her own assumptions, she used a kind of grounded theory to explore what she was really trying to get at, Abrahams discovered that she should be writing Sarah Bartmann from her own perspective, not in response to previous misconceptions; an example of Transformative Learning.

Like Kiely, I was a participant in my own study, and defend my role as such. I assisted in the organization of the project and planning of the experience. Funding and planning for the trip were undertaken as the direct result of the Cook College Student Leadership Program, a program that Levy had directed for many years before stepping down as Director in 2004. It was a student program in which I was directly involved in

my role as a student affairs professional. The students themselves conducted a series of fundraising projects that generated the money to fly all 82 participants to New Orleans, pay for sleeping bags for everyone and provide for transportation needs once in New Orleans. Levy arranged for donations of hard hats, masks, goggles, gloves, medical supplies, and duct tape. All participants were required to buy steel-tipped, puncture resistant boots and Levy arranged for a local distributor to provide them at cost.

Levy divided the group in two. I flew to New Orleans with the second group and lived in the same tent as the student participants. I worked daily on the homes to be demolished alongside Levy, two graduate students and eight undergraduate students. In New Orleans I was the Tool for Black 14.

It was this experience and setting that provided the all-important backdrop, the "black box", for this case study that was undertaken in an effort to understand how specific elements of a Service Learning experience generated Transformative Learning experiences.

While I did not chose to "objectify" my role in this study, I did attempt to isolate my own reactions to the elements of the learning environment discussed since I had not even given an interview or answered my own email interview survey. Like Kiely, I had the advantage of being there and participating, observing and recording. This assisted in lending a framework to the study and background to the experience. I purposely limited my role to that of observer, recorder, reporter and analyzer.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Transformative Learning: **A Preliminary Introduction to Theory**

In choosing Transformative Learning as the major lens through which to view the data, I have selected a theory that is described by its own adherents as a work in progress, or a theory in evolution. It has been explored by writers concerned with areas of educational theory such as adult learning and experiential learning, but has also been grasped by those investigating many forms of experience such as study abroad, service learning, professional development and spiritual transformation, to name just a few. As a result, it has received an uneven and factionalized treatment by professionals with divergent viewpoints, understandings and approaches. This, according to its progenitors, is a good thing. As a theory, it helps to explain how experience leads to paradigmatic changes in understanding, beliefs and thinking processes.

Furthermore, pedagogically, its basic tenets and applications are consistent with what was observed, and while there may be disagreement about some key aspects of the theory among theorists, it nonetheless provides a valuable tool in understanding these observations. Like every writer I discovered, using the core elements of the theory led to greater understanding of the data analyzed. I have therefore, selectively chosen my view of the theory and selected those writers whose insights and thoughts have produced a coherent viewpoint of both the evolution of the theory and it application to the data specific to this study.

Transformative Learning was first explored and described by Mezirow (1978) as a way to examine and explore adult learning. He was looking for a way to understand

how adults began to learn from experiences that changed previously closely held beliefs, perceptions and assumptions and the life-changing aspects or nature of such experiences.

According to Mezirow (1978, 2000, p.22) and Cranton (2000, p. 20) Transformative Learning consists of 10 phases grouped into Four Stages that must be experienced to some degree in order to claim a Transformative Learning experience. Therefore, the Service Learning experience must generate opportunities to experience some aspect of these phases in order to cross the threshold into consideration as Transformative Learning. This study addresses how these opportunities arose from a Service Learning experience. The Ten Phases and Four Stages can be summarized as follows:

Stage 1: Experience:

Phase 1: Disorienting dilemma.

Stage 2: Critical Reflection:

Phase 2: Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame.

Phase 3: Critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or

psychic assumptions.

Stage 3: Reflective Rational Discourse:

Phase 4: Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of

shared transformation.

Phase 5: Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and

actions.

Stage 4: Taking Action:

Phase 6: Planning a course of action.

Phase 7: Acquisition of skills and knowledge for implementing one's

plans.

Phase 8: Trying new roles.

Phase 9: Building competence in new roles and relationships.

Phase 10: Reintegrating newfound perspective.

Mezirow (1991, p. 7) states that learning in childhood is a socializing,

normalizing and acculturating process, but as adults, we become more open to other ways

of seeing, other possibilities for knowing and understanding, moving the individual

toward a "more inclusive, differentiated, permeable and integrated meaning perspective,

the validity of which has been established through rational discourse." These qualities of

mind, says Nagata (2006, p. 42) are recognized as desirable qualities in adults living in

contemporary societies.

According to Cranton (2006, pp. 34-38) it is important to remember that

Transformative Learning is a relatively new area of research and one that is still in a state

(by design) of active evolution. Transformative Learning is experienced-based learning,

and a solid understanding of the environment in which such an experience, or series of

experiences takes place, is vital to the understanding of any project involving

Transformative Learning. A description of where the experience took place, with whom it

took place, why it took place and how these factors interrelated with each other is

important in developing some kind of portrayal of the complicated nature of the case

study sought to be described.

As his theory evolved, Mezirow went on to outline Transformative Learning as a

theory that examines "meaning--how it is construed, validated, and reformulated" (1991,

p. xii). He proceeded to develop two important, foundational concepts: (a) meaning

schemes, and (b) meaning perspectives. Meaning schemes are the specific beliefs,

attitudes, and emotional reactions (such as the "inferiority of women" or "white male

entitlement") articulated by an interpretation. They are derived from earlier, often

unreflective interpretations. Meaning schemes serve as specific habits of expectations.

Meaning perspectives are groups of related meaning schemes (p. 35). Meaning

perspectives, or generalized sets of habitual expectation, act as perceptual and conceptual

codes to form, limit, and distort how we think, believe, and feel and how, what, when,

and why we learn. They have cognitive, affective, and connotative dimensions. These

habits of expectation filter both perception and comprehension (p. 34).

Nagata (2006) in her excellent literature review (pp. 42-46) says that meaning

schemes and meaning perspectives influence how we understand our experience.

Accordingly, she says, there are three types of meaning perspectives: epistemic

perspectives, sociolinguistic perspectives, and psychological perspectives. "Becoming

aware of meaning schemes and these three types of meaning perspectives," says Nagata

(2006, p. 43) "can particularly help people to understand themselves as well as those

from other cultures who have different ones." This type of awareness played out

prominently as participants in this study began to become aware of "Others," a concept

common to Transformative Learning theory.

According to Kitchenham (2008, p. 3) Mezirow (1978, 1991) describes

Transformative Learning as a particularly adult way of learning where adults modify or

adjust "narrow, problematic, or fixed assumptions and expectations in themselves" –

what Mezirow calls a "frame of reference" through which adults filter incoming sensory

information. Mezirow (2000) says that a meaning perspective:

> …selectively shapes and delimits perception, cognition, feelings and
> disposition by predisposing our intentions, expectations, and
> purposes. It provides the context for making meaning within which
> we choose what and how a sensory experience is to be construed
> and/or appropriated. (p.16)

Transformative Learning, therefore, results in perspective transformation, which

Mezirow (1991) describes as follows:

> Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically
> aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the
> way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing
> these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more
> inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally,
> making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings
> (p. 167).

According to Kitchenham (2008, p. 3) this means that a transformation in a

meaning perspective indicates that a person has changed their views of their world,

including their views of themselves. Nagata (2006), however, also describes meaning

perspectives as:

> …structures of largely pre-rational, unarticulated pre-suppositions;
> they are mainly out of our awareness and may result in views of
> reality that Mezirow describes above as distorted. They are based in
> prior learning that has remained unexamined. Transforming these
> limited meaning schemes or perspectives through examination and
> evaluation of fundamental assumptions is the essential task of adult
> learning. (p.43)

The value of understanding Transformative Learning, says Mezirow (1981, 1994,

1997) and Clark (1993) is that Transformative Learning is learning that induces more far-

reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning

experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift,

which affects the learner's subsequent experiences.   By way of overview, Baumgartner

(2001) and Taylor (2000) both list some of the unresolved aspects of Transformative

Learning. They too discuss Mezirow's development of meaning perspectives, which can

be described as one's overall world-view, and meaning schemes, which Mezirow calls

smaller components that contain specific knowledge, values, and beliefs about one's

experiences. A number of meaning schemes, they say, work together to generate one's

meaning perspective or habits of mind. (Cranton, 2006) goes on to say:

> Meaning perspectives are habits of mind that include uncritical
> assimilated knowing, believing and feeling. They include
> distortions, prejudices, stereotypes and simply unquestioned or
> unexamined beliefs. Maintaining a meaning perspective is safe. (pp.
> 22-23)

According to Dirkx (2000), meaning perspectives change naturally as a result of

exposure to life experiences and that Mezirow saw this change as a key component to

Transformative Learning. But according to Tsao, Takahashi, Olusesi, & Jain (2006)

changes in meaning perspectives are hard to come by, so ingrained can those perspectives

be. In their review of Transformative Learning theory, Tsao et al. state that meaning

schemes are frames of reference that derive from a person's total life experiences through

cultural assimilation:

> When their meaning schemes interpret and assimilate a new
> experience, it may either just reinforce the perspective or gradually
> stretch its boundaries. As a result, a novel experience is either flatly
> rejected or the experience itself is transformed in order to fit into
> existing meaning schemes. People may change their meaning
> schemes as they add to or assimilate new information to their prior
> scheme and, in fact, this kind of transformation may commonly
> occur through learning… This process is very important to bridge
> their prior meaning schemes and new meaning schemes. (pp. 193-
> 194)

According to Cranton (1994) when it comes to changing meaning

Transformative learning does not happen by itself; it takes place when learners face a radically different and incongruent situation or information that cannot be assimilated into their meaning perspective. Learners' experiences significantly affect their perspectives, an interpretation of experience, which is a part of transformative learning. Meaning perspective is "a collection of meaning schemes made up of higher-order schemata, theories, propositions, beliefs, prototypes, goal orientations, and evaluations (Mezirow, 1990, p. 2) and a way of seeing the world, that is, the perspective or view through which meaning emerges from experience. (p. 42)

Identifying some of the elements of the learning environment that "triggered" or led to changes in the meaning schemes or meaning perspectives of the participants in this Service Learning experience is what prompts this study, and in part answers this call for better understanding.

According to Mezirow (1978, 2000) Transformative Learning requires the person to be able to recognize that there has been a change to his/her belief system. This is stated as a change in a person's, assumptions, perceptions and beliefs, and that they are able to articulate and reflect on that change. It is important to note that Mezirow also believes that this process must be intentional and can be designed into a learning or educational experience. Other writers like Susan Imel (1998) disagree on the need for intentionality, and think that valuable learning experiences can be equally significant when derived from happenstance. Citing authors Robert Boyd (1988), Valerie Grabov (1997) and Edward Taylor (1998), she relates how this end of the process spectrum has attracted more attention recently, but still draws on the realm of what she calls interior experiences, insights, judgments and decisions. This "happenstance" element presented itself in the study's interviews and reflections by the combination of the fact that while the trip was planned from the outset to be a learning experience, what occurred in New Orleans, and

what each person experienced was in large part happenstance. No post-trip reflection or deconstruction was planned. The repository of data mined subsequent to the trip that forms the basis of this study was all accumulated afterward as part of an effort to just record what people said happened to them and what they thought may have caused that happening. In essence, happenstance in the sense that the trip was not pre-planned to create a Transformative Learning study.

It was also necessary to gain an understanding of Mezirow's related ideas of Emancipatory Learning as well as Service Learning and Adult Learning; and the relationship of these learning theories to both Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning in order to put this experience into context. Transformative Learning is a product of experience, in this case, the type of experience generated by a Service Learning opportunity. According to Nagata (2006, p. 43) Mezirow (1991, p. 97) applied the critical social theory of Habermas (1984) as the sociolinguistic context of Transformative Learning. Habermas (1984) explored what he described as two intersecting domains of intentional learning: (a) the instrumental and (b) the communicative. Instrumental learning, according to Habermas, is concerned with manipulating parts of the environment and produces technical knowledge. Communicative learning is concerned with understanding and being understood by other people and results in practical knowledge. Mezirow (1991, p. 97) says, "Each domain has its own purpose, method of problem solving, and way of validating statements"

Mezirow further posited that a third type of learning, emancipatory learning, can free us from "libidinal, linguistic, epistemic, institutional, and environmental forces that limit our options and our control over our lives" (Mezirow 1991, pp. 97-98).

Emancipatory knowledge is knowledge gained through critical self-reflection, as distinct from the knowledge gained from our 'technical' interest in the objective world or what he describes as the practical interest in social relationships (Mezirow, 2000). As Mezirow and others also write, the emancipatory nature of these experiences and critical reflective examination of our assumptions is essential for achieving this freedom and drives our newfound understanding. According to Mezirow, emancipatory learning results in "self-knowledge, particularly understanding of our meaning perspectives" (Mezirow, 2000, pp. 10-11). He adds that self-knowledge is considered by others to be the most important kind of knowledge for intercultural communication competency, a subject further discussed by Martin & Nakayama (2004). This sense of freedom from previously held beliefs was a constant in the narratives of the participants in the study and would play out in a number of ways including the defiance of parents by undergraduates, a newfound acceptance of others within each person's immediate social group, and newfound understandings regarding issues of political and socio-economic power distance.

Furthermore, the ability to reflect on changes in personal thought as the result of an experience is considered to be a learning method particular to adults or an adult way of learning. Mezirow (1991, p. 104) defines reflection as "the process of critically assessing the content process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience." He looked at what he called non-reflective action and reflective action. Non-reflective action, according to Mezirow, has two types: habitual action and thoughtful action. Habitual action results from previous learning, often of the psychomotor type such as touch-typing, which can be performed while our attention is focused somewhere else. Habitual action is sometimes described as operating on automatic pilot. Thoughtful action

depends on higher-order cognitive processes that guide us when we do things like analyzing, discussing, or evaluating. Thoughtful action also depends on prior learning and remains within pre-existing meaning schemes and perspectives. Reflective action, on the other hand, introduces the concept of mindfulness, and has come to play a key role in the Transformative Learning process.

According to Nagata (2006, p. 46) reflection is something that may be needed to "help us move through a series of actions or when we are having trouble understanding under new circumstances." Reflective action produces decisions or actions, "based on the insights we gained from reflecting." Nagata (2006, p. 43) states that "Reflective action is mindfulness as opposed to the mindlessness of habitual action." Nagata sites Langer (1989) who described mindfulness as being aware of content, and multiple perspectives, and being guided rather than governed by rules. Mezirow, says Nagata (2006, pp. 42-44) recommends reflective action or mindfulness because it is "associated with greater accuracy of perception of the unfamiliar and deviant, avoidance of premature cognitive commitments, better self-concept, greater job productivity and satisfaction, flexibility, innovation, and leadership ability" (Mezirow, 1991 p. 117).

It should be noted here, however, that by no means are all Adult Learning experiences transformative in nature; nor is it required or designed that they be. And while community service is almost always experienced-based with tremendous potential for Transformative Learning, it too can just as easily be of a nature--that while important-- is not conducive to deep introspective reflection of closely held beliefs.

When Mezirow (1978) first investigated Transformative Learning as a form of learning in the mid 1970s, he intentionally designed his theories to accommodate new

data and differing opinions. His work has been carried on, or expanded upon, by others whose writings have impacted on this study. While the ongoing nature of this approach has created a dynamic, interactive, theory, it is important to note the research that impacted the organizational approach to this study, by either defining a need for further understanding, or by calling for added insight to currents understandings associated with theory.

Transformative Learning: A Theory Still Evolving; Its Application Widening

Transformative Theory has evolved as its application to study has broadened. In an effort to better understand what people are trying to say about new perspectives, researchers have continued to turn to Transformative Learning Theory as a way to view an individual's paradigm shift – a whole new way of understanding, knowing and seeing. Importantly, as many writers have observed Transformative Learning, in the end, is always about individuality (Daloz, 2000. Dirkx, 2000).

One of the key tenants of Transformative Learning as theory is that the assumptions, perceptions and beliefs that get re-evaluated, critically analyzed, and perhaps altered or transformed are an accumulation of several, or different processes that actually impose those assumptions, perceptions and beliefs upon us all. Culture, religion, educational indoctrination, family values, speech and language, all being contributing factors. Brookfield (2000, pp. 137-138) says that the accumulation of assumptions, perceptions and beliefs are "sediment" that are layered upon us and that we assume are for our benefit, but which are actually "serving the interests of others." They are what he calls "hegemonic assumptions." They are specifically not assumptions, perceptions or beliefs that have been derived from independent thinking.

Daloz (2000, pp. 112-117) adopts a term used by Nelson Mandela to describe this imposed, sedimentation of assumptions, perceptions and beliefs as "Tribal Givens," and lists what he believes are particular conditions where an encounter with "Others" and a challenge to "Tribal Givens" might lead to a Transformative Learning experience and a new sense of social responsibility, all of which were encountered in New Orleans: (a) the presence of others; (b) reflective discourse; (c) a mentoring community; and (d) opportunities for committed actions.

Daloz (2000, p. 108) illustrates many of the points that he makes by using quotes or stories about the experiences of Mandela. According to Daloz, "Tribal Givens" is a term that Mandela used to describe unexamined beliefs that he carried in his ways of thinking, knowing and understanding well into his adulthood. Mandela's well documented life experiences and the changes undergone by his nation as a whole over the course of a lifetime, are, says Daloz, without question, profoundly transformative (Daloz, 2000, p. 108).

Mandela's encounters with "The Others" is one of the catalytic aspects of Transformative Learning that Daloz (2000, p. 109) examines and links directly to Mandela's reported changes in outlook and understanding that so thoroughly defined his life and his political movement. According to Daloz, at age 19 Mandela, a member of the Thembu tribe, felt, in his own words, that his "horizons did not extend beyond Thembuland" and that he believed that "to be Thembu was the most enviable thing in the world." (Daloz, 2000, p. 107). Like Mandela at 19, most of the participants had limited experiences eating, sleeping, showering, working and socializing with what they perceived as "Others." But, according to Daloz (2000) experience with "Others" and

challenging "Tribal Givens" must be accompanied by and fostered by a mentoring community. Many interviewees in the instant study refer to similar concepts, recognizing that certain triggering events that occurred in New Orleans forced them to reexamine these "Tribal Givens." Many interviews obtained for the current study also included the recognition that living and working in close proximity with "Others" seemed to be a key toward the reexamination of closely held "Tribal Givens."

The third component, a mentoring community, is explained by Daloz (2000, p. 115-116) as a key to understanding the "web of relationships in which we are all invariably held." Citing Fogel (1993) Daloz says that there are a number of significant persons who can affect the developing "sense of self" in a young adult. These include adults, teachers, youth leaders, business people and clergy. Recognition of this influence, particularly on adults between the ages of 20 and 30 is something that Daloz (2000, pp. 116-117) cites as playing a prominent role in their development by helping to form commitment to public life; nurturing critical thinking; dispensing advice; and opening doors to opportunity.

This turned out to be very consistent with descriptions by the participants who were interviewed. Many expressed versions consistent with all four components and often used terms like the "pleasure" they received from helping others; the "pleasure" they received from being a part of the Cook College and/or Rutgers Community; the recognition of the value of older adults as mentors; the "pleasure" experienced when participants realized they had formed their own opinions based on this experience; and opinions that differed from pre-trip outlooks.

Daloz (2000), turning again to the life of Mandela to illustrate the

interconnectedness of his argument:

> Quite explicitly Mandela tells us that his earlier assumptions have come into question, challenged by his direct experience, but we must add that those currents of his life also include a rich ecology of mentors, colleagues, adversaries, events, and critical discourse – a conversation that seeks to givens and tacit assumptions into dialogue with perceived experience and alternative interpretations of cause motivation and reality itself. (p. 109)

Daloz (2000, p. 112) ties the importance of these three elements of transformative

learning--recognition of the other, challenge to tribal givens, and a mentoring

community--directly to his examination of Transformative Learning and an individual's

development of a sense of social responsibility. He says that it is the growth toward an

ability to identify his or her own sense of self, with the "well-being of all life" that

supports his use of the term "social responsibility," a linked concept that emerged from

the current study.

The current study clearly produced reflections of specific examples where

individuals were able to recognize concepts such as "Others" and "Tribal Givens," and

examples of individuals who were able to recognize their ideas of "Others" and "Tribal

Givens" as being layered or "learned" assumptions, perceptions and beliefs imposed on

them to this point in their lives. In the current study, participants expressed recognition of

this examination of their own "Tribal Givens" often in a humorous context or fashion,

and recognition of their prejudged ideas regarding "Others."

In writing how a Transformative Learning experience occurs when a person

develops a sense of social responsibility, Daloz (2000, p. 105) calls a commitment to the

"common good." Many of those interviewed for this project also expressed similar

reasons for going, at least in part, or a resultant sense of social responsibility, fitting

neatly with Daloz' fourth of a four-part requirement for Transformative Learning

experiences that lead to greater social responsibility. The work that was done in New

Orleans was an act of social responsibility on a large scale, and the students knew it.

What Mezirow and other authors call "action" to some writers means specifically a

collaborative effort of the type exemplified by these students and their New Orleans

experience.

Brookfield (2000, pp. 126-127) addresses the role of critical reflection in the

Transformative Learning process, calling it a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of

Transformative Learning. In other words, he says, Transformative Learning cannot occur

without critical reflection, but critical refection does not always produce a change in what

he calls "perspective or habit."

Brookfield (2000, pp. 142-144) also makes two keys points about critical

reflections: (1) critical reflection is important but not sufficient because that reflection

must challenge ideologies, and (2) any change to basic assumptions must result in social

action that challenges power relationships and hegemony. Critical reflection is more than

deep and probing, according to Brookfield. It must result in some powerful analysis, like

Mandela's "Tribal Givens" that a person's own emotional dimensions and automatic

emotional responses are socially learned. Transformative Learning must include the

recognition of how uncritically accepted and unjust dominant ideologies are embedded.

What we think are personal interpretations, explains Brookfield, are, in fact, culturally

embedded. When doing ideology critiques, maintains Brookfield (2000), we must try to

penetrate the givens. Brookfield says there are two steps: Step 1: Understand how

considerations of power undergird, frame and distort; and Step 2: Question assumptions

that appear to make our lives easier but actually end up working against our own self-interests (pp. 130-131).

Brookfield (2000) also calls for the need for critical reflection to be more probing and lead to the uncovering of paradigmatic structuring assumptions. To Brookfield, depth is not enough. He calls the word "critical" a sacred word because of his experience with the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory. "People must actually try to identify assumptions that they hold dear that are actually destroying their sense of well being, and are serving the interests of others. We have to learn to examine that our emotional responses to certain situations are actually leaned" (Brookfield, 2000, p. 127). He goes on to describe the process as being one by which people learn how to recognize critically accepted and unjustly dominant ideologies embedded in our outlook. He cites Marcuse (1964) who uses the term "ideologically sedimented" to characterize this process. This self-examination leads to Critical Self-Reflection on Assumptions (CRSA). Brookfield (2000) calls for narrative CRSA as a way to lead to a better understanding of Transformative Learning.

Participants interviewed, in fact, pointed to the recognition of eroded power distances among students, staff, community members, and federal agents as an important element of awareness while in New Orleans. Deans and Directors lived, slept, ate and worked side-by-side, in the exact same conditions, with the exact same duties as the students. Students were often dismayed at the response of the Federal Government to the plight of New Orleans. In addition, and in keeping with Brookfield, their experience led to a form of narrative CRSA that disclosed the emotional power of their experience, even up to three years later. And many indicated "they wanted to go back."

Brookfield (2000) also says that Transformative Learning need not be either "epiphanic, apocalyptic or a cognitive event shift." It must however, result in a "fundamental questioning and reordering how one thinks and acts" (p. 139). Again, this seems to be a consistent theme in the narratives. In the same article Brookfield (p. 143) sites Freire (1998) and says that learning can only be transformative if it is both the product of critical reflection, and results in some action, although Mezirow (2000, pp. 6, 11, 24) says that even deciding to think differently is enough of an action. Brookfield also warns that others have pointed out that if Transformative Learning is only legitimate if it produces social action, it will never be encountered voluntarily and seen as an "energy-sapping, pessimistic exercise since large scale change can often be seen as overwhelming to near impossible" (p. 145).

Travel, too, is a frequent catalyst. This was echoed by Richard Keeling (2004), for example, among others, and was a constant theme of the narratives of the interviewees. A specific committee was established by the Cook College Student Leadership Program to gather information and details regarding travel plans. Travel to and from New Orleans was significantly curtailed after Katrina for several key reasons. Problems were compounded by the large size of the group.

Immediately after the storm, obstacles to travel included the obvious: Flooded and flood-damaged roads, blocked roadways; and power outages. Six months post-Katrina, when the group was ready to go to New Orleans, regular air travel was intermittent for the simple economic reasons that few wanted to go to New Orleans in the first place; when they got there, there was no place to stay; and airport workers were evacuated, just like everyone else, and now lived elsewhere with new jobs. Once on the ground, the

group needed transportation to and from the airport. As result of damage from the storm, just about the entire New Orleans bus fleet was destroyed. Travel, in connection with encounters with "Others," and resultant collaborative efforts with "Others" seem important in understanding the process experienced by the students who went to New Orleans. Keeling and others write that Study Abroad programs often serve as platforms for Transformative Learning experiences and this experience bore many similarities of a study abroad experience by virtue of the time, place and setting. Therefore, it was with particular interest that this study accumulated descriptions of aspects of the learning environment such as time, place and setting.

Walton (2010, p. 159) opines that there is an ever-increasing need for educators to better understand cross-cultural messages, social experiences, and civic participation in an ever-expanding and demanding global reality. Calling it a "critical task for educators" he calls on teachers to assist in the education of citizens who will "be equipped to deal with a wide variety of personal, political, and multicultural commitments as well as understand the ways in which they are interconnected."

Walton (2010, p. 157) calls for Transformative Learning to serve as a framework for a more "dynamic and systemic" understanding of these messages, experiences and participations. Basing his study, in part, on the theory that "conceptual tension is central to intellectual growth and transformative learning," he explains, the basic key to understanding is "the role of cognitive dissonance in modifying, revising, and changing psychological meaning structures" because "cognitive struggle, or disequilibrium, and adult learning and development are closely related" (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991, 1994, 1997; Joyce, 1984; Taylor, 2007).

Walton (2010) refers to earlier investigations by some of the giants of educational theory into this process whereby adults encounter experiences that force them to reconsider pre-existing beliefs, assumptions or perception, writing:

> Nearly a century ago, American philosopher John Dewey called attention to the growth-enhancing implications of disequilibrium, particularly in environments where conceptual tension mediated an active reconstruction of personal experience (1910, 1938). Similarly, Jean Piaget (1954, 1977) suggested that when actors encounter experiences discrepant with pre-existing mental frameworks, they undergo a state of dissonance that motivates a reorganization of cognitive schema. (p. 158)

Expanding on this theme, Walton cites Mezirow (1991, 1994, 1997) and colleagues (e.g., Cranton, 1996; Taylor, 2007) saying they have "demonstrated that disorienting-induced experiences can be a valuable means of supporting adult learning and transformative development" (p. 158). He sums up his understanding of this aspect, the first phase of Mezirow's theory, by writing:

> Essentially, the results of these studies indicate that incongruities (e.g., disorientation, imbalance) within life circumstances or learning environments can serve as an impetus for critical reflection and the transformation of existing assumptions and perspectives. Again, the implication is that cognitive dissonance offers a basis for individual psychological growth, including the possibility of developing deeper, more inclusive understandings about self and others (p. 159).

The current study produced numerous specific examples to support Walton's assertions regarding the value of cognitive dissonance as he understands it and as a result, it will add significantly to this aspect of the Transformative Learning discussion. The current study differed significantly, however, in that his study involved classroom experiences, while participants here were describing their transformative experiences--

specifically those instances or examples of cognitive dissonance, which took place outside of the classroom.

Enter Kiely

Kiely (2005) turned to the work of Mezirow and others contributing to Transformative Learning Theory in order to better understand what he was observing, "because," in his own words, "it focuses on how people make meaning of their experiences, and, in particular, how significant learning and behavioral change often result from the way people make meaning of ill-structured problems, critical incidents, and/or ambiguous life events" (p. 6).

Kiely's own 2005 study was his response to calls from other writers looking to develop "a more systematic and rigorous research process and agenda" as it pertained to the understanding and substantiation of Service Learning in both the K-12 setting and in higher education. Another of his concerns was to answer observations by Bringle (2003), Bringle & Hatcher (2000) and Ziegert & McGoldrick (2004), that according to Kiely, Bringle says that there is more to research than just collecting data which Bringle believes in turn leads to the "myopic, technical-rational obsession with more precise measurement of service learning outcomes," and, quoting Ziegert and McGoldrick, (p. 32) "runs the risk of being misguided as it ends up focusing precision at a level that it is impossible in the context of the real world" (Kiely 2005, p. 5).

Keily (2005, p. 5) believes that educators who explore the learning process in Service Learning have tended to focus on some form of structured reflection after placing students in some real life situation, and while acknowledging the value of reflection, says that "research should also examine the value and influence of contextual factors and non-

reflective forms of learning in service learning." In turning to Transformative Learning as a method to better understand Service Learning. Keily (p. 6) first outlines the more traditionally used model of experiential learning developed by Kolb (1984) calling it the "Rosetta Stone" of experiential learning (Becker & Couto, 1996, p. 20) citing both its popularity and simplicity for explaining and understanding the learning process experienced by service learners. Kolb's cycle of: (a) concrete experience; (b) cognitive reflection; (c) abstract theorization; and (d) experimentation, while valid, useful, time proven and important, does not pay enough attention to the role of emotions, affect, context, ideology and educator-student power distance according to Kiely (p. 6). As a consequence, he turned to Mezirow's model (1991, 2000), because, he said, it provides valuable insight on how Transformative Learning occurs in Service Learning. In Kiely's study, as in this one, the program setting was deemed important.

Keily designed a case study based on a Service Learning experience in an effort to gain greater insight to what emphasis his students placed on the meaning and the learning process that the experience generated over time (Keily, 2005, p. 8). Keily's data collection methods included document analysis, on-site participant observations, focus groups, and interviews – both semi-structured and unstructured. He specifically selected the case study method, indicating that it was useful in validating, corroborating and triangulating emerging ideas (p.8). In addition, says Keily, it was more apt to "increase the trustworthiness and validity of the study results" (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995, 2000).

In this study, documents included surveys, journals, photographs, papers, reports and interviews, but also included pre-trip surveys and action plans. Keily (2005) writes

that "close attention was devoted to observing students' emotional, physical and intellectual responses to important events, the physical setting, service work and social interaction" (p. 8). All are elements of the instant study as well.

As a result of his analysis, Keily identified five categories that he calls Themes that he says described how his students experienced Transformative Learning as a result of a Service Learning experience. He describes these Themes as follows:

1. Contextual Border Crossing includes personal (i.e., biography, personality, learning style, expectations, prior travel experience, and sense of efficacy), structural (i.e., race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability), historical (i.e., the socioeconomic and political history of Nicaragua and US-Nicaragua relations within larger socioeconomic and political systems), and programmatic factors (i.e., intercultural immersion, direct service-work and opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue with diverse perspectives, and curriculum that focuses on social justice issues such as poverty, economic disparities, unequal relations of power) which intersect to influence and frame the way students experience the process of transformational learning in service-learning (Kiely , 2005, p.8)

2. Dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience. There is a relationship between dissonance type, intensity, and duration and the nature of learning processes that result. Low to high intensity dissonance acts as triggers for learning. High-intensity dissonance catalyzes

ongoing learning. Dissonance types are historical, environmental, social

physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and

technological (Kiely, 2005, p.8).

3. Personalizing represents how participants individually respond to and learn

    from different types of dissonance. It is visceral and emotional, and compels

    students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Emotions and feelings

    include anger, happiness, sadness, helplessness, fear, anxiety, confusion, joy,

    nervousness, romanticizing, cynicism, sarcasm, selfishness, and

    embarrassment (Kiely, 2005, p. 8)

4. Processing is both an individual reflective learning process and a social,

    dialogic learning process. Processing is problematizing, questioning,

    analyzing, and searching for causes and solutions to problems and issues. It

    occurs through various reflective and discursive processes such as journaling,

    reflection groups, community dialogues, walking, research, and observation

    (Kiely, 2005, p. 8)

5. Connecting is learning to affectively understand and empathize through

    relationships with community members, peers, and faculty. It is learning

    through non-reflective modes such as sensing, sharing, feeling, caring,

    participating, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting, and

    doing. Examples include performing skits, singing, dancing, swimming,

    attending church, completing chores, playing games, home stays, sharing

    food, treating wounds, and sharing stories. (Keily, 2005, p. 8-9)

Keily (2005) says that these Themes, organized in this manner "add insight to current notions of transformational learning theory and articulate a conceptual framework for educators to understand and more effectively foster learning processes that lead to transformative outcomes in service-learning" (pp. 8-9).

Below is a figure of Kiely's processing model. Kiely's Themes were applied to data obtained from the current sample chosen selectively in order to see if elements or aspects of the learning environment present in the current study are exemplary of Kiely's model and to see if the method by which participants described and synthesized are representative of any of Kiely's TL processing themes.

Figure 1
Transformational Service-Learning Process Model – Theme/Meaning and Characteristics

Contextual border crossing: There are personal (i.e., biography, personality, learning style, expectations, prior travel experience, and sense of efficacy), structural (i.e., race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability), historical (i.e., the socioeconomic and political history of Nicaragua and US-Nicaragua relations within larger socioeconomic and political systems), and programmatic factors (i.e., intercultural immersion, direct service-work and opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue with divers perspectives, and curriculum that focuses on social justice issues such as poverty, economic disparities, unequal relations of power) which intersect to influence and frame the way students experiences the process of transformational learning in service-learning.

Dissonance: Dissonance constitutes incongruence between participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that shape the service-learning experience. There is a relationship between dissonance type, intensity, and duration and the nature of learning processes that result. Low to high intensity dissonance acts as triggers for learning. High-intensity dissonance catalyzes ongoing learning. Dissonance types are historical, environmental, social physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and technological.

Personalizing: Personalizing represents how participants individually respond to and learn from different types of dissonance. It is visceral and emotional, and compels students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Emotions and feelings include anger, confusion, joy, nervousness, romanticizing, cynicism, sarcasm, selfishness, and embarrassment.

Processing: Processing is both an individual reflective learning process and a social dialogic learning process. Processing is problematizing, questioning, analyzing, and searching for causes to problems and issues, It occurs through various reflective and discursive processes such as journaling, reflection groups, community dialogues, walking, research, and observation.

Connecting: Connecting is learning to affectively understand and empathize through relationships with community members, peers, and faculty. It is learning through nonreflective modes such as sensing, sharing, feeling, caring, participating, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting, and doing. Examples include performing skits, singing, dancing, swimming, attending church, completing chores, playing games, home stays, sharing food, treating wounds, and sharing stories.

It became clear, as data was reviewed**,** that Kiely's model provided a solid framework for organizing and analyzing data. Participant descriptions contained all five themes as presented by Kiely. Furthermore, it was clear that these themes often worked in combination to produce lessons learned and eventual perceived impacts as described by the participants themselves. As a consequence, this study attempted in part, to examine how descriptions of specific elements of the experiential learning environment made sense of Kiely's model by describing themes or aspects of the themes that Kiely derived from his study. Noticing that participant descriptions could often fit into more than one of Kiely's Theme boxes, it was determined that the method of description (outlined in the Methodology Section) would allow the descriptions to stand alone, while still recognizing that these descriptions were describing at least one, but often a combination of Kiely's processing Themes: Contextual Border Crossing, Dissonance, Personalizing, Processing and Connecting.

Empirical Studies

Taylor (2007) reviewed 40 studies based on Transformative Learning in his article "A Critical Review of the Empirical Research of Transformative Learning: 1995-2005" where he observed that most of these studies continue to use Mezirow's basic definition(s) of Transformative Learning and that most of the studies report on experiences that foster Transformative Learning. He also reported that most of these are in higher education, but unlike the present study, related to formal educational settings. While studies have gained in sophistication, Taylor opined, more has to be done to determine when an experience is a true Transformative Learning experience or whether

the critical reflection is more likely attributable to normal developmental changes or some other process not associated with Transformative Learning.

Brookfield (2000, p. 134) citing Derrida (1978) Lyotard (1984) and Lacan (1979) believes that Transformative Learning need not be as linear as the process described by Mezirow. Taylor (2003, pp. 413, 416) believes that Transformative Learning is not just rationally driven and consciously derived, but also involves a selection of non-rational and unconscious modes of processing for revising meaning structures. Relevant to the instant study is Taylor's call for an understanding of context about where and how Transformative Learning takes place and what Nagata (2006, p. 45) calls a "re-conceptualization" of the transformative learning process. Taylor, Nagata says, emphasized the significance of whole person learning by quoting the following: "awareness and use of all the functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions" (The Group for Collaborative Inquiry cited by Taylor, 1997, p. 49). Like Taylor, says Nagata, Robert Boyd and J. Gordon Myers (1988), Patricia Cranton (1994, 2000), and John Dirkx (2000) have found that "affective and other extra-rational aspects of human experience have been neglected." These writers have been described as proponents of holistic transformational theories by Susan Lennox (2005) in her dissertation "Contemplating the Self: Integrative Approaches to Transformative Learning in Higher Education," according to Nagata (2006). Lennox (2005) writes that holistic transformation theorists have not reached a consensus on a definition of transformation, but "they tend to conceive of it as involving more of a whole person shift or a shift in consciousness that

extends beyond mere ideation" (p. 32). She offers an articulation by O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor (2002) as a tentative definition of integral Transformative Learning:

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the 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. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body-awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (O'Sullivan et al. cited by Lennox, 2005, p. 32)

Nagata (2006), provides not only an excellent review of the theoretical framework provided by Mezirow, but more importantly to this study, discusses what she terms "the use of our whole selves to communicate…our body, emotion/feeling, mind and spirit" (p. 45). While her study focuses on the importance of non-verbal communication in expressing Transformative Learning, it's relevance here is to that aspect already mentioned, and so obvious in the narratives of the subjects of this study; that descriptive terms relevant to sensory perception and emotions/feelings, are elements in understanding the nature and impact of a particular Transformative Learning experience. Nagata's study attempts to analyze some of her own Transformative Learning experiences and their value to understanding intercultural communication (Martin & Nakayama, 2004 and Taylor, 2008). According to Nagata, the pattern of someone cycling through their thoughts and feelings is critical to the process of reflection. And reflection, she says, is critical to the process of improving our ability to communicate with others. With this in mind, attention was paid to descriptive terms of feelings, emotions and sensations used by the subjects of this study.

Merriam & Ntseane (2008) explore possible disconnects between what they call Mezirow's Western slant on Transformational Learning, and its practical application to African cultures. Of relevance to the present study, they took a look at two specific factors--cultural responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles. The authors write, "Hanson (1996) suggested that for some cultures and situations, conformity to the group may be more important than critical autonomy" Merriam & Ntseane (2008. p. 185)

And like Nagata, Merriam and Ntseane point to the growing opinion that Transformational Learning is not necessarily a totally rational process, highlighting the importance of feelings as a guiding force in Transformational Learning. That study focused on Afro-centered cultural realities, saying that in most African tribal cultures, belongingness, connectedness and community participation are more important than they are in Western cultures (Merriam and Ntseane, 2005. p. 185). This theme of growing connectedness, and the group as a dimension of the learning environment would be repeated in several different contexts by the students interviewed, who placed large value on the group experience to their subsequent change in belief systems, assumptions and perceptions, and what actions those changes are going to, or have lead to, in their personal lives. The current study may play a part in exposing a more universal understanding of belongingness independent of Western versus Eastern or African cultural influence.

In another empirical study, "Perspectives on Authenticity in Teaching," (Cranton & Caursetta, 2004) examined what they called the flawed approach of college faculty trying to improve their teaching skills by reading best practice manuals, guidelines and strategies without taking into account the individualized value of each teacher's personal

style. In their opinion, teachers trying to improve were involved in a Transformational

Learning activity:

> When we critically reflect on social norms about teaching, and
> disengage ourselves from the norms we do not accept, we are
> differentiating ourselves from the collective of teachers, and this is
> the development of authenticity—knowing who you are as separate
> from (and the same as) the collective of humanity. In Jungian terms,
> this is also known as individuation (Dirkx, 2000; Sharpe 1995;
> Cranton & Caursetta, 2004, p. 108).

Of value to the present study was the way in which the authors first had to

examine the mechanism, what others have called "sedimentation," the almost

unconscious passing on of accepted cultural norms, in this case accepted teaching

practices within the culture of higher education--a place notorious for its lack of formal

teacher training. But the relevance of the article to this study was in a concept of

authenticity that Cranton and Carusetta (2004) define as: " …a multifaceted concept that

includes at least four parts: being genuine, showing consistency between values and

actions, relating to others in such a way as to encourage their authenticity, and living a

critical life" (p. 107).

The participant interviews in the instant study show clearly that they were less

inhibited (genuine) and spoke freely about emotions and feelings. And their reformed

viewpoints, so far, have lead to actions consistent with their new-found values. All of the

participants expressed elements of these four parts of authenticity as defined by Cranton

and Carusetta (2004), as being important to their experience in New Orleans, with

relating to others, and leading a critical life often drawing not only reflections about

themselves, but their opinion toward others sometimes expressed in terms of anger,

disgust or disrespect.

Finally, a three-year longitudinal study by researchers in Finland focused on a new approach to teaching nurses in Finland with an idea from changing the promotion of health education from a traditional approach to an empowerment approach, entitled "The Development of Reflective Learning in the Context of Health Counseling and Health Promotion during Nurse Education," (Liimatainen, Poskiparta, Poskiparta, and Sjogren, 2001). One of the main purposes of the study was to explore the reflective learning process in the context of health promotion. The study was grounded in Transformative Learning theory. Similarly, the present study attempted to get participants to describe what they learned and to describe reflectively why that was so. The researchers in Finland were trying to evaluate an intentionally transformative learning approach to nursing education that would allow nurses to explore a greater breadth and depth of understanding in the practice stating that, "Critical consciousness entails becoming aware of one's awareness, criticizing it and challenging one's underlying assumptions, which results in a changed perspective" (p. 655).

The current study also took the opportunity to see if one becomes aware of one's own assumptions and criticizes them. It was learned that this was a consistent feature of the interviews for the present study. Participants of the current study, as indicated, were asked to relate the story of this life-altering experience through surveys and interviews. Some participants also kept journals, and/or wrote articles and essays. In addition, hundreds of photographs of the experience were forwarded to the primary researcher. This data was accumulated over a three-year period following the trip creating a large repository of data that was later mined in order to discover what the participants were

saying, thinking and feeling about the learning environment and how it generated, or triggered Transformative Learning opportunities.

This project, therefore, is grounded, in major part, within the theoretical research based on Transformative Learning. The individuals who went on this trip were exposed to a constant stream of life-altering sensations. Interviews and email surveys conducted indicated that all were aware to some significant degree that they came back with changed outlooks and viewpoints about themselves and the world that they occupy. They also were able to relate a new set of skills and knowledge that they acquired by the simple act of travel, community living and performing manual labor every day. Significantly, they were able to reflect and articulate on some of the causes for change. As a consequence, Transformative Learning is the major lens to better understand their experience and this study.

Other Key Areas of Research: Adult Learning/Service Learning/Experiential Learning

There is much literature regarding Adult Education. This area has paid close attention to the way that adults accumulate and process information in light of their usually more numerous life experiences, but also in light of their more firmly sedimented belief systems. Both Adult Learning and Transformative Learning draw their basis from discussions on learning styles and preference, and this too, must be included in any literature review. Of particular interest for this study was the work of researchers Tanner, Arnett & Leis (2009), who write about what they call emerging adulthood, ages 18-29, as a specific period of life, characterized by important changes from an individual's teen-age years into what they call settled young adulthood. Important in this study was an

understanding of the characteristics attributed to this age bracket and their learning styles,

preference and capabilities. Of interest here is their opinion that the college setting and

environment is particularly "well suited" to the development features of emerging

adulthood. This experience was designed from the outset to be student-driven, and though

it involved persons from older age brackets, 74 of the 82 participants fall into this age

bracket.

The study of young adult cognition includes looking at learner preference,

cognitive abilities and types of knowledge. Adult Learning and Development also

discusses these elements in ways that may make sense out of the data obtained in the

study and must be included in my preliminary literature review efforts. For example,

Merriam and Clark (2006) are interested specifically in the interrelatedness of adult

development and Adult Learning. Their research highlights the complexity of defining

change over time when it comes to Adult Learning, and what triggers these changes.

They are particularly concerned with the connection between experience and education.

Parsing out the multilevel, multifaceted connections, they say, is what Boud, Cohen and

Walker (1993) call "messy;" but it will be this "messiness" that the instant study

attempted to capture, at least in part.

Other questions discussed in the Adult Learning literature and of relevance to

understanding this particular trip as it relates to developing a better understanding of the

learning environment that can produce a Transformative Learning experience include

Hoare (2006), who asks if studies in adult holistic experiences will help to provide an

understanding to the instant study by providing examples of how particular participants,

mostly traditionally-aged college students, described their experiences. The

interrelatedness of experience, motivation and development are certainly elements that intersect studies in Transformative Learning as well.

Service Learning can be defined as a learning opportunity where students or participants learn and develop through active participation in organized service that is conducted in, and meets the needs of, a community and helps foster civic responsibility. By its very design it is boundary spanning (Billig & Furco, 2002). According to Pritchard & Whitehead, III (2004) it must be integrated into the academics and involves community agencies or groups. Familiar higher education versions of this type of learning include Teach for America, Peace Corps, and AmeriCorps. Learn and Serve America, for example, is a federally funded grant program authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990 that sponsors higher education programs dedicated to Service Learning opportunities. In this case, participants were performing services for Habit for Humanity under the direction of AmeriCorp.

Pertinent to this study, Eyler (2002), writes that the research design and methods for student impact need to be refined and produce clear descriptions of the impact of Service Learning. Like the studies on Transformative Learning, she also writes that there have been almost no studies on the continuous impact of the experience and are almost always studies of short duration. The instant study addressed both of these concerns and so will satisfy, in part at least, a gap common to both Transformative Learning and Service Learning. In addition, and more relevant here, is Eyler call for observational studies. Service Learning, she writes, (like Transformative Learning) is appropriate for qualitative analysis in general and case study method in particular because of the need to

understand what she calls the complex understandings of assumptions and puzzling experiences in real world situations.

Eyler (2002, pp. 7-8) also writes, importantly for this study, that the independent variable for Service Learning research is the Service Learning experience itself. Studies like the one undertaken needed to take into consideration her view that something must be done to accumulate data on longer-term view of experiences by the participants. Since the data that provided the basis of this study was, in large part, a collection of interviews recorded over a three-year period, this study attempted to be part of that conversation. In addition, the instant study answers Eyler's call for a better understanding of the "experience the students are having," rather than comparing the impact of some service learning experience with another type of experience the students are having. (p. 7). In essence, Eyler's call predates that of Kiely, whose call for a better understanding of the "how" of Service Learning provided the major focus of the instant study. Future studies, said Eyler, should build on previous qualitative studies in an effort to better understand and "focus more clearly on precisely what aspects of service learning pedagogy make a difference" (p. 8).

Furco & Billig (2002, pp. 15-16) write that additional research in Service Learning must be multidisciplinary in nature, in addition to tying the research to relevant theories. Their point is that Service Learning cuts across many disciplinary lines, but that the research is almost always conducted from the viewpoint of the discipline providing the Service Learning experience. The instant study may assist in their quest by providing a case study example tied to various educational theories, thus providing a generalizable review of a Service Learning experience where the disciplinary lens is not relevant

whatsoever. This trip was open to all at Rutgers University. It was not tied to any

educational course or discipline. In terms of educational or disciplinary lens, the

participants each brought their own distinctive viewpoint about its relevance. In addition,

Furco and Billig (2002) point out that Service Learning, like Transformative Learning, is

still a relatively new field, with limited research and in need of both further study and a

more coordinated effort within the field (p. 16). This study, therefore, also attempts to

provide some response to this call for greater understanding of Service Learning by

providing a detailed case study of the learning environment that was encountered by

students during this specific Service Learning experience.

Also valuable to this study was an article written by Environmental Geographer

Mark Bjelland (2006) who attempted to combine his expertise in environmental science

with a growing awareness of its connection to concepts of social justice and Service

Learning. Bjelland believes that social and ecological issues are inseparable when it

comes to urban planning and urban growth, particularly as it pertains to what he terms

"environmental inequities" and how these directly impact social justice issues (pp. 75-

76). Bjelland thinks that it becomes too easy for environmental studies students to

become withdrawn from responsible engagement with society (p. 77). Part of the answer

he believes is Service Learning; by giving students a chance to participate in responsible

engagement in society and by giving students practical skills, helping students develop

what he calls a "sense of place within the local bioregion." (p. 77).

Participants often referred to their new level of awareness with regards to the

environmental issues and urban planning issues facing New Orleans, both pre- and post-

Katrina. Many of the undergraduates came to New Orleans with a strong background in

environmental science as a result of their studies at Cook College, a school focused on

the biological and environmental sciences. The participants on the instant Service

Learning experience witnessed firsthand the combination of environmental design issues

such as the levy system, and the impact its failure had on a large section of the City (The

Ninth Ward) populated mainly by poor Blacks.

Another theoretical area explored by this study, at least in part, is described by

McMillan (2002, pp. 58-59) where she wondered at the lack of university-level

commitment to Service Learning – particularly as it pertains to assessment and evaluation

regarding the insular nature of the university educational experience, versus an

opportunity to use such experience to introduce and address larger societal needs. This

study attempted to answer such a call for better understanding, at least in part, by

providing a research project where students experienced some of the largest-scale societal

issues extant and were asked to reflect on the impact of those issues on their individual

experiences. Furthermore, the students involved generated the entire project without any

university funding and no direct faculty involvement, leading to questions, perhaps, about

what McMillan (2002) calls the lack of commitment by "the university sector" to the

community and the "tightly bound and insular teaching practices" found in higher

education (p. 58). This was done here by presenting a case study that clearly involved

large-scale issues that allowed students to directly participate in the three key areas of

challenges that she says are facing learning institutions if they want to respond to her call

to break out of their insularity: (a) An increased participation in higher education by a

diverse group of learners; (b) responsiveness to societal needs: and (c) Cooperation and

partnerships (McMillan, 2002, p. 59). The instant case, therefore, clearly represents a

study that belongs in this conversation by virtue of the fact that all three of these

challenges were undertaken, at least in significant part, by the participants of the this

study and the efforts of the Office of Student Affairs at Rutgers–Cook College, which

was the department that organized this Service Learning experience and then made it

happen.

As it implies, Experiential Learning occurs through experience. It should be noted

that not all experiential education is transformative in nature, in fact much is not. Many

trades, for example require, experiential learning--learning by doing, as opposed to

informative learning--the delivery and reception of information more familiar in the

classroom. Airplane pilots, surgeons, nurses, teachers, engineers and applied physicists

are recognized professionals who are subjected to significant experiential learning

opportunities, that are not designed, nor are they required to be, transformative in nature.

Learning something new by doing it, in itself, is not transformative in the sense of

Transformative Learning. Nonetheless, the instant study had to draw on the theoretical

literature of experiential learning because of the way that information was imported and

absorbed. The perceptual pathways for the cognitive intake of information involve direct

experience, rather than cognitive intake via indirect experience as in reading or hearing

about some experience (Jarvis, 2009, pp. 81-82).

Jarvis (2009, pp. 55-56) argues furthermore, that experience is the start of all

learning. While experience provides the cognitive, or biological, basis for learning, he

argues, it does not stop there. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that

Jarvis divides post-cognition experiential learning that occurs in time, in place and in us.

This line of inquiry suggested by Jarvis is relevant in placing each individual's

experience into context, which is another reason why the description by the participants

of the perceived elements of the learning environment that created, contributed or

facilitated their own Transformative Learning experience adds to our knowledge of

Experiential Learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Case Study

According to Zainal (2007) and Tellis (1997) the case study method is still controversial, stemming primarily from its lack of quantitative certainty and usual lack of generalizabilty. Nonetheless, it has become an accepted approach, especially in sociological research circles because of its ability to capture information about specific cases that add to the overall understanding of theory. Zainal writes that one of the reasons for the acceptance of case study as a research method is that researchers became bothered by the limitations of quantitative methods in providing "holistic and in-depth explanations" of the social and behavioral issues in question. The case study method researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative-based results and parse out the behavioral questions through the actor's perspective (Zainal, 2007, p. 1)

Tellis (1997) citing Yin (1984, 1989a, 1989b, 1993, 1994) believes that case study, even a single case, has applicability, provided it meets the established objective. Tellis also states that the case study method satisfies three basic tenets of qualitative research--describing, understanding and explaining. A single case of a Transformative Learning experience is appropriate, according to Tellis since it can add to the further understanding of theory, as well as to understanding the specific case. A researcher doing a case study must write up the case as it presents itself (Tellis, 1997, p. 1). This particular case study, then, will attempt to describe the experiences particular to these individuals on this specific trip, but to also provide a further understanding of Transformative Learning derived from Service Learning experiences in general and the process by which

specific elements of the learning environment of a Service Learning trip can generate, stimulate, create or facilitate a Transformative Learning experience.

Therefore, this case study used research design strategies appropriate to case studies as outlined in Bryman (2004), Maxwell (2005), Tellis (1997) and Zainal (2007). Bryman in particular, writes that cases can be unique, revelatory or exemplifying, but what is unique, revelatory or exemplary may not become apparent until after the study is done. Furthermore, according to Bryman (2004, pp. 333-35) case studies tend to be intensive to the particular case, and that participant viewing and unstructured observation are appropriate to case studies. In this particular case, much of the data will be the result of loosely structured interviewing, and placed in context through participant observations.

This case study, following Tellis (1997) and Zainal (2007), allowed each individual to describe his or her experience in their own terms (tell a story) with the subsequent data obtained categorized in the manner described below in an effort to get a more "holistic and in-depth" understanding of the elements of the learning environment that created or facilitated Transformative Learning arising out of a Service Learning experience.

According to Maxwell (2005) case study is an appropriate method for collecting, categorizing and evaluating descriptions of events in order to place those events within the context of their occurrence, and their understanding through the use of the appropriate theoretical frameworks. In this instance, the study looked at a well-defined sample to understand each participant's experiences within a well-defined event, at a well-defined location, and within a well-defined period of time. The study, though conducted via

interviews over a three-year period, is not technically a longitudinal study and is well-bounded and appropriate for the case study method

Using a mixed sampling of email interviews, video interviews, audio interviews, journals and articles obtained from a specific sample of participants, open coding was first used to identify elements or aspects of the learning environment that participants identified as generative to, or facilitating of their individual Transformative Learning experiences.

The sample was based on purposeful selection for the best examples, also called richest examples or rich text, of this data from among the larger sample of participants from whom interviews, journals, and articles were acquired. Writers such as Cresswell, 2007; Bryman, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Hoffman, 2009; and Patton, 1990 have all approved this method of addressing and reporting findings. According to Patton, purposeful selection allows the researcher to look for information-rich sources. Maxwell, citing Creswell and Patton believes that, in summary, purposeful selection: (a) Helps achieve typicality or representation of the setting; (b) can also capture the heterogeneity of the setting; (c) can provide examples that are critical for understanding the theory; and (d) can serve to capture the differences between settings or individuals when comparing the data. All four of these advantages presented themselves in the instant study.

Comparison within the sample is also appropriate given the (a) requirements for sample inclusion; (b) the specific elements of the learning environment to be compared; and (c) the specific manner in which those elements generated or facilitated a Transformative Learning experience and the place they played in the synthesizing process. Well-defined examples serve as comparison benchmarks for each individual's

Transformative Learning experience. Although there is no control group for this study, Maxwell (2005) says that comparisons are, in fact appropriate for studies where the interviewees from a relatively homogenous group themselves provide how they viewed the "before and after"--aiding to the interpretability of the data (pp. 113-114). Furthermore, Creswell (2007) indicates that this approach will produce data, maybe not for generalizing beyond the case, but more importantly, to help understand the complexity within the case. This complexity or "messiness" as it is referred to by other writers (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993) make the case study method an appropriate method of choice.

According to Yin (1984) a case study should generally involve a discreet geographical area and a finite (usually small) number of individuals, both conditions were satisfied here. Furthermore, Yin states that the method is appropriate in order to describe a contemporary event or social phenomena in its real life context when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not so clear. The instant study attempted to clarify these boundaries based on the data obtained from the participants themselves.

Finally, it should be mentioned here that there is certainly an element of collecting oral histories about the project design. In order to put each individual's interview into context, it will was necessary to present some of their own history. Otherwise, their own before-and-after analysis will have little relevance. In order to understand why any closely held beliefs, perceptions or assumptions changed, it will was necessary to understand why they held those particular beliefs, perceptions and assumptions in the first place. This, according to Richie (2003) is oral history, and the way that the interviews were conducted also exemplifies the modern approach to oral history. Richie

(pp. 223-230) further indicates that this study might also be considered what he calls "community oral history" in that it describes the history of a certain group of people in a certain time and place in their joint and collective experiences. Viewing the interviews as oral history was further supported by the grounded theory method of doing guided interviews in that the oral histories, in fact, informed the data collection methods, the categorization process and the analysis of the data that emerged.

Population

As indicated, the study began by conducting interviews, as well as collecting email interviews, journals and articles from participants in the 2006 Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief project. The material was collected over a three-year post-experience time period in order to provide a larger context for the time-line of such experiences and greater context for the meaning of perceived changes. All project participants were either students or staff of Rutgers University with the exception of Siana Bridell, the daughter of Douglas College Dean of Students Jocelyn Bridell, and Mike Duva, fiancé of Cook College graduate student Anne Nielsen. Of the 74 undergraduate students who went on the trip, all but nine were Cook College students. The vast majority of the total group, 74, was traditionally-aged undergraduates--18-23 years old, with one undergraduate being 25.

Sample and Criteria for Selection

From the overall group, the following materials were obtained: 30 audio and/or video interviews from 26 individuals, 16 email interviews, one documentary film by Lauren Carrier, Over 1,000 photographs, two journals, and two articles written by participants.

From thes**e** materials, the interviews and material from 26 individuals comprised of 17 audio interviews, 5 video interviews and 14 email interviews were utilized to produce the study. In addition the research journal, articles and photographs from the primary researcher were used for background. No interviews of the primary researcher were recorded. Inclusion in the final group was based on purposeful selection and that individual's ability to best articulate his or her experience. This method was used to provide the richest or best example of the Methods of Description and Synthesis that generated, created, stimulated or facilitated or triggered their Transformative Learning experience.

The individuals who comprised the final sample are:

1. Ed Levy, Associate Dean of Students
a.   Three Audio Tape Interviews 2/27/2008; 3/4/2008; 5/11/2008
b.   Primary Researcher's article about the trip with interview of Levy
c.   Email Interview 7/18/2006

2. Vicki Wilson
a.   Audio 5/10/2008

3. Anne Nielsen
a.   Audio Interview 3/3/2008
b.   Email Interview 7/20/2006

4. Mike Duva
a.   Email Interview 7/18/2006

5. Tanya Marion
a.   Audio Interview 4/10/2008
b.   Email Interview 12/28/2006

6. Nakeefa Bernard
a.   Audio Interview 12/14/2008
b.   Video Interview 3/12/2009
c.   Journal; Independent Study Report

7. Daniel Betz
a.   Audio Interview 3/5/2008

b.   Email Interview 11/30/2006

8. Kaitlin Seifert
a.   Audio Interview 3/31/2008
b.   Email Interview 7/18/2006

9. Mike Esmail
a.   Audio Interview 12/14/2008
b.   Video Interview 3/9/2009
c.   Email Interview 7/24/2006

10. Kristin Tangel
a.   Email Interview 7/25/2006
b.   Photographs

11. David Lamb
a.   Email Interview 7/26/2006

12. Anita Yadavalli
a.   Audio Interview 2/12/2008
b.   Email Interview 12/7/2006

13. Fred Lozy
a.   Email Interview 7/18/2006

14. Danielle Cohen
a.   Audio Interview 11/28/2007

15. Matt Raleigh
a.   Email Interview 7/17/2006

16. Rajni Singh
a.   Email Interview 7/15/2006

17. Mukund Thakore
a.   Audio Interview 4/8/2008

b.   Email Interview 7/22/2006

18. Lauren Carrier
a.   Email Interview 7/16/2006
b.   Documentary Film

19. Diana DeSantis
a.   Audio Interview 3/11/2008

20. Mike Kolanko

a.   Audio Interview 1/4/2009
b.   Video Interview 4/2/2009

21. Danielle Kirk
a.   Audio Interview 6/14/2008

22. Katherine Piso
a.   Audio Interview 1/30/2009

b.   Photographs

23. Lindsay D'Amato
a.   Video Tape Photo Ethnography 12/3/2006

b.   Audio Interview 6/14/2008

c.   Photographs

24. Stathis Theodoropoulos
a.   Audio Interview 12/5/2008.
b.   Video Interview 3/3/2009

25. Dan Mulcahy
a.   Audio Interview 6/30/2008

26. Donald Heilman
a.   Journal and observation notes

b.   Focus Article

c.   Independent Project Article

d.   Photographs

Photographs were purposefully selected from collections provided by Kristen Tangel, Katherine Piso, Lindsay D'Amato and Donald C. Heilman and are included in this dissertation to further increase the understanding of descriptions and narrations provided by the sample.

Thumbnail Sketches of Members of the Sample

All participants gave their express permission to use their first names. The thumbnails are drawn by the primary researcher from information provided by the participants on their email interviews, audio/video interviews, the primary researcher's journal, and the primary researcher's familiarity with many of the participants based on his role as a Student Affairs professional and classroom teacher at Rutgers-Cook College at the time of the trip to New Orleans.

1. Edward Levy: The Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief project was the brainchild of Levy, who in the fall of 2005, was beginning his 31st year at Rutgers University. A note of explanation is important here about the structure of Rutgers University in 2005-2006. Rutgers was a federated union of colleges in New Brunswick that was composed of Cook, Douglass, Rutgers and Livingston Colleges--all undergraduate colleges with various emphasis and identities based on academic focus, school philosophy, and in the case of Douglass College, gender. Levy served as the Associate Dean of Students at Cook, but was also the Director of the Cook/Douglass Department of Recreation as a result of those two school combining recreation resources and facilities in 1983. Levy, therefore, was an employee of both Cook--a college devoted to Environmental and Biological Sciences, and Douglass--the nation's then only remaining all-women's public college founded in 1918.

Levy graduated from Ohio University in 1968 and received his masters of

Physical Education at the University of Maryland in 1970 where he remained before

beginning at Cook in 1975. Levy was instrumental in creating many of Cook's most

innovative and long-enduring student affairs programs such as the Cook Student

Leadership Program and the Cook/Douglass Recreation Activity Council – two groups of

students that would provide a large percentage of the person-power and fundraising for

the trip.

Levy was a master organizer, devoted to student success, and he had a long track

record of creating programs that would incorporate students, faculty, staff and alumni. He

also had record of whole-person learning that eventually earned him the University's

Presidential Award for recognition of his development of the Rutgers-Cook College

Hurricane Katrina Relief Project.

Levy, age 60 at the time of the trip, is short, bald and has a penetrating voice that

can be easily heard over crowd noise. In New Orleans, he was a member of Black 14,

lived, slept, worked, showered and ate side-by-side with all other participants from

Rutgers--a fact that did not escape the notice of the 81 other persons who went to New

Orleans with him.

2. Vicki Wilson: Vicki Wilson grew up on the Jersey Shore, playing soccer in

high school and working on the yearbook staff. Coming to Cook however, was like

coming to Mecca, she said, because it gave her a chance to be involved in so many of the

things she wanted to try. A leader of the Residence Life Staff, Vicki was a 21-year old

Junior at the time of the trip, majoring in Communications and Media Studies. She was

on her way to obtaining a teaching degree at the University of New Hampshire in the

teaching of Environmental Science. A member of the Cook Student Leadership Program, Vicki was a writer on the school newspaper, *The Green Print*, and also served as an interns at the Rutgers University Student Legal Information Center.

Energetic, diversified, witty and well-liked, Vicki was heavily involved in intramural activities. She would serve on Black 13 in New Orleans and was very articulate about the learning experience in New Orleans, saying that in New Orleans, she "saw a person's true personality by how they dealt with the conditions."

3. Anne Nielsen: Anne was working on her doctorate in Entomology with an anticipated graduation date of 2008 at the time of the trip. Despite her heavy commitment to research, Anne was Chair of the Student Affairs Committee of the National Entomological Society of America at the time that the Katrina Relief Project was being organized. Obviously caring, and readily approachable, Anne's easy-going manner made her an immediate favorite among the undergraduate volunteers, and along with her fiancé and future husband Mike Duva, created what Ed Levy described as the perfect "Class Couple" on the trip. Twenty-seven years old at the time of the trip, Anne stated that she was motivated to go on the trip "because just sending money was not enough." She felt, she wrote, that it was a privilege to volunteer to go to New Orleans, where, like Mike Duva, she was a member of Black 14. In her email interview, she requested that I emphasize that she was the Chair of the Transportation Committee for the trip.

4. Mike Duva: Mike was the fiancé of Anne Nielsen at the time of the trip, having graduated from Penn State University in 2000 with a degree in Health Policy and Administration. Mike stated that he originally volunteered to keep Anne company, but had become "angry and annoyed at how the Federal Government had handled the entire

situation." In his interview he stated, "I wanted to make a difference." Mike was 28 years old at the time of the trip, and along with Anne, and Kaitlin Siefert, provided a group of adults just slightly "older, wiser and more accomplished" than the undergraduates. Levy noted in his interview that Anne Nielsen and Mike Duva were turning into role models for the younger students more closely related in age and experience to themselves, than were senior staffers Levy, Heilman and Bridell. Duva's steady character and willingness to extend help to others made a noticeable impact on the younger students in New Orleans. Mike was a member of Black 14.

5. Tanya Marion: Tanya was a Douglass College student at the time of the trip to New Orleans. A Psychology major, she expected to graduate in 2008 and would turn 20 years old the week after returning from New Orleans. She listed as her main campus activities Tent State University, an annual week-long occurrence that takes place on the College Avenue Campus (at the time called the Rutgers College Campus) of Rutgers University where students live in tents, make posters, play music and invite discussion in order to bring attention to wide variety of social and/or political issues.

A member of Black 14 in New Orleans, Tanya saw her motivations for going as a simple, "opportunity to volunteer and help make a difference to people who were in a great need of help." Tall, thin and fiercely devoted to the underdog, Tanya would be one of those women who amazed fellow volunteers like Ed Levy with how hard they would work at the demolition sites. Like fellow participant Dan Betz, her father was in the construction business and she reported that he had taught all of his children how to use tools. Tanya was a student in a course devoted to understanding the damage done to the

Gulf Coast by Katrina and also stated that she volunteered for a chance to see New

Orleans for herself.

6. Nakeefa (Keefa) Bernard: Known to everyone, including faculty and staff as

Keefa, she was already a recognized student leader in her sophomore year at Cook

College at the time of the trip to New Orleans. A Black woman from New Jersey, but

with roots in the Caribbean, Keefa was already on the Residence Life Staff with

participants Vicki Wilson, Lindsay D'Amato, Mookie Thakore, Mike Esmail and Rajni

Singh, and had already received extensive training and experience dealing with, and

management of, large numbers of students.

New Orleans was something very different for her. Assigned as Tool for Black

13, Keefa was often overwhelmed by what she saw and was very capable of articulating

her experience and the processes of learning that she underwent in New Orleans.

Majoring in Environmental Policy, Behavior and Institutions at the time, Keefa would go

on to graduate and receive her Masters from the Edward Bloustein School of Planning

and Public Policy of Rutgers University. Interviewed about her experience by her home

newspaper, The Jersey City Journal, Keefa would state that she felt "privileged" to go to

New Orleans and assist with hurricane relief.

7. Daniel Betz. At the time of the trip to New Orleans, Dan was about to turn 20

years old in April and was in the spring semester of his sophomore year. A tall, strong

man, Dan was involved in a wide array of activities, somehow finding the time to be both

a member of the Rutgers University Marching Band and also a member of Cook College

Academic Co-Ed Fraternity--Alpha Zeta. Dan was also active in the Cook College

intramural program overseen by Ed Levy, was the Natural Resource Management

Representative on the Cook College Council, as well as serving as a Student Orientation

Ambassador and a member of the Program Activities Council (PAC)--a club organization

devoted to planning, organizing and providing both academically oriented and

entertaining programs for Cook College. In his interview, he listed the "Sleeping Team"

as another Campus Activity, a comment on his laid-back demeanor, belied by his heavy

student involvement workload and excellent academic record.

Dan indicated that he knew "about six people on the trip" before going. When

asked why he decided to go on the trip, he answered with a question of his own: "Who

could pass up an opportunity to help those in need, especially in New Orleans?" Dan was

one of the few volunteers who could boast any previous experience with manual labor

and digging tools, having worked in the family construction business while growing up.

In New Orleans, he was a member of Black 10. When asked what he disliked the most

about the Service Trip to New Orleans, he wrote, "Leaving."

8. Kaitlin Siefert: Kaitlin was part of the Cook College staff in 2006, working as

an accountant in the Business Department for Student Affairs. A 2002 Cook College

graduate, Kaitlin was another of the recently graduated staffers, along with Mike Duva

and Anne Nielsen with whom undergraduates could more closely relate. Kaitlin had

already obtained professional certificates in Food Systems Education and Administration

and one for School Business Administrators. In New Orleans, she was assigned to Black

12.

At Cook, she was one of the Student Leadership Program staffers and brought to

New Orleans significant and invaluable Service Learning experience, with prior efforts

having been devoted to hurricane relief, and on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. Her soft

voice and gentle manner belied her willingness to get dirty at the job site and deal happily with the conditions of Camp Premier.

9. Mike Esmail: Mike was 19 years old at the time of the trip t New Orleans. In his sophomore year at college, Mike was already an established student leader at Cook and at the center of many activities. A leader on the Residence Life Staff, Mike was well respected for his intelligence, outgoing manner and easy approachability. A strong man, Mike ended up carrying the luggage of some of the smaller, less strong volunteers who, despite repeated warnings and requests to the contrary, overpacked. Mike was also a member of the Cook College Counsel and a coordinator of the Pilot Me Program, a group of volunteers from Rutgers who tutored inner-city youths from New Brunswick where Rutgers is located. Like many other students at Cook, he was active in intramurals and part of the Cook College Student Leadership Program – both programs having been founded and heavily influenced by Ed Levy. Mike, who was a member of Black 10 in New Orleans, stated that he volunteered because he wanted to "see it for himself," and that to him, it represented an "incredibly worthy cause."

10. Kristin Tangel: Kristen was an 18-year old first-year student at Cook in March 2006 and just beginning to feel her way around campus when the trip organizing commenced. Kristin was involved in meetings and trip planning from the beginning, although she admitted to being worried about flying and dealing with all the damage in New Orleans. A prospective Journalism major at the time, Kristin was in involved in a wide variety of activities on campus including *The Green Print*, the school newspaper, the Rutgers University Photography Club, and the Collegiate 4H Club. Kristin was often seen around campus with her camera, and took hundreds of photographs while in New

Orleans. A member of Black 12 in New Orleans, she stated that her motives for going were as simple as "wanting to help."

11. David Lamb: David was a student at Livingston College of Rutgers University at the time of the trip, and so was one of the few non-Cook students involved with the project. A Criminology major with a history minor, Dave was 21 at the time of the trip and anticipated graduating from Rutgers in 2007. His interests included running and weight lifting and he was active in New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG) and a local organization devoted to Habitat For Humanity. Dave was on Black 15 in New Orleans and ended up hearing about the trip through his apartment mate, a Cook College student who told him about the project. Initially concerned that he wouldn't know anyone at the first meeting, he stated, "after being there for five minutes (at the meeting) I knew that I had to go because it was going to be one of the coolest experiences ever."

12. Anita Yadavalli: An 18-year old first year student at Cook College at the time of the trip to New Orleans, petite and energetic, Anita was deciding between Pre-Med and Journalism and Media Studies when she signed up for the Student Leadership Program and joined the Katrina planning efforts by becoming a member of the Fundraising Committee. Her eclectic background included membership on the Rutgers Performing Dance Club and her service as an aerobics instructor at the Cook/Douglass Recreation Center, another program overseen by Ed Levy. Anita said that she didn't know anyone on the trip and had never done any sort of demolition work, but that she knew when she read Levy's general email to the college community that this was the trip for her. In New Orleans, Anita would serve on Black 15. Anita, like so many others, was

worried that she would "unravel" emotionally once in New Orleans, and spoke for many when she said that she was "angry" at the lack of government response to the needs of the City of New Orleans.

13. Fred Lozy: Fred was a Biochemistry major at Cook College and would turn 21 years old in April following the trip to New Orleans. Along with others, Fred was a member of the Cook College Student Leadership Program, and along with Dan Betz, was member of the Program Activity Council (PAC), a club organization devoted to planning, organizing and providing both academically oriented and entertaining programs for Cook College. Fred was active in intramurals in volleyball, bowling, roller hockey, inner-tube water polo, handball and softball, and could be seen all over campus balancing the demands of his academic and extra-curricular activities. Fred was also a member of the academic organization known as Designer Genes, an academic club involving students interested in genetic research and design.

In New Orleans, Fred was a member of Black 10 and stated that he knew about 10-20 people on the trip before going. Fred stated in his interview "he likes helping others," but also indicated that he "doesn't know all the answers." In his interview, Fred also stated that he went to help "those less fortunate" than he, and had concerns that he worked in an "upscale neighborhood" instead of a more impoverished one.

14. Danielle Cohen: Danielle was an 18-year old first-year student from Suffern, New York at Cook College when Katrina struck. She decided right away to be involved in Cook Student Leadership, Lifeguarding and Recreation Activities Council (RAC), and so, through the heavy influence of Levy, got involved in the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project. A Nutritional Science Major, she was also involved on campus with Relay for

Life, a nationwide cancer research fundraiser. She came to Cook from a high school career that included varsity swim team, cheerleader and dance lessons six nights a week. Danielle says that as soon as the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project was mentioned at the first RAC meeting by Levy, she decided that she was going. For any fears she may have had about going to New Orleans, Danielle stated that the potential for rewards far outweighed the fears. Danielle considers herself an overachiever.

15. **Matt Raleigh:** Matt was a 19-year old Animal Science major at Cook College at the time of the trip to New Orleans. He was active in the Society of Animal Science where he was the Treasurer, and was a New Student Orientation Ambassador. Matt was also in the Pre-Vet Club and active in Recreation, listing intramurals and the Frisbee Tournament as his main activities. Matt attended every pre-trip meeting and said he was prepared for the hard work. In New Orleans, Matt was assigned to Black 10. Raleigh admitted that he was expecting to see worse conditions when he got to New Orleans, but once on the ground and doing the work and seeing the people of New Orleans, Matt would change his opinion about the work that needed to be done.

16. **Rajni Singh:** Rajni was a 20-year old Junior at Cook at the time of the trip. Extremely energetic, Rajni was at the center of campus life, and would be so in New Orleans. Like many, she identified strongly with her work team, writing the words "Hoo-Rah" next to her team, Black 10, on her email interview. Rajni became a Resident Assistant with Residence Life; was on the Relay for Life Planning Committee--an event dedicated to fund raising for the American Cancer Society; was a Student Orientation Ambassador; and was a member of the Society of Animal Science.

With a major in Animal Science and minor in Biochemistry, Rajni had a sister at the Louisiana State University Medical School at the time of Hurricane Katrina and volunteered to go because she thought it was so much "more significant than sending money." Rajni stated that she knew 30-40% of the people who went on the trip beforehand. Rajni would say later that she learned that every person can make a difference and that being part of a team was inspirational.

17. Mukund "Mookie" Thakore: A commuter to Cook from nearby East Brunswick, Mookie did not allow the barriers that commuters often experience stand in the way of his desire to be involved on campus. Mookie was the secretary of the Bio-Tech Club and would go on to earn a place on the Residence Life Staff as a student Resident Assistant. A 20-year old Junior in 2006, Mookie was an Animal Biotechnology major and listed Biochemistry and Religion as his minors. A member of Black 10 in New Orleans, Mookie said that he went because he saw the trip as a "once in a lifetime experience." Mookie's eclectic interests, easygoing manner, evident intelligence and willingness to do almost anything for Cook made him one of the obvious student leaders, both on campus and in New Orleans.

18. Lauren Carrier: Lauren was a 22-year old senior at Douglass College of Rutgers University at the time of the Katrina relief effort majoring in Visual Arts. Lauren would go on to film and produce a documentary film of this trip for which she received credit. In the film is stunning footage of the widespread damage and interviews with victims of the storm. She was a member of the Recreation Activities Council (RAC), another organization created and supervised by Ed Levy that provided leadership opportunities for students through the Cook/ Douglass Recreation Program. RAC would

send about 15-16 students to various fully-funded graduate programs every year, a not insignificant sum for a small school like Cook. Lauren, who would go on to be the beneficiary of one such program and obtain her Master's in Education at Townsend State University, was a member of Black 11 in New Orleans.

At the time that she volunteered for the trip, Lauren said that she didn't think anyone she knew would be going, only to realize that she knew about 20 people on the final roster. Lauren stated that after the trip, "she looked at life in a different way." In her email survey she wrote: "I honestly think I pray a little more than I used to after my experience... and not for certain objects but for my friends, family and myself to all be safe, happy and healthy."

19. Diana DeSantis: Diana was a 20 year-old sophomore at the time of the trip and an officer in the Recreation Activity Council (RAC). Coming from Bellville High School where she was class president, captain of the cheerleading team, editor of the yearbook, Homecoming Queen, and member of the community service Key Club, she admittedly had a rough transition her freshman year. By the time of the New Orleans trip though, Diana had begun to hit her stride and found herself at the center of campus life having joined RAC, Student Leadership and the planning committee for Relay For Life. New Orleans would represent, however, her first plane ride and first trip away from the New Jersey area.

She said she volunteered because she wanted to help and to show everyone she was not, in her own words, "just this prissy cheerleader." Diana majored in Journalism and Media Studies and minored in Environmental Policies, Institutes and Behaviors. Her

biggest fear about going to New Orleans, she said, was the plane ride. In New Orleans she was a member of Black 11.

20. Mike Kolanko: Mike was another freshman who decided to get involved right away at Cook College, and found himself involved in the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project almost from the outset. Mike is a large man, dubbed "Big Mike" by Levy, and became a Natural Resource Management major at the end of his freshman year after changing his mind about going to the Graduate School of Education. An Eagle Scout, Mike grew up in Livingston, New Jersey. He said that he was drawn to Cook College because of its intimate size, yet it was a part of the larger Rutgers University system with, in his own words, people from all over the world.

In New Orleans, Mike would be in Black 15, the same work team as Lindsay D'Amato and Danielle Kirk and would be one of the many males who noticed and commented on the ability of his female colleagues and team members to do the heavy work. His motivations for going to New Orleans included "just wanting to help out," and as he explained, he wanted to "see what [he] was capable of."

21. Danielle Kirk: Danielle came to the Hurricane Katrina Project with a long history of volunteerism. A Cook College Student, she was involved with Cook Student Leadership and volunteered her time at nearby Robert Wood Johnson Hospital. Danielle was also an established student leader at the time, working as a student manager at Cook College's Nielsen Dining Hall, overseeing a staff of 50 student workers and 12 other student managers. While at Rutgers, she participated in Dance Marathon, a three-day dance-a-thon devoted to raising money for children with cancer, and also served as a New Student Orientation Ambassador. She says that volunteerism is just who she is.

Danielle served on the Fundraising Committee for the Hurricane Katrina Project and went so far as to take the Behind the Wheels Driving Course offered through Rutgers so that she would be able to drive a van full of Rutgers personnel in New Orleans if transportation arrangements resulted in the group having to rent their own vans to get around New Orleans. In New Orleans she was assigned to Black 15.

22. Katherine (Kat) Piso: Kat was a member of Levy's Recreation Activity Council (RAC) at the time of the trip to New Orleans and was also a part of the Student Leadership Program. Like so many who went on the trip, Piso had a long record of volunteerism and campus involvement. RAC would run a dozen programs a year, and Kat had served on just about every committee. A natural leader, she was about to graduate and go on to a Master's degree in genetic research at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey at the time of the trip to New Orleans.

Naturally upbeat and energetic, Kat, like Diana DeSantis, laughed, smiled, and cried openly during her interview, such was the emotional impact of the experience. She says that she feels everything intensely, and she brought that emotional commitment to the work in New Orleans, where she was a member of Black 11. One of her many stated fears about going to New Orleans included her fear that she would not be able to do the work, describing herself as "someone with terrible natural coordination."

23. Lindsay D'Amato: A sophomore at the time of the trip, Lindsay was already a highly valued member of the Residence Life Staff at Cook. Active in intramurals, Lindsay was also in the Cook Student Leadership Program. Lindsay was also a primary source of photography for this study. Enthusiastic and committed, Lindsay actively

sought leadership opportunities at Cook College. She also always maintained an upbeat attitude and concern for others that was evident on the trip to New Orleans.

In New Orleans, Lindsay, an inveterate organizer, was one of those members of the Rutgers contingent that reached out to students from other colleges and universities, asking them to join in on card and board games in the large mess tent. Her motives for going, she said, were her sense of adventure and a chance to help others. Lindsay was a member of Black 15.

24. Stathis (Stat) Theodoropoulos: Stat was another Levy protégé, involving himself in all things to do with Cook/Douglas Recreation. In March of 2006 he was a 20-year old sophomore majoring in Environmental Business Economics. Also a member of the Cook Student Leadership Program, Stathis credits Levy with getting him involved in the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project right away. Stat said that he knew that there would be large physical demands of him in New Orleans. Stat's main fear, he said, was his phobia of snakes, something that experienced workers had said was prevalent in the flooded sections of New Orleans and that needed to be taken into account before reaching under any furniture or debris to in order to remove it from the buildings.

After going to New Orleans, Stathis said that he devoted himself to reading books about the city and the storm to learn more about what he had seen, and viewed at least four documentary films on New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina. The trip to him was, first and foremost he said, about helping others. He was a member of Black 11 along with other active members of the Recreation Activities Council.

25: Dan Mulcahy: Dan was a first year student at Cook at the time of Hurricane Katrina. He was a successful track and cross country runner at nearby East Brunswick

High School, and had great expectations of involvement when he decided to attend Cook College. He was one of the many Hurricane Katrina volunteers who credited Ed levy with getting him involved right away. Mulcahy would serve on the Transportation Committee with Anne Nielsen and played a large role in trip organization. At the last possible instance, he was prevented from going on the trip by his mother, a registered nurse, who was alarmed at the reports just then coming out of New York City concerning health issues suffered by 9/11 workers as the result of their exposure to toxic substances, and reports of similar toxic substances found in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Research Data Collection Methods

A repository of accumulated data was collected over the three-year period post-Service Learning experience. Some was used for earlier projects, such as the article to appear in the Rutgers Focus, or Qualitative I & II research papers written by the primary researcher, class papers written by students who went on the trip, or PowerPoint presentations given by students and the primary researcher. These are described in greater detail below. The various forms of data were eventually organized by type and then combed, or mined, for the best and richest examples for this study.

Recorded Interviews: The interviews were conducted using a semi-formal method, also called the interview guide method, using a prepared and approved protocol. Grounded Theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; and Glaser, 1978) was used, however, to the extent that interviews were conducted in such a fashion as to allow the stories to emerge. Interviews lasted between 35 and 50 minutes. The interviews were recorded by digital sound and/or digital camera. Filming preserved the outward emotional responses and reactions to the process exhibited by each individual. It was

used to confirm coding for emotional response and sensory description. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the interviewees for verification.

Interviewees were given a definition of Transformative Learning based on that of Mezirow and Associates (2000) at the outset of each interview as follows:

> Transformative Learning is a way of learning that requires you to critically reflect on your assumptions, perceptions, and your belief systems and to speak to an event or events that have changed those perceptions or assumptions or belief systems as a result of some experience. Then to describe how those changes are looked at (X) years later, or how you think that they've affected what you're plans of action are, or what actions you have taken, as a result**.**

Major interview questions asked: As a result of this trip to New Orleans:

1. What personal beliefs, perceptions, or assumptions changed?

2. What caused these beliefs, perception or assumptions to change?

3. What were your beliefs, perceptions and assumptions before they changed?

4. When did these beliefs, perceptions and assumptions change?

5. Describe the effects of the change; what has continued to matter today?

In response to calls by Kiely (2005), Nagata (2006) and Merriam& Ntseane (2008) specific attention was given to learn what descriptors were used that related to emotion and sensation regarding each phase. Transformative Learning is often accompanied by an emotional response and an effort was made to learn what generated these emotions and how they were described.

Email Interviews: An email interview (Appendix C) was generated within three months of the return of participants and distributed via email with the Permission of Cook College Dean of Students Lee Schneider (Appendix G).

Journals: Another source of data was the journals or diaries kept by participants on the trip. According to Morse and Field (1995) this is an appropriate source of data since it can provide additional insight to intimate details. It is often used by historians and biographers. In this case, however, it was also used to better understand the context of individual experience and to serve as an additional source of critical reflection.

Photographs: A set of photographs were used to aid in descriptions and stimulate memory recall. Participants, in some cases, were handed a pre-collected set of photographs chosen for their widespread representation of the experience (Appendix E). This method proved effective in stimulating recall of specific events; not only the when, where and with whom these moments occurred, but the deeper emotional insights that place the moment into context for the participants when these events occurred. This method is also appropriate to case study method according to Morse and Field (1995). It also forms the core basis of research methodology for Pink (2001) in compiling visual ethnographies. Importantly for this study, Pink says that (a) photography can be used in many ways to serve the aims of the research; (b) that they are appropriate for what she calls "reflexive research;" (c) that they can generate appropriate descriptions--be impressionistic; and (d) are appropriate for multidisciplinary studies. In this instance, a 15 photograph "album" was created, using only images, no words or symbols to depict some of the major themes and activities of the trip. Participants were asked to look at the album before the interview began and could refer to it during the interview if they so desired.

A visual ethnography recorded by audio was conducted of Lindsay D'Amato on June 14th, 2008 and provided data for this research.

Furthermore, photographs are used throughout this dissertation in support of, and to further assist, the descriptions or and explanations of the events, experiences and people that make up this case study. They were chosen by the same criteria as the written and audio descriptions – that is, as best examples of their kind for relevancy to the project and their ability to further enhance and clarify the case study.

Audio Interviews: The three audio interviews of Edward Levy were also used. These were somewhat different from those interviews provided by the other participants in that Levy was able to provide more specific details about his original concept of the trip, its planning, organizing and direction were accomplished, and how he viewed the result of his efforts. In addition, Levy's interviews provided his reflections and memories of the experience, offering a variation for comparison to that of the mostly younger contingent. Levy was 54 years old at the time and had been working at Cook College since 1975.

Also utilized was my own journal with notes, my own photographs, and previously written articles concerning the experience. These were used as reference material for context, setting, and verification. Like Kiely, I was a participant in my own study, but unlike Kiely, I had no pre-planned intention to be so. As a consequence, I viewed my journal and the articles and papers that I wrote as another source of information to be mined for data, but not as a source of the richest text or best examples of the Transformative Learning process and the elements of the learning environment that produced it. I was not interviewed nor did I provide an email interview.

Research Data Analysis Methods

Data was initially organized into categories of elements of the experiential

learning environment specific to this trip. Initially, it was thought that these categories

would need to be analyzed using Kiely's processing model, or be applied directly to one

or more of Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning. It soon became apparent,

however, that elements of the experiential learning environment stand alone, that is, they

are not so much a part of the process whereby someone is transformed, but rather they are

the elements of the learning environment which generate, stimulate, create or facilitate

the Transformative Learning process--what Taylor (2000) refers to as "triggering." To try

to shove the elements studied into pre-determined phases or themes of transformation

would miss the point and not respond to Kiely (2005), Eyler (2002), Furco & Billig

(2002), and Taylor's (2004) call for more study as to what elements of the experiential

learning environment "trigger" Transformative Learning in the first place.

The interviews were first read and reviewed with an eye toward their overall

descriptive value. They were initially assigned a primary code based on their relevance

and descriptive value as it pertained to an element of the experiential learning

environment. In many instances, a particular quote or passage would be assigned more

than one element code since it clearly described more than one element. This process

allowed the various elements to emerge while beginning the process of organizing the

data. Generally, the questions being asked tended to stimulate or generate observations

and reflections of specific elements, making it easier to identify the elements or elements

being discussed. A question about a participant's recollections of the conditions of Camp

Premier, for example, would naturally stimulate or generate a description of those

conditions and their reflections concerning those conditions, such as a participant's way

of dealing with the novelty, stress, excitement, or aggravation of dealing with those conditions. As descriptions were read and analyzed, general categories of elements emerged and coding took better shape. Five of these elements of the experiential learning environment were selected for this study and described below.

The result of this initial method of organizing data exposed a process whereby participants were personally describing and synthesizing what was generating, facilitating of stimulating their Transformative Learning experiences, often in real time, as well as the result of post-trip critical reflection. The trip planners never envisioned traditional Transformative Learning exercises like debriefing and critical reflection, and then making determinations about reflective and non-reflective processes. Nonetheless, participants narrated real-time adjustments to what Mezirow (2000) calls meaning perspectives or habits of mind, or what Cranton calls frames of reference (Cranton 2006, pp. 22-23) which can lead to changes in understanding and belief systems. These changes happened sometimes coincident to the experience, sometimes during naturally occurring breakdown sessions with other participants, and sometimes during post-trip reflection and analysis. Exposed by this methodology were distinct elements of the experiential learning environment that participants described as important, significant, or instrumental to their Transformative Learning experience. Selected here for purposes of study were five elements, which were derived from experiences common to many participants. These five elements of the learning environment and their initial codes are: Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD); Personalizing The Loss (PTL); Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA); Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD); and, Experiencing Others (EO).

Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD) was the code assigned to those observation and reflections that participants used to describe their experience with both the large scale and small scale destruction to New Orleans that resulted from Hurricane Katrina. Large-scale observations dealt with region-wide, citywide and neighborhood-wide destruction to the Gulf Coast, City of New Orleans and large neighborhoods that the participants observed. These included rows of homes, levees, docks, shopping malls, schools, factories, streets, highways, cars, trucks, playgrounds, parks and cemeteries. Small scale observations included the destruction of individual homes, backyard pools, cars and personal belongings.

Personalizing The Loss (PTL) was the code assigned to those observations and reflections regarding the tendency of participants to place their observations of loss and destruction, both large and small scale, into a personal frame of reference and prior experience. This included comparisons to their own home, town and state; comparisons to their own belongings; comparisons to their own family; and comparisons to what they had previously seen on television or read about in various print media forms.

Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA) was the code assigned to observations and reflections regarding the anxiety, worry, concerns and fears that participants recalled that they experienced prior to the trip. It included concerns about travel, health, dangerous conditions, unknown living and sleeping arrangements, social confidence and their respective abilities to deal with the unknown.

Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD) was the code assigned to those observations and reflections regarding the living and working conditions found in New Orleans and included living, sleeping, hygiene and eating conditions experienced at

Camp Premier, as well as conditions found in the neighborhoods and individual homes where participants worked.

Experiencing Others (EO) was the code assigned to those observations and reflections regarding the way participants recalled their encounters with other students and staff from Rutgers University, other persons they met at Camp Premier and residents of the City of New Orleans, and how these encounters made them think differently about themselves and the "Others" that they met.

Significantly, a consequence of the initial open coding led to recognition of three specific ways, or methods, in which elements of this specific learning environment generated or facilitated the process of synthesis. Labeling these as "Methods of Description and Synthesis," so as not to be confused with Kiely's "Processing Themes," these are:

1. Personalizing the Experience (MDS-p): This method of description and synthesis caused participants to do things like place themselves in the shoes of the victims; imagining similar destruction to the own homes and towns, relating smaller-scale natural disasters to which they were exposed, and recognizing similarities between their own homes, families and towns to that of the victims and the City of New Orleans. This method of description and synthesis often combines aspects of processing that was found in all five of Kiely's Themes – primarily Connecting and Personalizing.

2. Sensing the Experience (MDS-s): Sensing the Experience: This method of description and synthesis caused participants to recall and

reflect on elements of the learning environment in terms of sensory input with all five basic senses being used to describe the experience – sight, sound smell, touch and even taste. Kiely's model often fits this method of description and synthesis within his Personalizing Theme, although it is used in all five Themes.

3. Emotionalizing the Experience (MDS-e): Emotionalizing the Experience: This method of description and synthesis was often used by participants to recall or reflect on elements of the learning environment in terms of emotion, something the literature regarding Transformative Learning says is: (a) an important aspect of the experience, and (b) not yet well understood why Transformative Learning can generate such emotions, or what specifically generates these emotions. Kiely fits this method of description and synthesis primarily within his Personalizing Theme.

It was concluded that Methods of Description and Synthesis was significant not only for its distinction from Kiely's processing theme, but also had some future value as researchers attempt to understand how these elements were experienced, how they may have worked in combination, and how the Methods of Description and Synthesis-- whether individually or in combination--may play a role in the intensity and duration of impacts, something called for by Kiely and Taylor. Methods of Description and Synthesis specifically addresses the call to understand what elements of the learning environment generate, stimulate, create and facilitate Transformative Learning. This may include a continuous part in the subsequent process of learning, which is better addressed by

Keily's processing model, which in turn, attempts to understand how people experience the various steps of Transformative Learning.

Specific elements of the learning environment on many occasions were described and synthesized by not just one, but two or all three descriptive methods. How these Methods of Description and Synthesis worked in combination was explored and described here, using Kiely's Model to help demonstrate the Transformative Learning relevance of the description. It was also recognized that these elements and their Methods of Description and Synthesis often worked in combination to produce impact. This description of learning environment and learning impact were left intact. Separating the causes from the effect was considered counter-productive for the purposes of this study. If a participant reported that an element or combination of elements, described or synthesized through either an individual or a variety of methods to produce some result or results, it was so reported here. While attempting to begin to simplify a study and analysis methodology of environmental elements and their respective Methods of Description and Synthesis, a certain level of complexity, interrelatedness and, perhaps, irreducible "messiness" stands out.

What this methodology allowed for was comparison within the group, demonstrating both similarities and differences in the way that specific elements of the learning environment resulted in individual processes, reflections and outcomes. The richest or best example proved to be especially facile and was not in any way limited to one example for each element. Rather, best example allowed the study to better portray the complicated nature of the relationship between the learning environment, the individual experienced derived, and the resultant process of synthesis and descriptions of

impact--also called here "lessons learned"--on an individual basis. Variations shed light on a wide range of variables including age, previous experience, and previously formed habits of mind, ways of thinking, assumptions, presumptions and perceptions that each individual brought into the experience.

This methodology allowed for common themes and differences to emerge, but also allowed for each individual description of their respective Transformative Learning experience, how it unfolded for them, what they perceived caused it to unfold, and how they tried to make sense of it at the time of the experience, and/or then at the time of each interview.

Following the advice of Harry Wolcott (1994), the study combined two suggested ways to organize and interpret the data by: (a) staying close to the data as originally recorded and allow the informants to tell the story, and then (b) go directly to interpretation, focusing on such areas of storytelling as characterization, plot, and groups in interaction. This was appropriate because of the storytelling nature of the interviews, something that Wolcott says is specifically appropriate for this approach. In addition, a large part of the experience was conducted in groups – often groups within the larger group. For example each member was a part of the overall Rutgers – Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program; each was assigned to a tent for sleeping; each was assigned to a group for working; and Rutgers was one of about a dozen organizations to send students all living at Camp Premier at the same time.

What this means in application to the present study is that the interviews needed to be organized by (a) reviewing and then cutting out descriptors of elements of the experiential learning environment and placing them in a box with like elements, and then

(b) determining the Methods of Description and Synthesis listed above. This produced a

collection of individually recalled experiences or reflections in context with what was

being recalled at the time of the interview; this offered a rich text or best example of the

specific element of the learning environment being described, and by what synthesizing

methods the individual used to describe how that particular element generated,

stimulated, created, or facilitated his or her own Transformative Learning experience.

According to Robert Stake (1995), analysis and direct interpretation from a single

instance is one way of looking at phenomena. This was appropriate, even when using a

comparison method of analysis since the unit of analysis will remain the individual's--

that is data that will be compared with those descriptions by other individuals describing

the same element of the learning environment under discussion.

What emerged was a series of individual descriptions of (a) one of five specific

elements of the learning environment encountered on this trip; (b) the method(s) by

which participants described and synthesized the element experientially, and (c) some

explanation by the participants of why an element was important to them, what lessons

were learned, or how it generated, stimulated, created (triggered) or facilitated a

Transformative Learning experience.

Table 2. Data Organization

Element	MDS	Kiely	Mezirow	Impact/Lessons Learned
Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD)	1. MDS-s 2. MDS-e 3. MDS-p	1. Contextual Border Crossing 2. Dissonance 3. Personalizing 4. Processing 5. Connecting	1. Disorienting dilemma. 2. Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame. 3. Critical	1. You have to go there and experience it. 2. You can't always trust what you see on TV.

			assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. 4. Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of shared transformation. 5. Reintegrating newfound perspective	3. The government's response was disappointing, non-existent, and not trustworthy. 4. Commitment to a greater good.
Personalizing The Loss (PTL)	1. MDS-e 2. MDS-p	1. Dissonance 2. Personalizing 3. Connecting	1. Disorienting dilemma. 2. Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame. 3. Critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. 4. Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of shared transformation. 5. Reintegrating newfound perspective	1. How little I need to make me happy. 2. I am now less critical, more forgiving, more compassionate, and want to help others.
Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA)	1. MDS-s 2. MDS-e 3. MDS-p	1. Contextual Border Crossing 2. Dissonance 3. Personalizing 4. Processing 5. Connecting	1. Disorienting dilemma. 2. Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame. 3. Critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. 4. Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of shared transformation. 5. Reintegrating	1. I made friends for life. 2. Preparation is important. Preparation reduces, eliminates anxiety. 3. If I believe in the cause, I will overcome my fears. 4. Travel is great. Hard work is fun. Reduced living conditions are not a problem.

			newfound perspective	5. I have a new-found relationship with my parents. I am more independent. 6. Gratification and satisfaction can justify personal sacrifice
Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD)	MDS-s MDS-e MDS-p	1. Contextual Border Crossing 2. Dissonance 3. Personalizing 4. Processing 5. Connecting	1. Disorienting dilemma. 2. Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame. 3. Critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions. 4. Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of shared transformation. 5. Reintegrating newfound perspective	1. How little I really need to be happy. 2. Don't sweat the details. 3. I want to help others and I am willing to make personal sacrifices. 4. Hard work can be fun.
Experiencing Others (EO)	MDS-s MDS-e MDS-p	1. Contextual Border Crossing 2. Dissonance 3. Personalizing 4. Processing 5. Connecting	1. Disorienting dilemma. 2. Self-examination with feeling of guilt or shame. 3. Recognition of one's discontent and the shared process of shared transformation. 4. Exploration of Options for New Roles, Relationships and Actions 5. Trying New Roles 6. Reintegrating newfound perspective	1. I thought differently about my friends afterward 2. I thought differently about women afterward. 3. I thought differently about other people afterward. 4. I thought differently about myself afterward.

RELIABILITY

The audio and video interviews conducted have been recorded. All interviewees had an opportunity to read the transcript of their interview for corrections and/or deletions and then signed an additional permission form. The journals, articles and papers written by the participants are their own work product. The documentary film produced by Lauren Carrier is her own work product. The photographs produced are the work product of the individual participants. Permission to use them has been obtained. The email interviews were returned via the participants own email address and their permission granted electronically. The primary researcher's journal notes are his own work product. The magazine article written and produced by the primary researcher is his own work product.

Quotations were typically corrected for spelling and minor grammatical errors. Anything in parenthesis was placed there by the interviewee. Brackets were used by the primary researcher to aid in understanding or placing the quote into context.

IRB approval was for all data proposed to be used in this study. IRB # E07-034.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The trip produced a myriad of reactions, emotions, reflections and learning as the result of a complicated mixture of factors including age, gender, expectations, prior experience, temperament, outlook and beliefs, and how these combined with the experience of each individual within the specific context of this trip and its effect on each individual. This study resulted in the identification of five specific elements of the experiential learning environment and three specific processes, called here Methods of Description and Synthesis (MDS) that combined to stimulate, generate, create (trigger), or facilitate Transformative Learning. These elements of the learning environment are Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD), Personalizing The Loss (PTL), Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA), Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD), and Experiencing Others (EO). They will be discussed and analyzed individually, and also in combination where those combinations seemed relevant and important.

Element One: Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD)

Hurricane Katrina left a massive trail of destruction in its wake, hammering the Gulf coast in a 250-mile swath that included the City of New Orleans. Destroyed homes,

neighborhoods and large sections of New Orleans were visible everywhere. Every

individual who was interviewed could recall his or her reaction to the widespread

devastation and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. Recollections included walking

into an abandoned home or neighborhood for the first time, or walking two miles each

way one evening through deserted neighborhoods to find an open tavern for some food,

drink and company. Others, like Tanya Marion and Rajni Singh noticed the hundreds of

miles of destruction in all directions from the air as the plane circled the airport. Most

others, however, recalled the impact of seeing the destruction close up on their ride from

the airport to the tent city location called Camp Premier where the group stayed while in

New Orleans, or when they first entered a destroyed home to begin their demolition

efforts.

Scenario 1

As the bus rolls out of the New Orleans Airport, taking the second group of 41

students and staff from Rutgers University, it heads to their home for the next eight days,

Camp Premier, located in Chalmette in St. Bernard's Parish, one of the most damaged

sections of New Orleans. Participants see what more than one person called "something

they had never imagined possible." This assault on their senses occurred even though

they had seen images of New Orleans for the previous six months on television, on the

Internet, and at group meetings held in preparation of this trip. The second plane landed

mid-afternoon and the participants were driven to Camp Premier in the late afternoon and

under a darkening sky.

At the outset of the trip to Camp Premier, the second bus is rowdy. The students are excited. For some, they had just experienced their first plane ride. For many, this represents their first trip away from the New Jersey-New York area, and the first time that they were so far away from home with their friends, and not with their parents. At the time, most riders are busy texting friends back home, taking photos, or introducing themselves to others on the trip. This is the first day of a big adventure and they are excited. They are paying attention to nothing that is going on outside. They have given up their spring break to volunteer in New Orleans. They have attended preparation meetings to describe what can be expected and to discuss the possible strong reaction they might experience when they actually see the effects of the storm. They had been taught how to use shovels, crow bars, masks, goggles and hard hats. They have all purchased puncture-resistant, steel-tipped boots as required by Habitat for Humanity.

And then everyone becomes absolutely quiet.

The bus is on a stretch of elevated highway passing through the Ninth Ward, a section of New Orleans populated almost entirely by poor Blacks and the focus of media attention amidst allegations that the White ruling class of New Orleans intentionally permitted destruction, and dragged its feet in both evacuation efforts and relief efforts. Accusers saw this as a move by those in power designed to rid themselves of what was considered to be a blighted neighborhood, and a non-productive population. As far as the eye can see, every house has been destroyed. Cars are piled one on top of the other under bridges and overpasses, leaking oil and gas since the day they were towed there after the flood. No other moving vehicle is in sight. No one is moving outside and no street lights,

no house lights, no store lights, or no car lights are visible. There is nothing visible but

destruction, desolation and abandonment. (See Photographs 1-3, Appendix F).

Discussion

Participants interviewed point to this moment, what Jack Mezirow (1978, 2000)

and his adherents of Transformative Learning call a disorienting dilemma, and what

Kiely says gets processed as Dissonance. Participants realized they were in the midst of

a totally new experience. This was a disorienting-inducive experience that Walton

(2010) says is valuable to adult learning. Nothing, many agreed, had prepared them for

this, this assault on their senses. Wrote Mike Duva in his email interview:

> My reaction to the devastation once we arrived was just pure shock.
> I had seen all the news coverage on television but for some reason it
> really didn't do it any justice. I will never forget the bus ride from
> the airport to Camp Frontier [sic] when we first arrived. It was just
> mind-blowing the severity and amount of destruction that had
> occurred. It was almost too much to comprehend. It was just one
> desecrated neighborhood after another, and it went on for miles and
> miles. It was surreal.

Ed Levy, speaking in his interview three years after taking the group to New

Orleans was very clear about this moment in time, its significance and its impact:

> Now we're in New Orleans and getting on a bus to head to Camp
> Premier. But we couldn't visualize where we were going. When we
> get on bus… then things became very real. After about 15 minutes,
> the driver said we're approaching a bridge in the Ninth Ward. You
> could not understand what you are looking at until you get on that
> bridge.
>
> When the Ninth Ward hit our vision… Not a sound on the bus. It
> was the first of many in your face moments. [Until then] I was not
> even close to understanding the devastation that was going on here.

Stathis Theodoropoulos recalled this scene just as vividly three years later in a

recorded interview as a defining moment. To him, there was no sign of life. Not a bird

flew in the sky. Not a dog barked. No one could be seen moving about any of the homes

or neighborhoods. To him, even the smell of New Orleans, a combination of rotting,

decomposing material mixed with toxic run-off like pesticides and petroleum products,

made him grimace after all that time as he recalled the effect of that odor:

> From the moment you landed, it just felt like a different country, something not of the U.S. It was just very, very quiet. There was a different smell to the area. I don't know if that was how it normally is… from the moment we got to the airport to the moment we got back to Newark, it was just like a war-torn country. It was nothing I had ever seen in my life before. Everywhere you looked, 360 degrees, something was destroyed--not damaged--completely destroyed.

Of the initial impression, Kaitlin Seifert said, "The sights, the smells, the

devastation was beyond

words."

Nakeefa Bernard also remembered that moment, when everyone went quiet on her

bus as it drove through the Ninth Ward:

> We did that at the beginning, [rode] through the Ninth Ward. That was… when I saw the house in the middle [of the street], and I saw cars lodged into the house, and things I had never fathomed in my head before… it brought to life everything I had ever imagined and it multiplied it by 10, by 20, by 100. I could never have imagined it the way I saw it… I imagined seeing some broken doors and cars that were destroyed and stuff like that, but seeing houses completely moved from their foundations and placed in the middle of the street, that was big, mind-boggling. It's not something you ever thought was physically possible. Someone's home, someone's life, someone's love was there and then it was moved physically, and I couldn't really comprehend that until I saw it.

Kat Piso recalled the markings on the doors of abandoned buildings as the bus

passed slowly by. Those markings, put there by relief officials, indicated that the building

had been searched. Some of the markings indicated that dead bodies or pets had been

found inside; that gas and power had been shut off; and the date of the search. Now, six

months later, officials were still searching homes in New Orleans for the first time. That

day, while driving to Camp Premier, students learn from the bus driver that the body of

an infant had been recovered in the Ninth Ward the day before. As the staggering

magnitude of the destruction began to take hold, the participants would talk, sometimes

three years later, about how they knew then and there, that they were going to do

something important. Their role, all agreed, no matter how small, was going to be

important to them. "People here lost everything," said the bus driver. There was little

need to say more. Participants rode in silence staring out of the bus windows. Some wept.

Kat Piso remembered her reaction to seeing the markings on thousands of doors

of homes that had been searched for survivors and bodies. (See Photograph 4, Appendix

F).

> We knew from the markings, we were told about the markings on
> the doors then [at a pre-trip meeting] and so we knew that there was
> nobody that was dead that was found in the house and there was no
> dead animals,… we were all concerned about finding a dead pet,
> because we were all very animal loving kind of people. We were
> worried about finding a cat or a dog or something like that. So we
> knew that there was no dead people in the house, we knew that there
> was no dead animals.

Rajni Singh remembered the day, emotionalizing her reflection with terms of

sadness and shock:

> That bus ride from the airport to the camp was certainly
> unforgettable, and I still have a very clear recollection of the images.
> The rain and gloom of the day certainly contributed to the general
> mood of sadness and loss. I was shocked at the severity of the
> damage. Also, the suburbs we passed were completely deserted. I
> couldn't imagine being a resident of New Orleans, and falling victim
> to such an unpredictable natural disaster.

Participants added many fine details to their reaction of WMD. David Lamb

noticing details like the non-functioning traffic lights and piles of abandoned vehicles

(See Photographs 5 & 6, Appendix F):

> One of the first things I remember seeing after leaving the airport
> and being on the bus going to the camp was being passed by a
> couple of flatbed trucks carrying wrecked cars. They were the first
> vehicles other than us that I saw on the road and I remember
> thinking, "They're hauling away cars destroyed in a storm that took
> place half a year ago - still at 3, 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon,
> this has to still be really bad."

When asked what surprised him the most, Lamb responded: "….the vastness of

the devastation and slowness of recovery. I was surprised to see that traffic lights were

not working when we were there."

What these participants were experiencing, describing and synthesizing was an

element of the learning environment, in many ways unique in modern America to New

Orleans after Hurricane Katrina--that is witnessing destruction on a massive scale. While

this element was experienced repeatedly over the next week by all participants of the trip

in a wide variety of settings and under a range of circumstances, it was described and

synthesized by various methods, leading some to express the experience of witnessing

mass destruction in terms of sensory input, as did Stathis Theodoropoulos, " …it felt like

a different county," or "it even had a different smell."

Others emotionalized the experience, like Rajni Singh, who recalled, "Along with

shock, I also a felt deep sympathy, knowing that so many people lost so much, including

the lives of their loved ones."

Others personalized the experience, like Tanya Marion, who said, "I had been to

New Orleans previously for a family vacation. It was nice to see that the French Quarter

and Bourbon Street were still intact, but the devastation was so disheartening. I was glad to have seen New Orleans before Katrina because I'm not sure that it will ever be the same."

Many expressed WMD as a combination of all three Methods of Description and Synthesis, as did Nakeefa Bernard by (a) personalizing the experience--"I could never have imagined," (b) sensing the experience--"I saw cars lodged into houses. Something I could never have fathomed before," and (c) emotionalizing the experience--"Someone's home, someone life, someone's love was there…"

The unexpectedness of WMD also had an important impact:

"I didn't think it was going to be that bad," said Mukund Thakore, expressing an aspect of WMD that was often repeated in the interviews.

"I was horrified at everything I saw," reported Mike Esmail**.** "It was like a third world country (a reaction often expressed by others). "I knew it was bad, but I had no way of knowing how widespread the devastation was in the area. I still can't imagine how entire neighborhoods can be completely wiped of life that it once housed. I had no idea how much damage was actually done by the hurricane."

Anne Nielsen said that she was somewhat prepared for the scope of destruction in the Ninth Ward, but was unprepared for seeing so much devastation elsewhere. She remembered, **"**Most of the coverage had been about the lower Ninth Ward so I had no idea about the level of devastation in St. Bernard's. I had expected more wind damage though. Most of it looked like a ghost town. It was eerie."

This exposure to destruction on such a massive scale and the sudden confrontation of the reality of that destruction on preconceived perceptions of the scope of destruction

triggered two consistent lessons learned, or impacts, according to participants. One could

be summed up as, "you had to see it to believe it," or "you had to be there to believe it,"

while the other could be summed up as a healthy skepticism of press coverage, or at the

very least, a recognition of the shortcomings of modern media coverage.

"The devastation was much more extensive than indicated and it was shocking to

see that practically nothing had been done in the six month since Katrina hit," recalled

Anne Nielson. This too, represented an oft-expressed sentiment regarding the surprise at

seeing so little improvement to New Orleans six months post-storm.

Mike Esmail, when asked what was changed for him by his "shock" at seeing the

destruction first hand, stated:

> I've got to see to believe. I couldn't believe what happened in New
> Orleans before I could actually see the damage with my eyes. It's
> one thing to see it on TV; it's another thing to see it with your own
> eyes and to see the extent and the degree of the complete havoc the
> water left on the city.

Eight of the 16 email survey respondents and 7 of the 12 recorded interviewees

who went to New Orleans in this study used the word "shocked" or "shocking" when

discussing their first impression of seeing for themselves the massive destruction suffered

by the City of New Orleans, while others, like Mike Duva used the term "mind-blowing."

Danielle Kirk reported that when she landed in New Orleans, the extent of the

damage did not register at first, but later, when it did, she called it "shocking." Matt

Raleigh, on the other hand, indicated that he was not initially shocked by what he saw:

> No. I'll be honest here rather than considerate, since this is for
> research: The damage, I thought, seemed greatly exaggerated prior
> to the trip. I didn't expect such a great majority of the houses to still
> be structurally stable like that. [I] didn't see as much destruction as I
> was prepared for, which I guess was a good thing. Like I said above,
> I thought more of it was flattened. I knew that many people lost
> literally everything, which is really what matters, but even so I

expected more physical damage.

Raleigh and Kirk, like the rest of the group, would have a chance to re-evaluate that perception when they entered the homes for the first time, but his initial impact needs to be ear marked here and revisited when participants begin to talk about their actual work in the destroyed homes and meeting the victims of Katrina.

Another moment of common surprise, creating an often described instance of a disorienting dilemma, processed as dissonance, occurred when volunteers entered a destroyed home for the first time. Ed Levy recalled his first time walking into one of the homes targeted for gutting that had been destroyed in the storm:

> The first time we went into a home… it was beyond anything you could describe except to say it was like putting a bomb or two into your home and blowing it up. The water could have been up to the roof. Nothing was where it was supposed to be. The refrigerator was 25 feet away from where it was [suppose to be and] open with maggots and we had to duct tape it shut so we could move it. Nothing seemed salvageable.
>
> Twenty-five or 30 years of their lives in this house. Every possession they ever owned was in that house. Layered with mud. Everything ruined. OK let's go to work. Everybody just worked from the minute we got there.

When Lauren Carrier took her video camera with her to the worksite, she had a reaction that represented the reflections of many, saying, "The devastation was unimaginable, even seeing all of the destruction almost felt like it couldn't be real." Many recalled riding the bus to work, riding through one deserted and destroyed neighborhood after another, as a series of ongoing moments of disequilibrium, accumulation evidence that confronted the senses and the ability to process what was being seen. Danielle Kirk said that her awareness of the scope of destruction began to grow as she rode the bus through neighborhoods on her way to her first worksite:

> I remember in the airport and area around airport I was thinking this
> wasn't that bad. I had done work in Camden before, but this (New
> Orleans) was just disaster. We saw the piles of rubble in front of
> homes, and this was a cleaned-up neighborhood.

For some, the impact of Witnessing Mass Destruction also seemed to combine two steps in Keily's Processing Model, Processing and Connecting, to derive a commonly expressed sense of disappointment, disgust, or outrage at the perceived poor or non-existent response from State and Federal Officials. Anita Yadavalli would later specifically link her visual experience with what she had learned about governmental response to the storm:

> The local government barely did anything to alleviate the hardships
> that residents faced after the catastrophe. I learned that the state and
> federal government were equally reticent. They failed to provide the
> necessary recovery of the natural disaster.

Dan Betz, David Lamb, Fred Lozy and Danielle Kirk all formed perceptions of governmental response that was based, in part, to the Witnessing of Mass Destruction on a first hand, continuous and intimate basis. When asked about his thoughts concerning governmental response to the plight of New Orleans after Katrina, Betz said, "It is dreadfully inadequate, and in some cases pointless… There is too much red tape."

Others were more specific about their reaction to their observations and their conclusions. David Lamb expressed his views about the adequacy of government assistance to the citizens of New Orleans post-storm:

> I learned that they are definitely more concerned about spending
> money halfway across the world in a foreign country than they are
> about helping their own. I think that's a pretty common view and
> one very true and obvious one if you were to take a little trip down
> to New Orleans.

Danielle Kirk's opinion was formed, in part, as a result of her encounter with a resident of New Orleans:

> A taxi cab driver told us stories. One woman was living with her
> family out of her cab. She was still waiting for a FEMA trailer. No
> one's down there helping them. And all we kept hearing about was
> that FEMA tents were going to go away.

Fred Lozy, when asked about his thoughts regarding governmental response to the damage, added, "They (the government) haven't done much and haven't allocated enough money for the relief effort."

What participants are describing here represent examples of what Daloz (2000) called a commitment to the greater good and something that he considers to be an important aspect of Transformative Learning experiences. It also represents a clear example of what Eyler (2002) and Billig & Furco (2002) believe represents a core mission of Service Learning experiences--a commitment to give students a chance to work with agencies and groups--even if the resultant impression of that agency or group is a negative one.

Here, participants were clearly describing lessons learned, or attempting to articulate a sense-making effort that derived directly from exposure to this element of the environment, demonstrating the usefulness of Kiely's Processing Model to begin to get at impacts by organizing how the experience is being processed. Participant reflections demonstrate a cause and effect pattern that derived from their own experiences, their own observations that led them to re-examine what they thought about the impact of the storm before actually seeing the destruction form themselves. This example clearly produced changes of what Cranton calls frames of reference, or alternate perspectives and what Mezirow (2000) called changes in meaning perspectives or habits of mind (Cranton, 2006, pp. 22-23).

Analysis

These descriptions set up a very identifiable element and a definable and expressible resultant cause and effect pattern of one element of the experiential learning environment – Witnessing Mass Destruction.

1. Participants experienced the mass destruction using all three Methods of Description and Synthesis to express their sense-making of the information – sometimes using each method individually, sometimes in combination. Expressed here as a generalization and/or combination of participants observations, reflections, and perceptions.

A**.** Sensing the experience: I saw the destruction. It smelled. It had a different feel. It seemed like a different country.

B. Emotionalizing the experience**:** I was shocked. It blew me away. I was horrified. It was dreadful that the government failed to react.

C**.** Personalizing the experience: I had seen New Orleans before. I am not sure it will ever be the same. I had nothing in my previous experience, or I had something in my previous experience, to compare.

2. Participants drew conclusions from the experiences that were different from their preconceived perceptions of the situation.

A. The extent of damage caused by the storm was worse than I thought.

B. TV and pictures didn't do it justice. It was worse than I thought.

C**.** Governmental response was worse than I thought.

3**.** Impacts: Participants changed what Mezirow (2000) calls changes in habits of

mind or changes in meaning perspectives and what Cranton calls changes in frames of

reference (Cranton, 2006, pp. 25-33) to arrive at a newfound understanding:

A. You have to go there and experience it.

B. You can't always trust what you see on TV.

C. The government's response was disappointing, non-existent, and not

trustworthy.

D. A commitment to a greater good.

4. The manner in which these participants experienced this element of the

learning environment can then be said to have followed the following analytical steps by

using the Methods of Description and Synthesizing and evaluating these methods by

applying Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service Learning

Experience (Kiely, 2005). This approach helps identify Witnessing Mass Destruction as

an element of an experiential learning environment. This specific element and the

Methods of Description and Synthesis for this element fit into all five of Kiely's

Processing Themes:

(1) Contextual Border Crossing: According to Kiely (2005) this Phase or learning

dimension considers personal (i.e., biography, personality, learning style, expectations,

prior travel experience and sense of efficacy), structural (i.e., race, class, gender, culture,

ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and physical ability), historical (i.e., the

socioeconomic and political history of New Orleans within larger socioeconomic and

political systems), and programmatic factors (i.e., intercultural immersion, direct service-

work and opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue with diverse perspectives, and

curriculum that focuses on social justice issues such as poverty, economic disparities,

unequal relations of power) which intersect to influence and frame the way students

experience the process of transformational learning in service-learning (p. 8). Contextual

Border Crossing describes how personal, structural, historical, and programmatic

elements of the service-learning context frame the unique nature and impact of

participant's service-learning experience, either enhancing or hindering possibilities for

Transformative Learning.

The participants in this study were engaged in direct service work opportunities

that exposed thematic elements such as their personal biographies, their prior travel, and

age. They related their experiences doing actual work in New Orleans to prior

experiences or lack of experience such as air travel, or prior service experience,

particularly construction-type or demolition work and prior exposure to the effects of

large-scale natural disaster. In this case participants were describing and synthesizing

their experience with mass destruction and trying to place that border crossing into

personalized and meaningful context. Furthermore, participants expressed their

viewpoints about government sponsored relief efforts, political statements about the

extent of damage and relief efforts, and what victims of the storm represented to them

(the participants) after seeing first-hand the destruction to the City and to private homes.

(2) Dissonance: According to Kiely (2005) Dissonance constitutes incongruence

between a participants' prior frame of reference and aspects of the contextual factors that

shape the service-learning experience. There is a relationship between dissonance type,

intensity, and duration and the nature of learning processes that result. Low to high

intensity dissonance acts as triggers for learning. High-intensity dissonance catalyzes ongoing learning. Dissonance types are historical, environmental, social physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, communicative, and technological (p. 8). Dissonance occurs frequently because much of what participants saw, felt, touched, heard, and participated in was new and incongruent with their frame of reference or world-view. Participants were living in a dramatically different set of environmental, cultural, social, physical, political, and economic circumstances, they are forced to function, think, and learn in ways to which they are unaccustomed. The types of dissonance identified by Kiely include historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative, and technological.

The participants in this study repeatedly described the incongruence of what they believed, before arriving, to be the condition of New Orleans, and its reality. This was an event of large environmental and historical significance. They also used descriptors of intensity, such as "shocked" and "mind-blowing", something Kiely's Themes list as directly related to the duration of the lessons learned. Participants experienced dissonance in forms that included their physical and environmental surroundings, their social setting, and their growing awareness of the political and technological elements of the disaster, such as the demographics of the neighborhoods affected, the history of the City, and the engineering decisions affecting the construction and undermining of the levees.

(3) Personalizing: Personalizing, according to Kiely (2005), represents how participants individually respond to and learn from different types of dissonance. It is visceral and emotional, and compels students to assess internal strengths and weaknesses. Emotions and feelings include anger, happiness, sadness, helplessness, fear, anxiety,

confusion, joy, nervousness, romanticizing, cynicism, sarcasm, selfishness, and embarrassment (p. 8). This occurs when a person analyzes and learns from an experience of dissonance.

In this study, participants consistently described their ability to personalize their current situation and reaction to Witnessing Mass Destruction by calling on prior personal experience, and used terms of feeling and emotions as listed by Kiely using all three Methods of Description. Participants expressed shock, disappointment, disgust, and frustration. They also expressed sadness. They tried to relate the destruction to other personal experiences, either first- or second-hand in order to create a frame of reference into which to place this new-found information.

(4) Processing: According to Kiely (2005) Processing is both an individual reflective learning process and a social, dialogic learning process. Processing is problematizing, questioning, analyzing, and searching for causes and solutions to problems and issues. It occurs through various reflective and discursive processes such as journaling, reflection groups, community dialogues, walking, research, and observation (p. 8). This Theme relates to individualizing the experience, as well as experiencing the situation in group settings, which all participants did and described. It includes, according to Kiely, walking and direct observation as a manner of questioning and exploring for causes and effects, something clearly represented by the descriptions provided by participants using all three methods of synthesis.

Here, participants not only walked and rode through completely destroyed neighborhoods, but lived and worked in them, going into individually destroyed homes

and witnessing the mass destruction first hand and on the street level. Their interviews

contain numerous examples of direct observation, exploring, discussion and reflection.

(5) Connecting: Connecting, according to Kiely, is learning to affectively

understand and empathize through relationships with community members, peers, and

faculty. It is learning through non-reflective modes such as sensing, sharing, feeling,

caring, participating, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting, and doing.

Examples include performing skits, singing, dancing, swimming, attending church,

completing chores, playing games, home stays, sharing food, treating wounds, and

sharing stories (p. 8).

Participant descriptions in all three Methods of Description and Synthesis utilized

the terms that Kiely calls for in this Theme such as empathizing, caring, sharing, and

talking in both reflective and non-reflective discourse. Participants often connected their

prior experience with newfound knowledge and/or changes in the individual ways of

seeing in order to articulate what they thought they had learned or what impact the

experience had on them, thereby directly linking the experience and their individual

sense-making efforts, to lessons learned and impacts. Interviews included stories of

sharing food, sharing stories, and treating wounds, but for this particular element, WMD,

it includes specific examples of sharing as a group such as the bus ride through the Ninth

Ward, or their first times stepping into a destroyed home to begin work.

5. This element and the methods by which it was described and synthesized, and

processed can also be demonstrated to have generated or facilitated, at least in part, five

of Mezirow's Phases of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20):

(1) Experiencing a Disorienting Dilemma, Phase One of the Transformative

Learning Process (Cranton, 2006, p. 20) and defined as an experience which causes one

to question and examine prior perspectives, or what Mezirow (2000) calls habits of mind,

or meaning perspectives and Cranton calls changes in frames of reference (Cranton,

2006, p. 23). Here participants were confronted with, for the most part, a single dramatic

event, of the type Mezirow (2000) and Cranton (2006) call epochal or epiphinal in nature,

like the bus ride to Camp Premier, or their first experiences inside the destroyed homes.

Participant descriptions clearly and repeatedly could point to exact moments in time

when they knew they had encountered something "different."

(2) Undergoing Self-Examination, Phase Two of the Transformative Learning

Process (Cranton, 2006, p. 20) where learners begin to describe the process of changes in

beliefs, assumptions or perceptions, or what Mezirow (2000) calls changes in habits of

mind or changes in meaning perspectives and Cranton calls changes in frames of

reference (Cranton, 2006, pp. 25-33). In this Phase, triggered by experiences occurring in

Phase One, participants in this study were able to articulate why they felt they needed to

re-examine what they had believed about New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina before

arriving, and what the actual situation was that confronted them upon arrival. They

shared this self-examination and changes in beliefs with members of both their immediate

work group and the larger Rutgers group.

(3) Conducting a Critical Assessment of Internalized Assumptions and feeling a

sense of alienation and social expectations was expressed by several participants. This is

Phase Three of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20) and was most obviously

represented by the significant number of participants who had assumed that government

reaction to the Katrina Disaster was measurably further along and in greater effort than it obviously was in actuality. Their expectations that the government and/or society would respond to the needs of the people of the City of New Orleans was significantly challenged. In addition, their growing awareness that their own lack of knowledge about the storm and its continued effects was a challenge to the belief that many had in themselves as educated and/or informed persons.

(4) Relating Discontent to the Similar Experience of Others – Recognizing that the Problem is Shared, is Phase Four of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20). This means that learners began to recognize that their problem is shared and not individualized or exclusive. In Camp Premier, participants had an opportunity to live, eat, shower, launder and dine alongside of victims of the storm, discussed at greater length in Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation. At the worksites and when going out into the city, participants had an opportunity to meet and talk with survivors of Hurricane Katrina, which created opportunities for learning based on this shared experience and recognizing that it was a shared experience. In combination with the learning environment element Experiencing Others, participants in this study could clearly articulate the recognition that: (a) the disaster was widespread and far reaching; (b) many shared in the blame for the disaster; and (c) that it would take many to assist, alleviate and remediate the destruction that they witnessed.

(5) Reintegrating Newfound Perspective is Phase 10 of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20). Here participants have reintegrated several newfound sets of knowledge into their outlook, including several participants who actually demonstrated ways of thinking more critically. Participants indicated that before they accept

representations from the media or government officials, they will have to see for themselves, and that they have newfound understandings of the limitations of second-hand knowledge, that is, knowledge not gained by direct experience. In addition, participants clearly articulated attempts to integrate their actual knowledge regarding governmental response to the disaster with what they had believed was the case before arriving in New Orleans. Participants expressed a renewed, or newfound commitment to the greater good.

Element Two: Personalizing The Loss (PTL)

The total group arrived on Saturday via two separate plane rides to New Orleans, and two separate bus rides from the airport to Camp Premier--one arriving early in the morning, the other later in the afternoon. The next day, Sunday, was devoted to organizing and orientation. Participants were lectured by AmeriCorps workers on logistics and details like wake-up times, breakfast times, laundry procedure, packing lunches, busses to the worksite, shower protocol, dinnertime protocol and lights out. They were also given instruction on how to manage the worksite and what to do with the large amounts of rubble that was going to be removed from each home. Items were to be divided into four groups when placed outside, one grouping or pile being reserved for those items that workers thought might have sentimental value. As a consequence, workers moved very cautiously and carefully when they thought they might be uncovering something of sentimental value. Direct exposure to the full contents of someone else's home, whether of sentimental value or not, produced in many a strong reaction, and caused significant reflection about the value of their own belongings.

Participants often placed their own homes, or family lives in a substitution context as a way a relating, connecting, describing and synthesizing the experience. Here it appears that WMD and PTL sometimes worked in combination to produce impact. A readily identifiable difference between the exposure to WMD from the bus or the airplane, and WMD when working in someone's home is the obvious placement of the dissonance to a personal scale.

Scenario 2

Black 14 arrives at its first home assignment. As instructed, the group performs an outside check on the home for safety. The neighborhood is deserted except for other work crews. The waterline is visible on the outside of every home, clearly indicating the height of water attained by the flooding of the nearby Industrial Canal. The gas and electricity are checked to make sure they are off. The symbols on the door are decoded for date of inspection, and if any bodies were recovered. The door is opened with great difficulty and entry is blocked by the large amount of debris that was washed into the hallway and now lies cemented in place by six inches of gooey, toxic mud. Small insects swarm around the face-down refrigerator and pantry food that has remained where it was when the flooding inside this home overturned everything.

When the 14-foot wall of water entered this home, it smashed everything inside up against the ceiling, destroying the ceiling and flooding the attic space above this one-story house. As the water eventually drained out, most of the contents of the attic fell through and landed on top of the contents of the main floor. Beds, TVs and furniture lay upside down or on their sides in rooms other than their original location--a testament to

the swirling violence inside this home when it was flooded. Clothing, food, dishware, pictures, appliances, rugs, towels, curtains and personal belonging lay jumbled in various piles. Wall-to-wall carpets were covered with the six-inch mud that was everywhere, as was the unmistakable smell that was New Orleans (See Photographs 7-10, Appendix F).

It is warm outside, but not overly oppressive. It is drizzling and so there is overcast. It is humid. Everything in this house will be taken outside and arranged in piles on the front yard, which is now all sticky with mud. Sheetrock, ceiling tiles and all electrical outlets, fans, light fixtures and wiring are to be removed, too. Helmets on, goggles on, masks on, gloves on, Black 14 performs its safety check of the inside of the house to insure that nothing from the attic will fall through and strike a worker. A few windows are opened, or broken to provide ventilation. The large front window is broken to make it easier to remove the large bedroom and living room furniture to the outside.

"OK," somebody says. "Let's get started."

Discussion

This close-up experience with mass destruction on such a personal scale caused many students to describe and synthesize this information by placing it into a context based on their personal lives and previous experience, two methods of processing that Kiely's model calls personalizing and connecting. In New Orleans, participants were specifically personalizing and/or connecting with the personal loss suffered by others. There were now faces, names and lives connected to the mass destruction that they had witnessed on their bus ride to Camp Premier. The experience of working in the homes of the victims of Katrina produced a much different set of reactions and reflections by the

participants, which appeared to have produced not only an individual impact, but also combined with other elements of the learning environment to produce lessons learned and impacts. Participants reported this as a disorienting dilemma, Phase I of Mezirow's (2000) 10 Phases of Transformative Learning, and as an example of Walton's (2010) disorienting-inducive experiences--something that he writes is valuable to adult learning.

Kat Piso had gone to New Orleans, she said, to help people. This represents a stage of the Transformative Learning experience that Daloz (2000) calls a "commitment to action," something that many participants described as both a primary motivation for going and a resultant impact following the experience. Her reasons became more concrete as she dug through the rubble:

> I wanted to do it. I wanted to help people. Because my family has gone through a lot financially and its hard [she is crying]… I've gone through a lot with my family. We haven't necessarily lost a lot, but we've gone through a lot emotionally. Luckily we haven't lost a lot in terms of our possessions, but these people lost everything.

Kat Piso remembers one particular instance where she could directly identify and relate with the people who had previously lived in the home that she was demolishing:

> The one thing that sticks out in my mind is one of the houses we were cleaning… Their china cabinet had fallen over, so everything was pretty much smashed up. Stuff was encased in, I don't even know, how many feet of mud. We were cleaning it up and I picked up this crystal bowl. It was about the size of my palm. It was the exact same one we have in my china cabinet at home. So for me that was kind of a turning point, this could have been us, it wasn't, but it could easily be anybody. You just have to do what you can for people. It's a life changing experience, and that's all I can say to people.

Participants not only had a chance to view intimate aspects of the lives of the people who lived in the homes that they were working in, but also had an opportunity to meet some of them. Kristen Tangel was representative of the many who said that meeting victims played an important part, if not the most important part, of their overall experience. What this experiencing of the personal loss and meeting of the victims created was a combination of these elements of the learning environment – Witnessing Mass Destruction, Personalizing The Loss, and Experiencing Others – leading to lessons learned and impacts as described by Kat Piso:

> Well, when the owner came, we had no idea at first who she was…it wasn't the owner, it was the owner's sister I think. We had no idea who she was. She just kind of walked up to us. Some of us were in the house working still so we all kind of trickled out slowly so then she had a huge mass of people at the house around her. We wanted to know the story; we wanted to know what happened. It ended up that for quite a few days they couldn't find the person that had been living in the house. She had been air lifted out and she was taken to a hospital. Medically she was fine, but I guess because she was older in age she wasn't able to move around as easily and they couldn't find her for days. She had half the girls crying; how [can you not] find somebody in a situation like this?

Through this combination of experience and encounter, participants displayed a real-time effort to describe and synthesize the information and the experience to make sense of what they were seeing and doing. In this case, Piso was clearly able to articulate that she sensed, emotionalized and personalized the experience:

> …We would say, "Oh, we saw this one picture of her and a little boy. Did she have a grandson?" We were referring to things that we found in the house and it was kind of nice to piece the person's life together. The random things that you find around the house all of a sudden make sense. She had a lot of different things stored, like medical stuff, stored in a closet. Her husband was ailing; he didn't want to live in a hospital in his dying years. [With] things like that you piece together the life and I think that was really nice to know

the kind of people you were helping and know that the person was okay.

Both David Lamb and Mike Esmail reflected on two aspects of this element: (1) that they themselves were going to be able to walk away from the destruction and (2) that the experience "opened their eyes" to what they described as suffering in the world. Lamb said:

> I learned and truly saw how people are forgotten. I mean, we did not forget about them because we were down there, but we could only be there for one week, then we had to go back to our lives, and our families. Those people may not ever be able to rebuild what they once had, and it's so bad because they did absolutely nothing to cause it.

For Esmail, the experience provided a foundation for reflection and critical analysis of his own view of the world and his place in it. Experiencing mass destruction in person made him think about suffering on a global basis. He said:

> I was able to walk away [from the destruction] and realize how much suffering there is and that changed me, to make me more compassionate about what people go through in the world and things like that. And I feel like that brings things to the big picture for me, instead of just being concerned about my own little world and the people around me.

Rajni Singh explained that she was able to relate immediately to the plight of New Orleans residents by virtue of the fact that her sister was a Louisiana State University Medical Student School student at the time of the storm, spurring her decision to participate. Her reflection is a good example of how participants began to make real-time analysis of their situation in New Orleans and how the experience was affecting their frame reference:

It's one thing to send money and watch the horrific scenes of death, poverty, and despair on a television set, but it's so much more significant to volunteer hands and time, and be part of the change.

Participants brought their own individual perspective as to what was important and what had sentimental value and so had to be saved. For Mike Kolanko, it was two mirrors that he broke despite trying to be as careful as possible, or the contents of the family china cabinet that was overturned as he tried to salvage as much of the contents as he could. For Nakeefa Bernard, it was a stuffed teddy bear:

Going in and gutting a house is not that difficult, but gutting a house with people's belongings in them… that was hard. They told us to separate a pile of things that we thought might be important and things we thought were not important. How were we to tell what's important to someone and what isn't. I didn't like making that decision. I had a big pile because I put everything as being important. A photograph is important. A teddy bear is important. I thought maybe someone's dresser with his or her clothes would be important. But I can't decide that, and that was definitely difficult.

Danielle Kirk tried to make sense of what she saw and what she was doing by comparing it to her own experience back home in New Jersey when, as a young girl, she watched builders erect the new family home over the course of months. Said Kirk of her experience, "…I was comparing it to watching my house get built back in New Jersey… It was a long process. We took this house down to the studs in a few days."

Kirk also reflected on the lessons learned and impacts. She, like many, was impacted by meeting the home owners, and later receiving correspondence from them:

An owner came back and told us about the house. We'd piece together people's families. Afterward we got thank you cards from both families that we helped. It made you feel great. I don't know anyone who came back the same. I came back from break and had meeting with 12 managers [at Nielsen Dining Hall]. I found I couldn't explain what I felt.

Diana DeSantis, who like Kat Piso, would smile laugh and cry throughout her interview, admitted that at first she did not appreciate what she was doing as she sorted out the personal belongings of the former residents of the houses she was helping to demolish. As the literature indicates, Transformative Learning can be an epochal moment in time, while others experienced a more gradual revelation of changes in perspective. Here, DeSantis describes an experience that contains elements of both:

> We were going through people's stuff. At first it didn't hit me. Some of the china was neat. A guy came to look at his house. "It's weird," he said, "to see 33 years of your life on the front lawn." [Diana Starts crying]. It's more like you were on a mission to clean that house out. But once you start talking to the neighbors…it was just weird.

She continued, trying to describe the impact and the emotional response provides insight into her personalization process:

> I don't know why I am crying…tears of joy or sadness? Both. I don't know why. It's hard to talk to about it. If you don't go it's hard to understand it. The trip provided a life-altering experience. I tried to put myself in the position of the people who I was helping. I remember when I lost my stuff (as a young girl, her basement apartment flooded). I knew what they were going through but theirs was on such a larger scale. I feel like I wasn't there, that some other Diana was.

Participants used all three Methods of Description and Synthesis. Participants were clearly able to articulate instances of Sensing the experience--seeing a photograph, holding a piece of china; Emotionalizing the experience--crying, feeling sadness, feeling amazement; and Personalizing the experience--thinking about their own house, their own belongings. They also were able to list lessons learned and impact, leading to examples of sense making and changes in frames of reference or habits of mind, which included: (a) the recognition of the suffering of others; (b) a need for compassion; (c) satisfaction from assisting others in need; and (d) how little participants felt they really needed in life to

make them happy, an impact often expressed in combination with other elements.

Sensations like pleasure and satisfaction are feelings that Daloz (2000) says can result

from Transformative Learning experiences. Danielle Kirk expressed this, saying, " I am

now more conscientious of the things I hold on to. I try to never take people for granted.

It made me think about what I really need."

Analysis

This data sets up a definable and expressible cause and effect pattern of this

element of the experiential learning environment: Personalizing The Loss.

1. Participants experienced aspects of the personal tragedy of others and

attempted to relate it to their own previous experiences using all three Methods of

Description and Synthesis to express their processing and sense-making of the

information. Like WMD, sometimes participants used methods individually, sometimes

in combination. Expressed here as a generalization and/or combination of participant's

observations, reflections, and perceptions:

> A. Sensing the experience: I saw things, I touched things, and I talked to
> people that helped me understand.
>
> B. Emotionalizing the experience: It made me sad. I cried. It made me feel
> great to help.
>
> C. Personalizing the experience: I met people like me; like my family. It
> reminded me of my home. I had similar things of my own, in my house. I
> found things that looked like mine or my family's. I picked up, felt,
> carried things that were like mine.

2. Participants drew conclusions from the experiences that were different from their pre-conceived perceptions of the situation, both as the result of this single element or in combination with Witnessing Mass Destruction and/or Experiencing Others. These can be summarized as follows:

A. It could have been me or my own family.

B. It could happen to anyone, anywhere at any time.

C. No one deserved this.

3. Impacts: Participants changed what Mezirow (2000) calls changes in habits of mind or changes in meaning perspectives and Cranton calls changes in frames of reference (Cranton, 2006, pp. 25-33) to arrive at a newfound understanding:

A. How little I need to make me happy.

B. I am now less critical, more forgiving, more compassionate, and want to help others.

4. The manner in which these participants experienced this element of the learning environment can then be said to have followed the following analytical steps by using the Methods of Description and Synthesis and evaluating these methods by applying Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service Learning Experience (Kiely, 2005). This approach helps identify Personalizing The Loss as an element of an experiential learning environment. This specific element and the Methods of Description and Synthesis for this element fit into all five of Kiely's Processing Themes:

(1) Contextual Border Crossing: The participants in this study were engaged in direct service work opportunities that exposed thematic elements such as their personal biographies, and their prior outlooks regarding their own personal needs, how they

previously viewed or thought about the individual victims of Katrina, what they now thought about their own role in recovery efforts, and their place in the bigger picture of recovery efforts.

(2) Dissonance: Participants are living in a dramatically different set of environmental, cultural, social, physical, political, and economic circumstances, they are forced to function, think, and learn in ways to which they are unaccustomed. The types of dissonance identified by Kiely include historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative, and technological.

The participants in this study described several distinct moments of unexpectedness when encountering the condition of the inside of the homes; witnessing the force of the storm and flood, and handling the household contents through which they sifted every day. This was often highlighted by the impact on their experience of meeting the victims in person. They also used descriptors of intensity, something Kiely's Themes list as directly related to the duration of the lessons learned. One participant went so far as to describe herself as if she were another person who went there.

When discussing Personalizing The Loss, participants often described a physical Dissonance based on the actual handling or seeing of personal items or belongings and witnessing the physical devastation of homes and neighborhoods.

(3) Personalizing: Participants repeatedly described their reaction to the Personalizing the Loss in emotional terms, mostly sadness, but in many cases with terms of respect for and inspiration derived from the efforts and attitudes of the people of New Orleans. Other descriptions included the self-identification with the victims and pride in their own personal participation and direct assistance to the victims.

(4) Processing: Processing of Personalizing the Loss is something clearly represented by the descriptions provided by participants using all three Methods of Description and Synthesis. Here, participants not only walked and rode through completely destroyed neighborhoods, but lived and worked in them, going into individually destroyed homes and witnessing personal loss to which they easily related as the result of first-hand experience and direct contact. This led many to describe newfound sensibilities and recognized changes in the prior attitudes. Participant descriptions included both individualization of this process and group settings where it occurred.

(5) Connecting: Participant descriptions using all three Methods of Description and Synthesis utilized the terms that Kiely calls for in this Theme – empathizing, caring, sharing, and talking in both reflective and non-reflective discourse. Here participants clearly articulated their abilities to care and empathize, often drawing on personal prior experiences to make sense of what they were seeing, doing and feeling. Interviews contained rich examples of caring, feeling, participating, relating, comforting and empathizing. Participants specifically related instances where they took part in chores (demolition) at the worksite.

5. This element had an obvious connection with two other elements--Witnessing Mass Destruction and Experiencing Others. The connection of there elements either clarified or magnified the impact of the total experience, leading participants to experience, through connecting, a change in frame of reference and/or habits of mind regarding their own lives and the lives of others. In this case often summed up as "I learned how little I really need."

6. This element and the methods by which it was described and synthesized, and processed can also be demonstrated to have generated, or facilitated, at least in part, five of Mezirow's Phases of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20):

(1) Experiencing a Disorienting Dilemma: Here participants were confronted with, for the most part, a single dramatic event, of the type Mezirow (2000) and Cranton (2006) call epochal or epiphinal in nature when describing their first experiences inside the destroyed homes. But PTL was also a more cumulative experience based on several days spent working on homes, meeting victims, and handling their personal belonging. Participant descriptions clearly and repeatedly could point to sense-making moments when they knew they had begun to think differently about themselves and the victims of Katrina, and not always in epiphinal terms.

(2) Undergoing Self-Examination: In this Phase, triggered by experiences occurring in Phase One, participants in this study were able to articulate why they felt they needed to re-examine what they had believed about the victims of Hurricane Katrina before arriving; what they thought about themselves and their own needs after Personalizing The Loss; and how it was triggered by the actual experience of their relief effort in New Orleans.

(3) Conducting a Critical Assessment of Internalized was most obviously represented by the significant number of participants who said that this element of the learning environment, PTL, forced them to reconsider what is important in their own lives and what, in their own words, they really need to be happy.

(4) Relating Discontent: Here, in combination with learning environment elements Witnessing Mass Destruction and Experiencing Others, participants in this

study could clearly articulate the recognition that: (a) the disaster could have happened

anywhere to anyone; (b) many in New Orleans lived similar lives to theirs, and had

accumulated similar possessions as to their own; (c) that we all shared, and should

continue to share a responsibility to assist those in need; and (d) the government did not

do enough.

(5) Reintegrating Newfound Perspectives: Here participants have reintegrated

several newfound sets of knowledge into their outlook, including several that actually

demonstrated ways of thinking more critically. Participants indicated that from now on

they will be more compassionate, more understanding of personal loss and how much

less they need to be happy.

Element Three: Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA)

Participants often reflected on their state of mind going into the trip, during the

period of preparation, and during pre-trip planning. Participants had been instructed as to

what clothing and equipment to bring. Sleeping bags had been purchased for everyone.

Passports, something many lacked, were required. Kiely (2005) values the lessons

learned from travel. Keeling (2004) too, reports the value of just travel itself when

discussing experiential opportunities for students who engage in programs like study

abroad. There is much about this trip that resembled a study abroad program destined to a

third-world or emerging nation.

Scenario 3

On an evening of the week before the trip, participants gather in the Cook College Campus Center Multi-Purpose room for a last pre-trip briefing. Present are just about all those going on the trip. Cook College Executive Dean Robert Goodman thanks everyone for undertaking this mission. He gets very emotional and cannot continue. Five years from now, he promises, he will host a reunion for all those going on the trip.

Ed Levy introduces a psychologist who has recently returned from New Orleans. He briefs the group on possible emotional difficulties they may encounter seeing so much destruction close up and first hand. He shows images, on the wall-sized screen, of New Orleans after Katrina. The audience is completely silent. At earlier meetings, participants had been advised of many of the hazards and told that if they wanted to back out, there would be no problems and no criticisms. "This is completely voluntary," Ed Levy repeated time and again. But after your airplane ticket is purchased, "If you back out, we must ask for a refund." Those at the meeting that night had made the commitment.

Also making a presentation were some employees from the Rutgers Department of Environmental Health and Safety, who demonstrate how to put on goggles, mask and hard hat; how to hold and use a sledge hammer and shovel; how to pick up debris and look for snakes, rodents or other animals before grabbing the items by hand; and how to avoid hitting yourself and hurting others nearby with your work tools. Finally, everyone is asked to sign a legal waiver (attached as Appendix F) outlining the known and anticipated hazards. The students read the waiver, there is a noticeable buzz in the room as hazard after hazard is listed. Everyone signs the waiver.

Discussion

Participants were exposed almost daily to images on TV and other media outlets, of the still-staggering scope of the devastation to New Orleans. As a result of these, and other examples of pre-trip information, many of the participants discussed worries, concerns and outright fears associated with making the trip. These seemed to fall into the following general categories:

1. Fear of isolation: I won't know anybody else on the trip

2. Fear of dangerous or dead animals and dead persons: I hope I won't see (a) snakes; (b) dead bodies; (c) dead animals; or (d) encounter anything poisonous. (See Photograph 11, Appendix F).

3. Fears related to health such as exposure to hazardous materials: I am afraid of toxins, disease or unknown chemical hazards and other unknown hazards.

4. Fear of emotional reaction: I am afraid I won't be able to handle the emotional impact.

5. Defiance of Parental Authority: My parents didn't want me to go but I went anyway.

For some the pre-trip anxiety was compounded by their first exposure to air travel, while others were more concerned about the physical nature of the work involved, confessing to having never used a shovel, sledge hammer or wheel barrow.

6. Fear of Travel: I have never been on a plane. I have never been away from New Jersey. (See photograph 12, Appendix F).

7. Fear of Ability: Can I do the work? Am I strong enough?

Some students had changed their minds just before the trip. Others, like Dan Mulcahy, were prevented from going by their parents. Mulcahy's mother, he said, would

not let him go. She is a nurse and was alarmed by both the reports coming from New

Orleans, including the discovery of pockets of benzene, a highly toxic material, as well as

reports coming from 9/11 rescue workers. People who had rushed to the scene after the

September 11, 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center were just then beginning to

report a wide variety of ailments and conditions, which medical experts were afraid might

be linked to the hazardous conditions to which workers, many of them inadequately

protected, were exposed. Workers in New Orleans were reporting respiratory ailments,

which were given the nickname "Katrina Cough." Mulcahy had been a key student

organizer of the trip, including the fundraising and other pre-trip committee work devoted

to travel arrangements. His disappointment was obvious. He was resentful, but at the

same time, he would not defy his parents.

Other students, like Kat Piso, would later report that they specifically defied or

ignored parental concerns. This type of defiance, which for some like Kat Piso led to a

greater sense of independence, exemplifies the emancipatory nature of Transformative

Learning that Mezirow (1991) speaks of and credits Habermas (1984) for identifying.

What Mezirow and others mean is that Transformative Learning can be emancipatory in

nature because it can free one to think and act differently than before, often resulting in

how one thinks about others or is thought about by others in return. Transformative

Learning can result in changes of power distances and can serve as an agent of

enablement--in the case, directly effecting parent-child relationships.

Ed Levy remembers his own discussion with Dan Mulcahy's mother and the

impact that it had on him:

> One young man [Mulcahy] came into my office in tears because his
> mother forbid him to go. He did more getting this trip organized

than anyone. His mom was a nurse and she forbid him to go. Now I am in New Orleans thinking "we're going to have people in Tykev suits working with oil.' And I am thinking, "I don't want to bring back 84 people with lung disease."

Dan Mulcahy recalled his immediate attraction to the project:

I remember getting an email from Dean Levy and I jumped right on it. It was the first major thing I did as a freshman. Not something I could put words on. It just had a kind of a draw. It was compelling. It was the first time I saw the power of college. No distinction between students [and] deans. Everyone had a "Go get them" attitude. I learned that there was nothing you can't do. Here I was, calling airlines, calling rental car companies. Who am I? I'm just a freshman. But we'd go back to meetings and report what we did.

When Mulcahy learned from his mother that he would not be allowed to go, he was crushed:

She [his mother] told me, "You're not going." I knew it would be an uphill battle. I argued. I put a lot into this. I was on the front lines. I had put a lot into this. It was like the leader pulling out. She threatened me with everything [like] pulling tuition [or] car insurance.

In the end, after weeks of distancing himself from his parents, Mulcahy arrived at a new equilibrium.

I didn't realize it at the time, but now I have seen other examples – you get to breaking point. It is not worth the consequences. People get estranged from family. That can lead to problems. I didn't want it to get to that level. I had too good a relationship with my family.

Mulcahy could also articulate the lessons learned from the experience. Despite his disappointment, Mulcahy had to establish both a new level of independence and started thinking about co-dependence:

I learned from the confrontation with my family. It was the last major falling out I had with my family. I did learn that family is important. The wishes of family should be taken into consideration. I know that now more than I did at that time. If it causes pain to your family, is it worth it? Battling with my mother... She is strong

willed, but I battled. I learned a lot about being self sufficient. I can mold my own future.

Kat Piso also had to take on her parents and also reached a new understanding and a new equilibrium, as a result of the experience. The experience with her mother caused her to initially experience Pre-Trip Anxiety with which she had to deal:

> I felt like I was defying her [her mother], but in the end she was supportive. And she realized that there were other staff members going. There were other students going; I was never going to be alone. She was kind of scared of, I guess, physically if I was going to get harmed. You know, in terms of in the houses, in terms of whatever was living in the houses. And that there were all kinds of riots and things, so I think that was really her main concern. By the end she was supportive and she was worried about me, but she was supportive. In a way I still felt like I was defying her, because she flat out said "I don't want you going."

Many assumed that they would be the only ones going who didn't know anyone else on the trip. David Lamb spoke for many when he discussed his lack of familiarity with others going on the trip and his assumption that everyone else was good friends before the trip. Often, participants felt that they would be the only one on the trip who didn't know other people going:

> I think my biggest [concern] was more equivalent to like a new kid starting at a new school. I was just worried that everyone all basically knew each other already and they [were] all close friends with them.

Daniel Betz was another who expressed anxiety associated with not knowing anyone else on the trip. He admitted:

> I was slightly afraid of not knowing anyone, but then in the class [A non-related academic class devoted to studying the causes of the disaster] I became much more comfortable with the others taking it.

Not everyone is outgoing, and many admitted to their social awkwardness and sense of shyness. This feeling of being an outsider who gained insider status was an often

repeated observation by participants afterward. Kaitlin Seifert was concerned about both

her own ability to interact with others on the trip, as well as her ability to do the actual

work expected:

> Yes. I was worried that my wrist would not hold out, since I just had
> surgery on it in January. For this I just got my wrist as strong as I
> could before I left, spoke to my physical therapist and took his
> advice while I was in New Orleans. I was also worried that I would
> not interact with anyone on the trip; I am very shy when it comes to
> new people and this was not going to be just a few new people.

Many expressed pre-trip concerns about finding something dead in the rubble.

This source of anxiety was supported by the many missing persons reports, as well as

updates of recently exposed finds by workers in New Orleans who continued to sift

through the rubble. Many homes were still being investigated for the first time six months

post-storm, so massive was the undertaking. Said Danielle Cohen of this source of

anxiety:

> I know my entire group, our biggest fear collectively… We actually,
> I believe, came up with this fear together just watching the slides
> before we even went to the Tent City that weekend. We all were
> terrified of finding a dead animal… A dead person somewhere in the
> house. We made the boys lead us around the house before we even
> touched anything with our flashlights. Making sure. Picking
> thing…piles up. Seeing what's everywhere… Because there was a
> group on our street that found a dog. And that scared us.

Others were finally able to put their finger on their pre-trip anxiety once they

arrived in New Orleans and saw both the destruction for themselves and talked to others,

such as survivors, or guards and workers at Camp Premier. This was a commonly

expressed observation that the transformational experience unfolded in stages, not

necessarily in chronological order, and that the sense-making reflections and analysis was

triggered by some subsequent event or experience that brought the issue more clearly into

focus. Mike Duva described such a sequence that for him began to make sense after

speaking to guards at Camp Premier:

> As for me, I was a little scared when we first drove through the
> Ninth Ward. Safety was a concern and I was kind of afraid that I
> would find a dead body or animal remains. I think the biggest thing
> that worried me was after talking to the guards at Camp Premier.
> They told stories of how bad the camp was when it first started or
> opened. There were gangs and criminals causing havoc and stealing,
> and they mentioned a few volunteers were even raped. That really
> caught my attention and made me see the need for the strict rules of
> the camp, as well as the security.

Danielle Cohen's PTA was significant, by her own admission, amplified by the

final pre-trip meeting and reading the waiver:

> I remember when we got our masks I was really confused. I was like
> how much is there around that place? Like what am I going to be
> breathing into my lungs? And if there's not a hospital around, what's
> going to happen? I knew we were going to be playing with sledge
> hammers. I knew we were going to have all different tools that were
> going to be dangerous. And I knew people like Jeff Ryder [friend
> and participant] should not be walking around with a sledge hammer
> in his hand. (LAUGHTER).

One possibility discussed at the final pre-trip meeting was the use of a one piece

Tyvek jumpsuit-style protective clothing by volunteers who would be going into

particularly dangerous sites where exposure to toxins was more highly predictable. Said

Cohen:

> It was a fear. I remember when we got down there they had told us
> that we may or may not be wearing the white jumpsuit
> things…because those were the only ones that go there [the
> volunteers exposed to oil]. I was praying that we didn't have to. I
> don't know enough about petroleum and gases and all that stuff to
> be able to feel comfortable around it all

The waiver itself outlines many of the known hazards such as exposure to toxins,

disease and poisonous animals, but also advises the participants that they were waiving

any and all claims for injury or damages caused by unknown hazards. Cohen remembers

reading the waiver and watching the safety briefing:

> I didn't--I remember looking it over with my friends and just all of
> our eyes just bulging out of our head like, Oh my goodness, what are
> we getting ourselves into? I don't remember the specific parts of the
> waver now. But I do remember just being there, confused. Why are-
> -why are we doing this? Like what are we getting ourselves into?
> We're not going to come back from this place.

Poisonous animal, particularly snakes, were a major concern, often cited in

interviews, both audio/video and email interviews:

"I was particularly afraid of the prospect of snakes inhabiting the debris." – Rajni Singh

"My biggest fear was snakes and unfortunately there was nothing I could do about them,
except just to deal. It did make me feel slightly better knowing I was not the only one
afraid of them." – Kaitlin Seifert.

Being strong enough emotionally was also a common concern. Like Mike Duva,

Tanya Marion expressed a real-time synthesis of this element of the learning environment

that came into better focus once the group actually got to New Orleans**:** "I wasn't exactly

sure what I was getting myself into and I didn't really understand the scale of damage

that I was about to see," said Marion.

Fred Lozy, like many others, was concerned about how the experience was going

to affect him "emotionally and mentally," something also expressed by Anita Yadavalli**:**

> The only fear I had was regarding how my emotions would unravel
> once I saw the devastation and met the owners. However, I decided
> that I would deal with the situation as it approached and ended up
> staying strong.

Similarly, Matt Raleigh wrote in his email interview that he was very concerned

pre-trip about his ability to deal with the emotional challenges of witnessing mass

destruction in person, and may go some way to explaining his sense of relief when his

first observations in New Orleans were that the destruction was not as bad as he thought

they would be. Raleigh was prepared for the worst:

> [I remember] fear that I would be shocked emotionally from the
> damage (which--see above--did not manifest anyway), and fear that
> I would find something that was once alive (which also never
> happened). I just told myself that, if I believed it, I could handle
> anything.

Lauren Carrier expressed insights into her own state of mind, both before and after the trip, regarding this aspect of pre-trip anxiety. Carrier was concerned pre-trip that she would be too emotional, she actually worried about crying the whole time. In New Orleans, however, she discovered an ability to deal with her emotions. Post-trip, however, was a different matter, and she described growing emotional after returning and reflecting on the things that she had said and done:

> I was honestly concerned that I might go to New Orleans and cry at
> everything I saw. I approached this by looking up as many things as
> possible on the area; I also did a few art projects for graphic design
> concerning New Orleans. I was fine the entire time I was down
> there, now looking back, a lot of things brings tears to my eyes. But
> while I was there, I was with a good group of people and there was
> no need to sit around being upset, we were all there to help.

Danielle Kirk remembers her reaction to the presentation by the psychologist at that final pre-trip meeting and thinking about her own ability to handle the experience. She, like many other, committed to go in spite of fears, anxiety and reservations. This commitment and resolve in the face of anxiety generating knowns and unknowns was a commonly expressed source of dissonance that would play out differently for each individual who went on the trip. Said Kirk:

> I remember listening to the psychologist who spoke about
> depression and anxiety. I knew at that point I would change when I
> came back. When your coached that much. But I was more anxious
> about not knowing anyone going down. I have never made true
> relationships with anyone. Lindsay was my one friend. We knew
> nothing going down. We're just going.

The overall result for Danielle Kirk? "I loved it. I didn't expect any of it." Here is

a clear example of Transformative Learning through happenstance.

Others indicated that they were more worried about the physical demands of the anticipated work to be done, rather than the emotional challenges warned of by trip planners and advisors. Like Kaitlin Siefert, Mike Esmail was not sure that he could do the actual work, and this concerned him: "I was afraid for my health because I had a health condition a few weeks before the trip, which could have been exacerbated by physical labor."

Some were more insightful than others about their own strengths and weaknesses and their ability to handle uncertainty. Danielle Cohen had the added PTA of expecting PTA:

> [I had] anxiety of having anxiety--I knew that the pictures were--
> they were strong pictures that we saw. We saw pictures of
> devastated houses…of devastated lives. That scared me. That just--
> the idea of not just being pictures. I knew it was going to be a lot
> worse than it was depicted. It just scared me. I didn't know what I
> was getting myself into. The ambiguity of it all. We didn't know
> transportation right away. We didn't know housing right away. Like
> that uncertainty had me wary.

Ed Levy would recall his growing awareness of pre-trip anxiety for his participants and his attempts to deal with it, restating on a regular basis that no one had to go if they didn't think they would feel comfortable.

> I didn't know what we would encounter at the demolition sites. We
> didn't know what we would be dealing with. There was so much
> that was unknown or what we are getting into. I was very anxious
> getting another person on the trip hurt…that I was trusted with lives.

What also appeared to be going on were cases of pre-trip anxiety becoming easier to articulate once the actual environment was experienced, like Mike Duva's reaction to the guard's stories, or another participant's request for anonymity while relating the story

of a work team mate from Rutgers who admitted to him on the first day at Camp Premier that he was always afraid to use a portable toilet.

For this element of the experiential learning environment, almost all participants processed the experience by emotionalizing the experience, by personalizing the experience, or in some combination.

Method of Description and Synthesis-Emotionalizing the Experience (MDS-e) was clearly represented by the use of terms like scared, fear and uncertainly. Participants confessed to "not knowing what they were getting themselves into." Of the 15 email interviews used, 7 specifically used the words fear, afraid, and/or scared, while 6 of the 12 recorded interviews from participants who went to New Orleans did the same. Seven email interviews used the terms worried or concerned and/or nervous as did 3 audio interviews. Stathis Theodoropoulos admitted to having a "phobia" of snakes.

Others, like Kat Piso, Vicki Wilson and Mike Kolanko, said they were not nervous so much as excited to go. Kolanko confessing to the butterflies the night before the flight to New Orleans and Stathis Theodoropoulos, despite his snake phobia, claimed that his overriding outlook pre-trip was one of excitement.

Method of Description and Synthesis-Personalizing the Experience (MDS-p) was also consistently present in interviews with phrases like, "I knew it was going to be worse," or Danielle Cohen's highly descriptive "the eyes were bulging out of our heads" when she talked about looking at the legal waiver for the first time just days before the trip. Mike Duva's story about his conversation with the Camp Premier guards is another good example. "That caught my attention," he said when the guards were describing the gangs, the looting and reports of rape.

And impacts or lessons learned were also well-described. Many expressed the

recognition of, and the value of all the pre-trip preparation. David Lamb said:

> A lot of times in the meetings it seemed like we were going over the
> same thing a lot of times. I guess when you're taking a group of
> college kids away for a week you need to explain things more than
> once so they remember. I'm sure Ed [Levy] knew what he was
> doing and I don't question him. With the information we had
> though, I definitely think we were more than adequately prepared.
> Simply look at us compared to the other groups we met down there.
> We were definitely in the best prepared shape. I think everyone
> would back that up.

Rajni Singh also said that her concerns were answered in large part by pre-trip

planning:

> I was concerned about the working conditions and getting hurt in
> some way. I was particularly afraid of the prospect of snakes
> inhabiting the debris. I approached these worries by taking proper
> precautions with safety (including wearing all our safety gear that
> we were given) and trusting in my other team members… I felt very
> prepared before departing for this trip because all my questions were
> answered and everything we needed to know, we knew.

Katlin Seifert added that pre-trip planning went a long way to reducing her PTA

and she had a greater, subsequent impression regarding preparation once in New Orleans.

Again, this represents an example of certain pieces falling into place as an experience

unfolds. Being sensitized to the issues may have played a role in subsequent better

understandings:

> I think the pre-trip meetings were definitely adequate. Unfortunately
> it is extremely hard to prepare people for unknown conditions and I
> think the meetings prepared us as best they could. The most
> important things we needed to know and do were before we boarded
> the plane- we needed the right equipment with us and proper shots,
> which the meetings definitely informed us on. I think that our group
> was more prepared for what awaited us than other groups that went
> down with no equipment and even worked in sneakers!

Gratification was often cited as an important element in association with both Pre-Trip Anxiety and Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation. Pre-Trip Anxiety seemed to combine with Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation to generate a sense of satisfaction and the justification of sacrifice in order to help others (See Photographs 13, 14, 15, Appendix F). Tanya Marion said:

> I realized that I should get out and try to do more things like the New Orleans trip if I am able to do so. You can't just assume that someone else will help, you have to get out there and do it yourself and the reward is ten-fold of what you put in.

Vicki Wilson admitted to being concerned about her ability to deal with her emotional response, and planned pre-trip to be ready. This symbolized the approach of a significant segment of participants, who often referred to their pre-trip planning, which included dealing with anticipated strong emotional reaction to the destruction of New Orleans. Wilson said:

> I am an emotional person. I had to prepare for that. You had to tell yourself mentally, "You do what you can do. You're going to help. You can't think about the bad stuff." I knew we would never forget the things we saw.

Analysis

These descriptions set up a very definable and expressible cause and effect pattern of this element of the experiential learning environment – Pre-Trip Anxiety

1. Participants experienced Pre-Trip Anxiety in a variety of ways and described and synthesized this experience primarily using two Methods of Description and Synthesis. Expressed here as a generalization and/or combination of participant's observations, reflections, and perceptions:

    A. Emotionalizing the experience**:** Fear of snakes and other poisonous

    animals; of travel; of finding bodies; and fear of unseen or unknown

    hazards.

    B. Personalizing the experience: I was worried that I wouldn't know

    anyone. I am shy. I was not sure I could do the work. I had never flown

    before. I had never traveled outside of New Jersey before. I defied my

    parents.

2. Participants drew conclusions, afterwards, from the experiences that were

different from their pre-conceived perceptions regarding the trip.

    A. If challenged by fear, then prepare to meet the challenges that are

    producing that fear.

    B. Being well-prepared and equipped as a result of meetings and pre-trip

    instructions went a long way to reducing their anxiety.

    C. I'll be OK. I am going along with others.

    D. I worked despite my fear of snakes or toxins and other unknowns

    because of the need to help others.

    E. My parents learned to deal with the fact of me going. I became more

    independent of my parents. In the end, my parents were proud.

3**.** Impacts: Participants changed what Mezirow (2000) calls changes in habits of

mind or changes in meaning perspectives and Cranton calls changes in frames of

reference (Cranton, 2006, pp. 25-33) to arrive at a newfound understanding:

    A. I made friends for life.

B. Preparation is important. Preparation reduces and/or eliminates anxiety.

C. If I believe in the cause, I will overcome my fears.

D. Travel is great. Hard work is fun. Reduced living conditions are not a problem.

E. I have a new-found relationship with my parents. I am more independent.

F. Gratification and satisfaction can justify personal sacrifice

4. The manner in which these participants experienced this element of the learning environment can then be said to have followed the following analytical steps by using the Methods of Description and Synthesis and evaluating these methods by applying Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service-Learning Experience (2005). This approach helps identify Pre-Trip Anxiety as an element of an experiential learning environment. This specific element and the Methods of Description and Synthesis for this element fit into three of Kiely's Processing Themes:

 (1) Dissonance: The participants on this trip described several distinct moments of unexpectedness, such as reading the pre-trip waiver; when they defied their parents; the actual travel experience; when they got to, or began dealing with the living conditions at Camp Premier; or when they began the actual demolition of homes and had to synthesize this information in light of their pre-trip expectations. They also used descriptors of intensity like "scared, phobia, fear," something Kiely's Themes list as directly related to the duration of the lessons learned.

Dissonance types experienced by participants of this trip included social--where students talked about being afraid of not knowing anyone on the trip, and

communicative--where they read about New Orleans, Hurricane Katrina, or viewed the waiver that outlined many of the hazards anticipated.

(2) Personalizing: Personalizing is present when a person analyzes and learns from an experience of dissonance. Participants repeatedly described their reaction to the Pre-trip Anxiety as it related to their own recognition of that anxiety, what generated that anxiety, how they dealt with the anxiety and what they learned from the experience. Some participants also related their experiences with others who were experiencing anxiety. This Theme includes, according to Kiely, assessment of one's own internal strengths and weakness, and is emotional and visceral in nature. Descriptive terms include phobias, fears, anxieties, and embarrassment.

(3) Connecting: Participants, through their individual and shared experiences, processed this Phase by sensing, sharing, listening, empathizing and doing. They repeatedly described instances, or chains of events concerning their PTA and how it played out (confirmed, refuted, and accommodated) once they got to New Orleans such as listening, relating, feeling and doing.

5. This element and the methods by which it was described and synthesized, and processed can also be demonstrated to have generated or facilitated, at least in part, five of Mezirow's Phases of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20):

(1) Experiencing a Disorienting Dilemma: Here participants were confronted with both single dramatic events, of the type Mezirow and Cranton call epochal or epiphinal in nature, such as the reading of the waiver, but also a more cumulative experience based on attending several pre-trip meetings and/or watching and reading about Hurricane Katrina and the City of New Orleans. Participant descriptions clearly

and repeatedly could point to sense-making moments when they knew they had begun to think differently about themselves, their anxieties and their responses to those anxieties, but not always in epochal terms.

(2) Undergoing Self-Examination: In this Phase, triggered by experiences occurring in Phase One, participants in this study were able to articulate why they felt they needed to re-examine what they had believed about the conditions to be found in New Orleans and/or of victims of Hurricane Katrina before arriving; what they thought they would encounter there, and their ability to deal with unknowns; what they thought about themselves after processing Pre-trip Anxiety; and how it was triggered by the actual experience of their pre-trip relief-effort, planning, information sessions and/or training prior to going to New Orleans.

(3) Conducting a critical assessment of internalized assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation and social expectations was expressed by many participants. This is Phase Three of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20) and was most obviously represented by the significant number of participants who said that this element of the learning environment, PTA, forced them to asses aspects of their individual lives, such as whether it was important for them to know people going on the trip, whether to defy their parents, whether exposure to hazards was justified by the purpose of the trip, or whether concerns about travel would be mitigated by the experience.

(4) Relating Discontent to the Similar Experience of Others: Here participants were describing both what trip expectations that were causing PTA, and what was unknown about the trip that was causing PTA. Participants repeatedly discussed PTA in

terms of a shared experience – at meetings, and/or in discussions amongst friends and recognized that PTA was a common experience among participant members.

(5) Reintegrating Newfound Perspective is Phase 10 of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20). Here participants have reintegrated several newfound sets of knowledge into their outlook, including several that actually demonstrated ways of thinking more critically. This included the need to use preparation to alleviate PTA; the need to share in preparation; the knowledge that others share in travel anxiety; and that personal independence can be attained through defiance.

Element Four: Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD)

Participants gave up their spring break to travel to New Orleans and assist with post-Katrina relief efforts. Camp Premier (See Photographs 16, 17, Appendix F) was a series of large tents pitched in an open field next to an oil refinery near the Industrial Canal, which had undermined its levees and sent a wall of water raging through the streets of St. Bernard's Parish. For many, conditions were fairly primitive although everyone had a military cot to sleep on. Showers and toilets were portable, towed in by trucks and set around the perimeter of the tent areas. Large piles of boots, helmets, and left over clothing were all around the tents. Food was sent to the work sites in coolers. Breakfast and dinner were served in the large tent areas. Privacy was at a minimum. Cell phone service was intermittent and the whole camp was surrounded by a barb-wired fence patrolled by armed guards.

The worksites had no power, water or sewerage. There was often only one portable toilet serving hundreds of workers. Enormous piles of debris were in nearly

every front yard. Vehicles of every sort sat rusted and leaking fluids where they had been
deposited by the storm. Men and women worked and sweated side by side. All work was
done without power tools. All tools had to be shared since they were in limited supply.
Lunch was often taken in the middle of the street as the only place reasonably clear of
debris, but it was anyone's guess what was contained in the sludge that coated every
street and sidewalk surface.

Participants reported, what Vicki Wilson called, "the rawness of the whole thing,"
as being an important element of the experiential learning environment. This element
gave participants an opportunity to experience what Daloz (2000) calls a commitment to
the common good and a commitment to community action, but with a large amount of
self-sacrifice. For many, the conditions represented Mezirow's Phase I Disorienting
Dilemma, and what Walton (2010) calls a disorienting-induced experience.

Scenario 4

Ed Levy is looking for a place for his group to eat lunch. He is Group Leader for
Black 14. Eating inside of the house his team is working on is out of question. It is a mess
inside--hot, sticky, buggy and everything is covered in six inches of gooey, toxic mud.
Not to mention the fact that it smells bad inside. Outside in the yard is not much better.
The six inches of gooey toxic mud covers the yard, which has been piled 10-15 feet high
with the destroyed contents of the house. The same scenario is repeated up and down the
street, where the inside of these homes are being gutted by other teams of volunteer
workers.

The workers don't seem to be bothered by the conditions anymore. They already

have a new perspective on what is important. They sleep in a tent with 22 other people,

gender distinction often breaking down. They eat in a large tent designed to serve meals

to over 1000 people at a time. They stand in long shower lines after the work day to get

clean and put on a change of clothes. Showers and toilets are all mobile units that form a

ring around the large mess and sleeping tents inside the fenced-in compound known as

Camp Premier. Gender lines have been blurred here too; an open shower or an available

toilet is highly valuable. Privacy requirements and personal space are not as highly

valued (See photographs 18, 19,and 22-25, Appendix F).

Volunteers start to wake at 4:00 am to get into the line to drop off laundry. Pick

up is usually after dinner. Standing outside in the dark under the glow of weak

fluorescent lighting, volunteers are a complete mix of age, gender and college of origin.

Hair has not been combed. Makeup has not been applied. Faces have probably not been

washed. Conversation, however, is effortless. The line is full of enthusiastic volunteers.

Many traditional societal barriers seem to have been eliminated, at least for now, and

participants remember this group experience long afterward as a major part of the

learning environment. Photography inside Camp Premier is prohibited, but the scenes are

too new, too "raw" and some photos survive of conditions inside the camp.

So Levy picks a spot in the middle of the street. It is the cleanest spot he can find.

Other groups are lunching nearby in driveways or on curbsides. Levy calls over to his

group. They take off helmets, goggles, masks and gloves. They are laughing, smiling and

upbeat. They sit in the middle of the street for there is almost no chance of any traffic

ever coming by, and none in fact does. Black 14 begins the lunch-time ritual of trading

the contents of their pre-made lunch bags, trading barbs, humor and good-natured

disrespect in equal doses. Around them are piles of debris from the homes they are

gutting, while other teams are performing the same ritual of looking for a place to sit

down and eat. (See Photographs 20, 21, Appendix F).

Discussion

Levy laughed as he recalls lunch times. "Lunches were the best," he smiles when

interviewed, and other participants seemed to echo the surprising reaction to, and

reflections of, their voluntary, in most cases, enthusiastic embrasure of living and

working in what were Spartan conditions by modern standards. Unlike Witnessing Mass

Destruction, Personalizing The Loss, and Pre-Trip Anxiety, however, most participants

didn't synthesize in real time about the working and living conditions, and it was only on

later reflection that their impressions and reactions were articulated. While this appears to

also qualify as another example of Mezirow's Moments of Disequilibrium, its delayed

onset supports the observations of Cranton (2005) and other researchers that say

Transformative Learning experiences need not be generated by epochal or epiphanal

moments like those experienced on the bus ride to Camp Premier.

Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation seemed to be produced by several basic

experiences, and also seemed to work in combination with Personalizing The Loss and

Pre-Trip Anxiety to produce lessons learned and impacts. Most of the reflections were

described and synthesized by personalizing the experience. Danielle Cohen was on the

second flight out of JFK and was receiving texts from her friends on the trip who were on

the first flight and had already arrived at Camp Premier early in the morning:

…I remember my friend called me [from Camp Premier] and complained…because she was on the first flight in. She was like, "this place is kind of creepy. The beds are about an inch off the ground. And they squeak whenever you breathe. [LAUGHTER] The bathrooms are just-- well, you need to experience this for yourself. Get over here now." So I was terrified. That was before we even got on the flight. I was tempted to call my mom to pick me up from JFK at that very second. We got there. And I looked around and there was mud everywhere. There were cops patrolling. We had to wait on line. It was a long flight. We had to wait on line for about an hour to get our IDs.

Long lines, remembers Cohen, were a common theme at Camp Premier:

And this laundry line was just miserable. Because you're coming back from a long day working over at the houses. And everybody in the entire Tent City is on line. Because everybody gets back at the same time. And everybody's on line to get their laundry and right away.

Others, like David Lamb, had similar memories regarding Camp Premier when asked about the negative elements of the experience, recalling, "I would probably say the showers or the toilets, but that wasn't even that bad, it was all part of the experience, I loved it. I had fun."

But others, like Danielle Kirk, had a different reaction to Camp Premier and to the working conditions, showing that participants presented a fairly wide range of expectations and reactions to the conditions in New Orleans and Camp Premier. Snakes, however, remained a fairly consistent concern:

I had lower expectations [of living conditions in New Orleans]. Instead, we had nice tents and cots. We were braced for sleeping on the floor. I thought, I'd be working far more hours. I thought there would be less people there. I was anxious and nervous. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. But I figured, what's the worst that can happen? Except snakes. I didn't want to sleep with them.

Levy's perspective was somewhat different as he described some of his first reactions to Camp Premier.

Camp Premier was a compound. Make no mistake. You're behind these fences. Housing thousands of displaced people. The next thing that hit me was "safety is a concern."

I remember waiting to get processed. The next rude awakening was a policeman telling me how unsafe the area is. "Listen tonight, you'll here gun shots." I looked at him. "Understand, there has been a mass exodus. The first ones back are thieves and gangs that need to re-establish territory." That's why there was a sign by the gate telling you if you're minute late [after midnight curfew], you're not getting in.

Living in Tent City made everything very real. You were processed and photograph. I was hit with the realization everyone here was going to be walking around with photo ID. The Police were always present. Tent City to me was a defining moment that said to me, "This is real." It was about as rustic as it gets. No personal space… It was hard to believe we were in America.

But Camp Premier also had moments of fun and humor for Levy, as it did for many:

Remembering Big Mike [Kolanko] makes me laugh. I hear Mike go right through his cot. He gets up calmly…goes gets on another. The next thing, boom, right to the ground. Finally, he finds one that is just a little bigger than the rest. He gets on it and lies perfectly still, like he's afraid to move or he'll fall through that one.

The main method of describing and synthesizing this information regarding the experiencing of living conditions was through personalization (MDS-p), exemplified here by Mookie Thakore:

I was kind of worried about the bathrooms before the trip. I didn't know if they were clean or not. But, when I got there, the bathrooms were fine. They were cleaner than I thought they would be.

Rajni Singh observed that people's ability to handle the living arrangements improved over time. This caused Singh to evaluate the progress made over time by her colleagues and their ability to handle the adversity of Camp Premier's novel living conditions:

I learned that people are capable of tremendous change in a short time. People who (in the beginning) didn't particularly enjoy communal living, early mornings, sweating, mud, and long lines were able to change and become more comfortable where we were.

Vicki Wilson's single favorite memory of the trip involved Ed Levy and the conditions at Camp Premier. Wilson embraced the challenges and her recollections and reflections often expose her willingness to deal with discomfort in pursuit of what she considers a worthwhile experience. Wilson smiled as she remembered:

Camp Premier. We were staying in a tent within the tent. It was great. My fondest memories are from that tent. I remember running into this guy I use to date randomly. "Wow," I thought, "other people are here." It made me feel great, feel positive. I remember I peeked into a guy's tent, just to grab some guy. There was Dean Levy in his underwear. It brought a sense to it. There is my Dean staying in the same tent dealing with the same conditions. He became a real person.

Wilson was identifying the source of a skill that results from Services Learning that authors Pritchard & Whitehead, III (2004, pp. 49-50) call "Learning to Work with Authority Figures." Here she clearly articulates a chance encounter with a dean from her college that changes her perspective of him and a change in her previously held perceptions of the power distance between them.

Not everyone adapted so readily. Danielle Cohen, for example remembers the many discomforts she experienced at Camp Premier:

You're walking around barefoot because your boots can't go into the Tent City. You're walking around in sweaty tank tops because you took all your top layers off to throw in the laundry. It was miserable. Your bandana's falling off. Your pigtails are falling out. I remember there were curfew hours on the Tent City. And we were all just really confused. Like why would they have to have a curfew on this? We don't understand. Got into the tent. Saw the beds were about an inch off the ground. And they squeak whenever you move.

But it was exactly this discomfort, some of it anticipated and some of it unexpected, that made this element of the learning experience worthy of reflection. Differences in the range of reactions to the living conditions at Camp Premier, and the working conditions at the job sites seemed to have no relationship to gender or previous travel experience.

Danielle Kirk laughed as she remembered the living conditions found in Camp Premier, saying, "The showers? The showers were something else…they were comical."

Kat Piso remembers the lunch breaks with similar pleasure. "Everybody crowding around…even though you're in this horrible setting. Making the best of what you have."

Mike Kolanko spoke for many other participants when reflecting on the gratification received by the whole experience, noting that the difficult living and working conditions were more than justified by the purpose of the Service Learning experience, and that EVD seemed to work in combination with PTL to create impacts he described as, "Don't sweat the details," and "I learned how little I really need." Kolanko said:

> It was basically just us going there and cleaning out houses so that people could restart their lives. It was just an overall…it was a lot of work. I remember it was really hot, [we] had to wear all the protective equipment. But I honestly wouldn't have traded that trip for any other possible spring break trip I could have had that freshman year. It really is…I still think back, I would not have traded that trip for anything.

Nakeefa Bernard reported that she felt that her upbringing in Trinidad prepared her for hot, sticky weather with swarms of mosquitoes, and that the broken cot that she slept on taught her that in the future, she "should sleep on the floor." For her, issues like food, sleeping arrangements and shower lines were "superficial," and like Kolanko,

inconveniences were far outweighed by her sense of gratification. She was not, she said,

going to New Orleans expecting a "lavish lifestyle. "What else are you going to do?"

Bernard asked rhetorically, "We were there for them."

For Vicki Wilson, EVD was all positive:

> The lines [in Camp Premier] were such a big part of the experience.
> I grew up camping. Our house had one bathroom. We grew up
> sharing. [Camp Premier] was a bonding thing. You don't need a
> whole lot of privacy. You're not there for you.

For many of the participants, personalizing this element of the experience seemed

to come naturally and played out in many different ways. Stathis Theodoropoulos

reported that it was not just the difficult or inconvenient living and working conditions

that had its affect, but the actual structure of the day and demands on his time that caused

him to reflect and think about his parents in a new and more positive light:

> I wasn't really used to it [the physical labor]. We got through it no
> problem, but it wore you down just a little bit. I got injured too
> during the trip as well. I had dry wall fall on my head, so that was
> tough. And also for myself, getting up that early, I wasn't used to
> getting up at four-thirty in the morning, taking a shower, getting
> ready to leave by six-thirty or seven was kind of different, but was
> cool because your day was so structured, you knew what you had to
> do exactly when. You just kind of learned how to deal with it. I
> think that was something else that was kind of hard. I'm not a
> morning person. But by the end of the week, I had no problem
> getting up at five in the morning and working starting at seven.

Nakeefa Bernard, who like many, personalized the experience and combined it

with WMD and PTL to arrive at newfound understandings about herself:

> I definitely felt differently about myself. I guess before the trip I
> never really considered myself particularly privileged in any way,
> like financially. I went to college and I had a lot of loans and I knew
> people that didn't have to take out loans and I always had some sort
> of job to support myself, but I didn't think that I was
> underprivileged in the way that some people are. But I also didn't
> think I was really in any way in a good status or well-off by any

means. But when I got down there I realized even the conditions I could imagine, the way that houses looked before the storm, even the condition of the houses prior to that, probably were not in good shape, especially those in the lower Ninth Ward, the ones that we worked on. I definitely reevaluated what my status was and my idea of privilege. I think it made me realize how lucky I was to be who I was, and to be in the place I was in.

Analysis

These descriptions set up a very definable and expressible cause and effect pattern of this element of the experiential learning environment – Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation.

1. Participants Experienced Voluntary Deprivation as an absence or reduction of modern conveniences; lack or loss or privacy; reduction in sanitation; and large communal living. Most participants attempted to describe and synthesize these experiences by relating it to their own previous experiences, and thus by personalizing the experience, they were able to articulate the experience, impacts and lessons learned. The primary method of description was:

> A. Personalizing the experience: I was worried; It reminded me of camping; It was fun; The rawness of the whole thing is what made it valuable.

2. Participants drew conclusions, afterwards, from the experiences that were different from their pre-conceived perceptions regarding the trip.

> A. I could handle the physical labor; I could handle the long lines; the people here lost everything; we had it better than most.

> B. It was easier to deal with because we were in a group.

C. It was fun. It was worth the sacrifice to help others.

3. Impacts: Participants changed what Mezirow (2000) calls changes in habits of mind or changes in meaning perspectives and Cranton calls changes in frames of reference (Cranton, 2006, pp. 25-33) to arrive at a newfound understanding:

A. How little I really need to be happy.

B. Don't sweat the details.

C. I want to help others and I am willing to make personal sacrifices.

D. Hard work can be fun.

4. The manner in which these participants experienced this element of the learning environment can then be said to have followed the following analytical steps by using the Methods of Description and Synthesis and evaluating these by applying Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service Learning Experience (2005) and seeing if Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service Learning Experience (2005) fit. This approach helps identify Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation as an element of an experiential learning environment. This specific element and the Methods of Description and Synthesis for this element fit into five of Kiely's Processing Themes:

(1) Contextual Border Crossing: The participants were engaged in direct service work opportunities that exposed thematic elements such as their personal biographies; their prior outlooks regarding their own personal needs; how they previously viewed or thought about the individual victims of Katrina from both a political and historical perspective; what they now thought about their own role in recovery efforts; and their place in the bigger picture of recovery efforts. For this element, many viewed their loss or reduction of modern conveniences, privacy, sanitation and even safety as a

small price to pay in exchange for the opportunity to be of service to others. It also

exposed them to the living, eating and sleeping conditions of many hurricane victims who

remained in New Orleans six months post-storm.

(2) Dissonance: The participants described several distinct moments of

unexpectedness such as encountering the conditions at Camp Premier--the long lines and

communal living, as well as the working conditions and the job site issues such as lack of

sanitation. They also used descriptors of intensity, something Kiely's Themes list as

directly related to the duration of the lessons learned. Here, participants discussed the

incongruence of enjoying the hard work and reduced living conditions in which they

found themselves. They often described this part of the experience in terms of how they

felt about it, although participants also used descriptors derived from, or compared to,

previous experiences. Dissonance types included social, environmental and physical in

combination because the experience was often described and synthesized in terms of both

their individual reaction to EVD and what the work group, or even larger group of

volunteers was doing about it.

(3) Personalizing: Participants repeatedly described their reaction to Camp

Premier and to the work site conditions with a mixture of worried anticipation, fear

and/or repulsion; but in many cases, with acceptance, pride and enjoyment. Participants

expressed themselves in terms of fear, anxiety, and happiness, all terms consistent with

this Theme of Kiely's model. EVD produced in many participants a reaction that the hard

work and reduced living conditions were necessary sacrifices that needed to be made in

order to assist others. Participants also reflected that EVD in combination with PTA ,

PTL and/or WMD produced a lesson learned, or impact, that they do not need as much as they previously thought they did in order to be happy.

(4) Processing: This Theme relates to individualizing the experience as well as experiencing the situation in group settings, which all participants did in New Orleans and described afterward. It includes, according to Kiely, working, waiting in long lines, experiencing inconvenience and difficult conditions, as well as direct observation, as a manner of questioning and exploring for causes and effects. Here participants were able to process the experience in such a fashion that established a clear-cut chain of cause and effect leading many to re-evaluate their own personal needs. Participants often processed this element in combination with PTL and/or WMD.

(5) Connecting: Participants, using personalization as the primary method of description and synthesis utilized descriptive terms that Kiely calls for in this Theme-- empathizing, caring, sharing, and talking in both reflective and non-reflective discourse. At Camp Premier, they worked (completed chores), played games, shared stories, and in some cases treated wounds. Many expressed a newfound empathy for the victims after living in similar conditions for a week that the victims had been living in since the storm. The shared experience of loss or reduction in sanitation and privacy, in combination with their observations and reflections as a result of WMD and/or PTL allowed many participants to connect these three elements of the experiential learning environment to produce the lessons learned and impacts listed, such as reduced personal needs and requirements for a happy life, as well as the value of sacrifice as it relates to Service Learning experiences.

5. This element and the methods by which it was described and synthesized, and processed can also be demonstrated to have generated or facilitated, at least in part, five of Mezirow's Phases of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20):

(1) Experiencing a Disorienting Dilemma: Here participants were confronted with instances of incongruence based on their previous experiences around issues of sanitation, privacy and comfort. Unlike Witnessing Mass Destruction, however, participant descriptions often were expressed in terms of retrospection. They stated that they enjoyed the conditions and felt that giving up comfort was a worthy sacrifice in the furtherance of the desire to help others. Most could point to sense-making moments when they knew they had begun to think differently about themselves and others on their group, but not always in epiphinal terms.

(2) Undergoing Self-Examination: In this Phase, triggered by experiences occurring in Phase One, and in combination with Witnessing Mass Destruction and Personalizing The Loss, participants in this study were able to articulate why they felt differently about issues of sanitation, privacy and comfort after living in Camp Premier and working in destroyed neighborhoods, often in comparison to the situation faced by survivors of the storm still living in tent cities like Camp Premier. Participants could clearly recognize that they had changed their outlooks on personal needs, what they thought about themselves after Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation, and how it was triggered by the actual experience of their relief effort in New Orleans.

(3) Conducting a Critical Assessment of Internalized Assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation and social expectations was expressed by many participants. This is Phase Three of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 23) and was most obviously

represented by the significant number of participants who said that this element of the

learning environment – EVD, in combination with WMD and PTL – caused them to

easily accept the reduced living conditions that included loss of privacy, reduced

sanitation and reduction of comfort. Participants also assessed their own internal

assumptions about the plight of survivors who remained in tent cities like Camp Premier,

and the actual impact of recovery efforts to date.

(4) Relating Discontent to the Similar Experience of Others – Recognizing that

the Problem is Shared: Here, in combination with learning environment elements

Witnessing Mass Destruction and Personalizing The Loss, participants of this Service

Learning experience related instances of recognition of their own happiness in spite of

sacrificing privacy, sanitation and comfort, by discussing their shared nature of the

experience with members of their own immediate group; with members of the larger

group of relief effort volunteers; and with survivors of the storm who still lived in tent

cities like Camp Premier six months after the storm. Participants shared this experience

on multiple levels, including, their immediate group, the larger Rutgers Group, the larger

group of volunteers and the people from New Orleans with whom they interacted.

(5) Reintegrating Newfound Perspective is Phase 10 of Transformative Learning

(Cranton, 2006, p. 20). Here participants have reintegrated several newfound sets of

knowledge into their outlook, including several that actually demonstrated ways of

thinking more critically. This included ideas concerning personal space and privacy,

sanitation needs, and communal living; that living in reduced circumstances can be

enjoyable; and that EVD is worth the experience for a good cause.

Element Five: Experiencing Others (EO)

Transformative Learning research had early on uncovered the power of experiencing others--meeting individuals, or new groups of peoples--as a common cause for Transformative Learning experiences. Subsumed within this concept is encountering other individuals within your perceived group in such a manner that it generates a change in your habit of mind, frames of reference, and/or your preconceived beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about yourself and others. Daloz (2000) writes about this recognition of others as an important aspect of Transformative Learning. In New Orleans, students would work and live side by side with authority figures--producing a resultant erosion of power distances, and a recognition of the mentoring community that Daloz (2000) stated are two other valuable aspects of Transformative Learning. The trip to New Orleans produced a plethora of descriptions of this process, with participants clearly able to articulate this element of the experiential learning environment in all three Methods of Description and Synthesis, and what lessons they believed they learned about themselves and others.

Scenario 5

Ed Levy suggests an evening out for the entire group. There is a tavern located two miles away. The group can walk there through deserted streets and neighborhoods. It will be after dark when the group returns. Because there are no street lights or house lights, flashlights are carried and 40 people or so set off (Photograph 29, Appendix F). It is mid-week. Already individuals' views about themselves and others on the trip are changing. Group social barriers that existed at Rutgers are breaking down. Students from

Residence Life have been sleeping in tents and working alongside students from

Recreation--an apparent tribal taboo. Fifty-somethings converse easily with teenagers

while working, eating, and even showering. The group has met students from other

colleges and universities and has not always formed a favorable impression. Workers

have met the owners or family members of the homes in which they were working.

Valuables and sentimental items have been returned to the victims, something that often

overwhelms workers with emotion and gratification. Putting faces and personal stories to

the work they are doing reinforces and justifies the effort. Their cause and their efforts

are redoubled.

At the tavern, it is quickly established that the group is from Rutgers and here to

help with post-Katrina clean-up. The bar owner produces trays full a Creole shrimp,

while warm beer and soda are produced from eclectic boxes of salvaged goods

(Photograph 30, Appendix F). There have been few deliveries for months and the

generator can't handle both lighting and cooling requirements for long. Warm beer and

hot shrimp will have to do. Word goes out quickly that Rutgers is in the bar. Neighbors

arrive to meet and greet. Ed Levy is a celebrity and people take turns shaking his hand,

some crying. "You don't know what this means to us," they say. No money is accepted at

the tavern from the Rutgers group, which begins playing darts and pool with the locals,

who all have their own stories to tell. This bar, says the owner to Levy, remained open

throughout the storm, retreating to the roof when the flood waters came.

It is time to leave and the group assembles to walk back to Camp Premier in the

dark. Outside, a pick-up truck pulls over and people jump out to shake Levy's hand. "We

heard what ya'll are doing and we just wanted to say thanks," they say. Handshakes turn

into hugs. The group walks back, excited, laughing, and uplifted. Levy recalls the episode two-and-a half years later…tears easily coming to his eyes.

Discussion

The interviews are replete with participant's reflections and memories of their changing views toward themselves and others as a result of their experiences in New Orleans. Some participants recognized that their preconceived ideas about fellow students at Rutgers, or their beliefs about the older staff members needed to be changed after eight days of living and working together in the conditions they found themselves in. Others had stronger reflections associated with their encounters with individuals or groups other than those within the immediate Rutgers contingent. Overall, Experiencing Others seemed to generate or facilitate four specific types of Transformative Learning experiences:

> 1. I had to change my opinion, belief, or assumptions regarding another individual or group of individuals that I personally knew before going this trip.
>
>> A. It forced me to think differently about myself.
>
> 2. After I met people from New Orleans, I formed a much more intelligent, knowledgeable, and informed understanding about New Orleans and the victims of Hurricane Katrina than the ones that I had before this trip.
>
> 3. I formed favorable/unfavorable opinions about students from other colleges that I met on this trip.

4. I (a male) was surprise that my female counterparts could handle the physical labor and tough living conditions. It caused me to re-evaluate my previous assumptions and perceptions about women.

Here is a concrete example of what Daloz (2000) writes that Mandela called breaking with "Tribal Givens," and "Givens" are something that Brookfield (2000) writes must be penetrated by critical reflection –something that both Ed Levy and Mike Kolanko, two men separated by some 40 years of age and experience, articulated extensively when recalling and reflecting on their experiences in New Orleans.

These types of experiences led to the some common conclusions:

1. I realize that my previously held opinions regarding others were in large part the result my own previously held assumptions, perceptions and beliefs regarding others. By changing my opinion about them, I had to change my opinion about myself.

2. There are a lot of good people out there who want to help.

3. There is a lot of suffering in the world.

4. Women work hard and are strong and courageous.

Experiencing Others also generated reflections regarding the group experience in general. Many participants commented on their feelings about belonging to such large-scale group efforts as were the post-Katrina recovery efforts, or belonging to something that involved their university, Rutgers, on such a large scale.

The first area of discussion, then, turns on those reflections that deal with newfound understandings about others within one's own group. For some, it was easy to

make new friends and get over any pre-existing barriers. David Lamb, for example,

recalled making new friends by just lifting and removing an overturned refrigerator with

his workmates. Mike Esmail said that he was hoping to:

> …grow a little bit closer with my colleagues, and my peers, and my
> friends that went with me on the trip… I was also hoping that I
> would be able to give something back. I knew that this was
> obviously a philanthropy thing, so I wanted to give something back,
> something that obviously was very much needed in the New Orleans
> area.

Nakeefa Bernard was "nervous" about how others that she knew from Rutgers

would perform, exactly like Danielle Cohen's and Kat Piso's concerns regarding their

friends and work team mate Jeff Ryder. Previous experience with individuals in the

college setting did not necessarily transmit the impression that certain individuals would

be up to the demands of post-Katrina clean-up work, at least not in Nakeefa Bernard's

mind:

> I guess some of the people that I worked with on my team, not that I
> didn't really have faith in them, I didn't really see… envision them
> working in the way that they did once they were there. You guys
> had to prepare us, we had all those meetings, talking about physical
> labor, going through all the moldy houses, but I didn't really think
> some people would be able to handle it. Maybe that's just me being
> judgmental, but I was nervous for them.

On the scene, conditions and her own observations forced her to reconsider

(See photographs 26, 27, Appendix F). Bernard continued:

> But when we got down there and everyone just came together and
> just hacked it. My specific team worked on two houses while we
> were there, just watching them, it was amazing to see that because I
> had a completely different notion of who they were. Seeing them in
> that atmosphere made me give them more credit than I had before. I
> think that's really the biggest pre and post conceptions I had.

Kat Piso said that she wasn't worried about herself and how she would perform

on the trip, but she had definite reservations about other students from Rutgers. Like

Bernard, she had formed preconceived ideas about her friends and colleagues that were

changed by the experience.

> I was just like…these guys are going to be horsing around all the
> time. Like, I love them and they're fun people, but it's not people I
> would pick to do hard work with. So, I had concerns about that. But
> by the end I couldn't believe how well we had pulled together and
> how much everybody did what they were supposed to do.

After observing her friends in action, however, she acknowledged her

newfound understandings:

> I think it made me think differently of a lot of people that I worked
> with…it made me look at them differently in terms of what they
> were willing to sacrifice for people that they didn't know.

Danielle Kirk, like many, also admitted to having formed preconceived notions

about her workmates, and changing those opinions. Like Mandela, she acknowledged

her pre-existing frame of reference and the source of that prejudice. In Kirk's case, she

could point to an epiphanal moment, on the second day at the worksite with her

teammates from Black 15:

> They [Black 15] were people I would not have picked beforehand. I
> was prejudiced about kids in sororities…fraternities…their
> personalities. It was based on my general college
> experience…drinkers…partiers. And then at some point it becomes
> a team. Everyone is there for the same reason.

> I became aware of a change on the second day, sitting on the curb
> and talking with another person. I said to myself "damn, my
> preconceptions are so wrong." Now I definitely think differently
> about people.

The participants also confessed of having formed opinions regarding the people of

New Orleans before arriving there, or, not really having considered the individual

residents of New Orleans and victims of Hurricane Katrina (See Photograph 28,

Appendix F). Kat Piso recalled her encounter with family members of the owner who

used to live in one of the houses her work group was demolishing. This person's story

put faces and names to the ordeal, a fact that was not lost on Piso, as well as the others

who reflected that meeting the people of New Orleans and the victims of the tragedy as

being the most significant aspect of the trip.

Mike Kolanko and his group had a similar experience and similar

reaction, but Kolanko's reflection goes to a commonly voiced motivation for

volunteering--a sense of self-gratification:

> The one lady from the one house we cleaned out, she came and
> stopped by and she thanked us and that was one of the most
> rewarding things on the entire trip…for this lady to show up
> thanking us. And she offered to pay us. And we're like, no, no, we
> can't take money. "If you want, give it back to Habitat for Humanity
> or some other donation. We're here on our own and we wanted to
> help you out." That was one of the most rewarding things and I'll
> think about that if someone ever does anything really, really nice for
> me. It's like whole 'pay it forward thing.' I feel like it makes me feel
> good inside that people are just helping people for no other reason
> than just a thank you.

Lauren Carrier thought that meeting the actual victims of Hurricane Katrina was

the most important single element of the trip:

> I am not sure if the trip would have been complete without meeting
> the owner's sister of the second house we were working on. All
> week long we had not met either of the owner's of the homes we
> worked on. The last day, last possible hour a woman showed up to
> thank us and tell us her story. Seeing someone that we were helping
> made the entire trip.

For Danielle Kirk, meeting the people for New Orleans left an important

impression. Here she describes meeting the owner of the home that she and Black 15

were working on:

> The owner came back and told us about the house. It helped us to
> piece together people's family. We got thank you cards from both
> families that we helped. It made you feel great. It changed you.
> How? I am more conscientious of things I hold on to. I never take
> people for granted. I think about what I really need.

Mike Duva remembers a night in a local tavern, where he and others from

Rutgers met local residents and the significant impact that it made on him:

> I think I saw the "light" when a group of us were out at a bar on
> Bourbon Street one night. Some of us had our Rutgers Hurricane
> Relief Shirts on and we were sitting at a bar (Anne, Justin, Brian,
> and a few others) when this older gentleman (late 50s, early 60s)
> sitting next to me inquired about our shirts. We explained we were
> with Rutgers Univ. and volunteered our Spring Break time to gut
> houses in St. Bernard's Parish. Well this guy happened to be a
> Constable for St. Bernard's Parish and had lived in the community.
> It about brought tears to his eyes to know we were doing such a
> wonderful thing to help rebuild his community. He was so gracious
> and insisted on paying for all our drinks while we were there, which
> he stated was the least he could do. He kept reiterating what a
> wonderful thing we were doing for his community. He was at the
> bar and had a few friends with him who were also just as gracious.
> He personally thanked each and every one of us, individually by
> shaking our hand and talking about where each of us was from and
> so on. I have never seen anyone to this day be so thankful and
> appreciative of anything I have ever done before in my life. It really
> made me feel good inside about what we were doing for these
> people who were no different than us. It is really hard to put into
> words the feeling of that particular moment, but I will never forget it
> as long as I live.

At Camp Premier, Rutgers students met students from other schools engaged as

were they, in a large-scale Service Learning experience. Students admitted thinking that

the other college students were automatically "cool" and driven by the same motivating

factors to help. Some Rutgers students further admitted to being disappointed when they

learned that this was not so. This caused participants from Rutgers to reflect on the

connected ideas of service learning, for-credit courses in college, and volunteerism.

Many opined that college credit should never be associated with Service Learning.

Howard University, for example sent a large group of several hundred students,

none of whom brought protective clothing. They were allowed to stay around Camp

Premier all day, but were not bussed to worksites to assist with demolition. Howard

students seemed to never go to sleep at night and were never present for early morning

breakfast. This induced a negative reaction, typified by Anne Nielsen, who was

disappointed at "unorganized schools that parasitized on the trip's meaning."

This notion was reflective of ideas expressed by authors Pritchard and Whitehead,

III (2004, pp. 2-4), where they write, that among other things, Service Learning should

be designed by the students, at least in part, to generate ownership; meet an authentic

need; and should not be an add-on to existing curriculum, required for graduation, or

assigned as punishment. The raison d'être, should therefore, be for the service of others.

It is from that experience that benefit to the servers is derived.

Said Mike Duva, as he spoke about his encounter with students from other

institutions:

> It makes me think of Howard University's piss poor effort and waste
> of resources, which were just an excuse to get off the campus for a
> week. An 18-hour bus ride with free food and lodging for a week for
> college credit, sure! The 250 plus unprepared students almost
> ruined my entire week, they really were the only complaint of the
> entire trip I had. They should have turned those buses right around.

Danielle Kirk had several reactions to the other groups – mostly students – who

she encountered at Camp Premier, ranging from pride in her own group, disappointment

with some from other groups, and awe for an individual who came to New Orleans on

her own:

> Noticing people from the other schools…that caught me off guard. We
> had everything we needed and other kids were walking around in flip
> flops, no boots. It would have been a horrible feeling to go help people
> and you can't, because you don't have something (like protective
> equipment and clothing)… I remember being in the tents. Our tent had
> other colleges. One girl was there all by herself. I was in awe of her.

Meeting people who came to New Orleans and lived in Camp Premier with a

different agenda, a different set of sensibilities, a different set of purposes, and in the

case of some fellow college students who apparently had a different schedule, had an

impact on Danielle Kirk:

> I thought about other people who were in the tent with me and didn't
> turn out the light, talking to their boyfriends on the phone… I am a lot
> more conscientious about how I treat other people.

Other participants related concerns about such Service Learning programs that

attract students that are only there for the credit and specifically opposed suggestions

that future service learning programs be for-credit experiences on the grounds that the

most important lessons would not be learned. Anne Nielsen said:

> I'm not sure (about the idea of for-credit service learning). The idea of
> volunteering is that you are freely giving your time. Getting credit for it
> seems to cheapen it for me. Also, there is a certain pride in knowing
> that you raised money to go and that you wanted to go badly enough
> that you worked for it.

Anne Nielsen, who said that as a result of the trip, she felt for the first time, what

she called "Rutgers Pride", spoke for several other volunteers when she had objections

to the actual communities that Rutgers worked in – described at the time as middle

class:

> I was a little worried about emotional effects resulting from cleaning up
> a person's entire life but having such an incredible group (go Black
> 14!!!) was a great support group, if it was needed. Michael [Duva] and
> I talked about what we saw but the main feeling I felt after the trip was
> guilt that I wasn't doing enough. It did concern me that we were
> helping a more economically able community who may have had more
> financial means to pull themselves out of the trouble.

But most of the students seemed to revel in the large gathering of other students

from around the country that lent an undeniable energy and atmosphere of excitement to

Camp Premier. After all, everyone there was giving up a typical spring break

opportunity. For Stathis Theodoropoulos, the chance to travel and meet fellow college

students from around the nation had a big impact:

At that point I don't think I was really exposed to any other group of college students aside from New Jersey. New Orleans was probably the furthest West I had ever been in my life at that point. I mostly stayed around New York state, Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey; so I never really got exposed to other parts of the country and that was actually my first spring break where I actually left home too, so that was cool. We met people from California, Nebraska, Wyoming, all these states. One girl I went to high school with, I probably talked to her once in my life, don't remember her name, and she comes up to me at our camp, and was like, "you're Stat from Kearney, right?" And it was kind of weird because I've never seen her in my town, but I go down there and I see someone. It was really interesting the group of people that would go down there, and learning what type of people are from different parts of the country, talking to them a little bit. So that was pretty interesting. I enjoyed that.

When asked what impacts or lessons learned resulted from their experience with others, both within the Rutgers group and the people they met in New Orleans, most were able to clearly articulate their reflections. David Lamb, for example, said, "I learned that it takes a lot of good people, and there are a lot, especially there, to make it work. The people down there were just incredible, from the volunteers to the residents, simply incredible people."

Mookie Thakore recognized that it was important to him to have learned that others shared his desire to serve, recalling, "I learned that there is more good in other people than I previously thought. I was surrounded by GOOD people who had nothing to gain from this experience personally, and just wanted to help their fellow man. I am so glad that I went on this trip, because it taught me that even though people can be selfish and cruel, they can also be selfless, compassionate, and whole-hearted." Both Anne Neilsen and Mike Esmail expressed a common reaction to seeing so many willing volunteers who wanted to help in the face of so much destruction and loss. "It reinforced the idea that a tragedy brings people together," said Nielsen. Esmail had a similar reaction, saying, "People care about each other in extreme conditions."

Nakeefa Bernard had a similar, but at the same time, a more complex reaction to

the people of New Orleans that she encountered. She described and synthesized her

reactions by personalizing her reflections using her own previous encounters with

persons from her family's native Trinidad, as well as her experiences gained by living

in New Jersey. Bernard, like many others, was trying to make sense of her observations.

Despite having just gone through one of the worst natural disasters in recorded history,

and despite almost everyone having experienced staggering personal losses, Bernard

observed more than just the goodness in people that she encountered in New Orleans.

To her, it was a combination of the people of New Orleans having what she called a

"Southern mentality" and a stronger sense of community. This, said Bernard, was

somehow different from her New Jersey experiences, and importantly, worthy of

emulation:

> …the people in New Orleans, even though they had just lived
> through this huge, record-breaking natural disaster, they just seemed
> happier and more lifted and more at peace, just easy-going. Maybe
> that's just the Southern mentality, but they just had this bond with
> the streets, with the people, with their fellow people, tourists. There
> was just a different feeling than New York City or New Brunswick
> or Jersey City, where I'm from. Even in that sense, they had more of
> that privilege than I did. They were better off in that aspect than me
> in my community. I think seeing them made me realize what was
> missing from my life and from my community; that camaraderie.
> Everyone doesn't know everyone. It's a large city, but everyone still
> felt comfortable with each other, whereas here (New Brunswick),
> it's not like that. Despite the fact that they had this huge disaster,
> they were still happy.

Tanya Marion also reflected on the residents of New Orleans, and the lessons

she learned from their example (See Photograph 31, Appendix F):

> I was surprised at the state of the residents who were affected by the
> storm. I expected to see shock and sadness. Instead we were greeted
> by incredibly thankful and positive people. Instead of people in a
> state of confusion about the future, I found people to be encouraging

and ready to move on. The shock was over and now they were
focused on getting things together and starting life over again. They
were very appreciative and willing to work with us on getting their
lives back together again.

What Bernard and Marion were experiencing and articulating precisely was a key

element, according to authors Pritchard & Whitehead, III (2004, p. 50), of Service

Learning experiences that they call "The Ability to Work with People from Diverse

Cultures" and includes people from different ethnicities, ages, and lifestyles, from their

own. Here Bernard and Marion identified qualities and characteristics of New Orleans

residents that they not only identified as "different" but worthy of emulation.

Some male participants commented on the amount and type of work they

observed being done by their female counterparts, and the big impact that it had on the

pre-existing views about women and hard physical labor. Woman lived and worked in

the same conditions. There were no apparent differences in labor, skill or effort at the

worksite, again something that many men were apparently observing for the first time.

Women all dressed in the same work clothes with boots, helmet, mask, goggles and

work gloves as the men. They pushed wheelbarrows, swung sledge hammers, raked and

pick-axed side-by-side with the men. They dealt with the same lack of toilets at the

worksite and the same sanitation conditions. Where tools were unavailable, they took

off their gloves and used their bare hands (See Photographs 32-35). Ed Levy smiled as

he recalled:

I couldn't believe how hard the women physically worked. I'll never
forget it. That was not meant to be a sexist statement. Men are
physiologically bigger stronger, but it wasn't like ''you women
break the glass, and we'll lift the couch." No it took all 12 people to
get that rug out. I remember like it was yesterday just seeing the
strength of some of these women, some of them small, maybe 100
pounds… I have a picture in my mind. Tanya Marion. It was time to

take a lunch break. I go over to Tanya who is ripping sheetrock with her bare hands…ripping the stuff off the wall, I am like "unbelievable." Whether it was in Tent City or at work… Nobody had specific jobs. Everyone did everything. You know how hard it was to wheel the wheelbarrow, but it wasn't like "ok big, strong guy, you wheel the wheelbarrow" No, it was everybody did everything.

Mike Kolanko echoed Levy and spoke for other men on the trip:

They (the women in his group) would do stuff that I was surprised at…like our two littlest girls pushed out a wheelbarrow that I would have had trouble…it's stuff like that, where it's like, they were just trying their hardest, everyone is just trying their hardest. We were doing things that I did not think I would possibly be doing, like taking down a ceiling fan with a sledgehammer, just trying to get it off the thing because it's nailed on like four sides. The girls, a lot of them in our group, were like, "give me the sledgehammer," and we're like, "uh-oh." It's just a sight to see one of our really short girls standing on a ladder just nailing something with a sledgehammer, just ripping it off the ceiling. It was a lot of that. I guess that surprised me a lot… I guess it kind of changed my perception of how, when it came down to…we were just all working as hard as possible.

What Levy and Kolanko are describing is what Mezirow (2000) calls taking on new roles, or the recognition of new roles. What occurred however, may also be described as a recognition and acceptance of new roles by women and recognition of that fact by Levy and Kolanko. Either way, it was a profound recognition for Levy, Kolanko and other male participants, opening up a whole new way of thinking about women's roles based on new experiences and observations.

Analysis

These descriptions set up a very definable and expressible cause and effect pattern of this element of the experiential learning environment – Experiencing Others.

1. Participants Experienced Others (OE) in a variety of ways and described and synthesized this experience using all three Methods of Description and Synthesis expressed here as a generalization and/or combination of participant's observations, reflections, and perceptions:

> A. Personalizing the experience: I knew some people before the trip; I met new people in New Orleans; I thought differently about them afterward.
>
> B. Sensing the experience: I saw them swinging a sledge hammer, pushing a wheel barrow; Others seemed happy.
>
> C. Emotionalizing the experience: It made me proud. I was happy.

2. Participants drew conclusions, afterwards, from the experiences that were different from their preconceived perceptions regarding the trip.

> A. People who I thought might not work hard changed my mind about them.
>
> B. The People of New Orleans after all they had been through, still had a great attitude.
>
> C. Women can do hard physical labor and live in rough conditions.
>
> D. I had preconceived assumptions about myself and others.

3. Impacts: Participants were able to articulate how the experience changed their habit of mind regarding several previous outlooks regarding their own lives.

> A. I thought differently about my friends afterward.
>
> B. I thought differently about women afterward.
>
> C. I thought differently about other people afterward.
>
> D. I thought differently about myself afterward.

4. The manner in which these participants experienced this element of the learning environment can then be said to have followed the following analytical steps by using the Methods of Description and Synthesis, and then evaluating these methods by applying Kiely's Processing Model for Transformative Learning from a Service Learning Experience (2005). This specific element and the Methods of Description and Synthesis for this element fit into all five of Kiely's Processing Themes:

(1) Contextual Border Crossing: The participants were engaged in direct service work opportunities that exposed thematic elements such as their personal biographies, their prior outlooks regarding their own personal viewpoints regarding others, how they previously viewed or thought about the individual victims of Katrina from a sociological perspective, what they now thought about their own role in recovery efforts, and their place in the bigger picture of recovery efforts. Participants related reflections on the differing socio-economic status of victims, and the deterioration of lines of differentiation that had existed prior to the trip to New Orleans based on their self-identifying groupings of friends, acquaintances, position of authority.

Some thought about, and were forced to think differently about the differences between men and women and their physical abilities.

(2) Dissonance: The participants described several distinct moments of unexpectedness when encountering the conditions in New Orleans that led to new-found understandings about themselves and how they understood others. Living conditions in Camp Premier included a reduction in privacy, sanitation and comfort, requiring everyone to adjust their personal needs in these areas. The worksite provided many opportunities to engage in physical work alongside, and in cooperation with,

people of whom preconceived notions had already been formed regarding the other

person's, strength, ability to do work, attitude and commitment.

(3) Personalizing: Participants repeatedly described their reaction to living and

working with others at Camp Premier and the work site conditions with a mixture of

worried anticipation, but often changing to acceptance and enjoyment. They did

however, also use words of disgust and disrespect when describing their impression of

students from other schools. Terms of anxiety, joy and happiness, and disgust are all

terms consistent with this Theme of Kiely's model. Furthermore, participants often

recounted their new-found viewpoint and attitude toward both specific persons as well

as groups of persons.

(4) Processing: This Theme also relates to individualizing the experience, as

well as experiencing the situation in group settings, which all participants did and

described, and includes, according to Kiely, working and living in conditions that

included reduced privacy, sanitation and comfort, as well as direct observation of others

as a manner of questioning and exploring for causes and effects, something clearly

represented by newfound attitudes towards others, both individually and in groups, and

toward themselves.

(5) Connecting: Participants, using personalization as the primary method of

description and synthesis utilized descriptive terms that Kiely calls for in this Theme--

empathizing, relating, caring, sharing, listening, and talking in both reflective and non-

reflective discourse. Participants described an almost automatic, non-reflective,

response to living and working conditions, but clearly had a more reflective approach to

synthesizing and describing this phase when discussing changes in their attitudes about themselves and others.

5. This element had an obvious connection with other elements, to either clarify or magnify the impact of the total experience, leading participants to experience a change in habits of mind, or frame(s) of reference regarding their own lives and the lives of others.

This element and the methods by which it was described and synthesized, and processed can also be demonstrated to have generated or facilitated, at least in part, six of Mezirow's Phases of Transformative Learning (Canton, 2006, p. 20):

(1) Experiencing a Disorienting Dilemma: Here participants were confronted with instances of incongruence based on their previous experiences around issues of sanitation, privacy and comfort. Like Witnessing Mass Destruction, participant descriptions often were often expressed in epiphinal terms, but also included terms of a more time-delayed retrospection. Descriptions of Disorienting Dilemmas involving others seemed to fall into categories such as (a) not believing another could do the work until it was witnessed firsthand; (b) being suddenly disappointed with the work or attitude of others; and (c) being impressed and influence by the work and attitude of others.

(2) Undergoing Self-Examination: In this Phase, triggered by experiences occurring in Phase One, participants in this study were able to articulate why they felt differently about themselves and others after living in Camp Premier and working in destroyed neighborhoods, often in comparison to what they said was their perception, assumption or belief about an individual person or group of persons before going to

New Orleans. Participants admitted that the entire experience forced them to reconsider prior beliefs. Participants could clearly recognize that they had changed their outlooks about themselves and others as a direct result of this self-examination of pre-existing beliefs.

(3) Relating Discontent to the Similar Experience of Others – Recognizing that the Problem is Shared: Here, participants in this study related instances of recognition that survivors of the storm, who still lived in tent cities like Camp Premier six months after the storm, and that through sharing at least a part of this experience with them, gave participants a new insight to the attitude of the survivors. This aspect of the experience, along with meeting survivors at the workplace, and the trip to the tavern one night, gave participants new insights into their own attitude and their own place in history as well. Participants shared this experience on multiple levels, including, their immediate group, the larger Rutgers Group, the larger group of volunteers and the people from New Orleans with whom they interacted.

(4) Exploration of Options for New Roles, Relationships and Actions is Phase Five of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2005, p. 20). Participants examined new roles in relation to their previous student-dean/teacher, or student-administrator roles, coming away with newfound understandings about age and experience differences. They also spoke of the mentoring community that was Cook College and its creation of the project to New Orleans, something Daloz (2000) states is important in understanding similar Transformative learning experiences. Additionally, some men reflected on their newfound views about women and their ability to deal with adverse physical condition and to do hard physical labor.

(5) Trying New Roles is Phase Eight of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2000, p. 20). In New Orleans women tried new roles involving hard and dangerous physical labor and men took note of how they performed. In addition, men observed women share in reduced comfort, sanitation and living conditions, leading men to re-evaluate their prior understanding regarding traditional gender roles.

(6) Reintegrating Newfound Perspective is Phase Ten of Transformative Learning (Cranton, 2006, p. 20). Here participants have reintegrated several newfound sets of knowledge into their outlook, including several that actually demonstrated ways of thinking more critically, specifically about how they thought about fellow Rutgers students, Rutgers administrators, people with significant age difference, people from New Orleans, and women and their ability to endure hardships and handle physical labor.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Several new pieces of knowledge emerged from this study: (a) Through the use of Methods of Description and Synthesis, the beginning of an approach for identifying and analyzing elements of a learning environment that not only trigger, or generate, stimulate and create Transformative Learning experiences were identified, also those that facilitate the process and generate lessons learned. (b) Specific elements of the learning environment were so identified by participants of the 2006 Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Relief Project and were analyzed; (c) The role that was played by these elements in the individual Transformative Learning experiences of those participants who were part of the study was analyzed; and (d) The historical value of their descriptions and photographs of their experience as it relates to college-sponsored Service Learning efforts in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina was preserved.

The data supports my conclusion that participants of the 2006 Rutgers – Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Project which went to New Orleans in March of 2006 were able to identify and describe five elements of the experiential learning environment that generated, stimulated, created (triggered), or facilitated, Transformative Learning experiences. These are:

1. Witnessing Mass Destruction (WMD)

2. Personalizing The Loss (PTL)

3. Pre-Trip Anxiety (PTA)

4. Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation (EVD)

5. Experiencing Others (EO)

Furthermore, three Methods of Description and Synthesis (MDS) were identified by me based on the way the participants described the element and their sense-making process of that element as it related to their respective Transformative learning experience. These are:

1. Sensing the Experience (MDS-s)

2. Emotionalizing the Experience (MDS-e)

3. Personalizing the Experience (MDS-p)

These Methods of Description and Synthesis often combined to produce what I termed lessons learned and/or, more traditionally, impacts derived from the experience. Kiely's Processing Model for analyzing Transformative Learning experiences arising from Service Learning experiences provided a processing framework for thinking about and evaluating these elements and seeing how they might fit into the larger context of Transformative Learning theory and future research. It was demonstrated that the descriptions of all five of the elements identified and studied here, were processed by at least three, but in four cases, all of Kiely's processing Themes. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that each of these elements of the learning environment as described, played a part in generating or facilitating at least 5 of Mezirow's 10 Phases of Transformative Learning, confirming that these elements were, in some significant part, responsible for creating a Service Learning experience that generated, stimulated, created (triggered), or facilitated, a Transformative Learning experience and explaining how these elements did so.

Each element was described and analyzed separately in an effort to confirm the methodology and recommend it to future use for identifying other elements and other

Methods of Description and Synthesis. As a consequence of this approach, specific

conclusions can be drawn about the part that each element played in generating,

stimulating, creating or facilitating Transformative Learning from a Service Learning

experience. The conclusions regarding each element can therefore be set forth as follows:

Witnessing Mass Destruction: By taking the various descriptions of Witnessing

Mass Destruction, in this case utilizing all three Methods of Description and Synthesis,

and applying Themes from Kiely's processing model for Service Learning experiences, it

can then be demonstrated that this element, at least in part, also generated or facilitated, 5

of Mezirow's 10 Phases of Transformative Learning. By this methodology, it can be

concluded that there is a clearly demonstrated case for identifying Witnessing Mass

Destruction as an example of an element of the experiential learning environment that led

to Transformative Learning for some of these participants. Their descriptions led to

conclusions expressed by them regarding the lessons learned or impacts, or the

contribution to lessons learned or impacts, that this element of the experiential learning

environment made to their related newfound knowledge and understandings. These

include the impact and lessons learned and their own sense-making regarding the size and

destructive nature of the storm; the inadequacy of press and media coverage; the

perceived inadequacy of governmental response to the situation; their own role and the

role of others in the recovery effort; and a newfound or renewed commitment to the

greater good.

Personalizing The Loss: By taking the various descriptions of Personalizing The

Loss, in this case utilizing all three Methods of Description and Synthesis, and applying

Themes from Kiely's processing model for Service Learning, it can then be demonstrated

that this element generated or facilitated, at least in part, 5 of Mezirow's 10 Phases of

Transformative Learning. By this process, it can be concluded that there is a clearly

demonstrated case for Personalizing The Loss as an example of an element of the

experiential learning environment that triggered Transformative Learning for some of

these participants. Their descriptions led to conclusions expressed by them regarding the

impact or lessons learned, or contribution to impact and lessons learned that this element

of the learning environment made to their related newfound knowledge and

understandings. These include the impact and lessons learned and their own sense-

making regarding the loss experienced by the victims of Katrina; how easily it could have

been them who were victims; and how little the need in their own lives to be happy.

Pre-Trip Anxiety: By taking the various descriptions of Pre-Trip Anxiety, in this

case utilizing primarily two Methods of Description and Synthesis (personalizing and

emotionalizing), and applying Themes from Kiely's processing model for Service

Learning experiences, it can then be demonstrated that this element generated or

facilitated, at least in part, five of Mezirow's 10 Phases of Transformative Learning. By

this process, it can be concluded that there is a clearly demonstrated case for Pre-Trip

Anxiety as an example of an element of the experiential learning environment that led to

Transformative Learning for some of these participants. Their descriptions led to

conclusions expressed by them regarding the lessons learned or impacts, or the

contribution to impacts that this element of the experiential learning environment made to

their related newfound knowledge, and understandings. These include the impact and

lessons learned and their own sense-making regarding their ability to handle the

unknowns of travel; the unknowns of reduced living conditions; the unknowns of hard

and dangerous physical labor; how many felt that they gained a greater independence; how gratification can be worth the sacrifice; how preparation is important in dealing with unknown;, and that dealing with unknowns can be fun.

Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation: By taking the various descriptions of Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation, in this case utilizing personalizing as the primary method of description and synthesis, and applying Themes from Kiely's processing model for Service Learning, it can then be demonstrated that this element generated or facilitated at, least in part, 5 of Mezirow's 10 Phases of Transformative Learning. By this process, it can be concluded that there is a clearly demonstrated case for Experiencing Voluntary Deprivation as an example of an element of the experiential learning environment that generated or facilitated Transformative Learning for some of these participants. Their descriptions led to conclusions expressed by them regarding the lessons learned or impact, or the contribution to impact, that this element of the experiential learning environment made to their related newfound knowledge, and understandings. These include the impact and lessons learned and their own sense-making regarding the loss experienced by the victims of Katrina; a willingness to sacrifice in order to help others; and how little they need in their own lives to be happy.

Experiencing Others: By taking the various descriptions of Experiencing Others, in this case utilizing all three Methods of Description and Synthesis, and applying Kiely's processing model for Service Learning experiences, it can be demonstrated that this element generated or facilitated at least in part, 6 of Mezirow's 10 Phases of Transformative Learning. By this process, it can be concluded that there is a clearly demonstrated case for Experiencing Others as an example of an element of the

experiential learning environment that led to Transformative Learning for at least some of these participants. Their descriptions led to conclusions expressed by them regarding the lessons learned or impact, or the contribution to impact that this element of the experiential learning environment made to their related newfound knowledge and understandings--that is the impact and lessons learned and their own sense-making regarding the assumptions, and preconceived ideas that they had about themselves and others before the trip, such as seeing women in the new role of doing hard physical labor, and how those assumptions and ideas changed as the direct result of experience.

Important to this study were the facts that the study occurred after the Service Learning trip to New Orleans was completed, and that no pre-planned Transformative Learning exercises or debriefings were planned. No intention to make such a study pre-loaded the trip and so there was no predetermination by the participants of how they would scaffold their experience as part of a Transformative Learning experience. The email interviews were conducted without any use of the term or phrase Transformative Learning. Such a definition was given at the outset of the audio/video interviews, but they were otherwise loosely constructed (informal) interviews. Discussion was spontaneous. As a result, it is posited here by me, that answers were more genuine for their lack of predetermination. This lack of intentionality is an important distinction from prior Transformative Learning studies.

In addition, this Service Learning experience was not tied into any pre-existing curriculum and was not for credit, as is often the case. The experience was strictly a volunteer experience. There was no need to justify future Service Learning efforts based

on this one. This again, represents two significant variations from most other Service Learning studies.

As a result, it is claimed here, that this study can be used to both identify and organize data in the future when attempting to study elements that generate, stimulate, create or facilitate Transformative Learning experiences, whether they be from Service Learning or other types of experiences.

Another significant pair of added values to this study that emerged, at least in part, was the time period covered post-trip, and the nature of the sample. Taylor (2000) and others called for both longitudinal studies and studies specific to traditionally-aged college students. While this study was not technically a longitudinal one, it was based on interviews that ranged from four months to three years post-trip. And while there was no attempt to quantify variables like memory, emotions, or impact, it can be informally observed here that time distance did not appear to alter the strength of memories, or sense of value. Participants easily remembered where they were, what they were doing, who they were with and what they learned from the experience, whether they were writing their email interview four to six months after returning from New Orleans, or speaking at an interview three years later. The resultant picture is one of both the organization and the "messiness" of a Service Learning experience and what elements of a Service Learning experience can, individually, or combined, generate and/or facilitate Transformative Learning. In addition, 74 of the 82 participants of the trip were traditionally-aged college students, and as such, provided most of the data.

It is posited by me, therefore, that elements of the learning environment of a Transformative Learning experience can be evaluated in this manner in order to answer

the call of Kiely, Taylor, Eyler, and Furco & Billig among others, who ask that more attempts be made to study the generating elements Transformative Learning – that is, what elements of a learning environment generate, stimulate, create or facilitate Transformative Learning and how do they do so.

Further study needs to include the following: (a) Using this method of element identification, accumulate and catalogue other elements of the learning environment that learners say generated or facilitated their Transformative Learning experience; (b) Look for and identify additional Methods of Description and Synthesis; (c)Trace, using this or similar methodology, how these experiences led to changes of frames of reference or changes in habits of mind and how they triggered a Transformative Learning Experience arising from a Service Learning experience; (d) Look at how elements of the learning environment were described and synthesized and also how they were processed using Kiely's Model; (e) Study how the Methods of Description and Synthesis of an element play into the efficacy, strength and duration of that element as a generating, or facilitating aspect of the experience; and (f) Study how the elements may work in combination to affect the nature of the impact--is there a greater impact from combination?

By developing a catalog of elements of a learning environment and how they generate, stimulate, create or facilitate Transformative Learning, researchers will develop a better understanding of the Transformative Learning process and how that better understanding may lead to more effective practical planning and a broader application of Transformative Learning as a theoretical framework for educators.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB Approved Consent Form

<u>**Informed Consent/Permission Form**</u>

Study Title: A Case Study of the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project at Cook College

IRB # E07-034

Chief Researcher: Donald C Heilman. J.D., Ed. M.

     Associate Dean of Students

     Rutgers University

     dheilman@echo.rutgers.edu

     732-932-7109

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, entitled **A Case Study of the Hurricane Katrina Relief Project at Cook College,** being conducted by principal investigator Donald C. Heilman. By participating in this interview, I give Donald C. Heilman permission to use the information that I provide as part of his Graduate School of Education Qualitative Research II project concerning the 2006 Rutgers Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program, his intended articles for publication, and his further studies on transformative learning, living/learning communities, service-based experiential education, leadership, and the sociological and philosophical foundations of education**.**

The recording(s) will be used for analysis of the narrative and/or ethnographic content in order to derive data from the experience, memories, reflections and opinions of the participants. Photographs and videos will be used to describe the environment and physical conditions of the experience as well as serving for the basis of stimulated response. The recording(s) will include your name and other identifiers such as hometown, college, year of graduation and major. Videotaping and/or photographs will include your name and face.

I understand that this interview is recorded and may be stored as part of a permanent archive. I hereby give my permission to for this interview and any other interview/material/data photograph/films/journals, or any other written and/or photographic material provided by me in association with this study to be used in furtherance of the above-stated objectives without limitation and without promise of compensation, financial or otherwise.

The recording(s), photographs, and any written material will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked roomed while being used by the principal investigator. Since all materials are intended to create a permanent archive, they will be retained indefinitely.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

If this form is provided in association with my transcript review, I have so reviewed, revised where appropriate and provide my consent and permission to use the transcript of the interview with which it is associated. I understand that I had the opportunity to delete anything that I did not wish to be used. My participation in this study is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw my permission or agree to answer only certain questions.

I understand that my name, identity, and photographic image may be used in this study.

I understand that an interview will take about one hour of my time.

I represent that I am of sound mind, full age and otherwise competent to give my permission so stated above.

Subject Signature_____

      Date_____

Subject Print Name_____

Principal Investigator Signature_____

      Date_____

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at: Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-855 Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104, Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Ph: 732-932-0150

http//orsp.rutgers.edu

Reference IRB# E07-034

APPENDIX B
IRB Approved Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

A Case Study of the 2006 Rutgers Hurricane Katrina Relief Project

Principal Investigator: Donald C. Heilman

<u>**Part I**</u>

Name:

Gender:

D.O.B.

College Affiliation:

Year of Graduation:

Major:

Minor:

Certificates:

College Address:

Home Address:

E-Mail:

Cell Phone:

Clubs/Organizations:

Students Government:

Sports/Recreation:

Cook Leadership:

Other Campus Activities:

Team Assignment in New Orleans:

Did you serve on any of the trip committees? If so, please indicate committee.

Hopes and expectations as a student first coming to Rutgers.

Hopes and expectations for postgraduate career.

Please complete those sections of Part II that you feel comfortable answering:

Part II

1. What made you decide to be a part of the Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program?

2. Had you ever been to New Orleans before? What were your reactions to the devastation once you got there?

3. What did you know about the condition of the city following Hurricane Katrina, before you went there with the program?

4. Did you attend any of the pre-trip meetings? How many? What did you learn?

5. Before the trip, how many people on the trip did you know?

6. Had you ever done any sort of construction, demolition, heave-duty clean-up work before?

7. Do you think that you brought any special skills or experiences to the program?

8. Did you have any fears or concerns before the trip? What were they? How did you approach any areas of concern, fears, or worries?

9. In retrospect, do you think that the pre-trip meetings were adequate? What could have been done better? Did you feel prepared?

10. How did you first learn of the Katrina Project?

11. What was your original understanding of the purpose?

12. What were your original expectations and how did they change?

13. Did you do any self-guided research or get other information on your own before the trip?

14. What were your reactions to TV and newspaper coverage before the trip?

15. What was your reaction to information learned at meetings?

16. What was your reaction to the legal waiver we signed or to the discussion of things like exposure to toxins, carcinogens and venomous animals?

17. Any other concerns before we left?

Please answer those questions in Part III that you feel comfortable answering.

Part III

1. Describe the trip to New Orleans.

2. Describe your first reaction to the city.

3. Describe your reaction to other students in the group.

4. Describe the bus ride to Tent City.

5. Describe Tent City and the Tent City experience.

6. Describe a typical workday.

7. Describe the work done.

8. Describe how it made you feel.

9. Describe your reaction to other groups in Tent City

10. Describe your reaction to people you met in New Orleans.

11. Describe other things that you did with the group.

12. Describe things that you saw in the individual houses that you worked on.

13. Describe your reaction to the Federal relief effort.

14. What is your favorite story?

Please answer those questions in Part IV that you feel comfortable answering.

Part IV

1. What did you learn about yourself while in New Orleans?

2. What did you learn about others while in New Orleans?

3. What did you learn about disaster relief while in New Orleans?

4. What did you learn about local government while in New Orleans?

5. What did you learn about state and/or federal government while in New Orleans?

6. What surprised you the most?

7. What did you enjoy the most?

8. What was/were the most meaningful experiences in New Orleans?

9. What did you dislike the most? .

10. Do you think your efforts helped? If yes, why? If no, why not?

11. Did you make new friends? How did this occur?

12. Did you learn new leadership skills? If so, give examples.

13. If you consider the trip to New Orleans life changing, explain why.

14. What was your reaction going through other peoples' belongings?

15. Why do you think that people got close to each other?

16. Was Cook a strong community? Why

17. Did the news originally shock you? How about after you saw it for yourself?

18. Did you get parental support, or did your participation create parental conflict?

19. Were you aware of the racial tensions in New Orleans before you went down/ after?

20. Do you remember the Psychologist before we went? What do you remember?

21. Did 9/11 have any impact on your decision to go? If so, how?

22. Do you make any distinctions between an educational experience and a learning experience? Explain.

23. Was this trip an educational or a learning experience for you? Explain.

24. Would you recommend that Cook and/or Rutgers create a permanent for-credit course that will be an alternate spring break, service-based educational experience?

25. Would you endorse such a course? Why?

26. What should be the educational goals or objectives?

27. Should fund raising be a part of the course?

28. Did you keep a journal?

29. Did you take photographs?

30. What should be the academic requirements of such a course, or, what should the students do for the course to receive credits?

Part V

Please take the time to tell me anything you want, positive or negative, that you think I should know about your experience(s) in New Orleans or in association with the trip.

Part VI: Permission

By participating in this interview, I give Donald C. Heilman consent and permission to use the information that I provide as part of his Graduate School of Education Qualitative Research II project concerning the Rutgers Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program, his intended articles for publication, and his further doctoral studies, including his dissertation on transformational learning, adult learning, living/learning communities, service-based experiential education, leadership, and the sociological and philosophical foundations of education**.**

I understand that this interview is recorded and may be stored as part of a permanent archive. I hereby give my permission to for this interview and any other interview/material/data photographs provided by me to be used in furtherance of the above-stated objectives without limitation and without promise of compensation, financial or otherwise.

Signed_____

Dated_____

Print Name_____

Any questions can be directed to:

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

ASB III Rutgers Plaza

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Ph: 732-932-0150

http://orsp.rutgers.edu

<u>**APPENDIX C**</u>

Master Email Interview

Katrina Relief Email Interview (2006)

Please complete all sections of Part I

<u>**Part I**</u>

Name:

Gender:

D.O.B. College Affiliation:

Year of Graduation:

Major:

Minor:

Certificates:

Job:

College Address:

Home Address:

E-Mail:

Cell Phone:

Clubs/Organizations:

Students Government:

Sports/Recreation:

Cook Leadership:

Other Campus Activities:

Team Assignment in New Orleans:

Did you serve on any of the trip committees? If so, please indicate committee.

Please complete those sections of Part II that you feel comfortable answering:

Part II

1. What made you decide to be a part of the Rutgers-Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program?

2. Had you ever been to New Orleans before? What were your reactions to the devastation once you got there.

3. What did you know about the condition of the city following Hurricane Katrina, before you went there with the program?

4. Did you attend any of the pre-trip meetings? How many? What did you learn?

5. Before the trip, how many people on the trip did you know?

6. Had you ever done any sort of construction, demolition, heave-duty clean-up work before?

7. Do you think that you brought any special skills or experiences to the program?

8. Did you have any fears or concerns before the trip? What were they? How did you approach any areas of concern, fears, or worries?

9. In retrospect, do you think that the pre-trip meetings were adequate? What could have been done better? Did you feel prepared?

Please answer those questions in Part III that you feel comfortable answering.

Part III

1. What did you learn about yourself while in New Orleans?

2. What did you learn about others while in New Orleans?

3. What did you learn about disaster relief while in New Orleans?

4. What did you learn about local government while in New Orleans?

5. What did you learn about state and/or federal government while in New Orleans?

6. What surprised you the most?

7. What did you enjoy the most?

8. What was/were the most meaningful experiences in New Orleans?

9. What did you dislike the most?

10. Do you think your efforts helped? If yes, why? If no, why not?

11. Did you make new friends? How did this occur?

12. Did you learn new leadership skills? If so, give examples.

13. If you consider the trip to New Orleans life-changing, explain why.

Please answer those questions in Part IV that you feel comfortable answering.

Part IV

1. Would you recommend that Cook and/or Rutgers create a permanent for-credit course that will be an alternate spring break, service-based educational experience?

2. Would you endorse such a course? Why?

3. What should be the educational goals or objectives?

4. Should fund raising be a part of the course?

5. Did you keep a journal?

6. Did you take photographs?

7. What should be the academic requirements of such a course, or, what should the students do for the course to receive credits.

Part V

Please take the time to tell me anything you want, positive or negative, that you think I should know about your experience(s) in New Orleans or in association with the trip.

Part VI: Permission

By responding to this e-mail, I give Donald C. Heilman permission to use the information that I provide as part of his Graduate School of Education independent project concerning the Rutgers Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program, his intended articles for publication, and his further studies on

living/learning communities, service-based experiential education, leadership, and the sociological and philosophical foundations of education.

APPENDIX D

Master Email Interview

Rutgers, The State University
Waiver and Acknowledgment
Hurricane Katrina Relief

I, _____, being of full age (18) and sound mind waive all of my rights to any and all claims whatsoever that I may have against Rutgers, The State University, and all of its units, colleges , departments and/or division; its agents, servants employees, faculty, and staff (Hereinafter Rutgers University) and agree to hold Rutgers University harmless for any dan and/or injuries of any kind that may result from my participation in the Cook College sponsored Hurricane Katrina Relief Program in and around the City of New Orleans, Louisiana scheduled between the dates of March 11 and March 18, 2006.

_____ I recognize that the area in which we will be staying and working has been devastated by a hurricane and that I will be exposed to hazards, dangers and risks which may result in permanent non-permanent injury and/or damages, including but not limited to death, illness, disease, physic injury, mental and/or psychological injury.

_____ I recognize that I may be exposed to dangerous conditions which include, but are not limit dangerous building sites, construction hazards, road hazards, toxicity, poisons, disease, venomou insects and other venomous animals, wild, feral and/or domestic animals, electrical hazards, plur hazards, microwave hazards, gas, fuel and petroleum hazards, chemical hazards, transportation hazards, hazards caused by falling and/or unstable debris.

_____ I understand that I will be staying in a Tent City facility maintained, controlled and operat Habitats For Humanity, their agents, servants and employees and/or some third-party or parties which Rutgers University has no control, and that Rutgers University has no responsibility for th aforesaid facility and that I accept all conditions and/or rules and regulations imposed upon me appurtenant to my stay.

_____ I have been asked to provide my own work clothes, steel-tipped boots, safety eye wear go and gloves, N95 masks, and that I am solely responsible for their provision, maintenance and us must use any and/all required safety equipment while at work and/or performing any and all task associated with the Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program.

_____ I represent that I am in good physical health; that I have any and all required inoculations including but not limited to Tetanus vaccine; that I have no known immune deficiency condition do I suffer from any known mental and/or physical condition that would prevent me from full participation in the Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program.

_____ I understand that I am subject to, and agree to obey all laws, rules and regulations, whether they be local, municipal, county, parish, state or federal. That if I incur any fines or penalties as a result of any of the aforesaid , I am personally responsible for said fine or penalty and that I am financially responsible for any legal representation that I may require.

_____ I understand that I am staying in an area of reduced or non existent medical facilities, sanitation facilities, fire fighting capability, or emergency medical response capability.

_____ I understand that I may be exposed to pathogens, bacteria, mold spore, viruses or other microorganisms that may cause illnesses or injuries and/or diseases, which could be permanent in nature.

_____ If for any reason, I am requested to, or required to return home, or leave for some other destination, and as a result, incur additional expenses not anticipated or pre-paid, I may be required to do so at my own expense.

_____ The aforesaid list of hazards, risk and notices is not intended to be all-inclusive and are only representative of those types of risks and hazards that I may face as part of the Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program. Notwithstanding the aforesaid, I hereby specifically release Rutgers University from any and all responsibility for any risk of injury, illness or damages, whatsoever, whether hidden or obvious, known or unknown, reasonable or unreasonable. Furthermore, this release of any and all claims against Rutgers University as a result of my involvement in the Cook College Hurricane Katrina Relief Program is binding on all of my heirs and assigns.

Signature_____   Date_____

Witness_____   Date_____

DONALD C HEILMAN
ATTORNEY AT LAW
DIRECTOR
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY STUDENT
LEGAL INFORMATION CENTER
42 BIEL ROAD WEST
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901
732-932-5120

APPENDIX E

Stimulated Response

The 12 photographs of Appendix E were provided to some interviewees prior to the interview as a four-page document with no captions or written descriptions. This was provided in order to see if (a) interviewees need to have their memories stimulated prior to interview, or if it aided in some way during the course of the interview. Interviewees were told that they could refer to the photographs as necessary during the course of the interview. The result was mixed, but mostly interviewees need little to stimulate their reflections or memories other than to be asked to do so.

APPENDIX F

Selected Photographs

Photo 1: The Ninth Ward – First Look. Participants go silent while viewing the Ninth Ward from the bus as it travels above an overpass, giving occupants an aerial view of the destruction. This was an often –cited experience triggering disorienting dilemma caused by or processed as dissonance. For many, this was their first opportunity to witness mass destruction and recognize its impact on them. Photo taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 2: The Ninth Ward - Homes Destroyed. This neighborhood was home to a largely poor, black population. Its near-total destruction was documented by the media, but many felt that you had to see it to believe it. Participants had been aware of the large amount of damage done to this section of New Orleans, and some of the political arguments that we generated by its non-recovery at the time of the trip to New Orleans. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 3: The Ninth Ward - Extent of Damage. This view from the bus let participants see destruction of the Ninth Ward that stretched to the horizon. Much of the damage to neighborhoods was not visible from the airport, and difficult to discern from the street level of the access roads. Once on the bus, participants had a much better opportunity to witness the destruction and begin to process the experience. Photo taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 4: House Markings. Participants took note of markings on doors and the front of homes indicating that the house had been inspected for survivors and bodies. The group had been briefed on this aspect of demolition work before leaving for New Orleans. The potential for recovering bodies of people or pets was a significant source of Pre-Trip Anxiety. Here it appears that the building was searched twice with markings in red and orange. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 5: Abandoned Vehicles. Cars and trucks remained where they had come to a rest, or were moved and stacked six months earlier, still leaking fuel, oil and other fluids. This was one of the first signs of mass destruction recognized by participants, who also noted the total absence of working traffic lights and street lights. Photo taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 6: Worksite Neighborhood Close-up. For some, the extent of the damage and widespread destruction did not register until they were driven to their individual worksites. Many recalled their first impression of the widespread destruction on the way to their first worksite neighborhood in St. Bernard's Parish. Photo taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 7: Inside of a Destroyed Home. Everything was where it came to a rest after the waters had receded six months earlier. This was another opportunity for participants to witness mass destruction. Participants had a different type of experience once inside individual homes, often personalizing the loss by relating things seen and found to their own experiences at home. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 8, 9, 10 : Sorting Through the Rubble. As participants dug through the rubble and moved the contents of homes outside for sorting, they easily identified with the possessions and belongings of the homeowners. Volunteers were asked to sort belongings into four piles; (1) trash; (2) valuables; (3) sentimental value; and (4) dangerous materials. For participants, the experience was both disorienting and at the same time familiar, and for many, represented an opportunity for commitment to action. Working in the homes represented, for many, justification and gratification for sacrifices they made to go on the trip and stay in Camp Premier. Photos taken 2006 by Katherine Piso. Reprinted with Permission.
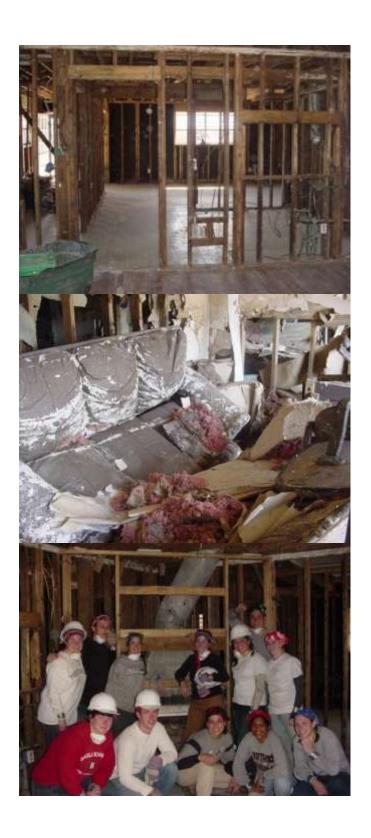
Photo 11: Snakes. Pre-Trip Anxiety included the fear of finding snakes, poisonous animals and dead pets inside of the homes being worked on by the participants. Participants had experiences with various insects and large semi-aquatic rodents called nutria that commonly grow to 20 pounds. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 12: Travel. Travel can be a transformative experience in itself, according to Kiely (2005) and Keeling & Keeling (2004). Travel gear for each person included all necessary protective gear including steel-tipped, puncture resistant boots as well as sleeping bags, plus medical supplies for 82 persons for a week. Photo taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 13, 14, 15: Hard Work and Sacrifice: Satisfaction. Pre-Trip Anxiety was often resolved by a sense of accomplishment as the result of the teamwork required to entirely clean out a house of all of its belongings and strip the interior right down to the studs and concrete floors. Photos taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 16: Entrance to Camp Premier. Home for eight days. Surrounded by fencing and patrolled by armed guards. All participants were required to wear an ID badge. The gate was locked at midnight and not opened again until 6 am. No exceptions. Security was concerned with reports of nearby shootings, rape and looting. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 17: Tent City. Inside Camp Premier, rows of tents that housed not only relief workers, but thousands of New Orleans residents who had nowhere else to go – six months post-storm. These displaced residents as well as camp workers would eat, sleep, shower and launder alongside volunteers. The entire complex was fenced in and patrolled by an armed guard 24 hours a day. Curfew was at midnight and the camp gates were locked until 6:00 am – no exceptions. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 18, 19: Work Day Begins. Volunteers would arise as early as 4 am, get in line to pick up their laundry; get in line to eat breakfast; get in line to pick up their bag lunch; and then board a bus to be taken to the work site. Bandanas were a distinctive look for the Rutgers group, serving not only to keep dust and grime out of hair, but also served as a badge of honor. Photos taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 20, 21: Lunch Break. Ed Levy, Black 14 and Black 15 (top) take their lunch break in the middle of the street. Lunches were highlighted by humor, food swaps and social bonding. The street often provided the cleanest place to sit down and eat. Photos taken 2006 by Donald Heilman. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 22, 23, 24: Tent City Life. Conditions were Spartan for most. Genders and ages mixed freely. Participants slept in tents – 22 persons to a tent. The blue and white sleeping bags were supplied to everyone on the trip. Appearance and dress codes were highly relaxed. Daily grooming was a necessity. Below, participants gather to listen to Dean Ed Levy after work is done. Participants embraced the living conditions. Many said that the gratification and sense of satisfaction far outweighed any sacrifices to comfort. Photos taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 25: Camp Premier Accommodations. Portable toilets, portable showers and outdoor laundry lines were all part of the experience, according to Vicki Wilson and others, who said that the sacrifice was worth it in exchange for an opportunity to help others. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 26: Teamwork. Teamwork was essential and teammates had to learn how to work together. Here it takes all 12 members of Black 14 to remove wall-to-wall carpeting saturated in toxic sludge. Photo taken 2006 by Donald Heilman. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 27: Problem Recognition. Volunteers study the problem before making the next move. Tools were limited to what was provided by relief organizations. There was no power so there were no power tools. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 28: Work Group Meets Survivors. For many, meeting survivors of Hurricane Katrina represented the most significant aspect of the trip. Here Black 15 poses with the homeowners of the house they were working on. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 29, 30: Walk to a Tavern. About 40 members of the Rutgers Group walked 2 miles to the closest open tavern for hot shrimp, warm beer, pool tables and a chance to meet local New Orleans residents, who were so grateful that they would not accept any payment. People came from nearby just to meet the volunteers from Rutgers. Photos taken 2006 by Katherine Piso. Reprinted with Permission.

Photo 31: New Orleans Residents Remain Upbeat. Participants reported being influenced by the positive attitude of the residents of New Orleans and valued the opportunity to meet them. The first day in Camp Premier featured a parade in front of the camp giving participants a chance to meet their first New Orleans residents and storm victims. Many pointed to this parade as their introduction to the upbeat outlook of survivors. It had a profound effect on many of the participants. Photo taken 2006 by Kristin Tangel. Reprinted with Permission.

Photos 32, 33, 34, 35: Hard Working Women. Woman go to work in hard hats and work boots, swing sledge hammers and push wheel barrows, a fact that was noticed by many of their male colleagues, causing them to reconsider their views regarding women and their ability to do hard and sometimes physical labor. Photos 32, 33 taken 2006 by Katherine Piso. Photos 34, 35 taken 2006 by Lindsay D'Amato. All reprinted with Permission.

APPENDIX G

Interview Permission Letter from Dr. Lee Schneider

June 5, 2006

To: Don Heilman

   Assistant Director of Residence Life

   Director of Judicial Affairs

   Cook College, Rutgers University

From: Dr. Lee Schneider

   Dean of Students

   Cook College, Rutgers University

   New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Don,

   I am extremely thrilled to hear about your ideas to incorporate your experience with the Cook College Hurricane Katrina Project into your graduate studies at the Graduate School of Education. It is my understanding that you intend to send out e-mail interviews to all participants and that you are going to attempt to conduct some in-person interviews in the near future.

   Please allow this letter to serve as my permission to conduct such studies here at Cook and at Rutgers University. Keep me posted on your work and don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Lee Schneider
Dean of Students
Cook College, Rutgers University