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Comparative Perceptions of Adult Learners in an Online and Face-to-Face Course

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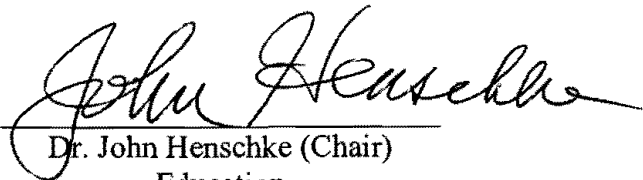
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Comparative Perceptions of Adult Learners in an Online and Face-to-Face Course


Paul Joseph Wilmarth

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in Partial Satisfaction of Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

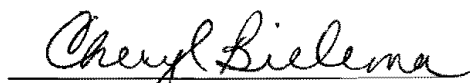
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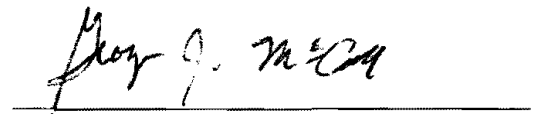
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Comparative Perceptions of Adult Learners in an

Online and Face-to-Face Course

Paul J. Wilmarth

University of Missouri-St. Louis

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to compare the perceptions and experiences of adult learners in two sections of the same course on adult learning at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL); one section was face-to-face and the other section met exclusively online. The subjects were a convenience group of students who had enrolled in the course. The two sections were conducted by the same instructor during the same semester, covered the same course content, and contained identical learning objectives and assignments. All students had the option of taking the course on campus (face-to-face) or completely online.

Because the purpose of this research was to describe in rich detail the perceptions and experiences of these learners, the ethnographic participant observer model was used; the questions of transactional distance and learner autonomy were also addressed. Finally, cultural domains for both groups were identified. Data from both course sections were gathered in the form of transcribed classroom discussions, online forum discussions, course email, student interviews, researcher field notes and an online survey.

Identification and analysis of cultural domains indicates that the perceptions and experiences of online students were different from those of the face-to-face students. The primary difference between both was a context for interaction. The face-to-face group had a rich social context; and the online group had only a text-based context. The primary similarity for both groups was the same course content. Additional domains were also identified.

Both groups relied on MyGateway (UMSL's version of Blackboard); online students used it for all course-related tasks while face-to-face students relied on it primarily as a course supplement. Data revealed that while most students from both sections found their learning experience interesting and rewarding, those taking the course face-to-face found the social

interaction to be a particularly positive experience. While students appreciated the online class option they would have preferred the face-to-face learning environment. Online students also experienced technology-related problems; for students taking the course face to face, technology-related problems were non-existent. Further research is recommended in the area of development and enhancement of social interaction for online students.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
CHAPTER I Introduction.....	1
Background for this Study.....	1
<i>Adult Learners and Andragogy</i>	3
<i>Transactional Distance in Face-to-Face and Online Courses</i>	4
<i>Adults as Autonomous Learners</i>	5
<i>Ethnography and the Student Experience</i>	5
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Opportunity for Research.....	8
Research Question.....	9
Limitations	10
Delimitations.....	11
Assumptions.....	11
Definition of Terms.....	12
Organization of the Study	17
CHAPTER II Literature Review.....	18
Critical Need for Research.....	18
Adult Education	19
<i>The Roots of Andragogy and the Study of Adults as Learners</i>	20
<i>Andragogy and Assumptions about Adult Learners</i>	23
<i>Andragogy as a Concept</i>	26
<i>Characteristics of Adult Learners</i>	27
Adult Learners and Distance Education.....	29
<i>History of Distance Teaching</i>	29
<i>Adult Learners and the World Wide Web</i>	31
<i>Additional Assumptions about Adult Learners</i>	33
<i>Education of Adults on the World Wide Web</i>	35
<i>Cognitive Components of Online Learning</i>	36
<i>Transactional Distance and Online Learning</i>	37

<i>Communicating Online</i>	39
<i>Interaction Online</i>	41
<i>Conversation Online</i>	43
Best Practices for Teaching Adults Online	45
Structuring Content for Online Learning	46
Summary	51
CHAPTER III Methodology.....	55
Description of MyGateway Interface.....	56
<i>Structure of the MyGateway Interface</i>	58
Ethnographic Model in Cyberspace	59
The Virtual Classroom	61
Research Design.....	62
Participants	63
Procedures	63
Data Collection and Instrumentation	64
<i>Discussion Board Posts and Face-to-Face Discussion</i>	64
<i>Participant Interviews</i>	65
<i>Field Notes</i>	66
Data Sources.....	66
Description of Course Content.....	68
Data Analysis	70
<i>Participant Observation and the Spradley Analysis Model</i>	73
Summary	73
CHAPTER IV Results	75
Research Questions	75
Description of Subjects	77
Description of Course Access by Students	78
<i>MyGateway Student Access: Day of Week</i>	78
<i>MyGateway Student Access: Time of Day</i>	80
Description of MyGateway Content Areas by Students	81
Description of Student Email.....	85

Online Discussion Board Forums	86
Three Discussion Topics	89
<i>Women's Learning in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board Forum)</i>	89
<i>Women's Learning in Adult Education (Face-to-Face Classroom Discussion)</i>	97
<i>Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board Forum)</i>	104
<i>Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education (Face-to-face Classroom Discussion)</i>	110
<i>Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board)</i>	117
<i>Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Face-to-Face Classroom Discussion)</i>	122
Student and Instructor Email.....	134
<i>Email Sent to Instructor from Students</i>	135
<i>Email Sent to Students from Instructor</i>	139
Student Interviews.....	142
<i>Interviews with Online Students</i>	142
<i>Interviews with Face-to-Face Students</i>	148
Online Environments Forum.....	153
Researcher Field Notes	157
Online Surveys	161
Chapter Summary.....	163
CHAPTER V Discussion and Summary.....	165
Research Question: Experiences of Online and Face-to-Face Students	166
<i>MyGateway</i>	166
<i>MyGateway Access: Day of Week and Time of Day</i>	168
<i>Student Email or Communication</i>	169
<i>Instructor Email</i>	171
Students and Their Environments	172
The Online Interaction Environment	173
Face-to-Face Interaction Environment.....	174
Student Perceptions of Sociability	175
Research Question: Student Perceptions of Learner Autonomy.....	177
<i>Email</i>	178
<i>Student Interviews</i>	178

<i>Online Survey</i>	180
Research Question: Student Perceptions of Transactional Distance.....	181
<i>Similarities and Differences between Online and Face-to-Face Students' Learning Experiences</i>	182
<i>Student Email</i>	183
<i>Student Interviews</i>	184
Research Question: Identified Cultural Domains	187
Cultural Domains Identified Within the Discussion Interaction.....	188
<i>Discussion: Women's Learning in Adult Education (Online)</i>	189
<i>Discussion: Women's Learning in Adult Education (Face-to-Face)</i>	190
<i>Discussion: Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education (Online)</i>	192
<i>Discussion: Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education (Face-to-Face)</i>	193
<i>Discussion: Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Online)</i>	194
<i>Discussion: Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Face-to-Face)</i>	195
Additional Comparisons of Online Student and Face-to-Face Student Experiences.....	197
<i>Kinds of Questions</i>	198
<i>Humor</i>	199
<i>Acknowledge of Others</i>	200
<i>Stories and Self-disclosure</i>	200
<i>Focus for Further Research</i>	201
<i>Additional Differences in the Experiences of Online and Face-to-Face Students</i>	202
Researcher Experience	205
<i>Classroom Breaks</i>	206
<i>Significance of Findings</i>	206
<i>Summary of Overall Findings</i>	208
Recommendations for Future Research	212
<i>Personal observations as Participant Observer</i>	214
References.....	216
Appendices.....	223

APPENDIX A RESEARCHER INTRODUCTION.....	224
APPENDIX B INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	225
APPENDIX C COURSE SYLLABUS.....	226
APPENDIX D FACE-TO-FACE READING SCHEDULE.....	230
APPENDIX E ONLINE READING SCHEDULE.....	234
APPENDIX F SUMMARY MATRIX OF CULTURAL DOMAINS.....	238
APPENDIX G INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	244
APPENDIX H IRB APPROVAL FORM.....	248
APPENDIX I SAMPLE DATA CONTENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS.....	249

List of Tables

Table 1. Compared Face-to-Face and Online Student MyGateway Hits—Absolute Numbers and Percentages.....	83
Table 2. Variance in Number of Hits in MyGateway Course Site for Face-to-Face Students and Online Students.....	84
Table 3. Domain Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum Topic of Women’s Learning in Adult Education.....	89
Table 4. Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Women’s Learning in Adult Education.....	97
Table 5. Domains Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum on Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education.....	105
Table 6. Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education.....	111
Table 7. Domain Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum of Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education.....	118
Table 8. Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education.....	123
Table 9. Domains from Emails Sent to Course Instructor.....	135
Table 10. Domains from in Emails Sent from Course Instructor to Students.....	139
Table 11. Domain Frequencies from Interview Transcripts of Students in the Online Section of this Adult Education Course.....	142
Table 12. Domain Frequencies from Interview Transcripts of Students in the Face-to-Face Section of this Adult Education Course.....	149
Table 13. Domain Frequencies from the Online Environments Forum in the Online Section of this Adult Education Course.....	154
Table 14 Domain Frequencies from Researcher Field Notes.....	157
Table 15. Domain Frequencies Identified from Online Survey Results.....	162
Table 16. Frequently Identified Cultural Domain: Online Students; Women’s Learning in Adult Education.....	190

Table 17. Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Women’s Learning in Adult Education.....	191
Table 18. Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Online Students; Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education	192
Table 19. Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Critical and Post-modern Education in Adult Education.....	193
Table 20. Frequently Identified Cultural Domains and Examples: Online Students; Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education	194
Table 21. Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education	196
Table 22. Compilation of Most Frequently Identified Cultural Domains for Online and Face-to-Face Discussions.....	198
Table 23. Summary of Experiences for Face-to-Face Students.....	209
Table 24. Summary of Experiences for Online Students.....	211
Table 25. Summary of Common Experiences for Online and Face-to-Face Students.....	212

List of Figures

Figure 1. Venn diagram of cultural domains for face-to-face and online students.....	6
Figure 2. Distant learning and teaching methods classified by distance dimensions.....	38
Figure 3. View of login page students use to access their MyGateway courses.....	57
Figure 4. View of MyGateway home page that students see once they have logged in.....	58
Figure 5. Announcements page viewed by students when logged in to MyGateway.....	58
Figure 6. Face-to-face students day-of-the-week MyGateway ‘hits’	78
Figure 7. Online students day-of-the-week MyGateway ‘hits’	78
Figure 8. Face-to-face student access of MyGateway based on time of day.....	79
Figure 9. Online student access of MyGateway based on time of day.....	80
Figure 10. Face-to-face student access to content areas in MyGateway.....	81
Figure 11. Online student access to content areas in MyGateway.....	81
Figure 12. Sample email domains from online students.....	86
Figure 13. Total discussion board posts: women’s learning, feelings and emotions, and critical theory.....	88
Figure 14. Women’s learning discussion board forum posts.....	88
Figure 15. Feelings and emotions discussion board forum posts.....	88
Figure 16. Critical theory discussion board forum posts.....	89
Figure 17. Face-to-face seating arrangement.....	89
Figure 18. Emails sent to the instructor by online and face-to-face students.....	136
Figure 19. Total number of emails sent by all students and instructor.....	137
Figure 20. Revealed cultural domains for face-to-face and online students.....	209

CHAPTER I

Introduction

“We decided that a learner’s ‘distance’ from his teacher is not measured in miles or minutes. It is defined as a function of individualization and dialogue.”

(Michael G. Moore, 1973, p. 665)

In a real sense, all learning is “distance” learning. That is, learning is something that happens inside our heads. While we have teachers and instructional modalities to guide and assist us, and a myriad of technological innovations to connect us to these resources, the learning process itself is a solitary one. So the question becomes, how do students and instructors minimize this distance in the learning process and incorporate those processes, methods and technologies that will most effectively assist the learner in his personal journey towards enlightenment? And given modern communication and computer technologies, must the transactional distance (Moore, 1980) experienced by students and instructors be necessarily greater when the process occurs online and not in the classroom?

Background for this Study

The purpose of this research project was to discover the perceptions of adult learners as they progressed through a graduate level introductory course in adult education. Some students experienced the course in a traditional face-to-face classroom, while other students only experienced the course as an online class and never set foot into the classroom. Because of this, literature dealing with the Internet and adult learners, the study of how adults learn and adults as autonomous learners will be relevant. Also,

because this study is about subjective perceptions, literature regarding the ethnographic model as a method of inquiry is also considered.

The Internet and Adult Learners

The World Wide Web has become an increasingly popular vehicle for adults wishing to gain new skills and knowledge. In the US, between 1991 and 1999, 46% of adults participated in some type of educational program that utilized the World Wide Web (WWW) (NCES, 2002). Further, there was a usage increase in almost every demographic category (with the exception of the 35-44 age group, and here there was no change): men and women, all races and ethnic groups, individuals from all educational and labor force levels, showed an increase in participation in online educational activities beyond the traditional K-12 venues. Postsecondary enrollments in distance education courses nearly doubled between 1998 and 2001 (NCES, 2004). Additionally, in 2002–03, 40% of all persons ages 16 and above who were no longer in elementary or secondary school participated in some work-related adult education (NCES, 2004).

In 2002, 76% of all adults in the UK aged 16 to 69 had participated in some type of continuing education program (NALS, 2002). This is up from 74% in 1997. Further, in 2002, 70% of adults in the UK—up from 67% in 1997—had used information communication and technology at some point in their lives.

Just as the correspondence courses of earlier days allowed working adults—many with few alternatives to other educational resources—to continue their educational development for personal and/or professional purposes, the use of the WWW to acquire and share information has created new learning opportunities for adults today. Suppliers

of educational content, both academic and commercial, have rapidly integrated new and existing material and made it available to learners online.

Commercial software producers such as Web CT and Blackboard continue to produce ready-to-use software packages that provide educators with web-based interface templates that allow for large-scale integration of material onto the World Wide Web. Add to this the fact that institutions traditionally responsible for teaching adults are under great pressure to attract and maintain the enrollment of adult students and to fully exploit the possibilities made available by the technological revolution. Indeed, the medium seems well suited to serve the particular demands and constraints of contemporary adult learners due to its flexibility in both access and scheduling.

Adult Learners and Andragogy

Most of us, if we are intent upon making experience yield its intellectual content, need to discuss our situations with those who are connected with us, with those who are likely to be influenced and with those who have special information which is relevant to our needs.

(Eduard Lindeman, 1926, p. 117)

Adult learners are serious learners; they learn differently from children and have different reasons for learning (Knowles, 1970, 1980). Adults are more likely than children to define themselves by their experiences and social roles: mother, wife, teacher, etc. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Zemke & Zemke, 1981). Pedagogy, as a teaching model, places the teacher as the active agent in the process of learning; the teacher is seen as the one who decides what will be learned and how and when it will be learned. The student is seen as a passive and submissive recipient in a role that promotes learner

dependency (Knowles, 1984). This is in sharp contrast to the andragogical model of teaching and learning. Andragogy, broadly defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, et al, 1998), provides an evaluative model for adult learners in the traditional classroom setting and when they learn online.

Whether in the classroom or online, adults are often motivated to learn in order to keep up with social, personal and professional demands. They learn best in a comfortable physical environment, an environment that promotes and ensures respect and dignity for all parties, and where they feel supported when constructive criticism is required (Billington, 2000; Knowles, et al, 1998). Adult learners tend to participate in learning programs for very specific purposes; therefore they appreciate course leaders who take their needs and interests into consideration and provide clear and detailed course descriptions, objectives, resources, and timelines for events (Knowles, 1980).

Transactional Distance in Face-to-Face and Online Courses

Moore (1973) provides a model for measuring the transactional distance—that physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners—in a distance learning and teaching situation. Moore states that the ‘distance’ a learner experiences is not a function of geographical separation, but rather a function of individualization and dialogue. Individualization refers to the way a course of study is structured: when students have many and varied options for achieving course objectives the course can be described as being individualized because students can select learning activities and processes that are most satisfactory to them. Non-individualized course structures offer students little in the way of variety in terms of the processes and activities utilized to achieve course objectives. Dialogue, within Moore’s model, “describes the extent to

which a learner may communicate with his teacher” (p. 665). In this way, the teaching/learning process can be classified as more or less distant depending upon course individualization and dialogue.

Adults as Autonomous Learners

Moore (1973), defines autonomy as “the will and ability to exercise powers of learning, to overcome obstacles for oneself, to try to do difficult learning tasks, and to resist coercion” (p. 667), and uses Wedemeyer’s (1969) description of autonomous learners: Autonomous learners are capable of planning and organizing their time and resources in an effort to succeed at their learning endeavors. Autonomous learners also enjoy the process of learning new things and the associated questioning, analyzing and testing. Autonomous learners have developed the personal and social skills necessary to interact successfully with teachers and peers, and they enjoy learning independently.

Ethnography and the Student Experience

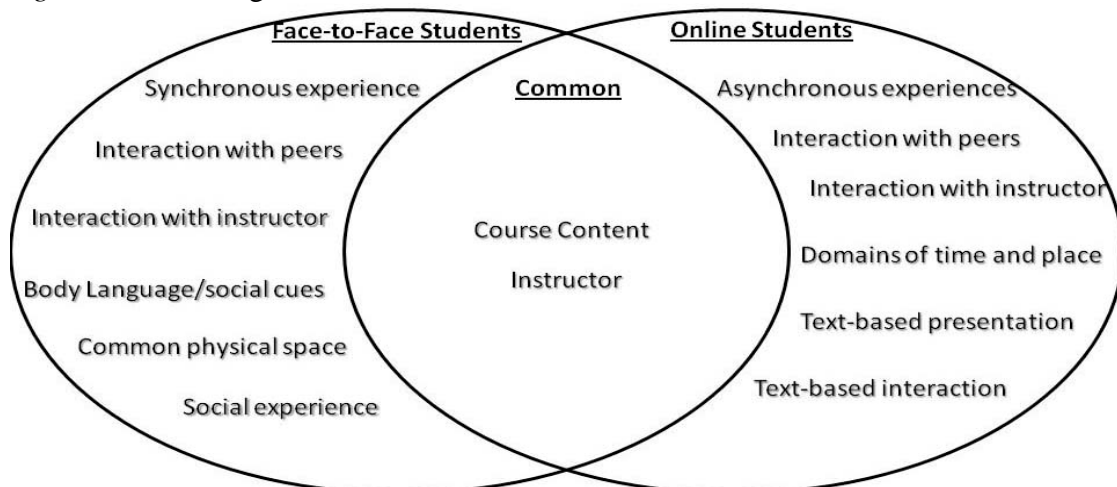
The subjects of this study were adult graduate-level students registered at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and enrolled in a graduate course in adult education. This 16-week course was offered as two sections: a traditional face-to-face section that met one evening a week, for three hours, and a completely asynchronous online section. Both sections were directed by the same instructor, covered the same subject matter and required identical student assignments. Students were free to enroll in either the online or face-to-face section; whichever best fits their particular needs.

Because the purpose of this research was to describe in rich detail the subjective experiences of these learners, the ethnographic participant observer model is the appropriate choice. The research question, ‘how, if at all, does the experiences of adult

learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation?’ can best be answered using the ethnographic method. Ethnography is rooted in the theories of symbolic interactionism as espoused by Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), and is the work of describing a culture. The goal of an ethnographic report is to collect and analyze primarily emic data in an effort to describe a group of people and the culture in which they operate. The goal of an ethnographer is to help readers understand a culture from the perspective of those within it. Ethnography is not the process of studying people, but rather, it is the process of “*learning from people*” (Spradley, 1980, p. 3).

It was anticipated that because the goals, objectives and required activities of both the online and the face-to-face students were identical—successful completion of a graduate course in adult education—some activities, experiences, behaviors and perceptions would be common to both groups, while some would be found only in one group or the other. Common characteristics of face-to-face and online cultural domains are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Venn diagram of cultural domains for face-to-face and online students



These activities, experiences, behaviors and perceptions can be identified as patterns or, 'cultural domains' (Spradley, 1980). Cultural domains can, in turn, be useful in illuminating and communicating the subjective experiences of these students.

Figure 1 describes how some cultural domains will be unique to each type of student: online students and face-to-face students; and some will overlap. Each group experienced interaction with instructor, school and peers very differently. Face-to-face students experienced the course synchronously and primarily as verbal and social. Online learners experienced the course asynchronously and primarily as text-based interactions. Both groups of students completed the same assignments and activities and interacted with the same instructor.

Because adult learners tend to be autonomous it was assumed in this study that a cultural environment that allows for perceived low transactional distance and high learner autonomy would be predominant in both groups. Because the ideal learning situation for adults is one that presents a highly individualized course structure with a high degree of dialogue, it was anticipated that cultural domains, subsequent cultural taxonomies and componential analyses would reveal a student culture highly supportive of individual differences with high levels of interaction among participants. And although Moore (1973) devised his model to evaluate transactional distance in the 'distance learning and teaching' classroom of the 1970s, it was anticipated that it could be a useful tool when used to evaluate the experiences of adult learners in both online and face-to-face learning environments.

Statement of the Problem

Theorists and practitioners are concerned that sound and effective teaching and learning theory guide the design and development of online education (Garrison, 1989; Herrington & Oliver, 2003; Holmberg, 1989, 1995; Reeves, et al., 2005; Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999). And some fear that theory is falling behind in its effort to keep up with the rapid evolution of communication technology. There has been a rush to ‘migrate’ traditional course materials (Strandvall, 2003)—that is, material traditionally developed and presented in a face-to-face classroom environment— and new content to the ‘online’ environment, because students desiring the flexibility of time and access will find them attractive. However, development and implementation of WWW technology has been so rapid that those interested in using it effectively as a venue for adult education have had little time to assess and reflect on how to best utilize this vast new phenomenon (popularly called Cyberspace). The Internet has created a vast new medium of exchange for adults seeking educational opportunities; access to course content and instructional resources is increasingly available and seems ideally suited to the independent nature of adult learners.

Opportunity for Research

Because of the growing popularity of online courses, the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis occasionally offers two sections of the same graduate-level adult education course: one section delivered in the more traditional face-to-face format, with a second section delivered completely online for those students who prefer that format or cannot complete course requirements any other way—this was the situation for this research project. Both sections were presented the same semester, by the

same instructor and with content and learning objectives being identical. These circumstances presented an opportunity to examine the experiences of students enrolled in the online and face-to-face classes, and to compare and contrast those experiences. The goal of this researcher was to actively take part in both sections of this course (participant observer), and to describe, to the extent possible, the experience of the participants from their own perspective.

It was anticipated that the students in the two sections would have different experiences and would perceive the course differently. The reason for this is that while the course objectives and content were the same, the delivery of content, structure of the course and participant interactions were very different.

Research data includes researcher notes taken during actual face-to-face sessions and during online activities, audio recordings of all class sessions, one-on-one interviews with participants of both sections, email correspondence between students and instructor, all content posted to online course web site (in both sections) including all Discussion Board content.

Research Question

This study was an attempt to describe in detail the experience of adult learners—to tell their story in their own words—about what it is like to participate in a graduate level course at a public university.

The purpose of this study was to examine the following question: How, if at all, did the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ from and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation?

Related questions include the following:

- 1a) What were student perceptions of learner autonomy in these two sections?
- 1b) Did student perceptions of learner autonomy differ in the online and face-to-face sections, and if so, how did they differ?
- 2) How did students in both sections perceive “transactional distance” a term coined by Michael Moore (1980) to describe a physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners (Moore, 1973)? And is the perception of transactional distance different for online and face-to-face students?
- 3) What cultural domains emerged for both the online and the face-to-face sections? *Cultural domains* are defined as categories of cultural meaning (Spradley, 1980, pp 88) and are identifiable as patterns of behaviors exhibited by members of a group or culture. What cultural domains will be common to both sections of students and what domains will be exclusive to one section or the other?

Limitations

“It is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something.”
(Geertz, 1973, p. 20)

This study focused on adult students from two sections of one introductory graduate course in adult education: one section was presented completely online; the other section was presented completely face-to-face. The experiences of other adult students in similar circumstances will vary but it is assumed that all adult learners share common experiences.

Data was generated from direct observation, participant interviews and review of student emails, posts and other submissions and as such reflected the experiences of only

those directly involved. The results may not reflect the experiences of adult learners in general.

Delimitations

Additionally, the nature of participant observation is that descriptions about events and persons are, necessarily, the subjective perceptions of the observer. These perceptions reflect, with varying levels of accuracy, the actual experiences of the subjects observed.

Assumptions

This study assumes that all individuals involved in this study were adult learners. As adult learners they have evolved from passive learners to active learners who are involved in their own learning and who take responsibility for success; as adult learners they have accumulated a reservoir of past experience and knowledge from which to draw from and apply to new experiences; as adult learners they are usually motivated to succeed because new knowledge can benefit them directly and immediately and can be directly applied to their social and/or professional roles—that is, adults have very specific and immediate reasons for learning (Knowles, 1970, 1980).

A second assumption is that the Ethnographic model was the correct method to use to obtain data (in this case the subjective perceptions of adult learners). Ethnography is closely linked to the symbolic interactionism of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969). As a theory symbolic interactionism stresses that meaning is determined by human beings through the course of their social interactions. An ethnographer's field work is not to impose meaning on human activities from the outside, but rather to learn from those he

studies the meanings they give to their own symbols, artifacts and activities (Spradley, 1980).

An assumption deriving from the preceding is that adult learners, whether learning in a traditional face-to-face classroom or learning online, experience their learning within a culture that is distinct and identifiable. A favorable physical and psychological environment is essential for adult learners in a traditional classroom setting where students meet face-to-face (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980, 1998; Suanmali, 1981). When adults are involved in online learning courses they are also participating in an identifiable cultural entity in which they become part of a 'community' of learners.

A final assumption is that virtual communities are constructed by people sharing a common language of communication and common rules for the conduct of such communication; this makes the ethnography of communication an ideal tool for their study (Mason, 2001).

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study the following definitions of terms were used.

Adult learner – any learner who is over 16 and/or has completed the traditional 12 years of schooling (8 in grammar and 4 in secondary, or, high school), or, its equivalent. Also, as postulated by Knowles (1980), an adult learner will display some or all of the following qualities: a self-concept as that of an independent and self-learner; a learner with a rich reservoir of past experience to draw upon; learning that is task- or goal-oriented and may be attempting to learn something for immediate application or to solve some problem.

Andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles et al., 1998).

Autonomous Learner – defined by Wedemeyer (1969) and used by Moore (1973) as having the following characteristics: one who prepares a learning plan and sticks to it; one who enjoys learning, forming generalizations, looking for principles and the basic concepts in new ideas, one who enjoys learning with and from others but also enjoys learning alone; one who has learned how to learn.

Componential Analysis – a “systematic search for the attributes (components of meaning) associated with cultural categories...componential analysis is looking for the units of meaning that people have assigned to their cultural categories” (Spradley, 1980, p. 131).

Cover Term – name given to a cultural domain that describes all categories within a domain (Spradley, 1980).

Culture – ideas, customs, skills, arts, etc. of a people or group that are transferred, communicated, or passed along---such ideas, customs, etc. of a particular people or group. (Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 1996).

Cultural Domain – categories of cultural meaning that are identifiable as patterns of behaviors exhibited by members of a group or culture (Spradley, 1980).

Cultural Taxonomy – differs from a cultural domain in that it shows the relationships among all included terms within a domain (Spradley, 1980).

Dialogue – extent to which learners and teachers can communicate—from Moore’s Theory of Transactional Distance (1973). For purposes of this study *Dialogue* and *Interaction* will be used synonymously.

Discussion Board – terms *discussion board* and *threaded discussion* will be used synonymously and interchangeably. The following is a definition of online *discussion board* provided by Teaching and Learning Support Services, Brigham Young University Faculty Center, Instructional Media Center, Center for Instructional Design Independent Study, Harold B. Lee Library, Testing Center:

Online discussion boards (also called threaded discussions) let participants pose and reply to topically organized questions and issues. Blackboard organizes discussion boards into ‘forums,’ which are high-level topics that faculty create, and then into ‘threads,’ which consist of a question or issue (called a ‘post’) and the replies to that post. As with e-mail, class members can post and reply to each other asynchronously, so participants can communicate at their convenience.

Brigham Young University, (no date)

Distance Education – various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous, immediate supervision of teachers physically present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization (Holmberg, 1989).

Distance Teaching – Defined by Moore (1973) as “the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviors are executed apart from the learning behaviors” (p. 664). The terms ‘Distance Learning’ and ‘Distance Teaching’ will be used synonymously and interchangeably.

Face-to-Face (interaction) – all communication that takes place when participants share the same physical space and are able to interact directly without the aid of any additional communication medium such as telephone, Internet, television and etc.

Included Terms – names for all smaller categories within a cultural domain.

Independent Learning and Teaching – defines an educational system in which the learner is necessarily autonomous due to separation, in time and space, from his teacher (Moore, 1973).

Internet – a global network connecting millions of computers. More than 100 countries are linked into exchanges of data, news and opinions. Unlike online services, which are centrally controlled, the Internet is decentralized by design. Each Internet computer, called a host, is independent. Its operators can choose which Internet services to use and which local services to make available to the global Internet community. (Small Business Computing Channel, 2002)

MyGateway – branded term used for UM-St. Louis's course management system.

Non-traditional student – any student enrolled in a college-level course and past the traditional college age (traditional college years being 18 to 22 years of age); and more generally, any adult returning to college after a period of absence from college.

Online Learning – “any learning which involves interaction between people using Internet and web-based communication technologies” (Goodyear, 2002, p. 82).

Pedagogy – derived from the Greek words *paid* meaning ‘child’ and *agogus* meaning 'leader': literally meaning 'child-leader' (Knowles, 1996).

Repurpose – to use or convert for use in another format or product: repurposing a book as a compact disk American Heritage Dictionary, 2004).

Self-directed Learner – a learner who has developed the capacity to learn independently and has the ability to utilize available resources for continued enquiry and critical evaluation (Candy, 1991).

Semantic Relationship – creates a link between the cover term and the included terms within a cultural domain (Spradley, 1980).

Traditional Student – any student enrolled in a college-level course who is not past the traditional college age for that level. That is, students of traditional college age (18 – 22) and who complete the matriculation by taking courses consecutively.

Transactional Distance – term coined by Michael Moore (1980) to describe a physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners.

Virtual Ethnography – traditional ethnography, as described by Geertz (1973) is seen as both richly descriptive (“thick description”) and interpretive. Mason (2001) describes virtual ethnography as an extension of traditional ethnography: “A virtual ethnography is one that fully immerses the ethnographer into the consensual reality experienced by groups of people who use computer-mediated communication as their primary, and often only, means of communication” (p. 63). Virtual ethnography assumes that people interacting online form virtual communities and cultures that can be studied in the same manner as communities and cultures that exist in fixed physical spaces.

World Wide Web (WWW) – defined as “the total collection of web pages that are stored on Web servers located all over the world....A series of related web pages that are connected by hyperlinks make up a Web site” (Lawrenceville Press, 2007).

Organization of the Study

Chapter one documents the rapid increase in the use of the Internet to deliver educational content to adult learners: adults are increasingly seeking educational opportunities as their need for life-long learning becomes greater. The purpose of this research is to answer the following question: How, if at all, do the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation? Finally, the limitations of this study were noted and definitions of terms were provided.

Chapter two reviews literature on the theory of andragogy and how adults learn in both online and face-to-face situations. Distance learning and its associated communication technology is discussed; components of online learning and best practices for teaching adults online are also discussed.

In chapter three, the ethnographic model of research as the appropriate choice for studying the experience of the adult learner will be discussed. Virtual ethnography is also examined as a method for applying traditional ethnographic methods to the online environment. Chapter four will present all data and analysis from all data sources and represents a mix of descriptive information and student-produced information, and analyzed according to Spradley's (1980) method of participant observation and domain analysis. Chapter five will answer the main research question concerning the experiences of participating online and face-to-face students; related research questions are also addressed. Finally, implications of research findings are discussed and suggestions for further research are recommended.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to shed light on the subjective perceptions and the experiences of adult learners and to answer the following research question: How, if at all, do the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation?

This research project is framed by literature from the fields of adult education and distance learning. The intent of this chapter is to review research that is relevant to these fields. The basic components of andragogy will be presented. Also discussed will be the general development of distance learning technology used for the education of adults and specifically the development of technology used to create online web-based learning environments for adults.

Critical Need for Research

Researchers and practitioners fear that traditional means of teaching and learning are changing so fast from face-to-face classrooms to online learning that our ability to develop and deploy learning opportunities based upon sound educational theory and accepted standards of quality is in question (Garrison, 1989; Holmberg, 1989, 1995; Reeves, et al, 2005; Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999;). Adult learners are taking full advantage of these new avenues for learning (NCES, 2002, 2004), but what kind of experiences are they having with them? The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the number of adult learners using distance learning technology to access educational opportunities. The rapid advancement of communications and computer technology and the Internet

(Strandvall, 2003) has permitted the large-scale repurposing of course content. This course content was often created for a more traditional (face-to-face) university campus setting, and is now being migrated to online web-based environments and offered to adult learners as an alternative venue for achieving their educational goals.

Currently, more than half of all two and four year colleges offer distance learning courses; 22% delivered at the graduate level (NCES, 2003). Because of this dramatic diffusion of technology into the educational process, it is vitally important that research is conducted to ensure that these new methods of course delivery are effective and efficient tools for the adult learner. It is important to understand if and how the experiences of adult learners enrolled in online courses differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in face-to-face classroom situations.

Adult Education

The practice of educating adults dates back to antiquity (Henschke, 1998), but it is only in the past few decades that practices and methods used to teach adults have been distinguished from those used to teach children (Knowles, 1970, 1980). The term 'andragogy', first coined in 1833 (Reischmann, 2000) was later popularized in the United States by Knowles (1970). Today the field of andragogy represents a large body of literature about how and why adults learn, and draws a distinction between the education of children and the education of adults.

Knowles (1970) suggests that we can make assumptions about adult learners that differentiate them from children: Although we begin our lives in a complete state of dependency, we increasingly begin to see ourselves as self directed individuals and use past experiences to guide further learning. As we develop and mature, we take on social

responsibilities and roles which require additional knowledge and experience; our learning experiences tend to reflect our own internalized need for more information, as our motivation for learning changes from subject centered to problem centered considerations. Children may fail to see why learning a particular thing is important and relevant to them, whereas adult learners seek out learning experiences that tend to solve real-life problems or satisfy personal goals or desires (Knowles, 1970, 1980, 1984).

Adults tend to be goal-oriented in their learning objectives, self-directed and internally motivated to succeed. They take full responsibility for their learning, incorporate past experiences to help in their learning process, and tend to view teachers, as well as fellow students, as peers in the learning process (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam, 2001; Mezirow, 1991, 1997, 1998; Suanmali, 1981). Adult learners, if encouraged to develop their own critical thinking skills, are able to elaborate on current knowledge and transform previous ideas and opinions and develop a “habit of mind” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10) in which they become aware of their own reflective processes of critical evaluation and realize the limitations of previously held assumptions.

The Roots of Andragogy and the Study of Adults as Learners

There is an abundant amount of literature available concerning the characteristics of adult learners and how adults differ from children as to how and why they learn, and what environments are most favorable for adult learning (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Suanmali, 1981). Knowles (1970) defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn, and drew a clear distinction between this term and the term ‘pedagogy’.

Practitioners of andragogy would suggest that although there is occasional overlap, adults and children have very different orientations to learning tasks and respond very differently to them (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Suanmali, 1981). This is because adults have highly developed and complex self-identities; they have very specific reasons for learning something. Each adult brings to their learning environment a unique set of skills and experiences. It is the position of andragogs that these adult qualities should be used to full advantage in an effort to facilitate learning. Adults require freedom and flexibility to learn because they are so unique in their abilities; they desire to be active participants in their learning activities and responsible for their own successful outcomes.

The practice of teaching adults dates back to antiquity. Indeed, the greatest teachers the world has ever known were involved primarily in the instruction of adults: “Confucius and Lao Tse in China; the Hebrew Prophets and Jesus in Biblical times; Aristotle and Plato in ancient Greece; and Cicero, Euclid and Quintillian in ancient Rome” (Henschke, 1998, p. 4). And although the practice of adult education had been “deep-rooted in the evolution of societies” (Savicevic, 1991 p. 210) it was not institutionalized as an identifiable discipline until the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Savicevic, 1991).

The first use of the term ‘andragogy’ to describe a method for teaching adults dates back to 1833 when a German high school teacher named Alexander Kapp used it in a book titled *Platon’s Erziehungslehre* (from the German meaning ‘Plato’s Educational Ideas’) (Reischmann, 2000). While it is not known if Kapp invented the term or borrowed it from someone else, a major thesis of his work was that lifelong learning is a necessity

and that “education, self-reflection and education of the character is the first value in human life” (Reischmann, 2002, p. 3). And although scholars and educators in Europe were discussing specific methods for the instruction of adults in the first part of the 20th century, these activities were only occasionally associated with the term ‘andragogy’.

Lindeman’s (1926) foundational book on the practice of adult education was a critique on the idea that knowledge is not a “precipitate” or “sediment” of another’s experience (p. 173) that can be banked or accumulated. Rather, it is an ability to apply knowledge in new ways and to new experiences. While Lindeman did not use the term *andragogy* to define his views of adult education, his ideas are consistent with current andragogical concepts regarding the adult learner (Henschke & Cooper, 2003).

In the United States, Malcolm Knowles is generally credited with popularizing the term andragogy to describe theories and practices associated with adult education—a term he acquired from Savicevic in 1967 (Henschke & Cooper, 2003). In 1970, Knowles published his book *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy*. This book fueled a popular debate over the differences between the way adults and children learn. In 1980 Knowles published a revised edition of this book, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Andragogy to Pedagogy*, in which he softened his polemical stance against pedagogy as a teaching method and suggested that while pedagogical methods might be necessary under some circumstances, andragogy should be the goal for adult educators. Since the 1980s Knowles and other theorists and practitioners have continued to develop the concept of andragogy. Mezirow (1981), writing from a critical perspective, developed a “charter for andragogy” that included 12 core concepts “that enhance [adults] capability to function as self-directed learners” (p.

21); Suanmali (1981), a student of Mezirow's, further developed these core concepts and found that the goal of educators as they work with adults should be to decrease learner dependency by helping students learn how to learn.

Billington (2000) identified seven characteristics that learning programs should have if they are to be effective in helping adults achieve their learning goals. Henschke (1998) suggested that andragogy is more than a teaching method, andragogy is an attitude about life and the role of teachers and students as co-learners; it should be more than a collection of ideas or theories; and it must be modeled and practiced by instructors if it is to have any value. Merriam (2001) argues that andragogy and self-directed learning work together to create the two foundational 'pillars' of adult learning.

Andragogy and Assumptions about Adult Learners

Like all theoretical frameworks, andragogy is based upon a set of assumptions about the nature of the adult learner. Knowles (1970) suggested that there are four developmental transitions that we, as human beings, make as we mature from children to adults. First, we necessarily begin our lives in a state of dependency. But as we grow and learn we increasingly begin to see ourselves as self-directed human beings capable of more autonomy. Second, as we grow we accumulate experience and knowledge which, in turn, becomes an increasingly valuable resource for further learning. Third, unlike our early years when we are expected to learn information that often has little relevance for us, as we mature we become increasingly ready to learn as we seek learning situations that are necessary or desirable and directly related to our individual needs and social roles. Fourth, where once our learning situations were primarily 'subject centered', as we mature they become increasingly 'problem centered' because we seek new information

and perspectives that will apply to our various life situations. A fifth assumption Knowles added about adult learners (1984) is that as children most of our motivation to learn comes from teachers, parents and other external sources. However, as we mature our motivation to succeed at learning tasks increasingly comes from within ourselves. A sixth assumption (Knowles, 1996) is that adult learners need to have a reason that makes sense to them as to why they should learn some particular thing. Work of other researchers support Knowles' assumptions (Billington, 2000; Henschke, 1998; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Merriam, 2001; Savicevic, 1991; Suanmali, 1981).

Billington (2000), based on her research, suggests seven characteristics of highly effective adult learning programs: A safe learning environment; an environment that encourages intellectual freedom and creativity; an environment where teachers treat students as peers and partners in the learning process; an environment where students can direct and take responsibility for their own learning processes and outcomes; proper pacing of learning materials in order to create an optimal intellectual challenge; active involvement in the learning process; and, constructive effective feedback on performance.

Suanmali (1981) found significant agreement among adult educators about how to most effectively work with adult learners. Suanmali suggests that instructors should do the following: strive to consistently increase the learner's abilities to learn independently from the teacher; help the learner learn how to use available learning resources; help the learner define his or her individual learning needs; assist learners to increasingly assume responsibility for planning their own learning programs; ensure that learning experiences are relevant to the learner and that the learner appreciates the perspectives of others; help

learners identify evaluative criteria; facilitate problem-posing and problem-solving learning activities; reinforce learners' self-concept as autonomous beings actively responsible for their own success; emphasize experiential and participative learning, and model andragogical principles—using learning contracts where appropriate.

Zemke and Zemke (1984) studied a variety of sources and found that several things are common to most adult learners: most adults are motivated to learn because of changing social needs; adults often tend to learn by integrating new information into that which is already known; adults tend to take learning 'errors' personally and this can affect self-esteem; while adult learners appreciate the ability to direct their own learning and to be autonomous, most adults do not like to learn in isolation. Autonomous self-directed learners usually enjoy face-to-face and collaborative learning activities; however, media such as books, programmed instruction and instructional television are becoming more popular with adult learners. The learning environment for adults should be physically and psychologically comfortable—when adults engage in learning their ego and self-esteem are on the line. Since adults bring so much experience into the learning situation with them, it is important that the teacher help students draw upon that experience for the benefit of their own and others' learning. It is also important to ensure mutual respect for differing perspectives of all kinds.

Instructors are encouraged to apply an eclectic approach to instructional processes and materials so that adults can pursue those materials and processes that best match their learning styles. Brookfield (1988) summarizes the work of Gibb, Miller, Kidd, Knox, Brundage and Macheracher, Darkenwald and Merriam and Smith, and suggests that most adults keep learning throughout their lives, adults are motivated to learn due to

transitional and life changes; adults exhibit a variety of learning styles depending on time and purpose; adults usually appreciate problem-centered (as opposed to subject-centered) learning activities; adults want their learning outcomes to have immediate relevancy and application; most adults have accumulated a large body of past knowledge and experience that often enhances, but sometimes hinders, current learning objectives; adults tend to link learning success to self concept; as adults mature they usually exhibit an increasing tendency towards self-directedness.

Murk (1993) suggests several techniques that facilitate adult learning: Instructors should know what interests and motivates learners; create a positive learning environment where “everyone serves as a teacher and everyone acts as a learner” (p. 26); use questioning techniques that require active participation and stimulate critical thinking; frame and organize learning activities and materials; encourage learner collaboration and ensure that students have a clear idea of what is expected of them; present material in a variety of ways in an effort to enhance learning and retention; provide ample feedback on course activities, assignments and projects; encourage learners to evaluate their own progress; treat students as peers; use problem-centered learning activities; and, be sensitive to social, physical and cultural differences among students and make sure that they feel physically and psychologically comfortable.

Andragogy as a Concept

Andragogy, as a guiding concept that informs, instructs and influences the practice of adult education is not without its critics (Henschke & Cooper, 2006). Much of the credit for popularizing the concept and practice of andragogy is given to Malcolm Knowles. While Knowles did not invent the idea of adult learning or originally

associate it with the term ‘andragogy’ as a distinct set of guiding principles—distinct from the guiding principles of pedagogy—his writings continue to be the most frequently referenced in the ongoing discussion about andragogy: “Knowles has garnered more journal citations over the last six years than any of the half-dozen of the field’s most well-known and well-published authors, with the exception of Friere” (Rachal, 2002, p. 212).

At the same time, there are numerous adult educators who “dismiss Knowles version of andragogy as being quite inadequate, unscientific, not well researched, being misleading to adult educators, and lacking in the understanding of the concept” (Henschke & Cooper, 2006, p. 503). Knowles did not substantially alter his definition of the term ‘andragogy’—the art and science of helping adults learn—in his over thirty years of writing and practice. The issue for some may be that andragogy appears to be more ‘art’ than ‘science’ (Rachal) and any specific operational definition of the term “tends to be ephemeral” (Rachal, p. 212). The reason for this may be a result of the very premise of andragogy which places the learner at the center of control in her own learning process.

Andragogs working with adult learners must deal with innumerable variables in the teaching learning environment where ultimately the student defines the value of learning objectives, resources, processes and outcomes. This great diversity creates difficulty for those wishing to distill a formal orthodoxy of theory and practice to support the ‘science’ of andragogy (Henschke & Cooper, 2006; Rachal, 2002).

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Adults tend to be goal-oriented in their learning objectives, self-directed and internally motivated to succeed. Ideally, they take full responsibility for their learning,

incorporate past experiences to help in their learning process, and tend to view fellow students, as well as teachers, as peers in the learning process (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam, 2001; Mezirow, 1997, 1998; Suanmali, 1981). Educators can enhance the adult learning process by providing a physically comfortable environment where there is mutual respect among participants and where the input of all is valued (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1980). Many Adult educators view themselves as guides in the learning process and not as sole repositories of knowledge. They can enhance adult learner independence by helping them learn how to use educational resources (Suanmali, 1981), identify and organize learning objectives (Suanmali, 1981; Knowles, 1980), and assist in the development of an individualized learning contract which can provide a detailed and student-generated outline of identified learning goals and objectives and the actions required to achieve and evaluate those objectives (Knowles, 1980). Adult learners, if encouraged to develop their own critical thinking skills, are able to elaborate on current knowledge and transform previous ideas and opinions and develop a “habit of mind” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10) in which adults become aware of their own reflective processes of critical evaluation and realize the limitations and short-comings of previously held assumptions (Mezirow, 1997, 1998).

The characteristics of adult learners have been well defined by researchers. Much of this research, however, has been done with the assumption that adult learning would take place in synchronous face-to-face traditional classrooms. But today educational courses delivered via the Internet have become increasingly popular owing to their inherent flexibility and ready access to busy working adults. Completing required course work and obtaining a university degree has literally become an any-time-any-place affair.

The next section will deal with the genesis and evolution of distance education and how adults have utilized the various methods and technologies involved.

Adult Learners and Distance Education

Adults learn differently from children. Literature dealing with the subject of andragogy illuminates these differences. An additional body of literature deals with how adults learn when they are no longer in a traditional face-to-face setting, but when they are using technology that enables them to learn at a distance from their instructors and even from their classmates.

For this study *distance education* is defined as: the various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous, immediate supervision of tutors [instructors and/or teachers] present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization (Holmberg, 1989). Distance teaching is defined as “the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviors are executed apart from the learning behaviors” (Moore, 1973, p. 664).

History of Distance Teaching

Distance education has been defined very generally in this study: at least since the advent of writing, clay tablets and papyrus many millennia ago people have been able to learn from each other without being physically present with the other. For centuries documentation of the written word was the only avenue available for sharing thoughts and ideas across time and space. But in the past two centuries evolving technology has transformed the written word and created new avenues for communication and interaction.

In the United States, distance teaching of adults began as correspondence courses delivered via the US Postal Service (Moore, 2003). In 1883, the Chautauqua Correspondence College in New York was the first college to offer correspondence courses to adults seeking liberal arts degrees. By the 1890s the University of Chicago Extension Department was offering the first formal program of university distance education (Moore, 2003). Correspondence courses continued to grow in popularity and in the 1950s there were approximately 3 million American adults learning by correspondence with over half of that number being in the military, the remainder were in college courses, private courses or not-for-credit courses (MacKenzie et al. 1968).

Although correspondence courses remain popular, the technological development of radio and television in the first half of the 20th century offered new and exciting ways to share information. According to Pittman (1986), although radio access became relatively common in the 1910s and 1920s, it failed as a medium for delivering educational programming to adults because universities did not develop it; commercial interests then took the medium over and dictated content.

Television fared much better; in 1934 the State University of Iowa, a land-grant university, became the first university to broadcast educational television programs. After five years, the University had broadcasted about 400 programs (Moore, 2003).

As television technology evolved in the 1940s and 1950s, universities in the United States continued to develop televised distance education programming even as they sustained support for the more traditional face-to-face courses. However, Zigerell (1984) notes that these *dual-mode* universities were only a small part of the overall distance learning efforts nation-wide. Private and home-study schools were developing

hundreds of courses that supported the trades and vocational occupations. The 1970s saw the growing popularity of televised programming via satellite. This model was essentially a broadcast from one source to one or many subscribed viewers. Interaction was possible only by using an associated phone line with these events (Mays & Lumsden, 1988).

The National Technological University (NTU) created satellite up-links with as many as 60 universities; this programming was then fed to 500 down-link locations. In the 1980s cable television grew in popularity and accessibility. For the first time it became feasible for colleges and universities to create television programming that could be delivered to individual students—as opposed to the larger “class” group that satellite down-links required. This, in turn, allowed schools to create more diverse content for smaller niche interests. By the mid 1980s the Annenberg Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) project was producing approximately 200 college-level courses (Brock, 1990). Originally called the 'audiovisual' movement in the 1950s, advances in communication technology in general and television content production in particular allowed for its general use in the classroom. Television content for purposes of education eventually came to be known as 'instructional television' (Reiser, 2001). Today the term instructional television references a broad category of audiovisual delivery methods: live classroom-to-classroom, DVDs, videotapes, streamed video, podcasts, web-based video conferencing.

Adult Learners and the World Wide Web

In the 1990s the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) created yet another venue for adults to access teachers, schools and learning materials. Although distance classrooms linked synchronously via dedicated television lines still

provide a popular means of teaching adults, cyberspace is rapidly becoming the most popular medium for adult learning.

Just as the correspondence courses, radio and television courses of earlier days allowed working adults—many with few alternatives to other educational resources—to continue their educational development for personal and/or professional purposes, the use of the WWW to acquire and share information has created new learning opportunities for adults today. Suppliers of educational content, both academic and commercial have rapidly integrated new and existing material and made it available to learners online. Commercial software producers such as Web CT and Blackboard continue to produce turnkey (ready-to-go) packages that provide educators with pre-designed web-based interface templates that allow for large-scale integration of material onto the WWW (BlackBoard, 2005). Add to this the fact that institutions traditionally responsible for teaching adults are under great pressure to attract and maintain the enrollment of adult students desiring these services and to fully exploit the possibilities made possible by this technological revolution. Indeed, the medium seems well suited to serve the particular demands and constraints of contemporary adults due to its flexibility in both access and scheduling.

During the past two decades a system of Internet servers—commonly referred to as the WWW, has become an increasingly popular vehicle for adults wishing to gain new skills and knowledge. In the United States, between 1991 and 1999, 46% of adults participated in some type of educational program that utilized the WWW (NCES, 2002). Further, there was a usage increase in almost every demographic category (with the exception of the 35-44 age group, and here there was no change): men and women, all

racers and ethnic groups, individuals from all educational and labor force levels, showed an increase in participation in online educational activities beyond the traditional K-12 venues. Enrollment in distance education courses in the United States nearly doubled between 1997-98, and 2000-01—from 19 to 40 percent. Between 1997–98 and 2000–01, institutions in the United States offering distance education courses increased the proportion of their totally-online course offerings from 22 to 30 percent (NCES, 2004). And the United States is not the only country to experience an increase in distance education courses. In 2002, 76% of all adults in the UK aged 16 to 69 had participated in some type of continuing education program (NALS, 2002). This is up from 74% in 1997. Further, 70% of adults in the UK—up from 67% in 2002—had used information communication and technology at some point in their lives.

Additional Assumptions about Adult Learners

It is, perhaps, a truism to say that all human behavior is, directly or indirectly, goal directed. That is, rational human beings tend to behave in ways that they perceive will assist them in achieving some desired goal or outcome. When that goal or outcome is knowledge, adult learners act in ways that are autonomous and self-directed; adults possess “the will and ability to exercise powers of learning, to overcome obstacles for [oneself], to try to do difficult learning tasks, and to resist coercion” (Moore, 1973, p. 667). Furthermore, autonomous learners are capable of planning and organizing their time and resources in an effort to succeed at their learning endeavors. Autonomous learners also enjoy the process of learning new things and the associated questioning, analyzing and testing. Autonomous learners have developed the personal and social skills

necessary to interact successfully with teachers and peers, and, they enjoy learning independently (Wedemeyer, 1969).

The behaviors of adult learners, then, are organized and presented in ways that will bring about positive learning outcomes:

Most of us, if we are intent upon making experience yield its intellectual content, need to discuss our situations with those who are connected with us, with those who are likely to be influenced and with those who have special information which is relevant to our needs.

(Eduard Lindeman, 1926, p. 117)

Further, adults are motivated to behave in ways that help them achieve their learning goals because, unlike children, they tend to define themselves by their experiences and social roles: mother, wife, teacher, etc. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Zemke & Zemke, 1981). Whether formally or informally, adults are often motivated to learn in order to keep up with social, personal and professional demands; that is, they are usually motivated to succeed because new knowledge can benefit them directly and immediately and can be directly applied to their social and/or professional roles. Adults tend to participate in learning programs for very specific purposes (Billington, 2000; Knowles, et al, 1998; Knowles, 1970, 1980).

This study is an attempt to observe and analyze behaviors of adult learners operating in two distinct environments: the online environment and the face-to-face classroom environment. This study assumes that both groups are essentially homogenous in terms of the relevant parameters: adult and goal oriented learners and working professionals. Given this basic assumption, the two course sections that they participated

in had identical assignments and goals (although process differences were necessarily made for the two environments), and, both course sections were taught simultaneously and by the same instructor. Given that the two groups are roughly equivalent, and that they are subject to the same (course) requirements, analysis of behavior patterns should yield valuable insights on how these individuals perceived their experience.

An additional assumption is that the Ethnographic model is the correct method to use to obtain data (in this case the subjective perceptions of these adult learners).

Ethnography is closely linked to the symbolic interactionism of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969). As a theory symbolic interactionism stresses that meaning is determined by human beings through the course of their social interactions. An ethnographer's field work is not to impose meaning on human activities from the outside, but rather to learn from those he studies the meanings they give to their own symbols, artifacts and activities (Spradley, 1980).

Education of Adults on the World Wide Web

During the 1970s, Swedish researcher [Instructor] Baath established the importance of two-way communication in the field of distance education (Keegan, 1996). Baath examined the teaching models developed by Skinner, Rothkopf, Egan, Bruner, Rogers and Gagne, and found that distance education models that emphasized fixed goals and a strict control of the learning process placed greater emphasis on teaching materials and less emphasis on two-way communication; while models with less emphasis on control of learning towards fixed goals placed greater emphasis on 'simultaneous' communication. The critical function of the distance educator, or course facilitator, as described by Baath is one who helps students relate new materials to old reinforcement

patterns (Skinner, 1968), conceives of the learning process in terms of Rothkopf's 'Mathegenetics', or, 'the process of giving birth to learning' (Rothkopf, 1965, 1966, 1982). The distance educator helps the student relate to his or her previous knowledge or cognitive structure (Ausubel, 1963, 1978), and establishes a good personal relationship with the learner (Keegan, 1996).

Cognitive Components of Online Learning

Adult educators who interact with students online should be aware that there are five basic cognitive factors that affect the way their students learn online (Hannafin et al., 2003). These factors include *prior knowledge* (that knowledge and experience that students bring to a new learning activity); *metacognition* (the ability to analyze learning needs, identify resources and assess various learning process); *technical ability* (ability to maneuver within a technological environment and the cyberspace of the WWW); *self-efficacy* (the tendency towards independent learning and self instruction); and *learning style*—this concept, most definitively described by Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI), deals with students' individual learning preferences: Concrete Experience (CE), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), Active Experimentation (AE) and Reflective Observation (RO) and motivation. These learning styles refer to learner preferences in the ways in which learners interact with information presented to them and how they use it to make sense of their world. (Hannafin et al., 2003).

Four additional learning factors that have an impact on the ways in which students learn online are the following: The context in which the learning takes place; the opportunities students have to participate in active learning processes; resources and tools available to online learners (print and electronic information, databases, technological

interface tools); and, scaffolding—this process allows students to incorporate new information and ideas into their existing cognitive schemas by connecting it to existing and prior knowledge. These factors support student learning and encourage their success in the online environment (Hannafin et al., 2003).

The importance of establishing a sense of ‘community’ online is not disputed, and threaded discussions (discussion boards) are seen as a way to build this community. However, “reports of frustration with stream-of-consciousness threads, a tendency of individuals to dominate the discussion, a lack of clarity as to the purpose of the discussions” have surfaced—this suggests that there are still many unknowns in the area of web-based learning environments and significant “inconsistencies between and among researchers and their studies” (Hannafin et al., 2003, p. 256).

Transactional Distance and Online Learning

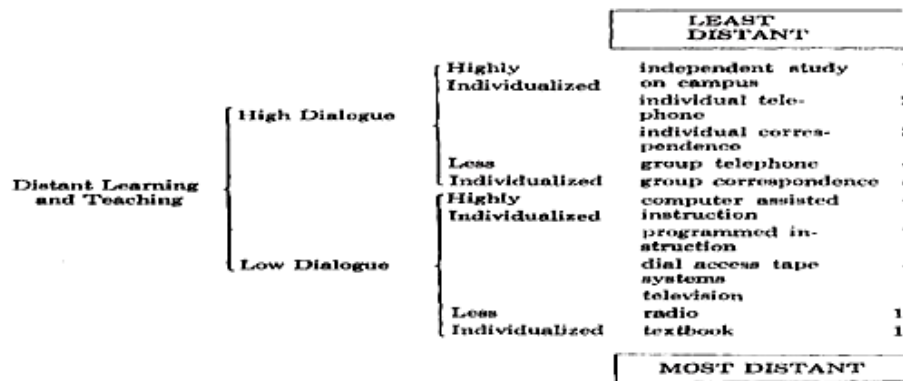
Moore (1973) was first to develop a hypothetical framework for evaluating the transactional distance (although Moore did not call this concept ‘transactional distance’ until 1980) learners experienced in a distance learning environment:

When the teacher prepares instruction for a correspondence course, a radio broadcast, or a text, it is with the intention that his material will meet the goals established by learners, and will be used in their executive events. Whether the material is used remains outside the distance teacher’s control; the decision depends almost entirely on the worth of the material in the program. Distance learners literally ‘turn on’ to the executive material that meets their goals, and turn off that which does not. By comparison, in most contiguous situations establishment events are entirely in the purview of the teacher, not the learner.

The teacher also dominates the evaluative processes, invariably establishing the criteria of successful learning, and passing judgment on whether the criteria have been satisfied. (p. 670)

As Moore hypothesized (1973, p. 674) distance learning situations that maintained frequent and effective interaction between teacher and student, and were tailored to the needs of the individual student (individualized) were perceived as less distant (see Figure 2). Learning situations having relatively little student-teacher interaction and where course content was not tailored to the needs of the individual student were perceived as more distant.

Figure 2. Distant learning and teaching methods classified by distance dimensions



An additional dimension is *learner autonomy*. This does not mean that the learner is completely independent of the instructor, rather, the learner has ‘learned how to learn’, and only solicits the aid of the instructor as resource facilitator in helping meet his or her learning objectives (Moore, 1972).

The concept of transactional distance was refined by Moore (1980) and further describes the physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners. Different factors can affect the transactional distance perceived by online learners.

If the entire universe of instruction were to be divided into two dichotomous parts, it could be viewed as either “contiguous” teaching, a teaching/learning situation where students and teachers are in close physical proximity (face-to-face), or *distance learning*, where students and teachers are separated from each other in time and/or space but connected through some technology medium. Within the distance learning category, there are two categories of instruction: individualized instruction, where the learner can access and digest information at his or her chosen pace; and non-individualized instruction, where the learner had no say in the rate and pace of course instruction. Within the individualized/non-individualized dichotomy, courses can be ‘dialogic’, allowing for some form(s) of student/teacher interaction, or, ‘non-dialogic’, not allowing interaction between teacher and student. Courses having higher levels of individualization and dialogue—where students have control over course pace, and, are able to interact with their instructors—can be defined as having a low transactional distance. Conversely, courses where students have little control and no opportunity for interaction are defined as having high transactional distance.

Communicating Online

Communication is an important dimension of distance learning, but there is a paradox in online learning: “distance education is dependent upon communications technology, but effective communication and instruction are considered independent of these devices” (Garrison, 1989 p. 17). Further, Winn (1990) suggests that while a particular technology chosen for instruction may not affect eventual student achievement, it greatly affects the efficiency with which instruction can be delivered" (p. 53). And, “while most distance educators argue for the necessity of providing two-way

communication, the reality is that not enough is done to actually facilitate it” (Garrison, 1989 p. 18). Further, much more effort goes into preparing the structure of distance learning content (that is, the printed word) than the “crucial element” (p. 19) of creating an environment that encourages sustained interactive dialogue.

Finally, the printed word in isolation, regardless of the technological medium, is strictly a one-way medium of communication. And even though there may be “internal dialogue” as the student interacts with the material, there is no opportunity for the “negotiation of meaning” among and between students and facilitators (Garrison, 1989, p. 18) unless there is interaction.

However, these “internalized conversations” or, “text elaborations” may help students engage more deeply in course content and should be encouraged (Holmberg, 1989, p. 44). There are several postulates relating to guided didactic conversation that course planners should be aware of when planning online content.

- (1) Feelings of personal relation between the teaching and learning parties promote study pleasure and motivation; such feelings can be fostered by well developed self-instructional material and two-way communication at a distance;
- (2) intellectual pleasure and study motivation are favorable to the attainment of study goals and the use of proper study processes and methods;
- (3) atmosphere, language and conventions of friendly conversation favor feelings of personal relation according to postulate one;
- (4) messages given and received in conversational forms are comparatively easily understood and remembered;
- (5) the conversation concept can be successfully translated, for use by the media available, to distance education and planning and guiding the work, whether

provided by the teaching organization or the student, are necessary for organized study, which is characterized by explicit or implicit goal conceptions.

(Holmberg, 1989, p 43)

If a distance-study course “consistently represents a communication process that is felt to have the character of a conversation, then the students will be more motivated and more successful than if the course studied has an impersonal textbook character” (Holmberg, 1989, p. 45). Guided conversation (dialogue) is a necessary component of effective internal dialogue (Garrison, 1989).

The focus of distance education researchers is shifting from its original emphasis on structural and content issues to those of transactional issues: “it is the nature of a sustained educational transaction at a distance that must be described, understood and abstracted in a manner accessible to the broader field of educational practice” (Garrison, 2000, p.11). Garrison (1989) also suggests that we may currently be entering a postindustrial era of teaching and learning at a distance because technology has advanced to the point where frequent small communications are now possible and practical, thus creating a context for interaction and the exchange of ideas.

Interaction Online

Interaction in the online environment is a critical activity and a key concept in distance learning. Three basic types of interaction have been identified: *learner-content interaction*, *learner-instructor interaction* and *learner-learner interaction* (Moore, 1989). Moore identifies *learner-content interaction* as the “defining characteristic of education. Without it there cannot be education, since it is the process of intellectually interacting with content that results in changes in the learner’s understanding, the learner’s

perspective, or the cognitive structures of the learner's mind" (p. 2). *Learner-instructor interaction* is particularly critical in the area of applying new knowledge and information.

Sometimes learners seek the input of instructors because

They do not know enough about the subject to be sure that they are 1) applying it correctly, 2) applying it as intensively or extensively as possible or desirable, or 3) aware of all the potential areas of application. It is for reality testing and feedback that interaction with an instructor is likely to be most valuable (p. 3).

Depending on the age, experience and level of autonomy of the learners, online *learner-learner interaction* where students collaborate to build knowledge and help each other learn can be "an extremely valuable resource for learning, and is sometimes even essential" (p. 5).

Anderson (2003, also see Garrison & Anderson, 2003) adds three additional interactions made possible largely because of recent advances in computer and communication technology: (1) *teacher-content interaction*, (2) *teacher-teacher interaction* and (3) *content-content interaction*. Teacher-content interaction focuses primarily on the process of instructional design. Instructors and course developers create and repurpose content and other discipline-related information in the process of developing their instructional materials (Anderson, 2003). That is, teachers have many opportunities to shape resources in such a way as to maximize student learning.

Although teacher-teacher interaction is not new, modern technology developments offer more opportunities for teachers to interact than ever before, but the greatest resource an instructor has in the area of teaching method or technology remains those colleagues that are close at hand (Anderson, 2003). And, computer technology,

with its ability to package and process information, along with the Internet's ability to disseminate it, offers teachers more variety in the presentation of learning materials than ever before. Content-content information is identified as the ability of computer and communication systems to interact with each other to provide enhanced feedback to students and teachers. That is, students and teachers can initiate interaction with computer-based programs that will search, filter, retrieve and modify information depending on initial and subsequent input by student or teacher. Anderson concludes that each of these six modes of interaction is in need of "systematic and rigorous theoretical and empirical research using a variety of research tools and methodologies" (p. 141).

Conversation Online

Conversation analysis (CA) researchers have studied common face-to-face conversation for several decades and have found that there appears to be identifiable patterns and structures for the way people interact (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974; Winiecki, 2003). These primary structures include *turn-taking*, *overlap*, *repair* and *formulations*. Within the traditional (face-to-face) classroom setting turn-taking is usually initiated by the instructor who prompts students for a response. This is followed by a student response, while the teacher, in turn, may prompt for additional information, where the sequence repeats again. Rules for these types of interaction appear to be clearly (if only tacitly) understood by both parties. *Overlap* in conversation is common and typically occurs at the point where one speaker is ready to stop and another speaker attempts to begin speaking. *Repair* functions within conversations to "realign the perspectives of participants in the conversation with the viewpoint that is being presented

by the current speaker” (Winiecki, p. 195). And *formulations* are recapitulations, restatements or expressions of the ‘gist’ of what has been said previously.

When these patterns and structures are studied within the asynchronous online environment, however, they have “different outward appearances and also different social effects on the accomplishment of conversation from those described in conversation analytic literature on face-to-face talk” (Winiecki, 2003, p. 203). *Turn-taking* manifests itself primarily as copying or quoting portions of text and incorporating them into a response, and to sequence posts so that they can be read as if they were something akin to a transcript of a spoken conversation. *Overlap* occurs primarily when bits of previous messages inserted into new responses; serving a connecting and overlapping function (Winiecki). As in face-to-face utterances, *repair* happens in asynchronous text discussion when previous utterances are questioned, corrected or modified in some other way.

Meyer (2003) suggests that the concept of time in asynchronous conversations has an impact on learning and student perceptions in at least four ways: first, time “expanded in online discussions” (p. 60) as authors reflected on comments by others and attempted to articulate clear responses; second, the quality of the discussion was perceived as elevated because questions, statements and responses were more thought out and less spontaneous; third, students missed the face-to-face and social elements of classroom conversation and felt somewhat deprived of the social, visual, aural cues associated with face-to-face interaction; fourth, students felt that they “needed to participate in the discussion” (p. 61) and that clarity and accuracy was important due to the text-based nature of the exchanges.

Best Practices for Teaching Adults Online

New technologies continue to evolve and offer the potential for increasingly effective online learning experiences. Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) writing for the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) recommend seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education: contacts between students and teachers; cooperation among students; active learning techniques; prompt feedback; time on task; high expectations and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. Out of these seven principles, four of them relate directly to the importance of effective interaction and communication: (a) good practice encourages contact between students and faculty. Communication technology can enhance interaction by making large quantities of learning material accessible to all participants regardless of physical location or time constraints. And, because of the ease of instant electronic messaging, it can also encourage shy or physically remote students to participate in dialogue with teachers and students and create a wider and more varied class discussion; (b) good practice develops reciprocity among students: the same technological structures that allow for increased accessibility to instructors allows for increased interaction among students. Again, physical location and time constraints become negligible barriers to interaction because of instant electronic messaging and posting to commonly accessible electronic ‘bulletin boards’; (c) good practice uses active learning techniques: modern communication and computer technologies allow for a ‘staggering’ range of technologies that encourage active learning. Categories of technology are: tools and resources for learning by doing (simulated computer-mediated activities); time-delayed [asynchronous] exchanges; and, real-time [synchronous] conversation, and (d) good practice requires prompt feedback.

Aside from the more obvious feedback mechanism of electronic messaging, computers are also capable of storing and tracking student performance and products. Not only does this create a permanent record that is always accessible, it also allows for continuous examination of content and feedback so that instructors and students can track progress over time (Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996).

Best practice guidelines for teaching adults online suggest that students and instructors should interact between and among themselves in an effort to create a community of learners where personal differences and unique learning styles are respected. The frequency of interactions should be adequate to maintain timely feedback and constructive dialogue among all participants (Distance Education, 2000).

Structuring Content for Online Learning

Research on the use of discussion in education has largely been anecdotal and based upon successful teaching strategies (Winiecki, 2003). The purposes of instructional-based discussion have been articulated: analysis, synthesis, evaluation, peer-to-peer activities, collaborative divergent activities (individual contributions of content to discussion) collaborative convergent activities, analysis and synthesis. But, beyond the identification of general methods and explanation through examples, the literature leaves it up to the savvy of the discussants to decide when to advance the discussion to another phase, continue in a phase, or reinitiate a phase. This highlights a gap in the literature and a need for “empirical research on instructional discussion” (Winiecki, p. 198). Further, although there is a common perception that there is a paucity of research on computer-mediated communication (CMC), “there is a substantial amount of literature [on the topic

of CMC] although it is scattered through the literature of a great many fields” (Winiecki, p. 198).

Online discussion can be either *synchronous* or *asynchronous*. Synchronous discussion, commonly known as ‘chat’, allows discussants to be in different physical locations (because they are connected by means of a computer network), but they must interact in real time—that is, all participants must be logged on to the same common connection at the same time. Asynchronous discussion allows participants to not only be in different physical locations, but to also interact in their own time. Because messages are written and then posted to a common ‘discussion board’ visible to all participants, students have time and opportunity to read and reflect how (or if) they might respond. According to Winiecki (2003),

Research on ACMC [asynchronous computer mediated communication] has not typically addressed conversation analytic topics...because [they] have questioned the efficacy of researching ‘context dependent’ and ‘context-shaping’ linguistic behavior when the context is not ‘there’ in any one place or time...There is a gap in the research literature and filling it could add to our understanding of how ACMC is actually accomplished and allow us to use such knowledge to make ACMC a more effective tool for achieving particular goals. (p. 201)

Currently, “there is a lack of technological support for the development of personalized knowledge representation for most online discussion forums” (Chen & Hung, 2002, p. 279). Further, “most discussion forums seem to focus more on supporting the construction of collective knowledge rather than on the construction of personalized understanding” (p. 280). An analogy can clarify this point: All of the holdings contained

within a library could be said to represent its “collective knowledge”. But students using the library are only interested in texts that are relevant to their interests. That is, only by reading and comprehending specific material that is relevant to their studies, will they be able to construct a “personalized understanding” and then be able to subsequently incorporate these new ideas into their existing mental schemas (p. 281).

Online discussion boards can often overwhelm students due to the sheer volume of material available to them. To extend the metaphor, a busy discussion board could become something like a large library that contained only a rudimentary referencing system.

The structure for most discussion boards presents all posts in a simple hierarchy: forums > threads > responses to threads. While the externalized representations of the collective group (documented thoughts, comments and ideas) is available to the entire group, students are not aided in structuring their own internalized meaning and must pull it out of the often vast ‘holdings’ of the collective discussion board content. Entwistle and Marton, as cited by Chen and Hung, (2002) developed the concept of “knowledge objects” (p. 281). Knowledge objects are formed in the mind of the learner as he/she attempts to internalize objective knowledge and are identified as having four essential components: awareness of an integrated body of knowledge; some internal visualization or awareness of that body; awareness of unfocused or incomplete areas within this knowledge, and finally; some idea of the structure or form of the knowledge that allows for its mental organization and manipulation. This final component is where existing technology could, but fails, to assist learners.

As cited in Chen and Hung (2002), Collins and Ferguson (1993) suggest that in order for information to be meaningful to the learner, it must be represented in a structured and organized way in the mind of the learner. As information is internalized, the exact structure of that information will be unique to each person and each will utilize different, or a combination of different, structures to internalize and solidify new knowledge. Chen and Hung suggest various ways that individual students participating in an online course could organize, ignore, prioritize and graphically display board content in a way that would enhance and complement their formation of internalized knowledge structures.

New education and online technologies have changed the way writers write and readers read (DeWitt, 1996). Context, within traditional classroom discussion, could previously be taken for granted. Time, place and sequence of discussion were givens with face-to-face interaction: all interaction occurred synchronously, all participants shared a common physical environment, and the discussion, usually in a sequential fashion, progressed from one speaking point to another. Today computer mediated discussion (CMD) is often a significant part of courses presented online. But the online environment presents students and teachers with a medium of exchange and interaction that is essentially context free: this presents users with potential problems and new opportunities.

Context for discussion and exchange must be explicitly created online because it does not exist as in face-to-face events. Direct quotations, paraphrasing others' remarks and summarizing content all help to create additional context for learners (DeWitt, 1996). A primary task of any instructor who uses the discussion board as a significant part of the

learning experience should be to help students understand how to contextualize their writing contributions.

Interaction in an online environment is critical to the online learning experience because students are often isolated from each other in time and space and the usual social reinforcements enjoyed in the face-to-face context are not present. Hannifin (2003) identifies five fundamental values of interaction in distance education courses: pacing, elaboration, confirmation, navigation and inquiry. Instructors primarily set the *pace* for discussion, interaction and the presentation of content, but all members of the online community interact to establish expectations about the pace of interaction. Effective *elaboration* of content helps students make new connections, identify resources and incorporate new knowledge into existing schemas. *Confirmation* functions to validate and reinforce existing knowledge. Information about *navigation* provides students with the practical technical feedback necessary to work effectively in the online environment, and online inquiry. Hannifin's initial reference to *inquiry* originally concerned itself with the responsiveness of various computer systems (Hannafin & Rieber, 1989). Currently, with the widespread use of the Internet, the potential for inquiry is much increased. Links to resource materials and database information have greatly increased the quality and quantity of interactive inquiry.

Structuring content-based discussion and interaction in the online environment has not been widely studied (Winiiecki, 2003). However, there is a substantial amount of literature about how people effectively learn using computers: computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC allows for synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (delayed) communication where participants 'post' text to a common web site, or

discussion board forum, and reply to other participants' posts. The variety of topics and sheer volume of content can overwhelm participants if they are not properly structured (Chen & Hung, 2002). Students may lack the ability to organize and structure information obtained in these forums and hence could fail to develop knowledge about their topic. Context for posted text-based discussion material does not exist; it must be created by the participants using standard documentation techniques: direct quotations, paraphrasing remarks and summarizing (Dewitt, 1996). Also, because interaction in the online environment is critical, proper pacing of the discussion, elaboration of the materials (when necessary), and confirmation (validation) of participant material is also necessary (Hannifin, 2003).

Summary

This research project is framed by literature from the fields of adult education and distance learning. Adult education theory is relevant to the development of distance learning technology because colleges and universities are increasingly using distance learning technology to supplement their course offerings and to reach adult learners. Because it is critically important to understand the subjective perceptions of adult students who utilize distance learning technology, the following research question was posed: How, if at all, do the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation? Related questions about learner autonomy, transactional distance and the identification of cultural domains were also introduced.

Andragogy has been defined as the art and science of helping adults learn. There is a large body of literature that suggests adults learn differently than children and that adults are internally motivated to learn and that their learning tends to be problem, rather than subject, centered (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Suanmali, 1981). It is important, therefore, that distance learning technology be used to facilitate adult learning and enhance the learning experience of adult learners online.

Distance education has been defined as any of the various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning and guidance of a tutorial organization (Holmberg, 1989). Distance education venues hold promising potential for online adult learning because these students tend to be self motivated and problem oriented. Adults often need and appreciate the flexibility and autonomy of working asynchronously online. The history of the development of distance learning in the United States began in the 1880s as mail correspondence courses. Throughout the 20th century and into the beginning of the 21st century, continuous improvements in communication technology have allowed for the sharing of multiple forms of communication media, and the increased opportunity for teachers and students to interact and provide feedback to each other from a distance. The emergence of the Internet and the World Wide Web continues to offer new opportunities for teaching and learning.

The question of how adult learners experience The Internet and the World Wide Web, however, and how they compare to the more traditional face-to-face learning

experiences is still largely unexamined. While adults appreciate autonomous learning, they also require varying amounts of direction and structure. 'Transactional distance' is a term coined by Michael Moore (1980) to describe a physical and/or psychological separation between an instructor and a learner. The term doesn't represent a physical distance, but rather an appropriate level of interaction and feedback between teacher and student. Courses designed to meet the needs of the adult online learner are tailored to the individual learner and to the content to be mastered. The degree of feedback, interaction, guidance and instruction may vary from subject to subject and from student to student. The focus of distance education research is shifting from its original emphasis on structural and content issues to those of transactional issues (Garrison, 1989) and online interaction has become a key concept in distance learning (Moore, 1989). Studying these interactions in detail could yield critical information about how adults learn and how to effectively balance autonomy and direction. There is a gap in the literature and a need for "empirical research on instructional discussion" (Winiecki, p. 198). One way to close this gap is to carefully examine the experiences and perceptions of adult learners as they learn at a distance and to compare those experiences to adults learning in a face-to-face situation.

Consequently, because of the need to learn more about the perceptions of adult learners both in the traditional face-to-face classroom setting and in the online environment, I have decided to study two groups of adult learners that will form two sections of the same graduate-level adult education course: one section delivered in the more traditional face-to-face format, and a second section delivered completely online and asynchronously for those students who prefer that format or cannot complete course

requirements any other way. Both sections will be presented the same semester, by the same instructor and with identical content and learning objectives. These circumstances present an opportunity to examine the experiences of students enrolled in the online and face-to-face classes, and to compare and contrast those experiences.

Chapter three will describe MyGateway, the course management system used by the participants in this research and the basic research design. A description of participants, procedures and data collection and instrumentation is also provided.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this research was to create a detailed descriptive report of the experiences of adult learners in an intact Adult Education Course at the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL). UMSL's College of Education offers courses that lead to advanced degrees in four areas: K-12, Education Administration, Higher Education Administration, Adult and Continuing Education and Community Education. The focus of this study is a graduate –level adult education class (Introduction to the Adult Learner). The reason for selecting this course was that it is a full semester 16-week course consisting of 2 sections: one section of students met on campus one day a week for face to face discussion, the other section of students took the course completely online via MyGateway, UMSL's course management system.

Research focused on comparing and contrasting the experiences of participants in both sections and examined the following questions:

- How, if at all, do the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation?
- What are student perceptions of learner autonomy in these two sections, do they differ, and if so, how?
- How do students in both sections perceive 'transactional distance' a term coined by Michael Moore (1980) to describe a physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners (Moore, 1973)? And is the perception of transactional distance different for online and face-to-face students?

- What cultural domains will emerge for both the online and the face-to-face sections? *Cultural domains* are defined as categories of cultural meaning (Spradley, p. 88) that are identifiable as patterns of behaviors exhibited by members of a group or culture. And what cultural domains will be common to both sections of students and what domains will be exclusive to one section or the other?

Description of MyGateway Interface

According to their website, the Blackboard Company was founded in 1997 for the purpose of connecting people and technology (Blackboard, 2005), and claims clients from all over the world including secondary education, higher education and government entities, corporations and textbook publishers. The company claims to be the most widely-adopted course management system among U.S. postsecondary institutions. Blackboard's vision and goal is to improve the educational experiences of students through the use of technology and the online environment (Blackboard).

The University of Missouri-St. Louis provides a unique web site for every course a student is registered for. Course sites are created using Blackboard Inc. Commonly referred to as a web-based course management system, the purpose of Blackboard is to create a virtual learning environment for students and instructors giving them a common virtual space in which to exchange information and to interact.

MyGateway is UMSL's branded version of Blackboard. The term 'branded' simply means that, while the Blackboard tool is generic in terms of functionality, individual institutions can add their colors and logo, and pick and choose from an extensive list of tools and options. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate what students and faculty

see when they access the online component of their classes, and how the University of Missouri-St. Louis has branded the Blackboard Inc. template so as to ‘personalize’ its appearance.

All students, when they are registered for a course at UM-St. Louis, are automatically enrolled in their classed; that is, for each course that a student is registered for, he or she has a corresponding course site. Students access their course web sites (MyGateway) by going to the following url and logging in: <http://mygateway.umsl.edu>.

Figure 3 shows the MyGateway log in page; after students log in to MyGateway students see a list of courses that they are enrolled in—as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3. View of login page students use to access their MyGateway courses



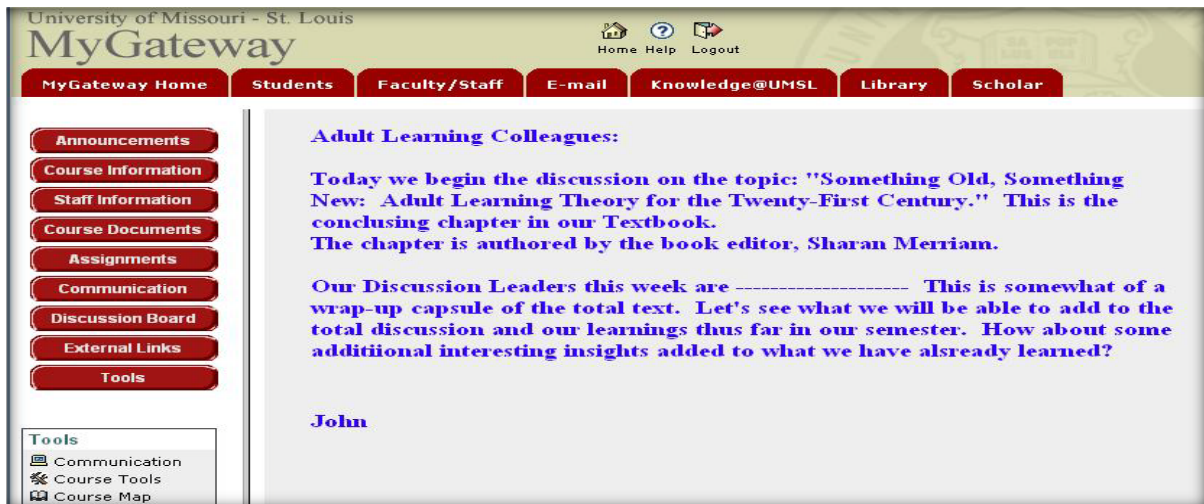
Once students log in to MyGateway, using their SSO (Single Sign-On) ID, and entering their password, they see a complete list of all the courses they are registered for under ‘Courses in which you are enrolled’. Students then select the specific course they wish to access. The default ‘home’ page in MyGateway is the ‘Announcements’ page. On

the Announcements page, shown in Figure 5, students can access information about the course posted by their instructor.

Figure 4. View of MyGateway home page that students see once they have logged in



Figure 5. Announcements page viewed by students when logged in to MyGateway



Structure of the MyGateway Interface

In addition to course announcements, students had access to several ‘quick links’ on the Announcements page:

- *Course Information link* – was not used.

- *Staff Information link* – provided students with access to the instructors contact information, web site and available office hours.
- *Course Documents link* – allowed students to access and download the majority of readings required for the course; purchase of an additional text book was also required.
- *Assignments link* – gave students access to the course syllabus and reading schedule, and provided detailed information for completing course assignments.
- *Communication link* – gave students access to all of the communication tools available in MyGateway; students in this course used it to access the class roster and to send email.
- *Discussion Board link* – used primarily by students participating in the online section of this course and gave them access to all of the discussion board forums.
- *External Links* – contained web sites and additional online resources related to adult education.
- *Tools* – gave students access to several MyGateway tools: the tools used by this group of students were (primarily) the student Home page, where students could create their own individual home page.
- *MyGrades* – students could go here to see their final course grade.

Ethnographic Model in Cyberspace

Within the realm of qualitative research, ethnography, as a model for studying human cultures, has been with us for quite some time. This model, however, has traditionally assumed that the actions and artifacts of a group of individuals be contained within a well defined physical space. With the evolution of the Internet, and the creation

of so-called 'cyber-space', researchers have begun to consider how the ethnographic model might be used to illuminate how individuals and groups learn and interact online; that is, to describe a *culture* of cyberspace. The ethnographic model is an ideal way to study Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). "Virtual communities are constructed of people sharing a common language of communication and common rules for the conduct of such communication making the ethnography of communication an ideal tool for their study" (Mason, 2001, p. 62).

A serious concern for some is the question of how the ethnographer can study a group of people who could be on different continents, interacting asynchronously, be surreptitiously male or female, where a subject can delete or add himself to a group at a whim; in short, how can the ethnographer verify that the communication he or she documents is accurate? The answer is that "ultimately if we wish to study life in a virtual community, populated by virtual people, then we must become virtual ethnographers" (p. 62). The ethnographer must fully enter into the "consensual reality experienced by groups of people who use computer mediated communication as their primary, and often only, means of communication" (p. 63). Research in this area has traditionally focused on the person at the keyboard; virtual ethnographers should reverse this trend and focus instead on the "persona that has been projected into cyberspace by the typist" (p. 63).

The debate has largely been polemical, where some extol the benefits and virtues of CMC, while the others decry the loss of social richness which must necessarily lead down a slippery slope of human isolation and social dysfunction. A close ethnographic study can inform and add depth to this debate (Mason, 2001). There are three basic areas of a virtual ethnography to consider. First, the ethnographic context must be identified;

questions regarding context deal with why the group exists, who its members are, what are the goals or objectives, and, how does the group meet these objectives. Second, ethnographers must have a methodology. This deals with how the ethnographer identifies patterns of behavior and shared meaning within the group and among its participants. Third, ethnographers must generate ethnographic tools for the organization and analysis of data. According to Mason, tools for virtual ethnography have to do with the researcher's ability to navigate and interact in cyberspace; this requires technical as well as cultural knowledge (Mason, 2001).

The Virtual Classroom

According to Hine (2004) "If the people you study move some aspects of their life onto the Internet, then so must you" (p. 2). It appears a certainty that life on the Internet, at least a part of it, is here to stay. And adults are increasingly using the Internet as an avenue to help meet their learning goals; so it is imperative that researchers interested in studying this group of learners find ways to do so. The past decade has seen a growing body of interest and research in the area of virtual ethnography (Guimarães, 2000; Hine, 2004; Mason, 2001; Paccagnella, 1997; Rutter, 1999; Rutter & Smith, 2002; Sade-Beck, 2004). Ethnographic research has traditionally relied on immersion of the researcher into the environment he or she was studying—that is, to become a part, to the extent possible, of the culture being studied (Spradley, 1980). Immersion is also the object when studying virtual cultures (Mason, 2001). According to Mason,

A virtual ethnography is one that fully immerses the ethnographer into the consensual reality experienced by groups of people who use computer-mediated communication as their primary, and often only, means of communication. As

such, the online or virtual persona of the participants are the main focus of the ethnographer. (p. 63)

It was anticipated that immersion in these two cultures, online and face-to-face, would result in finding two very different cultures. This is not necessarily because the individuals in these two class sections are different or the goals are different—they are not. It was anticipated that the online group would form an identifiable culture based upon the possibilities and constraints of the communications technology involved, while the face-to-face group would form an identifiable culture based upon weekly discussion groups.

Research Design

Because this study was an attempt to describe the experiences of adult learners it incorporated the ethnographic model and relied on the collection and analysis of primarily emic data. Emic refers to information that is relevant and meaningful to the participants themselves, and is in contrast to “etic” data which is culturally neutral and not necessarily reflective of the attitudes and cultural mores of a group of individuals (Pike, 1967). It was assumed that adult learners interacting both online and in face-to-face situations would form identifiable cultures that could be observed and described using the tools of the ethnographic researcher. Participant observation and immersion by the researcher into both the online and face-to-face sessions illuminated the question of perceived differences among online students and face-to-face students. It was anticipated that some identified cultural domains would be very similar for both groups of students, and some cultural domains would be exclusive to one section or the other.

It was anticipated that student perceptions of learner autonomy and transactional distance would also become evident as data were analyzed: generally students experiencing learner autonomy will perceive that they are in control of their learning outcomes; students who perceive that their peers and instructor are readily available and responsive will experience minimal transactional distance.

Participants

Participants included the instructor and students enrolled in both sections (online and face-to-face) of a graduate level adult education course at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The researcher also participated in the capacity of participant observer.

Course objectives and content were the same for the online and face-to-face students. The main elements of both sections included the following: completion of a learning contract, completion of a learning activity paper, participation in weekly discussion topics, leading the discussion for one topic and participating in peer evaluations. Content was divided into 15 one-week-long segments and coincided with the 16-week semester (allowing one week for spring break). Class meeting time for face-to-face students was primarily used for weekly discussion topics. Online students 'meeting' time consisted primarily of posting and replying (interacting) using the course discussion board to discuss the same (as the face-to-face group) weekly topics.

Procedures

At the beginning of the course students in both sections were informed of the purpose and goals of the researcher. The researcher was present for (and audio recorded) all face-to-face classes and participate in class discussion. The researcher also introduced himself and documented his purpose and role in the class to online students in the form of

an announcement and an attached paper detailing the research project (Appendix A). For online discussion the researcher participated in the discussion by posting comments to the discussion board forums.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The result of this ethnographic research is a descriptive and well-detailed narrative of the experiences of adult learners taking a graduate level adult education course at UMSL. In order to accomplish this research goal, data was collected from several sources: interviews with students, researcher field notes, recordings of face-to-face class sessions, text generated from online discussions, emails, and online survey questions. All data presented in the final version of this ethnography is anonymous.

According to Hammersley (1990), there are three basic ways to collect information about a culture: interviews, observations and documents. This data allows the researcher to tell the story of the people involved using direct quotes, extensive description and actual artifacts and documents. Audio recordings collected for analysis (classroom discussions and student interviews) were transcribed. Transcribed audio recordings and all collected text (discussion board forums and course email) were all placed into a 2-column Word Document for coding.

Discussion Board Posts and Face-to-Face Discussion

Both sections of this adult education course were primarily discussion-based. That is, the bulk of the 16 weeks was divided into various relevant adult education topics, covering approximately one topic per week.

Students that met face-to-face were required to read assigned material before class and then contribute to the general discussion during class time. Additionally, all students

were required to select a topic from the list of topics to be covered and led the discussion in class when that particular topic was covered. Discussion leaders were expected to introduce the topic, solicit responses and input from classmates, respond to comments and encourage input and interaction from everyone. Data collection for these discussion sessions was in the form of recorded audio (for later transcription).

Students who took this course completely online discussed the same topics as the face-to-face students. Online students were also required to select a topic that interested them and lead the discussion for that topic. The online students, however, did not discuss the topics face-to-face, but instead posted all comments in writing to an online discussion board. As in the face-to-face section, discussion leaders were expected to post an introduction to the topic, solicit responses and input from other online classmates, respond to posts and encourage input and interaction from all online students. Data collection for these discussion sessions was in the form of text documents of saved discussion board posts.

Participant Interviews

Towards the end of the term all students were invited to participate in a voluntary one-on-one interview with the researcher. Interviews with five students taking the course online, and three taking the course face-to-face were conducted. The objective for these interviews was to explore in depth the subjective experiences of those involved and to document remarks and/or experiences that may not surface online or during face-to-face class sessions. The basic questions (Appendix B) were open ended and, because this was an ethnographic study, it was anticipated that additional questions would emerge as data collection progressed.

Field Notes

The ethnographic model of participant observer emphasizes that the researcher is an important source of information. According to Spradley (1980),

The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation. The ordinary participant comes to that same situation with only one purpose: to engage in the appropriate activities...The participant observer...seeks to become explicitly aware of things usually blocked out [of conscious thought] to avoid overload. Increasing your awareness does not come easily, for you must overcome years of *selective inattention*, tuning out, not seeing, and not hearing. (p. 54-55)

The researcher attended all face-to-face classes and participated in all class discussions. During the face-to-face sessions the researcher took field notes and documented observations for later analysis. Field notes were also taken regarding the online section of this adult education class and consist of journal entries regarding the online class activities.

Data Sources

To answer the research questions presented here and to look for themes and cultural patterns, the following data was collected and transcribed by the researcher as text (in the case of audio recordings) and coded for *cover terms* and *domain names*.

Data to be used for analysis was collected from the following sources:

- Blackboard (MyGateway)

- Student access statistics and graphics: Blackboard application can track student access to course web site. Times and frequencies of student access to content areas and course tools was recorded and collected. Selected screen shots of the MyGateway interface were also captured.
- Discussion Board Forum posts (online students)
 - All (text-based) student and instructor posts for the three chosen subject areas (Women's learning, Post-modern and Critical education theory, and Feelings and Emotions in education) were collected so that a cultural domain analysis could be performed.
- Classroom discussions (face-to-face students) (audio tape)
 - Audio recordings were made of all face-to-face sessions. Transcripts of three sessions were created by the researcher: Women's learning in adult education, Post-modern and Critical theory in adult education, and Feelings and Emotions in adult education. These transcripts were used to perform a cultural domain analysis (Spradley, 1980).
- Student email and Instructor email
 - All email generated by students and sent to the instructor, and all email generated by the instructor and sent to students was collected for cultural domain analysis.
- Student interviews (audio tape)
 - Individual student interviews (online students and face-to-face students) were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher so that a cultural domain analysis could be performed.

- Online environment discussion board forum (online students)
 - An additional (and optional) discussion forum was created for online students inviting them to describe their online environment as well as any additional thoughts about their online experience
- Researcher field notes
 - The researcher participated in all face-to-face course sessions as well as the online course and produced a catalog of impressions and observations regarding his personal experience of the course (Spradley, 1980).
- Online surveys (online and face-to-face students)
 - Questions used for one-on-one student interviews (see appendix B) were posted as an online survey so that students could submit responses online and anonymously. These responses were collected so that a cultural domain analysis could be performed.

Description of Course Content

As previously stated the purpose and learning objectives for this graduate-level introductory course in adult education, *The Adult Learner*, were identical for both the online and face-to-face sections. The purpose of the class was printed plainly on page one of the course syllabus (see Appendix C for the complete syllabus):

This course is designed for those who help adults learn in a variety of settings. A study will be made of the characteristics of Adult Learners and various theories of how they learn, as well as the implications of these characteristics and theories for Adult Education Research, Programming, Curriculum, Planning, and Instructional Practice.

Course objectives for both sections were also identical and were listed as “Learning Objectives” and “Program Objectives”. These objectives were as follows:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the conclusion of this course the participants, in concert with the guidance of the instructor as a lifelong learner, will have developed and/or increased the following cluster of competencies:

- 1) Knowledge of the characteristics of adult learners, including an overview of physical needs, developmental states, and current research on adult learning;
- 2) Understanding of the implications of these characteristics and theories on research, programming, curriculum, planning, instructional practice, and praxis;
- 3) Skill in recognizing the needs of adult learners and the appropriateness and effectiveness of ways the adult learner is engaged in the learning process;
- 4) A positive attitude toward adult learners in general, and in their ability to learn;
- 5) Values consistent with respect for adult learners and for the experience they bring to the learning situation;
- 6) Interest in learning more about the adults in the field in which they work, their needs, interests, and abilities, and how to improve their learning experience.

(See Appendix C for more detailed information)

Course assignment information for both the face-to-face and online sections were made available in MyGateway by the instructor (see Appendix D and E). Assignments for the both sections were placed in course folder labeled ‘Assignments’. The reason for this was that, while content and objectives for both sections was the same, a major

difference was the way class discussions were held and the way that student assignments were made.

In addition to student assignments that were completed on an individual basis, a list of scheduled topics was presented to both groups at the beginning of the semester that formed the basis of course discussion sessions (see Appendix D and E). For the face-to-face students one topic was presented at most class meetings and took up the majority of the meeting time. For the online students discussion forums lasted one week.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this project followed Spradley's (1980) model for writing an ethnography as a participant observer. A first step in analyzing ethnographic data is to look for patterns in the culture and activities being studied. According to Spradley, "culture refers to patterns of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places, and activities" (p. 86). A *cultural domain* is identifiable as a "category of cultural meaning" (p. 88) and it includes other smaller categories. Spradley further defines *cultural domains* as having three basic elements: each domain can be given a *cover term*, which describes the smaller sub-set of categories within the general domain. Names for these smaller categories (included in the larger domain) are called *included terms*. Finally, between the *cover term* and its *included terms* there exists an explicit *semantic relationship* that describes how each of the *included terms* are related to the *cover term*.

An example of the above would be: a cultural category found in a classroom identified as "feedback". A researcher might observe people laughing, nodding heads, changing posture, taking notes, looking intently, etc. All of these activities serve to

communicate to a speaker certain information. So, the *cover term* is feedback, and *included terms* become laughing, head movements, eye contact, note taking, etc. Finally, the *semantic relationship* is that they are all ways to give feedback to a speaker. That is, eye contact *is a way to* give feedback to a speaker; head nodding *is a way to* give feedback to a speaker; laughing *is a way to* give feedback to a speaker, and so on.

As cultural domains are being identified, it becomes possible to create taxonomies of these identified domains.

Like a cultural domain, taxonomy is a set of categories organized on the basis of a single semantic relationship. The major difference between the two is that a taxonomy shows more of the relationship among the things inside the cultural domain. (Spradley, 1980, p. 112)

Using the same example as above, the cultural domain *feedback* contains the cover term *head movements*. The term *head movements* itself can be further divided as different *kinds* of head movements. That is, a nodding of the head up and down *is a way to* express feedback that indicates agreement; a nodding of the head from left to right *is a way to* express feedback that indicates disagreement.

Taxonomies differ from domains in only one important way; they “show the relationships among *all* the included terms in a domain. A taxonomy reveals subsets and the way [these subsets] are related to the whole.” (Spradley, 1980, p.113).

Once a list of domains and their associated cover terms has been identified, and a taxonomy of domains has been created, the next step is to perform a componential analysis. According to Spradley (1980),

Componential analysis is a systematic search for the attributes (components of meaning) associated with cultural categories. Whenever an ethnographer discovers contrasts among the members of a domain, these contrasts are best thought of as attributes or components of meaning. A 'component' is another term for 'unit'; thus, componential analysis is looking for the units of meaning that people have assigned to their categories. (p. 131)

In the example of head nodding cited above, it may be possible to discover several contrasting meanings for this feedback mechanism. In addition to indicating affirmation or disaffirmation, it may also be a way for participants to signal that they are listening and engaged. The purpose of a head nod could also mean encouragement or disgust or a way to indicate that someone approves of a statement or proposition.

According to Spradley (1980), it is not enough to identify and analyze cultural domains and their relationships to each other. In order to fully present cultures it is necessary to identify overarching cultural themes: a cultural theme is "any principle recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning" (p. 141). Cultural themes are usually very general and assumed rules governing behaviors and most remain at the "*tacit* level of knowledge"

(p. 143):

Themes come to be taken for granted, slipping into that area of knowledge where people are not quite aware or seldom find need to express what they know. This means that the ethnographer will have to make inferences about the principles that exist. (p. 143)

It is anticipated that as analysis of data progresses cultural themes will be identified. It is also anticipated that it will be possible to locate these themes within a set of broader “universal themes” (p. 153) that are common to all human endeavors: social conflict and control, management of personal relationships, social status and problem solving (Spradley).

Participant Observation and the Spradley Analysis Model

Participant Observation as a distinct and legitimate method of observation for purposes of gathering information about people and the culture in which they live has a long history in the field of ethnographic research (Boaz, 1938; Cushing, 1975; Evans-Pritchard, 1951; Geertz, 1973; Malinowski, 1922; Mead, 1928 & Spradley, 1980). Spradley’s work, in addition to being well within the mainstream of the participant observation paradigm, is associated with an explicit model for data collection and analysis; that model is followed here. A basic premise of Spradley’s model is that cultural meaning is developed and shared among participants of that culture. As such it is the task of the researcher (also acting as participant) to identify meaning and cultural patterns as they present themselves through shared activities. That is, the researcher brings no preconceived categories of meaning or significance, but rather, through observation and participation, comes to appreciate the significance of human action through the eyes of those involved.

Summary

This project was an attempt to write a detailed description of the experiences of adult learners in a graduate level course at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This course was available to students as either a (traditional) face-to-face class that met one

evening a week, or as an online course. Both sections of the course were held during the same 16-week semester, and the course schedule, content, assignments and instructor were identical.

Ethnography with participant observation was the appropriate research model for exploring student experiences and perceptions. Using the analysis model described, it was anticipated that a rich and detailed portrait of how students viewed their learning experience (online and face-to-face) would emerge.

Chapter four will discuss the results of data collection and analysis based on Spradley's (1980) model of participant observation. Data sources are listed and detailed examples of student experiences, including direct observation and actual quotes, are provided and categorized into cultural domains.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this research was to create a detailed and descriptive report of the experiences of adult learners participating in a graduate level adult education course at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The reason for selecting this course was that it was a full semester 16-week course consisting of 2 sections: one section of students that met on campus one day a week for face to face discussion, and an additional section of students that took the course completely online via MyGateway, UMSL's course management system.

Qualitative research has, traditionally, studied human cultures as they exist within the context of a well defined time and space. With the evolution of the Internet and its concomitant cyberspace, virtual communities, researchers have begun to consider how the ethnographic model might be used to illuminate how individuals and groups learn and interact online; that is, to describe a *culture* of cyberspace (Hine, 2004; Mason, 2001).

This study incorporated the ethnographic model and relied on the collection and analysis of emic data. It was assumed that adult learners interacting both online and face-to-face would form identifiable cultures that could be observed and analyzed using the tools of traditional ethnography in general, and, more specifically, using Spradley's participant observer model (1980).

Research Questions

The focus of this research was to compare and contrast the experiences of participants in both the online and face-to-face sections of this adult education course and to examine the following questions:

1a) What were student perceptions of learner autonomy in these two sections?

1b) Did student perceptions of learner autonomy differ in the online and face-to-face sections, and if so, how did they differ?

2) How did students in both sections perceive “transactional distance” a term coined by Michael Moore (1980) to describe a physical and/or psychological separation between instructors and learners (Moore, 1973)? And is the perception of transactional distance different for online and face-to-face students?

3) What cultural domains emerged for both the online and the face-to-face sections? *Cultural domains* are defined as categories of cultural meaning (Spradley, 1980, pp 88) and are identifiable as patterns of behaviors exhibited by members of a group or culture. And what cultural domains were common to both sections of students and what domains will be exclusive to one section or the other?

Traditional ethnographic research, and, by extension, virtual ethnography is richly descriptive and interpretive (Geertz, 1973; Mason, 2001). This rich, or, ‘thick description’ relies on a multitude of data sources. Data analysis follows Spradley’s (1980) model for writing an ethnography as a participant observer. Culture, according to Spradley, refers to patterns of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is “an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places, and activities” (p. 86). It follows then, that a close analysis of the experience of the adult learners in both the online and face-to-face sections of this class, will reveal similarities and differences in their respective experiences in this class. The following is a list and description of the data sources for this study.

Description of Subjects

Two sections of this 16-week graduate-level course in adult education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis were conducted: a traditional face-to-face section that met one evening a week, for three hours, and a completely asynchronous online section. Both sections began the first week of January and ended the first week of May. They were directed by the same instructor, covered the same subject matter and required identical student assignments. Students were free to enroll in either the online or face-to-face section according to their personal preferences. Of the 28 students enrolled in both sections, 22 students were at the Masters level. Three were Doctoral students and one student was post-doctoral (with no information reported for two students).

All students completed the course; 17 students enrolled in the online section and 11 students enrolled in the face-to-face section for a total of 28 students. Of this total, 22 students were female (72.7%) and six were male (27.3%). There were 16 females (93.75%) and one male (6.25%) in the online section. In the face-to-face section there were six females (83.3%) and five males (16.7%).

Age span for both sections was 30 years with the lowest reported age being 29 years old and the highest age being 59 years old. Age span for the online section was 18 years (29 to 47 years old); age span for the face-to-face section was 29 years (30 to 59 years old).

The average overall age for all students in both sections was just over 40 years old (40.16); with the average age of the online students being just under 37 years old (36.8) and the average age of face-to-face students being 46.5 years old. Total age variance for both sections was 74.22 with a standard deviation of 8.78. Variance totals for the online

and face-to-face sections independently were 47.89 and 71.36 respectively. Standard deviations for both sections independently were 7.16 and 8.90 respectively.

In summary, the online section contained more and younger students and more female students than the face-to-face section. The face-to-face section students were older with greater variance in age, but more evenly divided in terms of gender.

Of the 28 students enrolled in both sections, 22 students were at the Masters level. Three were Doctoral students and one student was post-doctoral (with no information available for the remaining two).

Description of Course Access by Students

During this 16-week course it was anticipated that students in the online section of this course would access their course site and its associated materials differently than students in the face-to-face section would. That is, online students would access their course site more frequently than face-to-face students.

MyGateway Student Access: Day of Week

Figures 6 and 7 show the day of the week and the number of 'hits' (the actual number of times students accessed any web page inside their course section).

Two striking differences noted between the face-to-face students and the online students are the number of MyGateway hits, and the relative variance of activity based on the day of the week. In terms of absolute numbers of hits, the scale for the online group is 10^3 , whereas the scale for the face-to-face group is 10^2 . This difference in the use of the MyGateway interface was anticipated: online students were almost completely dependent on their MyGateway course site for all access, interaction and information. Face-to-face students, on the other hand, were able to complete most of their tasks during 'regular'

(face-to-face) class time with their instructor and peers. An additional note is that while online student access to course materials was relatively constant during the week, the face-to-face group displayed a significant (62%) increase in course activity on Tuesdays (almost 700 hits versus an average of 263 hits the other days of the weeks). It is, perhaps, not coincidental that the face-to-face students met each Tuesday at 5:30 PM Central Time.

Figure 6. Face-to-face students day-of-the-week MyGateway 'hits'

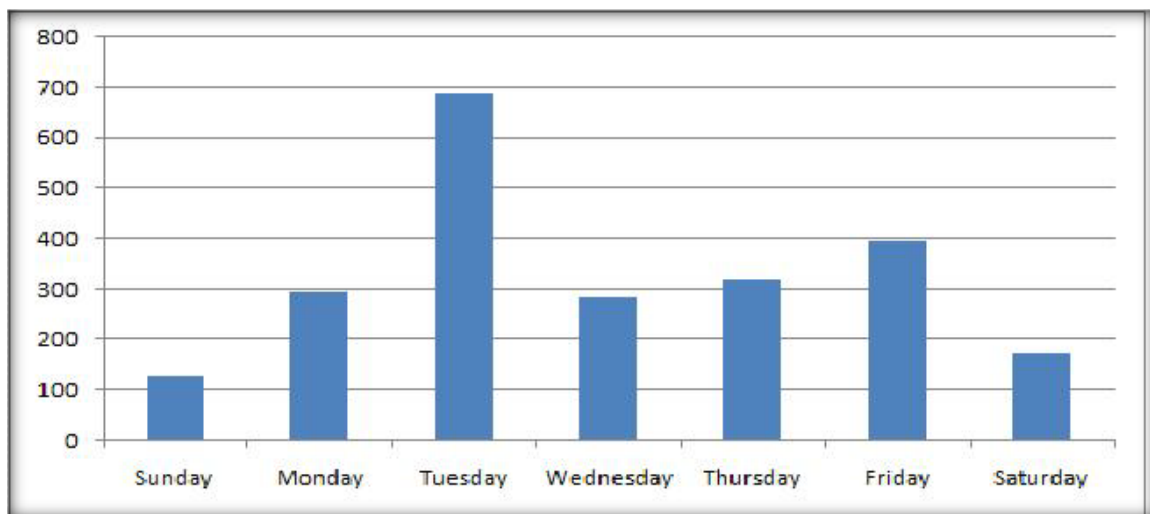
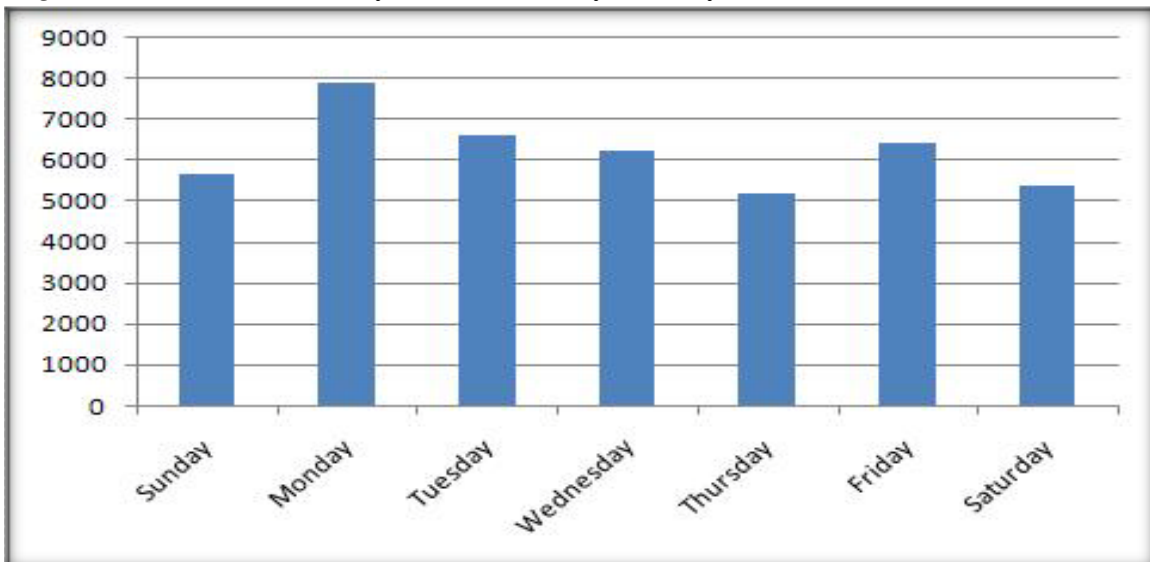


Figure 7. Online students day-of-the-week MyGateway 'hits'



MyGateway Student Access: Time of Day

In addition to the absolute number of MyGateway hits by both groups, Figures 10 and 11 show the time of day that students accessed their MyGateway course pages. The magnitude of student hits for the face-to-face group and the online group is 10^2 and 10^3 , respectively. The pattern that emerged is that whatever other perceptions may have existed between these two groups of students, sheer exposure to the MyGateway interface influenced the perceptions of the online students much more than the face-to-face students. The experience of the face-to-face students was only minimally influenced by the MyGateway interface and influenced much more profoundly by their experiences and interaction in the classroom with peers and instructor.

Face-to-face activity almost completely disappeared during the 12:00 AM to 6:00 AM hours (Figure 8), whereas, online students (although fewer in number) were active during these hours (Figure 9). Also, after 9:00 PM the face-to-face group hits dwindled sharply with a slight upward trend beginning at 7:00 PM and ending at 9:00 PM, while the number of online student hits climbed (peaking at 10:00 PM) and then receding but not stopping even past the midnight hours.

Figure 8. Face-to-face student access of MyGateway based on time of day

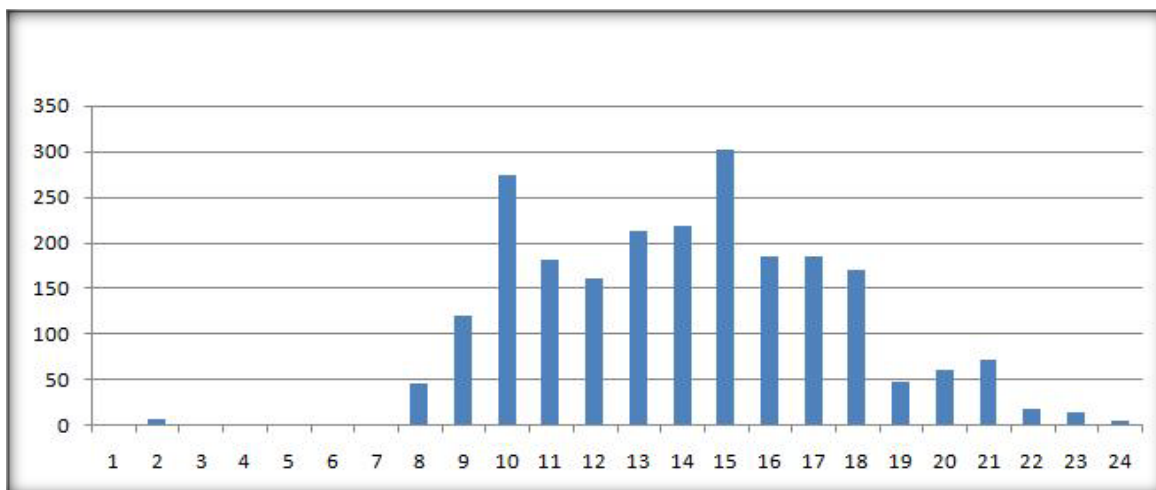
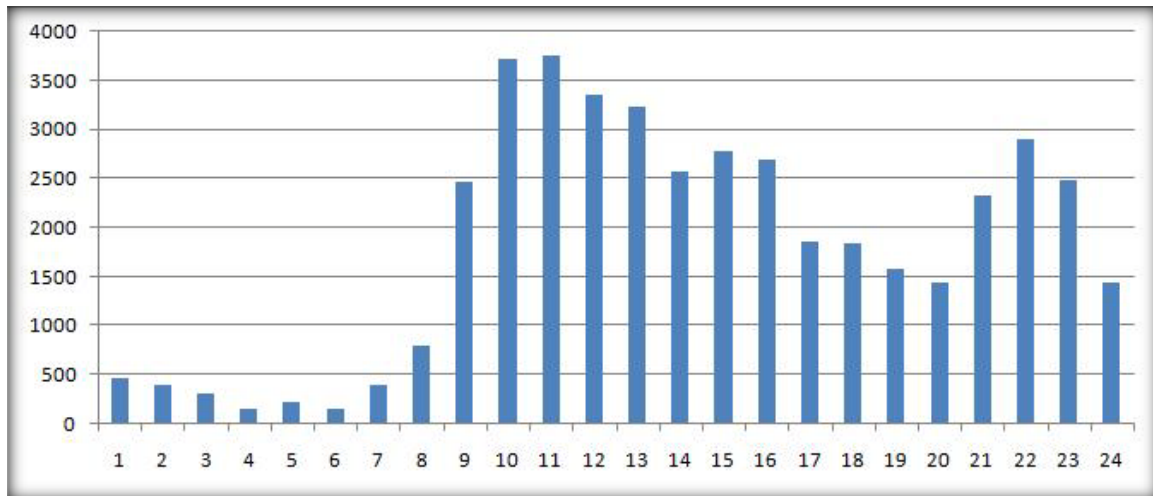


Figure 9. Online student access of MyGateway based on time of day



Finally, Figures 10 and 11 indicate that online students were most active between 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon, and then again at the 10:00 PM hour. Face-to-face students show peak activity during the 10:00 AM hour and then again at the 3:00 PM hour.

Description of MyGateway Content Areas by Students

In terms of absolute numbers it has been established that online students accessed their MyGateway content much more than did their face-to-face counterparts. This was expected because it was assumed that face-to-face students would acquire most of their information and process a significant portion of their course requirements (course discussions) while meeting and interacting with peers and the instructor during scheduled class time. Online students, on the other hand, would be required to access their MyGateway course content frequently and repeatedly in order to acquire necessary information and interact with peers and instructor—because MyGateway was the only avenue available to them to complete these course requirements.

Figure 10. Face-to-face student access to Content Areas in MyGateway

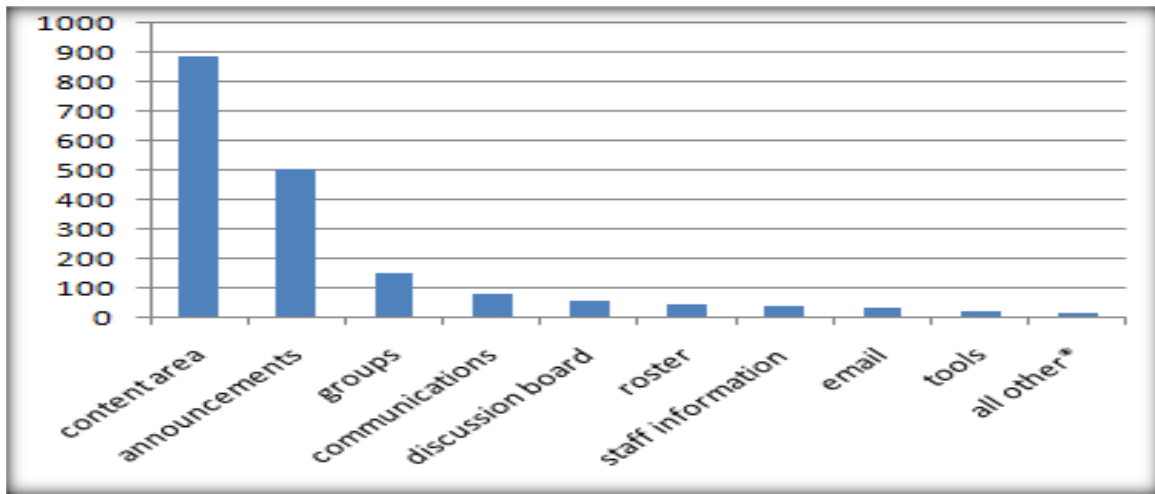
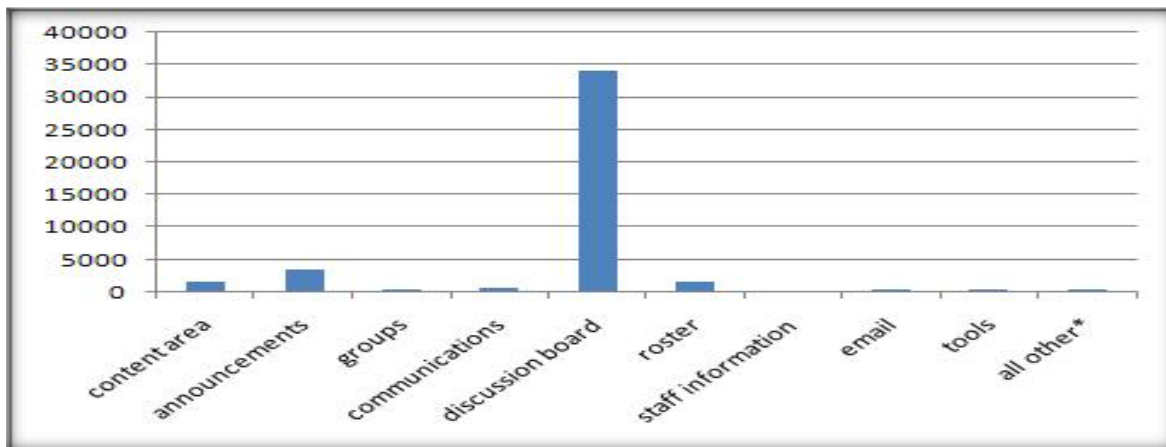


Figure 11 Online student access to content areas in MyGateway



Figures 10 and 11 represent the actual number of MyGateway hits by both online and face-to-face students. Note that the range for face-to-face student hits is zero to 1000; whereas the range of MyGateway hits for the online student group is zero to 40,000. As previously stated, this result was anticipated due to the online students' dependence on MyGateway, and, to the relative face-to-face students' independence from MyGateway. Figure 14 compares the absolute numbers and percentages for face-to-face and online student MyGateway hits. An important observation is that face-to-face student hits in the Content area (this is where students were able to access and download course materials:

syllabus, assignments, readings and etc.) constituted just under half of all course site hits (48%) and hits in the Announcements section of MyGateway for this group, constituted over a quarter of all hits (27%) (see Table 1). For online students, hits in the Discussion Board section of the MyGateway Course site constituted 80% of all course site hits while announcements accounted for just over 8%. These statistics are somewhat skewed, however, by the very large number of Discussion Board hits (34, 174) by online students. Online students still accessed Course Content areas more (in absolute numbers) than face-to-face students by a ratio of almost two to one (1446/886), and visited the Announcements section of their MyGateway course site by a ratio of almost seven to one (3452/507 = 6.81).

Table 1
Compared Face-to-Face and Online Student MyGateway Hits—Absolute Numbers and Percentages

Blackboard Areas	Face-to-Face Hits		Online Hits	
	N	%	N	%
Content Areas	886	48.71	1446	3.14
Announcements	507	27.36	3452	8.14
Groups	151	8.15	321	0.74
Communications	83	4.48	488	1.15
Discussion Board	56	3.02	34174	80.64
Course Roster	46	2.48	1454	3.43
Staff Information	41	2.21	112	0.26
Email	38	2.05	292	0.68
Tools	26	1.40	312	0.73
All Other	19	1.03	327	0.77
Total Hits	1853	99.99	42378	99.96

The numbers in Table 1 suggest that while face-to-face students did rely on information available to them on their MyGateway course site, online students were much more active in and dependent on their MyGateway course sites.

Finally, Table 1 demonstrates that the overall variability in student access (MyGateway hits) for face-to-face students (total variance of 17.96) was much greater than for their online counterparts (total variance of 7.5). Standard deviations for both groups also show that the face-to-face students had a much greater variance in access for day-of-week and time-of-day hits. This suggests that online students accessed their MyGateway course site with greater frequency and consistency than did their face-to-face counterparts. That is, online students tended to access their MyGateway course sites more consistently over time than did face-to-face students.

Table 2
Variance in Number of Hits in MyGateway Course Site for Face-to-Face Students and Online Students

	Face-to-Face Students	Online Students
SD (Day of Week)	7.43	1.95
SD (Time of Day)	4.24	2.74
Total Variance	17.96	7.50

The above discussion describes how online students use and experience MyGateway and how that use and experience differs from that of face-to-face students. Online students were completely dependent on the MyGateway interface to complete course requirements and overwhelmingly used the Discussion Board section, the Course Content section and the Announcements page; face-to-face students used MyGateway to a lesser extent (primarily to download course content and announcements) and were only partially dependent on MyGateway. Because of this it is likely that the MyGateway interface was more formative in shaping student perceptions and experiences.

Description of Student Email

Figure 12 is an example of email content to the instructor from online students. See Appendix I for an extended example of the researcher’s data content analysis worksheets and additional information regarding how domains were identified and categorized. Note that these terms: *misunderstood assignment; apology; need help finding content; introduce self* and *request more time*; could operate as cover terms or included terms depending on additional terms associated with them. For example, some of these terms could be *included terms* and form a large domain named ‘student requests’; *misunderstanding assignment, requesting more time* and *need help finding content* would be examples *included terms* because they are *kinds of* student requests. Obversely, the term *misunderstanding assignment* could function as a *cover term* and contain *included terms* such as *can’t find syllabus, didn’t understand directions* or *did assignment incorrectly*. In any case, the objective of Spradley’s model is to identify both kinds of terms (cover and included terms) in an effort to discover embedded cultural patterns within the data.

Figure 12. Sample email domains from online students

Domain: misunderstood assignment	from (PB) 1/16/05 I completed 2 more parts to the introductory exercises today... I was waiting to do them in weeks 2 and 3 and misunderstood they were all due in the 1st <u>week</u> . I apologize for missing the deadline.
Domain: apology	
Domain: need help finding content	from (PB) 1/16/05 My question.... I cannot find the Discussion Board thread re: what we learned <u>about</u> our classmates. I found the 1) adjectives, 2) what’s important, and 3) <u>the</u> online environment. Can you direct me where to find the thread about what <u>we’ve</u> learned about our classmates?
Domain: introduce self	From (ND) 1/15/05 Hello, my name is (*****) and I enrolled into your class late. I am writing <u>to</u> request to have a couple more days to complete the first <u>assignment</u> .
Domain: request more time	

Once content was coded, patterns were identified. According to Spradley, culture “refers to the patterns of behavior, artifacts and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places and activities” (pg. 86).

Online Discussion Board Forums

As previously stated, the Discussion Board section was a major access point for the online students. The Discussion Board forums were intended to perform the same function (for online students) as the face-to-face classroom discussions that were held weekly on the UM-St. Louis campus. The structure of the Discussion Board in MyGateway consists of three levels: the top level, the Forum level can only be created by the instructor, contains the overall description and focus of the discussion, and sets up parameters and expectations for the students. Threads are the second level within the Discussion Board. Once a Forum has been created by the instructor students may start posting Threads within the forum. The third level of the Discussion Board forum is the Reply level. Once a thread has been posted, students and instructor may reply to it. Finally, replies can be ‘replied to’ indefinitely so that a reply, to a reply, to a reply and etc. is possible.

Three forums (out of a total of 23) were chosen for close analysis: Women’s Learning, Critical and Post-modern Education Theory and the Function of Feelings and Emotions in the Learning Process. The reason these forums were chosen was because they were the most popular forums as judged by the number of posts to them in the online section of the course. Figure 13 shows the total number of threads and replies posted for

these three forums. Figures 14, 15 and 16 show the number of threads and replies posted to the individual forums. Also, for each figure, note that ‘R1 (indicates replies), R2 (indicates replies to replies), R3 (indicates replies to replies to replies)...R8’.

Figure 13. Total Discussion Board Posts: Women’s Learning, Feelings and Emotions and Critical Theory

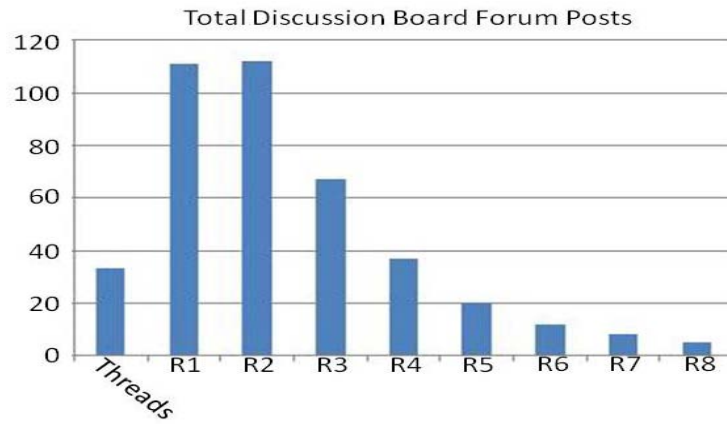


Figure 14. Women’s Learning Discussion Board Forum Posts

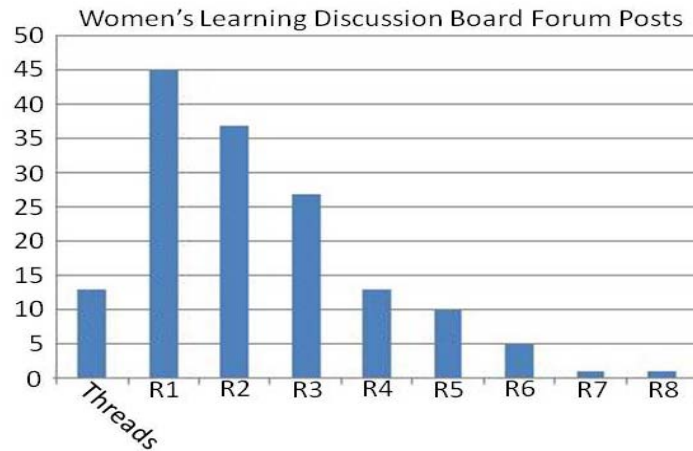


Figure 15. Feelings and Emotions Discussion Board Forum Posts

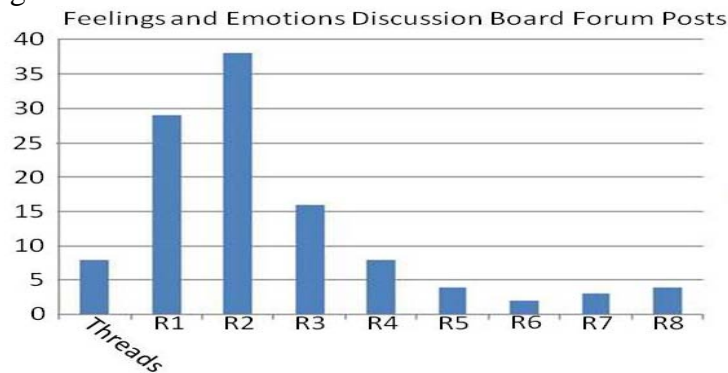
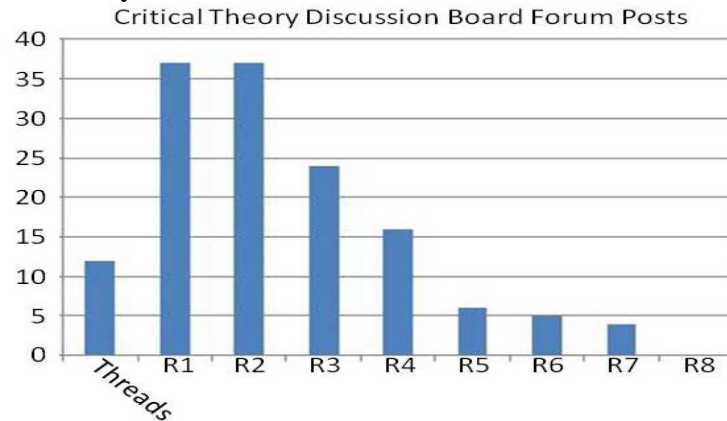


Figure 16. Critical Theory Discussion Board Forum Posts



As previously stated, the Discussion Board forums were intended to function as venues for student and instructor interaction as they discussed (by posting online) the course topics (women's learning, Critical theory and feelings and emotions in education). The face-to-face counterpart for this function was the in-class, real-time classroom discussion. These class discussions were all held in the same room (shown in Figure 17) with a circular, semi-circular or oval seating arrangement that allowed students and instructor to view each other as they interacted.

Figure 17. Face-to-face seating arrangement



Three Discussion Topics

The following section presents data analysis representing three topics covered in this course: Women's Learning in Adult Education, Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education, and Emotions and Feelings in Adult Education. Data are presented in the order that the topics were covered in the course; data from the online section are presented first followed by data from the face-to-face section.

Women's Learning in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board Forum)

Women's Learning was the first of three discussion topic areas chosen for analysis in this project. Analysis of the postings revealed 489 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. In Table 3, Domains are listed in order of their frequency of occurrence within the discussion:

Table 3. *Domain Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum Topic of Women's Learning in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of questions	93
Kinds of stories	80
Ways to: address someone	50
Ways to: affirm	49
Ways to: add information	39
Kinds of opinions	29
Ways to: agree	24
Ways to: express gratitude	19
Ways to: solicit response	15
Ways to add color	11
Ways to self disclosure	10
Ways to give feedback	9
Ways to be critical	9
Ways to be prescriptive	9
Ways to be sociable	8
Kinds of interjections	7
Kinds of paralinguage	6
Ways to reference text	6
Kinds of mistakes	5
Kinds of humor	5
Ways to talk about talk	4

The following taxonomy is a list of domains identified in the Women's Learning Theory and Adult Education online Discussion Board forum with their associated cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

KINDS OF QUESTIONS (93)

- Opinion-seeking question
 - So, do you feel that basically that women are being pushed in modern day society to 'do everything'...
- Reference another's question
 - Your question "How to figure out what's the most important priority?"In the last several years it has been all about me.
- Announce question
 - I have a question: regardless of how you may feel about the man, your political feelings, sexual orientation, religious persuasion, etc. Why do you think
- Question in response to post
 - Do your differences play a role in how you raise your son?
- Question as statement
 - Don't you believe that most women continue the patterns and behaviors of their mothers and their mothers' mothers, and so on
- Rhetorical question
 - But I still have to ask, why are women still behind in the business and political arena?
- Copy and paste questions
 - Student post: What role do you believe gender plays in learning? (2) How might we as educators create learning experiences that are supportive of both women and men? (3) Do you feel the stereotype of women as caretakers and nurturers are inherited genetically or are learned behaviors? (4) Do you feel women who possess assertive and directive skills are treated equally in learning, business and political environments? If so, please share an experience or knowledge of a situation.

KINDS OF STORIES (80)

- Story to illustrate point
 - What you answered reminded me of what is called, "the tacit dimension of practical knowledge." It is like learning to ride a bicycle...
- Personal story about another

- An illustration would be Ken Tada, the husband of quadriplegic, Joni Erikson-Tada. He married her after she was a quadriplegic. He is into caretaking and nurturing her very much of the time.
- Personal story about self
 - Amidst everything else I have going on in my life, for the last 3 years I have been actively involved in the Make-A-Wish foundation...
- Illustration work-related
 - In planning each semester of course offerings in my program, I find myself seeking the current trends--what's hot and what's not--rather than targeting gender-specific courses.
- Illustration non-personal (generic)
 - This is best demonstrated by watching a girl play with her baby doll. If she sees her mother or someone close nursing their baby on a frequent basis, the girl will watch then repeat that nursing action with her doll.

WAYS TO ADDRESS SOMEONE (50)

- Direct address
 - Most student posts began by naming the individual the response was addressed to.

WAYS TO AFFIRM (49)

- Personal affirmation
 - You are blessed and fortunate!!!
- Affirm contribution to discussion
 - Thanks for providing us a varying perspective.
- Complement another
 - I like your openness about not having a problem with a man being in charge. I was reading your comment about women bringing their emotions with them to work.
- Affirm encourage another
 - [name]--I admire you for having that desire to make a difference. I can totally relate as I've always had that same desire to make a difference with children. I'm here to encourage you.
- Affirm another
 - [Name]--it sounds like your environment did play a big part in your career choice. You were given the support and encouragement to choose the career that best suited you regardless of whether of not it was your strongest ability.
- Affirm reply
 - Hi [name], Great responses.

- Hi [name]--You make some good points. yes, I believe we all know successful and powerful women,

WAYS TO ADD INFORMATION (39)

- Reference TV program
 - Your reference to "Pioneer Mentors" in Oprah Winfrey, Condolezza Rice and Hillary Clinton certainly is...
- Reference earlier remark
 - It seems to me as I said in my answer to # 1 above, I think women have a natural tendency of nurturing.
- Reference personal experience
 - I find it to be that way for myself.....and maybe again, that's my personality and not just part of my genetic makeup. I do know men who can also be flexible in their learning.
- Reference statistic
 - For example, girls statistically do worse than boys on math tests-so girls need extra help and vice versa for boys in other subjects where they are weak.
- Reference current event
 - Then it leads to an interview like the national news did this morning called "Soccer Moms on Meth." Did anyone see that?
- Reference text
 - The author uses the math example, such as strategies for discounts and comparison shopping.
- Reference author
 - According to Elisabeth Hayes, author of the chapter, there are two sets of beliefs about women as learners.
- Paraphrase
 - The first belief (relationships or connection) states that ... The second belief (subjectivity, intuition, and emotion) states that a woman relies on...

KINDS OF OPINIONS (29)

- Opinion as question
 - Could it be that maybe she really wants to stay single and unconsciously is not changing the "take charge" modality of her life?
- Opinion with reservation
 - My speculation [and it could be way off base] is that he has been known in his Hollywood Role and seen physically as a very strong man.
- Beliefs

- I believe whether we're male or female we're individually unique and at some point in our life our direction has been influenced by a particular person or event.
- Speaking for others
 - Maybe we're all speaking from a woman's viewpoint, but I think most women feel the same way.
- Opinion as fact
 - It's true, we all try to do too much.
- Personal opinion
 - But I firmly am convinced that the behaviors are learned.
 - The caretaker and nurturing intuition that women have I believe is a learned behavior.

WAYS TO AGREE (24)

- Total agreement
 - I totally agree!
- Agree/disagree
 - I agree with you about the need for...I also agree with you about the need for ...I don't agree with his remarks...
- Concurring
 - My thoughts exactly!!
- Adding emphasis to another's remark
 - Good point, [name], about the double standards! I agree with you.
- See another's point
 - I can definitely see how being in a gender specific school would or could remove that particular barrier to learning.
- Agree and affirm
 - Great point about women in powerful positions!!
- Explicit agreement
 - I agree. Stereotypical gender roles do help to maintain social and political order.
- Agree with discussion point
 - In a business and political environment, yes [women] are treated unequally and stereotyped.
- Agree with another
 - You make some good points. Yes, I believe we all know successful and powerful women.

WAYS TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE (19)

- Thanks for responding

- Hi [name]--thanks for your response. We have had a very full and interesting discussion of gender learning and...
- Thanks for humor
 - You are too funny and so..... very right in regards to your response to # 4. My brother always told me that I would never marry because of my mouth and my need to 'run things'.
- Thanks for participation
 - Thanks for reviewing and adding to the discussion. It has been interesting!
- Thanks for object
 - Thank you. The book is very interesting and I look forward to completing it.

WAYS TO SOLICIT RESPONSE (15)

- Response to specific question
 - I remember reading an article about mothers taking an ADHD medication? Prescribed for their kids? Did anyone read that same article?
- Ask for response
 - Let me hear your opinion
 - This is just my opinion. What are some others' opinion?
- Ask for agreements/disagreements
 - Any one may like to take issue with me on this, and I would welcome your thoughts and feelings.
 - Others may have additional ideas.

WAYS TO ADD COLOR (11)

- Saying
 - I'm laughing--that is a great line--too soon old, too late smart.
- Cliché
 - I wish I knew at their age what I know now. The "bumps in the road" would have been a lot smoother.

WAYS TO SELF DISCLOSE (10)

- Personal worldview
 - At least how it has "played itself out" in my life over the years. I found out that for me it was / is extremely important to give precedence to my "being who I am".
- Personal feelings
 - ...And you learn not to beat yourself up too bad when you don't get home from work on time and realize your son has missed the basketball team picture.

- Opinion about work
 - Most of the women in my experience tend to be pushy and overbearing and bring a great deal of issues to the job that are not job related.
- Professional situation
 - This is an area that I need to work on as a trainer, I am looking forward to reading what others have suggested.
- Personal wish
 - I have a fabulous husband, but I literally pray at night that God will keep me healthy and safe until my kids are grown.
- Personal lifestyle
 - I am a single parent with two children--21 and 12. Luckily, I am able to rely on my 21 year old...

WAYS TO GIVE FEEDBACK (9)

- Respond to remark
 - It seems to me as I said in my answer to # 1 above, I think...
- Reply to post
 - Thoughts and comments.
 - I caught a bit of that also. What I thought interesting was his discussion of the social conditions playing an important role.

WAYS TO BE CRITICAL (9)

- Critical of a culture
 - But I still see women who are assertive, directive being called bitches. Happened just an hour ago.
- Critical of another
 - I remember a college professor telling me when I was an undergrad that I was too aggressive and I thought to myself, "You wouldn't say this if I was a guy."

WAYS TO BE PERSCRPTIVE (9)

- Professional advice
 - As educators, it is extremely important that we differentiate instruction for both men and women.
- Advice as fact
 - As women we have to be flexible, it is a must.
- Give advice
 - Allow the students to share examples and best practices from both sexes be empathetic yet assertive. A mix to gain the comfort of both.

- Anyone in influential positions should be very careful of a bias or ambiguous statements made in public.

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (8)

- Yes/but
 - I do have to agree with you on that point....but I do have the problem of shifting gears...
 - You brought up some interesting ...however...
 - Yes, I believe we all know successful and powerful women, but I wonder if you talked openly with them.

KINDS OF INTERJECTIONS (7)

- Single word
 - Wow!
 - To be totally honest.
 - Amen!

KINDS OF PARALANGUAGE (6)

- Using text to express
 - Whoops!
 - This does not mean, however, that ALL women are born to be caregivers or ...
- Talk about talk
 - Well said!

WAYS TO REFERENCE TEXT (6)

- Reference other remark
 - It seems to me as I said in my answer to # 1 above, I think women have a natural tendency of nurturing.
- Reference text
 - According to Elisabeth Hayes, author of the chapter, there are two sets of beliefs about women as learner.

KINDS OF MISTAKES (5)

- Technical error
 - Sorry, clicked submit too soon.

KINDS OF HUMOR (5)

- Text to indicate laughter
 - I'm laughing--that is a great line--too soon old, too late smart.

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT TALK (4)

- Express agreement with another's words

- This is certainly a topical discussion, if anyone has been following the aftermath of Lawrence H. Summer's comments at Harvard.
- Well said! I also believe more mothers today are not following in the societal and cultural footsteps of our mothers/grandmothers.
- Provide direction to others
 - My response to the following questions are as follows:

Women's Learning in Adult Education (Face-to-Face Classroom Discussion)

Analysis of the transcripts for the women's learning in adult education face-to-face discussion revealed 685 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. In Table 4, Domains are listed in order of their frequency of occurrence within the discussion.

Table 4. *Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Women's Learning in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of questions	90
Kinds of humor	61
Ways to agree	49
Ways to express an opinion	49
Kinds of fragments	36
Ways to be sociable	30
Ways to add to the discussion	29
Ways to reference things	28
Kinds of group actions	27
Kinds of interjections	25
Kinds of noise	22
Kinds of self disclosure	22
Ways to affirm	21
Kinds of colorful language	21
Kinds of feedback	15
^a Ways to process	8
Ways to talk about the discussion	4

^aProcess remarks do not contain course subject matter but represent statements about the course itself (assignments, meeting times, and etc).

The following taxonomy is a list of domains identified in the Women's Learning Theory and Adult Education face-to face classroom discussion with their associated

cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

KINDS OF QUESTIONS (90)

- Question as statement
 - I'm just kind of wondering if maybe she was surprised by them not saying anything or that it kind of validated...what she had probably already thought...you know, that they wouldn't be willing to speak.
- Filler questions
 - You talked about connected learning...what was it? Connected knowing and separate knowing.
 - You know what? I'm thinking about that because you know...
- Questions as dialogue
 - Afterword [she] came to me and said, "what was that all about?"...
- Repeat question
 - student: was there a language barrier?---Instructor: What?---Student: language barrier?---Instructor: no, no...
- Questions that seek opinion
 - Men give advice, would you agree with that?
- Clarifying questions
 - Student: then [she] had two male children—and she tried to introduce them to dolls—and all this kind of stuff.---Instructor: to dolls?---student: to dolls!
- Process questions
 - What were you all discussing?
 - We've got a week where we're not gonna be here, right? March something?
 - Was parking a problem: Did you have trouble finding [parking] places?
 - Rhetorical questions
 - Is it all culture? Are we culturally programmed to react in the way we do? Or are some things intrinsic in us...like the urge to nurture? Is that something that we're born with? Or is that culturally instilled in women to do that?
 - So why does that happen? Unless it's...unless we are predisposed from the moment we're born to seek these opportunities.
- Questions to stimulate response
 - What they were trying to suggest and way was that a woman can multi-task and men did not have that same capability.....so.....any thoughts....

- Instructor: but, do you...I guess I want to ask the women... do you experience the um, organizational, or institutional culture, if you will...as being...bias against you?
- Questions to further conversation
 - Student: did they assume, did they assume those things though because you're were a woman, or, did they assume those things because they saw you as being ...new, passive...
- Information-seeking questions
 - Student: [the author] said something very interesting in there about the standard deviation ---Instructor: are you talking about Hayes?---Student: Summers---Instructor: Oh, summers...

KINDS OF HUMOR (61)

- Jokes
 - Student 1: if the world was run by women we'd never have war---Student 2: [laughs out loud] (LOL) I don't know about that! We'd have cat fights!---Lots of laughing and general talking.
- Laughter
 - Laughing out loud (LOL) and joking was identified 61 times during the course of this discussion.

WAYS TO AGREE (49)

(There were times in the face-to-face discussion when agreement was explicit: ("I agree with you...") but more often agreement was expressed through non verbal expressions and murmurs of variations of 'uh-huh', or, 'yeah').

- Disagreement
 - I disagree with y'all a man goes through same, similar changes ...let's take a man who's been teaching for 50 years...
- Agreement with point
 - Student 1: You know, and there are some girls who are going to want to play with trucks---Student 2: Right.
- Parallel agreement
 - One student makes a point while two other students agree making similar point: Student: but he's defining it by his job...his job; he's not defining it by other people--Two women talking here making the same point emphatically.
- Agreement to clarify a point
 - OK, alright. Well, yeah. Sure, that has something to do with it...because generally the priests...those who are duly ordained are the only ones that can perform marriage ceremonies.
- Group agreement

- Student: I mean its all theory (group: umhm, yeah) you know, we believe this based on...I mean it...
- Student: I had to go back and read it over and over again to make sure I was reading it correctly...that, you know, somebody would say that (group: uhmhmm (agreement)).

WAYS TO EXPRESS AN OPINION (49)

- Ask opinion of another
 - Student 1: men give advice, would you agree with that?---Student 2: I agree that men give advice to each other:
- Give opinion
 - Women at early ages, you know, display.....and we can argue, is it nature or nurture...do we encourage women to be more verbal if they do come to be more verbal, and males....to be more hands-on....you give, you, you give some young kids a set of blocks...
- Repeat words for emphasis
 - Student: I mean I see that among women...that they're doin that---Student2: Oh, yeah---Student 1: and more emotional---Student 2: Right! And more emotional competition---Instructor: on the part of....?---Student 1: Women---Student 2: Women...

KINDS OF FRAGMENTS (36)

- Broken conversation
 - Student 1: and also, a lot of churches even to this day, women cannot sit in the pulpit they have to sit in the...---Student 2: like I said, I don't know is that a... ---Student 1: no this is just how a lot of churches...
 - Student 1: there are some girls who are going to want to play with trucks--Student 2: right---Student 1: but...---Student 3: the overwhelming majority of 'em---Student 1: but while the majority of them, though...

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (30)

- Small talk
 - Researcher field notes: Chit-chat—lost in space—movies—general talking as the class reenters the room after break
- Being polite
 - Student 1: I think we should ask the females the question---Student 2: I think [the instructor] was getting ready to ask a question.---Student 1: oh, I'm sorry, go ahead...
- Yes/but
 - But, you know you mention...it goes both ways because; let's deal with the court situation...

- I think it plays into it, ...but I think if I'm facilitating a class, I'm not going to...

WAYS TO ADD TO THE DISCUSSION (29)

- Paraphrase article
 - Well in the article I think she states that uh, men have a tendency to become more, uh, competitive and women are, um, socialized that they're not supposed to be competitive.
- Add detail
 - Student 1: if you look at specifically we are usually the bread-winners in the family, and um---Student 2: pre19---post 1970s---Student 1: ok, post 1970s, um, and as you mentioned earlier...
- Add point
 - But that's not exactly what he was addressing, he was addressing, he was addressing the lack of women in hard sciences...

WAYS TO REFERENCE THINGS (28)

- Reference current event
 - When I read these, and when I found out what President Sommers said I thought it was a nice segue into this week's um, chapter that we were responsible for reading...
- Reference text
 - ...And I think that in the book she does state that, uh learning is intertwined with the---laughter---context with which it occurs...
- Reference another
 - I believe in W.E.B Du Bois LOL...I don't know if you know this but in the 1930s W.E.B Du Bois came up with a theory called the double conscience theory.

KINDS OF GROUP ACTION (27)

- General group talk
 - Student 1: well, there were two there the was biological and there was cognitive...you know, brain was sort of biological (yeah) everyone talks at the same time: 'right brain-left-brain'---Student 2: I don't know if you'd go out on a limb and say women learn differently...
- Lose focus
 - Two students are both talking and trying to get the floor---general talking/laughing agreement/ points/counterpoints---The discussion becomes unfocused here---Student 1: Well in the article I think she states that...

KINDS OF INTERJECTION (25)

- Interject point
 - Student 1: she didn't have opportunities when she was a teenager---
 - Student 2: well, it was WW2---Student 1: But even then, you know, I went to college in the 70s.
- Interject question
 - Student: no one spoke?---Instructor: (loudly) no one!---Student: the questions I have---Instructor: (emphatic) absolutely nobody spoke—she never said another word.
- Interject words
 - Student 1: I also saw an Oprah show about children, males, who wanted to play with dolls---Student 2: MJ: and that's fine!---Student 1: um-hm...

KINDS OF NOISE (22)

- Coughs
 - Students enter—Howdy---General hellos from the group---instructor—clears throat---student coughs loudly---small talk continues with sporadic LOL .
- Filler (words)
 - Uhm....uhm...anybody get a..
 - well...uh...
- Talk-over
 - Student 1: they're just goin at it...and it seems like they enjoy that (two students talk at once) verbal combat---Student 1: Yeah, yeah...

KINDS OF SELF DISCLOSURE (22)

- Personal
 - I'm the father of three daughters—and from 2 to 8 to 15...and uh, and ever since I brought 'em—since day 1 when I brought 'em home from the hospital—this ##### be the first one to touch them—they are different I mean, I don't know how to explain it...
- Story as confession
 - I did a group on emotions today with my boys...and I said, 'does your father to hug you...or does your father kiss you and does your father say he love you...and the boys told me today...man!!! ...and you know, I was teaching them that men die early because of this.....we too hard core...we too hard to cry...ohh cause we orientated in our learning process that men don't cry?...men don't show weakness?...men don't you know, we're not sensitive?...we just deal straight with the facts...but we dyin inside...
- Story as illustration

- My wife's car got stolen last week and she's the one in the house who wants a gun now. (LOL)
- Work-related
 - Um...I can remember...in 1993 I was in um, at a, uh, world conference in uh, Lityuanoa Slovenia...70 of us...from 30 countries...and four, four groups were, um, that were formed...

WAYS TO AFFIRM (21)

- Affirm point
 - Yeah, it's typical from a, a, male-dominated perspective, in, in institutions...
- Agreement
 - No, I understand what you're saying because I know I didn't want to be like my mom—at least not exactly like my mom.
- Affirm another's comment
 - Well you know I'm glad you mentioned that because I was going to mention a church that...

KINDS OF COLORFUL LANGUAGE (21)

- Saying
 - She's the leader—she threw down the gauntlet!
 - A lot of the women don't even believe that a woman can be president—that just blew my mind
- Speaking as other
 - That lady afterword who came to me and said, “what was that all about?”...so she did not...apparently she didn't understand...
 - It's when I contributed it's like, “oh, ok...you know, and they never took me seriously until I, I became a little bit more aggressive...

KINDS OF FEEDBACK (15)

- Group feedback
 - Researcher note: I notice a lot of murmurs, side remarks, all seem to be social cues that signify people are listening (feedback) and that they agree with the speaker and can identify with points being made—
 - I had to go back and read it over and over again to make sure I was reading it correctly...that, you know, somebody would say that (--uhmhhh (agreement)) and, um, I think in the book is says...
- Intimate feedback – second speaker finishes the sentence (thought) of the first
 - Student: and she was a woman—she should have been the one...---
 - Instructor: yes...who opened up the...open up the dialogue, uh, teased it out, if you will---Student: so was she trying to make a point to say...
- Verbal

- Non-verbal
 - Much non-verbal information being sent and received during all face to face discussions

WAYS TO PROCESS (8)

- Clarify remark
 - Student 1: but are you saying that they learn differently in how they perceive things?---Student 2: not necessarily in how they perceive things...ok, but---Student 1: how they process things?---Student 2: Yeah, how they process things, right...
- Turn taking
 - Student: I'm sorry, go ahead---Instructor: don't lose your thought, we can come back to that, but I was just thinking.

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT THE DISCUSSION (4)

- Metatalk
 - Instructor: now I don't want to get into a big discussion regarding that but the point I'm trying to make---yeah, that's a whole 'nother topic, but...---LOL and some general talk-over---Instructor: but...uh...lot of times...

Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board Forum)

Critical Learning Theory in adult education was the second of three discussion topic areas chosen for analysis in this project. Analysis of the transcripts revealed 338 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. Table 5 lists the Domains in order of their frequency of occurrence.

Table 5. *Domain Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum on Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Ways to express an opinion	69
Ways to affirm	56
Ways to add information	47
Kinds of questions	39
Kinds of stories	36
Ways to thank	20
Ways to agree	17
Ways to be sociable	12
Ways to self disclose	9
Ways to talk about talk	8
Kinds of humor	7
Ways to solicit	6
Kinds of feedback	5
^a Kinds of process issues	3
Kinds of paralanguage	3
Ways to disagree	2

^aProcess remarks do not contain course subject matter but represent statements about the course itself (assignments, meeting times, and etc)

The following taxonomy is a list domains identified in the Critical and Post-modern online Discussion Board forum with their associated cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

WAYS TO EXPRESS AN OPINION (69)

- Opinion
 - The ultimate survival of Adult Education in the University setting, in my estimation is not tied to whether or not we espouse a particular philosophy or theory, but whether we treat adults as adults and encourage the adult educators we work with to honor and respect others' points of view.
- Opinion with reference
 - *I do agree* with the critical theorists that people tend to know about what they are interested in being able to do.
- Opinion with example
 - We can attempt to "deconstruct" but does that address the multiple needs of learning in multiple learning environments. The example of the

demand for a flexible workforce with diverse skills, knowledge, and understandings is a perfect example.

WAYS TO AFFIRM (56)

- Affirm other
 - Your opening of of this discussion is excellent !!!
 - Such fruitful study and interchange this is turning out to be !!!
 - I hope you're successful in your goal of creating a more open learning experience for your students.
- Affirm text
 - Our relinquishing power over our students, sure has a freeing aspect, because it seems to me that when we do that, there is an accompanying element that we are encouraging them to take power over themselves.

WAYS TO ADD INFORMATION (47)

- Reference author
 - The author also discusses the shift in some critical theorists' viewpoint that individual learning reinforces the status quo
- Reference another student
 - However, as [another student] said...understanding how to process the information gives the learner the understanding of why these rules are in place.
- Attach document
 - I'm attaching an article that deals with this issue--I think it's a fair description of the issue--would be interested in hearing what you think.
- Note reference
 - Found this link for a paper submitted by Edwards and Usher--different reference but I think it's essentially the same article.

KINDS OF QUESTIONS (39)

- Rhetorical Question
 - We can attempt to "deconstruct" but does that address the multiple needs of learning in multiple learning environments.
- Searching question
 - I ask myself the following: How can I relate with these persons, this community, this corporation, this individual, or social group, in a way that will help them become emancipated to the extent that they may wish to, and how am I going to check myself out [and/or get feedback from them] to determine whether or not I am accomplishing this.
- Questions to an individual (post)

- Are medical board exams (nurses & physician) exams all written standardized test? Is there any component that includes application?
- Opinion-seeking question
 - Do you think there is ever an appropriate time or place to question or challenge the story that they write?
- Questions about course process
 - Would you consider what we are doing in our interchange for this course, is in any way fostering "critical thinking skills?"
- Question about question
 - Does anyone else have any ideas on this question that has just been raised?
- Direct question
 - What aspects of either or both of these perspectives resonate with you?
- Repeat questions
 - Students often copied and pasted questions (from forum leader) into their replies and then responded to those questions.

KINDS OF STORIES (36)

- Personal stories
 - I work for a social service agency in which there is a lot of staff turnover. We are continually get young adults new to the field; many are often straight from college.
- Stories about work
 - I work for a social service agency in which there is a lot of staff turnover. We are continually get young adults new to the field; many are often straight from college.
- Funny stories
 - I apologize for the delayed response, in all honesty I left my book on the plane and felt like it took an act of congress to locate, order, purchase, and get a new book delivered to me.
- Stories as illustrations
 - As far as knowledge and power, I tend to lean towards the critical theorist and believe knowledge can empower you. For example...
- Stories as example
 - For example, if I am teaching someone how to enter data into a program in my office, I may explain why we use that specific program and what it can do, as well as how the information collected fits into the big picture.
- Stories about others
 - This morning I was flipping channels and came across an interview with [Instructor] Wooden the great UCLA basketball coach conducted by Bill

Walton. Wooden is 94 now. Walton asked him what makes a great teacher and he talked about tapping into the talent of your students.

WAYS TO THANK (20)

- Direct expression of thanks
 - Thanks for your feedback.
 - [student name], I appreciate your honesty.
 - Thanks for your response.
 - Okay, thanks.
 - Thanks for the clarification.
 - Thanks for posting this interesting article.
 - Thanks for advancing my thinking and our discussion.

WAYS TO AGREE (17)

- Agree with author/text
 - In regard to the Postmodernists or Poststructuralists, I agree that knowledge is contextual rather than "out there"...
- Agree and affirm
 - I am like you in that my "...most important deconstruction happens in my own head!"
- Agreement about disagreement
 - We may not always agree, but we can work together to make a cooperative contribution to a given situation.
- Agree with reservations
 - I agree that what is common sense for one person is not for the other but in my own life experiences...
- Agree with another
 - Thanks--I do agree with that.
 - I can understand and agree with the critical theory of the common sense lens. ... I also agree with the postmodernism ... I agree with you that the critical point is for the individual person to "...ultimately...chart his own course in learning."

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (12)

- Social nicety
 - Please do not see the term in a negative sense. I used the word over-analyze because as adults when we view through that multiple lens.
- Remarks about self
 - I told [the instructor] that I could handle a challenge and this week's topic certainly provides it!
- Remarks of encouragement

- Good for you!
- Remarks non-course related
 - I have been enjoying the Easter Holiday today!

WAYS TO SELF DISCLOSE (9)

- Talk about personal strengths
 - I want to say that in my interactions with my staff I am not possessing the power but instead my staff are empowered to express theirs but in reading this section I have to be real to myself in acknowledging that I don't feel ready...
- Express opinion
 - By nature I am skeptical, so I appreciate the idea that none of us have the "last word" on truth. I am also always for the underdog.
- Express doubt
 - I feel very free to respond. However, I sometimes wonder if my responding freely has the tendency to close down the interchange.

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT TALK (8)

- Talk about the class discussion board
 - I do get so much more out of the actual exchange of ideas and thoughts on the reading than I do actually out of the reading. I feel reading the articles and information gives me a baseline.
- Talk about discussion topic
 - I think the discussion about power is interesting. I wonder though how much of it happens without the educator even being aware of it.

KINDS OF HUMOR (7)

- Subtle humor
 - I agree with you (sorry to disappoint you!) re: groups being disenfranchised.
 - Call me crazy, but the bottom line seems to be the same to me: Question what you think you know because those in power often write the story...

WAYS TO SOLICIT (6)

- Encourage discussion
 - Any comments or counter thoughts?
- Request response from individual
 - Do you think there is ever an appropriate time or place to question or challenge the story that they write?
- Request responses from group
 - Does anyone else have any ideas on this question that has just been raised?

KINDS OF FEEDBACK (5)

- Encouragement
 - I have some of the same fears you do in walking away and knowing you gave them the best information (and knowledge). *I think* that's a good quality of leadership and especially in your recognizing it.
- Request responses from group
 - Positive reinforcement
 - Your opening of this discussion is excellent! ! !

KINDS OF PROCESS ISSUE (3)

- Talk about ways to post a message
 - Student 1: I meant to make my previous message a new thread.)---Student 1: [another post] OK now my thread moved over. I guess that happens when there is a reply.

KINDS OF PARALANGUAGE (3)

- Using language
 - I continue to be amazed at the "aha" experiences I have through this course and the tools I'm gathering.

WAYS TO DISAGREE (2)

- Disagree with statement
 - I do not understand when you say that English and Math is black or white. However I do understand some of your points that each theory has its place.

Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education (Face-to-face Classroom Discussion)

Critical Learning Theory in adult education was the second discussion topic area chosen for analysis in this project. Analysis of the transcripts revealed 244 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. In Table 6, Domains are listed in order of their frequency of occurrence within the discussion.

Table 6. *Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Critical Learning Theory in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of questions	64
Ways to add information	50
Kinds of humor	35
Ways to be sociable	17
Ways to express an opinion	16
Ways to affirm another	12
Kinds of stories	10
Kinds of audio filler	9
Kinds of fragments	9
Kinds of noise	8
^a Ways to process	7
Ways to agree	6
Kinds of social color	5
Ways to self disclose	4
Kinds of feedback	4
^b Ways to interject	3
Ways to talk about talk	2

^aProcess remarks do not contain course subject matter but represent statements about the course itself (assignments, meeting times, and etc).

^bInterjection remarks are quick (usually single) words made by others while another person is talking.

The following taxonomy is a list of domains identified in the Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory face-to-face classroom discussion with their associated cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

KINDS OF QUESTIONS (64)

- Implied question
 - It does seem, though there's different types of knowledge, there is sort of, scientific, and I guess there'd even be some questions about physical principles, you know, do they need to deconstruct one-plus-one...
- Question as dialogue
 - Student: that's what you mean, basically, it's a certain amount of rules?--- Instructor: I think so---Student: that's universal?---Instructor: yeah, that's why I added that uh, absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- Question about another's statement

- So when you say explains all the courses, I mean, what do you mean, what type of courses?
- Question about content
 - Is there a place for deconstruction, though, in Critical theory?
- Question about text
 - Did you think that, uh, looking at the critical theory, and post modernism that sometimes situations can start off at the critical and then evolve into the post modern?
- Framing question
 - So what's the value of post modernism?
- Question seeking affirmation
 - How did that occur and what was it that made the group say, we're moving on—does that make sense?
- Rhetorical question
 - So I guess that's why I say that how can you have this um great deconstruction group where everybody just assumes there is no right or wrong; I don't think that's human nature.
 - But, [the instructor's] question of how far do you go with that I mean, where's the end of all this stuff.....
- Probing question
 - I'd like to ask a related question, and that is how the post modernists came up with the notion that there is no answer out there.
- Direct question
 - Let me ask a question: how many of you had heard of the critical theory? Before this chapter?
- Process question
 - Instructor: Do you want to begin? Who's presenting?

WAYS TO ADD INFORMATION (50)

- Speaking as another
 - ...That would be what Habermas would say would be the existing power structure –now you, in your mind may be thinking—*ok, this is a great idea, let's go with it*—um, and, and not in a bias sense, or, the people that you talk to but, on some level, that power dynamic is happening.
- Paraphrase
 - So you're saying basically that it's basically a standard in which everything is going to be measured by...
- Reference handout

- Uh, I uh, was talking before about my idea that we all have a model of the universe—how the world works in our heads, and uh, I think that's true and I handed out two things.
- Reference another
 - Well, and that's the truth, that's when—that's the practical side of it and I think that's when [the instructor] said, ok, it's time to move on now.
- Reference author
 - Because I get impression that these were both pretty relatively new theories....because uh Habermas was 72 for the critical theorists and I thing Foucault—he's 78—so these are relatively new theories.
- Reference text
 - Well, today's chapter is critical and post-modern perspectives on adult learning...and...what this chapter's looking at is...it's looking at two theories—the theories—world views I guess is what you would call—you know, different world views.
- Define terms
 - Well, the idea that like you said, knowledge is not out there, I mean we don't discover truth we internalize meaning and we create meaning within ourselves we construct meaning—that's the basic premise of constructivist theory.

KINDS OF HUMOR (35)

- Humorous observation
 - Student 1: I mean you look at magazines people are just (naked) I wish Gilligan was—that was the good old days LOLS, LOLS---Student 1: Let's all go home and watch Gilligan's Island.....
- Humorous display
 - Student: Is this a good time for a break?---All: yes---Student: yeah, let's go for a break--I got the Power! (LOLs)
- Humorous reply
 - Well, I think you articulated just exactly what I said—in an awful lot of words—you said in a few words (LOLs)
- Humorous story
 - We've had that in our department for years—there's always someone that wants to deconstruct everything—except their own deconstruction LOLs and, but finally we had enough numbers to kind of just, you know move along...
- Humorous statement
 - You know, I read this and I thought why in the world did I pick this thing? LOLs I was all excited about picking it and then I thought, oh, my god...

- Humorous response
 - Student 1: what would you do in that situation? ---Student 2: : I'd have him do his homework; I don't think there's going to be a test on Gilligan's Island (LOL)—

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (17)

- Individual agreement
 - Student 1: I think the next sentence explains it for me—they see knowledge as a logical outcome of neatly categorized human interests, like nice neat tidy---Student 2: yeah, like structures...yeah, definitely...
- Group agreement
 - There are also those times where everybody in the room considers themselves the expert [several students express agreement]
- Saving face
 - Student:...the objective being methods and practice and outcomes—adult learning outcomes---Instructor: that's part of it, but ...not necessarily all practical either—there's some that are generating new theories...
 - Student: now, I see the value of that, but that's not new, I mean that's not something that's been discovered in the last 30 years...

WAYS TO EXPRESS OPINION (16)

- Statements about opinions
 - –You know, I want to do it this way—*no we're not going to do it this way because this is my opinion* –and I think that in some –and maybe not within every group—maybe it's just the dynamic of personalities within a group but sometimes because I think it's human nature we all have opinions and we hold dearly to our values our beliefs and our opinions and I think it can be really difficult
- Express opinion by stressing words
 - Instructor: Not the criteria—it didn't even have to do with the criteria—it was the 'word' character! ---Student: Because it implied emphasizing a character as opposed to all characters and all characters are equal...
- Personal opinion
 - The problem I have with both of them is the absoluteness, you know, if we're going to go to the extreme of the absoluteness where I can see is postmodernism.
- Opinion about text
 - It just seemed, when I was reading the chapter it seemed that, um critical theory, um I think as everybody mentioned is very structured.
- Opinion about subject matter

- I couldn't define either one of the theories, so I think that the perspective is a little difficult—it's looking at theories I'm really not that comfortable with.

WAYS TO AFFIRM ANOTHER (12)

- Confirm Text
 - Student: yeah, um it says deconstruction does not conclude the ...knowledge which the critical theorist would, or at least Habermas says there's three types of knowledge.
- Affirm statement
 - Student 1: uh, and he was tenured and he said I'm like a 500 pound gorilla, you know, what I say is what goes---Student 2: right, right.
- Agree with another
 - Well, I, I yeah, I agree with you (cough) one thing I think it was helpful for me was to feel maybe the uh maybe the repression's not the right word.

KINDS OF STORIES (10)

- Story as humor
 - ...You know, so there's a modern theory which they talk about and it's sort of ironic, the kind of tongue-in-cheek say, because the post modern are going to kind of poo-poo the modernist theory but, this writer says, but I'm going to follow this modern theory to present my article...
- Story as example
 - To me that was a good example of, ok, the people in that room and the people in that --or ...in the uh, uh, group of people had agreed, ok, these are the rules we'll all play by, you know, and, we'll know you position.
- Story as illustration
 - I want you to imagine—I guess most of us have kids—or, I want you to imagine either one of your kids—if you don't have kids—you know, a kid that you're responsible for—I want you to imagine they're like 10th grade or so...

KINDS OF AUDIO FILLER (9)

- Unneeded words
 - I'm not quite sure how the uh the post-modernists got there and the people just agreed to it but, um, that's how they contrived (?) their social construction of that, now uh.

KINDS OF FRAGMENTS (9)

- Partial thoughts/sentences expressed

- Student 1: and post-modernism would say well, how do you define good...---Student 2: well, doesn't that bring up truth and justice, those two ideas, I mean...

KINDS OF NOISE (8)

- Ambient noise
 - I shouldn't say surprising, but um (LOUD COUGH)...even though you've got the oppressed, they are oppressed by consent...
- Interruptions
 - Student 1: so—no go ahead and finish your thought, I was just going to ask you your thought.---Student 2: ok, so when I was reading it I mean the post modernist.

WAYS TO PROCESS (7)

- Turn-taking
 - Instructor: I don't know whether that addresses your uh...---Student: well, the objective being methods and practice and outcomes—adult learning outcomes---Instructor: that's part of it, but...
- Remarks about student assignments
 - Instructor: you're on with us 2 weeks from tonight---Student: yeah...

WAYS TO AGREE (6)

- Concede a point
 - Student 1: everyone has different views built on their different experiences...so.. ---Student 2: I guess, I thought the ...to go along with your line of thinking that the uh oppression, I thought it made, at least to the critical, uh, theory...
- Direct agreement
 - Student 1: like nice neat tidy...---Student2: yeah, like structures---Student 1: yeah, definitely.

KINDS OF SOCIAL COLOR (5)

- Expression
 - Student 1: they set the structure and you just basically had to tow the line.---Student 2: yeah, you got that right and that's the way it was, too—
- Slang
 - Now that was not the intention at all—of it—but that was the bugaboo...

WAYS TO SELF DISCLOSE (4)

- Personal experience
 - No one has the definitive power, but, in my experience it's almost human nature to have someone say, no I have ownership of this, I have power.

- Express doubt
 - Maybe I read it incorrectly but what I got out of it was that the critical theorists –maybe I didn't read it correctly because it was a little different, but um, the critical theorists.

KINDS OF FEEDBACK (4)

- Granular (back-and-forth) feedback
 - Student 1: this may not be the reality---Student 2: it allows you to question---Student 1: it gives you the freedom to think outside the box;---Student 2: but Copernicus couldn't deconstruct it without having knowledge of it---Student 1: oh, exactly...

WAYS TO INTERJECT (3)

- Single word comment
 - Student 1: And everybody automatically succumbs to that individual---Student 2: Right---Student 1: [continues] so I guess that's why...

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT TALK (2)

- Talk about the discussion
 - You know I really like the work we did on this, to be honest as we go through each topic, the really have these, uh intellectual stimulation about these theories...

Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Online Discussion Board)

Feelings and emotions was the last of the three discussion topic areas chosen for analysis in this project. Analysis of the posted messages revealed 404 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. Table 7 lists Domains in order of their frequency of occurrence within the online discussion:

Table 7. *Domain Frequencies in the Online Discussion Board Forum of Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Ways to acknowledge another	60
Ways to self disclose	57
Ways to ask questions	40
Ways to add information	39
Ways to affirm	38
Kinds of stories	25
Kinds of personal expression	23
Ways to give an opinion	20
Kinds of paralanguage	18
Ways to agree	16
^a Kinds of process issues	13
Ways to thank people	12
Ways to reference text	10
Ways to encourage	10
Kinds of feedback	9
^b Kinds of metatalk	7
Ways to be sociable	6
Kinds of humor	1

^aThe process remarks do not contain course subject matter but represent statements about the course itself (assignments, meeting times, and etc).

^bMetatalk refer to text written about the text, or, text represented as expressive; (ie: emoticons).

The following taxonomy is a list of domains identified in the Feelings and Emotions Online Discussion Board Forum with their associated cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

WAYS TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANOTHER (60)

- Direct address
 - This discussion was carried out completely online and asynchronously. Almost all posts to this forum followed the traditional 'letter' format of directly addressing group or individual members of the group. Signing name at end of post occurred regularly but less frequently.

WAYS TO SELF DISCLOSE (57)

- Talk about personal things
 - Student: I experience my emotions in my heart and/or gut, not my brain. And guess what I have just been reading that now they think that the heart

and gut have their own neural networks. Whew, maybe that is why we say things like "I have a broken heart," when I am very sad.

- Talk about social role
 - Student: For me, this investigation into feelings has been [and probably will be] the most productive in my educational experience as a learner and as a facilitator.
- Tell story about self
 - Student: I had an instructor whose voice and aura reminded me of an overbearing individual. Therefore, I had ill feelings toward him, especially if I felt the topic was not related, I did not get the grade on papers I thought I was going to get.

WAYS TO ASK QUESTIONS (40)

- Direct question
 - Student: Have you ever experienced use of the imaginal technique for learning? What was that like?
- Repeat question
 - *Posted questions were often copied, pasted into student reply posts and then posted along with responses*
- Rhetorical question
 - Instructor: what about just testing the waters and letting our emotions loose instead of thinking we have to be 'in control' and seeing where it all comes out? Could it be possible that if we did let them loose, we would find some real substance, meat, and 'ahas' at the end of the expression, after we reflected on what had happened?
- Solicit response
 - Instructor: But what about it if we just stood back and let all of it just 'kick in' and see where it would naturally come together?

WAYS TO ADD INFORMATION (39)

- Add external content
 - Student: Linda Kohanov has written two books on this topic - The Tao of Equus, and I don't remember the other one, sorry.
- Quote or reference another
 - Student: I'll paraphrase a quote that I heard credited to Nelson Mandela to the effect that it is our power and our light that frighten us, not our failings. If we tapped into the power of the emotional brain which is also considered the seat of our spiritual selves we would be in for the ride of our lives. (a quote again, this time from the movie *Defending Your Life*).
- Respond to text

- Student: I was confused on one hand, because there seemed to be a lot of "half-thoughts" and "cut-off" expressions in the author seeking to express himself. On the other hand, I was excited in a positive way.

WAYS TO AFFIRM (38)

- Affirm another
 - Instructor: Your addressing of the various comments that have been shared, has been exceptionally well done. Keep up the good work.

KINDS OF STORIES (25)

- Story about self
 - Student: I sat for fifteen minutes this morning before work and I started out feeling kind of annoyed. My little dog barked at me. I guess because it's very unusual for me to sit still in the morning and I felt happy, loved and loving.
- Story about other
 - Student: My very wise Grandmother would always say - let your head and your heart meet at the shoulders, that way you cannot blame either of them for the choices you make.
- Example stories
 - Student: When I read the example about an instructor who "comes in with such motivation and enthusiasm, it's like you got no choice but to wanna come to class" had me smiling and being nostalgic about one of teachers who provided opportunities for fun learning.

KINDS OF PERSONAL EXPRESSION (23)

- Express feelings
 - Student: I really enjoyed reading the responses and the materials as it relates to the Power of Feelings, Emotions, Imagination and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Learning.
- Express opinion
 - Student: I believe now more than ever that feelings and emotions are directly linked to the way adults learn, act and respond.
- Figure of speech
 - Student: he came out of a *bag* that I should have expected, he disregarded the emotional part of it and changed the subject.
- Sayings
 - Student: not surprisingly some of the best ways to get our limbic brain 'good juices' back in balance are, *you guessed it*, exercise, eating healthy, getting enough sleep...

WAYS TO GIVE AN OPINION (20)

- State opinion
 - *statements preceded by:* I think; I feel, I'll bet; --- I think part of the reason--- I feel fortunate to--- I have felt a...

KINDS OF PARALANGUAGE (18)

- Text as graphically expressing meaning
 - WOWEE !!! (LOL)

WAYS TO AGREE (16)

- Agreement with others
 - Student: I agree with you that this topic is deep.

KINDS OF PROCESS ISSUES (13)

- Directing
 - My Instructional Perspectives Inventory has within it a focus on 'feelings' as well as 'beliefs' and 'behaviors'. Take a look at it, if you have not already.
- Assigning
 - First before you respond to these questions, create a period of 15 minutes where you will be undisturbed, in a quiet place. Sit for that time and begin by being curious about what you might find within yourself. Then ask yourself what you are feeling.
- Replying
 - That is much the same way I "feel" my emotions. Although, I find that my brain kicks into "High Energy" when I am experiencing strong negative emotions...

WAYS TO THANK PEOPLE (12)

- Express thanks directly
 - Students: Thank you for your comments.--- Thanks for doing the research for us!--- Thanks for all the good information on the "limbic brain."

WAYS TO REFERENCE TEXT (10)

- Reference text directly
 - Student: I just wanted to add some final thoughts to our discussion on the power of feelings - emotions, imagination, and the construction of meaning in adult learning presented by Dirk. He argues for...

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE (10)

- Direct encouragement
 - Instructor: you are to be commended!!!

KINDS OF FEEDBACK (9)

- Affirm other
 - Student: ...That "shift" you mention has always been a sign of learning to me. Sometimes, it may even come after the class or training is over.
- Direct response
 - Student: Good comment. I'm thinking about "where" I feel and it depends on the situation.

KINDS OF PARA/META TALK (7)

- Metatalk
 - Student: After this discussion, I do think that my view on this has changed somewhat.
 - Instructor: just my point of view.

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (6)

- Greetings
 - Student: Happy Saturday! I just wanted to add some final thoughts to our discussion.
- Wish well
 - Happy Saturday!

KINDS OF HUMOR (1)

- Comment
 - Student: You are too funny! I am trying to get my husband to do the same thing. He tells me I watch too much Oprah. I couldn't agree with you more! Thanks.

Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Face-to-Face Classroom Discussion)

Analysis of the transcripts from the feelings and emotions face-to-face discussion revealed 474 cover terms with the following domains and associated taxonomies. In Table 8 Domains are listed in order of their frequency of occurrence within the discussion.

Table 8. *Domain Frequencies in the Face-to Face Classroom Discussion on Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of humor	51
Ways to add information	43
Kinds of stories	42
Kinds of noise	39
Kinds of questions	34
Ways to agree	27
Ways to be sociable	27
Kinds of colorful communication	27
Ways to give feedback	26
Ways to give opinions	21
^a Kinds of process remarks	20
Kinds of group talking	19
Ways to talk about the text	18
Kinds of fragments	17
Kinds of interjections	16
Ways to affirm	12
Ways to be critical	12

^aProcess remarks do not contain course subject matter but represent statements about the course itself (assignments, meeting times, and etc).

The following taxonomy is a list domains identified in the Feelings and Emotions face-to-face classroom discussion with their associated cover terms. Beneath each cover term is a direct quote that serves as an example of each term. Where appropriate, a researcher's note is added to explain terms.

KINDS OF HUMOR (51)

- Tell a joke
 - Instructor...since our brains are complicated we'll uh, see if there's two entry points for them (LOLS)...in one ear and right out the other (LOLS)--
General talking and goodbyes.
- Tell a funny story
 - Student: ...here in American culture, men generally, black and white, are taught to be tough, you know, we got all these tough boy images, or movies like Rambo, shot four times in the leg (LOLS)
- Satire
 - Student: well, if everybody was emotional all the time...there would be..that would be—that's why we medicate psych patients (LOLS)

they'd be emotional all the time—there have to be checks and balances, there have to be parameters...

- Laugh out loud
 - Student: And yet, I used to work for a supervisor and she would do it so good, she'd make you think. Oh, thank you for firing me, I mean she (LOLS) I mean, you'd think, Oh, Man! Thank you for firing me because she was so good at being able to (LOLS) interact with people and their emotions and learning, and teaching them the right way of how to interact, um...
- Short quips
 - Student: but that may be another whole area of discussion (LOLS)---you do not want to open that can of worms –it's too late I may # out ---too late in the broad spectrum, or, too late for tonight? LOLS---too late for tonight—my allergies.
- General background laughter
 - Instructor: ...tells me it's time to take a break...Party time!
- At another's expense
 - Instructor: well, if you want to hand [your assignment] in on the 3rd (LOLS) that's ok (LOLS) ---student 1: can I just email it as an attachment?---instructor: that would be fine ---student 2: they'll make you sign for it, too...you have a certified research paper...
- At own expense
 - Student: ...men, like I said, we hide it, we, you know—I cut my hand, Im, I'm, I'm painin! –gimme a rag, I'm all right (LOLS) I'll be back, I'll see y'all next week...
- Break in (to conversation) with humorous comment
 - Instructor: yeah, it was probably about 48 years ago---student 1: see, and it's like it happened yesterday---instructor: yeah---student 1: and that's...-- -student2: you know about post traumatic stress syndrome don't you [LOLS]---instructor: no, because it was 48 years ago.

WAYS TO ADD INFORMATION (43)

- Add point (to conversation)
 - Student 1: there's some people that realize that it's still an important part....---student 2: I wouldn't confuse spirituality with religion....--- student 1: I'm not confusing spirituality and religion, but...
- Quote text directly
 - Student 1: they had like a way-broader meaning than---Group talk#####---student 1:"an enlarging of our capacity to relate—relating to self, community, everything..."---Silence.....---instructor: but

probably, uh, if that was inserted in there, what 15 years ago?, uh, that would have been seen as uh, violation...

- Reference to earlier discussion
 - Instructor: I got a question, I wanna take you back, think of an example ##### it sounds like, men, not displaying emotions (publicly) suppressing it, impeded you learning—as men...
- Reference to movie
 - Student: y'all remember that movie on HBO? Emma Thompson? She was a professor, and uh, she got some form of cancer, and one of her former students was a doctor? (um-hm,...yes FB) and, uh, he had no bed-side manner, no ethics, but...
- Change subject
 - Student 1: because it hardly talks about culture as basically the nutrient or the ### which motivates our emotions...---Pause.....silence---student 2: I think, as I was reading, uh this chapter, um I think that learning is a compilation of all #####psycho-motor and also the affective—I think that what he is saying in the chapter is that...

KINDS OF STORIES (42)

- Illustrations
 - Student: let's say we have to take a course in college and it's a required course—you're either going to be motivated to take that course—highly interested and you still might be learning process might still be taking place—because you gotta have this course to pass so....
- Personal stories
 - Student: I thought about my experience that I shared with the group—when I took a political science class here at umsl, and, taking that one class from that instructor I got emotionally involved and excited and the reason I got excited was that I saw the excitement and the enthusiasm that he showed ##### and in turn I got excited and I wanted to know more about political science.
- Work-related stories
 - Instructor: he's been dabbling in this for, uh, what, that I know of, maybe 22 or 23 years, I know him going back that far in some of the initial stages of this, kind of thing, and basically he's trying to say some things to the field and ask some things in the field that the field has not been very open to.
- Stories to make a point
 - **Student: he's talking about** the O.J. case, he says there's two difference emotions—when the verdict came out –one—one group of people the emotions was like, **yeah!**, you know, they stormed two law schools, they

stormed Howard university, you know, and they stormed a law school I think it was, like Harvard or something...

- Funny stories
 - Student: I'm going to give you a really good example, this was probably back about last year, I went to ----- Hospitalnow, this was a crisis situation, this was stuff that I've never experienced before and I'm sitting there, and the doctor came in and, he came in, and a nurse, and started talking to me, and all of a sudden I just felt at ease (LOLs) –you know, all it took was just somebody just to smile and say, oh, you know, this is common, you know...

KINDS OF NOISE (39)

- Filler talk
 - Student: like, you know, um, uh...
- Talk over
 - 12 incidences of students talking while another student was trying to talk.
- Break in-to an existing conversation
 - Student 1: so there was unfamiliarity with it but it wasn't um, maybe talked about as well as...---student 2: [Breaks in] well, a lot of people don't know what the Moors are—so the Majority...---student 1: well, you bring up the cultural context of the black male...
- Everybody talking at once
 - *6 incidences of entire group talking at once*
- Loss of group focus
 - *5 incidences of group focus where side conversations, and general mumbling occur.*
- Coughing
 - *Coughing, throat clearings occurred throughout the discussion*
- External (classroom noise)
 - *Noises outside the classroom, people walking past the open door, air handlers, talking coming through the walls from another class room.*
- Dominating the conversation
 - *One person dominates the conversation*

KINDS OF QUESTIONS (34)

- Casual question
 - Student: you know what I'm saying?
- Direct question
 - Student: are you kind of suggesting that there's a side of us that have to make the emotions happen not forcefully but allow that experience to

become a part of us because some people don't live in that zone, type thing?

- Question about course process/course work
 - Student 1: what do y'all think?---student 2: didn't you say it's not transitional transformational, though?---student 3: she said transactional---student 2: recent studies of transformational learning...---student 3: where are you?
- Question implied
 - Student 1: your piece, I think is in contrast to this notion of transformative learning in which we are encouraged to ask how or why questions---student 2: right...
- Question rhetorical
 - Student: if I follow his path and I accept what he's saying—how am I going to make this connection between what I'm learning and what I'm reading and attach on a very deep and personal soul meaning, and I'm not—I'm kind of shaky on that..but one of the...
- Question pondering
 - Student 1: What I get out of it is he wants to get all learning to be more self knowledge---student 2: without the emotion...---student 1: no, he wants you to take that emotion and integrate it into yourself and become more a whole person.
- Question to group
 - Student: think about this: can you remember a time where, you've had an experience but because you suppressed the emotion the experience was less than it would have been, if you had allowed yourself the full feeling, the full feeling to come out?
- Question to individual
 - Student: I mean let me ask you because there's a whole lot of anger that I've had in the past after I have been exposed to certain things...
- Question humorous
 - Student: out of curiosity, I want to know what was said—inquiring minds want to know...---instructor: you really want to know?
- Question as statement
 - Student: I wonder if it's actually that, is it that women are more emotional, or some people are more emotional than other people are—is it that they simply do not display...the emotion...I mean is the emotion just not there or is it not...

WAYS TO AGREE (27)

(Much agreement in this group was in the form of non-verbal head nods and general 'um-hm' remarks.)

- Agree to affirm
 - Student 1: we're continually linking back to previous experiences and our emotions that are related to them....---Student 2: to be the foundational relationship with that personyeah...
- Agree as feedback
 - Student: so they're not really that concerned—you know, that emotionally attached to what they're doing, they're thinking about the dollar--general feedback agreement----But I'll be perfectly honest, the majority of doctors go into it for the money (um-hms feedback).
- Agree but (yes-but)
 - Student: yeah, except that he's asking us to look beyond that...he's asking us to look beyond, um.....emotions being a barrier learning or being a motivator to learning.
- Agree with peers
 - Student: yeah, I think you're right, the methodologythere's this whole ...let's see if I can...we're doing a lot of skipping around here...
- Agree with instructor
 - *Student nods of approval; verbal 'uh-huhs'*

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (27)

- Social nicety
 - Student: that's how I kind of see it, you know....
 - Student: I could be wrong, but...
- Physical performance
 - Student: [accompanied by acting out a part] ...it's probably there, but I think men, like I said, we hide it, we, you know—I cut my hand, Im, I'm, I'm painin! –gimme a rag, I'm all right (LOLS) I'll be back, I'll see y'all next week.
- Small talk
 - *Small talk occurred primarily before class time, during breaks and immediately after class ended.*
- Yes-but
 - Student: yeah, but sometimes it comes in-- emotions come in a negative or positive way (right) it still can enhance ... your life.
- Face save
 - I was thinking pain is probably the number one motivator of things, of change on a lot of people's lives in a crisis situation, you know, **I could be wrong, but** I mean sometimes the hurt that cause people to take a serious look at something, you know, we learn, but a lot of times it's that crisis that makes us say hmmmm...

- Small group talks
- Private conversations

KINDS OF COLORFUL COMMUNICATIONS (27)

- Acting out a dialogue
 - Student: my father and I, that's been our fight between each other all my life, because I'm very much into, 'hey, what do you think about that?'
- Speaking emotionally
 - When this, um conversation in just the last 5 minutes was going on, um, you know, I could feel um some of um my own upbringing and uh, my journey of uh, interactions that I've had that are very emotionally charged and uh, to allow that to flow, and to me that's the exciting part of what he is trying to say.
- Figures of speech
 - Student: I was a happy camper.
- Repeat words for emphasis
 - Student: whew! Yeah, it was wild....what was the name of that movie. I don't know...yeah, it was wild...
- Slang
 - Student: and that translates to keeping them awake in class (LOLs) and being 'on' so to speak.
- Misc laughs and guffaws
 - *Discussion session was liberally sprinkled with laughs, chuckles, smiles, nods.*

WAYS TO GIVE FEEDBACK (26)

- Replies
 - Student 1: well, but, in that situation I don't think that it's the right time and the right place---Student 2: I understand that...---Student 3: but if you look at the context of the book, we're not talking about displaying emotions, but...
- Affirmations
 - Then everybody else who's already falling apart is going to be worse (yeahs-FB) and you gotta remember that Bush was in a elementary school classroom, you know. I mean, if he freaks out, what are these kids gonna do (LOLS) LONG PERIOD OF UNINTERRUPTED LAUGHTER – clapping, clowning
- Agreements
 - Student: but it was also in the affective realm—so you can blend it—into a classroom (background agreement voices)with different kinds of exercises depending what your goal is—I think you can.

- Silence
 - Silence was an infrequent occurrence during this discussion, but when it happened it was powerfully expressive and tended to accentuate previous statement.
- Laughter
 - Laughter was a common occurrence during this discussion with frequent LOLs.
- Physical gestures
 - *Physical gestures (head movements, hand gestures, body postures) tended to reinforce verbal remarks*

WAYS TO GIVE OPINION (21)

- Offer opinion
 - Student: so I just wanted to point to I think that maybe culture probably is the key aspect in how someone's emotions gonna play in their learning process.
- Reply opinion
 - Student 1: Does it have to be two separate –things---Student 2: I don't know that I could separate them---Student 3: I don't know that I would be able to...do one or the other---Student 4: I don't know if you'd actually want to separate them.
- Prescriptive statements
 - Student: and these affect people working in health care—they need to explore how they feel about those topics and where they stand
- Make a point
 - Student: and these affect people working in health care—they need to explore how they feel about those topics and where they stand... so I think the images can become, um, scary for people, so and then it goes on to teachers...

KINDS OF PROCESS REMARKS (20)

- Words about assignments
 - Instructor: uh, I just wanna talk about what we got upcoming, uh, tonight, of course in the assignments I realize now I have the numbers and chapters incorrect—tonight was the power of feelings—Student: next week we have basically I think 2, we have two doing on, we have two assigned, I'll, I'm not sure whether I've got all the names connected with all the, all the chapters.....*some talking*.....and #### did I get back to you on chapters?
- Words about words

- Student 1: didn't you say it's not transitional transformational, though?---
- Student 2: she said transactional.

KINDS OF GROUP TALKING (19)

Group talking occurred in the general categories listed below and tended to be times of social interaction

- Group agreement
- Group laughter
- Goodbye/hello
- Support/feedback
- Noisy unfocused

WAYS TO TALK ABOUT TEXT (18)

- Interpret text
 - Student: he does say on page 69 that um (paper ruffling student muttering 'let's see here) that uh, emotionally charged images tend to appear spontaneously—on the top of page 69—within the learning process—they arrive as they so choose, ##### relatively independent of the ego, and he says in this same paragraph that basically if we just stop thinking about it and let it happen, then we'll have those moments where we connect the cognitive and the affective...
- Reference text
 - Student: a couple of things I wanted to refer to...yeah, on page 67...under connections between learning, emotions and adulthood—that second full paragraph in there that second sentence it talks about ##### where it deals with the similar #####.
- Paraphrase text
 - Student: yeah, except that he's asking us to look beyond that...he's asking us to look beyond, um.....emotions being a barrier learning or being a motivator to learning. What I get out of it is he wants to get all learning to be more self knowledge.
- Respond to text
 - Student: that's the way I understood it to say basically that that's a way that you can take what you're learning cognitively and you can own it on a very deep and personal level....um...like I said I think he ...he has, he, for me he has made very good points generally but ...there are some things and you think, wow. How am I going to get there...how am I going to get where he wants me to be as an adult learner if I follow his path if I follow his path and I accept what he's saying—how am I going to make this connection between what I'm learning and what I'm reading...

KINDS OF FRAGMENTS (17)

- Incomplete sentences
 - If I could address that...
- Incomplete thoughts
 - Student: ...I mean is the emotion just not there or is it not?...

KINDS OF INTERJECTIONS (16)

- Interject comment
 - Instructor: yeah---student 1: but any (##### talk over) can be detrimental---student 2: because I was thinking as you were talking is that it can sometimes cause you to second-guess yourself...
- Interject opinion
 - Student: you know, I'm sitting here listening to this and I'm thinking of how culture plays a role in this, and why I think, you know...
- Piling on
 - Student 1: But I'll be perfectly honest, the majority of doctors go into it for the money (um-hms FB)---student 2: oh, yeah,make \$250,000 starting off!...
- Series of quick comments
 - Student 1: that's the line that really struck me, um, --student 2; they're not rational---student 1: Right—OK.

WAYS TO AFFIRM (12)

- Affirm another
 - Student: I like the way you—and I did something similar and that's to bring the emotions to motivate us to really think about this because as you mention that...
- Encourage another
 - Student 1: but that only tells you the what, the qualitative tells you the why; that's why you need both.---Student 2: yeah, I think so and I think...- --Student 1: it was still hard for me to get through edstats, though...
- Seek affirmation/approval
 - *Much of the affirmation and approval during this meeting was communicated through short uh-uhs and head nods.*
- Give affirmation
 - Student 1: then that enables you to take that emotion and move forward—is that a good example?---Student 2: that's an excellent example. The emotions are probably rational; do you understand it better now?

WAYS TO BE CRITICAL (12)

- Critical of text

- Student: is that because of jargon” ...it’s like he’s trying to use the jargon and mix the jargon and it’s too many words—too many words that you gotta break down it’s hard to...
- Critical of other
 - Student 1: we need to share some of this with our doctors who do not have bedside manners---Student 2: they’re worse than the patients---Student 3: I’m working on a doctor like that, I’ll tell ya, I’m working on it. I’m getting him there.

The preceding section presented data analysis representing three topics covered in this course: Women’s Learning in Adult Education, Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education, and Emotions and Feelings in Adult Education. Data were presented in the order that the topics were covered in the course; data from the online section is presented first followed by data from the face-to-face section. While both the online and the face-to-face have similar structures in this document, it should be remembered that they were experienced quite differently by the two groups of students: Face-to-face students met as a group and experienced their exchange as a social one; for online students, the exchange was primarily a solitary one. Face-to-face students met and interacted in real (synchronous) time at regular (weekly intervals; Online students logged in, read posts and then responded as their personal schedules permitted. Finally, perhaps the biggest difference between the two groups is that the face-to-face students were not only able to verbally express and exchange ideas, they were in a position to perceive a whole spectrum of nonverbal information, look into one another’s eyes as they spoke or listened. These additional levels of communication undoubtedly provided a depth of experience unavailable to online students. Online students were limited to the medium of text to express ideas, thoughts, and emotions, ask questions and express themselves.

Student and Instructor Email

Email was an important avenue of communication for students. For purposes of data analysis, email content was divided into two groups: email from students and addressed to the instructor, and email from the instructor directed to students

The volume of communication via email to and from online students was much greater than for that of students taking this course in the traditional face-to-face format. Because online students only participated in this course through the internet, it was necessary for them to make sure that the instructor received their work as an email attachment. Students taking this course face to-face (with only one exception) handed in their assignments directly to the instructor during regular class times.

Figure 18 shows that of the 142 total emails exchanged in this course from instructor and students from both sections of this course, only six email messages (just over 4%) were directed to the instructor or received (by the instructor) from students taking this course in the face-to-face section; the remaining 96% were sent to the instructor by online students or sent by the instructor to online students.

Figure 18. Emails sent to the instructor by online and face-to-face students

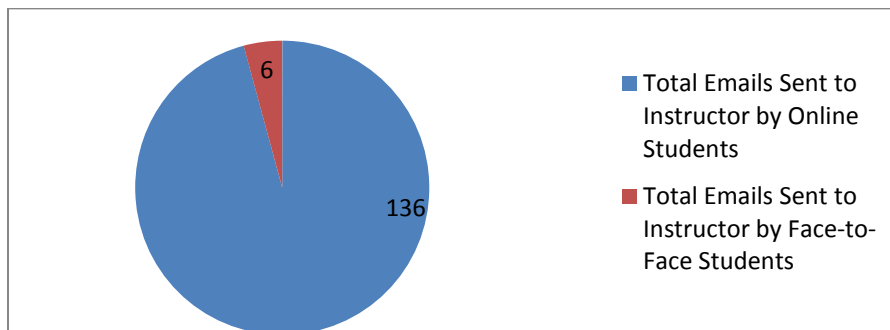
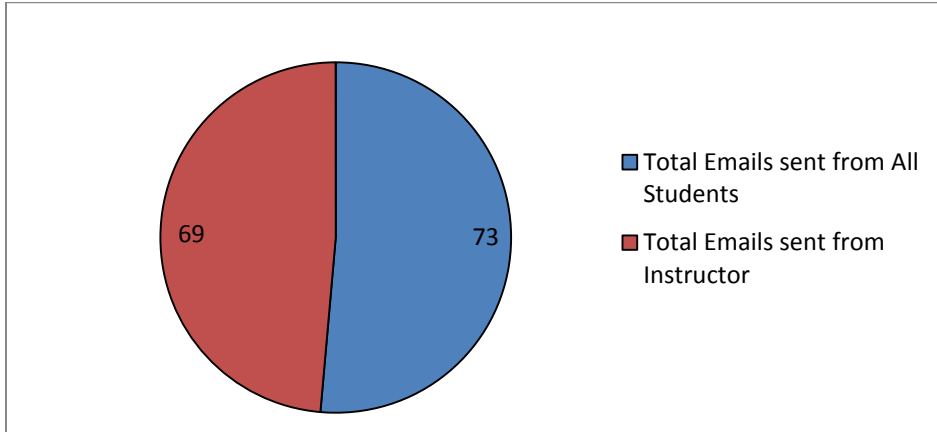


Figure 19 shows the total amount of email generated by all students and the instructor. The 17 online students generated 69 emails at an average of just 4 emails per student, while the instructor generated all 69 of his emails.

Figure 19. Total number of emails sent by all students and instructor



Email Sent to Instructor from Students

Of the 73 emails sent to instructor, 184 terms were identified. One-hundred-sixty-three of these terms were selected and separated into categories that made up larger domains. Table 9 presents the breakdown of cultural domains and their recurrence in emails sent to the instructor as percentages of total student-generated email content. The domain of Assignments is the largest at 36 percent of the total. This means that 36 percent of the emails sent to the instructor dealt with questions and/or comments about course assignments.

Table 9. *Domains from Emails Sent to Course Instructor*

Domain	Number of terms/percentage	Percentage
Ways to complete	53	36%
Kinds of technical	43	26%
Ways to be sociable	30	18%
Ways to say ‘thank	24	15%
Ways to apologize	10	06%
Kinds of humor	3	02%

WAYS TO COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS (53/36%)

This domain was the largest, and comprised 36% of the total email material sent to the instructor by students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Turn in paper or Submit assignment
 - My Adult Learner (6410) paper is attached. Please let me know if it works to send it to you this way or do you need a hard copy by fax, or hand delivered?
 - I have attached a copy of my interviews.
 - Where would you like me to post my Adult Paper? I'd like to go ahead and submit it since I'm going to be out of town part of this week and over the weekend and may not have access to a computer.
 - I've gone ahead and sent you my adult paper since I will be out of town for the rest of the week and over the weekend.
 - Here is the paper one more time please let me know if you do not get it. Thanks!
- Request assignment preference
 - I would like to present Chapter 5 for discussion. Thanks.
 - I would be more than happy to lead the discussion on Chapter 4--New Look at Women's Learning--if that is still available. Please let me know.
 - I would be happy to take the week of February 20-26 / Informal & Incidental Learning Ch 3 / Marsick & Watkins. I don't have a partner right now but would definitely be willing to work with someone (as assigned or to fly it solo).
 - Even with the confusion I am looking forward to lead a discussion. I would like to lead "Off the Beaten Path: Creative Approaches" Chapter 9.
- Question about assignment
 - I have a question... what context is the learning contract we're developing for? Is it for this course? I'm thinking it would be something else ... perhaps a component for the course?
 - Also, as far as the learning contract is concerned, I am confused. I will look at it again and see if I can find a more specific question. It seems as though we are learning from the articles and the book, so why the contract?
 - I see that the assignments document says this is due tomorrow, the 14th. How shall we send it to you, by email? Will there be a discussion board regarding this?
- Confirm assignment
 - I think I included everything you want, but I'm just not sure. I'm also not sure my evaluation component is what you have in mind. We can talk about this on Tuesday if you have time.
 - I chose Consciousness and Learning and now there are two postings with questions on the same topic (Consciousness and Learning) Is this OK and do you think it will be confusing to the others? Should we say something to clarify?
 - There is no problem, I just wanted to make sure that everything was alright being two people did the same topic.

KINDS OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS (43/26%)

This domain was the second largest and represented 26% of email content generated by students and directed to the instructor. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Need help finding content
 - My question.... I cannot find the Discussion Board thread re: what we learned about our classmates.
 - I found the UM-St. Louis Adult Ed Program Knowledge Base Statement but did not find the Mission Statement. Can you tell me where I can find that?
- Request clarification
 - I have a question... what context is the learning contract we're developing for? Is it for this course? I'm thinking it would be something else ... perhaps a component for the course?
- Request confirmation
 - ...I chose Consciousness and Learning and now there are two postings with questions on the same topic (Consciousness and Learning). Is this OK and do you think it will be confusing to the others? Should we say something to clarify? Thank you. Dr. Henschke, I also left you a message.
- Request information
 - Do you have the bibliographic info for the following course documents? I would like to cite them in my interview paper.
- Computer problems
 - I have attached a copy of my interviews. I couldn't send it Saturday since my home computer is down. Thanks for understanding.
- Software problems
 - Okay, let's try this again. I realized I sent you one of my first drafts, rather than the final paper. Here's the paper I meant to send. Please excuse my operator error!
- Internet access problems
 - Where would you like me to post my Adult Paper? I'd like to go ahead and submit it since I'm going to be out of town part of this week and over the weekend and may not have access to a computer.

WAYS TO BE SOCIABLE (30/18%)

This domain constituted 18% of email content from students and directed to the instructor. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Social nicety
 - Hello [Instructor], I hope you are home safe from your distant travels. I trust you had a marvelously fascinating adventure. I am writing to request an extension on the due date for the Adult Learner paper.
- Express gratitude
 - Dr. Henschke, It was nice to speak to you last week. Thank you for calling. I have attached a revised learning contract.
- Self disclosure

- I was recently hired into a new position as a RN in a small home health company. During the month that I have been hired I've observed multiple areas of learning needs. My goal is to meet with the CEO or VP of the company and discuss areas of improvement.
- Greetings
 - Hello, my name is [Name] and I enrolled into your class late. I am writing to request to have a couple more days to complete the first assignment.
- Introduce self
 - Hi. I'm your student, [Name] and I wanted information about our initial class meeting. Are we going to meet at a physical location or will we begin online?

WAYS TO SAY 'THANK YOU' (24/15%)

This domain was the third largest and represented 15% of email content generated by students and directed to the instructor. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Polite thanks
 - *Polite thanks refers to those instances in student email where a 'thank you' is expected or is a cultural expectation such as a perfunctory 'thank you' following a question or comment:*
 - Would you please confirm that you received this? Thank you.
- Expressive thanks
 - *Expressive thanks refers to instances where gratitude is expressed for a specific incident or remark:*
 - "I would like to thank you for a warm and friendly internet experience."
 - "Thank you for your patience."

WAYS TO APOLOGIZE (10/6%)

This domain was the fourth largest and represented 6% of email content generated by students and directed to the instructor. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Admitting mistakes
 - Here's the paper I meant to send. Please excuse my operator error!
- Not understanding
 - Attached please find my paper. I apologize for the length, if it's a problem I can edit it further.
 - Sorry if we were confused about this.

KINDS OF HUMOR (3/2%)

This domain was the smallest domain and represented just 2% of email content generated by students and directed to the instructor. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Humorous expression
 - 1:30 on Tuesday is great. Come rain, sleet, hail or snow, I'll be there!
- Clever remark

- Dr. Henschke: There may be a reason no one has picked that topic...nevertheless I'm okay with a challenge. I will plan to lead that discussion.

Email Sent to Students from Instructor

The instructor sent a total of 69 emails to students in the course. Again, only two emails were directed to students taking the course face-to-face, while the remaining 67 emails went to online students. A total of 140 domain terms were identified and 128 were categorized into the domains shown in Table 10. Fifty-two terms were associated with information and direction on assignments, which constituted the largest single domain (at 41 percent).

Table 10. *Domains from in Emails Sent from Course Instructor to Students*

Domain	Number Terms	Percentages
Ways to give feedback on assignments	52	41%
Kinds of personal communication	28	22%
Ways to assign work	20	16%
Ways to solicit feedback from students	19	15%
Kinds of technical problems	9	07%

WAYS TO GIVE FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS (52/41%)

This was the largest domain and represented 41% of email content generated by the instructor and directed to students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Confirm assignment
 - Just received this e-mail with the attachment. A few minutes ago I sent a response to your 4/30/05 e-mail indicating that the paper was not attached. Looks like all is well now.
- Clarify mix-up
 - There was a mix up. However, this is not a problem and I think each of you have approached the article in a different way. I will make a clarifying announcement about this to the class.
- Provide additional information
 - It will be up to you and [Name] to get in contact with each other, and work out the details of how you will proceed the presentation and discussion. If you have any questions, please let me know.
- Direct feedback
 - This is a good contract for developing a staff training program from your agency. I have raised some questions within the body of your contract.
- Provide examples

- Follow this procedure and I think it will get you to where you want to go. If it does not work, get back with me and we will try again.
- Provide suggestions
 - On the other hand, as you said, you could develop your own and not use what is there. Those other documents are there only for suggestions if you want to use them. I hope this helps clarify and addresses your questions.

KINDS OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION (28/22%)

This was the second largest domain and represented 22% of email content generated by the instructor and directed to students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Apologies
 - Sorry I am slow in getting this back to you. I have included your original contract, and the second one has some comments by me. I hope this is helpful.
- Encouragements
 - Looks good and more like what you will be able to accomplish in the given length of time for this semester.
- Direct salutations

When communicating to students via email the instructor always started by stating student's name followed by a colon: 'Susan: I have received your email'.
- Concern for personal welfare
 - I hope that you come through your struggles successfully and that your future will be much brighter. That will be fine as you are able to 'catch up'. I look forward to your postings when you are able to get to them.
- Thank you
 - Thanks for the reminder !!! I have not posted that as yet because I overlooked it, but will right away.

WAYS TO ASSIGN WORK (20/16%)

This was the third largest domain and represented 16% of email content generated by the instructor and directed to students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Explicit instruction
 - *The course syllabus described course assignments in detail. When students emailed the instructor regarding an assignment it was usually to address a specific question in the students mind. Therefore, replies from the instructor, while varied, were explicit responses to specific questions:*
 - Dear [Name]: We will begin Online. I will post the first items on Sunday, 1/9/05. This way we will be able to observe a weekly schedule that starts on Sunday, and ends on Saturday. I am in the process of finishing the course document, syllabus, and assignments and getting them in the MyGateway System. They will be on MyGateway by Sunday.

WAYS TO SOLICIT FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS (19/15%)

This was the fourth largest domain and represented 15% of email content generated by the instructor and directed to students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Offer help
 - Dear [Name]: Don't hesitate to call me if your need some help. You can call in the daytime at ***-***-****; in the evening at ***-***-****; and even on a cell phone at ***-***-****. The Best to You...
- Offer more information
 - If you have further questions, let me know. Or, if I missed your question entirely with my answer, let me know this also, and I will try it again if your will give me a bit clearer direction in your question.
- Solicit questions
 - Any questions you have, let me know. I'll introduce the fact, that you are the discussion leader, on the Discussion Board and then you start the discussion.
- Solicit responses
 - Let me hear from you.
- Encourage replies
 - If you have any questions, please let me know. I'll try to answer.
- Request personal information
 - Are you the same as [Name]? I have a [Name] on my Class Roster in MyGateway, but not a [Name].

KINDS OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS (9/7%)

This was the smallest domain and represented just 7% of email content generated by the instructor and directed to students. The following is a list of included terms within this domain:

- Problems with MyGateway
 - I finally got it worked out to be able to sent to you the Self-Directed Learning [SDL] & Self-Planned Learning [SPL] PDF File I promised last night to send.
- Problems finding things on MyGateway
 - I just checked its location and it is the fifth document up from the bottom in the course documents. Just in case you can locate it, I have attached to this e-mail a PDF File Copy of it. I hope this helps.
- Problems with documents
 - Dear [Name]: Here is the article as an attachment. See if you can open it. Let me know if you have problems.

The most important point to be made about student experience with email in this online course is that while it was essentially unused by face-to-face students (a few students submitted their papers to the instructor as attachments instead of turning them in

during class time) it was a critical communication channel for online students. Important questions about course assignments and deadlines were asked, discussed, clarified and critiqued via email. Online students and instructor worked online together to resolve many complex issues. It was, perhaps, inevitable that technical problems were encountered; some students were new to online learning and new to the MyGateway interface, and, computer, hardware, software and internet problems were an occasional source of confusion for instructor and students.

All email communications, however, were well-structured and closely followed accepted and shared standards of social etiquette. Evidence of sociability: expressing gratitude, self-introductions, salutations and statements (explicit or implicit) of personal concern, were evident and comprised large portion of the total email content.

Student Interviews

A total of eight one-on-one student interviews were conducted; five interviews with students taking the course online and three interviews with students taking the course face-to-face. These interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis by the researcher.

Interviews with Online Students

Analysis of the transcripts for online students revealed 249 cover terms with the following domains emerging presented in order of frequency:

Table 11. *Domain Frequencies from Interview Transcripts of Students in the Online Section of this Adult Education Course*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of personal preferences	70
Things that didn't work	58
Kinds of challenges	48
Things that worked	35
^a Things miscellaneous	21
Reasons for taking the course online	17

^aMiscellaneous remarks refer to random remarks volunteered students that did not fit into any identifiable domain, but were informative of student perceptions.

KINDS OF PREFERENCES (70)

- Personal preferences
 - I basically just wanted to explore and see how the adult learner really processes information—just to, just basically for my patients
 - If I was asked a question and I really had to answer, I would but you have some people that answer everything, just jump, jump, jump, jump, jump—that's not me; I am the kind of person I do like to observe,
- Learning preferences
 - I think the online classes are a little more generic for some reason.....yeah, you have more fun face-to-face—
 - The online course was very challenging—it is challenging—I would probably have preferred to have done face-to-face
 - I don't know, so, would I do it again? I don't know; has it been an experience? Yes.
 - But, I would miss working with the people face to face---I would miss that, but, just for the convenience if I had the option of taking this whole program I'm taking on line, I would do it.
 - I still would like to go through each one of those postings and do a posting—that's important to me—what I thought about the readings.

THINGS THAT DIDN'T WORK (58)

- Online environment
 - Your response changes according to what other people's responses are, but, if other people's responses are already there, you don't have that evolution of thought—and that bothered me, more than anything
 - I do better in face-to-face real-time discussions than I do in the asynchronous environment.....yeah, well I think that you lose spontaneity—this is what happened to me over and over again

- I think that when you have more face-to-face interaction you can put names with faces and, um, I think it's just better for me to do a face-to-face more so than an online
- It's just hard to coordinate with people when you're online
- I was more disappointed when it was time to post
- [when] I want to come back and respond to [a post] but where was it? And which thread was it and how do I get back there?
- I'm more of an auditory learner—it would have been best if I had taken the class (lol) and LISTENED—because I never forget a conversation.....when you just read it online—and sometimes people just go all the way over to left field and you're like, “what?”
- I like to meet people and when I meet them I like to put a face with people I don't like to just see a name and don't know who I'm talking to or what I'm saying,
- Course content
 - That's not how I learn [using a learning contract] I don't have to break it out and put it on paper so it was a little different kind of experience to force myself to really think about it and do it
 - A lot of people I can't relate to so I have a lot of problems responding to a lot of the responses that are out there that you're supposed to interact, and you want to interact but I can't relate to a lot of it so I just don't respond
 - I actually feel kind of guilty that I have not caught up with those postings; I feel like, how am I going to ever do this
- Other students
 - You see the people who really have something to offer, but, they don't know how to write very well and...well, it's the only avenue on an online course
 - People who respond at the end of the week—there's no interacting with them—and it's hard to go back—we're done—we've talked that topic to death—we're ready to go on to something else—and they're just getting in and responding—and so, I don't even read their responses
 - I pay attention—I pay attention—there's some people who've just dropped out—there's some people who post all the time and it used to be discouraging to me
 - It's not even that it's on line, it's not even that it's not being face to face—but [students in this course] living a different life than I am.

KINDS OF CHALLENGES (48)

- Too many posts challenges
 - I think what was overwhelming to me was that---I think this just blows my mind when I click on the computer and I'll see, gosh, 60 things to read,

and I'll be saying in my mind, gosh, where do people find the time to just post and post and post –

- One challenge was trying to keep up with the reading online, because you want to keep up with what other people are saying
- But, you know, some of those postings, like 110 of them!—you know, and I do, I read a lot of them, so you know, like wow—this person's interesting—so, I might follow what [another student] says a lot because he's very interesting
- Technology challenges
 - I have dial-up so it's slow and sometimes it's down, it was not consistent—just the quality of the internet connection
 - It is difficult to maneuver through all of those [posts in the discussion board]
- Feedback/ asynchronicity challenges
 - I've learned that when you are going to work online you still need to go after that person especially if you're going to do a project together or a discussion together
 - I think it would be much, much easier to learn in an open environment where immediately you can pop back a response to someone and have a discussion between three or four people and not waiting several days for somebody to respond and then sometimes if you respond to someone they don't ever answer you back, you know what I mean!?
 - You feel like you gotta watch what you say but then again you might say something where you are thinking in a very soft tone of voice but it comes out to somebody else in a very harsh manner or sound critical and I think that's a really difficult type of interacting to maneuver around.
- Fitting in challenges
 - My challenges were relating to the student experiences—I feel like I'm on a different page than they are; I'm looking for different things out of the class than they are.
- Time Challenges
 - Time management issues----...and also I had trouble with the specific course format and the all-online courses—I still am trying to get used to that
 - One challenge was having to insert my school work with my 'work' work.
 - I have a laptop at home, but I have a strange schedule—
 - but it was hard to fit in the time to concentrate, to focus on online courses while I had so many other things
 - One of the challenges was, um trying to fit in time—

- It worked against me in that it took more time—however, had I been in the face-to-face course, being an auditory learner, I would have gotten it—I would have walked away with it;
- Challenges?: just finding the time to do what I needed to do
- Environmental challenges
 - It's also hard to switch gears to go from the work mode and the administrative, to the student mode –that was hard and I usually needed more time to make that transition
 - I don't have an office that's private

THINGS THAT WORKED (35)

- Fit life/learning style
 - I like to work alone and in group projects, I'm usually the one who takes over so that I get it done quickly—so that really works for me
 - I think that this class worked fine with my learning style
 - what worked more for me was being able to go back and go over the questions, or whatever
- Schedule/flexibility
 - One of the reasons I took it online is because it was a conflict in schedules for me
 - What I find is when I work the night shift I can [find the time to post] I can just sit there and do it, but when I'm doing the day shift I have to find the time
 - Well, the good thing was, [this course] was online so I was able to do it...
 - online [is] just for the convenience
- Personal enrichment
 - This adult learning class—I took it because I wanted to understand more about who I am
 - Learning more about myself as an adult learner
- Enjoyment
 - Overall it's been a good course, I mean, I've enjoyed it.
 - That's what I like about these online courses is that most of it's on me and I just work better that way....so I enjoy that part of the online courses
 - Just to read them and see where other people were coming from was interesting—it was very interesting
 - The technical part of it was ok—so it wasn't new, I can handle it—actually I think it's quite fun.
- Learned a lot
 - This class is definitely working for me I enjoyed it, in fact I'm going to look for other adult learner courses

- The reading is fine, I don't ever have a problem with sitting down and reading a chapter and I can take whatever information I want from out of there and then take everyone else's view on it so—
-It's really what you take away from this course...of all the things that are out there, it's really about being able to take something away from the course that 's useful
- One course closer to maintaining my certification—it was a first step for me into a grad program—it was a first step into interacting with other students through an online course
- I learn what I want to learn out of it [this course] and this course has certainly met my needs I learn what I want to learn out of it [this course] and this course has certainly met my needs
- I have this aha experience in this class—I might get one or two things out of 105 responses and correspondence that I've read but to me, that's acceptable—if I leave with something, I'm happy
- [the course] opened up my eyes to quite a few new things to quite a few new theories that are out there
- Because of an online course, you do learn to be very succinct, very direct—you do get rid of all the filler words that you use in everyday speech or that you would use in a classroom, so it's more efficient that way—yeah, and I guess that helps for people who are not comfortable with public speaking.

THINGS MISCELLANEOUS (21)

- Personal disclosures
 - The most useful postings were the ones where the people really obviously read stuff and could write well—some were stronger than others
 - I have trouble concentrating—I need absolute silence—I'm not one of those people who can play music or have background TV—I need quiet
 - I enjoyed the course... it was a true learning experience
 - Somehow the nature of the discussion really changed in an online discussion.
 - This is my first online class and I'm not really sure how I'm interacting
 - Some weeks I'll post more and some weeks I'll post less...sometimes I don't have anything to reply back—so I would be just for the fact of 'ok I'll get my number of posts in.
 - If it's a topic I enjoy I'll be in there checking on it.
 - It wasn't about anything else, or anybody else; it was all about what I needed to do.
 - I was just interested in the adult learner—I thought, 'that's an interesting title'.

- You need to be a self starter to take online courses—if not how can you take it online—you cannot be passive [in an online class]. You need your own inner drive.
- If you're a procrastinator you definitely don't need to take this.
- I'm a more hands on—life experiences is what helps me get through my studies, and when I can just take something and relate it to it it helps me to be able to comprehend it within myself.
- I think there would have been more interaction in the group [if the class had been face to face] as the experiences—everyone would throw out there experiences and the instructor would feed off of that in tying the class together.
- I gather and glean the information that I need and the rest---tschhhh—it's gone.
- I'm kind of a sit-back-analyze kind of person and I think that relates to my personality—I'm not a jump-in blah-blah-blah-blah-blah kind of person
- It was the first time I'd ever used a learning contract and I had some conversations through email and on the phone with [the instructor].

REASONS FOR TAKING COURSE ONLINE (17)

- Schedule
 - It was just more feasible, more beneficial to take it online because then that allowed me to do it at my own pace—that's basically it.
 - One of the reasons I took it online is because it was a conflict in schedules for me.
 - To save on the parking LOL)—that was the main thing, and then to save on travel time, and I could do it as it fit into my schedule rather than having to work my schedule around a set time.
- Convenience
 - More a matter of convenience for this first class.
 - So I wouldn't have to be away from my job, away from home—other things—more a matter of convenience.
- Physical space
 - I'm isolated geographically from the rest of my students [*student was living in Greece for most of the semester*].

Interviews with Face-to-Face Students

Interviews with three face-to-face students were recorded, transcribed and coded.

Analysis revealed 117 cover terms with the following domains emerging. In Table 10

domains are presented in order of frequency.

Table 12. *Domain Frequencies from Interview Transcripts of Students in the Face-to-Face Section of this Adult Education Course*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of personal disclosures	38
Reasons for taking the course face-to-face	27
Things that worked	23
Kinds of challenges	12
Things that didn't work	11
^a Things miscellaneous	6

^aMiscellaneous remarks refer to random remarks volunteered students that did not fit into any identifiable domain, but were, nevertheless, informative of student perceptions.

KINDS OF: PERSONAL DISCLOSURES (38)

- Face-to-face worked better for me
 - I can't imagine how online class would be as beneficial as f2f would be, in terms of the interaction provide.
 - I'm just not so sure that [the online class] would have been as beneficial to me as the f2f class has been.
 - I know that the possibilities to get the information that I have gotten from being face-to-face just wouldn't be there online; it just doesn't happen that way and I think that's the difference between technology and human contact.
 - I would try to approach it in a way that I sort of owned it—people can tell you the way that THEY think, but you have to sort of own it.
 - So it's really difficult to come across well in and email or an online chat session.
- Learned a lot
 - I learn stuff from other people, I read a lot, I like hands-on activities, visual learning –some TV some videos, depending---the internet—just a combination of all of those.
 - I'm not going to realize how much I know, how much I actually gained from this class until it's over.
 - so I'm pretty comfortable getting out there and digging up information
 - I don't need a lot of motivation—if I have a passion about something and I really want to do it I don't need other people to [direct me].
 - I have to make the conscience decision to control my learning, to discipline myself to actually do the learning and be the learner—nobody is going to open my brain and pour it in—I have to do the work.
- Enjoyed the course
 - I had originally signed up for the online class but... I enjoyed [f2f] so much I decided to stay.”

- It's been a fun class, it really has.
- I've really gotten my money's worth out of this class.
- What I find interesting is that there is this unique dynamic in this class—that if you changed one person in this class in any given night—how would that change the discourse—how much would it change the dynamic?
- We have so many different cultural, economic, professional backgrounds in this class that to change that, we may not laugh as much we may not talk about the same things we talk about as much...or laugh in different places—it would all be different—but I think you find that in life general.

REASONS FOR TAKING CLASS (Face-to-Face) (27)

- Familiar with Face-to-Face format
 - I'd never taken an online course before so, I'm starting school again, so, do I go into something that is really brand new, or, do I go into something that's more familiar classroom environment—so that made it a little more comfortable.
 - Communicating on line...is in some ways more challenging; you have to be able to communicate thoughts, feelings, opinions diplomatically, tactfully, succinctly online.
- Social interaction
 - I look forward to this class—I enjoy it, I enjoy coming here... yeah, I like the interaction.
 - Most importantly, for me, is the dynamic situation in the classroom that I wasn't sure I would find in an online course, or, if I did it would be in a different way.
 - In this class we had so much good discussion and, for example, tonight there was a lot of emotion and a lot of interest and a lot of voices all at one time and you don't get that, I don't think I would get that same feeling—that's a component you're going to miss in an online class.
 - I'm comfortable with the technology...it was more the choice had to do with, 'do I want to be looking at people and talking to them, or, do I want to be sitting at the computer and chatting online?'
 - There's just something about sitting down and talking long and hard about something—that's what's interesting about this class.

THINGS THAT WORKED (23)

- Learned a lot
 - We're learning something were learning from each other and were thinking of new ways, new perspectives and new ways to look at the

- topic—so, no matter how far off topic you get, you’re still in some way or another learning something that will eventually pertain to that topic.
- But it’s interesting, because [the instructor] really doesn’t teach a lot, but you learn so much from him...
 - Sometimes we are very good about sticking to the text—and other times we will go way off—and somehow or other we come back full circle and I find that so interesting because we bring in so many thoughts and ideas and we’ll go way off topic—way out there and then we still somehow or another tend to bring it all back
 - Like tonight for example I think because it is such a deep topic or maybe a broad topic there’s a lot that can be said about it—it is very interesting—I don’t think I would get that online—I think I would really miss that.
 - Well, I like theory and abstraction, you know, I like that....I don’t have to have it all wrapped up...I can have it in bits and pieces....you know, that’s ok with me....so, there was a lot of that here.
 - I am learning how to discern what deem valuable for me right now or, what interests me more or maybe what I can apply more, take in more, absorb more, or just utilize more in my day-to-day life.
- Social environment
 - I think the physical structure [of this f2f classroom] is conducive to positive communication...I think it facilitates more open dialogue –when you have people sitting in a circle you really feel like you’re part of a group.
 - I’m struck, too by how we have gelled as a group—and you may get that same bonding online (if you will) but I don’t think to the depth that you do in the classroom.
 - The thing that I’ve enjoyed the most has been the interaction with a group of people that I normally wouldn’t rub shoulders with—age, sex, race
 - I like the interaction...the talking to other students—about getting their perspectives that involve issues about adult education that I couldn’t possibly get online...because you just don’t have that kind of spontaneity online that you do in person.
 - Course fit my learning style
 - I’m a very auditory learner so it helps me to have all of the---talking---
 - I liked a couple of things—preferences, I suppose, I liked communication with other people; I like talking and listening and learning about people as I’m learning about whatever topic we might be on.
 - I really like the idea of, ‘ok, you’re responsible for teaching tonight’—you’re going to really gear up—if there’s going to be one chapter that you read it’s going to be that one.

- I think what happens when I talk about something, when I say something out loud, then, I'm hearing it so I can process it in a new way and it just helps to make whatever it is real, concrete or solidify the idea
- Learning how to become more self directed, and learning how to transfer that knowledge to [my] students...

KINDS OF: CHALLENGES (12)

- Course Content
 - Maybe one of the difficulties has been making that direct line between this class which is very theory based and very broad in its approach.
- Scheduling/time
 - My challenges? Time, but I think that's an excuse, ...it's more of a challenge of a split in attention, um, you know, having to work a fulltime job, your focus tends to be on your job.
 - The only challenge that I had was that my employer did not want to give me Tuesdays off.
- Interactions with group members
 - You're constantly editing your own thoughts as you're listening [to others speak]—a lot of times somebody will say something and I'll think Oh, I saw something in the book or in the chapter that really answered that question or that was really to that point and try to find it real quick.
 - And it's hard, because if you don't jump in [to F2F conversation] somebody else will.....I think it's fascinating—I think each person is absolutely different and unique and how they handle the discourse.
 - But it's frustrating...because you have to set the standards—you have to set the criteria.....suddenly in this course, or in this program I'm being pushed to get to that point where I make the rules about my learning...and I have to do it—I have to take full responsibility.

THINGS THAT DIDN'T WORK (11)

- Course discussions
 - I think, the discussions have just gone on too long.
 - I think that some students might deviate a little bit too much...and it's kind of distracting because it takes you away from the issue we are really studying.
 - Some students clearly give more information than is needed for the purposes of discussion.
 - The discussion sort of wanders at times.
 - Sometimes when you want to say something the person might be so abrupt and rude and I don't even think they're aware of it that you've lost your thought (LOL).

- Online, you can kind of ignore somebody like that –by not reading their posts, but you can’t ignore somebody that’s in your face.
- Course content
 - Some of the topics I could really get involved with, and some of the topics, not so much.
 - I guess what I was hoping for—being a trainer and instructional designer was more...direct...skills, more how you build a business-type curriculum—needs assessment—that type thing.
- Things Miscellaneous
 - It really makes you responsible—which I really want to be—I just wish I didn’t have to worry about all this other stuff—and then I think—Oh, I could be a full time student and then just really dedicate----and forget about all that job stuff...
 - I had originally signed up for the online class but when I went to sign up ...it was going to take a while...so in the interim Dr. Henschke told me to just come to class so you don’t miss out on anything and it was about 2 weeks before I could get in.

Online Environments Forum

It is a basic assumption of this study that the discussion topics covered in the classroom for the face-to-face students were roughly equivalent (in terms of teaching/learning objectives) to the discussion board topic forums for online students. That is, the actual topics were identical and students (online and face-to-face) were expected to ‘discuss’ these topics.

The discussion environment for face-to-face students in this class is well known to the researcher because he participated in all of the face to face meetings and produced detailed field notes describing class meetings (see researcher field notes). Completely unknown to the researcher, however, was the environment(s) of the online students as they posted to course discussion board forums. In an effort to gain some appreciation of what the experience was like for these students, an additional (and voluntary) discussion board forum was added to the online course section that asked online students to describe

their physical environment when posting to the discussion board. Figure 23 is a screen shot of the Environments Forum where students were invited to describe their online environment.

Figure 23. Screen shot of online environments forum

What's your online environment like?

The term Ethnography literally means drawing culture. As adult learners participating in an online course we are in the process of creating a culture of our own. One thing that affects our experience in this course is our individual relationships to the technology we use to interact and exchange ideas and information.

I would be interested in knowing (others may be interested as well) what it's like in your world when you are online in this course. That is, what is the environment like where you do most of your work? Is it quiet? Noisy? Comfortable? Well lit? Are there other factors that exert an influence on your work?

As educators, we know that the physical environment we are learning in affects us in very significant ways do you have any thoughts about the way your physical environment affects your interactions in this course?

Participation in this forum is strictly optional; all comments welcome!

*You are also free to post anonymously to this forum if you prefer to do so.

A total of 20 posts were received from 15 of the 17 online students. The instructor also posted comments to this forum. Analysis of the transcripts for this Online Environments Forum, as shown in Table 13, revealed 89 cover terms with the following domains emerging and presented in order of frequency:

Table 13. *Domain Frequencies from the Online Environments Forum in the Online Section of this Adult Education Course*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of body sensations	16
Kinds of environments	12
Kinds of visuals	12
Kinds of objects	12
Kinds of technical issues	11
Kinds of sounds	11
Kinds of distractions	10
Kinds of time	3
Kinds of tastes	1
Kinds of smells	1

KINDS OF BODY SENSATION (16)

- Physical sensations
 - I currently have a blanket in my office at work and will often drape it around me while I work.

- Mental/emotional sensations
 - The downside to both of my spaces is that I have minimal natural lighting which I have found makes me get an anxious feeling.

KINDS OF ENVIRONMENTS (12)

- Office
 - My environment is very conducive to learning and learning online.
- Home
 - Right now my online environment is very comfortable. I am at my computer in the cozy basement of our home.
- Multiple environments
 - I have 2 environments; home and work. Both of my environments are quiet.

KINDS OF VISUALS (12)

- Objects and artifacts
 - At home, well right now I'm in my oldest son's room ... It resembles a dorm room with a refrigerator, microwave, toaster and unfortunately lots of dirty dishes and an unmade bed.
- Lighting
 - My office has lots of natural light which I love!!!

KINDS OF OBJECTS (12)

- Non work-related objects
 - Have a very comfortable high back chair
 - There is also a 200 gallon fish tank in the corner next to the chair.
- work-related objects
 - My office space consists of books, books and more books.

KINDS OF TECHNICAL ISSUES (11)

- Internet access
 - I have free access to my own computer and the internet connection is very good.
- Tracking assignments
 - All these different forums are hard to keep track of, what do I read, how do I remember who wrote what. It is a bit overwhelming right now. And I still haven't figured out how I missed the one reading assignment on the Zemke article.

KINDS OF SOUNDS (11)

- Silence
 - My environment is as quiet as I want it to be.

- My online environment from home is quiet.
- Distractions
 - My online environment from my office is often noisy and distracting.
- Music
 - I have music and surroundings (plants, comfortable chair, a painting) that really enhance my relaxation.
- Environmental
 - The sound of the water is relaxing and helps me to stay calm.

KINDS OF DISTRACTIONS (10)

- Chaos
 - At work my environment is chaos.
- Other people
 - I sometimes sit at the homework hutch so that I am able to supervise the children.

KINDS OF TIME (3)

- Flexible
 - My work schedule is very flexible so I can go online when I want to work.
 - When there is a lull I can log on when I have a few minutes. I think that is what makes this setting very beneficial for me. I can logon and work/read at times that are good for me.
- No time
 - It's hard to try and take care of patients and find the time to work online.
 - All other times it is impossible to steal a moment to get online.

KINDS OF TASTES (1)

- Eating and drinking
 - Usually I have something warm to drink such as coffee, tea, or cocoa.

KINDS OF SMELLS (1)

- Scents
 - I have soft classical music playing, fresh scents in the atmosphere.

It should be remembered that these data all represent the experiences and perceptions of online students as they participated and interacted with other online students in this course. While face-to-face students undoubtedly had ‘environments’ where they worked on completing assignments for this course, almost all face-to-face student interaction was carried out in real time (synchronously) and in a social cohort.

Researcher Field Notes

The researcher attended all face-to-face classes and recorded observations while class was in session. The researcher also participated in the class discussions. All researcher notes were later transcribed by the researcher and placed in a 2-column Microsoft Word Document. All hand-written drawings were also copied and inserted into the Word document. Notes were placed in the right column and domain names were placed in the left column. A total of 191 domain terms were identified; 171 of those terms were organized into the following domains and taxonomies as shown in Table 14. See Appendix F for a sample page from the researcher's field notes.

Table 14. *Domain Frequencies from Researcher Field Notes*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Kinds of physical presentations	53
Kinds of researcher observations	27
Ways to socialize	24
Kinds of sounds	13
Kinds of visuals	10
Kinds of stories	9
Kinds of internal states	9
Kinds of noise	8
Kinds of feedback	8
Kinds of classroom artifact	6
Kinds of environments	5
Kinds of physical arrangement	4
Kinds of objects	2
Kinds of smells	1

KINDS OF PHYSICAL PRESENTATIONS (53)

- Laughter
 - Laughter is very prominent in this course.
 - “Who’s going to start off” meets with laugh—seems to ease tension.
 - What is the online equivalent of spontaneous laughter?
 - [Instructor] tells an old joke and gets lots of laughs (story).
 - Laughs punctuate the quiet—students need to laugh in order to release pressure from being still and quiet for so long.

- Laughing and spontaneous volunteers—so much easier face-to-face—WHY? What is happening here that doesn't happen online?
- Eye contact
 - I notice that eye contact is a very central component in turn-taking.
 - I also notice that eye contact is mostly directed to [the instructor]—this seems to maintain social control and creates a hierarchy.
 - Eye contact is a sort of control.

KINDS OF RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS (27)

- Conversation
 - *The art of conversation* –[a student] says that we don't cultivate conversation as a social art form any more.
 - Face-to-face allows for very fluid feedback.
- Real-time
 - Also, I note that [the instructor's] introduction was heard in 'real time' by all those present—this is so different from online.
- Rituals
 - Breaks
 - Meeting times
 - Seating arrangements

WAYS TO SOCIALIZE (24)

- Rules
 - It's funny, we are all just 'waiting' for the teacher—to teach us, I suppose.
- Small talk
 - Course starts with small talk about the weather (another social bonding exercise).
 - Last class starts with small talk and a typical adult education food—class – food arrangement in front of room.
- Casual talking
 - People talk about their experiences—very nice—very pleasant exchanges—student fans himself.
 - Social intercourse during class breaks also function to strengthen social bonds.

KINDS OF SOUNDS (13)

- Talking
 - Background talking low talking—student walks in and asks, “is this adult learning?”.
 - Deep voice—male student very well-spoken—will this create impressions about him that aren't available to others (as in online)?
- Quiet

- *people wait for a “quiet” spot to begin talking—or a pause.
- Laughs punctuate the quiet—students need to laugh in order to release pressure from being still and quiet for so long/
- Quiet is a kind of space – ‘not being present’ is a kind of space/
- Quiet togetherness-- Very quiet period right now but no tenseness in the air.

KINDS OF VISUALS (10)

- Affective displays
 - I never really noticed how much information is received—and—we all share the same physical space—context is automatically generated!—not like online (*Margin note: vocal inflection and tone quality is very important here*).
- Lighting
 - I am tired and the lights are bright.

KINDS OF STORIES (9)

- Story as instruction
 - We can use the ‘story’ as a vehicle for learning—could this be utilized online? (of course).
- Story as performance
 - [Instructor] tells another story and it is much quieter than when others speak.
- Story as parable
 - [Instructor] tells story about Jack Mezirow—a story is like a parable.
- Stories as amusement
 - [Instructor] tells an old joke and gets lots of laughs (story).
 - Great stories by [Student]—quite the talented speaker—this adds a dimension to F2F—what is the equivalent of online vocal modulation/inflection.

KINDS OF INTERNAL STATES (9)

- Tired
 - I am really starting to fade (if I was online now I’d be signing off) I’m running out of things to say about his group. I think this is because the stage is set and there is really not much new in terms of the physical environment.
- Being quiet
 - Tonight I feel tired and don’t really feel like talking—besides, I didn’t read the text.

KINDS OF NOISE (8)

- Mechanical noise
 - [Student's] phone rings and adds to the noise factor in the class.
- Human noise
 - A new student introduces herself and my stomach makes a loud noise—wouldn't have that problem online!
 - Discussion goes on—[Name] keeps coughing—excuses herself—leaves room—comes back and is still coughing.
- Group noise
 - There is apprehension think in the air—we are a community already—almost—what a difference from online—cough—body posture—socially acceptable etc.

KINDS OF FEEDBACK (8)

- Physical presentation
 - Lots of head-shakes and nods—eye contact, body posture vocal quality—the 'sound' off a person's voice—all these guide discussion.
- Vocal inflection
 - I notice how people's voices are very influential in my appreciation of their words.

KINDS OF CLASSROOM ARTIFACT (6)

- General objects
 - Desks, pens, paper, books.
- Learning objects/handouts
 - [Instructor] gives first assignment--hands out sheet and describes the illustration.

KINDS OF ENVIRONMENTS (5)

- Room description
 - Room description—2 lines of florescent lights each 3x3 carpeting is dark brownish --desks are pure black—there are piles of paper for the course.
- Room sounds
 - Room is quiet now—it is 5:30. There is apprehension think in the air—we are a community already.
- Room temperature
 - 1720: before class—room is warm, very warm. I arrive about 10 minutes before class.

KINDS OF PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT (4)

- Alternative seating arrangement
 - Typical seating/desk arrangement was as a circle, semi-circle or oval.

KINDS OF OBJECTS (2)

- Course related objects
 - Desks, flip charts, pens, blackboard.
- Personal objects
 - Physical self.
 - Other students.
 - Personal artifacts (clothes, purses, phones, book bags and etc.
- Content related objects
 - Books, papers, articles.

KINDS OF SMELLS (1)

- Food
 - Occasional smells of food when students would eat during class.
- Perfumes
 - Strong smell.

A central component of Spradley's model of participant observation in the development of an ethnographic study (1980) is researcher input. In contrast to how a regular participant would function in any social or cultural event, Spradley offers six explicit elements that distinguish a participant observer from an ordinary participant:

Maintain a *dual purpose*...to participate and to watch yourself and others at the same time. Make yourself *explicitly aware* of things that others take for granted...take mental pictures with a *wide angle lens* looking beyond your immediate focus of activity...experience the feeling of being both an *insider* and *outsider* simultaneously...engage in introspection to more fully understand experiences and finally...to *keep a record* of what you see and experience. (p. 58)

Online Surveys

An online survey was made available to students of both sections of this adult education course. A total of nine students responded; seven respondents were students

who experienced the course online, and the remaining two students were from the face-to-face section. All results were anonymous.

Analysis of online surveys revealed 62 cover terms with the following domains emerging presented in order of frequency as shown in Table 15:

Table 15. *Domain Frequencies Identified from Online Survey Results*

Domain	Frequency of Occurrence
Things that worked	27
Kinds of problems/challenges	20
Reasons for taking the course online	13
Reasons for taking the course face-to-face	2

THINGS THAT WORKED (27)

- Positive Learning experience
 - I learned lots and lots about adult learning theory.
 - I gained a lot of valuable information from online discussions that I can share in my approaches with working with adult students.
 - Once I realized that I was responsible for my own learning it became a challenge to see if self-directed learning really worked for me. I like the professors input which guided the posting and that he allow persons to take turn leading discussions.
 - *Leading the course discussion. I like to work in an interactive environment and leading the discussion kept me involved.
 - A totally new attitude toward learning and how to achieve a peace about it. I don't know how to explain it any other way but peaceful.
 - This class taught me that I had a learning style, whice is visual. Advance notice of the reading and subject matter gave me a chance to study-up on the upcoming topics before discussed in class

KINDS OF PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES (20)

- Public speaking
 - *Overcoming the fear of public speaking, adjusting to a entirely new learning style for me.
- Technology
 - Initially, simply figuring out how to use the technology was difficult and annoying.
- Course content
 - New to the subject matter.
- Finding the time
 - The number one challenge I faced was finding the time. I know I wanted an online course for more flexibility but by the end of a day I was exhausted and sometimes too tired to get online and critically think.
 - having the time to complete the reading and post.

REASONS FOR TAKING THE COURSE ONLINE (13)

- Necessity geographically
 - I chose to do this course online because there is no such course offered near my residence. As well as I like the online experience the flexibility to learn at my own convenience.
 - I live in Cincinnati Ohio so online was the only option.
- Time/flexibility
 - I really took the on-line course because it has more flexibility.
 - I chose online because I do not have time to travel on campus and enjoy the daily interaction at my own pace.
 - It was much easier for me not to have to come to class, but to participate when it was convenient for me.
 - I chose online because it gave the flexibility I needed in a class. Being a full time working mom with a husband and very active children in their schools and community I needed flexibility.

REASONS FOR TAKING THE COURSE FACE-TO-FACE (2)

- Familiar with learning format
 - *This is my first class as a grad student. It has been over ten years since I have taken a class for degree credit. I felt that I should first try a more traditional class.
 - *I chose face to face because this was my first graduate course and I think I needed the interaction with other students.

**Indicates comment is from student taking the class in the face-to-face section*

The section above contains data received from an online survey that was made available for students in both the online and face-to-face sections of this course. The online survey questions are shown in Appendix B and are the same questions used as a general interview guide during the face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four began with a list of all data sources that were collected and analyzed for this project: MyGateway (Blackboard), the online course site used at UMSL; online and face-to-face discussions; one-on-one student interviews; posts from an Online Environments forum; researcher field notes and a voluntary online survey. All data was prepared as text—audio tapes were transcribed as necessary—and placed in a 2-column

Microsoft Word document (see Figure 15). Text was entered in the right-hand column, and a domain analysis was performed (see Spradley, pg. 85-99) identifying cover terms and placing them to the immediate left of their associated text.

According to Spradley, culture, “refers to the *patterns* of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places and activities” (p. 86). Because all actions are meaningful to the participants who perform them, a list of cover terms based on motivation and intent is a way to discover patterns and meaningful activity on the part of the students involved in this study. Additionally, when coding data with their associated cover terms, no attempt was made to force data into any preexisting structure; cover terms were labeled according to the researcher’s best sense of what the speaker was trying to accomplish with words (and in some cases, deeds). According to Malinowski (1922) the goal of the researcher is to

grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world...People aspire after different aims, follow different impulses, yearn after a different form of happiness...To study the institutions, customs and codes or to study the behavior and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realizing the substance of their happiness—is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward we can hope to obtain from the study of man.

(Malinowski, 1922, p. 25)

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Summary

Chapter 4 provided a detailed review of data gathered from two graduate level Adult Education courses at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The ethnographic participant observer model espoused by Spradley (1980) was used for this research project because it is an attempt to document the perceptions of the students involved. That is, this work was an attempt to identify the *culture* in which these students operated. The works of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) suggest that the ethnographic model is the most appropriate model to use when attempting to describe any culture in detail. Spradley (1980) suggests, ethnography is not the process of studying people, but rather, it is the process of “learning from people” (p. 3). Further, data collected for this project was analyzed as emic: information that is relevant and meaningful to the participants themselves, and is in contrast to ‘etic’ data which is culturally neutral and not necessarily reflective of the attitudes and cultural mores of a group of individuals (Pike, 1967). Finally, Hammersley (1990) suggests that there are three primary ways to collect information about a culture: interviews, observations and documents. Ethnographic research, and by extension ‘virtual’ ethnographic research should be richly descriptive and interpretive (Geertz, 1973; Mason, 2001). Ethnography should ideally be a “thick description” of the culture and subsequent activities of a group of individuals (Geertz, 1973, p. 6).

For these reasons, this study gathered data from the following sources: emails, student interviews, transcripts of face-to-face classroom discussions, discussion board posts, online exposure to and interaction with MyGateway (UMSL’s course management

System), online environment discussion board forum; researcher field notes, and an online survey.

Research Question: Experiences of Online and Face-to-Face Students

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the following research question:

How, if at all, did the experiences of adult learners enrolled in an online graduate course on adult learning differ and contrast with the experiences of adult learners in the same course conducted in a face-to-face classroom situation?

Data results suggest that, while all students covered the same course content and had access to the same course instructor, the subjective experiences of online students were different from those of the face-to-face students.

The following section is divided into discussions of (a) use of the course management system, MyGateway, (b) communication trends for both online and face-to-face students, and (c) interaction environments as observed by the researcher and described by those students who were interviewed. The section concludes with answers to the question of learner autonomy.

MyGateway

MyGateway, the UMSL course management system, was available to all students in this study, regardless of whether they were taking the class face-to-face, or online. Face-to-face students, however, were able to interact with their instructor and access much of the information they needed during their weekly face-to-face classroom meetings. Therefore they interacted through MyGateway much less than their online counter-parts. While face-to-face students accessed course areas 1,853 times, online students accessed course areas 42,387 times: or 22.87 times more than students taking

this course face-to-face. This means that the MyGateway interface constituted a much larger part of the online students overall course experience. That is, MyGateway, for better or worse, had a fundamental impact on how online students perceived this course. Face-to-face students, on the other hand, used the MyGateway course site primarily as a supplement to their in-class experience. For example, face-to-face and online students are relatively close in their use of the MyGateway Content Areas, with Online students using these areas more than face-to-face students at a ratio of 1 to 1.6 (886/1446). These areas contained course readings and documents that both groups would need to complete their course assignments. While online students were more dependent than face-to-face students, both groups relied on MyGateway to access course materials.

In terms of overall hits to MyGateway, Content Areas and Announcements constituted 76.1% of total hits to the course site, while these same two areas constituted just 11.3% of total hits for online students. Content areas where students could access course materials, and announcements—where students could view communications about the course from the instructor—were the primary targets for face-to-face students. For online students the Discussion Board area was by far the most frequently accessed area and constituted 80.6% of all course site hits. It was anticipated that the Discussion Board area would be the most frequently accessed area for online students because this is where course topics were discussed and where students interacted with each other and the instructor. This discussion area was also the counter-part of the face-to-face classroom discussions.

MyGateway Access: Day of Week and Time of Day

An additional difference between online and face-to-face students was when they accessed their MyGateway course site. Table 2 (p. 84) illustrates there was a much greater variability among face-to-face students in terms of the day of the week they visited their course site as well as the time of day. The total variability for online students was 7.50 while for face-to-face students it was 17.96.

Online student access to MyGateway was fairly evenly distributed according to the day of the week; whereas face-to-face students accessed their course site much more frequently on Tuesdays than on any other day; a reason for this could be that the face-to-face class met on Tuesday afternoons and students were accessing course materials in preparation for their session later that day. The range was a low of 110 hits on Sundays to 690 hits on Tuesdays. For online students the range was a low on Thursdays of 5,100, and a high on Mondays of 7,900.

Face-to-face students also varied in their access to their MyGateway course site in terms of time of day. The bulk of their access was between the hours of 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM and falling to essentially zero between midnight and 7:00 AM. Online students, on the other hand showed significant activity between the hours of 9:00 AM until midnight, with access dropping significantly but never going to zero in the hours between midnight and 7:00 AM.

Online students were significantly more impacted by the MyGateway (Blackboard) interface than were face-to-face students. This was because while MyGateway functioned as supplemental for face-to-face students, that is, face-to-face students could have completed the course with very little or no access to MyGateway,

online students depended heavily on the MyGateway course site for access to the instructor, course documents and assignments, and access to the discussion board forums and student interaction. Face-to-face students accessed the course site as needed to check announcements and access course materials, but, overall, were much less dependent on it and relied on it much less because, presumably, they could access information directly from the instructor and/or peers before during and after class meetings.

Student Email or Communication

It was anticipated that, while both groups of students (online and face-to-face) would use email as a means of communicating to the instructor, online students would use it much more. The reason for this was that online students would depend on email for essentially all communication with the instructor, while face-to-face students would rely primarily on their exposure to the instructor before, during and after class meetings. Of the total 142 emails generated during this course by all students and the instructor, only six emails (4%) were sent to (from the instructor) or received by students taking the course face-to-face. Additionally, of the 142 total emails generated during both sections of this course, a total of 73 were sent to the instructor by students, while the instructor sent the remaining 69 emails to students. Finally, there were 17 online students which means that this group generated an average of four emails per student; Eleven face-to-face students generated a total of six emails during the course for an average of approximately one email for every two students.

It is evident that online students were very motivated to access information about course content and assignments through the medium of email because, in most cases and at most times, this was the only communication channel open to them. Face-to-face

students sought and received the same information directly when they met in the classroom with their instructor and peers.

A total of 184 domains were identified from the analysis of email content sent by students to their instructor. It is clear from this analysis that 80% of the content was generated for three primary purposes: completing assignments, turning them in or asking questions about them (36%); seeking information about a technical problem (not related to course content) (26%), or, efforts to be sociable, that is, to share personal information or interact with others about personal information (18%).

Typical of student comments in the ‘completing assignments’ domain is the following:

- Also, as far as the learning contract is concerned, I am confused. I will look at it again and see if I can find a more specific question. It seems as though we are learning from the articles and the book, so why the contract?

These kinds of questions were typically asked by the face-to-face students during class meetings.

Typical examples of a student email with a technical problem or question are as follows:

- My question.... I cannot find the Discussion Board thread re: what we learned about our classmates.
- I found the UM-St. Louis Adult Ed Program Knowledge Base Statement but did not find the Mission Statement. Can you tell me where I can find that?

These sorts of questions deal primarily with locating course content in the online MyGateway course site. Face-to-face students would have had some of these same questions, but, again, they would have been addressed during their face-to-face meetings.

Sociability was an important domain for online students because, to a large extent it was a necessary substitute what was a face-to-face experience for those students taking the class in the classroom. Typical remarks from students in this domain are as follows:

- Hello [Instructor], I hope you are home safe from your distant travels. I trust you had a marvelously fascinating adventure. I am writing to request an extension on the due date for the Adult Learner paper.

- It was nice to speak to you last week. Thank you for calling. I have attached a revised learning contract.

It is clear that these types of remarks are for purposes of creating a social context in which to relate to others on the course.

Instructor Email

A total of 141 domains were identified from the analysis of email content sent by instructor to online students. Analysis reveals that 79% of instructor-based content was dedicated to three domains: feedback on assignments (41%); personal communication (22%); and giving assignments (16%).

Typical of remarks from the instructor about an assignment was the following:

- On the other hand, as you said, you could develop your own and not use what is there. Those other documents are there only for suggestions if you want to use them. I hope this helps clarify and addresses your questions.

For face-to-face students these kinds of issues were discussed usually before or after an in-class session, or, during a break in the class.

Approximately 22% of instructor generated content was in the form of personal remarks or related to efforts to be sociable. These types of remarks usually do not address content issues, but rather, attempt to develop a more personal tone. Typical of these kinds of remarks are the following:

- I hope that you come through your struggles successfully and that your future will be much brighter. That will be fine as you are able to "catch up." I look forward to your postings when you are able to get to them.

A final domain of instructor-generated email was ensuring that students received their assignments. Again, student assignments such as identifying discussion leaders and ensuring that everyone understood written assignments would have occurred for face-to-face students when they met with the instructor each week. It was necessary for the

instructor to use email to ensure that online students understood and received their tasks.

Typical of instructor remarks about task assignments were as follows:

- Dear [Name]: We will begin Online. I will post the first items on Sunday, 1/9/05. This way we will be able to observe a weekly schedule that starts on Sunday, and ends on Saturday. I am in the process of finishing the course document, syllabus, and assignments and getting them in the MyGateway System. They will be on MyGateway by Sunday.

The use of email to convey information and/or interact among peers and instructor was almost exclusively used by students taking this course online. This means that, while it was a vital communication venue for this group, it was an insignificant one for face-to-face students, this suggests that the functions ordinarily performed in the classroom by students and instructor during face-to-face interaction, were, of necessity, carried out remotely and asynchronously via email exchanges. The necessity of email as a communication and interaction medium for online students highlights a significant difference in the experiences of students taking this course online and students taking the same course face-to-face. Email was essentially unnecessary for face-to-face students and instructor because of their regular weekly and direct interaction. Online students did not experience the same level of interaction with the instructor. Additional information about the online and face-to-face learning environments follows.

Students and Their Environments

Both online and face-to-face students were required to complete course assignments that did not require interaction with other course members and took place in addition to regular 'class' time (see Appendix D and E); completing these assignments would be primarily the same for both groups because they required that students do additional work outside of regular classroom interaction.

In terms of peer and instructor interaction, for students taking this course face-to-face, it was, essentially, a ritual that lasted 16 weeks and occurred every Tuesday evening from 5:30 PM to 8:10 PM, and it was primarily a synchronous and social experience. For online students interaction and discussion with peers and instructor was a solitary and asynchronous experience. Further, online students reported that they would usually post their comments to the discussion board whenever they could find the time; that is, routine and ritual was not evident or was not part of their online experiences.

The Online Interaction Environment

The researcher added a discussion board forum to the online section of this course and solicited voluntary posts by students and asked them to describe their online environments, that is, the environments they usually inhabit when they post to the discussion board and interact with peers and instructor (see figure 23). Physical sensations were most frequently noted; typical examples are as follows:

- I currently have a blanket in my office at work and will often drape it around me while I work.
- I have soft classical music playing, fresh scents in the atmosphere.
- Usually I have something warm to drink such as coffee, tea, or cocoa.

Some students stated that they had more than one environment for online interaction—usually one at home and one at work. A response typical of this arrangement is the following:

- I have 2 environments; home and work. Both of my environments are quiet.

One overriding feature of these environments (whether explicit or implicit) was that they were solitary. Quiet was an essential and sought-after component and noise was avoided:

- My environment is as quiet as I want it to be.
- My online environment from home is quiet.
- My online environment from my office is often noisy and distracting.

For online students, all activities required to complete this course were, primarily solitary pursuits. Course projects were completed individually by all students (face-to-face and online) but online students were additionally required to interact with their peers and instructor asynchronously and individually. For face-to-face students, these interactions were richly social.

Online student environments for interacting with peers and instructor have been described and it is interesting to note the frequent references to ‘comfort’ levels, and the attempts to create and maintain this comfort. Students meeting face-to-face appeared to take their environment for granted, accepting the physical circumstances (noise, cramping and small desks, or warm room temperatures) as given. Perhaps this environmental flexibility for online students was perceived as an advantage not possessed by their face-to-face counterparts.

Face-to-Face Interaction Environment

Researcher field notes document that face-to-face students appeared to enjoy their in-class meeting time. Domain analysis indicates a wide range and depth of social interaction. Laughter occurs often as the face-to-face group interacts:

- Laughter is very prominent in this course
- “Who’s going to start off” meets with laugh—seems to ease tension
- Laughs punctuate the quiet—students need to laugh in order to release pressure from being still and quiet for so long
- Laughing and spontaneous volunteers—so much easier face-to-face

Laughter was a common occurrence in all class meetings. And, while obvious, it should be noted as significant that laughter is absent from the online student experience.

Attempts at humor are attempted in online posts, often with text as a sign for laughter:

- I’m laughing--that is a great line--too soon old, too late smart.

But the physical effects of a good belly laugh often experienced in the face-to-face section are completely absent with the online group.

Face-to-face students experienced course discussions as social events, and, as such, experienced the full range of interactions that normally occur when small groups of individuals get together to talk. Participant's physical qualities—size, clothing, smell, as well as vocal qualities and inflections, eye contact and physical gestures that accompany words, all add depth and meaning to a speaker's words. A shared physical environment, whether hot, cold, bright dim, etc, creates a common environment. The physical space creates a shared context which does not exist for the online student group.

Student Perceptions of Sociability

Eight student interviews were conducted during the semester; five of the interviews were with online students and the remaining three were conducted with students who took the course face-to-face. Zemke and Zemke (1984) suggest that most adults do not like to learn in isolation, and that even though adults tend to be autonomous and self-directed, they still usually enjoy face-to-face collaboration and learning activities. A common theme that emerges from an analysis of content from students taking the online section is that, while the online venue allowed them to accomplish their goal of taking this course and receiving academic credit for it, the face-to-face would have been preferable and the missing component for online students appears to be the social element:

- I think the online classes are a little more generic for some reason.....yeah, you have more fun face-to-face.
- The online course was very challenging—it is challenging—I would probably have preferred to have done face-to-face.

- ...but, I would miss working with the people face to face---I would miss that, but, just for the convenience if I had the option of taking this whole program I'm taking on line, I would do it.

Comments from students in the face-to-face section also confirm that the social element of the course was what made it more enjoyable:

- I can't imagine how online class would be as beneficial as f2f would be, in terms of the interaction provide.
- I'm just not so sure that [the online class] would have been as beneficial to me as the f2f class has been.
- I know that the possibilities to get the information that I have gotten from being face-to-face just wouldn't be there online; it just doesn't happen that way and I think that's the difference between technology and human contact.

An additional difference for face-to-face and online students was that most online students were in the online section because they required the flexibility that accompanied that venue—not because they preferred the online experience per-se. That is, while all three face-to-face students mentioned that they found the social component of the course the most enjoyable, online students mentioned repeatedly that while they appreciated the opportunity that the online venue gave them to complete the course, they perceived online interaction as a challenge to overcome:

- I'm isolated geographically from the rest of my students [*student was living in Greece for most of the semester*].
- One of the reasons I took it online is because it was a conflict in schedules for me.
- so I wouldn't have to be away from my job, away from home—other things—more a matter of convenience.
- One challenge was having to insert my school work with my 'work' work.
- I have a laptop at home, but I have a strange schedule.
- but it was hard to fit in the time to concentrate, to focus on online courses while I had so many other things.
- One of the challenges was, um, trying to fit in time.

Students in both the online section and the face-to-face section of this course generally found the actual course content interesting and rewarding. The same set of individual assignments was completed by both groups, with the online students requiring communication via email, whereas the face-to-face students talked to the instructor directly in the classroom. Interaction and discussion with peers and instructor about course topics (women's learning, feelings and adult education and critical and post-modern theory) was experienced very differently by the two groups of students: face-to-face students appeared to enjoy the social interaction that accompanied these group meetings and saw it as a real value; online students perceived the online venue as a means to an end—that of completing course requirements.

Research Question: Student Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

An additional question that this research project attempted to answer concerned student perceptions of learner autonomy, if these perceptions differed between students taking this course online and those taking the same course face-to-face; and, if there were differences, what were they?

Autonomous learners are capable of planning and organizing their time and resources in an effort to succeed at their learning endeavors. Autonomous learners also enjoy the process of learning new things and the associated questioning, analyzing and testing. Autonomous learners have developed the personal and social skills necessary to interact successfully with teachers and peers, and, they enjoy learning independently (Wedemeyer, 1969). Moore (1973) describes autonomous learners as those who, essentially, have learned how to learn. Further, adult learners tend to be autonomous learners who are internally motivated to learn, take full responsibility for their own

learning, and tend to view others in the learning process (teachers and other students) as peers and resources in the learning process (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam, 2001; Mezirow, 1997, 1998; Suanmali, 1981). Adult learners, then, put their own skills and experience to work for themselves their own learning situations. They have learned how to use their own resources to overcome obstacles in that process and are focused on the task of learning and the learning goals to be achieved.

Email

Online students generated 69 out of 74 (93%) of the emails to the instructor; face-to-face students generated the remainder. Analysis reveals that most of the content of these emails was for purposes of clarifying assignments and overcoming obstacles to learning. domain analysis of these emails suggested that most of the content was dedicated to completing assignments, solving technical problems and being sociable. This content portrayed these learners as dedicated to their own learning, and as students who were asking the right questions so that they could complete course requirements. Further, this content showed evidence of mature adult learners who perceived that they had control over their own learning outcomes and enjoyed the learning process:

- Where would you like me to post my Adult Paper? I'd like to go ahead and submit it since I'm going to be out of town part of this week and over the weekend and may not have access to a computer.
- Even with the confusion I am looking forward to lead a discussion. I would like to lead, *Off the Beaten Path: Creative Approaches*, Chapter 9.
- I think I included everything you want, but I'm just not sure. I'm also not sure my evaluation component is what you have in mind. We can talk about this on Tuesday if you have time.

Student Interviews

An additional data source for evaluating student perceptions of learner autonomy was the interviews conducted with eight students: three interviews were conducted with

students taking the course face-to-face, and five students taking the online section of the course. Again, there were many student comments that suggest students were very much autonomous learners and felt in charge of their own learning processes.

Researchers involved in the study of adult learning have postulated that adult students tend to be goal-oriented in their learning objectives, self-directed and internally motivated to succeed. They take full responsibility for their learning, incorporate past experiences to help in their learning process, and tend to view teachers, as well as fellow students, as peers in the learning process (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam, 2001; Mezirow, 1991, 1997, 1998; Suanmali, 1981).

The adult students involved in this study, both in the online and face-to-face sections were goal-oriented and self-directed. They also displayed examples of critical thinking as they became aware of their own reflective processes (Mezirow, 1997). Learner autonomy for online students was suggested in the following remarks:

- That's what I like about these online courses is that most of it's on me and I just work better that way....so I enjoy that part of the online courses.
- That's not how I learn [using a learning contract] I don't have to break it out and put it on paper so it was a little different kind of experience to force myself to really think about it and do it.
- I like to work alone and in group projects, I'm usually the one who takes over so that I get it done quickly—so that really works for me.

Remarks from students taking this course face-to-face also suggest that they approached their learning experience with autonomy, but with a slightly different tone.

- ...so I'm pretty comfortable getting out there and digging up information.
- I don't need a lot of motivation—if I have a passion about something and I really want to do it I don't need other people to [direct me].
- I have to make the conscience decision to control my learning, to discipline myself to actually do the learning and be the learner—nobody is going to open my brain and pour it in—I have to do the work.

It is clear that both groups of students, those taking the course face-to-face and those taking it online, were very aware that the task of learning and succeeding in the course was their own responsibility. Face-to-face students took advantage of their direct exposure to instructor and peers, but still were internally motivated to succeed as they assumed responsibility for their own learning outcomes. Online students were very similar to face-to-face students in this respect, however, they had the additional issue of completing most of their work online—this was an advantage to them in terms of flexibility, but did occasionally present challenges that their face-to-face counterparts did not have.

Online Survey

Students from both sections of the course were given the opportunity to voluntarily respond to an online survey about their experience in the course. Most respondents indicated they were enrolled in the online section. An analysis of this content reveals a high amount of perceived learner autonomy:

- Once I realized that I was responsible for my own learning it became a challenge to see if self-directed learning really worked for me. I like the professors input which guided the posting and that he allow persons to take turn leading discussions.
- It was much easier for me not to have to come to class, but to participate when it was convenient for me.

Comments from face-to-face students who responded, although fewer in number, indicate an assumed personal responsibility for learning and completing the learning process. The following comments also show that face-to-face students were able to assess their own learning needs:

- This is my first class as a grad student. It has been over ten years since I have taking a class for degree credit. I felt that I should first try a more traditional class.

- I choose face to face because this was my first graduate course and I think I needed the interaction with other students.

Both groups of students—those taking this course online and those taking this course face-to-face—perceived that they were responsible for their own learning outcomes, displayed resourceful ways of overcoming obstacles to learning, showed evidence of internal motivation towards achieving learning goals and appeared to enjoy the process and challenges of the course. Online students enjoyed the flexibility of not having a set schedule for meetings or having to physically be in the classroom at specified times every week, but they also experienced more learning challenges because of their lack of direct weekly exposure to their instructor and peers.

Research Question: Student Perceptions of Transactional Distance

A second area of questioning in this research study was how students in both sections perceived *transactional distance*. Moore (1973; 1980) was first to develop a hypothetical framework for evaluating the transactional distance (although Moore did not call this concept ‘transactional distance’ until 1980) learners experienced in a distance learning environment. Moore maintained that transactional distance essentially was a psychological ‘distance’, regardless of physical separation from teacher and student. This perceived distance was a combination of three basic factors: interaction (or dialogue), individualization and learner autonomy. Figure 2 (see page 38) is a sketch of Moore’s hypothesis. Note that in this figure *distance* is a function of interaction, or *dialogue* as Moore calls it, and individualization. Individualization is the amount to which students have control or input regarding course content and learning processes and course objectives. A third factor, Learner autonomy has already been discussed and is a basic component of Moore’s transactional distance theory as well as a basic assumption

concerning adult learners (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970, 1980; Lindeman, 1926; Merriam, 2001; Mezirow, 1991, 1997, 1998; Suanmali, 1981)

Similarities and Differences between Online and Face-to-Face Students' Learning Experiences

One of the objectives of this research project was to identify student perceptions of transactional distance as defined by Moore (1973; 1980) and to see if there were differences in these perceptions according to whether students were taking an adult education course online without ever meeting with their instructor or peers, or face-to-face and meeting weekly in a classroom with their instructor and peers.

In terms of individualization, both sections of this course contained a balance of structure and freedom. That is, while course assignments were uniform, students had wide latitude in the focus and scope within them. Dialogue, however, a second component in Moore's model that affects student perceptions of transactional distance, was experienced by both groups qualitatively and quantitatively: online students were primarily limited to text-based communications and interactions with peers and instructor. Face-to-face students had the option of text-based communication with peers and instructor (although few chose to communicate this way), and, face-to-face students had all of the additional communication channels open to them that meeting socially with a group afforded.

Additionally, each student developed and completed an individual learning contract which allowed them to individually pursue learning objectives of particular personal or professional interest. Group activity consisted primarily of topic discussion: for online students this meant interaction in the online discussion board forums; for face-

to-face students this meant coming to class each week and participating in face-to-face discussions.

Because course assignments were identical, the primary experiential difference between online and face-to-face students was access to the instructor and peers, and their participation in class discussions. In terms of Moore's model, the essential difference in the way these students will experience transactional difference will be in terms of dialogue and interaction; that is, high levels of dialogue and interaction will allow students to perceive low levels of transactional distance and vice-versa.

Student Email

As previously noted, most of the email in both sections of this course was generated by students taking the course online. While students taking the course face-to-face could interact with the instructor directly about any questions they had about assignments or other concerns, online students were required in most cases to use email as their communication medium. It is assumed that interaction and dialogue between and among face-to-face students, peers and instructor was fairly high; analysis of email content to and from the instructor confirms instances of transactional distance created due to the primarily asynchronous nature of email communication. The following student comments were sent to the instructor by students and suggest that lack of synchronous face-to-face interaction created some perceived transactional distance among students:

- Okay, let's try this again [attaching a document to an email]. I realized I sent you one of my first drafts, rather than the final paper. Here's the paper I meant to send. Please excuse my operator error!
- I think I included everything you want, but I'm just not sure. I'm also not sure my evaluation component is what you have in mind. We can talk about this on Tuesday if you have time.

- My question.... I cannot find the Discussion Board thread re: what we learned about our classmates.
- I found the UM-St. Louis Adult Ed Program Knowledge Base Statement but did not find the Mission Statement. Can you tell me where I can find that?

In each case these online students were unsure how to proceed until they received confirmation from their instructor. The instructor responded to these emails, but without the immediacy of a face-to-face interaction. The following represent typical instructor responses to questions or problems posed by online students:

- Just received this e-mail with the attachment. A few minutes ago I sent a response to your 4/30/05 e-mail indicating that the paper was not attached. Looks like all is well now.
- There was a mix up. However, this is not a problem and I think each of you have approached the article in a different way. I will make a clarifying announcement about this to the [online]class.
- Sorry I am slow in getting this back to you. I have included your original contract, and the second one has some comments by me. I hope this is helpful.
- If you have further questions, let me know. Or, if I missed your question entirely with my answer, let me know this also, and I will try it again if your will give me a bit clearer direction in your question.

There were no emails of this sort sent to face-to-face students because these kinds of problems were primarily handled during their weekly meetings with the instructor. And although it is clear that email interactions were handled expeditiously, the level of dialogue and interaction for the online students does not compare to that of the face-to-face group.

Student Interviews

Student interviews were conducted individually with eight students: five students from the online section and three students from the face-to-face section. Analysis of this information reveals that transactional distance, as described by Moore (1973; 1980) was essentially minimal or nonexistent for the face-to-face group. Domain analysis of this

group (see Table 10) shows clearly that even *Kinds of Challenges* and *Things that didn't Work* had more to do with the immediacy of the social the social situation than any perceived distance:

- You're constantly editing your own thoughts as you're listening [to others speak]—a lot of times somebody will say something and I'll think Oh, I saw something in the book or in the chapter that really answered that question or that was really to that point and try to find it real quick.
- And it's hard, because if you don't jump in [to F2F conversation] somebody else will.....I think it's fascinating—I think each person is absolutely different and unique and how they handle the discourse.
- I think, the discussions have just gone on too long.
- The discussion sort of wanders at times.
- Online, you can kind of ignore somebody like that –by not reading their posts, but you can't ignore somebody that's in your face.

These kinds of remarks by students experiencing the course face-to-face about challenges and things that didn't work are in sharp contrast to remarks made by online students in the same identified domains (*Things that didn't Work* and *Kinds of Challenges*)

- I do better in face-to-face real-time discussions than I do in the asynchronous environment.....yeah, well I think that you lose spontaneity—this is what happened to me over and over again.
- It's just hard to coordinate with people when you're online.
- I was more disappointed when it was time to post.
- [when] I want to come back and respond to [a post] but where was it? And which thread was it and how do I get back there?
- I actually feel kind of guilty that I have not caught up with those postings; I feel like, how am I going to ever do this.
- People who respond at the end of the week—there's no interacting with them—and it's hard to go back—we're done—we've talked that topic to death—we're ready to go on to something else—and they're just getting in and responding—and so, I don't even read their responses.
- It is difficult to maneuver through all of those [posts in the discussion board].

Students experiencing this course online clearly faced different challenges than their face-to-face counterparts. Lack of spontaneity and the inability to respond

immediately to others in the group was the main challenge. Because of the asynchronous nature of these interactions, students often felt overwhelmed by the accumulated responses and comments made by others on the discussion board and unable to process and/or respond to them in any depth. At the same time, online students were often unsure of responses to their own posts by others in the course. Finally, for face-to-face students, just being physically present was often a sign of involvement and words (participation and interaction) were to some extent optional. If a face-to-face student just wanted to listen and absorb the ideas and thoughts being discussed, they could simply listen, letting their physical presence speak for them. For online students, on the other hand, silence was synonymous with absence:

- A lot of people I can't relate to so I have a lot of problems responding to a lot of the responses that are out there that you're supposed to interact, and you want to interact but I can't relate to a lot of it so I just don't respond.

The problem, of course, is that for online students, the only verification the instructor had concerning their 'presence' in the class was their posted comments.

Moore's model of transactional distance (1973; 1980) provides a useful framework in which to evaluate student perceptions of distance between themselves and others involved in their course (instructor and peers). Moore suggests that high levels of dialogue coupled with high levels of course work individualized for the needs of each student would produce low levels of perceived transactional distance, and low levels of dialogue with low individualization would produce high levels of transactional distance.

While Moore's theory has been criticized by several authors (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005; Chen & Willits, 1998; and Chen 2001) for its lack of testability and over reliance on subjective observation, it is, nevertheless, a valid model in which to evaluate and organize students' self-reported perceptions of how closely connected they felt to the rest

of the individuals in their course. According to Gorsky and Caspi (2005) transactional distance is useful “as a historical milestone, it pointed out that the essential distance in distance education is transactional, not spatial or temporal. In practical terms, as a measurable dependent variable in a theory or model, the concept has little usefulness” (p. 10).

Research Question: Identified Cultural Domains

This research project attempted to answer the following question: what cultural domains would emerge for students in the online section and face-to-face section of this adult education course? An additional question was: what cultural domains will be common to both sections of students and what domains will be exclusive to one section or the other?

Culture, according to Spradley (1980), “refers to patterns of behavior, artifacts, and knowledge that people have learned or created. Culture is an organization of things, the meaning given by people to objects, places and activities” (p. 86). Spradley also suggests that “every human society is culturally constituted” (p. 86). An assumption of this study is that the ethnographic model was the correct method to use to study the perceptions of adult education students in two sections of a graduate level course: one section of students took the course completely online, and another group of students took the course as a traditional face-to-face course. Further, it is assumed that adult learners, whether learning in a traditional face-to-face classroom or learning online, experience their learning within a culture that is distinct and identifiable. A final assumption is that virtual communities are constructed by people sharing a common language of

communication and common rules for the conduct of such communication; this makes the ethnography of communication an ideal tool for their study (Mason, 2001).

Data analysis for this study uses Spradley's model of domain analysis. The primary element used in this analysis is the *cultural domain*. A *cultural domain* is identifiable as a "category of cultural meaning" (p. 88) and it includes other smaller categories. Spradley defines *cultural domains* as having three basic elements: each domain can be given a *cover term*, which describes the smaller sub-set of categories within the general domain. Names for these smaller categories (included in the larger domain) are called *included terms*. Finally, between the *cover term* and its *included terms* there exists an explicit *semantic relationship* that describes how each of the *included terms* are related to the *cover term*. Chapter four presented a complete list of all identified cultural domains along with their associated taxonomies; according to Spradley, the purpose of taxonomies is to show "the relationship among things inside the cultural domain" (p. 112).

Cultural categories and the meaning implicit in them are not imposed externally by the researcher. Rather, the researcher attempts to understand a culture from the point of view of those involved in it, or, as Malinowski so elegantly put it: to "grasp the native's point of view" (p. 25). Therefore, cultural domains identified in this study are not categorical and discrete, but rather, they suggest themes of meaning by those students who participated in the online and face-to-face sections of this adult education course.

Cultural Domains Identified Within the Discussion Interaction

Three discussion topics covered during this adult education course were selected for domain analysis—selection of these particular topics was based on the amount of

online posts they received. The course learning objectives were identical, but the process for the online group of students required that they post their comments to an online discussion board; the face-to-face students met once a week and discussed the same topics as a group. These discussions constituted the majority of the face-to-face meeting time. Analysis reveals that, while the topics to be discussed and the preparatory assigned readings were identical, the subjective experiences for both groups of individuals were different. It should also be noted, that for the online group, the text data was the complete context of the exchanges—that is, for this group, there was nothing more than the text. For the face-to-face group, however, the recorded and transcribed words spoken by the group contains only a small fragment of the actual information that was exchanged; physical gestures, vocal inflection and a common environment all operated to create a rich and multidimensional context in which to interact.

Discussion: Women's Learning in Adult Education (Online)

As shown in Table 16, for online students participating in the Women's learning in adult education discussion board forum, *kinds of questions, kinds of stories* and *ways to address someone* were the most commonly identified domains.

Table 16. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domain: Online Students; Women's Learning in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Kinds of questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So, do you feel that basically that women are being pushed in modern day society to 'do everything'... ○ I have a question: regardless of how you may feel about the man, your political feelings, sexual orientation, religious persuasion, etc. Why do you think... ○ But I still have to ask, why are woman still behind in the business and political arena? ○ What you answered reminded me of what is called, "the tacit dimension of practical knowledge." It is like learning to ride a bicycle...
Kinds of stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is best demonstrated by watching a girl play with her baby doll. If she sees her mother or someone close nursing their baby on a frequent basis, the girl will watch then repeat that nursing action with her doll.
Ways to address someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most student posts began by naming the individual the response was addressed to.

Online students tended to clearly indicate their questions, often making them explicit with question marks. Stories were a very common way to share experiences and make points probably because they tended to be self contained and did not require immediate feedback. Direct address was necessary for online communication as a mechanism for directing remarks to a specific individual or that individual's remarks.

Discussion: Women's Learning in Adult Education (Face-to-Face)

As shown in Table 17, for face-to-face students participating in the Women's learning in adult education in-class discussion, *kinds of questions*, *kinds of humor* and *ways to agree* were the most commonly identified domains.

Table 17. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Women's Learning in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Kinds of questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Men give advice, would you agree with that? ○ Student: then [she] had two male children—and she tried to introduce them to dolls—and all this kind of stuff.--- Instructor: to dolls?---student: to dolls! ○ What were you all discussing? ○ We've got a week where we're not gonna be here, right? March something?
Kinds of humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student 1: if the world was run by women we'd never have war---Student 2: (LOL) I don't know about that! We'd have cat fights!---Lots of laughing and general talking. ○ Laughing out loud (LOL) and joking was identified 61 times during the course of this discussion.
Ways to agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student 1: You know, and there are some girls who are going to want to play with trucks---Student 2: Right ○ Student: I mean its all theory (group: umhm, yeah) you know, we believe this based on...I mean it... ○ Student: I had to go back and read it over and over again to make sure I was reading it correctly...that, you know, somebody would say that (group: uhmhmm (agreement))

Questions for the face-to-face students tended to be more fluid than those asked by online students and depended more on the immediate feedback of other students. Humor was a common theme in the face-to-face meetings; laughter, jokes and humorous anecdotes occurred regularly. Agreement in explicit form such as 'I agree with you' occurred regularly, but also there was group agreement expressed in the more subtle forms of head nods, smiles and a great variety of vocal 'um-hms' all indicating some level of solidarity, agreement and/or commiseration with the speaker.

*Discussion: Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education**(Online)*

As shown in table 18, for online students participating in the Critical and post-modern discussion board forum, the most frequently identified cultural domains were *ways to express an opinion, ways to affirm and ways to add information.*

Table 18. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Online Students; Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Ways to express an opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>I do agree</i> with the critical theorists that people tend to know about what they are interested in being able to do. ○ We can attempt to "deconstruct" but does that address the multiple needs of learning in multiple learning environments. The example of the demand for a flexible workforce with diverse skills, knowledge, and understandings is a perfect example.
Ways to affirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your opening of of this discussion is excellent !!! ○ Such fruitful study and interchange this is turning out to be !!! ○ I hope you're successful in your goal of creating a more open learning experience for your students.
Ways to add information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author also discusses the shift in some critical theorists' viewpoint that individual learning reinforces the status quo ○ found this link for a paper submitted by Edwards and Usher--different reference but I think it's essentially the same article.

Student posts commonly expressed personal opinions about the discussion topic. Opinions tended to be explicitly stated as complete thoughts. Explicit affirmations were common as well. This is because the only way to communicate that students agreed with something someone had said, or that they were in solidarity with them was to explicitly state that agreement in words.

*Discussion: Critical and Post-modern Learning Theory in Adult Education**(Face-to-Face)*

As shown in Table 19, for face-to-face students participating in the Critical and post-modern in-class discussion, the most frequently identified cultural domains were *kinds of questions, ways to add information, and kinds of humor.*

Table 19. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Critical and Post-modern Education in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Kinds of questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: that's what you mean, basically, it's a certain amount of rules?---Instructor: I think so---Student: that's universal?---Instructor: yeah, that's why I added that uh, absolute power corrupts absolutely. ○ Is there a place for deconstruction, though, in Critical theory? ○ Let me ask a question: how many of you had heard of the critical theory? Before this chapter? ○ Instructor: Do you want to begin? Who's presenting?
Ways to add information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So you're saying basically that it's basically a standard in which everything is going to be measured by... ○ Well, today's chapter is critical and post-modern perspectives on adult learning...and...what this chapter's looking at is...it's looking at two theories—the theories—world views I guess is what you would call—you know, different world views—
Kinds of humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student 1: I mean you look at magazines people are just (naked) I wish Gilligan was—that was the good old days LOLSLOLS---Student 1: Let's all go home and watch Gilligan's Island..... ○ Well, I think you articulated just exactly what I said—in an awful lot of words—you said in a few words (LOLs)

Face-to-face students were able to pose questions and add information as the discussion went on in a much more informal way than their online counterparts. The immediacy of group interaction allowed process questions (Do you want to begin? Who's

presenting?) to mix easily with content questions. Adding information often occurred just by immediately adding on to another's point: (So you're saying.....). And, again, humor, in the form of anecdotes, side remarks and jokes, was the rule.

Discussion: Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Online)

As shown in Table 20, for the online group of students participating in the Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education discussion board forum, the three most frequently occurring domain categories were *ways to acknowledge another*, *ways to self disclose* and *ways to ask questions*.

Table 20. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domains and Examples: Online Students; Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Ways to acknowledge another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Researcher's note: This discussion was carried out completely online and asynchronously. Almost all posts to this forum followed the traditional 'letter' format of directly addressing group or individual members of the group. Signing name at end of post occurred regularly but less frequently.
Ways to self disclose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: For me, this investigation into feelings has been [and probably will be] the most productive in my educational experience as a learner and as a facilitator. ○ Student: I had an instructor whose voice and aura reminded me of an overbearing individual. Therefore, I had ill feelings toward him, especially if I felt the topic was not related, I did not get the grade on papers I thought I was going to get.
Ways to ask questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: Have you ever experienced use of the imaginal technique for learning? What was that like? ○ Instructor: But what about it if we just stood back and let all of if just 'kick in' and see where it would naturally come together?

For online students in this discussion about feelings and emotions in adult education, acknowledging to whom remarks were addressed to, and who they were from

was a necessary element in their communication. Face-to-face students would not require this elemental and explicit information because of all the contextual cues and paralinguistic present in the face-to-face social situation. Self disclosure, too, is presented by online students in more explicit form and in self-contained and complete thoughts—again, this is because all context for these remarks were, of necessity, text based and could not rely on a preexisting social context as their face-to-face counterparts could.

Discussion: Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education (Face-to-Face)

As shown in Table 21, for the face-to-face group of students participating in the Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education in-class discussion, the three most commonly identified domains were *kinds of humor*, *ways to add information* and *kinds of stories*.

Table 21. *Frequently Identified Cultural Domains: Face-to-Face Students; Feelings and Emotions in Adult Education*

Domain	Examples
Kinds of humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: ...here in American culture, men generally, black and white, are taught to be tough, you know, we got all these tough boy images, or movies like Rambo, shot four times in the leg (LOLS) ○ Student: And yet, I used to work for a supervisor and she would do it so good, she'd make you think. Oh, thank you for firing me, I mean she (LOLS) I mean, you'd think, Oh, Man! Thank you for firing me because she was so good at being able to (LOLS) interact with people and their emotions and learning, and teaching them the right way of how to interact, um...
Ways to add information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: y'all remember that movie on HBO? Emma Thompson? She was a professor, and uh, she got some form of cancer, and one of her former students was a doctor? (um-hm,...yes FB) and, uh, he had no bed-side manner, no ethics, but... ○ Student 1: because it hardly talks about culture as basically the nutrient or the ### which motivates our emotions...--- Pause.....silence---student 2: I think, as I was reading, uh this chapter, um I think that learning is a compilation of all #####psycho-motor and also the affective—I think that what he is saying in the chapter is that...
Kinds of stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student: I thought about my experience that I shared with the group—when I took a political science class here at UMSL, and, taking that one class from that instructor I got emotionally involved and excited and the reason I got excited was that I saw the excitement and the enthusiasm that he showed ##### and in turn I got excited and I wanted to know more about political science ○ Student: I'm going to give you a really good example, this was probably back about last year, I went to ----- Hospitalnow, this was a crisis situation, this was stuff that I've never experienced before and I'm sitting there, and the doctor came in and, he came in, and a nurse, and started talking to me, and all of a sudden I just felt at ease (LOLs) – you know, all it took was just somebody just to smile and say, oh, you know, this is common, you know...

For students engaged in this face-to-face discussion about feelings and emotions in adult education humor was a common way for them to express deep feelings. An additional point is that immediate feedback in the form of body language, ‘um-hms’ and head-nods, were often interspersed between the main speaker’s comments or occurred simultaneously with them. This created a deeper and richer communication experience because of the multiple levels of interaction that were continually occurring.

Additional Comparisons of Online Student and Face-to-Face Student Experiences

Table 22 lists the three most identified domains for each of the three Discussion area topics presented in this adult education course; additionally, the table shows the different domains for the online and face-to-face course sections. The ethnographic model in general (Blumer, 1969; Geertz, 1973 & Malinowski, 1922), and Spradley’s model of ethnographic research and participant observation in particular (Spradley, 1980) stress the point that predetermined/pre-existing (by the researcher) categorical domains of cultural meaning should not be used because they tend to overlay and impose meaning onto a culture that may not exist—that is, cultural meanings gathered using pre-established categories tends to be ‘etic’ in nature; this kind of information is culturally neutral and not necessarily reflective of the attitudes and cultural mores of a group of individuals (Pike, 1967). ‘Emic’ data, on the other hand, is information that has subjective meaning to the participants themselves. For this reason, Table 22 is not an attempt to compare domains, but rather an attempt to indicate the dominance and frequency of their occurrence within the online and/or face-to-face student groups. The frequency of these domains suggests that they are significant and formative in the experiences and perceptions of the students involved.

Table 22. *Compilation of Most Frequently Identified Cultural Domains for Online and Face-to-Face Discussions*

Discussion Topic	Online Domains	Face-to-Face Domains
Women's Learning	Kinds of questions	Kinds of questions
	Kinds of stories	Ways to add information
	Ways to address someone	Kinds of humor
Critical and Post-modern	Ways to express an opinion	Kinds of questions
	Ways to affirm	Ways to add information
	Ways to add information	Kinds of humor
Feelings and Emotions	Ways to acknowledge another	Kinds of humor
	Ways to self-disclose	Ways to add information
	Ways to ask questions	Kinds of stories

Kinds of Questions

It is not surprising that questions, asking them and responding to them, was an important component of participation for both groups of students. Two critical differences for students, however, between those experiencing this course online and those experiencing it face-to-face were that the face-to-face students experienced questions and answers synchronously: everyone involved in the discussion heard the question(s) at the same time and was able to respond immediately, building on the question if necessary, asking associated questions, modifying the nature and/or focus of the question and etc. Face-to-face students also experienced all of the contextual cues that accompany any face-to-face social interaction: non-verbal cues, auditory and visual information about the speaker and the rest of the group, vocal cues and inflection. Online students, lacking the presence and immediacy of others in their discussion group, were forced to rely in text-based cues in both asking and responding to questions. This limitation required that questions posed by online students be presented clearly and

succinctly and incorporating the accepted standards of syntax and grammar—traits commonly absent from questions asked by face-to-face students:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Online question | ○ Does anyone else have any ideas on this question that has just been raised?" |
| Face-to face question | ○ You talked about connected learning...what was it?
Connected knowing and separate knowing?
○ You know what? I'm thinking about that because you know... |

Humor

As has already been shown, humor, joking, and laughter were a common occurrence for students taking the course in the face-to-face section. Humor and laughter operated as a social bonding experience, and also provided entertainment and enjoyment to what could have otherwise been a dull or tedious learning experience. The way that humor functioned in these face-to-face discussion, however was very much dependent on timing, vocal inflection, verbal and non-verbal cues, immediacy of student interactions and responses. For students taking this course online and lacking this rich veneer of social context, attempts at humor were much less frequent, more modest and toned down, probably because of the fear of being misunderstood:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Online humor | ○ Call me crazy, but the bottom line seems to be the same to me: Question what you think you know because those in power often write the story... |
| Face-to-face humor | ○ Student: but that may be another whole area of discussion (LOLS)---you do not want to open that can of worms –it's too late I may # out ---too late in the broad spectrum, or, too late for tonight? LOLS---too late for tonight—my allergies... |

Acknowledge of Others

A frequent domain identified in the written content of the online group of students was that of acknowledgement: that is, an explicit reference to another, another's state of being, or another's comment or remark. Because posts and responses for students experiencing this class completely online were posted asynchronously and contained only text-based social and conventional context, explicit reference to others (in effect, an explanation or reason for posting) was necessary so that those reading and subsequently responding a post would understand it's context. In the face-to-face section of the course, acknowledgment of others, and reasons for what would usually be obvious because of the existing social context and explicit reference to another was used only occasionally:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Online acknowledgement of others | ○ [Name], thanks for your response. I wonder how you think deconstruction can fit into adult learning as you described it. |
| Face-to face acknowledgement of others | ○ Well, I, I yeah, I agree with you (cough) one thing I think it was helpful for me was to feel maybe the uh maybe the repression's not the right word |

Stories and Self-disclosure

Students in both the online and face-to-face sections of this course participated, to varying degrees, in disclosing information about themselves. The telling of stories, whether deeply personal, or about their public or professional experience, or about others, served a range of purposes from cautionary tales, to illustrations of a point, or, occasionally in the face-to-face section, purely for purposes of entertainment and embellishment:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Online stories and self-disclosure | ○ [Student]: When I feel emotions, they are very much experienced by me in two places: one is in my heart -- I have sadness, or gladness, or excitement, etc.; the other |
|------------------------------------|---|

is in my "solar plexus" my gut.

Face-to face stories and self-disclosure

- [Student]: when I went to college, taking acting, in our theatre department and one of our professors was what you call the technical director would, he believed that we didn't need to do anything more than technique, you just did you lines, you did everything you were told to do by the director and that would make you performance very good—he used to say that, his famous line was ‘if acting were easy, we'd all be Laurence Olivier’ (LOLs).

Focus for Further Research

An interesting footnote to all of the information gleaned from student interviews and remarks, as well as the researcher's own field notes, is that no face-to-face students stated explicitly or implied that they would have preferred taking the same course in the online section. Indeed, face-to-face students explicitly stated that they wanted to take the course face-to-face and that the online experience would not be their preference. On the other hand, the students who participated in this course completely online indicated that, while they appreciated the opportunity that the online venue afforded, and that they appreciated the flexibility of taking a course online (as opposed to face-to-face), no students, in either section, stated that they preferred (or would have preferred to take) the same course online. It is the opinion of this researcher that the preference of these adult learners was to maximize any and all social experiences available to them when engaging in a course of study. And, while this research cannot generalize this proposition to other adult learners, it is reasonable to assume that a desire for rich social interaction might be a common desire for all adult learners.

Future research in the area of creating desirable and effective online courses for adult students—as well as ‘hybrid’ courses where students participate in a mixture of online and face-to-face learning experiences—should focus on recreating, to the extent

possible, a rich social dimension. As Moore points out (1973, 1980; 1989; 2003), increase in dialogue and feedback and higher levels of course individualization will lead to decreased transactional distance. Additionally, effective use of newer Internet-based Web 2.0 technologies such as MySpace, FaceBook, Bebo, Flickr and other social networking tools, offers educators and course designers opportunities to help students create rewarding and enjoyable learning experiences by complementing online study with the rich social interaction that these Web 2.0 technologies afford.

Finally, it was observed that ‘stories’ played a significant role in both the online and the face-to-face student experience. Stories are essential to the human experience and allow us to share not only unique experiences with one another, they allow us to build common meaning and form solidarity with others.

Additional Differences in the Experiences of Online and Face-to-Face Students

It has already been noted that students experiencing this course online communicated with the instructor and peers primarily using the medium of text and interacting asynchronously. Online students were almost totally dependent on their MyGateway interface to interact with peers and instructor: for course questions and assignments email was used; for discussion of course topics and interaction with peers and instructor, the course site discussion board was used.

An additional experience that online students did not have was the direct face-to-face and weekly interaction with the instructor and peers. All of the domains noted in the researcher’s field notes (see table 12) were experienced only by the face-to-face students. On the other hand, students taking this course face-to-face and meeting with the

instructor weekly, experienced MyGateway only minimally as a source for accessing reading materials and course announcements.

All students in both the online and face-to-face sections who took this adult education course and participated in class discussion covered identical topics: women's learning in adult education, critical and post-modern theory in adult education and feelings and emotions in adult education. For students taking the course online, it was necessary that they post written information regarding their opinions, thoughts, facts and questions.

Dewitt (1996) suggests that context for discussion and exchange has to be explicitly stated because the online environment is devoid of contextual information. Direct quotes, paraphrasing other participants remarks and summarizing content all help create additional context. Also, posting comments online required that students explicitly state to whom and to what comments they were responding to. Posted comments tended to be elegant, in the sense that they were simple and precise—that is, desultory remarks or useless words were not present. Face-to-face-students, on the other hand, tended to use many filler words ('um'; 'and' ;'well') and often seemed to be developing their thoughts as they spoke. Because of this, face-to-face discussion at times tended to wander from point to point but was rich in human interaction. Myer (2003) suggests that online discussion can be richer because authors have time to reflect and edit their responses; also, online student felt compelled to participate in the discussions and that accuracy was an important consideration for them. Online discussions were necessarily more explicit in terms of text and language, but were shallow in terms of social context. This is not to say that online discussion lacked depth in terms of the subject matter being discussed, but

rather than the social component of direct physical presence and interaction with others was missing. To the extent that a social context was perceptible for online students, it was created completely from text-based information.

Also, as Chen and Hung suggest (2002), students that have to navigate online discussion board forums can often become overwhelmed by them due to the sheer volume of the material available. In order for information to be meaningful to learners, it should be represented in a structured and organized way in the mind of the learner. As information is internalized, the exact structure of that information will be unique to each person and each will utilize different, or a combination of different, structures to internalize and solidify new knowledge. Evidence of students becoming overwhelmed was found; also, students did attempt to structure and organize the information presented in ways that were personally meaningful and that would make sense to them:

- I think what was overwhelming to me was that---I think this just blows my mind when I click on the computer and I'll see, gosh, 60 things to read, and I'll be saying in my mind, gosh, where do people find the time to just post and post and post –
- One challenge was trying to keep up with the reading online, because you want to keep up with what other people are saying
- but, you know, some of those postings, like 110 of them!—you know, and I do, I read a lot of them, so you know, like wow—this person's interesting—so, I might follow what [another student] says a lot because he's very interesting

In this same area, Hannafin et al. (2003) suggest that “reports of frustration with stream-of-consciousness threads, a tendency of individuals to dominate the discussion, a lack of clarity as to the purpose of the discussions” have surfaced (p.256). These frustrations are suggested in student interview remarks.

Researcher Experience

A significant part of Spradley's ethnographic model (1980) is that of the participant observer—that is, the researcher is, himself part of the study: researcher observations are considered as valid and important as the activities and behaviors of those he studies:

The participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation. The ordinary participant comes to that situation with only one purpose: to engage in the appropriate activities. (p. 54)

Most of the domains identified in the researcher field notes are those common to any small gathering of individuals who meet regularly in a public place to discuss a specific topic for a specific reason. Physical presentations, smells, sounds and other environmental circumstances produce a common context for the group and a potential for interactive intimacy as individual group members get to know each other better over time. A particular observation of the researcher was how often one student would start a thought and another student would complete the thought:

- Student 1: and also, a lot of churches even to this day, women cannot sit in the pulpit they have to sit in the...---Student 2: like I said, I don't know is that a... ---Student 1: no this is just how a lot of churches...
- Student 1: there are some girls who are going to want to play with trucks-- -Student 2: right---Student 1: but...---Student 3: the overwhelming majority of 'em---Student 1: but while the majority of them, though...

These kinds of sentence fragments would make no sense on an online discussion board and, in fact, could not be achieved in an asynchronous environment.

Classroom Breaks

Classroom breaks were also the sole experience of the face-to-face group of students. Breaks were significant because they provided additional social cohesion for the group and also served as important communication venues between students and instructor. Very often student assignments were given or clarified and important course-related information was exchanged. For online students the primary source for this kind of information was email.

Significance of Findings

The focus of this research project was not to evaluate the relative effectiveness of learning or learning outcomes in the online learning environment as compared to the face-to-face learning environment. There exists an abundant and growing body of research describing effective ways to teach adults online (Anderson, 2003; Chen, 2001; Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Keegan, 1996; Mason, 2001; Meyer, 2003; Moore, 2003; Rutter & Smith, 2002; Strandvall, 2003; Winiecki, 2003). The purpose of this research project was an attempt to illuminate in detail the subjective experiences of students who actually participated in a course of study that was experienced completely online, and also compare those perceptions with the perceptions of students who experienced the same course—in terms of content, design, and with the same instructor—as a completely face-to-face experience.

All students from both sections of the course—online and face-to-face—completed the course of study and received a grade of “A” or “B”: learning outcomes for both groups were favorable. An overarching theme for the face-to-face group of students was an enjoyment of, and satisfaction in the interactions and social relationships that

developed during the weekly meetings. Indeed, students experiencing the course face-to-face stressed that they felt very comfortable in the classroom setting and that each individual contributed to the overall ‘chemistry’ of the group experience. And this is particularly significant in light of the often heavy and emotional topics that were covered. On the other hand, for students experiencing this same course of study completely online, an overarching theme was that, while they appreciated the flexibility of the online venue, and that this flexibility was often the single factor that allowed them access to the course, they missed the social interaction that a face-to-face class would have provided.

It is doubtful that students participating in online classes, particularly where a significant portion of their interaction is asynchronous, will ever achieve the same levels of social interaction and its associated satisfaction as those in the traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Therefore it is critically important that course content designers and educators who teach these kinds of courses understand and respond to students’ desire for social interaction and connection.

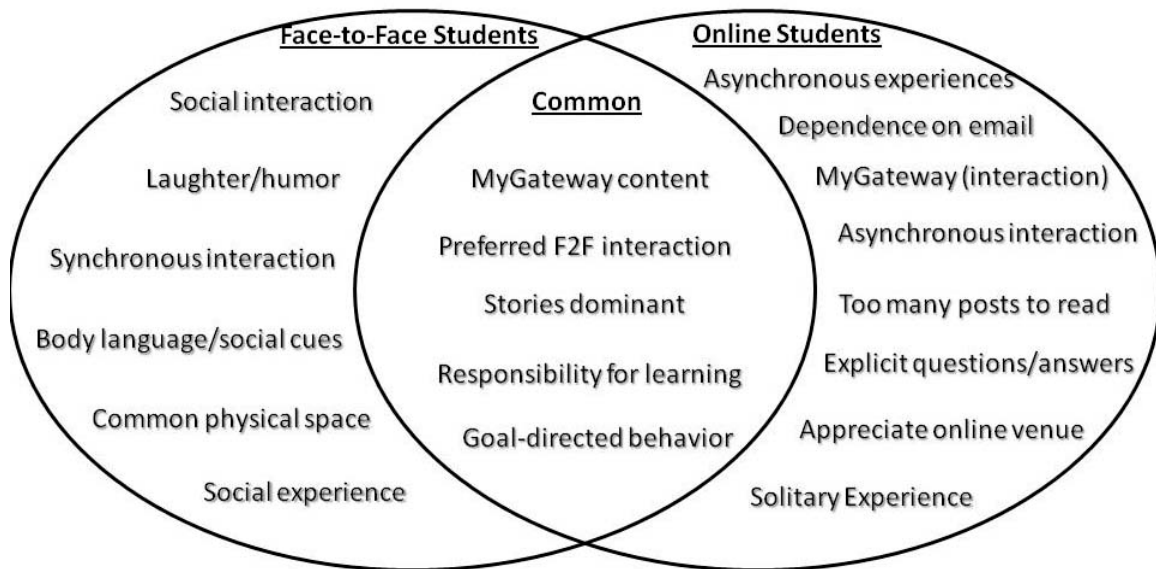
As Moore (1973, 1980) points out one way to minimize transactional distance—and thus to minimize the detrimental effects of low levels of socialization—is to decrease feedback wait time and increase the frequency of interactions. And, indeed, this is recommended in ‘best practices’ articles on students and online learning (Distance Education: Guidelines for Good Practice, 2000). Moore also points out that transactional distance can be minimized by increasing individualization within the course itself. Development of courses for online students that are designed to afford maximum flexibility to pursue information based on individual interests will be more meaningful to students and therefore provide increased motivation to succeed. This is particularly

significant for adult learners because they are goal oriented and internally motivated to succeed (Billington, 2000; Knowles, 1970; 1980; 1984; 1996; Merriam, 2001).

Summary of Overall Findings

Figure 1, shown on page six, suggested possible domains that would emerge as a result of close analysis of student experiences as they participated as online and face-to-face students in this adult education course. Figure 20 is an overview of unique domains that were discovered for the face-to-face group and the online group of students, and the domains that were common to both groups. Tables 23, 24 and 25 contain a detailed list of identified student experiences; Appendix F presents these differences and similarities in matrix form.

Figure 20. Revealed cultural domains for face-to-face and online students



It was anticipated that face-to-face students would enjoy the immediacy and rich social environment afforded by their in-class meetings. Online students, on the other hand, would maintain effective interactions and communications with peers and instructor, but would do so asynchronously and without the accompaniment of the rich social dimension experienced by their face-to-face counterparts. Tables 23 and 24

summarize the major findings of these two groups of students and suggest that the face-to-face students did experience a richer social experience and experienced minimal or no transactional distance. Learner autonomy served both groups well in that while all students would have preferred a face-to-face learning environment, online students were independent and self-motivated and were able to succeed in the online environment.

Table 23. *Summary of Experiences for Face-to-Face Students*

Face-to-Face Student Experience
<p>MYGATEWAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face students used the course primarily as a supplement to their in-class experience. • Face-to-face students accessed their course site much more frequently on Tuesdays than on any other day.
<p>EMAIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face students generated only 4% of email sent to instructor.
<p>TRANSACTIONAL DISTANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face students had the option of text-based communication with peers and instructor (although few chose to communicate this way). • Analysis of this information reveals that transactional distance, as described by Moore (1973; 1980) was essentially minimal or nonexistent for the face-to-face group. • For face-to-face students, just being physically present was often a sign of involvement and words (participation and interaction) were to some extent optional.
<p>CULTURAL DOMAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the face-to-face group the recorded and transcribed words spoken by the group contains only a small fragment of the actual information that was exchanged; physical gestures, vocal inflection and a common environment all operated to create a rich and multidimensional context in which to interact. • Questions for the face-to-face students tended to be more fluid than those asked by online students and depended more on the immediate feedback of other students. • Humor was a common theme in the face-to-face meetings; laughter, jokes and humorous anecdotes occurred regularly. Humor was a common way to express deep feelings. • Agreement in explicit form such as 'I agree with you' occurred regularly, but also there was group agreement expressed in the more subtle forms of head nods, smiles and a great variety of vocal 'um-hms' all indicating some level of solidarity, agreement and/or commiseration with the speaker. • The immediacy of group interaction allowed process questions (Do you want to begin? Who's presenting?) to mix easily with content questions. Adding

information often occurred just by immediately adding on to another's point: (So you're saying.....). And, again, humor, in the form of anecdotes, side remarks and jokes, was the rule.

- Face-to-face students experienced questions and answers synchronously.
- Face-to-face students also experienced all of the contextual cues that accompany any face-to-face social interaction: non-verbal cues, auditory and visual information about the speaker and the rest of the group, vocal cues and inflection.
- Face-to-face-students, on the other hand, tended to use many filler words ('um'; 'and'; 'well') and often seemed to be developing their thoughts as they spoke.
- Classroom breaks (unavailable for online students) were significant because they provided additional social cohesion for the group and also served as important communication venues between students and instructor.
- Face-to-face students could 'choose' to talk, or, not to talk and participate in group discussion, and still be perceived as participating.

Table 24. *Summary of Experiences for Online Students*

Online Student Experience
<p>MYGATEWAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MyGateway interface constituted a much larger part of the online students overall course experience. • Total dependence on MyGateway. • Online student access to MyGateway fairly evenly distributed according to the day of the week.
<p>EMAIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students generated 73 emails/instructor generated 69 emails. • Online students generated 96% of all email sent to instructor email. • Instructor sent just under half of all email.
<p>SOCIABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online venue allowed online students to accomplish their goal of taking this course and receiving academic credit for it, the face-to-face would have been preferable and the missing component for online students appears to be the social element.
<p>LEARNER AUTONOMY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email content portrays these (primarily online) learners as dedicated to their own learning, and asking the right questions so that they can complete course requirements.
<p>TRANSACTIONAL DISTANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online students were primarily limited to text-based communications and interactions with peers and instructor. • Analysis of email content to and from the instructor confirms instances of transactional distance created due to the primarily asynchronous nature of email communication. • Lack of synchronous face-to-face interaction created some perceived transactional distance among students. • Lack of spontaneity and the inability to respond immediately to others in the

group were the main challenges for online students.

- Online students often felt overwhelmed by the accumulated responses and comments made by others on the discussion board and unable to process and/or respond to them in any depth.
- Online students were often unsure of responses to their own posts by others in the course.
- For online students, the only verification the instructor had concerning their 'presence' in the class was their posted comments.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

- For the online group, text (written words) data was the complete context of the exchanges.
- Online students tended to clearly indicate their questions, often making them explicit with question marks.
- For students taking this course online and lacking rich veneer of social context, attempts at humor were much less frequent, more modest and toned down, probably because of the fear of being misunderstood.
- Opinions tended to be explicitly stated as complete thoughts. Explicit affirmations were common as well. This is because the only way to communicate that students agreed with something someone had said, or that they were in solidarity with them was to explicitly state that agreement in words.
- Online students in this discussion about feelings and emotions in adult education, acknowledging to whom remarks were addressed to, and who they were from was a necessary element in their communication.
- Online students experienced questions and answers asynchronously.
- Online students, lacking the presence and immediacy of others in their discussion group, relied on text-based cues in both asking and responding to questions. This limitation required that questions posed by online students be presented clearly and succinctly and incorporating the accepted standards of syntax and grammar.
- Posted comments tended to be elegant, in the sense that they were simple and precise—that is, desultory remarks or useless words were not present.
- Online discussions were necessarily more explicit in terms of text and language, but were shallow in terms of social context.
- To the extent that a social context was perceptible for online students, it was created completely from text-based cues.
- For online students the primary source for social cohesion information was email and discussion board.
- Efforts to create routine and ritual were not apparent for online students (care-to-face students had the built-in rituals of time and place).
- Online students noted that environmental comfort was a priority when working online

Experiences that were common to both the online and face-to-face students are shown in table 25.

Table 25. *Summary of Common Experiences for Online and Face-to-Face Students*

Common Face-to-Face and Online Student Experience
<p>MYGATEWAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both groups relied on MyGateway to access course materials. <p>SOCIABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in both the online section and the face-to-face section of this course generally found the actual course content interesting and rewarding. • No face-to-face students stated explicitly or implied that they would have preferred taking the same course in the online section. Face-to-face students explicitly stated that they wanted to take the course face-to-face and that the online experience would not be their preference. • The preference of these adult learners was to maximize any and all social experiences available to them when engaging in a course of study. • Stories played a significant role in both the online and the face-to-face student experience. Stories are essential to the human experience and allow us to share not only unique experiences with one-another, they allow us to build common meaning and form solidarity with others. <p>LEARNER AUTONOMY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student interviews and online survey responses suggest that both groups of students, those taking the course face-to-face and those taking it online were very aware that the task of learning and succeeding in the course was their own responsibility. <p>CULTURAL DOMAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All topics discussed and the preparatory assigned readings and individual assignments were identical.

Recommendations for Future Research

Criticism of Moore's theoretical model of transactional distance is well taken; and as Gorsky (2005) points out, it may have little usefulness "in practical terms, as a measurable dependent variable in a theory or model" (p. 9), but it remains a useful and practical way of evaluating two critical elements in online courses for adults: dialogue (interaction) and course individualization. Future research in the area of effective online course development should focus on these two areas in an effort to maximize the frequency and timeliness of student-teacher and student-student interactions, and, construct courses so as to allow for as much individualization as possible. An additional area of research could be to further develop our theoretical understanding and use of

student learning contracts as articulated by Knowles (1970). Learning contracts are commonly used by teachers and instructors familiar with andragogical theory but a more widespread application of student learning contracts could greatly increase course individualization and make learning more meaningful and practical for adult learners.

Final Observations: Intriguing Comments and the Need for More Research

The following comments, all from students taking this course online, reflect a learner resiliency and autonomy that demonstrates the maturity and experience that adult learners bring to their learning experiences.

- Somehow the nature of the discussion really changed in an online discussion.
- It wasn't about anything else or anybody else; it was all about what I needed to do...
- You need to be a self starter to take online courses—if not how can you take it online—you cannot be passive [in an online class]. You need your own inner drive.

Literature on the qualities, characteristics and skills of adult learners (Knowles, 1970, 1980; Merriam, 2001; Suanmali, 1982) suggest that adults seek out learning experiences that fulfill very specific goals, both personal and professional. These remarks by adult students actually involved in a college-based learning experience suggest that they are well aware of their own responsibility in obtaining a successful learning outcome, yet they realize that learning online presents challenges that could quite possibly be daunting and new to them. Future research should focus on identifying the needs of adult learners who may have the desire and experience to learn autonomously in an online environment, yet may lack the technological sophistication and fluidity required to take full advantage of online learning venues.

The two comments below, solicited during personal interviews from students taking this course completely face-to-face, suggest that these students, too, just like their online counterparts were autonomous learners who assumed responsibility for their own learning outcomes.

- I'm not going to realize how much I know, how much I actually gained from this class until it's over.
- I don't need a lot of motivation—if I have a passion about something and I really want to do it I don't need other people to [direct me].

Any of these face-to-face students could have successfully taken the course as an online offering—that is, they had the internal motivation, experience, independence and learning skills necessary to complete the task—they only would have required an amount of technical support to help them integrate their efforts in the online environment. A final comment from a face-to-face student, however, suggests that the social dimension created when students gather in one place and time as a group provides a powerful inclination and perhaps a bias towards learning experiences that occur in the traditional classroom setting.

- What I find interesting is that there is this unique dynamic in this class—that if you changed one person in this class in any given night—how would that change the discourse—how much would it change the dynamic?

Future research should, to the extent possible, examine effective ways to develop, replicate and support these social dimensions for students learning in the online environment.

Personal observations as Participant Observer

Mature adults are internally motivated to acquire the tools necessary for intellectual, spiritual and social development. This means that they actively seek out

learning experiences, both formal and informal, that will provide them with an environment in which they can learn and grow. Students taking the class as a face-to-face learning experience were able to participate in deeply personal and spontaneous shared human experiences of joy, sadness, laughter and pain—with each person interpreting these activities in their own way and within the context of their own lived experience. Abundant laughter, knowing looks, vocal cues and nonverbal behaviors worked in harmony to produce a rich fabric of social solidarity. The unities of time and place provided content within a ritualized context: the traditional classroom.

All of the participants in this study completed the requirements of the course, but there was an over-arching sense that those taking the class as an online offering were doing so because of necessity and not out of any desire to avoid or bypass the traditional classroom experience. Busy schedules, incompatible work-hours or geographical separation were generally the reasons given for taking the class online.

Future researchers in the area of adult education, andragogy and the online experience may gauge the effectiveness of these types of courses in terms of desired learning outcomes because for adults ‘effectiveness’ is (properly) defined in terms of how well it meets, or fails to meet, specific learning desires and outcomes. But effectiveness must also be defined as containing the more intangible dimensions of common human experiences. As technology evolves and affords increasing complexity in social contact and interaction, researchers should identify technologies that most closely mimic and reinforce our primal social bonds.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Researcher Introduction

From Paul Wilmarth
UM-St. Louis (student)
AduEd 6410 the Adult Learner (online)

Hello _____

As you know, one of the reasons I'm participating in this course on the Adult Learner is so that I can collect data on adult learners and their experience in an online class. In order to collect this data it is necessary (and important) that you know and approve of this process.

I've attached an informed consent form for you to read and sign. If you will send me your mailing address I will send you a SASE so that you can return a copy of your signed consent.

If you prefer, you can send your consent form to this address.

Paul Wilmarth
401 CCB
University of Missouri- St. Louis
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63121-4400

If you have access to a fax machine and can send it that way, my fax number is (314) 516-6477.

I'm also attaching a copy of interview questions I'd like to ask of some of our online students. If you are interested in participating in these interviews please let me know. The interview could be face-to-face or over the phone. It would take about 30 minutes to an hour.

Please let me know if you have any questions about my research in this course and thank you very much for your help.

Paul Wilmarth
Wilmarth@umsl.edu
(314) 516-4901

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Experience of Adult Learners in an Online and a Face-to-Face Environment

Interview questions:

1. You had the choice to take this course as a regular face-to-face course, or, as an online class; why did you choose (online / face-to-face)?
2. What were some of the challenges you faced in you efforts to complete this course of study?
3. What worked best for you and your personal learning style during this course?
4. What worked against you and your personal learning style during this course?
5. What adult learning methods do you utilize when you approach a new learning situation? Explain.
6. What did you gain from taking this course?
7. Describe your own learning experience in this course.
8. How much time did you spend per week working on this course (for online students this would be logged in and or working on course assignments; for f2f students this would be in addition to in-class time)?
9. Did you have any difficulty registering for this course and or accessing this course?

**Appendix C
Course Syllabus**

SYLLABUS

**Adult Education 6410
The Adult Learner**

**Winter / Spring 2005
Three Semester Hours Graduate Credit**

**Dr. [Instructor] A. Henschke
Associate Professor – Adult Education
269 Marillac Hall
University of Missouri – St. Louis**

**Office Phone: 314-516-5946
Home Phone: 314-344-9087
Fax: 314-516-5942**

**E-mail: henschkej@missouri.edu
Andragogy Website: <http://www.umsl.edu/~henschke/>**

PURPOSE:

This course is designed for those who help adults learn in a variety of settings. A study will be made of the characteristics of Adult Learners and various theories of how they learn, as well as the implications of these characteristics and theories for Adult Education Research, Programming, Curriculum, Planning, and Instructional Practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the conclusion of this course the participants, in concert with the guidance of the instructor as a lifelong learner, will have developed and / or increased the following cluster of competencies:

- 1. Knowledge of the characteristics of adult learners, including an overview of physical needs, developmental states, and current research on adult learning;**

2. **Understanding of the implications of these characteristics and theories on research, programming, curriculum, planning, instructional practice, and praxis;**
3. **Skill in recognizing the needs of adult learners and the appropriateness and effectiveness of ways the adult learner is engaged in the learning process;**
4. **A positive attitude toward adult learners in general and in their ability to learn;**
5. **Values consistent with respect for adult learners and for the experience they bring to the learning situation; and,**
6. **Interest in learning more about the adults in the field in which they work, their needs, interests, and abilities, and how to improve their learning experience.**

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the semester, each participant, in concert with the guidance of the instructor and other learners, will be responsible for systematic inquiry meant to increase and deepen their commitment to lifelong learning, as follows:

1. **Developing a personal learning contract consistent with the purpose and objectives of the course. The recommended format and guidelines are shown in a handout that will be distributed on-line & in class, and will include learning objectives, learning strategies and resources, evidence of accomplishment of objectives, and criteria and means for validating evidence with added target dates for completion of each objective;**
2. **Negotiating with the instructor for the grade they are to receive for the completion of the various components of the course;**
3. **Developing an in-depth profile of a particular population of adult learners, including relevant characteristics and learning theories;**

4. Learning all they possibly can about an adult learning theory and various characteristics with which they have little or no acquaintance and in which they are interested;
5. Being involved with a learning/teaching team in engaging other members of the class in an active, dynamic learning experience of that theory and those characteristics;
6. Engaging in a learning activity with a fellow lifelong learner and submitting a detailed description of that learning experience as a facilitator of learning as well as a learner. Your learning process and an analysis of your learning in reference to the research and theories covered in the course, and sharing your experience in a written paper. More detailed requirements will be discussed on-line and in class.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Merriam, S. B. (Ed.). (2001). *The new update on adult learning theory*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 89. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Supplemental Readings – provided by the professor [online in MyGateway Course Documents] and students

Participation trends and patterns in adult education: 1991 to 1999; and 2000 to 2001.

To obtain these booklets go to the following website and type “adult education” and click on “search.” One article [2000-2001] should be the first paper on the list; and, another article [1991-1999] should be the fifth article on the list.

You can then print them out. <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>

RECOMMENDED TEXT

American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

ELEMENTS OF THE COURSE:

Learning Contract
Learning-Activity Papers
Learning Theory Paper Discussions
On-line Participation – Reading Text Materials, Leading the
Discussion, Posting and Interacting with Fellow Participants
Peer Evaluations

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE:

In Class Section these are to be included with the Syllabus; and,
On Line Section will be included in the assignments section of MyGateway
for this course.

Appendix D
Face-to-Face Reading Schedule

SCHEDULE FOR READINGS
ADU ED 6410: THE ADULT LEARNER
WINTER / SPRING – 2005 IN CLASS SECTION GRADUATE COURSE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

*** NOTE: DO EACH OF THE READINGS PRIOR TO COMING TO CLASS ON THE DATE DESIGNATED [EXCEPT JANUARY 11, 2005]**

1ST Week – January 11

1. UM-St. Louis Adult Education Program: “Knowledge Base Statement & Mission Statement”	In Course Documents # 16
2. Taylor – “Learning for Self-Direction”	“ “ “ # 1
3. Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale	“ “ “ # 17
4. Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scoring Form	“ “ “ # 18
5. Learning Style Inventory	“ “ “ # 15
6. Self-Directed Learning Reflection	“ “ “ # 2
7. “Adult Learning: What Do We Know For Sure?”	“ “ “ # 19

2nd Week – January 18

1. Learning Contract Forms & Narrative	In Course Documents #11
2. Smith: “Learning to Learn”	“ “ “
3. Merriam: Chapter 1 “Andragogy & Self-Directed Learning”	Textbook
4. Cooper & Henschke: “Additional Thinking About Andragogy	External Links # 6
5. “Annotated Bibliography of Sources Related to Andragogy”	In Course Documents # 9
6. Special Website on Andragogy”	http://www.andragogy.net
7. Reischmann: “Andragogy. History, Meaning, Context, Function”	Opening Page in Andragogy Website Just Above

3rd Week – January 25

1. Cooper, Isaac & Henschke: ”Teaching Adults & Non-Traditional Students”	In Course Documents # 10
2. Billington: “Characteristics of Highly	

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Effective Adult Learning” | External Links # 2 |
| 3. Henschke: “Training Teachers of Adults” | “ “ # 1 |
| Look Under Henschke’s Published Works 1987 | |
| [Articles Arranged Sequentially By Years Starting from 2004] | |
| 4. Knowles: “Adult Learning” | External Links # 7 |
-

4th Week – February 1

- 1. Baumgartner: Chapter 2 “An Update
In Transformational Learning”** **Textbook**
 - 2. <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
1st Article – 2000 / 2001; & 5th Article – 1991 / 1999.** **Search “Adult Education”**
-

5th Week – February 8

- 1. Special Library Time – Opportunity to Bring Reading
Up-To-Date From The First Four Weeks; and,
Do Additional Studying That You May Not Have Had Time To
Accomplish Since The Beginning of The Course**
 - 2. Interacting With Selected Colleagues for “Polishing Up”
The Learning Contract Draft That Is Due By February 15.**
-

6th Week – February 15

- 1. Marsick & Watkins: Chapter 3 “Informal
and Incidental Learning”** **Textbook**
-

7th Week – February 22

- 1. Hayes: Chapter 4 “A New Look at
Women’s Learning”** **Textbook**
-

8th Week – March 1

- 1. Hansman: Chapter 5 “Context-Base
Adult Learning”** **Textbook**
 - 2. Wilson: “The Promise of Situated Cognition** **In Course Documents # 5**
-

9th Week – March 8

1. Kilgore: Chapter 6 “Critical and Postmodern Perspectives on Adult Learning” **Textbook**
-

10th Week – March 15

1. Dirkx: Chapter 7 “The Power of Feelings – Emotions, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Education” **Textbook**
-

Week of March 22

This is Spring Break at The University of Missouri – St. Louis. No Reading Or Posting is Scheduled During This Period. However, the MyGateway System Is Operational At This Time.

11th Week – March 29

1. Hill: Chapter 8 “The Brain and Consciousness -- Sources of Information for Understanding Adult Learning” **Textbook**
 2. Boucouvalas: “Consciousness and Learning – New and Renewed Approaches” **In Course Documents # 4**
-

12th Week – April 5

1. Clark: Chapter 9 “Off the Beaten Path – Some Creative Approaches to Adult Learning” **Textbook**
-

13th Week – April 12

Another Special Library Week:

1. Opportunity to Finish Interviewing Adult Learners and Complete Report
 2. Time to Bring Reading and Discussion Board Up-To-Date
 3. Reflection on My Transitions Into Self-Directed Learning
 4. Heimstra: “Three Underdeveloped Models for Adult Learning” **In Course Documents # 6**
-

Week of April 19

A Breather Just Before the Last Push Into The Finish Of The Semester

14th Week – April 26

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Merriam: Chapter 10 “Something Old,
Something New – Adult Learning
Theory for the Twenty-First
Century” | Textbook |
| 2. Taylor: “Learning for Self-Direction”
[Re-Read This Article] | In Course Documents # 1 |
-

15th Week – May 3

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Wrap-Up in the Meaning of The Adult
Learner and Learning | Reflections |
| 2. Sharing of the Importance of Adult Learners | Drawing from
Experience |
-

May 10

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Critique of the Course and Evaluations | Drawing From |
| 2. Final Comments by Participants and Professor | Experience |
| 3. Completed Learning Contracts Handed In | |
-

Appendix E
Online Reading Schedule

SCHEDULE FOR READINGS
ADU ED 6410: THE ADULT LEARNER
WINTER / SPRING – 2005 ONLINE SECTION GRADUATE COURSE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – ST. LOUIS
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

1ST Week – January 9 through 15

1. UM-St. Louis Adult Education Program: “Knowledge Base Statement & Mission Statement”	In Course Documents # 16
2. Taylor – “Learning for Self-Direction”	“ “ “ # 1
3. Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale	“ “ “ # 17
4. Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scoring Form	“ “ “ # 18
5. Learning Style Inventory	“ “ “ # 15
6. Self-Directed Learning Reflection	“ “ “ # 2
7. “Adult Learning: What Do We Know For Sure?”	“ “ “ # 19

2nd Week – January 16 through 22

1. Learning Contract Forms & Narrative	In Course Documents # 11
2. Smith: “Learning to Learn”	“ “ “ # 8
3. Merriam: Chapter 1 “Andragogy & Self-Directed Learning”	Textbook
4. Cooper & Henschke: “Additional Thinking About Andragogy	External Links # 6
5. “Annotated Bibliography of Sources Related to Andragogy”	In Course Documents # 9
6. Special Website on Andragogy”	http://www.andragogy.net
7. Reischmann: “Andragogy. History, Meaning, Context, Function”	Opening Page in Andragogy Website Just Above

3rd Week – January 23 through 29

1. Cooper, Isaac & Henschke: ”Teaching Adults & Non-Traditional Students”	In Course Documents # 10
2. Billington: “Characteristics of Highly Effective Adult Learning”	External Links # 2
3. Henschke: “Training Teachers of Adults”	“ “ # 1

**Look Under Henschke's Published Works 1987
[Articles Arranged Sequentially By Years Starting from 2004]**

4. Knowles: "Adult Learning" External Links # 7

4th Week – January 29 through February 5

1. Baumgartner: Chapter 2 "An Update
In Transformational Learning" Textbook
 2. <http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
1st Article – 2000 / 2001; & 5th Article – 1991 / 1999. Search "Adult Education"
-

5th Week – February 6 through 12

1. Special Library Time – Opportunity to Bring Reading
Up-To-Date From The First Four Weeks; and,
Do Additional Posting That You May Not Have Had Time To
Accomplish Since The Beginning of The Course
 2. Interacting With Selected Colleagues for "Polishing Up"
The Learning Contract Draft That Is Due By February 14.
-

6th Week – February 13 through 19

1. Marsick & Watkins: Chapter 3 "Informal
and Incidental Learning" Textbook
-

7th Week – February 20 through February 26

1. Hayes: Chapter 4 "A New Look at
Women's Learning" Textbook
-

8th Week – February 27 through March 5

1. Hansman: Chapter 5 "Context-Base
Adult Learning" Textbook
 2. Wilson: "The Promise of Situated Cognition" In Course Documents # 5
-

9th Week – March 6 through March 12

1. Kilgore: Chapter 6 "Critical and Postmodern
Perspectives on Adult Learning" Textbook

10th Week – March 13 through 19

1. Dirkx: Chapter 7 “The Power of Feelings – Emotions, Imagination, and the Construction of Meaning in Adult Education” Textbook
-

Week of March 20 through 26

This is Spring Break at The University of Missouri – St. Louis. No Reading Or Posting is Scheduled During This Period. However, the MyGateway System Is Operational At This Time.

11th Week – March 27 through April 2

1. Hill: Chapter 8 “The Brain and Consciousness -- Sources of Information for Understanding Adult Learning” Textbook
 2. Boucouvalas: “Consciousness and Learning – New and Renewed Approaches” In Course Documents # 4
-

12th Week – April 3 through 9

1. Clark: Chapter 9 “Off the Beaten Path – Some Creative Approaches to Adult Learning” Textbook
-

13th Week – April 10 through 16

Another Special Library Week:

1. Opportunity to Finish Interviewing Adult Learners and Complete Report
 2. Time to Bring Reading and Discussion Board Up-To-Date
 3. Reflection on My Transitions Into Self-Directed Learning
 4. Heimstra: “Three Underdeveloped Models for Adult Learning” In Course Documents # 6
-

Week of April 17 through 23

A Breather Just Before the Last Push Into The Finish Of The Semester

14th Week – April 24 through 30

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Merriam: Chapter 10 “Something Old,
Something New – Adult Learning
Theory for the Twenty-First
Century” | Textbook |
| 2. Taylor: “Learning for Self-Direction”
[Re-Read This Article] | In Course Documents # 1 |
-

15th Week – May 1 through 7

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Wrap-Up in the Meaning of The Adult
Learner and Learning | Reflections |
| 2. Sharing of the Importance of Adult Learners | Drawing from
Experience |
-

May 8 through 12

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Critique of the Course and Evaluations | Drawing From |
| 2. Final Comments by Participants and Professor | Experience |
-

Appendix F		
Summary Matrix of Cultural Domains		
MyGateway		
ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE	COMMON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MyGateway interface constituted a much larger part of the online students overall course experience. Total dependence on MyGateway. For online students the Discussion Board area was by far the most frequently accessed area and constituted 80.6% of all course site hits. Online student access to MyGateway fairly evenly distributed according to the day of the week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face students, on the other hand, used the course primarily as a supplement to their in-class experience. Face-to-face students accessed their course site much more frequently on Tuesdays than on any other day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both groups relied on MyGateway to access course materials.
Email		
ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE	COMMON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students generated 73 emails/instructor generated 69 emails. Online students generated 96% of all email sent to instructor email. Instructor sent just under half of all email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face students generated 4% email of email sent to instructor. 	
Sociability		
ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE	COMMON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The online venue allowed online students to accomplish their goal of taking this course and receiving academic credit for it, the face-to-face would have been preferable and the 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in both the online section and the face-to-face section of this course generally found the actual course content interesting and rewarding.

missing component for online students appears to be the social element.

- No face-to-face students stated explicitly or implied that they would have preferred taking the same course in the online section. Face-to-face students explicitly stated that they wanted to take the course face-to-face and that the online experience would not be their preference.
- The preference of these adult learners was to maximize any and all social experiences available to them when engaging in a course of study.
- Stories played a significant role in both the online and the face-to-face student experience. Stories are essential to the human experience and allow us to share not only unique experiences with one-another, they allow us to build common meaning and form solidarity with others.

Learner Autonomy		
ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE	COMMON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email content portrays these (primarily online) learners as dedicated to their own learning, and asking the right questions so that they can complete course requirements. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of student interviews and online survey responses suggest that both groups of students, those taking the course face-to-face and those taking it online were very aware

	that the task of learning and succeeding in the course was their own responsibility.	
	Transactional Distance	
ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE	COMMON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online students were primarily limited to text-based communications and interactions with peers and instructor. • Analysis of email content to and from the instructor confirms instances of transactional distance created due to the primarily asynchronous nature of email communication. • Lack of synchronous face-to-face interaction created some perceived transactional distance among students. • Lack of spontaneity and the inability to respond immediately to others in the group were the main challenges for online students. • Online students often felt overwhelmed by the accumulated responses and comments made by others on the discussion board and unable to process and/or respond to them in any depth. • Online students were often unsure of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face students had the option of text-based communication with peers and instructor (although few chose to communicate this way). • Analysis of this information reveals that transactional distance, as described by Moore (1973; 1980) was essentially minimal or nonexistent for the face-to-face group. 	

responses to their own posts by others in the course.

- For online students, the only verification the instructor had concerning their ‘presence’ in the class was their posted comments.

- For face-to-face students, just being physically present was often a sign of involvement and words (participation and interaction) were to some extent optional.

Additional Domains

ONLINE

FACE-TO-FACE

COMMON

- For the online group, text (written words) data was the complete context of the exchanges.

- For the face-to-face group the recorded and transcribed words spoken by the group contains only a small fragment of the actual information that was exchanged; physical gestures, vocal inflection and a common environment all operated to create a rich and multidimensional context in which to interact.

- All topics discussed and the preparatory assigned readings and individual assignments were identical.

- Online students tended to clearly indicate their questions, often making them explicit with question marks.

- Questions for the face-to-face students tended to be more fluid than those asked by online students and depended more on the immediate feedback of other students.

- For students taking this course online and

- Humor was a common theme in the face-to-

lacking rich veneer of social context, attempts at humor were much less frequent, more modest and toned down, probably because of the fear of being misunderstood.

- Opinions tended to be explicitly stated as complete thoughts. Explicit affirmations were common as well. This is because the only way to communicate that students agreed with something someone had said, or that they were in solidarity with them was to explicitly state that agreement in words.
- Online students in this discussion about feelings and emotions in adult education, acknowledging to whom remarks were addressed to, and who they were from was a necessary element in their communication.
- Online students experienced questions and answers asynchronously.
- Online students, lacking the presence and immediacy of others in

face meetings; laughter, jokes and humorous anecdotes occurred regularly.

Humor was a common way for them to express deep feelings.

- Agreement in explicit form such as 'I agree with you' occurred regularly, but also there was group agreement expressed in the more subtle forms of head nods, smiles and a great variety of vocal 'um-hms' all indicating some level of solidarity, agreement and/or commiseration with the speaker
- The immediacy of group interaction allowed process questions (Do you want to begin? Who's presenting?) to mix easily with content questions. Adding information often occurred just by immediately adding on to another's point: (So you're saying.....). And, again, humor, in the form of anecdotes, side remarks and jokes, was the rule.
- Face-to-face students experienced questions and answers synchronously.
- Face-to-face students also experienced all of the contextual cues that

their discussion group, relied on text-based cues in both asking and responding to questions. This limitation required that questions posed by online students be presented clearly and succinctly and incorporating the accepted standards of syntax and grammar

- Posted comments tended to be elegant, in the sense that they were simple and precise—that is, desultory remarks or useless words were not present.
- Online discussions were necessarily more explicit in terms of text and language, but were shallow in terms of social context.
- To the extent that a social context was perceptible for online students, it was created completely from text-based cues.
- For online students the primary source for social cohesion information was email and discussion board.

accompany any face-to-face social interaction: non-verbal cues, auditory and visual information about the speaker and the rest of the group, vocal cues and inflection.

- Face-to-face-students, on the other hand, tended to use many filler words ('um'; 'and'; 'well') and often seemed to be developing their thoughts as they spoke.
 - Classroom breaks were also the sole experience of the face-to-face group of students. Breaks were significant because they provided additional social cohesion for the group and also served as important communication venues between students and instructor.
-

Appendix G
Informed Consent Form



Department of Education
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-xxxx
Fax: 314-516-xxxx
E-mail: xxxxx@umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities
Experience of adult learners online

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number: 050114W

Principal Investigator: Paul Wilmarth
516-4901

PI's Phone Number (314)

Why am I being asked to participate?

You are invited to participate in a research study about **how adults use the online environment to learn** conducted by **Paul Wilmarth, a doctoral student in the School of Education]** at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. You have been asked to participate in the research because **you are an adult learner who will be completing some of your course work online using Mygateway**. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the research. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with this University or **any other institution]**. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to examine the experience of adult learners on line and how these experiences differ from face-to-face experiences. There have been many studies designed to learn more about how the online environment affects learning, and how adult learners interact. Few studies, however, have utilized the ethnographic model of participant observation in an effort to provide a rich and detailed description of actual learning processes.

What procedures are involved?

If you agree to participate in this research, you can expect:

- An ethnography is the study of a culture. Ethnographers observe and document what they see going on in the environment around them: in this case the “environment” is both the physical location (the classroom), and the online environment (MyGateway Discussion Board). From these observations researchers attempt to find patterns and dynamics (culture) that may or may not be readily apparent to the casual observer. I will be doing a form of ethnography called Participant Observation. This means that I will actually participate in your course as a student. I will be present during many of your face-to-face meetings, and will participate in the online discussion with you. During class meetings, I will take notes, make audio recordings, take a few pictures, and just generally document what I see. I will also be reading and recording all posts to the Discussion Board.
- Because my research will consist of observing your behavior, the things you say and do will be documented. I will also ask you to complete an online survey about your experience in this course, and, will ask some of you (if you are willing) for an additional face-to-face interview about your experience. In short, I am interested in what YOU experience in this course and what those experiences mean to you.
- Except for the online survey and face-to-face interviews, research activity in this course should proceed unobtrusively and require only passive support on your part.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

- It is anticipated that my presence and activities in this course will not affect your course-related activities to any significant degree, and all data collected will be anonymous

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

It is hoped that this research will provide an in-depth and detailed description of how adults learn online and face-to-face, as well as a description of the overall culture in which these processes take place. This information could help course and curriculum planners devise more effective ways to present online content to adult learners.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

Protected Health Information (PHI) is any health information through which you can be identified. PHI is protected by federal law under HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

- This study will not involve PHI, or health information of any kind

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. If photographs, videos or audiotape recordings of you will be used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

There will be an audio recording made of each class. Some of recordings will be transcribed and coded and subjected to Content Analysis. All audio recordings will be erased after they have been transcribed. Also, participants have the right to review any recordings made during these classes.

Students participating in the course online will utilize BlackBoard's Discussion board. All posts will be recorded, described, and analyzed for patterns and themes. Collected information will consist of researcher notes, transcriptions from class discussions and discussion board texts and voluntary Survey information and face-to-face interviews.

As data is collected and transcribed, all information linking it to individual subjects will be removed. You may be asked to provide some descriptive information about yourself in the survey but this information will also be anonymous.

Will I be paid for my participation in this research?

Subjects participating in this study will not be paid, nor will this study require from them any cost in time or money.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

You can choose whether to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You also may refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. If you decide to end your participation in the study, please complete the withdrawal letter found at <http://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/IRB.html>, or you may request that the investigator send you a copy of the letter.

It is anticipated that this data collection effort will not be objectionable to any of the class participants. Indeed, it is important that "researcher effects" (beyond my mere presence) be minimal. Your comments, both verbal and documented, made during this course, will be recorded and analyzed.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The researcher conducting this study is Paul Wilmarth. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher(s) at (314) 516-4901

You may also contact my Committee Chair, [Instructor] Henschke at (314)516-5946, or email at henschkej@missouri.edu

You may choose not to participate, or to stop your participation in this research, at any time. This decision will not affect your class standing or grades at UM-SL. The investigator also may end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing will not be affected. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Remember: Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with this or **any other institution**. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at (314) 516-5897.

You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

I have read the above statement and have been able to express my concerns, to which the investigator has responded satisfactorily. I believe I understand the purpose of the study, as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I authorize the use of my PHI and give my permission to participate in the research described above.

All signature dates must match. Use signatures as appropriate.

Participant's Signature Date Participant's Printed
Name

Witness' Signature Date Witness' Printed Name

Researcher's Signature Date
(See guidelines on [Who May Obtain Consent](#))

The Notice of Privacy Practices (a separate document) describes the procedures used by UM-SL to protect your information. If you have not already received the Notice of Privacy Practices, the research team will make one available to you.

_____ I have been offered a copy of the UM-SL Notice of Privacy Practices.

Initial



OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

Interdepartmental Correspondence

Name: Paul Wilmarth

Title: Experience of adult learners in an online and a face to face environment.

The chairperson of the Human Subjects Committee for UIM-St. Louis has reviewed the above mentioned protocol for research involving human subjects and determined that the project qualifies for exemption from full committee review under Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46.101b. The time period for this approval expires one year from the date listed below. You must notify the Human Subjects Committee in advance of any proposed major changes in your approved protocol, e.g., addition of research sites or research instruments.




You must file an annual report with the committee. This report must indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects to date from start of project, or since last annual report, whichever is more recent.

Any consent or assent forms, must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UIM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

Protocol Number	Date	Signature - Chair
050114W	1/20/05	<i>C. J. Davis</i>

Appendix I
Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheets

Domain: grateful	It's so cool to hear of real life stories of people who look back and remember those who made a real difference in their lives.
	
Domain: humor (online_	I'm laughing--that is a great line--too soon old, too late smart.
Domain: old saying	
	
Domain: direct address	--I admire you for having that desire to make a difference. I can totally relate as I've always had that same desire to make a difference with children. I'm here to encourage you to never give up your desire to achieve that goal. Amidst everything else I have going on in my life, for the last 3 years I have been actively involved in the Make-A-Wish foundation as a speaker and a wish granter. It has been a very rewarding experience. I accept speaking engagements when I can fit them into my schedule and I don't ever let it overwhelm me. It somehow always works out.
Domain: affirmation/admiration	
Domain: illustration/personal	
Domain: encouragement	
Domain: personal story	Also, I recently opened our home to an 18 year old female exchange student from Brazil. She spent the past 6 months with me and my two sons. It was one of the most rewarding experiences for our family--albeit a lot of extra work. She was a very loving and beautiful girl who I now refer to my "daughter." I believe I also made a difference in her life as she did mine.
Domain: encouragement	Don't ever lose sight of the power of your desires--you can make it happen--it just becomes another chapter of your life.
	
Domain: thread to everyone	It seems our topic of discussion this week has been in great timing with current events. I was browsing the MSN website earlier this evening and the top story is a list of the 10 Most Powerful American Women as well as a compiled list of the 10 American Women Who Changed the World. Really interesting!
Domain: reference current event	

Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheet (Online Discussion)

	From [REDACTED]
Domain: 2 environments	Well, I have 2 environments; home and work. Both of my environments are quiet. I am fortunate to have my own office at work (with very little foot traffic around) and at home. I also don't have any children now thus my environment is as quiet as I want it to be. My work office is very well lit while my home office is darker – my personal preference because I find it easier to read the computer screen when the light is dimmer, especially when I'm on it for long periods (I'm sure this goes against "best practices" for eye safety!).
Domain: aural/quiet/home	
Domain: noisy/work	
Domain: well-lit	
Domain: dimly lit	
Domain: aural/listen to music	At work I have the option of listening to music while at home I can access a TV and/or music from my office.
Domain: aural/TV	The downside to both of my spaces is that I have minimal natural lighting which I have found makes me get an anxious feeling quicker when I'm working than if I were working where I had more natural lighting (my last job gave me more natural lighting so I'm comparing). I take frequent breaks and often find myself writing much of my thoughts down while sitting in my dining room in front of large windows then going to my office to type it up.
Domain: natural lighting	
Domain: breaks/frequent	
Domain: privacy	From [REDACTED] My environment is very conducive to learning and learning online. I have a private office and the halls around it our usually quiet. My work schedule is very flexible so I can go online when I want to work. I have free access to my own computer and the internet connection is very good. The temperature in the building is often uncomfortably hot in the winter, which I find makes me feel lethargic and makes it difficult to concentrate at times. Hope this info is helpful, Paul.
Domain: work schedule-flexible	
Domain: access (to online)	
Domain: room temperature/too warm	
Domain: concentration	
Domain: comfort level with technology	From [REDACTED] Yes I am comfortable to a degree with the technology. Where I still feel uncomfortable is probably less about technology itself and more about getting accustomed to the format for the online class, as I described and you replied to in the other Forum. Which is part of what is confusing, all these different forums are hard to

Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheet (Student Interviews)

Domain: problems relating to students	<p>people I can't relate to so I have a lot of problems responding to a lot of the responses that are out there that you're supposed to interact, and you want to interact but I can't relate to a lot of it so I just don't respond—I'm not going to respond because that 's what I think I need to do—I say something if I feel like I need to say something, if not-----I do learn from other people –but I think that's the biggest challenge for me....the interaction part. It's not even that it's on line, it's not even that it's not being face to face—but they're living a different life than I am.</p> <p>I think there would have been more interaction in the group [it the class had been face to face] as the experiences—everyone would throw out there experiences and the instructor would feed off of that in tying the class together I think that—I think that's the part about being in a seated course as opposed to an online course—it's not that you can't see the people face to face, it's just that there's so much information that you can put down that people like to share in answering the questions and just interacting—that I can't relate to.</p> <p>[in face to face] I'd be able to stay right there, in the open room—what are you talking about, what do you mean [she's looking for more feed back here] –to respond to somebody online and not appear incredibly stupid—I just won't do it—I just don't feel the need to—I gather and glean the information that I need and the rest---tschhhh—it's gone.</p> <p>What worked best for you?</p> <p>I think it's the self directed—I had to be more disciplined in my learning to really get out of the information that's out there—the reading is fine, I don't ever have a problem with sitting down and reading a chapter and I can take whatever information I want from out of there and then take everyone else's view on it so—call that informal learning—ai think I informally learn from just reading and just growing in my learning—in myself directed experience—I think that this class worked fine with my learning style—I don't know that I really have a particular learning style—I can do hands on, and I think I can learn in many different arenas I'm very open to learning—I don't see myself as having a really huge learning style –as I think about it and apply all the information, I've learned, gathered and read, I totally see it in my classes—I see, ok, this learning style, --there type of people usually</p>
Domain: don't just respond for the sake of responding	
Domain: I learn from other people	
Domain: other students different from me	
Domain: F2F better at bringing students together	
Domain: can't relate to much posted information	
Domain: online lacks instant (real-time/granular) feedback	
Domain: I take what I need (from the course) the rest doesn't matter	
Domain: self directed/independent learning	
Domain: needed discipline	
Domain: reading (text) amount was fine	
Domain: read DB to get other people's take	
Domain: able to direct my own learning	
Domain: this class worked well with my learning style	
Domain: don't have specific learning style	

Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheet (Course Email)

Domain: direct address	██████████:
Domain: reference previous comment	As I said to ██████████ and ██████████, I think it may be "the little boy in men that has not grown up as yet." That is no excuse, I realize; just an encouragement to me to seek improvement.
	██████████
Domain: direct address	██████████ ██████████:
Domain: illustration/	I don't know whether Maria Shriver [Arnold's Wife] "blasted" Arnold on this occasion because of what he said. But, I do know that she was asked to speak once, on a TV Program that goes all over the world weekly, about some of the special charity things she is doing, and when Arnold found out about it, he queried her, "What about me; am I not going to be asked to speak on that Program?" She responded to him, "No Arnold, they asked me to speak, not you this time?" And she told about their exchange right on the TV Program. Of course, everyone in the audience laughed [very approvingly] at what she said to him.
Domain: quoting another	██████████
	██████████ ██████████:
Domain: direct address	Good for you !!!
Domain: encouragement	██████████
Domain: paralanguage	██████████ ██████████:
	"Being Flexible" has been a very prominent watchword in my 35 year career as a Faculty Member with the University of Missouri Extension. The "book" says there is one way to do things, and then there is that way that we need to adapt the learnings so they will be relevant to the person with whom we are working and their situation.
Domain: direct address	My wife, ██████████, often tells me that I need to be more flexible "Papa" with my 14 grandchildren. As
Domain: personal reference	
Domain: reference text	

Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheet (Face-to-Face Discussion)	
	Elliot, class of 1853, stated that the corporation would not receive women as students into the college because the world knows next to nothing about the natural mental capacities of the female sex.
Domain: solicit opinion	--now, anybody want to comment on that?
Domain: humor	LOL
Domain: question about content	█: what year was that?
Domain: opinion	--we've come a long way
	--1869
Domain: audio filler	█: uhm—uhm
	--anybody get a ##### for that.....and then after 136 years it appears that Harvard's president is still grappling with the same question...um...and I know, uh, last week on the radio, there was a, uh, uh, vote of confidence that the faculty was supposed to, uh,
Domain: restates point	█:what the president made about women's learning...I remember that comment
Domain: opinion	█: Typical to me
Domain: question-information-seeking	--typical?
Domain: affirmation	█: yeah, it's typical from a, a, male-dominated perspective, in, in institutions
Domain: opinion	█: most institutions America reflect that orientation—that's why the glass ceiling still exists
Domain: question-information seeking	--for?
Domain: reply to question	█: for women and minorities
Domain: express disbelief	--I was totally shocked, when I, when I read this,...I had to go back and read it over and over again to make sure I was reading it correctly...that, you know, somebody would say that (--uhmhmm (agreement)) and, um, I think in the book is says studies have been done and in general, you know, what they've
Domain: group feedback-agreement	

Sample Data Content Analysis Worksheet (Online Survey)

Domain: having information upfront	
Domain: icebreaker exercise was enjoyable	[I enjoy the option of self-directed learning.]
	[flexibility]
Domain: self directed experience	[This class taught me that I had a learning style, whice is visual. Advance notice of the reading and subject matter gave me a chance to study-up on the upcoming topics before discussed in class.]
Domain Flexibility	
Domain: visual learner	[Leading the course discussion. I like to work in an interactive environment and leading the discussion kept me involved.]
Domain: advance knowledge of work	
Domain: leading a discussion	[]
	[The opportunity to reflect before posting worked well for me.]
Domain: leading discussion	
Domain: professor input	[once I realized that I was responsible for my own learning it became a challenge to see if self-directed learning really worked for me.]
Domain think before participating (online)	
Domain: responsibility for own learning	
Domain: missed F2F contact (online)	
Domain: too much reading (online)	
Domain: class discussion to fast) F2F	
Domain doesn't fit my learning style (F2F)	

[I enjoy the option of self-directed learning.]

[flexibility]

[This class taught me that I had a learning style, whice is visual. Advance notice of the reading and subject matter gave me a chance to study-up on the upcoming topics before discussed in class.]

[Leading the course discussion. I like to work in an interactive environment and leading the discussion kept me involved.]

[]

[The opportunity to reflect before posting worked well for me.]

[once I realized that I was responsible for my own learning it became a challenge to see if self-directed learning really worked for me.]

4. What worked against you and your personal learning style during this course?

[What worked against my learning style was not having face to face contact.]

[I cannot think of anything.]

[To many posting to post]

[Being a visual learning. Some times in class, I would get an idea, but by the time that I got the floor, I would have forgotten how I was going to word it.]

[I am also visual learner so taking an online class is against my learning style.]

[I thought there would be more interaction with my fellow learners some colleagues seemed to disappear.]

[I am so busy it was difficult at times to keep up with reading and posting.]