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Four Generations Working Together in the Workforce and in Higher Education.

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Four Generations Working Together in the Workforce and in Higher Education

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Lisa Hemmert Speer

May 2011

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ABSTRACT

Four Generations Working Together in the Workforce and in Higher Education

by

Lisa Hemmert Speer

The purpose of this study was to help the reader hear and begin to understand each of the 4 generations, resulting in an awareness of how each generation perceived the world in general, and specifically its perception of work in an academic setting.

The researcher studied 4 participants currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment; each represented one of the 4 generations examined and was studied through stories, autobiography, notes, conversations, interviews, family stories, and life experiences. Today's American workforce is unique in that never before has there been such a diverse group of individuals working together. Research suggests that the mixing of race, gender, ethnicity, and generation in the workforce of today is remarkable. First, the 4 generations in this qualitative study were identified. For this study, the generations were known as The Veterans or Traditionalists born approximately between 1922 and 1945, The Baby Boomers born approximately between 1946 and 1964, Generation X born approximately between 1965 and 1980, and Generation Y born approximately between 1981 and 2000.

After the collection and analysis of the 3 sets of data (interactive interviewing, written descriptions, and descriptive observations), the researcher created a coding and catalog content analysis. Much of the researcher's work consisted of a process method of analysis to discover

characteristics and patterns similar to the 4 generations represented in the qualitative Narrative Inquiry methodology.

Through the narrative inquiry method of this qualitative study, the examination of multiple generations within the workforce produced more similarities than differences. Common ground spanning over 80 years was evident more often than not. All 4 generations ultimately wanted the same thing with regard to their jobs: an enjoyable job, fulfillment and purpose, good benefits and pay, a perspective on what is important, respect, stability in the company and job, validation, and appreciation (Gibson, 2009).

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my daughter Abigail Lee Speer and to my father Richard Lee Hemmert. Though they are no longer with us physically; spiritually their legacy of love, courage, and strength will never fade. For this, I am forever grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood" (Covey, 1989, para. 1).

Today's American workforce is unique in that never before has there been such a diverse group of individuals working together. Research suggests the mixing of race, gender, ethnicity, and generation in the workforce of today is remarkable. First, the four generations represented in this qualitative study were identified. For this study, the generations will be known as:

1. The Veterans or Traditionalists: Born approximately between 1922 and 1945;

2. The Baby Boomers: Born approximately between 1946 and 1964;

3. Generation X: Born approximately between 1965 and 1980;

4. Generation Y: Born approximately between 1981 and 2000. (Hammill, 2005)

The periods represented are not scientific but rather subjective in that similar studies have not agreed on the represented periods. This has not been problematic in that the variance of years is minimal (Hammill, 2005).

For the first time in American history, there are four distinct generations working together. The generational differences resulting from this historical phenomenon can affect the cycles of change, the challenge of encouraging motivation and collaboration, as well as the ability to communicate. Communication is often based on generational background. When attempting to understand some fundamental differences between the four represented generations, it is helpful to look at individual characteristics within each of the generations studied here (Hammill, 2005).

Sharing common ground can be extremely helpful when working with multiple generations. Generations certainly have both similarities and differences, but ultimately, most

generations want the same things with regard to jobs. Some common desires include (Gibson, 2009):

- An enjoyable job.

- Fulfillment and purpose.

- Good benefits and pay.

- A perspective on what is important.

- Respect.

- Stability in the company and job.

- Validation and appreciation.

All generations want the same thing. However, the varying definitions of what is wanted and in what context can often result in clashes of job expectations.

> Each of us has preferences when it comes to communication styles and approaches – and which generation we belong to has something to do with that. It's helpful to recognize that what may seem natural to us might not be natural to other generations. Not that there's anything wrong with our approach (or theirs), it's just that our communication may miss the mark – or even be perceived as offensive. (Gibson, 2009, p.21)

Conflict and change can prove a challenge for members of any generation. When dealing with life's conflicts, we each carry our own level of risk tolerance, and this plays a major role in, not only how we deal with challenges, but also in, how the impact of such situations may affect our attitudes and behaviors (Gibson, 2009).

Conflict among the differing generations is often due to errors of perception rather than from valid differences (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). This reinforces the importance of effective communication when dealing with generational conflict. Zemke et al. (2000) suggest the use of aggressive communication to maintain a cohesive intergenerational workforce. This technique preempts and uncovers generational and other possible conflicts. By using aggressive

communication, the energy usually used during "behind-the-back complaining, passive-aggressive behavior, and open hostility" (p. 153), is redirected, allowing each to better appreciate the fresh perspective of the young and wisdom of the more experienced workers.

The study included four individuals currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment. Each represented one of the four generations outlined and was studied through observations, interviews, and conversations. Through narrative methodologies, the Narrative Inquiry method was used to converge and provide a better understanding of the *whys* of human action (Myers, 2000).

<div align="center">Generational Differences</div>

Through generational differences in character, choices, and reactions, demographers look beyond birth to childhood experiences referred to as defining events.

> A defining event happens before we are 18 years old and has the potential to shape our generation. While a defining event may be a major worldwide event, major worldwide events are only defining events for some of us experiencing them – those who are younger than 18 at the time. (Gibson, 2009, p. 4)

- The Traditionalists, survivors of the Great Depression of the 1930s, are often depicted as having a strong sense of respect for authority and discipline, as well as a nature of conformance (Gibson, 2009). Veterans are also known for being conservative with their money… "Put it away. Pay cash" (Hammill, 2005, p. 3).

- The Baby Boomers, of which there are an estimated 80 million, are described as driven workaholics who work efficiently for personal fulfillment and follow the "Buy now, pay later" financial attitude (Hammill, 2005, p. 3).

- With Generation X, the values lean toward skepticism and informality; however, their financial beliefs are similar to the Traditionalists in that they tend to be more conservative and careful with their money when compared to their parent's generation. GenXers, a

generation of latchkey kids from dual-income families, often function independently of

anyone or anything (Hammill, 2005).

- Generation Y, also referred to as the Millennials or Gen Ys, promoted a generation of

    globally-centered young people concerned with personal safety, as a result of school

    shootings and acts of terrorism. Generation Y portrays a strong sense of confidence and

    its members are extremely social. When it comes to spending habits, they earn money to

    spend money (Hammill, 2005).

Of course, these category descriptions are highly subjective and based on observation, research,

and individual characteristics representing each generational category.

The Generations

Scholars are now turning their attention to a phenomenon named the new or next

generation learner (Oblinger, 2003). When studying learning styles, individual preference or

psychological constructs are often incorporated as contrasted with the new learning concept,

which emerges from sociological, cultural, economic, and political perspectives (AASCU,

EDUCAUSE, & Microsoft, 2004).

> Defining today's students as new learners suggests a fundamental difference in the way
> they approach knowledge acquisition, problem solving, and moving into the workforce.
> The paramount questions become: is higher education meeting the needs of the present
> generation learner and, possibly more important, who is generation-next? These questions
> cause speculation about how we might transform or rebuild higher education. Let's
> briefly consider the generations that populate our campuses now. (AASCU et al., 2004,
> as cited in Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2005, p. 86)

The Traditionalists (Veterans)

The Traditionalist or Veteran generation, born prior to 1946, is often identified through

such historical markers as World War II, the Korean Conflict, The Depression, and the New

Deal. Though not all members of this generation directly experienced all of these events, they served as defining moments of whom they were and where they had come from.

The Traditionalist generation often lived with extended families and heard stories of their heritage as well as the defining moments of their lives, including the impact of World War II and the Great Depression. Their personal narratives placed tremendous importance and provided consistent messages through their conversations on the radio, in the movies, and in newspapers and magazines.

> "Hard work is the key to success," "the common good above all," "be thrifty and save your money for a rainy day – there are hard times ahead," "there are good people and there are bad people," "authority deserves respect," and above all, "one should be loyal to one's family, friends, job, country, and community." These events and themes played a powerful role in shaping the mindset of the Mature generation. (Wendover & Center for Generational Studies, 2000, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 87)

Technology implications for this generation are many, including trans-Atlantic radio signals, phonographs that play stereo recordings, and the origin of electronic computers. "These citizens, who believed in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, saw the university as an ivory tower: Go to college, I want better for you" (Wendover & Center for Generational Studies, 2000, p. 8).

Baby Boomers

Politically, economically, socially, and culturally the Baby Boomers have used the weight of their numbers to influence the country. With the beginning of this generation, economic expansion quickly gave way to a strong feeling of financial security. Life held much promise, even in lieu of defining moments including "divorce, consumer debt, the Cuban missile crisis, the Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations, and Vietnam" (Santos & Cox, 2000, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 87). Even with the impact of these events, Boomers continue to remain optimistic, and

are willing to go into debt, remain process-oriented, and strive for convenience. They occupy high positions in government, commerce, and industry, and they are becoming legendary for their potential impact on the social security system. Some of the major technology markers for this generation include PLATO, the fax machine, the BASIC computer language, and the minicomputer. (Santos & Cox, 2000, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 87)

Boomers consider higher education and the university environment a great expectation. They hold onto the mindset of buying it now and paying later – everything will work out, once they receive their degree (Hagevik, 1999).

Generation X

As the first generation to feel the profound impact of technological developments, as have the Boomers, Generation X has experienced a much different set of defining moments. Life events taking place during Generation X's time include excessive inflation, massive layoffs, the Challenger tragedy, the energy crisis, Three Mile Island, AIDS, and the Exxon Valdez. Generation X also became known as the *Latch Key Generation* because of both parents working. GenXers are often perceived as being somewhat skeptical and mistrustful of the, so-called, *establishment*.

Viewed as disrespectful, they speak up and look out for themselves because they feel societal expectations such as employment and security are ephemeral. Because they see job security as a myth, they work to live, putting very little stock in future stability. For Generation X, versatility provides security. There are many important technology markers for this generation: Windows keyboard mouse, the UNIX operating system, Intel's introduction of the 4004, 8008, and 8080 microprocessor chips, the C programming language, the foundation of Microsoft, and Apple Computer. (Hagevik, 1999, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, pp. 87-88)

Generation X tends to regard the higher education and university experience as one of uncertain mediation; in other words, they "have no idea what's happening after graduation" (Hagevik, 1999, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 88).

Generation Y (Millennials)

Also referred to as the Net Generation, Generation Y, Nexters, and the Internet generation, media exposure has taught this generation to challenge tradition and value (Lowery, 2001, as cited by Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 88). Rises in the stock market, cell phones, the Internet, and the World Wide Web have been part of their daily existence. Generation Y (the Millennials),

> have access to worldwide events that are unprecedented in history. However, they view these sometimes gruesome situations through the aloof templates of television and unfiltered websites that are repositories of pornography and extreme violence… They see political campaigns as media spin, and they see job expansion at the minimum wage level. Millennials are the most diverse generation in the history of our nation and can navigate complicated software with such ease that they intimidate members of previous generations. (Lowery, 2001, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 88)

Technological markers for Generation Y have been extremely impressive, with the introduction of the PC to the development of search engines, DVDs, and the MP3 audio format. "The Millennial Generation experiences the university through bricolage: I'm piecing together a program from four departments" (Marx, 2002, as cited in Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 88).

For each generation represented in this study, it became apparent to me that the defining events previously discussed shaped the trends or characteristics of their individual experiences. For many some characteristics tend to represent each generation's timeframe. Does that mean all generational characteristics are the same? Certainly not. More specifically, the trends of each generation in this study are often marked by common experiences. Individual differences are greatly influential as well, including, birth year, influences of growing up, birthplace, culture, and personal *baggage*.

Statement of the Problem

My intent in this study is to help the reader listen and begin to understand each of the four generations, resulting in an awareness of how each generation perceives the world in general

and, specifically, the world of work in an academic setting (Jorgenson, 2003). Communication has always provided the key to effective interaction among individuals (Steele & Gordon, 2006). The understanding of another individual allows interaction and influence between the two to occur. People frequently think chronologically; in other words, through the events occurring during their lifetimes. Individuals between the ages of 10 and 20 years have been considered extremely impressionable (Jorgenson, 2003).

Research Questions

This study was based on two research questions:

1.   What are the professional and personal challenges that four generational representatives working together in the higher education setting encounter?

2.   What are ways that different generational representatives use lifelong learning in their professional and personal lives?

Both the employees and employers need to ascertain why questions are asked without assuming that employees with questions are trying to cause trouble, be disrespectful, or undermine a person in authority (Deal, 2007). To avoid reaching the wrong conclusion, identify possible reasons why the questions were asked. Employers should communicate with the younger generations entering the workplace. Through employee guidance, training, review, and evaluation, employers can maintain the credibility needed to establish a successful working environment (O'Bannon, 2001).

Because leadership is often defined as a process of interpersonal influence, communication is at the very heart of this process. "Leadership is human (symbolic) communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet group" (Hackman & Johnson, 1991, as quoted in McElrath, 2009, p. 1). Leadership is effective when

enacted through communication and persuasion, not through force or coercion. Further, a leader is an individual influencing others through communication. Whether designated or emergent, any member of a group has the capability of providing leadership to other group members. Even in a group without a designated leader, there should be someone able to coordinate the flow of work and communication to its members. What do effective leaders do? Barge and Hirokawa's (1989) Communication Competency Model of Group Leadership is one of the most comprehensive models to address this question. Communication skills, also referred to as competencies, are used by individuals leading small groups. Two of the competencies include task and relationship distinctions.

Through analysis of the four research participants' individual interviews and conversations, I have provided thick, narrative description within their natural environments. I aimed for objectivity, as well as taking the views of the participants into account. Through interactive interviewing, written descriptions of participants, and analysis of data, information was collected and analyzed about each of the four generations represented (Myers, 2000).

<center>Significance of the Study</center>

Is there a generational blending in attitudes about today's workforce? Several generationally related issues include values, ambitions, mind-sets, and demographics. Previously, have there been multiple generations within the same organization? Yes, but in the past, it was commonplace to sequester such groups both organizationally and structurally (Zemke et al., 2000).

> Generational "mixing" was rare and then significantly influenced by formality and protocol. Senior employees did not share their reasoning or ask for input for their decision making. Juniors, when they had complaints or doubts, kept to themselves or at least to those on their own level, and then usually discussed them only "off premises." (Zemke et al., 2000, p. 10)

Generational blending carries the potential of creativity, the ability to solve problems, and the chance of future opportunities. What often interferes with productive collaboration is intergenerational conflict, including differences of opinion, conflicting values and views, in addition to methods of working, talking, and thinking. The result often challenges the best interests of the organization as well as being stressful and confusing to all involved (Zemke et al., 2000). "The sounds of generations in conflict are heard around the water cooler, across the cafeteria table, at the coffee bar, and on the e-mail whine boards of 1,001 corporations and public servers" (Zemke et al., 2000, p. 11).

Generational gaps are not a new societal phenomenon. What is new and changing is that the new scenario has become a four-way divide. With four generations at odds in the workplace, the natural flow of power and responsibility moving from older to younger workers has been altered by many factors, including changes in life expectancy, advances in longevity and health, and changes in lifestyle and technology. For every generation, life has frequently become more unpredictable.

> In times of uncertainty and anxiety, differences between groups and sets of people, even generations, become tension producing and potential flash points. We increasingly live in a world of high stakes, winners and losers, high tensions, diminishing commonalities in values, and changing social contracts and compacts (Zemke et al., 2000, p. 13).

Interestingly enough, surprising similarities have been identified among Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generations X and Y (Gutierrez-Folch, 2009). The importance of creating teams and departments in which all four generations are included has proven valuable in generational integration, as well as in bridging the generational divide by working for the service of others. Many of the perceived differences and generational stereotypes are falling by the wayside as each of the four generations represented in this study have become accustomed to working together (Gutierrez-Folch, 2009).

The blending of the four generations within the workplace poses a dynamic challenge with regard to communication and collaboration. As members of each of the represented generations in this qualitative study responds differently to rules, terminology, technology, and constraints, they are also motivated by differing rewards and incentives (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007). For many individuals, behavior is frequently driven by their value systems. In other words, by reviewing another generation's idea of thinking and reasoning, there is a better chance of understanding and communicating with that generation. Communication's success is based on understanding what each party is saying (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

The Traditionalists need to be valued for their reliability and loyalty within the workplace as well as within the community. They prefer face-to-face communication and desire recognition for their experience and commitment to quality work instead of merely quick results. Members of the Traditionalist Generation are not wasters of time; they identify themselves through their careers (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

The Baby Boomers respond positively with systems and processes. Boomers are responsive to pay and incentives based on achievement. They are firm believers in face-to-face contact with their employer and are known as the *workaholic generation*. They prefer the title as well as the corner office (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

Members of Generation X and Generation Y require more input into how they learn, but desire the independence to do so. These generations have been exposed to considerable diversity through their education and in the workplace. They respond to action words and direct challenge and prefer email communication on an almost constant basis (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007)

> Given the trend toward later retirement, we now see Traditionalists and Boomers who are
> still happy working. Meanwhile, Generation Xers are quickly moving into positions of
> power and influence. They are supervising and educating members of older generations.
> It would behoove us all to understand each group's values to enhance communication and

collaboration while working alongside one another. (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007, p. 2)

<u>Research Approach</u>

The type of qualitative research used in this study was Narrative Inquiry, which uses field tests resulting in data sources. Some of the sources used include stories, autobiography, notes, conversations, interviews, family stories, and life experiences. Narrative Inquiry is a relatively recent procedure used in social science qualitative research. It has emerged as both a form of qualitative research and as a form of Knowledge Management. "Narrative Inquiry focuses on the organization of human knowledge more than merely the collection and processing of data. It also implies that knowledge itself is considered valuable and noteworthy even when known by only one person" (Clandinin & Connely, 2000, p. 98).

My purpose was to explore the phenomena of higher education by studying four individuals representative of the four generations studied: Traditionalists or Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. After the collection of data from the four individuals through interactive interviewing, analysis, written descriptions, and observation, I used an overall system for cataloging and coding to move from category constructions to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Limitations

This study is delimited to four individuals of different generations, who have worked or are currently working in the field of higher education. Through the research process, humanness both informs and directs the reader. Beneficial to qualitative research is its very strength with regard to the depth and descriptions used. As a narrative researcher, I realize that the stories collected and recorded depended on the individual's past and present experiences, his or her

moral compass, as well as the person who receives the stories. Narrative is, "the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 11).

Like many of us, educators tell and retell their experiences not only for others but also for themselves. These experiences may vary somewhat depending on the setting, the period, and the audience addressed. Further, the experiences shared through extensive interviewing of each of the four generational representatives, may change through additional experiences and dialog with others. Life stories and experiences must be rooted in society as well as performed by individuals in cultural settings (Bruner, 1986). Human knowledge and personal identity are in a constant state of flux and revision. The experiences of the participants in this research provide recordings of continuous and developing narratives of each of the four participants interviewed.

Situated within the qualitative or interpretive research method, the narrative approach to research enables each participant to be studied in his or her natural setting, lending to the interpretation of phenomena in the terms of the meaning those studied provide. This leads the focus of voice through qualitative research.

> Scholars within the narrative approach use the term voices rather than voice because they recognize that the narratives are in part personal stories shaped by the knowledge, experiences, values and feelings of the persons who are telling them. At the same time, they are also collective stories that are shaped by the addressees and the cultural, historical and institutional settings in which they occur. (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, as cited by Moen, 2006, p. 5)

By the process of collaboration through dialogue between the researcher and participants, a variety of data collection methods were used, including field notes, journal records, interviews, and direct observation. Three recurrent focal aspects of the narrative approach used during this research included the relationship between the researcher and participants, the development of an experienced and orally relayed story into written text, and the hermeneutic or interpretive nature of narrative research.

Definition of Terms

These definitions were used in this study:

Baby Boomers – The Baby Boomers were born approximately between the years of 1946 and
1964. After World War II, there was an explosion of births for the next 18 years. Baby
Boomers make up a sizable portion (80%) of the consuming public; their habits and
lifestyles have a powerful influence on the economy.

Diversity – Diversity is being different or unlike someone or something else. Globally speaking,
a diverse group of people (both men and women) of many generations includes those
from ethnically- and racially-differing backgrounds.

Generation X (Xers) – Members of Generation X were born approximately between the years of
1965 and 1980. Generation Xers are the generation born after the Baby Boomers; more
than 40 million Americans represent this generation.

Generation Y (Ys) – Members of Generation Y were born approximately between the years of
1981 and 2000. They are ordinarily marked by familiarity with communications, media,
and digital technologies.

Generational Montessori – Generational Montessori encourages older generations working with
younger generations.

Lifelong Learning – Lifelong Learning is the continued opportunity to experience new situations
through all or most of one's lifetime. It is a constant learning and development process, in
which everyone should engage, in a time of rapid change.

Traditionalists (Veterans) – Traditionalists were born approximately between the years of 1922
and 1945. This generation grew up in the United States during the Great Depression and

World War II. Their productivity at the *home front* made a decisive material contribution

to the war effort.

Qualitative Research – Qualitative research is a method of inquiry appropriated in many different

academic disciplines, but traditionally, in the social sciences. Qualitative Research

follows an inductive research process and involves the collection and analysis of

qualitative data to search for patterns, themes, and holistic features.

Organization of the Study

This qualitative study is presented in five Chapters. Chapter 1 provides an Introduction, a

Statement of the Problem, Research Questions, the Significance of the Study, Limitations, the

Definition of Terms, and an Organization of the Study. Chapter 2 presents the Literature Review

including an Introduction, Generational Shifts, Generational Merging, Generational Divergence,

Generational Learning in Educational Environments, Lifelong Learning, Learning Styles Across

Generations in Higher Education, Different Generations' Perceptions of Learning, Generational

Conflict in Professional Teams, Building Connection Among the Generational Divide, Managing

Generational Conflict in the Workplace, Diversity in the Multigenerational Workforce, and a

Chapter Summary. Chapter 3 provides a description of the Methods used in the study including

the Research Design, the Researcher's Role, the Population, the Development of Survey

Instrument, the Data Collection Procedures, the Research Questions, the Data Analysis, the

Validity and Reliability, the Ethical Considerations, and a Chapter Summary. Chapter 4 includes

the Results of the study including an Introduction, Sample, Findings, Findings for Research

Question 1, Findings for Research Question 2, and a Chapter Summary. Chapter 5 presents a

Discussion of the findings including an Introduction, Discussion, Implications for Practice,

Implications for Further Research, and a Chapter Summary.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Generational diversity has always been a factor in the workplace. Traditionally, the various generations are separated by their job descriptions as well as through systems of internal hierarchy. Often, senior employees were predominantly white males and middle-aged and younger workers filled the other positions available under senior management. Currently, for the first time in American history, four distinct generational groups are not only working together but also vying for the same positions. As with any generational divide, each of these four categories has differences with regard to life perspectives, ethical beliefs, authority expectations, and work preferences. How can all of this variation assure a productive working organization? "Seek first to understand, then to be understood" (Covey, 1989, para. 1).

Higher Education

Higher education is feeling the generational crunch as well. College students are coming to school armed with a vast array of tech-savvy and multi-purpose gadgets. Are professors changing pedagogy to keep up? Some believe colleges will eventually be required to change both classroom and degree-seeking directions (Carlson, 2005). Generation Y, also known as the Millennials, are not normally described as having an abundance of patience! This is the generation of instant gratification, even more so than its predecessor, Generation X.

> Millennials expect to be able to choose what kind of education they buy, and what, where, and how they learn. To meet the demands of these new students, colleges must rethink how they operate. Imagine classrooms that incorporate more videos and video games, classes that meet electronically to fit students' schedules, students who choose to learn from each other rather than a professor and courseware, search engines, and library databases that are animated, image- based, and interactive. (Carlson, 2005, p. A34)

However, not all of higher education agrees. It is a widely held belief that higher education is all about the Baby Boomers and previous generations. This level of learning is compared to an industrial-aged model. Should educational techniques change in order to keep up with the younger generations entering the *hallowed doors*?

Many educators are accustomed to helping mold their students in the process of learning instead of having to adapt to the digital generation, which is reported not to have the educational discipline of previous generations. Faculty members feel pressured to decrease lecture time and increase group discussion time. Much of this pressure, they feel, is coming from the administration. "We think that the students will come if we teach in a way that meets the expectations we have of what the students want. At some point, what we are doing is killing higher education" (Carlson, 2005, p. A34).

Knowledge acquisition, problem solving, and moving into the main stream are fundamentally approached in a different way. Currently paramount to the success of higher education is the question of whether or not it is meeting the needs of the present generation as well as reaching out to the next generation. Higher education is shifting toward an attitude of transformation in change regardless of the age of student, staff, or faculty currently populating the nation's campuses.

This study examined four individuals currently or formerly involved in higher education. Each participant, representing one of the four generations researched, was studied through observations, interviews, and conversations. Narrative Inquiry helped provide a better understanding of human action.

Professional Workforce

  There are four generational groups currently active today. The Traditional Generation (born before 1946) values such characteristics as loyalty, discipline, respect, and authority. Workers of this generation often played a key role in strong economic development (Simón, 2007). The Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1946 and 1964) has the largest portion of workaholics in history and often occupies positions of high corporate responsibility. Generation X members (born between 1961 and 1979) have the best academic training and international experience in history (Simón, 2007). Generation Xers tend to break with traditional patterns of behavior that result in a more informal working environment. Generation X also prefers a more flexible and horizontal style of working, as compared to the hierarchical authority often used by the Traditionalists and the Baby Boomers. Generation Y, on the other hand, (born after 1980) are the first generation to have lived their entire lives with information technology. They appear to be more individualistic than the previous three generations and expect autonomy in their behaviors and opinions. Generation Y also tends to place personal activities above workplace considerations.

> To put it as simply as possible, we can say that Traditionalist workers are pragmatic and disciplined and are motivated by loyalty. In contrast, Baby Boomers are more optimistic and more self-motivated. Generation X is the most skeptical when it comes to organizations, and it is trying to find balance and flexibility, above all. Finally, in Generation Y there is a shortage of loyalty to the generation. Nevertheless, Generation Y puts a great deal of importance on intense relationships with co-workers and supervisors. (Simón, 2007, para. 12)

  For each generation represented in this study, it became evident that its defining events shaped the trends or characteristics of its individual experiences. For many some characteristics tend to represent each generation's time. Of course, not all generational characteristics are the same. More specifically, the trends of each generation studied are often marked by common

experiences. Individual differences including birth year, influences of growing up, birthplace, culture, and personal *baggage* are greatly influential as well.

Based on the following criteria, I used purposeful sampling in the selection process of the four participants for this study:

1.   Four individuals representing each of the study's four samplings of generational representation: Traditionalists or Veterans; Baby Boomers; Generation X, and Generation Y.

2.   Four individuals who are currently or have in the past worked in the higher education environment.

3.   Heterogeneous purposeful sampling, including diversity based on gender and age.

Generational Shifts

Both faculty and administration need to understand that Generations X and Y, in particular, use a wide variety of media and appear to be more accepting of using more interactive methods in video or audio formats. Going a step further, learning could be a form of system that determines how a student learns and then adapts to his or her style of learning. Universities are beginning to lose their monopoly of higher learning as the web becomes a dominant force or infrastructure for knowledge as well as a global platform for communication with others (Tapscott, 2009).

Learning Styles Within Higher Education

The model of pedagogy on some university campuses is undergoing a fundamental challenge as the gap is widening between the traditional and the digital way of learning. However, the professor lecturing behind the podium is in no way obsolete on college campuses today. The challenge is that with this type of teaching and learning the student can become

somewhat isolated in the process. The *digital natives* (Generations X and Y) have grown up in an interactive educational setting, whereas the Boomers grew up in a broadcast Industrial Age educational setting. Such changes must be dealt with and not pushed aside in higher learning. This is all part of the cultural shift between generations.

> Tapscott (2005) strongly advocates debate on how universities function in a networked society and the restructuring of higher education. Is the basic model of pedagogy broken? Broadcast learning is no longer appropriate for the digital age and for a new generation of students who represent the future of learning. (as cited in Carlson, 2005, p. A34)

Changes in both the workplace and the educational environment have been profound over the last few years. Powerful demographic forces will help to unify the Generational Shift in numbers, norms, and values. As four generations compete for positions, we are working through some of the most profound changes since the Industrial Revolution. The oldest generation represented in this study, the Traditionalists, are gradually retiring from the workforce. With them, goes a tremendous amount of knowledge, skill, and wisdom. It is estimated that two experienced workers will exit the workforce for every new one over the next 10 years (Tulgan, 2010).

The Baby Boomers are rapidly representing the aging workforce. Every day, 8-10 thousand Baby Boomers reach 60 years of age (Tulgan, 2010). As the Baby Boomer generation influences aging and retirement, their mindset will add to Generation X's demand for a more flexible working environment. Interestingly enough, Tulgan (2010) also speaks of the eventual dominance of Generations X and Y within the workforce resulting in the outdating of many forms of old fashioned management. He goes on speak of the high maintenance nature of Generation Y and refers them to a revved up version of Generation X!

With scholars turning their attention to the learners of the next generation, the individual preferences and psychological constructs are incorporated into the learning concept emerging

from sociological, cultural, economic, and political perspectives. Employers are also adjusting

their means of communication with younger workers through building credibility between

managers and employees, requiring training as a job responsibility beginning with the interview

process, and linking performance evaluation with concrete actions.

How was the generation mix represented in this study? I identified and purposefully

chose a member of each generation from my coworkers, former professors, and community

members. The individuals representing each of the four generations were selected for interviews.

I also had conversations with various other members of the generations studied. The four

individuals currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment and representing

the four generations researched were examined through observations, interviews, and

conversations.

Generational Merging

Is higher education, as well as the general workforce, catering to the younger generations

who want to move fast and in the process force professors and administrators to give up their

core method of teaching students how to learn on their own?

> We are not teaching students, sit by yourselves, take a walk by yourselves and think –
> think through a problem. I don't mind group work, and I assign group problems. You can
> learn from each other. But some of this you have to learn to do on your own, and it takes
> quiet. (Carlson, 2005, p. A34)

Digital Media or Traditional Media

Faculty and administrative staff members are still skeptical about whether or not students

truly prefer digital to traditional media. After all, they work with text, video, and sound. Lectures

are multisensory experiences: The student sees the instructor, hears voices in the classroom, and

reads what is written on the board.

One view regarding generational differences presumes those shared events influence and define each generation (Zemke et al., 2000). Even though generations are diverse in nature, they also have in common many of the same thoughts, values, and the behaviors resulting from shared events. Additionally, these values, reactions, and behaviors may differ across the four generations. "The alternative view postulates that although there might be variations throughout an employee's life cycle or career stage, ultimately employees may be 'generic'" (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998, p. 29) in what they want from their jobs; trying to bifurcate employees by generations may be misguided (Jorgenson, 2003; Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998; Yang & Guy, 2006).

Generational merging carries the potential of added creativity, the ability to solve problems, and opportunities for the future. Generational merging promotes productive collaborations that occur through intergenerational conflict such as differences in opinions, values, views, work methods, and communication. Though somewhat stressful in nature, results often *bear fruit* and turn out in the best interest of the organization.

For this study, I interviewed individuals representing each of the four generations: the Traditionalists or Veterans, the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. They were asked to share descriptions of their experiences of phenomena. The personal documents were sorted, counted, and analyzed. Direct observations occurred during field visits as part of the Narrative Inquiry methodology.

Generational Divergence

For the first time in recent memory four generations have converged in the academic workplace (Fogg, 2008). As a result, serious culture clashes are bound to occur.

It is happening across college campuses – in offices as diverse as admissions, student affairs, and technology. And it is especially striking in the faculty ranks, where

generational challenges have extra significance and recruiting efforts, tenure evaluations, and the changing definition of what constitutes important faculty work. (Fogg, 2008, B18)

Generations X and Y are in a work environment of predominantly Baby Boomers; things are not always calm. Some universities are having difficulty retaining workers younger than 35 as members of the younger generation want more balance, freedom, and autonomy. Switching careers and leaving academia altogether is not a problem for them as long as they can improve their working conditions. Baby Boomers, on the other hand, cannot understand why someone would leave the office at 5 pm when there is more work to do. How can this generational dilemma be alleviated? Strong communication skills can be invaluable in helping the variety of different-aged individuals begin to understand their differences. Further, it has been said that more substantial structural and policy changes can ward off possible problems. A tremendous rise in the number of younger generation members competing for their places in the academic ranks is expected.

<u>Generational Gap in Higher Education</u>

A significant generational gap is expected to occur in higher education. There is a great need for colleges to make strong commitments to diversity, technology, and workplace balance. It is impossible to stereotype each of the four generations represented in this study, but it is just as impossible not to recognize some of each group's life characteristics.

> Baby Boomers dominate today's academic workforce. Born between 1946 and 1964, Baby Boomers represent at least half of the nation's faculty members. They typically display loyalty to their institution, an assumption that working overtime is a given, and commitment to making a difference by working together. In the Randstad survey, 78 percent of Baby Boomers described themselves as having a strong work ethic, as opposed to 53 percent of the members of Generation Y and 68 percent of those in Generation X. (Fogg, 2008, B18)

> Gen Xers, often noted for their cynicism, tend to care more about autonomy, seek a balance between home and work, and look out for their own interests first. Born between

1964 and 1982, they have been dubbed as the "Me Generation." And finally, just now entering the academic workplace, are the oldest members of Generation Y, also known as the "Millennials." Born between 1982 and the late 1990s, they grew up with technology at their fingertips. While similar to Xers, they are known to be more optimistic, fun seeking, and flexible, but they are also the most coddled of all. (Fogg, 2008, B18)

Varying personalities and working habits may be unrelated to generation. However, an understanding of each generation represented can make for a healthier working environment and help eliminate various workplace controversies. In order to narrow gaps in higher education and in the traditional workforce, management must be followed. "So much of what is going on in our lives is seen through our own generational lens" (Lancaster, 2004, p. 1).

Age Diversity Among Generations

The potential for conflict and confusion between generations has never been greater. While preparing this research, it became very clear that – between a lack of communication, the tension of always having done it a certain way, and the thinking that something should be changed, because it can be changed – the generational clash has reared its ugly head. How can this be rectified? With the coming workforce exit of both Traditionalists and Baby Boomers, not only will there be a tremendous shortage of workers but also a tremendous brain drain on those generations left to pick up the pieces and carry on.

What has proven to be a talent overload is quickly becoming a talent deficit (Lancaster, 2004). Companies in the near future will find themselves struggling and competing in their search for qualified employees. This is the time to encourage as well as take advantage of generational strengths instead of generational clashes. Generational differences can enhance rather than harm our places of business and institutions of higher learning.

Age diversity may very well prove to be the most conflict-ridden diversity issue of the early 21st Century. Along with the impending age boom, institutions of higher education must

adequately prepare graduates in all disciplines to participate in a multigenerational workforce. Not only younger graduates, but also the older workers returning to the classroom for retraining, should be prepared to handle conflict in an age-diverse work environment.

The research resulting from this qualitative study not only explains how each of the four generations is being understood or stereotyped but also relays what each generation can bring to the table through inevitable examples of clashes and interaction.

Generational Learning in Educational Environments

When looking at the planning of training aspect for four different generations simultaneously, a homogenous group of students will hardly be the result. "Instead, you will uncover a classroom more like a corporate Montessori, with four generations of students coming to learn" (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002, p. 276).With the increase of training multigenerational groups of students, the challenge for trainers is the ability to combine different generations, each with varying experience levels as well as training needs.

Changes in Generational Learning

With the strengthening of the economy during the 1990s, more training became available, which led to an increase in training multiple generations. As more positions became available, the development of each generation has become more aggressive. Where training was once a nice *extra*, it has since become a necessity for successful management in both the corporate and educational arenas. The world, with all its rapid changes, poses a demand for additional training regardless of generation (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Accessibility, too, continues to play an increasingly important role. For example, the World Wide Web is now a classroom. When considering the cost effectiveness of web training, the previous expenses of traveling and lodging become an excellent example of its added convenience. The on-line learning environment also

permits times and locations conducive to not interrupting the flow of those being trained

(Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

Generational Learning Perspectives

Do different generations look at learning from different perspectives?

- Traditionalists: *"I learned it the hard way: you can too!"*
- Baby Boomers: *"Train 'em too much and they'll leave."*
- Generation Xers: *"The more they learn, the more they stay."*
- Generation Ys: *"Continuing learning is a way of life."* (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002, p. 278)

The advantage of a *Generational Montessori* encourages the diversity of older generations

working with younger generations of students, as it is more realistic and reflective of their lives

and work communities. As each of the four generations has varying attitudes and expectations

toward learning, educators must be on their toes about understanding generational differences

including setting, style, and substance (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

Giancola (2006) notes a lack of published research on generational differences in

academic journals and suggests, "The generational approach may be more popular culture than

science" (p. 33). Why should generational differences matter in the workplace? When referring

to a generational cohort as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and

significant life events that have occurred at critical developmental stages, the major

environmental influences explain the different generations' human socialization skills. As such,

generational influences control the development of personality, values, beliefs, and expectations

that carry into adulthood. Of particular significance to the generational approach are major shifts

in the socio-cultural environment over time, as in highly salient events that one generation may

experience but another either does not experience or experiences the events outside of its critical

socialization years (Noble & Schewe, 2003; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Twenge, 2000).

Interestingly enough, surprising similarities have been identified among Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generations X and Y. The creation of teams and departments in which all four generations are included has proven valuable in generational integration, just as has bridging the generational divide by working for the service of others. As the four generations represented in this study have become accustomed to working and training together, many of the perceived differences and generational stereotypes have fallen away.

Lifelong Learning

What has research revealed about learning and how can organizations effectively meet those needs? Two areas frequently brought up by all generations are the areas of learning and development, which are widely considered important retention factors. In addition, learning and development are strong determinants of whether or not members of the four generations choose to stay in a position or consider moving on (Deal, 2007).

Learning and Development Within the Workplace

Recent research (Deal, 2007) answered a number of questions about learning and development in the workplace. The research showed that 90% of respondents were learning on the job, 79% were developing the skills they needed for the future, 63% believed their organization would develop them as employees, and 97% said it was important for them to learn on the job.

People of all generations have commented on the importance of learning and development within an organization. Research includes learning more about the developmental opportunities and learning methods employees prefer. What do people want to learn? Overall, these are the top 10 areas where people hope to get training (Deal, 2007).

1. Leadership – the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal
2. Skills training in the field of expertise – characteristics, skills, and knowledge of a person
3. Team building – a state of mind that moves us to action
4. Problem solving and decision making – supports technological and managerial information using short term goals and prioritization
5. Strategic planning – determination of steps required to reach an objective
6. Managing change – actively using new approaches, tools, and frameworks to help organizations, teams, and individuals
7. Computer training – education of multimedia
8. Vision – an image of the future we seek to create
9. Communication skills – the art and technique of using words effectively to impart information or ideas
10. Conflict management – practice of identifying and handling conflict in a fair, sensible, and efficient manner. (Deal, 2007, p. 123)

Professional Development Among Generations

Five professional development areas seem to be included on every generation's list: leadership, skills training in field of expertise, problem solving, decision-making, team building, and communication skills (Deal, 2007). This indicates that an interest in development exists among all four generations participating in this study. Some interesting findings include the Traditionalists and the Boomers who both place computer training in their top 10 priorities of continued learning. Conversely, neither the Xers nor the Ys included computer training in their top 10. Why? Because the latter two generations were born during the era of technology and do not know any other world except for one that includes computers. Obviously, Traditionalists and Boomers feel less comfortable with computers and desire to move further along the learning curve. Additional computer training as well as practicing on personal computers at home can prove quite beneficial for the eldest two generations represented in this qualitative study.

> Most of the development priorities for Early Boomers, Late Boomers, and Early Xers are the same. People from these generations focus on the development in the areas of strategic planning, managing, change, and vision. They also included management, business skills, and conflict management in their top ten. It is interesting to note how similar the responses are from people of these generations. Why might this be? Why

don't people of different generations want different types of development? Maybe generation is much less important than another factor in determining what development people want? (Deal, 2007, p. 178)

Effective Communication Among Generations

Most people want the same things from their jobs or vocations. However, the issues causing job dissatisfaction and the actions taken may differ by generation. A study released by the Learning Café (Hastings, 2008), a West Coast-based consulting firm specializing in generational issues, reported that,

More than 1,000 respondents from all four generations (with the majority of respondents – 58% – made up of Baby Boomers) indicated what keeps them motivated, satisfied or productive, as well as what causes them to disconnect or be unhappy or ineffective. (Hastings, 2008, p. 1)

The merging of the four generations within the workplace poses a dynamic challenge with regard to communication and collaboration. As each of the represented generations in this qualitative study responded differently to rules, terminology, technology, and constraints, each of the four generations was also motivated by differing rewards and incentives. For many individuals, behavior is frequently driven by their value system. In other words, reviewing another generation's idea of thinking and reasoning provides a better chance for understanding and communicating with that generation.

Through this qualitative study, as well as the participant's responses, it is clearly the time to make education, with a major focus on lifelong learning, a top priority within American culture. Globally, America continues to lose ground among developed nations in postsecondary completion rates. Research shows that the declining education level is in direct conflict with the global demand for more skilled workers. Every sector of society, or in the case of this study, each generational representative, has played and continues to play a crucial role to help and encourage America's workforce to keep up.

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Learning Styles Across Generations in Higher Education

A particularly important consideration, when teaching students or employees from multiple generations is to provide a comfortable learning environment regardless of learning style preferences. The degree of familiarity with technology as well as with previous learning experiences has resulted in some observations.

- Older students tend to resist technology more than younger students.
- Older students are more likely to ask the instructor technical questions rather than relying on the Informational Technology helpdesk.
- Younger students are more likely to use URLs in online discussions.
- Younger students tend to prefer video. (Kelly, 2010, para. 3)

Learning Styles

Learning style assessments can prove helpful in finding out how students prefer to learn. An idea when working with a multigenerational group of learners is to group the students according to their learning styles and experiences. Educators can recognize the many benefits of different generations interacting through course content, notwithstanding the occasional differences in language usage and cultural references. As a member of the Baby Boomer Generation, I realize the necessity for keeping up with the younger generations, and to be able to provide cultural information they can appreciate. However, as a writing teacher, I suggest that my students should not write the way they talk or text.

> I think there's going to be some challenges for faculty to understand the differences across generations, and we have the responsibility to find ways to adapt our delivery and engage our students or we're always going to have this core of students who are not going to be happy. (Deborah Silverman, as quoted in Kelly, 2010, para. 9)

Faculty and staff who currently work in higher education mirror the generational dynamics of the overall American workforce of four distinct generations working together. For the most part, representatives of the Traditionalist Generation are retired or preparing for retirement. The remaining generations of the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y

comprise the rest of the academic workforce, with the Baby Boomers serving as the largest

component of the employee population. Many of the Baby Boomers are holding leadership and

management positions. Generation Xers are moving into leadership positions, while the

Generation Ys or Millennials also move into leadership and management positions, in addition to

serving as graduate students and assistants. Faculty and administrative generational groups have

different ideas regarding work preferences and administrative styles in the higher education

setting (Gordon & Steele, 2005).

Generational Characteristics Within the Work Environment

Why do different generations prefer certain characteristics or qualities within their work

environment? As mentioned earlier, each generation's work ethics, habits, and expectations have

formed through the historical and social events occurring during their formative years. As Raines

(2003) points out in describing work cultures,

> Most Boomers prefer a workplace that is more egalitarian, humane, and democratic. Gen
> Xers tend to prefer a fast-paced, more functional culture with looser boundaries around
> leadership. Many Millennials (Generation Y) prefer a collaborative, creative and positive
> work culture. Rather than base the culture of a work environment on age, Raines suggests
> it be based on structure, policies, procedures, pace, and rewards. (p. 72)

Boomers often prefer opportunities within the workplace involving personal growth and

gratification. Boomers advocate teamwork and extrinsic rewards such as money, titles, and

recognition. Gen Xers, on the other hand, desire a more balanced personal-work ethic that values

life outside the workplace and is relaxed regarding hours, work, and dress. Millennials, however,

are more comfortable in a work environment focused on supervision and structure to enhance

their multitasking capabilities. Martin and Tulgan (2002) suggest that workers "prefer coaches

over bosses" (p. 54). In a multigenerational setting clear communication is critical in scenarios

that call for conflict resolution (Steele & Gordon, 2006). Martin and Tulgan (2002) quote a 56-

year-old Baby Boomer to illustrate a common complaint, "No one wants to pay their dues anymore. They want the corner office right now without earning it – or sacrificing for it. These young people just don't have our work ethic" (p. xii).

> A key issue in work ethic differences between generations is the conflict between the old paradigm of "face time" management (being at your desk at certain hours) and the new paradigm of "reality" management (getting the work done whenever and wherever it may be). (Steele & Gordon, 2006, Work Ethic, para. 1)

Advantages of working in a multi-generational institution of higher learning include a reflection of the diverse needs of the faculty, staff, and students. Varying perspectives of each generation represented in the study can positively affect the working climate. Raines (2003) points out that when differences are encouraged, creativity and productivity increase. Higher education should concentrate on what unites them in a common cause… that of serving students. "Education is the best provision for old age" (Aristotle (384-322 BC) as quoted by Diogenes, 2000).

Generational gaps are certainly not a new societal phenomenon. What is new and changing is that the scenario has become a four-way divide. With four generations at odds in the workplace, the natural flow of power and responsibility moving from older to younger workers has been altered by many factors including changes in life expectancy, advances in longevity and health, and changes in lifestyle and technology. For every generation life has frequently become more unpredictable. We now see Traditionalists and Baby Boomers who are still working as members of Generation X begin to move into higher positions of power and influence.

Different Generations' Perceptions of Learning

Do most adults have a basic learning style similar to what they were taught in school? Yes. Even with an ability to adapt to new ways of thinking, the majority of adults are most comfortable learning in a manner similar to what was introduced to them early in their education.

Have teaching methods changed dramatically over the last 30 years? Yes. "The look, style, and approach to learning has changed" (El-Shamy, 2004).

Learning Approaches Among Generations

Many members of the younger generations (Generations X and Y) are familiar with learning approaches like teamwork and collaboration and have been taught to use critical thinking skills. These generations have done well in open and individualized classroom settings. Teaching philosophies encouraging learners to become autonomous include engaged, problem-based, and self-directed learning styles (El-Shamy, 2004).

What are some characteristics of the learning styles of Baby Boomers? Much of this generation's classroom instruction took place through printed text and lecture. Classrooms were primarily sparse, strict, and structured; teachers frequently taught through reading assignments and in sequential order. Many Baby Boomers approach teaching as a growth or learning experience.

> …the first thirty minutes of class may be carefully devoted to setting a good climate – welcoming participants, making introductory remarks, presenting an overview of the class and its purpose and goals, covering housekeeping issues, and, of course, introducing yourself and then having the participants meet one another (preferably in a short, clever activity). All of this is done at an energetic, but evenly-paced tempo – accompanied by the appropriate distribution of three- ring binders, of course, and a sprinkling of overhead transparencies or colorful slides. (El-Shamy, 2004, p. 12)

Although this style of learning was reassuring in its approach and placed its participants at ease with the course content and instructor, to many younger generations (Generations X and Y) it is frustratingly slow and unnecessary. This has called for new approaches to teaching and training among the different generations working and learning together in today's society.

Generations X and Y, sometimes referred as the Games Generations, expect speed, connectivity, activity, and ability to access data simultaneously. Media socialization has

profoundly affected and altered the learning styles and capacities for all generations. Tapscott (1998) wrote,

> by exploiting the digital media, educators and students can shift to a new, more powerful, and more effective learning paradigm. The new paradigm he discusses includes such things as a more interactive and nonsequential access to information, more customized learning, and a move toward learning as fun. (Tapscott, 1998, p. 142)

Different learning styles and habits go along with each generation's approach. Technology has radically affected the learning styles and expectations of younger generations. Through their technological proficiency, Generations X and Y are predominantly open to a faster-paced form of training and teaching while at the same time offering high levels of interaction, choices, and options. On the other hand, Baby Boomers are inclined to train in a more leisurely style, often using telling and text-oriented manipulatives instead of taking a linear approach to matters. Through modification of teaching and the addition of interaction by the delivery method, Baby Boomers can begin to adapt to a cross-generational representation of technique and approach (El-Shamy, 2004).

The Traditionalists prefer face-to-face communication in the workplace and desire recognition for their experience and commitment to quality work instead of merely quick results. The Baby Boomers respond positively with systems and processes. Boomers are responsive to pay and incentives based on achievement. Firm believers of face-to-face contact with their employer, they are also known as the *workaholic generation*. Generations X and Y require more input into how they learn but desire the independence to do so. They respond to action words and direct challenge and prefer email communication to face-to-face conversation.

Generational Conflict in Professional Teams

Is it easy to form a hasty and incorrect impression from observing another generation? Misunderstanding a fellow team member's behavior and or surmising an erroneous impression of

someone from another generation is likely (Erickson, 2009). Misunderstandings among generational collaborative efforts may take on many forms, but it has been shown through research that generational conflict is usually centered on four essential team activities.

- Choosing where and when to work;

- Communicating among team members;

- Getting together;

- Finding information or learning new things. (Erickson, 2009, para. 3)

<u>Work Ethics Among Generations</u>

Many Traditionalists and Baby Boomers speak of *going to work* as a specified time in one location (for example 9 am to 5 pm). Over time this synchronous pattern of completing daily work-related responsibilities has evolved somewhat and relaxed with regard to younger workers. Members of the younger generations tend to view work as something that can be accomplished anywhere or anytime. Generations X and Y have grown up in an asynchronous era with the concept of set work schedules being viewed as restrictive to productivity (Erickson, 2009).

It is easy to understand how inter-generational team members can misinterpret one another's concept of time and place and question the importance of issues like the location for team interaction, levels of accomplishment, and measurements of team commitment. Communication among team members illustrates this misinterpretation: Generations X and Y are very accepting of electronic communication while Traditionalists and Baby Boomers may prefer either a face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction. With this difference in approach, any of the four generations may feel out of the loop. Are these team misinterpretations technology-based or communication-based? Typically group efforts to connect depend on the group's understanding of the different communicative approaches available (Erickson, 2009).

What are some suggestions for better communication among team members? Baby Boomers and Generation Xers tend to be planners and schedulers while Generation Ys are often coordinators. While Gen Ys are likely to ascertain each other's immediate coordinates and home in on one another, older colleagues seem to prefer preplanned schedules and become rather resentful of what they perceive to be Generation Ys *seat of the pants* approach.

Lawrence Perlman, the former chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ceridian, was once quoted as saying, "In a rapidly changing world, the key to continued employability and personal growth is the ability of each of us to reeducate ourselves continuously. Lifelong learning isn't just a nice-sounding phrase. It needs to be very much a part of who we are" (Pearlman, as quoted in Adams, 1999, p. 296). The world with all its rapid changes poses a necessity in the demand for additional training regardless of generation.

Baby Boomers and Traditionalists are linear learners and would rather attend training sessions, read manuals, and absorb the information before beginning the task. Generation Ys, on the other hand, are largely *on demand* learners and like to figure things out as they go. Generation Ys are not pleased with lengthy training sessions, while Generation Xers and Boomers become annoyed with Generation Ys frequent questioning and input requests.

When working with colleagues of other generations, each team member's diverse ideas should be brought into the open. The team as a whole should understand multiple points of view and legitimize these views to all members of the team. Decisions should be made as a group or team and communication should be clear when working on necessary accomplishments.

Different generations have very similar values and beliefs:

- Fundamentally, people want the same things, no matter what generation they are from.
- You can work with (or manage) people from all generations effectively without becoming a contortionist, selling your soul on eBay, or pulling your hair out on a daily basis. (Deal, 2007, p.1)

Different Generations and Different Values

Do different generations have significant value differences? Research via a computer program survey presented members of four generations a list of 40 values to be prioritized by importance. The values chosen most frequently in the top 10 were (Deal, 2007):

1. Family (72%) – a basic unit of social structure; two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and usually reside in the same dwelling.
2. Integrity (65%) – steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code.
3. Achievement (48%) – the success of something desired, planned, or attempted.
4. Love (48%) – a deep and tender feeling of affection for, attachment to, or devotion to a person or persons.
5. Competence (47%) – condition of possessing the social, emotional, and intellectual stimulation and behaviors needed to succeed as a member of society.
6. Happiness (46%) – self-actualization; process of finding who you are.
7. Self-Respect (45%) – pride in oneself.
8. Wisdom (45%) – the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight.
9. Balance (39%) – the power or means to decide.
10. Responsibility (38%) – acting with concern and sensitivity; aware of the impact of your actions on others.

The primary message gleaned from this was that there is not a strong agreement among individuals about which specific values are most important. However, when looking at the 40 values (see Appendix A), it is apparent that the four generations reported being similar in their life priorities.

Dilemmas Among Generations

With America's diverse workforce, the four generations represented in this qualitative study overlap at the endpoint. One result of frequent generational blending in the workplace is creativity (Zemke et al., 2000). Managing the mixture of ages, faces, values, and views is an increasingly difficult task. It is described as, "diversity management at its most challenging" (p. 25) How do successful companies handle this dilemma? They build nontraditional workplaces, exhibit flexibility, emphasize respectful relationships, and focus on retaining talented employees (Zemke et al., 2000).

How are institutions of higher learning and corporate entities handling this dilemma? Zemke et al. (2000) recommend accommodating employee differences, creating workplace choices, operating for a sophisticated management style, respecting competence and initiative, and nourishing retention. With companies fighting over the best and brightest employees, many are beginning to recognize the benefits of hiring or rehiring older workers. Myths and stereotypes about Baby Boomers and Traditionalists often blind some managers from tapping a great source of workers (Zemke et al., 2000).

Common misconceptions about older workers include that they resist change and the desire to learn new skills, are less energetic and have more health problems, and do not have many productive years left before retirement. The reality shows that almost anyone is likely to resist change if it is not introduced well, supported by training, or seen as a threat. On average, older workers are as fit as younger workers. As Baby Boomers move into their 50s and beyond, they have no plans to take early retirement (Thau & Heflin, 1997).

Ideas for intra-generational harmony include flexibility, openness to change, encouraging interaction among generations, and listening to the younger generation's abilities with

technology in reaching the younger market. Training in the workplace should be about communication, clarity, and retraining without catering to a specific generation or age group. It is no longer unheard of to have teenagers and octogenarians working together in the workplace; Americans are much more health-conscious and are living longer.

Managing Generational Conflict in the Workplace

Does conflict among employees result from generational differences? In fact, conflict often occurs between younger and older workers. Both work ethics and work-life balance provide examples of differing perspectives across varying generations. Without recognizing the source of conflict, the chance for miscommunication, low morale, and poor productivity become inevitable unless the issues are both addressed and a resolution is attempted (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

<u>Differences Between Older and Younger Generations</u>

Probably the largest difference between younger and older workers is their work ethic debate. Members of the Traditionalist Generation survived the Great Depression and World War II. They not only worked hard, but also instilled in their children (the Baby Boomers) "the meaning of sacrifice and 'climbing the ladder to success' by 'paying your dues'" (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007, p. 116). This explains the reluctance of the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers to accept the younger generation's suggestion of work hours, work methods, and work rules being open to discussion. Without negatively impacting the quality and result of the work done, the older generations – often opposed to any such discussion – have prompted members of the younger generations to strive for more direct control of their work methods and rules as being open to discussion. A recommendation, without compromising the quality of the work done, is for,

…managers to consider the results or objectives, rather than the process of reaching those results. If a job lends itself to telecommuting, why not expand the pool of employees who may be interested in that job by providing that option? Technology allows Internet and phone communication between customers and employees to appear seamless, and what the customers want is answers and assistance, not the knowledge that the person helping them is sitting behind a desk in a downtown office. (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007, p. 116)

Another source of conflict between the older and younger generations is the younger generation's demand for work as well as family balance. For the most part Generations X and Y grew up with both parents working outside the home and may have felt denied of enough *family time*. On the other hand, the Traditionalists and the Boomers see this demand for work-life balance as another example of generations X and Y's lack of proper work ethic. Further, as employees attempt to meet the challenge for a proper life balance and work balance, not everyone's needs are considered, and the conflict only deepens.

To avoid and/or minimize the conflict, an organization needs to have options and benefits available to *all* employees that help make their balance between work and family balance. If options only provide balance for young parents between 25 and 30, certainly other segments of the workforce will be frustrated and conflict will result. (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007, p. 117)

Minimizing Generational Conflict

General and effective ways to minimize conflict include constructive criticism and appropriate feedback. Obviously, one size does not fit all, and approaches will vary between older and younger employees. In all cases remember these key points for offering constructive criticism:

- Focus on the issue.

- Emphasize key points.

- Be specific about what you think or want.

- Acknowledge the other's point of view.

- Avoid "hot button" language. (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007, pp. 119-120)

Even though each generation deals with conflict in its own way, commonalities of strategy are evident.

Communication is important and respecting employees by respecting how they communicate is strongly recommended. While younger employees often want to cut to the chase and know what they need to know, Baby Boomers love to tell. Generations X and Y are comfortable with receiving immediate information through online and social media sources. As the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers climb aboard this *fast train* of technology and media, the erasing of stereotypes and age bias have great potential. All generations can learn from one another.

<div align="center">Diversity in the Multigenerational Workforce</div>

Although the different generations have different definitions of diversity, members of the Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Xers have fought, struggled, and demanded that this occur, especially in the workplace.

> Even with all the progress that's been made over the years, what has been a gradual evolution in diversity is about to become a revolution. It's been brewing for several years now in our colleges and high schools as the seventy-six million member Millennial generation prepares to make its definition known to the workplace. (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002, p. 321)

<u>Acceptance of Generational Diversity</u>

Even though the Traditionalists, Boomers, and Xers have learned to accept diversity as a part of business, the Millennials (Generation Y) are not only accepting diversity but are also expecting it. Statistically speaking, members of Generation Y will have as many as 10 career changes during their lifetime. They approach the work world realizing that diversity of experience is invaluable and "role models who demonstrate they've succeeded in a diverse and

nontraditional career path might be just what the Millennial ordered" (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002, p. 323).

Diversity is not only a smart way to conduct business but also an opportunity in the hiring and retention of the next generation. This theoretically also applies to higher education, as it attracts the next generation of students. Society is expanding its ethnic and racial diversity while also redefining diversity to include other factors. In order to succeed in diversity becoming a survival tool, the goals of diversity must first be identified. In order to strengthen our nation past generations have focused on the theory of creating a melting pot. To do this there had to be consistency to build our country and to fit in to become a part of this great nation.

> However, the melting pot dish today doesn't sound as tasty to a generation that, according to the American Federation of Teachers, is growing up in schools where over seventy languages are spoken daily. So there is a new recipe in town, and it's called diversity stew. What is it like? It contains a variety of ingredients living and working together, *but* no one has to melt. (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002, p. 326)

Our differences through varying views, backgrounds, and experiences are what make us strong. Differences also identify who we are and what we believe – what better way to value, understand, and build the legacy of diversity. Many times the older generations have made this possible. While going on to create their own paths, succeeding generations have often followed their predecessors' examples. As the younger generations quickly travel toward new destinations, are the succeeding generations ready to join them?

Each generation has its merits and strengths. However, their weaknesses and stereotypes may cause contention and disrespect. Younger workers could have difficulty understanding the intense work lives of the elder generations. Once again, this also brings to light the differences in communication within the multigenerational workforce. To manage an age-diverse staff better, it is extremely important to appreciate every generation's manner of communication.

Chapter Summary

The literature review indicates that for the first time in American history four distinct

generational groups are not only working together but are vying for the same positions. As with

any generational divide, each of these four categories has differences with regard to life

perspectives, ethical beliefs, authority expectations, and work preferences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Research Design

As stated in Chapter 1, my intent in this study is to is to examine four generational groups with potentially differing values and styles within the higher education setting (Hammill, 2005). From a qualitative standpoint, the research was conducted through Narrative Inquiry, which uses field texts resulting in data sources. Some of the sources included stories, autobiography, notes, conversations, interviews, family stories, and life experiences. Narrative Inquiry is a recent form of qualitative research and a form of Knowledge Management.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative Inquiry is the process of gathering information through personal narratives relayed to the researcher. The researcher then goes on to write a narrative of the experience. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) say, "Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of the narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. In other words, people's lives consist of stories" (p. 2).

The researcher's intention was to assist the reader in understanding the research about generational differences by providing answers to the research questions and providing a better understanding of how narrative inquiry is carried out. Other forms of qualitative research include the areas of significance, validity, and reliability, as well as a justification for the use of narrative methodology in specific inquiry situations. The terms narrative and narrative research are often found in qualitative studies. It is, however, unusual to find a definition of the terms (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 1993). According to Webster's Dictionary

(Guralnik, 1966), a narrative is defined as, "A discourse, or an example of it, designed to represent a connected succession of happenings" (p. 1503). Perhaps the most concise definition is that proposed by Smith (1980), Narratives are verbal acts consisting of, "telling someone that something happened" (Smith, 1980, p. 232).

My purpose was to explore the phenomena of higher education by studying four individuals representative of the four generations studied: Traditionalists or Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. After the collection of data from the four individuals through interactive interviewing, analysis, written descriptions, and observation, I used an overall system for cataloging and coding to move from category constructions to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

<center>Researcher's Role</center>

Four individuals currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment, each representing one of the four generations being researched, were studied through observations interviews, conversations, and the gathering of family-related artifacts. Through narrative methodologies Narrative Inquiry was used to converge and provide a better understanding of the *whys* of human action. Interpretive research, a method of field-research, was used to help participants put the data into their own words.

> Narrative analysis has proven useful for data collection of perspectives that have been traditionally marginalized. When asking unusual questions, it is logical to ask them in an unusual manner. The Narrative Inquiry, with particular attention to the "why," or meaning of the narrative story. (Brecher & Harvey, 2002, p. 326)

Through analysis of the four research participants' interviews and conversations I have provided thick, narrative descriptions in the four generation's natural environments. I have aimed for objectivity while taking the views of the participants into account. The meaning that an individual applies to significant life events may result in unpredictable consequences within the

individual's life. Through this frame, we use themes to link the life events sequentially over time (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

<center>Population</center>

As the primary researcher, I used purposeful sampling in my selection of the four participants in the study. Their selection was based on the following criteria:

1.   Four individuals representing each of the study's four samplings of generational representation: Traditionalists or Veterans; Baby Boomers; Generation X, and Generation Y.

2.   Four individuals who are currently or have in the past worked in the higher education academic environment.

3.   Heterogeneous purposeful sampling including diversity based on gender and age.

I identified coworkers, former professors, and community members as prospective participants. Then, participants from each of the four generations were purposefully selected for interviews. During four face-to-face interviews, I asked each of the four to participate in the study. I interviewed four individuals and had conversations with various other individuals representative of the generations studied. The four individuals are currently or were formerly involved in the higher education environment and represented the four generations researched. The participants were studied through observations, interviews, conversations, and the gathering of family-related artifacts. Through interactive interviewing, written descriptions by participants, and data analysis, information about the four generations represented was collected and analyzed (Myers, 2000).

The process of narrative inquiry is an experience of understanding. Over time collaboration between the researcher and participants allowed them to examine the places, life

<center>60</center>

situations, and experiences that made up their lives both individually and socially. "Narrative

inquiry can be used in both basic and applied research" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 5).

> Gordon Allport was also concerned that the individual not be lost in nomothetic or group
> studies. He advocated the development of methods that would ensure the integrity of the
> individual. As part of his efforts to develop such methods, he proposed the importance of
> personal documents as information for understanding individuals. (Polkinghorne, 1988,
> p. 103)

Development of Survey Instrument

Four individuals currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment –

each representing one of the four generations being researched – were studied through

observations, interviews, and conversations. A list of the interview questions developed is shown

in Appendix B. Through narrative methodologies Narrative Inquiry was used to converge and

provide a better understanding of the *whys* of human action. A method of field-research,

interpretive research, was used to help participants put the data into their own words.

> Narrative analysis has proven useful for data collection of perspectives that have been
> traditionally marginalized. When asking unusual questions, it is logical to ask them in an
> unusual manner. The Narrative Inquiry, with a particular attention to the "why" or
> meaning of the narrative story. (Brecher & Harvey, 2002, p. 326)

Through my analysis of interviews and conversations with the four research participants,

I have provided thick, narrative descriptions in the four generation's natural environments and

have maximized objectivity while taking the views of the participants into account. The meaning

that an individual applies to significant life events may result in unpredictable consequences

within the frame of that individual's life. Through this frame I used themes to link the life events

sequentially over time (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

> Narrative is a way of organizing episodes, actions, and account of actions; it is an
> achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place
> are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as
> well as the causes of happening (Sarbin, 1986, p. 9).

Data Collection Procedures

The first phase of this study consisted of data collection with recorded interview sessions over a period of several weeks, after which time they were each transcribed and coded. The second phase was the collection of documents and individual narratives, which were counted, sorted, documented, and coded. The third phase included extensive observation and ultimately analysis of the data in its entirety. Analysis, of course, began when the data were first collected and was used to guide decisions related to further data collection. The researcher wrote descriptively in order to transfer knowledge to the reader so that it would be communicated through rich descriptions. Merriam (2009) stated that, "Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read-it is the process of making meaning" (p. 175-176).

The participants of the study were asked to provide personal accounts of the past, the future, and events related to autobiographical happenings during their time working in higher education. Personal accounts of each participant involved provided rich narrative data for this qualitative study.

> The purpose of the life story is to give meaning to experience. We do this in narrative form. If we are to study the realm of meaning, we must study narrative; if we are to study the meaning level- the subjectivity-of a person's life, we must study his or her stories. Since the life story is constructed in narrative form, it is appropriate to consider methodologies that have been used in various disciplines for the study and deconstruction of narrative texts. (McAdams, 1996, p. 309)

Research Questions

Narrative studies according to Mishler (1995) include three types of central research issues:

1.   Reference and Temporal Order – the relationship between the order in which

        events actually happened and the order in which they are relayed through

        narration;

2.   Textual Coherence and Structure – the linguistic and narrative strategies on which

        the story or interview is constructed;

3.   Narrative Functions –the broader place of the story within society or culture.

The Narrative Inquiry method was developed from an analysis of the four representative

participants having worked in higher education. The study was measured through qualitative

means consisting of the collection of data through the interviewing of the four participants who

described their experiences and phenomenon through written descriptions and through

descriptive observations of verbal and nonverbal behavior.

Two research questions were used to guide this study:

1.   What are the professional and personal challenges that four generational

        representatives working together in the higher education setting encounter?

2.   What are ways that different generational representatives use lifelong learning in

        their professional and personal lives?

Data Analysis

"While some types of qualitative analysis have a standard set of procedures, narrative

research does not" (Riessman, 1993, p. 54). Riessman (1993) divided the narrative method into

three stages: *Telling*, *Transcribing*, and *Analyzing*.

<u>Interactive Interview Data Analysis</u>

The interview data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Interactive interviews took

place with individuals from each of the four generations represented in the study. Their

experiences and phenomenon were coded to assist with a systematic approach to the task. The

analysis of the qualitative Narrative Inquiry mirrored Merriam's (2009) guidelines.

1.   Be as *sensitive* to the data as possible

2.   Be *exhaustive* (enough categories to encompass all relevant data)

3.   Be *mutually exclusive* (a relevant unit of data can be placed in only one category)

4.   Be *conceptually congruent* (all categories are at the same conceptual level

        (Exhibit 8.2, p. 186)

Written Descriptions and Experiences Analysis

Individuals representing each of the four generations: The Traditionalists or Veterans,

The Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y described their experiences of phenomena.

The transcripts were then sorted, counted, and analyzed. Merriam (2009) stated, "Personal

documents are a reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the

world" (p. 143).

Observations of Verbal and Nonverbal Behavior Analysis

Direct observations occurred during field visits as part of the Narrative Inquiry

methodology. Both verbal and nonverbal findings were analyzed. "Participant-observation

makes the researcher into an active participant in the events being studied. This often occurs in

neighborhoods or groups" (Tellis, 1997, p. 5).

Validity and Reliability

Ellis (2007) suggests that *relational ethics* are most relevant to instances of life writing.

However, these ethics are typically not acknowledged or enforced by institutional review boards

(IRBs). Most IRB requirements apply to research "done on strangers with whom we have no prior relationships and plan no future interaction" (p. 5).

With life research the *stranger assumption* is null and void! Through the writing of life texts, the researcher bonds with participants and their shared experiences. It becomes rather difficult to remain anonymous. Relational details are just as important as research details. Thus, the Narrative Inquiry researcher must be able to separate interpersonal bonds and conversations with his or her participants just as he or she must continue to follow appropriate research protocol and ethical guidelines.

Research is worthless without rigor. Thus, much importance and attention is applied to validity and reliability in all areas of method research. Some researchers encourage adopting new criteria to determine validity and reliability as well as the ensuring rigor in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They suggest that researchers should substitute reliability and validity for the parallel concept of *trustworthiness* that contains four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Within these are specific methods for demonstrating rigor such as the audit trail, member checks when coding, categorizing, confirming results with participants, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, structural corroboration, and referential material adequacy (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

One concern that has surfaced since Guba and Lincoln developed their criteria for trustworthiness has been a tendency of qualitative researchers to focus primarily on the tangible outcomes of research rather than showing how verification strategies were used to shape and direct the development of the research. Strategies of trustworthiness may be useful in evaluating rigor, but they do not ensure rigor or that the research will be helpful. Strategies for ensuring rigor are an important part of the research process.

<u>Verification of Qualitative Research</u>

In qualitative research verification refers to the process contributing to the assurance of validity, reliability, and rigor of the study. When following the principles of qualitative inquiry the analysis becomes self-correcting. Qualitative research is iterative rather than linear so that a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis (Creswell, 1998; Kvale, 1989).

When studying human interactions research cannot be considered a precise science. The goal of qualitative research is to evaluate the soundness of the conclusions of the qualitative research study based on the methodology and data. Even though validity and reliability issues apply primarily to the results and conclusion of the research itself, the design of the research at its earliest stages must also be considered. If the researcher considers only this information at the completion of the study, it could prove futile in gathering quality or relevant data (Black, 1993).

Throughout transcriptions of the participant's interviews, the gathering of their experiences and phenomenon, and the collection of descriptive observations of the participant's verbal and nonverbal behavior, triangulation of the diverse sources must be accurate and credible. The researcher has the responsibility of being an oral historian whereby narrative validity and reliability are essential. Cvetkovich (2003) writes that doing oral history, "presents an endless array of practical challenges, including not just whom to interview and what to ask but, as I learned the hard way, where to do the interview and when to turn the tape recorder off" (pp. 435-436). As I am the researcher, it is my responsibility to uphold the validation of the research and analysis findings throughout the study.

Ethical Considerations

When undertaking data analysis, ethical issues must be considered. Ethical issues within the field of qualitative research may arise because of the observational nature of qualitative research and its interaction with groups and individuals. Researchers must be aware of several important issues before, during, and after the research has been conducted.

- Informed consent (Do participants have full knowledge of what is involved?)
- Harm and risk (Can the study hurt participants?)
- Honesty and trust (Is the researcher truthful in presenting data?)
- Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Will the study intrude too much into group or individual behaviors?)
- Intervention and advocacy (What should researchers do if participants display harmful or illegal behavior? (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

In this study I reported and reflected on the lives and experiences of each of the individuals representing the four generations. As such, I have an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of my informants. "Rigor in a qualitative research derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description" (Merriam, 2009, p. 165-166).

Chapter Summary

After the collection and analysis of the three sets of data (interactive interviewing, written transcriptions, and descriptive observations) using a sequential process, I created a coding and cataloging content analysis as a *systematic procedure for describing* (Merriam, 2009). Much of my work consisted of a process method of analysis to discover characteristics and patterns similar to the four generations represented by the qualitative Narrative Inquiry method.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomena of higher education by studying four representative individuals of four generations. The generations are Traditionalists – born approximately between the years of 1922 and 1945, Baby Boomers – born approximately between the years of 1946 and 1964, Generation X – born approximately between the years of 1965 and 1980, and Generation Y – born approximately between the years of 1981 and 2000.

Findings of this qualitative study were gathered through the process of Narrative Inquiry that uses field tests resulting in data sources. Sources used included stories, autobiography, notes, conversations, interviews, family stories, and life experiences. By focusing on the organization of human knowledge more than merely the collection and processing of data, Narrative Inquiry also implies that knowledge itself is considered valuable and noteworthy even when known by only one person (Merriam, 2009).

Ethical issues were considered as was the inclusion of human subjects. These considerations were met and approved by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. Each of the four participants understood the use of quoted material throughout the analysis process and each of the four participants provided informed consent. Confidentiality was assured and the real names of the research participants were never divulged in any of the data. Three aspects of the narrative approach used during this qualitative study were researching the relationship between the researcher and the subjects, the development of an experienced and orally relayed story into written text, and the hermeneutic or interpretive nature of narrative research (Merriam, 2009).

Sample

Through the process of Narrative Inquiry, the emergent themes of qualitative research and knowledge management resulted. Narrative inquiry often provides a keener awareness and understanding of human action (Myers, 2000). Four individuals and the researcher participated in the study, which totals five. Sampling selection was purposeful and nonrandom. Heterogeneous purposeful sampling included diversity based on gender and age. One male and three females represented the four generations of the study, and ranged in age from 22 to 66 years. All participants interviewed were either previously or currently involved in the higher education environment. Two hold a doctorate in education, one is a doctoral student in education, and the last has recently earned a master's in nursing. The faculty participants have been involved in higher education for 40 and 30 years respectively.

Data Collection

Data collection took place during four individual interview sessions, resulting in approximately 75 pages of textual data. I transcribed all interviews and collected all data in this study. After collection, the data were then combined. While interviewing the four generational representatives of this qualitative study, the significance of major life events came up consistently, with regard to each generation's cultural impact and response to it.

Data Analysis

Early data analysis began with the creation of categories and themes derived from the collected transcripts. The basic unit of study can be found in each of the four participant's transcripts. "Interviewing is about obtaining interviewees' interpretations of their experiences and their understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 36).

Initial categorization was based on process coding coming from the original research questions of this study (Saldaña, 2009). "Process coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for those that search for ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 169).

After collection and analysis of the three sets of data (interactive interviewing, written descriptions, and descriptive observations), I created a coding and catalog content analysis. Much of my work consisted of a process method of analysis to discover characteristics and patterns similar to the four generations represented in the qualitative Narrative Inquiry methodology.

Findings

Reported as themes derived from the data, the findings are categorized for presentation in relationship to the initial research questions. Findings are presented for each of the two research questions of the study as well as background generational information on each of the four participants. A thematic conceptual table for all areas of research is included. Detailed discussions of the findings for each question are presented in this Chapter 4. Interpretation of the findings is presented in Chapter 5.

Results: Generational Background of Four Participants

The first area that this qualitative study addressed was background information on each of the four generations represented: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. One content theme and four process themes were identified from the data to cover background information about each of the four participants in this Narrative Inquiry method of

data presentation. Each participant was given a fictitious name to assure confidentiality of identity. The themes are shown in Figure 1.
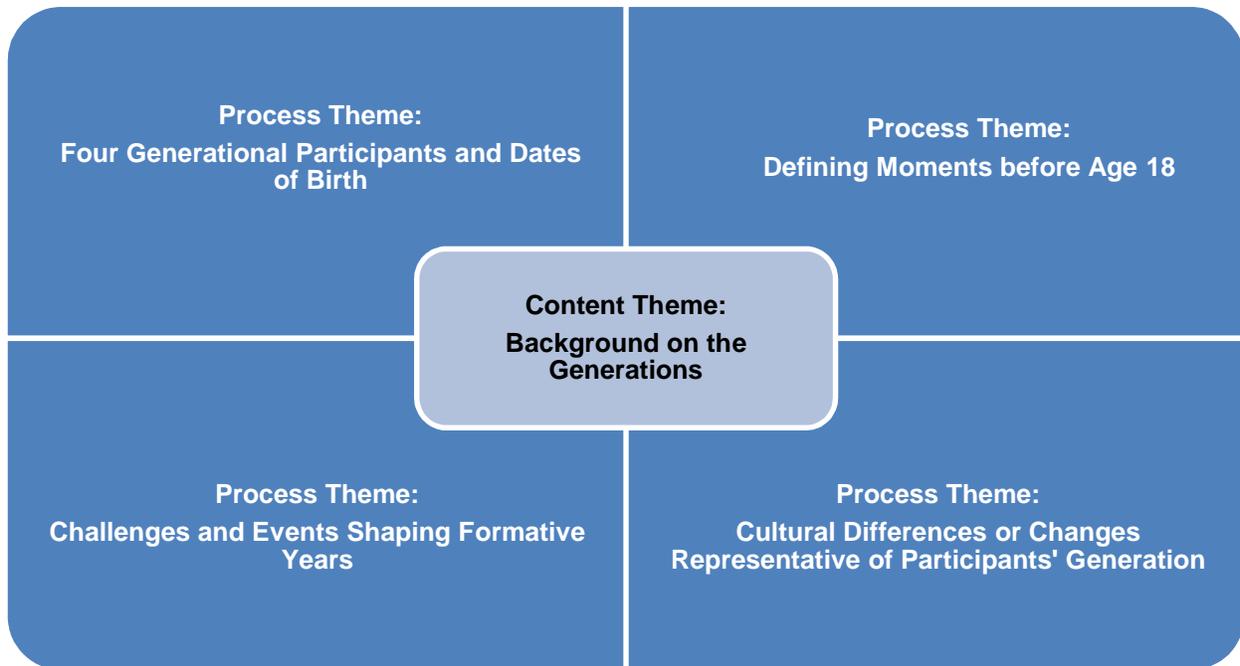
Figure 1. Content theme – Background on the generations and four process themes.

The first content theme was identified as pertaining to the background on the four generations researched in this study. The four generations include the Traditionalist Generation, Baby Boomer Generation, Generation X, and Generation Y. These descriptions are highly subjective and based on observation, research, and individual characteristics that I found to represent each generational category.

Traditionalist generation. Members of the Traditionalist Generation were born approximately between the years of 1922 and 1945. The Traditionalists – survivors of the Great Depression of the 1930s – are often depicted as having a strong sense of respect for authority and discipline as well as a nature of conformance (Gibson, 2009). Traditionalists are also known for being conservative with their money and say to put the credit card away and only pay cash.

Baby Boomer generation. The Baby Boomers, of which there are an estimated 80 million, were born between 1946 and 1964. They are described as driven workaholics who work efficiently for personal fulfillment and tend to follow the buy now, pay later financial attitude (Gibson, 2009).

Generation X. With Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, their values lean toward skepticism and informality. However, their financial beliefs are similar to the Traditionalists in that they tend to be more conservative and careful with their money when compared to their parent's generation (Hammill, 2005). Gen Xers – a generation of latchkey kids from dual-income families – often function independently of anyone or anything.

Generation Y. Members of Generation Y – also referred to as the Millennials or Gen Ys – were born between 1981 and 2000. This group promotes a generation of globally centered young people concerned with personal safety because of school shootings and acts of terrorism. Gen Ys portray a strong sense of confidence and are extremely social. When it comes to spending habits, they earn money to spend money (Hammill, 2005).

Four Generational Participants and Dates of Birth

The process theme of the four participants and their dates of birth are:

The Traditionalist Generation participant, Dr. Brown, was born in 1944 and was 66 years of age at the time of his interview. Members of this generation are 66 to 89 years of age, so Dr. Brown is at the young end of the Traditionalist Generation. He is a retired university professor who also served in a higher education administrative position for many years. He grew up on a farm where his parents were farmers as well as teachers. Dr. Brown's work ethic, both before and after completing college, resulted in a successful and satisfying career. The complete

interview transcript for Dr. Brown, the Traditionalist Generation participant, can be found in Appendix C.

The Baby Boomer Generation participant, Dr. French, was born in 1954 and was 56 years of age at the time of her interview. Members of this generation are 47 to 65 years of age, so Dr. French is right in the middle of the Baby Boomer Generation. She is a university professor who began her career as an elementary teacher and later moved on to both counseling and principalship positions. Dr. French grew up in the South and spoke candidly of her experiences during the Civil Rights Movement. Her mother was a teacher; her father was an electrician by trade. Dr. French attributes much of her sense of right and wrong, as well as her strength of conviction, to being a product of her upbringing. The complete interview transcript for Dr. French, the Baby Boomer Generation participant, can be found in Appendix D.

The Generation X participant, Ms. Cox, was born in 1975 and was 35 years of age at the time of her interview. Members of this generation are 31 to 46 years of age, so Ms. Cox is toward the young end of Generation X. She is both a university administrator and an educational leadership student pursuing a doctoral degree. She is married and has two young sons. Ms. Cox first worked in a corporate business environment but has always considered herself a *poster child* for lifelong learning. She is currently pursuing an Ed.D. and talking about the educational opportunities that lay ahead. Neither of Ms. Cox's parents attended college. However, she gives them all the credit for her strong work ethic and her love of education. The complete interview transcript for Ms. Cox, the Generation X participant, can be found in Appendix E.

The Generation Y participant, Ms. Carrie, was born in 1988 and was 22 years of age at the time of her interview. Members of this generation are 11 to 30 years of age, so Ms. Carrie is at the middle of Generation Y. She recently graduated from college as a registered nurse and

works in her chosen field. Having just started her professional career, Ms. Carrie is passionate about her choice and her ability to make a difference. When growing up, Ms. Carrie's family provided her with security and a strong sense of the value of learning, not only through pursuing her education, but also through traveling and experiencing other cultures. The complete interview transcript for Ms. Carrie, the Generation Y participant, can be found in Appendix F.

Defining Moments Before Age 18

During my research I frequently encountered the reiteration of who we have become because of what we have experienced. Research refers to this as defining moments, important life events, life challenges, and other descriptions. It is widely believed that this defining moment in life often occurs during one's formative years before the age of 18. While interviewing the four participants, I found this to be true. Further, their words took me back to my upbringing and formative recollections.

The process theme of defining moments before age 18 represents data expressing specific events happening to each participant before 18 years of age. The event may have been of worldwide or personal significance, but each event helped the individual define himself or herself. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

> Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). Well, I need to tell you… both of my parents were schoolteachers and there always was an unspoken requirement that you were not finished with school until you finished with college. And so, from an educational standpoint, my decisions and what I did were predicated on the fact that I knew I had to go to college. Early on I became a paperboy and I learned a lot about how people behaved. You would find out the types of people that would pay you and the types of people that would try to get out of paying you. This also made me learn to deal with money… in terms of dealing with people and dealing with finances, that was a good start in terms of a formative situation.

During the time I went to high school, I attended a small high school and was on the basketball team. I think I learned the value of teamwork during that process.

My dad, in addition to being a teacher, was also a master woodworker. I grew up having a full woodworking shop at that house… when I was in high school, I was making custom furniture for people. Through that process, I learned that I could be by myself and take care of myself. I have found that a lot of people are always looking to be entertained and sometimes, if you are just doing something productive, that is the entertainment.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). Well, I went to first grade in Alabama and then my parents got divorced and my mom and brothers and I moved to Chattanooga. When I was 12, my parents remarried. When they remarried, my dad was still an alcoholic and still a compulsive gambler. In retrospect, I realize my mom was addicted to my dad.

Ms. Cox (Generation X). Probably the biggest challenge and the first thing that comes to my mind, and I am sure this is typical of my generation… is the divorce of my parents. I think that more than anything has shaped who I was then, who I have become, the way I interact with people… I had a younger brother so I was the oldest sibling. I joke with my husband that I could work for the United Nations as far as peace keeping missions because I tried to keep the peace between my parents and tried to keep my brother happy, and, in a way, it was a good thing. Even today as an adult, it has resurfaced because I have children of my own, and so now, the same arguments they had the same issues from 20 years ago really are still there. I think I learned how to handle it as a child and as I got older and became an adult, I can remember thinking, I am not a kid anymore. These are my children and I can take control.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). A couple of things… every summer, my parents would take my brother and I to Michigan on a river with a whole bunch of their friends and they grew up and were born in the 50s and grew up in the 60s. They were very intelligent and kind and um… there was always food, fun conversation, and playing music. It was a cultural experience… lots of generations all in one area. My family and I also went on a six week vacation all around the United States. This really made me appreciate traveling and culture and art. I think this helped make me a little bit who I am because at that young age there are not a lot of people that can say they have been that far and seen a lot of things. So my parents really emphasized being open-minded and seeing things for what they really are and be creative and go to art galleries and go see things and experience things. We try to still go on a trip at least every year or so.

Challenges and Events Shaping Formative Years

The process theme of challenges and events shaping formative years of the four

participants in this study represents data about educational and professional occurrences that

began during each participant's early adulthood and moved into their experiences in higher

education. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C,

D, E, and F, respectively.

Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). In essence, my parents dropped me off at college and I essentially never went back home. I didn't have a car and I had to learn to be responsible on a day to day basis. I had learned about financing and I had learned about working independently, but to realize that I had to figure out where I wanted to eat, how much I wanted to pay for it in addition to getting an education… so that first year in college was very important in my formative years.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). I came of age with the Civil Rights Movement… I mean that's all happening and I think I was thirteen when Martin Luther King was killed. I wrote about that in my diary. And so my father had this very prejudiced attitude. Both my parents were fans of George Wallace and I remember the Selma March in Selma, Alabama. I grew up in this family where prejudice was kind of like a way of life, and early on, I vehemently rejected that outlook… was very much in favor of the Civil Rights Movement and was very attuned to what was going on and just felt real strongly that people are people are people.

I was aware of world events. I remember being physically ill when the protestors were shot at Kent State. I think the first time I really started realizing that… okay… the war in Vietnam was nasty and vile… but the young men who were drafted and to go rather than be locked up or leave the country, they aren't vile.

Ms. Cox (Generation X). One big thing that my parents taught me that was probably an unintended consequence of it, was the value of education, and my parents are probably hating this now because I have been in school so long and it looks like there is no end in sight! I think it instilled in me this drive to say that won't happen to me. This wouldn't have come about if it hadn't been for the two of them.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). My brother and I fought a lot as kids. I was the youngest one and I always wanted to hang around him and his friends and be a part of his life. I can remember just laying in bed sometimes and crying because I wanted to be closer to my brother. When my brother was in high school, though, he got into a lot of trouble and he was in and out of prison. This was hard on my family life because when my brother was home, there was yelling and fighting and it wasn't easy. I am not a very emotional person. I tend to suppress things or not to put a whole lot of energy into emotions and I think a lot of this is because of my older brother. Having that experience, suppressing emotions is kind of my way of coping… a defense mechanism. For me, it was easier to think of myself as an only child instead of saying that my brother was a criminal. That

has shaped who I am… such a challenge… not knowing if the police were calling or coming. Now he is working and doing well.

Cultural Differences or Changes Representative of Participants' Generations

The process theme of cultural differences and changes representative of the four generations in this study deals with data representing information about ways American society and culture has or has not changed during their lifetimes. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

> Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). In the fifties, the country was fairly stable… things were beginning to grow… and new products were coming from the manufacturers and so it really was a pretty good time… we had no… you know… once we got out of Korea, up until Vietnam, we had no war. The fifties were good times… they didn't last long, but it was good to have them and I guess, even now, I wish we could get back to that a little bit… people were civil to each other. I think from a human standpoint, it's possible to get back to that. I don't know that we ever will… I really do think that the current financial crisis this country is experiencing like losing their jobs and losing their homes and having to learn to live on less… has pushed some of them toward… that kind of behavior where they rely on people… more… talk to people more… and so it may not be all bad.
>
> At my age, my mother was retired from teaching school and my dad still had one year to go before retirement. So how has life changed? Most of these people that were the age that I am now were trying to figure out how to deal with retirement and not working on a daily basis, and, for me, I am currently dealing with retirement and how to survive and going about whatever I need to do! So, I quite frankly think there hasn't been much of a change!
>
> History repeats itself. It's just what you do with the time you have and how… do you do that helping people? Do you do that for self-gratification? Do you strike a balance? And I think my parents and grandparents dealt with that just like I'm dealing with that.
>
> During my childhood, television came to the forefront. I prefer to listen to the radio as opposed to television because the radio people have to fill in the gaps and that can describe things and give you some detail… to take up time that you couldn't get otherwise. I saw the television come in but I still loved the radio and I saw the advantages to both. I didn't necessarily think the television was a drastic improvement. I just thought it was a different way to deliver programming to others, but it also probably had the negative impact of slowing down family conversations.

Money needs? We didn't have a lot of money needs. We learned to live on what we had. Don't buy unless you can pay for it… what my parents taught me. We learned not to dream of things you just absolutely couldn't afford.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). My grandmother and my great-grandmother lived together in this little two bedroom, one bathroom house… the house that my grandmother grew up in. My grandmother never owned a car, never wore a pair of pants… but was very much the stereotypical, wonderful grandmother. I think my grandmother is where I got my total acceptance of people because she always cared about taking care of people. It didn't matter who they were or what they did.

I remember my grandmother was more excited about man on the moon and John Glenn orbiting the earth than I was because she knew how monumental it was and to me it was something that just happened. My grandmother was amazed at what was going on in the sixties.

Now we dispose of things or replace them. If we can't find something, were likely to just go out and buy another one rather than to keep looking at it. We tried to fix things then. There were repair shops. When I think about all the garbage we've made with this replacement mentality instead of the fixing mentality… our technology would have been the television and the radio!

As far as money needs, as a child and young adult, I never saw an allowance. I didn't have a job until I graduated from high school because my mother thought that school was my job. Money was tight and family relations were strained because of this… at least in my particular family

Ms. Cox (Generation X). It's just a different world. Deep down I still have the same values that my parents and grandparents had. That's not a world-wide thing… maybe that's just a more local or regional thing because of strong ties with church and family. Things are important to me that were just as important in my parent's generation. It's just the way it is expressed that has changed. I think the values are still there. I see a lot of the same kinds of traditions. I know my family foundation won't change. Whatever else goes on in the world, at the end of the day, I have this system in place that is not going to change. That security is so important. I wonder if Generation X's often portrayed lack of security is connected to their parent's high incidence of divorce? I think that they could be. You are loyal to your parents and then they split up. So goes some of Gen X's sense of loyalty to others.

Money needs… I didn't get an allowance as a child. We just knew to do our chores because our parents told us to. By having the work ethic instilled in me, I knew that money would not always be there… when you had extra… put it in the bank and save it… my parents teaching me responsibility. I knew that if I wanted to go to college, and that was the expectation, that I would now have to find a way to do it myself. I actually went to college on work study and so you know worked my way through college with

that and I didn't have any debt whenever I graduated. It was wonderful. I worked very hard for it!

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). Well, from what my parents say… money has definitely changed… technology is the big one as it is everywhere and they (my parents) have had to learn how to use it! I wasn't around my grandparents that much. I didn't get to have that grandparent experience as much. I think that grandparents are people that really shape your lives and they are really important people. I tend to appreciate older people. One of my professors, I really got close to her. We just talked out all stages of life and I remember we would just chat about things. So I think she was kind of a grandmother to me for a while. She was very wise… and I think older people… they have the potential to be very wise and we can learn a lot about them because they have gone through so much. Younger people can't begin to understand all of these emotions and experiences and everything.

My generation has always had technology… cell phones and computers have really played a negative role with the younger generations. They don't know how to be creative and they don't know how to really think about things around them. It's actually pretty sad. They fill their lives with socializing and games and things on the computer but they don't know how to go outside and play a game. They are not going to know how to communicate if they are always on their phone texting or emailing or something.

My parents grew up in a time where their parents were frugal… my dad, especially. Like when I was younger, I thought that we were the poorest family on the block. He made it a point that we did not spend a lot of money and we did have an allowance and we did have to work for that money. I can say that I know how to manage money and how to save money. I'd have to say that I'm very fortunate because my parents do have money and so I didn't have to work in college. I could spend my time focusing on school. I did have summer jobs and I was fortunate that I could take a loan from my parents and I was paying them back. My parents have taught me a lot about money. I have to say that my relationship with my parents, even with some struggles, has been amazing.

Summary Findings on Background Information of the Four Generations Represented

While participants of the four represented generations of the qualitative study shared similar viewpoints of the listed process themes, differences and analogies were apparent as well. Although the information gathered comes exclusively from the transcripts given, the participant's viewpoints and statements should not be considered exclusive and complete. Only what was said was recorded as research results.

When discussing the participant's defining moments before the age of 18, all four generational representatives agreed without hesitation of the importance of higher education, and all were raised with that being the forefront of their futures. Participants of the Traditionalist Generation and Generation X reported having been employed throughout high school. Children of divorced parents included the Baby Boomer and the Gen Xer. Only Generation Y mentioned a passion for art and travel.

When discussing the challenges and or events shaping their formative years, the Traditionalist told of being dropped off at college by his parents without a car or job! Both the Traditionalist Generation member and the Generation X member talked of working their way through college and achieving total independence. The Baby Boomer spoke of the turbulent issues of the 60s including the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, and Kent State. She emphasized her opposition to the violence and the shaping of her belief system and self-realization resulting. All four generational representatives were convicted in the importance of continuing their educations.

When discussing the cultural differences and changes representative of the Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, the Traditionalist spoke of the stability, productiveness, and prosperity of the 50s as well as the civility of people in their treatment of others… the Golden Rule, so to speak. The Traditionalist was also convicted in his belief system of being conservative with money and never having credit. The Baby Boomer expressed her dismay at the disposable mentality of our society and the huge accumulation of waste present in our society. Generation X emphasized a sense of insecurity and desire for sameness and loyalty within her generation's dynamics. Both the Traditionalist and Generation X worked their way through college, and the Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y

reported receiving no allowance when growing up at home. All generational representatives in the study appreciated the wisdom of older people and Generation X and Generation Y relayed that technology had always been a part of their lives.

<div align="center">Findings for Research Question 1</div>

The first research question is: What are the professional and personal challenges that four generational representatives working together in the higher education setting encounter? One content and two process themes were identified from the data. These themes are outlined in Figure 2.
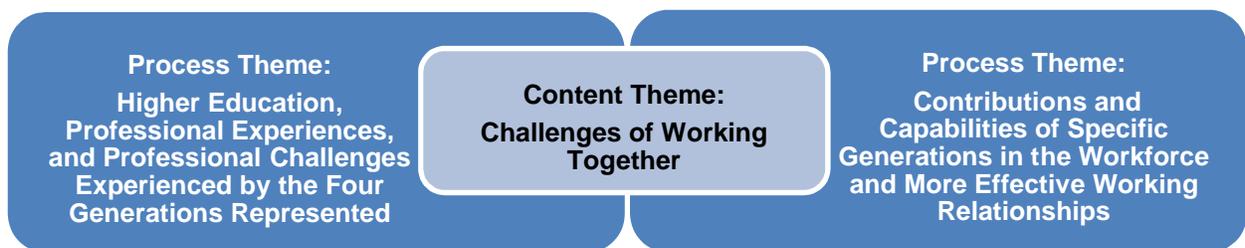
Figure 2. Content theme – challenges of working together and two process themes.

The content theme was identified as pertaining to the challenges encountered by the four generations researched in this study. The challenges include those experienced in higher education and contributions of the four participating generations in developing effective working relationships.

Higher Education, Professional Experiences, and Professional Challenges Experienced by the Four Generations Represented

The first process theme shown in Figure 2 was identified from the responses of the four generational participants: (Note: The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.)

Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). The first challenge was to get through college! I did not go to college to be a teacher or to have anything to do with education. My parents were both teachers and I told people that I grew up in poverty and didn't want to live that way anymore!

One professional challenge I encountered was in dealing with different personalities and generations of people who were in charge above you. Deans, department chairs, presidents… all had different personalities and different ways of doing things. Professionally speaking, there is continual change. This brings about challenges of compensating for change and continuing to do your job well. Throughout process and change, there were always new regulations and requirements. The challenge was to meet the demands through the educational process.

Some people in higher education have huge egos and they can't let go and they probably cause some problems. But it is not as cut throat as the business world because there's no dollar bottom line that you have to meet. The payoff of education is to help people learn and grow. Most teachers and administrators are on that track, regardless of age. What happens is there are probably arguments over how to go about it… different points, different generations.

Personally, a challenge for me during parts of my career was when I was given the responsibility for a program that I knew nothing about… but I had to learn and become productive at it. It was a responsibility as well as a challenge. This ties in with lifelong learning… had to learn what you were doing before becoming involved… challenge and learning experience. Challenge leads to learning. People tell me that they learned something in my class or they were challenged.

Students made a big difference in my life. Students asking questions have helped me grow. They bring so much information in from the outside world… couldn't learn without them bringing in those experiences and sharing them. When an educator has to apply what he or she knows to a situation, has discussions about it, and brings in experiences of differing generations, it makes a difference in a person's life.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). I am used to doing work, not writing about work. I am just used to doing work and getting involved in it, so the writing has been my challenge. Now when I think about research I need to be doing for my writing, all I am doing is other people's research and reading their dissertations. That's my challenge.

Professionally, I get in and work shoulder to shoulder with people. I am a learner as well as a leader. The fact that I learn with people, allows me to influence people. I learn from my students. That is one way I think I have made a difference… the connections that you still have with people make you know you made a difference.

Ms. Cox (Generation X). The biggest adjustment for me was when I moved away from home for the first time… and just managing life… along with college. As far as academically, I have always thrived. In the workforce? That's a whole different story. I

come from a non-academic program so I worked outside of higher education for years before coming in. And I had no idea what I was walking into. I didn't think about how different the culture is and how academic people are… I was not at all prepared for that.

I'm used to a world where management gives the rules because we get a paycheck for doing so, and it is not complicated. But you take higher education and that just goes out the window in about ten minutes! I don't have academic credibility yet… not in some people's eyes. I am not on the faculty. I am an administrator. That's different. You know that and I don't understand it… I mean it frustrates me to no end.

If there would be one piece of my job that I could change, it would be, for some reason, thinking I am trying to control what they do. I mean I just want to make sure that the job gets done. I am responsible for making sure it gets done. They are worried about this and they voted on this and they created this document and so on. My job description position is to make sure (the faculty) follow the plan. And then I go try to do it and they want to fight and pick with me… my job is to make sure we do what it says. It is so different.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). My biggest challenge of nursing school was the challenges of testing… application based. If this patient was having these symptoms… what would you do first and what would be the most important? It was very difficult testing and the study work load was hard… lots of information in nursing school.

I don't like giving meds and I don't like to take medicine either! I just feel like we overmedicate people and give them things they don't need and like the commercials encourage them that if they have certain symptoms, the meds will take care of it. In this part of the country and the sometime lack of knowledge or awareness of people, in my profession they are not as open-minded about the fact that there are alternative forms of medicine that have been around for thousands of years that have worked. You don't have to medicate people as much as we do. I mean… part of it is money going into their pocket, but there are better ways… looking at the whole person and trying to figure out what is wrong instead of just treating the symptoms.

I think in this area, the integrative forms of medicine are not as progressive as they are on the west coast and other parts of the United States. I see myself not staying in this area. However, I am very pleased with my education and I think I have made the best of it like I have also been involved in campus clubs and activities, as well as in the community.

I think in my profession, I have made a difference for others because I am not burnt out and I am new and I have energy and I really do care and I want to learn from the people around me as well as my patients. That's a big source of knowledge right there and because I am very open-minded, I am willing to go a little bit deeper into a patient's condition and see what else is going on. I think this will be very helpful to me in the long run. I want to have passion throughout my life.

Contributions and Capabilities of Specific Generations in the Workforce and More Effective

Working Relationships

In spite of their generational gaps and stereotypes, the second process theme shown in Figure 2 was identified from the responses of the four generational participants: (Note: The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.)

Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). My generation just continues what they have learned from their parents and grandparents. My generation changed the dynamics to some degree. The loyalty continued but they started thinking more for themselves. Many changes were made with the Traditionalists. They became innovators in the workforce and there was more mechanics and production than in the generation before them. If you just look at the automobile and visit pictures of what happened, conveniences that were put into automobiles… good reflection of a lot of products that were changed considerably during my generation. Traditionalists really got into the workforce and were in charge of whatever they had to be.

Traditionalists contributed a continuation of loyalty to management and it was a major contribution to be loyal to the people you are working for. My generation was very heavy into science despite what you hear about them not being competitive. We were very competitive in both science and math and responsible for much of the space program which has made a tremendous impact. We have products, systems, and procedures that would not have been possible without the space program.

Baby Boomers were not much different from my generation. The hippie generation totally changed the way this world thinks and it hasn't gone back from their profound change to society. Baby Boomers are very independent… question authority or anybody in authority… if it's a system… whether it's a government or an educational system, they figure there's something wrong with it because it's a system. They question everything. The Baby Boomers were also the first generation that demanded that colleges teach what they wanted rather than what colleges thought they needed to have… and they did! There were sit-ins and protests… this attitude is still prevalent of Baby Boomers today and probably causing a lot of problems because of it. Baby Boomers don't get along well with others and do not accept anything at face value. To question something just because it's presented… is wrong. Many Boomers are anti-everything and they were the beginning of a major change in the way this country operates.

Generation X was the first generation, in my opinion, that thought they ought to start life on their own at the same level in which their parents had after working for so many years! Generation X does not understand compromising and this is when materialism came to the forefront. Generation X does not have prejudices towards others as do

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previous generations. Gen X has established an environment where race doesn't matter as with earlier generations. Generation X has also been very entrepreneurial… Bill Gates and Michael Dell… have started some industries that have had major influences on our lives. Generation X is finally giving back what they contributed, are being entrepreneurial, and building new products and changing our way of life. As they are getting older, they are teaching us to give of our resources to help people. Materialism has led them to be innovators. They are beginning to share their wealth. They seem wiser than we were at that age!

Generation Y has all the electronic goodies. They have too much time on their hands! They need to be given responsibility to do something productive. There is a curse with Generation Y as more is expected of them for some reason. We expect them to accomplish more in a short period of time. Generation Y does not spend time talking to other people and playing with other people as much.

I would like future generations to look at the value of generations and take the good from each generation and apply it to theirs. You know the Big Book deals with human relationships and people relate to each other like they did then. They argue with each other like they did them. The technology we have… the toys we have… all that may change… but people don't change. They are still the same.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). I think we (Baby Boomers) created the workforce! When you think about NASA and all of the inventions that came out of NASA… and when you think of Bill Gates… he's one of us… all the technology. I mean there's just so much that came from our generation. Baby Boomers are the workhorses! Being a nine to fiver is not a bad thing but we should be more about results and not about time. But that's not who our generation is. Our generation is about putting in the time and getting the work done. Partly because time is associated with the Boomer work ethic, we get more done because of it. There's so much stability and sweat that Boomers have contributed to the workforce. How we are hurting the workforce, I think, is because we are so rigid in our view that time is tied to production. It takes me longer to do my work… but I know that I emphasize different things in my work.

Something that Baby Boomers do to hurt the workforce right now… we are imposing ourselves on other generations who don't need these decisions or rules. We think that in order to be more productive, we should work longer. However, the other generations may be more productive by having some freedom and some flexibility! That will increase their productivity and it's not all about time. I think there has been a cost to the Boomers contributing to the work ethic… and the cost to that is that many times we put work first.

When I had a chance to move up in my position as a principal to the central office, my daughter encouraged me to take it. She said she was tired of her mom calling her at six in the morning to make sure she was up, and she was tired of me getting home at eight at night. I took the central office job.

I have worked with people from the Greatest Generation (Traditionalists). They were in the workforce when I was first teaching and they helped contribute to the culture with their stories and sense of professionalism. I feel that's something they contributed that impacted me tremendously.

I think what Generation X and Generation Y have contributed is creativity, entrepreneurship… the balance that we (Baby Boomers) didn't have. And they have helped us see, if we are open to it, how important the balance is and the absolute… just the freedom to not let your work be your life… or the fortitude to realize the importance of balance.

Generation Ys have displayed conservatism to their values as did the Traditionalists, whereas we, the Baby Boomers were the rebels! I think we impose ourselves on other generations instead of looking at them and seeing what they have to offer.

If we are not free to ask the younger generations what their skills are and what they can help us with, then we are not taking advantage of those gifts. It's all about strengths and we have to think about that. Our generation (The Boomers) is still about fixing weaknesses.

Ms. Cox (Generation X). How do I handle different generations that are coming to me? Sometimes they're just strong personality conflicts and I can handle that effectively and it is not as frustrating as the collective faculty mentality. Some of them are younger or my age and I don't see it as much with people that are in my generation. I never really thought about that before. I really don't understand it… the faculty mentality… because I really believe that at the heart of it they are here for the same reason that I am… to put out the best product educationally that we can for our students. And so why can't we all just get along and work together and make it happen? So maybe that's the generational thing. I want to get everybody on board, you know, and say, "You guys came up with this plan… let me help you facilitate this work as much as I can."

I am very much so learning the higher education environment and I think… I just dealt with that last week! Or I'll deal with something in a meeting at work and I will think… here's a resource for you! We just talked about this in my classes… just studied it. This has been very good for me.

I think I see myself, as I look at the context of your study sort of as a bridge between the older… the powerful, the establishment and the younger generation because I don't know all the newest and latest and greatest technology, but I enough about it that I can work with it and I can show people how to use it effectively. And I think that is maybe one of the talents that I would bring to the table that someone else wouldn't and I am able to say when I don't know something about technology and can learn from others who do to make this work for all of us.

The biggest perspective I have on the Traditionalist Generation is probably from my grandparents and from the movies! And I just view them as being steady as a rock and just wise and patient… you know, being able to wait and make the right decisions which

I know I personally struggle with. I like just move, move, move! I would imagine that those younger than me are ten times worse! The patience and wisdom that the Traditionalists bring to the table would be, to me, their greatest asset.

Even though it frustrates me, I think that one of the greatest assets of the Baby Boomers is that they question everything and they don't trust easily. Many Boomers seem to come from a position of mistrust and when I think about the 60s… I mean that's where it stemmed from. Boomers didn't trust the people in power. I think, personally, just because I am naturally curious and I want to know what else is out there. I want to see ways these people are doing the things that they are doing. It's a different kind of questioning and I don't think my generation looks at it as critically as the Baby Boomer might.

Generation Y? I haven't worked with them enough to know. You know I still think of Generation Y being the students. They are not my peers yet. What can they bring to the table? Energy, because they are younger! Their knowledge of technology is important, and they are very good at working in teams. It's just natural to them to automatically pick up on something. My biggest concern about working with Generation Y is that they're more accustomed to having things given to them, not earning them. That is one worry I have… that they would just expect things.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). I think that my generation probably has the newness… the… it's like a different kind of drive, I guess. Maybe the older generations would go to school because they had to. It was expected. I think my generation, because it's still young, we do have the energy and the driving force and the… um the energy to make things new and fresh and bring upon new thoughts and ideas.

The Traditionalists contributed stability and tradition, professionalism, and leadership.

The Baby Boomers contributed new thoughts and new energy, and it was kind of like a generation where you were starting to be open-minded about things. In the workforce, the Boomers brought in new ways of doing things and kind of like more creative ideas. There was so much going on with the Baby Boomers. They questioned things and had a different sense of foundation. Like the ideas were completely different and before this, these things and questioning of ideas was not as prevalent.

Generation X is kind of hard for me. Well… often people are only interested in doing things their own way and when different generations are together in the workforce, you're working with two different species of animals! You are used to eating fruit with your hands and all of a sudden it is very different! I think sometimes it is hard to find the foundation amongst differing generations because they can be so different themselves. What is valued and not valued? The more you are with people of differing generations, the more you can come to a similar foundation but when you first get into it… it's like overcoming barriers. I think that if you can take all the positives of each generation and work together, than that's great. Then you can collaborate really well and learn from each other and come up with your own structure and ways of doing things that works for everyone.

Summary Findings on Challenges of the Four Generations Represented Working Together in a

Higher Education Setting

When discussing higher education, professional experiences, and professional challenges with the four participants of the study, each person indicated that he or she realized the importance of being productive but also strived for continued opportunities for advancement and innovation within the workforce.

The Traditionalist and Generation Y were more conservative in their belief systems than were the Baby Boomer and Generation X. Both the Traditionalist and the Baby Boomer shared the importance of NASA, the space program, and how valuable space exploration had been to the progress and development of science and technology. The Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, and Generation Y spoke of the dynamics of leadership; Generations X and Y are considered entrepreneurial in their capabilities and inner-drive. Finally, the Traditionalist and Generation X expressed concern that Generation Y expected monetary benefits without working diligently to receive them. Keep in mind, these are generalizations of the four participants' views concerning each generation – not one another – as they were never introduced during the course of the individual interview process.

Their life and work experiences – as well as their response to the factors representing career success – showed minimal differences. Whereas all four generations showed a strong attachment to job security, the oldest (Traditionalist) and the youngest (Generation Y) placed the highest importance on career influence. One detail I especially listened for was the four-generation participants' enthusiasm and passion for what they were currently, or had previously, accomplished within the higher education setting. A challenging problem remaining for future studies of the generations represented will be identifying the effects of age, maturation, and life

cycle on each of the four generations researched. This could conceivably show as much or more of a variation among members within the same generation as what exists between generations.

All four generational representatives spoke of the challenges of working together in a positive manner. Whatever apprehension was expressed was followed with the desire to collaborate and pool their resources including knowledge, wisdom, patience, questioning, energy, leadership, professionalism, technology, and teamwork. All four talked about the possibilities and advantages of working together.

Findings for Research Question 2

The second research question is: What are ways that different generational representatives use lifelong learning in their professional and personal lives? One content theme and two process themes are represented in the data. The themes are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Content theme – ways members approach lifelong learning and two process themes.

The content theme was identified as pertaining to the ways the four generational representatives researched in this study approach lifelong learning. The process themes include those the participating generational representatives experienced during their career and what they expect future generations to learn from them, just as they learned from their predecessors.

<u>Lifelong Learning During Professional Career</u>

The first process theme shown in Figure 3 was identified from the responses of the four generational participants: (Note: The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.)

<u>Dr. Brown (Traditionalist)</u>. I think during my professional career, there has always been something I need to learn about in order to either teach or participate in. And some people think that you are taught everything when you are in college and when you are out, you don't have to study anymore. That just doesn't happen. So I think the demands of the job have made me learn… didn't matter what the job was.

I like to learn and read… not with an I Pad or Kindle! I still like to turn a page. I know I am old fashioned but I still like the book and the newspaper. I read an average of two different newspapers every day. And the reason I like that is that I can get the story and I can put my own slant to it. I don't want somebody else telling me how it fits in. I just want them to give the basic story and let me decide how to use it. I hope newspapers don't become extinct during my lifetime. Many times as I would go to the library to get something specific, I would come across something I hadn't thought about that would attract my attention. And I would learn from it. The newspaper does the same thing. I like to be surprised finding things I wasn't looking for.

Give me the information and let me process it… lifelong learning. I learn because I love to solve a problem or deal with an issue or whatever… but I also read for pleasure… always have… still do… taken a lot of trips through reading and that is part of my lifelong learning. If you read, you can even read fiction and learn if people have gotten their facts about the setting. So you can learn a lot about different parts of the world and the culture and those kinds of things without visiting, but through the written word. And then lifetime learning has always occurred by talking to different people. And when I mean talking to other people, I mean listening to them. I think it's probably that you don't learn much when you are talking, but you probably do learn while you're listening. And so I have always liked to hear what other people have to say… and even as a kid and on up, I always gravitated towards older people and I think that helped me learn… just listening to what older people had to say.

My whole goal is not to make people memorize but I just wanted them to think about situations and apply what they knew about situations and come up with their own conclusions. And I think you grow when you do that. Students, particularly, have made a big difference in my life because students asking questions are questioning what I might have said and have made me go back and study more and figure out if you really believe that or what is the answer to the question?

When you have to apply what you know to situation and have discussions about it and bring in experiences from other places, it makes a difference in the life of the person leading the discussion and those involved in the discussion.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). At the end of my freshman year at college, I was a Girl Scout counselor at the camp I had attended as a kid. It was probably the best summer of my life. When I went back to school in the fall, I had to declare a major, so I went to the counselor's office and I said I didn't have a clue. I told him if I could, I would be a counselor 365 days a year. He suggested teaching and here I am!

I majored in Elementary Ed and minored in Library Science. My first job was in Dalton, Georgia. I both taught and was an elementary school counselor in Dalton. I got my doctorate in 1996. Every time I have gotten restless in a job, I would go back to school. I have gotten lots of certifications along the way, and just things I was interested in and then knew all I'm doing is going to school. I love it!

The night I received my doctorate, my husband asked me which degree I was going through next! It was a given that there would be more. Once I get this tenure thing under my belt, I will start taking advantage of the fact that we can take classes.

Lifelong learning never ends!

Ms. Cox (Generation X). I think I could be the poster child for lifelong learning because my family makes such fun of me! Every time I graduate, I say I'm finished and then within a couple of weeks, I say, "Now that looks interesting!"

I wonder if this is something within me and I am like why do I feel this need? And I push it on other people… like my husband… and I'm like… well, I work at a college now, you could come to school! You could get an MBA! He tells me he doesn't ever want to go back to school!

Education is not even like the means to an end… I have so much of it which I know makes me a complete nerd! And it's like this about everything… I just can't stop myself and I am turning my children this way too! My little boy is six years old and he just started kindergarten and he has already asked me how many years he will have to go to school and I said about 25! I tell him he can just keep going! He can become a doctor or a lawyer or whatever he wants, as long as he keeps going to school.

Education feeds my passion… it does. I didn't realize how much I liked school until I was away from it for a while. I just really love to learn new things. I think it's just… I don't understand why all people aren't that way!

You know, I can't imagine my life being less busy and hectic. I am a true lifelong learner, I think. I will be that little lady on the billboard that says, "She's 100 years old and still going to college!" I have been able to pull it off, you know, especially since I started working in Higher Education. That's my husband's worst nightmare! He's like, she can

go to school free forever! I keep telling him not taking advantage of that would be like turning down free money! And I am still the geek who, before the semester starts, gets excited about getting new binders, paper, etc. I like everything about it.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). Professionally, I hope to keep growing and to keep learning. I don't want to stop. I want to do as much as I can in nursing and do as much as I can in something else. I would like to take the interests that I have and pull them all together… like massage therapy and art… 'cause they do go together.

What Future Generations Will Learn from Your Generation and What You Have Learned from Other Generations

The second process theme shown in Figure 3 was identified from the responses of the four generational participants: (Note: The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.)

Dr. Brown (Traditionalist). I think that my generation certainly contributed a continuation of that loyalty to management and to the company and I think it was a major contribution to be loyal to the people you are working for. We have so many products now that were developed because of the space program and I think my generation contributed and I think it goes back to the fact that there are a lot of people in my generation that were into science and math.

The Baby Boomers are not accepting of anything at face value. It's good to question what's presented to us and decide if it is right or wrong or good or bad. To question something just because it is presented… is not always the right thing to do. The Baby Boomers were exposed to the Vietnam War and saw a president have to resign. A lot of things happened during that generation and maybe some of that led to the anti-establishment feelings and philosophies because they didn't like what they saw. It was anti-everything, but not near as much as it is today. I think it is the beginning of a major change in the way that this country operates.

Generation X doesn't understand there are compromises you have to make whether it is at work or PTA or somewhere else where you have to make compromises and to work with other people. They think if it is not their way, it is not right. Generation X thought they should start off where their parents were and also thought they should have everything new that came along. However, Generation X, for the most part, don't bring their prejudices toward others that my generation and your generation did. I think their children are even better at it than their parents and that's good. Generation X has established an environment where race doesn't matter as much as it did to other generations.

Generation X has also proven to be more dynamic and entrepreneurial than any other generation. They have started some industries that have had major influences on our lives. And they're beginning to give back. As they get older, they are teaching us to give of our resources to help other people. Materialism has led them to be innovators and now that they are getting older, they are saying, okay… what can I do with this wealth?

Generation Y has to have all of the electronic goodies that are on the market and every time there's a new one, they have to have it… too much time on their hands. They need to be given responsibility to do something productive… just the way they are behaving.

Generation Y has picked up some of the loyalty and respect of the Traditionalist Generation. However, Generation Y doesn't spend time talking to other people and playing with other people as much. I think the kids in that generation probably have done better in sports because they learned how to work together as a team.

I think it is really important that we remember our past. We need to remember the past and where we have come from… families and as a nation. It is easier to preserve the past through the media and the publication capabilities allowing us to do that… preservation instead of demolition.

I would like for future generations to look at the value of other generations and take the good from each generation and apply it to theirs. People don't change. I think that people should have to spend at least four hours a week talking to other people without interruptions or other distractions… talking about life, the world, the philosophy and whatever you can get into the conversation. I would tell all generations this. I think technology is leading us to become isolationists. I realize that not all generations would agree with me.

Dr. French (Baby Boomer). What people will learn from me is that all people are worthy of respect. It's the respect issue and I think everybody deserves that respect. I think I absorbed that because of the turmoil of the 60s and early 70s with the Civil Rights Movement and war protests and things like that. I think that's where those events… how they had an impact on me. That's how I treat people and how I respect people's gifts and to lean on strengths as opposed to fix what is wrong. I don't know that the Baby Boomers ever had an open mind… I think it was our way that was the right way and that the other way was the wrong way.

Ms. Cox (Generation X). At my previous job… unfortunately, the plant is closing… anyway, I was creating a training program which, generationally, that was an interesting experience. I worked as a supervisor there and I trained all the new employees who came in. And just being promoted to supervisor was a little bit of an issue. I was one of the younger employers there… not the youngest by any means, and one of the less experiences. I had more education, just not as much real world experience or application in that setting.

I remember one of the individuals I worked with in particular was so worried because he was older than me… probably about 10 or 15 years older than me and had been there for a long time. I thought how would I feel if I was him? Thank goodness, it was never an issue with his work. I focused on him and his work. I kept it to the book… this is what it says to do and how to fix it to make it better.

One of the men I trained was 70 years old and he was so much fun to train! He was a very smart man and he knew the chemistry behind it and the reactions… but he and technology, sometimes, because we had this computerized system and it was sometimes just a barrier. But it was a lot of fun to train him!

I want to be remembered as someone who did the right thing and who made the right decisions… somebody who worked hard… that's important for me. I want to be remembered as having a very strong work ethic and someone who is passionate about life… passionate about my job… passionate about my family. I want to be remembered as somebody who had a lot of responsibility but I was able to manage them all effectively because that's really hard for me sometimes. I bite off more than I can chew, but I like that about myself. I like being productive. I hate spending a day where I feel like I haven't gotten anything accomplished. I love structure.

This affects the way that I relate to people of different generations, as well. Relating this to how I would deal with different generations of my family in differing situations helps me know how to do it in the workplace. I preserve the past. Capturing the present… who has time?! I suppose I do this at home by preserving and capturing traditions with my children during the holidays and stuff. My biggest impact for the future would have to be my influence as a mother. How I raised my own children and the values that I instilled in them… but then, also through my job now. I have a really good opportunity to impact the future. I think I just need to grow a little more comfortable in the role I have here and try to find my place a little more… and then we'll see.

Ms. Carrie (Generation Y). There is so much to learn from the other generations. Nursing… working in the hospital as a nurse is very demanding… very few older men or women are doing it… and if they are doing it, you can see that their work pace is different. I feel like that there are more of the younger generations on the floors of the hospitals. However, some of the older generations… are working like in home health or something. We are overworked and understaffed anyway and it is difficult to keep that passion going for a twelve hour time period.

I am kind of fearful for the younger generation (Generation Y). I don't think they have the same values or work ethics. I feel like they want things just handed to them. I don't feel like they have that family structure or value system. They do look to technology for entertainment, but when it comes to values and things, you don't get the values from technology. Hopefully, Gen Y will learn loyalty and teamwork. There are many challenges ahead of them. It seems like family life is deteriorating. We need more outlets for children to cope and educationally wise to cope so that they are diverted from doing

drugs and having sex and doing things that they shouldn't be doing at their age… or doing things too fast or at a different rate.

We need role models… role models are not like they should be. Your generation (Baby Boomers), were like presidents and leaders. My generation's role models are like singers, actors, and actresses. All they see are things that are not important. People do not to spend hours and hours looking for glamour and gossip. The media is at our fingertips and why the different generations are and know what to do to find out information. It is spiraling.

I would like to be remembered as someone who cared and that made a difference. I know I don't want kids. I feel like there are so many kids out there who do not have a good home and I don't want to bring another kid into the world without helping the kids that are already out there first. If you can't give everything to that child, then you shouldn't have children. People have children to make themselves look better or to heal a relationship or something selfish… that's wrong. They're making a person and if they can't give their all to it, then they shouldn't do it. So many people think that it is just a normal thing to have kids, but I don't know… you can't take it for granted.

I would like to preserve the past by taking it and learning from it. I think a lot of times our history repeats itself. And it repeats itself because you are not learning from what happened! Preserve the past by learning from it. Capture the present… the best way to capture the present is to be in the present and to take it and not go back… to take in all your senses and really be in the moment. Your moment. Otherwise, you hit a road block… not easy… must concentrate and not dwell on what has happened in the past or will be happening… impacting the future in the best way possible by making a difference and by caring about the future and growing from the past and present so that the future can be a better place… do things with passion.

Summary Findings of Ways that Members of Different Generations Approach Lifelong

Learning, as it Impacts Their Workplace Life

Through research gathered in this qualitative study, I surmised that there are not many differences among the four generations with regard to how they want to learn. All four preferred learning skills like on-the-job-training, one-on-one coaching, peer interaction, and feedback, more than web-based, satellite, and distance learning programs. Several contrasts between the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X included differences in their opinion of web-based training. However, the Baby Boomer dispelled the myth that only the younger generations were interested in learning through computer-based media.

Regarding lifelong learning, all four participants talked about the importance, as well as the enjoyment of continuing to learn. The Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y all spoke of having a passion for lifelong learning. The desire for and realization of lifelong learning's importance in the workplace and throughout their lives had been an enriching and rewarding benefit of their professional careers. The Traditionalist and the Baby Boomer related what they had learned from their students. The concept of lifelong learning within the higher education environment is both given and received by students and faculty. Generation X joked about lifelong learning being her identity… If there was something to be learned, sign her up and buy her school supplies! Generation Y, having recently entered her professional arena, spoke of not only professional development opportunities but the knowledge, experience, and wisdom coming her way by working with members of other generations.

This qualitative study – through extensive conversations during the interview process – found that each of the four participants observed was willing to increase his or her skills and knowledge as each realized it was an opportunity to develop professionally. Each participant reported having sometime during his or her career the advantage of a mentor coach who showed what was best for his or her professional life. The plan to do something or having already done something similar for someone else was a common theme of satisfaction for all four generations.

A common consensus among the four study participants was that improvement is needed in communicating the value of education and the importance of raising graduation rates. Many workforce members are willing to pursue their education and training. Obstacles including inconvenience and cost prevent them from having the opportunity. A national commitment to lifelong learning allows workers to get training and stay ahead in their careers; they will have the opportunity to compete in a rapidly changing workforce in a higher education setting.

Regarding what future generations can learn and what participants have learned from other generations, one thing particularly stood out. The study participants had sturdy convictions about a strong work ethic and the importance of continuing their education. Whereas, their ideas for achieving these things differed with regard to loyalty, balance, and attitude. For example, the Traditionalist advocated loyalty to management and the company; he felt that his generation had contributed the most to this. All generations (including the Baby Boomer) commented on the Baby Boomer generation's doubt and inability to accept without question. However, the other participants spoke about the turbulence and turmoil occurring during the Baby Boomer years, to explain that generation's hesitation and protestations. The generations expressed a desire to be remembered as trying to do the right thing, trying to make the right decisions, and a desire to work effectively with members of other generations. That is lifelong learning, at its best.

Chapter Summary

The findings of this qualitative study point to the distribution of personality factors and traits as consistent among the four generations. Generational traits tend toward stereotypes, referring more to behaviors and values shaped by the defining events that occurred before the age of 18. I found a recurrent theme across the four generations in this study: personality traits, values, and behaviors were similar, whereas the priorities were different. Life experiences for people of each generation offered varying differences as to their actions and reactions to both personal and work-related situations. Because members of the four generations see the differences between them while working together, it became apparent that anything unfamiliar was attributed to judgment and a lack of understanding. In addition to their strengths and struggles to succeed in building more efficient and cohesive workforce teams, the most important step was found to be a keen understanding of each generation's formative ideals. Because

effective teams demonstrate success in behaviors within four competency areas – collaborating with others, dealing with change, organization and accountability, and productivity and decision-making – teams must address these issues to bridge generation gaps (Philion, 2010).

Chapter 4 provided a tremendous opportunity to *get to the meat* of the qualitative Narrative Inquiry process. The data came alive with the participant's descriptions and narrations through the content and process themes of the four generations, the challenges of four generations working together in the higher education setting, and the ways members of different generations approach lifelong learning in the workplace. I found that blending the four generations posed a dynamic challenge with regard to communication and collaboration; communication's success is based on understanding what each party is saying (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In my study of the four generational participants, I found that some of the stereotypes and generalizations assigned to each of the four generations presented issues for them in the workplace. Assuming specific values and personality characteristics for an entire generation is simply not acceptable. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, communication has always provided the key to effective interaction with another individual (Steele & Gordon, 2006). The participants confirmed this study's findings that people generally think chronologically. Further, individuals between 10 and 20 years of age have been considered extremely impressionable (Jorgenson, 2003).

Through research and narrative description of the four participants, it has become apparent that the largest difference distinguishing the generations from one another is the population of each generation. By 2020 Generation Y will be well on its way to outnumbering the Baby Boomers in the workforce (Frincke & Society for Human Resource Management, 2007). It is estimated that approximately 8,000 Baby Boomers turn 65 every day (Toedtman, 2011). A recurring theme encountered throughout this study was that the four participants regardless of their age or the size of their population have had essentially the same values and wanted the same things out of life including trust, respect, and family.

> when you hold stereotypes up to the light, they don't cast much of a shadow… Everyone wants to be able to trust their supervisors, no one really likes change, we all like feedback, and the number of hours you put in at work depends more on your level in the organization than your age. (Deal, 2007, p. 106)

Discussion

The intent of this study is to gain an understanding and awareness of how each of the four generations researched perceives the world in general and specifically the world of work in a higher education setting (Jorgenson, 2003). This study is delimited to individuals of different generations who have worked or currently are working in the field of higher education. The findings cannot be generalized beyond the four participants in this study.

Findings: Background Information of the Four Generations Represented

While interviewing the four generational representatives of this qualitative study, the significance of the major life events (Defining Moments) and occurrences consistently came up with regard to each generation's cultural impact and the representative's response to it. One view of generational differences presumes that shared events influence and define each generation. Each generation's work ethics, habits, and expectations have been formed through the historical and social events that took place during their formative years. Generational influences affect the development of personality, values, beliefs, and expectations that are carried into adulthood. Generational traits appear to lean toward stereotypes, which refer more to behavior and values formed by defining events that occurred before 18 years of age as discussed throughout the research. So much of what happens in life is seen through a *generational lens*. For many individuals, behavior is driven by their value system. So that reviewing another generation's way of thinking and reasoning provides a better chance for understanding and communicating with that generation. The comments quoted here are excerpts from those shown in Chapter 4. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Traditionalist generation. Both of my parents were schoolteachers and there always was an unspoken requirement that you were not finished with school until you were finished with college.

Baby Boomer generation. My parents were divorced and remarried by the time I was 12. When they remarried, my dad was still an alcoholic and still a compulsive gambler. In retrospect, I realize my mom was addicted to my dad.

Generation X. Probably the biggest challenge and the first thing that comes to my mind is the divorce of my parents I think that more than anything has shaped who I was then, who I have become, and the way I interact with people.

Generation Y. My parents really emphasized being open-minded and seeing things for what they really are.

Findings: Defining Moments, Challenges, and Events of the Four Generations Represented

For each generation represented it became apparent that the defining events discussed throughout the study shaped the trends or characteristics of each participant's experiences. However, this did not prove that either some characteristics tend to represent each generation's time frame or that all generational characteristics are the same. In fact the findings show that trends representing each generation were often marked by common experiences. Other important differences included birth year, influences of growing up, birthplace culture, and personal *baggage*. The comments quoted here are excerpts from those shown in Chapter 4. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Traditionalist generation. History repeats itself. It's just what you do with the time you have and how… do you do that helping people? Do you do that for self gratification? Do you strike a balance? And I think my parents and grandparents dealt with that just like I'm dealing with that.

Baby Boomer generation. My grandmother and great-grandmother lived together in this little two bedroom, one bathroom house… the house that my grandmother grew up in. My grandmother never owned a car, never wore a pair of pants… but was very much the stereotypical, wonderful grandmother. I think my grandmother is where I got my total

acceptance of people because she always cared about taking care of people. It didn't
matter who they were or what they did.

Generation X. It's just a different world. Deep down I still have the same values that my
parents and grandparents had. Things are important to me that were just as important in
my parent's generation. It's just the way it is expressed that has changed. I think the
values are still there.

Generation Y. I wasn't around my grandparents that much. I didn't get to have that
grandparent experience as much. I think that grandparents are people that really shape
your lives and they are really important people. I tend to appreciate older people.

Research Question 1: What are the professional and personal challenges that four generational
representatives working together in the higher education setting encounter?

Higher education is shifting toward an attitude of transformation regardless of the age of

student, staff, or faculty currently populating the nation's campuses. Advantages from working

in a multi-generational institution of higher learning include a reflection of the diverse needs of

student, staff, and faculty. Our differences through varying views, backgrounds, and experiences

are what make us strong as well as identify who we are and what we believe.

Professional challenge – diversity. What better way to value, understand, and build a

legacy of diversity than through generational diversity. Many times it has been the older

generations who have made this possible. While going on to create their own paths, succeeding

generations often followed in their predecessor's footsteps. As younger generations quickly

travel toward new destinations, we should ask if the succeeding generations are ready to join

them. The comments quoted here are excerpts from those shown in Chapter 4. The complete

interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Traditionalist generation. One professional challenge I encountered was in dealing with
different personalities and generations of people who were in charge above you.
Professionally speaking, there is continual change. This brings about challenges of

compensating for change and continuing to do your job well. Throughout process and change, there were always new regulations and requirements. The challenge was to meet the demands through the educational process.

Baby Boomer generation. Professionally, I get in and work shoulder to shoulder with people. I am a learner as well as a leader. The fact that I learn with people, allows me to influence people. I learn from my students. That is one way I think I have made a difference… the connections that you still have with people make you know you have made a difference.

Generation X. In the workforce? That's a whole different story. I come from a non-academic program so I worked outside of higher education for years before coming in. And I had no idea what I was walking into. I didn't think about how different the culture is and how academic people are… I was not at all prepared for that.

Generation Y. I think in my profession I have made a difference for others because I am not burnt out and I am new and I have energy and I really do care and I want to learn from the people around me as well as my patients. That's a big source of knowledge right there and because I am very open-minded.

Professional challenge – training. The reality is that most people are likely to resist change when it is seen as a threat and is not supported by training or not thoughtfully introduced. As Baby Boomers move into their 50s and beyond, they seem to have no plans to take early retirement; on average, older workers are as fit as younger workers. Training within the workplace should be about communication, clarity, and instruction. It should not cater to a specific generation or age group. The most frequent debate among different generations deals with their opinion about work ethics. The comments quoted here are excerpts from those shown in Chapter 4. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Traditionalist generation. My generation just continues what they have learned from their parents and grandparents. My generation changed the dynamics to some degree. The loyalty continued but they started thinking more for themselves. Many changes were made with the Traditionalists. They became innovators in the workforce and there was more mechanics and production than in the generation before them.

Baby Boomer generation. I think we (Baby Boomers) created the workforce! I think there's just so much that came from our generation. Baby Boomers are the workhorses Being a nine to fiver is not a bad thing but we should be more about results and not about time. Partly because time is associated with the Boomer work ethic, we get more done because of it. How we are hurting the workforce, I think, is because we are so rigid in our view that time is tied to production.

Generation X. How do I handle different generations that are coming to me? Sometimes they're just strong personality conflicts and I can handle that effectively and it is not as frustrating as the collective faculty mentality. Some of them are younger or my age and I don't see it as much with people that are in my generation. And so why can't we all get along and work together and make it happen? So maybe that's the generational thing. I want to have everybody on board, you know, and say, "You guys came up with the plan… let me help you facilitate this work as much as I can."

Generation Y. I think that my generation probably has the newness… it's like a different kind of drive, I guess. Maybe the older generations would go to school because they had to. It was expected. I think my generation, because it's still young, we do have the energy and the driving force to make things new and fresh and bring upon new thoughts and ideas.

Personal challenge – motivation. Motivating the four generations currently in the workforce to bring out their best effort includes an understanding of what motivates all employees. By combining and comparing the differing styles, a productive and inspiring working environment can result. How can members of four generations be effectively motivated, managed, and engaged in the same work environment? Paris (2008) suggests,

> Traditionalists – like the personal touch – a handwritten note, less e-mail and more personal interaction; socialization is important to them. They bring value to the workplace with their experience and knowledge, and are hardworking and dependable.
>
> Baby Boomers – also like a personal approach from managers. They enjoy public recognition, and appreciate awards for their hard work and the long hours they put in. If you are working with Boomers, get consensus – they may be offended if you don't include them.
>
> Generation X – are good at multi-tasking and need constructive feedback to be more effective. But don't micro-manage these employees – give them time to pursue other interests and even have some fun at work. And give them the latest technology – they are a determined group and will do a good job for you given the right tools.

If you have Generation Y employees, take the time to learn about their personal goals. They want to enhance their work skills by continuing their education. Training is important to them, as is mentoring Consider matching your Generation Y employees with Traditionalists. They will work together and share some of the same values and ethics (para. 13-16).

<u>Research Question 2: What are ways that different generational representatives use lifelong learning in their professional and personal lives?</u>

The world with its continuing change poses the necessity and resulting demand for additional training regardless of generation. In a rapidly changing world the key to stable employment and personal growth is our ability to reeducate ourselves continually. Lifelong learning is very much a part of all generations and helps define who we are.

People who spend significant amounts of energy coping with an alien environment have less energy left to do their jobs. Assimilation does not just create a situation in which people are likely to fail, it also decreases the productivity of organizations. (Fine, 1996, p. 493)

Within the workplace continuous learning opportunities are necessary to assure a culture of diversity and inclusion. Key elements of cultural change include assessment skills and diversity education, keeping in mind that the leadership's support of change is mandatory. Leaders and trainers must be aware of generational differences when bringing in new employees, providing training opportunities to current employees, and planning for knowledge transfer from retiring employees. Experts (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2010) agree that there are few differences in the value systems between generations and that they all basically want the same thing in the workplace because their values are essentially the same. Learning and development within the working environment must be provided. The importance of recognizing learning style preferences among the four generations must not be overlooked. Through a blended approach to learning and by including all learning styles in the process, members of the workplace will generally be more cooperative and productive. The comments quoted here are excerpts from

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those shown in Chapter 4. The complete interview transcript for each participant can be found in

Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Traditionalist generation. Give me the information and let me process it… lifelong learning. I learn because I love to solve a problem or deal with an issue or whatever… but I also read for pleasure… always have… still do… taken a lot of trips through reading and that is part of my lifelong learning. If you read, you can even read fiction and learn if people have gotten their facts about the setting. So you can learn a lot about different parts of the world and the culture and those kind of things without visiting, but through the written word. And then lifetime learning has always occurred by talking to different people. And when I mean talking to other people, I mean listening to them. I think it's probably that you don't learn much when you are talking, but you probably do learn while you're listening. And so I have always liked to hear what other people have to say… and even as a kid and up, I always gravitated towards older people and I think that helped me to learn… just listening to what older people had to say.

Baby Boomer generation. I majored in Elementary Ed and minored in Library Science, My first job was in Georgia. I both taught and was an elementary school counselor. I got my doctorate in 1996. Every time I have gotten restless in a job, I would go back to school. I have gotten lots of certifications along the way, and just things I was interested in and then knew all I'm doing is going to school. I love it! The night I received my doctorate, my husband asked me which degree I was going through next! It was a given that there would be more Once I get this tenure thing under my belt, I will start taking advantage of the fact that we can take classes.

Generation X. I think I could be the poster child for lifelong learning because my family makes such fun of me! Every time I graduate, I say I'm finished and then within a couple of weeks, I say, "Now that looks interesting!" Education feeds my passion… it does. I didn't realize how much I liked school until I was away from it for a while. I just really love to learn new things. I think it's just… I don't understand why all people aren't that way. You know, I can't imagine my life being less busy and hectic. I am a true lifelong learner, I think. I will be that little lady on the billboard that says, "She's100 years old and still going to college!" I have been able to pull it off, you know, especially since I started working in Higher Education. That's my husband's worst nightmare! He's like, she can go to school free forever. I keep telling him not taking advantage of that would be like turning down free money! And I am still the geek who, before the semester starts, gets excited about getting new binders, paper, etc. I like everything about it.

Generation Y. Professionally, I hope to keep growing and to keep learning. I don't want to stop. I want to do as much as I can in nursing and do as much as I can in something else. I would like to take the interests that I have and pull them all together… like massage therapy and art… 'cause they go together.

What is it like to have diversity of generations within a work environment? While interviewing the four participants in this qualitative study, I found that many times the use of technology seemed easier for Generations X and Y. The Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generations have made great progress regarding technology. In fact, many of today's greatest technological advancements were invented and developed by the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers. Nevertheless, many have had to learn what the younger generations often approach as their *native tongue*. Because of their tacit technological abilities, Generations X and Y are many times able to discover information in the virtual Internet arena that older generations cannot. Tips collected for bridging the generational divide include an openness to change, letting the different generations work together in developing suggestions, flexibility in how much younger generations are willing to learn from older generations, and an equivalent flexibility in how much older generations are willing to learn from younger generations.

Implications for Practice

During this qualitative research study, I examined four individuals currently or formerly involved in the higher education environment. Each of the four generations researched was studied through observations, interviews, and conversations. All four participants certainly had both similarities and differences, but ultimately wanted the same things including life balance, trust, and respect.

A lack of published research on generational differences in academic journals suggests that the generational approach may be more about popular culture than science (Giancola, 2006). The findings of this study show that the distribution of personality traits and factors are relatively consistent among the four generations. A particular challenge of working among four

generations is learning to avoid a tendency to stereotype one another and realizing that each

generation brings value to the workplace.

> For instance, when a Gen Xer applies for a job and shows up with a nose piercing, a Traditionalist recruiter may be biased against the piercing and automatically discount the Gen Xer applicant. Remember – the younger generations believe in freedom of expression. (Elliott, 2009, p. 34)

It has been suggested that taking personal risks in the workforce may be age-related (Walter,

2010). Younger workers may consider themselves invincible, while older workers may be more

cautious in their risk-taking endeavors (Walter, 2010). Speculation points to a tendency for Baby

Boomers to be more likely to cut corners to save money or meet a deadline; a Baby Boomer's

idea of risk may involve fulfilling the profit potential of an organization.

> Go to any newsstand and you'll read that issues abound as disgruntled employees from different age groups try to work together. Claims proliferate like: "These younger employees don't have any values." "My older co-workers don't care about new technologies." "Older employees are far more loyal and hard working than these young kids." If one believes the media, there are constant rumblings of worker conflict between the generations. (De Meuse & Mlodzik, 2010, p. 1)

One suggestion to alleviate conflict among the generations is to create cross-generational teams

that encourage sharing ideas and expectations.

Implications for Further Research

A dilemma resulting from recent findings and research studies is that there are often

inconsistencies about the definition of the generations themselves (Giancola, 2006). Another

research finding suggests that the generational differences reported are not always applicable

with regard to minority groups (Giancola, 2006). Interestingly enough, research suggests that the

greatest jump in population growth within the United States will be among the racial and ethnic

groups having the lowest education levels, whereas the Baby Boomers, expected to retire within

the next decade, are among the most highly educated (Schramm, 2006). The United States

should be concerned about what this means for the workforce. In addition to this lack of comparative levels of education, Generation X and Generation Y may face more competition in the workforce than did the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers. As younger generations enter the workforce, research refers to an environment of much greater diversity than with previous generations. Dr. Brown (see Appendix C) of the Traditionalist generation said,

> I do think there's something in this country Generation X is contributing to and it has continued with their children and that is they think they are not, for the most part, they don't bring the prejudices towards others that my generation and your generation had… um I think their children are even better at it than their parents, but that's good. I think Generation X has established an environment where race doesn't matter as much as it did to earlier generations.

Chapter Summary

Most employees regardless of work environment or generation represented are looking for the same things: a sense of security and a healthy life balance. Age may become more of a factor in what they want from work, what they believe is best, and the most effective way to accomplish their goals. Traditionalists and Baby Boomers may focus more on retirement benefits, whereas Generation X and Generation Y are looking for salary advantages that provide immediate help with student debt and the rising cost of living. Security, in whatever form, is a top priority for all generations currently in the workplace. The younger generations value job flexibility as a way to balance their lifestyle with young families. The older generations, whose children are – more often than not – grown, look for flexibility in paid time off. Life stages vary, while the basic value systems and job stability needs remain constant.

Through the narrative inquiry method used for this qualitative study, much information was brought to light. This study of four generations within the workforce produced more similarities than differences. Common ground spanning the nearly 80 years from 1922 to 2000 was evident more often than not. Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and

Generation Ys ultimately wanted the same things with regard to their jobs: an enjoyable job, fulfillment and purpose, good pay and benefits, perspective on what is important, respect, stability in the company and position, validation, and appreciation (Gibson, 2009).

Communication played a critical role among different ages working and learning in a productive and harmonious environment. Job satisfaction and professional development (lifelong learning) went hand-in-hand. Though research, regarding multiple generations in the higher education setting proved challenging at times, the basic values and purpose remained the same regardless of the professional environment. Proper communication remains essential in helping each generation better understand and work with one another.

In addition to my discoveries and findings through observations, interviews, and conversations with the four representative participants, the careful observations and recorded findings of this qualitative research study were based on the expert opinions of many who have studied generational similarities and differences in the workforce. Through narrative methodologies, Narrative Inquiry has been able to converge and provide a better understanding of the "whys" of human action (Myers, 2000).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Forty Values

A recent research study (Deal, 2007) conducted a computer program survey presenting various members of the four generations a list of 40 values to be prioritized in the order of what was the most important to each of them. The 40 values found in this survey were as follows:

- Achievement
- Activity
- Advancement
- Adventure
- Aesthetics
- Affiliation
- Affluence
- Authority
- Autonomy
- Balance
- Challenge
- Change/Variety
- Collaboration
- Community
- Competence
- Competition
- Courage
- Creativity
- Economic Security
- Enjoyment

- Fame
- Family
- Friendship
- Happiness
- Help Others
- Humor
- Influence
- Integrity
- Justice
- Location
- Love
- Loyalty
- Order
- Personal Development
- Recognition
- Reflection
- Responsibility
- Self-Respect
- Spirituality
- Wisdom

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

I developed the questions before the interviews; participants were given the opportunity to view them beforehand.

- What is your date of birth?

- What is your current age?

- What is your country of birth?

- What challenges and or events shaped your formative years?

- In what ways has life changed since your parents and grandparents were your age?

- What was available during your childhood and teen-aged years as regards technology, money needs, family relations, etc.?

- How has lifelong learning occurred during your professional career?

- What challenges have you faced in the higher education setting?

- How have you made a difference professionally?

- What special capabilities has your generation contributed to the workforce?

- What special capabilities does each generation have to contribute?

- How can generational gaps and stereotypes get in the way of what could be great working relationships? How can these working relationships become more effective?

- What will future generations learn from you?

- How would you like to be remembered?

- How do you think you will be remembered?

- How would you like to preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?

Traditionalist Generation

- **What is your date of birth and your current age?**

Dr. Brown: June 15, 1944 – 66 years of age

- **What is your country of birth?**

Dr. Brown: United States

- **What challenges and or events shaped your formative years?**

Dr. Brown: Well, I need to tell you… both of my parents were school teachers and there was always an unspoken requirement that you were not finished with school until you were finished with college. And so from an educational standpoint, my decisions and what I did were predicated on the fact that I knew I had to go to college.

Early on I became a paperboy, and for three years, every morning, I learned a lot about how people behaved… and this was one of the situations where you delivered where you delivered the papers seven days a week and on Saturday you had to go collect the pay. You would find out the types people that would pay you, the types people that would try to get out of paying you… I learned… as a young person that sometimes that the wife sometimes told the husband what to do… and at that time, that wasn't the norm. But it also made me learn to deal with money. I had to pay the newspaper people for the product I delivered. I could do what I wanted to do with what I had left over… so, in terms of dealing with people and dealing with finances, that was a good start in terms of a formative situation. Uh… (sigh)… during that time I still went to a small high school and was on the basketball team and I think I learned the value of teamwork and that process. I uh… my dad in addition to being a teacher was also a master woodworker. And I grew up having a full woodworking shop at the house… and… uh… when I was in high school I was making custom furniture for people… so I also, through that process learned that I could be by myself and take care of myself… don't know if that says anything, but I find other people… they are always looking to be entertained… and sometimes, if you are just doing something productive, that is the entertainment. And so I think I learned that… through that… through that woodworking experience. I guess… does that age frame have to have some? You're not into the college age-frame, yet, right? Trying to figure out who you are at this point.

Interviewer: You mean… your growing up years… well, the formative years would include that if it defines, you know, what happened during that time… you know it defines…

Dr. Brown: You know… I've told people when it came time to go to college, and my parents were very involved in my (pause) life. And I respected them and I did try to do what they wanted me to do… when, in essence was back when they took me to college, I didn't have a car… they dropped me off and essentially I never went back home… and I knew that I was on my own pretty much. And I felt that that experience uh helped me to be responsible on a day to day basis.

I had learned about financing and I had learned about working independently, but to realize that I had to figure out where I wanted to eat, how much I wanted to pay for it… get your clothes cleaned became my responsibility in addition to getting an education… so that… that first year in college was very important in my formative years.

Interviewer: In the bigger theme of things… you know like the national scheme of things… what during your childhood really… really sticks out? You know like in my childhood the Kennedy assassination.

Dr. Brown: Well, I was in college when Kennedy was assassinated but…

Interviewer: And it doesn't have to be a negative…

Dr. Brown: No… no… of course when I become aware that there was such thing as a political realm… Eisenhower was president. And just as a young person I always felt like he was… uh… a good leader… not terribly innovative… kept things on a constant track… didn't cause waves but kept the country moving… and he… you know he finally saw to it that we got out of Korea. He was responsible for stabilizing the country after that and I thought he did a good job… uh… but then it came down to the wrong… I guess it was a run-off between Nixon and Kennedy. And there was this huge issue over should a Catholic be elected president? And that got my attention because having grown up in a Protestant church… I couldn't understand really… really what the problem was. Although I knew that there were a lot of people who just thought it was wrong to elect a Catholic as president. I find it particularly interesting today when seven of our nine Supreme Court Justices are Catholic… the other two Jewish… We have no Protestants serving as Supreme Court Justices… Not that religion makes any difference… I just find in the context of debate over Kennedy… you know… there were people who wanted to be negative and talked about where his family money came from and some of it coming from breweries… but the central issue seemed to be on his religion and us… from a national standpoint, that was it.

In the fifties, the country was fairly stable… things were beginning to grow… and new products were coming from the manufacturers and so it really was a pretty good time… We had no… you know… once we got out of Korea up until Vietnam we had no war and so… that's pretty much it from a political standpoint. The fifties were good times… they didn't last long but it was good to have them and I guess, even now, I wish we could get back to that a little bit… people were civil to each other…

Interviewer: Right children could go out and play safely until dark

Dr. Brown: Right… it was a simpler time… you can't go back to simpler times… but human behavior could get back to that… now, the toys we play with may be problematic in terms of what it costs people or how much time it takes away from interaction from others

Interviewer: How much there is to distract us from spending time with others?

Dr. Brown: Right… But I think from a human standpoint, it's possible to get back to that. I don't know that we ever will… I really do think that the current financial crisis this country is experiencing like losing their jobs and losing their homes and having to… to learn to live on

less… has pushed some of them more toward… um… that kind of behavior where they rely on other people… more… talk to people more… and so, it may all not be bad…

Interviewer: Well, this is kind of leading into the next question…

- **In what ways has life changed since your parents and grandparents were your age?**

Since you are dealing with… uh… an older person… I was just trying to think… my grandparents… can I break it down a little bit?

Interviewer: Sure

Dr. Brown: Two of my grandparents… uh… my grandfather was dead much before my age… the other spouse though lived about twenty four years to where I am now. Still making her own garden at age 85… with a push plow! The other grandparents… uh… he was in poor health… he had some heart trouble and so he was just trying to survive because at that time they didn't know how to operate on hearts… They made you comfortable and gave you something for pain and hoped it healed itself and that is about all they did. And so he had to deal with that… his spouse didn't work… so even at my age they were in their declining years and probably dealing with a lot of health issues. At about my age, my mother was retired from teaching school and my dad still had one year to go teaching school. Uh… so how has life changed? Most of these people my age were trying to figure out how to deal with retirement and not working on a daily basis and, for me, I am dealing with retirement and how to survive and going about whatever I need to do! So I, quite frankly, don't think there's been much of a change!

Interviewer: And other than the fact, that it seemed like when were kids… people did not live as long… somebody our age or somebody to reach the age of sixty five was something… to live that long! You know, other than the longevity and is it really good… a whole other issue…

Dr. Brown: Well… my one grandmother lived until she was almost ninety and she had a good life up until the last couple of years. And she had… uh… they called it hardening of the arteries but today we would call it dementia… not Alzheimer's, but dementia, but… but… she had to deal with that… but other than that, she was physically strong… I guess that was because they were farmers and she spent a lot of time working outside.

Interviewer: So basically what you are saying is the idea that we kind of grew up with… that history repeats itself…

Dr. Brown: Yeah, it does! It's just what you do with the time you have and how… do you do that helping people? Do you do that for self-gratification? Uh… do you strike a balance? And I think… I think my parents and grandparents dealt with that just like I'm dealing with that.

- **What was available during your childhood and teen-aged years as regard technology, money needs, family relations, etc?**

Dr. Brown: Well… you have to know that during my childhood… television came to the forefront… and I remember that my neighbors had a television set much before we did and uh… once a week I got to go at their invitation and watch their television for about 45 minutes or on a

certain night, so I got to see the evening news which was fifteen minutes and one program and I thought it was… television was a little bit fascinating… but it wasn't something that I felt like I just had to have… even after supper. But then… (pause)… the television came to our house and as most electronic things do, it began to consume family time… unnecessarily. And I think I begin… as I look back I can see where family conversations probably decreased at that point. Before that, we had radio and it was one of those that stands on the floor. It was a Philco… and… even today, I still listen to the radio quite a bit because it makes you… number one… really listen to what people are saying… number two… you are not distracted by images and number three… you make up your own images. For instance… if I'm listening to a ballgame, many times I much prefer to listen to the radio as opposed to television because the radio people have to fill in the time gaps and that can describe things and give you some detail… to take up time that you don't get otherwise. And, so, I don't know where this going… but, uh, I saw the television come in but I still loved the radio and I saw the advantages to both. So I didn't… I didn't necessarily think the television was a drastic improvement… I just thought it was a different way to deliver programming to others but it also probably had the negative impact of uh slowing down family conversations.

Interviewer: And so we are on a kind of hamster wheel with that… it keeps on going and going and they come out with something new every day…

Dr. Brown: But there were rules then, you know, there were rules… you didn't watch it if you had homework to do, you didn't uh… it was turned off at a set time each night. It was never turned on in the morning or during the day… uh… and I guess I still find it quite unusual to see a television on in the morning! Until I retired, I had never seen a morning show!

Interviewer: You are kidding? You never watched like… uh… the Today Show?

Dr. Brown: Never had seen one. And I watched that for about six months and they were like the evening programs only they scrambled some things to fill in and I didn't find them very useful. In fact, I don't watch them now. I like to watch the evening news.

Interviewer: Me too! And I know a lot of people younger than me that do not…

Dr. Brown: I do watch evening news… that is a tradition… somebody asked me something about Fox News and I said, "I don't watch Fox News!" They thought I was making a political statement. I get most of my news from NBC or CBS and I still do that… and, I do, read the paper a lot which is where I get most of my news. Now wait a minute… let's go back to this…

Money needs? We didn't have a lot of money needs. We learned to live on what we had. You know this guy, Dave Ramsey, that goes around the country trying to tell people how to handle their money? Typically, he says don't buy it unless you can pay for it. He's not saying anything that my parents didn't tell me growing up… he's just talking about what I was taught young, you know? You handle your finances and you buy what you can afford… but, at the same time, we didn't have a lot of money… we learned not to dream of things you just absolutely couldn't afford.

Interviewer: Your parents might have spoken of the Great Depression a lot?

Dr. Brown: They did, but not as much as my grandparents did… they(my parents) were just conservative by nature… they didn't have a lot growing up… when we didn't have a lot of money in the house we managed to pay our bills and we had a decent life… I can't complain about that… um… I guess… my dad never had a credit card and when my mother went to the hospital for the last time at almost 84 years of age, she was checking in and she said… uh… she was going over with the lady what finances she had that could pay for that and she looked at me and she said, "I've got a credit card, but I never used it, so I don't know whether it works or not. So, essentially, my parents never used a credit card. She had one because she did some traveling and she knew that there might be places that she would go that wouldn't accept money and so she had the credit card for that reason. Of course, she never used it.

Interviewer: Good for her!

Dr. Brown: Um… family relations… we had good family relations. Like I say, you respected your parents and you got along with your siblings, but my siblings were so… so much older… there was a minimum of five years difference between us so the wasn't a lot of comradery between us and we grew up independently. The three of us kind of grew up more like only children, but there was this other kid around , you know, that you would see around every once in a while but we really didn't play together or that kind of thing and so… family? It was a good, solid family and there were, of course, family issues that nobody would probably be interested in reading! Well, you did what your parents told you… Because I grew up in a smaller community… everybody knows everybody else, and, you know, you were saying it takes a village to raise a child… well, I don't know about that but I can tell you that the village did let your parents know when you did something you shouldn't be doing! And, I think, that probably was a good thing because you knew just because you were away from the house, you couldn't get away with things you shouldn't be doing. Uh, you know, now, you could be in your neighbor's yard, and your neighbor wouldn't know that you were a neighbor. People in the community don't know each other and I think that's a shame. We have isolated ourselves so much that we don't know what's going on around us. I had the good fortune, in retrospect, I found it to be good fortune… the community I grew up in was about 40% black and 60% white. There were, essentially, no other races there. I learned that it didn't matter what the color was… people were people. So I really have never harbored prejudiced behavior towards others because of it… they were the people I grew up with… now, at the time, the black people did go to a different school and I understood why they did that but I didn't at the time… but, when we were home we were all in the same community and the adults next door helped take care of you just like anybody else would and didn't matter what color they were. So I think that was why it worked…

- **How has lifelong learning occurred during your professional career?**

Dr. Brown: I think during my professional career there has always been something I need to learn about in order to either teach or participate in. And some people think that you are taught everything when you are in college and when you are out you don't have to study anymore. That just doesn't happen. So I think the demands… I think that the demands of the job have made me learn. Didn't matter what the job was.

Interviewer: Do you like to learn?

Dr. Brown: I do… and I read a lot… still read a lot… um… and, no, I don't read with an I Pad and I don't have a Kindle! I still like to turn a page… I know I am old fashioned but I still like the book and the newspaper. I probably even today read an average of two different newspapers every day. And the reason I like that is that I can get the story and I can put my own slant to it… I don't want somebody else telling me how it fits in… I just want them to give me the basic story and let me decide how to use it.

Interviewer: That kind of goes back to what you were saying about the radio… you know, that you are doing your own visualization…

Dr. Brown: Yeah…

Interviewer: Do you read newspapers or read them online?

Dr. Brown: I don't read anything online. The reason is my eyes burn really bad if I look at the screen very long. Just can't do it.

Interviewer: What do you think about newspapers becoming a dying breed?

Dr. Brown: I think it will probably happen… I just hope it doesn't happen in my lifetime… but I think it is going to be a real race. Um… and it may happen soon for many of them. I hate to see that because I think that we will lose something. See… here's the deal… Have I ever read online? I probably have but you tend to go to what you want to see online… when you are reading a newspaper, you come across something you weren't looking for and you learn about it… and that's why… it's the same as browsing the library. Many times as I would go to the library to get something specific I would come across something I hadn't thought about that would attract my attention… and I would learn from it. The newspaper does the same thing. Uh… my wife reads a lot online and when she says, "Did you see this?" I say, "No." It's like she is targeting for specific information. And so… I like to be surprised finding things I wasn't looking for. And like I say, I just do not like commentary on the news. Give me the information and let me process it. Lifelong learning… I learn because I love to solve a problem or deal with a issue or whatever… but, I also read for pleasure… always have… still do. Taken a lot of trips through reading and that is part of my lifelong learning. If you read, you can even read fiction if people have gotten their facts about the setting. So you can learn a lot about different parts of the world and the culture and those kinds of things without visiting but through the written word. And then, lifetime learning has always occurred by talking to different people. And when I mean talking to other people, I mean listening to them. Um… I think it's probably true that you don't learn much when you're talking but you probably do learn while you're listening. And so I have always liked to hear what other people have to say… and even as a kid and on up, I always gravitated towards older people and I think that helped me learn… just listening to what older people had to say.

Interviewer: Are you the oldest child?

Dr. Brown: No, I am the middle… caught it from both sides!

- **What challenges have you faced in the higher education setting?**

Dr. Brown: Well, the first challenge was just to get through college! And coming from a small high school, it was kind of a shock to go to a big campus of about four thousand people which seemed like a big city to me compared to where I came from. So the first challenge in higher education was just to get through that… but, I adjusted to it after about a year and I really liked the atmosphere in Higher Ed and so… uh… I did not go to college to be a teacher or to have anything to do with education. My parents were both teachers and I told people that would actually say something about that somewhat with tongue and cheek that I grew up in poverty and didn't want to live that way anymore!

So… I just didn't aspire to go into education and I guess it was somewhat a rebellious thing on my part from where I had grown up… but then, I had a professor that was just insistent that I needed to teach. And I did… eventually.

Interviewer: Is teaching your passion, you think?

Dr. Brown: Yeah, it is… and I think so… I think somebody put me on the right track. I just needed somebody to point it out to me. Once I got into it, I thoroughly enjoyed it, and, I uh, think about some of the directions I thought I wanted to take before that and I have been thankful that it just didn't happen. So it was a good career. Do you want me to talk about some things that happened while I was working in Higher Ed?

Interviewer: No, that's totally up to you… just thinking of it as a generational background… how it was when you entered the world of Higher Ed Administration. I am sure that the leadership… like, you know, you talked early on about enjoying teamwork?

Dr. Brown: Yeah… I think one of the challenges in terms of my career in higher education was learning how to deal with different personalities and personalities of people who were in charge of something above you… understand?

Interviewer: Oh, yeah…

Dr. Brown: It could have been a dean, it could have been a department chair, it could have been the president… they all had different personalities and different ways of doing things and that was continually changing and I think one of the challenges was how you compensate for the change and continue to do your job and do it well. So that was a challenge and throughout the process as it is today there were always new regulations, new requirements, uh… that the public or the politicians or the business and industry leaders wanted carried out and so the challenge was how to meet the demands through the educational process. And I think that's still true today. The social and business world is constantly changing and how does education keep up with those demands? That hasn't changed in my lifetime… it's a constant. Um…

Interviewer: Do you think as far as office politics, do you think that the world of Higher Ed is any less ruthless than in the business world?

Dr. Brown: In general, it probably is… um… I think there are some people in Higher Ed that have huge egos and they can't let go and they probably cause some problems but it is not the cut throat business as much as the business world and it may be because there's no dollar bottom line that you have to meet. I think that anybody that is in education for a long period of time has

to some kind of desire to see humans grow and that's really is the payoff to education is to help people grow. Uh, and so, I think most teachers and administrators are on that track. There are exceptions but I pretty much think that is how most of them want it to happen. How it happens… there are probably arguments over that or how to go about it… certainly different points.

Interviewer: But you felt like you had a voice, though, in your career?

Dr. Brown: Yeah… I think so and talk about the challenges. There have been times in my career when I was given a responsibility or some program that I just didn't know anything about and I had to learn about it and I had to be productive at it. Was given the responsibility for that, and it was a challenge, but also, it goes back to the lifelong learning where you had to learn what you were doing before you could really get involved with it, so it was both a challenge and it was also a learning experience.

Interviewer: And that's good… Challenge leads to learning.

Dr. Brown: It does.

- **How have you made a difference professionally?**

Dr. Brown: I really don't know… I really don't… and I think you would have to ask people who have been around me if I have made a difference and what that is. I don't have a clue.

Interviewer: I can tell you that you made a great difference for me. Do you remember the show Paper Chase years ago?

Dr. Brown: What was the guy's name? The older guy… the curmudgeon…

Interviewer: Yeah…

Dr. Brown: Oh, I loved that show! Professor Kings something…

Interviewer: I am not intimating that you are a curmudgeon but you have that ability to, you know, not instill terror, like I used to tease you about, but you made us want to learn… you enjoyed learning… you didn't make us! You set the setting, you gave us the guidelines. I remember a student telling me one time that it took three days to read your syllabus and understand it and that her eyes were glazed over! She was running into things!

Dr. Brown: Laughter

Interviewer: And I was like… calm down! This is my second class with him!

Dr. Brown: More laughter…

Me… You just… your passion for what you do and just who you are… and I am not just saying this but you are the finest professor I have ever had…

Dr. Brown: Well, I appreciate that… You know I said that I don't know but I will tell you that I have had some people tell me that they learned something in my class or they were challenged. My whole goal is not to make people memorize but I just wanted them to think about situations and apply what they knew about situations and come up with their own conclusions. And I think you grow when you do that. You know… I think there's another side to this… students, particularly, have made a big difference in my life because students asking questions are questioning what I might have said and have made me go back and study more and figure out if you really believe that or what is the answer to that question? And so, I think students have helped me grow and that has been rewarding and when you, at the college level particularly… when you have the adult learner, and many of them are… they bring so much information in from the outside world and give you that as it applies to whatever topic it might be and it is something that you couldn't learn without them bringing those experiences in and sharing with you. It probably is a true statement from my perspective, that students have made a much greater difference in my life than I probably made in theirs. I was the recipient of all this…

Interviewer: I think that is the joy of teaching…

Dr. Brown: It is… That's part of it. You know, if I were teaching… had I been teaching something where I just had to, uh, lecture… I wouldn't have enjoyed it because, you know, you can get that over the Internet. You can get the book. But when you have to apply what you know to a situation, and have discussions about it and bring in experiences from other places, I think that is makes a difference in the life of the person leading the discussion and those involved in the discussion.

- **Getting into a generational perspective, what special capabilities has your generation contributed in the workforce?**

Dr. Brown: Give me some direction.

Interviewer: Your generation is being compared to Generation Y in the fact that Generation Y has picked up the loyalty to a profession, to responsibility… that you don't see in Generation X. Generation X. Generation X… they get a better offer and they're gone. There's not that sense of loyalty and continuance. That's an example.

Dr. Brown: You know… the generation before me… extremely loyal… I think my generation just continues what they have learned. I'm not sure they contribute as something new, I think they just kept going what they had learned from their parents or grandparents. Uh… quite frankly, my generation changed the dynamics to some degree. Our generation became more rebellious. I know that the loyalty continued but I think that my generation started thinking for themselves instead of… I don't like to use this term… instead of behaving like a parrot. Instead of just saying everything they were taught to say, I think they started thinking for themselves more. Um, I quite frankly think my generation became somewhat innovators in the workforce because if you look at a lot of changes that were made in products and about how my generation was in industry… I know that the latest has done a lot in terms of electronics field and so this was not their thing… it was more mechanical… but I think that they were more innovative than the generation before them. If you just look at the automobile and visit pictures of what happened, conveniences that were put into automobiles… it was probably a good reflection of a

lot of products that were changed considerably in my generation… really got into the workforce and were in charge of whatever they had to be.

- **What special capabilities does each generation have to contribute?**

Dr. Brown: Traditionalists: I think that my generation certainly contributed a continuation of that loyalty to management, to the company and I think it was a major contribution to be loyal to the people you are working for. I also think that my generation was a little bit conservative but yet willing to take some chances in terms of expansion. Sometimes it backfired and destroyed companies and situations but their willingness to do that and to take some chances was worth the risks taken. My generation was very heavy into science despite what you often hear about them not being competitive. My generation was competitive in both science and math when I was younger and I think we contributed a lot. We wouldn't have had a space program if people in my generation had not been good in math and science. Uh, the space program has changed our daily lives more than most citizens realize. We have products and systems and procedures that we wouldn't have dreamed of had we not had the space program. And the latest example is getting 33 miners out of the hole in Chile! NASA helped design that capsule that pulled them out… not only that but they had dealt with people in confined spaces for so long that they helped with the program to keep those people lucid and sane and even gave them a special drink to drink so they wouldn't get sick as they were pulled up through that hole.

Interviewer: Isn't that the best story?

Dr. Brown: It is… it's a great story!

Interviewer: We're so starved for good news…

Dr. Brown: That's just a latest example of where the space program has changed to help make a better life for those people… uh, but we have so many products now that were developed because of the space program and I think my generation contributed and I think it goes back to the fact that there a lot of people in my generation that were into science and math. We were taught that heavy at school. I have to laugh when I see where we are adding these new requirements to math and science when I think… what's the big deal? I had four years of science and four years of math in high school. Why is three years a big deal to people? I don't understand that.

Interviewer: Baby Boomers: What has my generation contributed besides wreaking havoc?!

Dr. Brown: I don't think there's a lot of difference between your generation and mine.

Interviewer: You're right… you are a Cusper (Tweener between Traditionalists and Baby Boomers) The Beatles… the assassination… LSD… Vietnam… defining moments of the Baby Boomer Generation.

Dr. Brown: Well… See… the hippie generation totally changed the way this world thinks and it hasn't gone back from their profound change to society. Very independent… um… question authority or anybody in authority… if it's a system… whether it's government or an educational

system, they always figure there's something wrong with it because it's a system. They question everything.

Interviewer: Anti-Establishment

Dr. Brown: Very much so… um, I think that changed the dynamics… It was the first time… that was the first generation that I know of that demanded that colleges teach what they wanted rather than what colleges thought they needed to have… and they did! There were sit-ins and protests because they wanted colleges to do what they wanted them to do instead of telling them what they needed to do. I think that attitude is still in our political system today and probably causing a lot of problems because of it. I don't think that generation was good at getting along with others and I don't think they get along with others today.

Interviewer: You're right… Baby Boomers always want the big office on the corner… Gimme Gimme!

Dr. Brown: Right. Not accepting anything at face value. I think it's good for all of us to question what's presented to us and decide if it's right or wrong or good or bad. To question something just because it's presented… I think is wrong. Uh, you know, they were exposed to the Vietnam War, saw a president have to resign… A lot of things happened during that generation and maybe some of that led to anti-establishment feelings and philosophies because they didn't like what they saw. It was anti-everything but not near as much as it is today. I think it was the beginning of a major change in the way that this country operates.

Generation X: That would be children's generation when they were growing up. They… they started off… they were the first generation, in my opinion, that thought they ought to start life on their own at the same level in which their parents had after working for thirty years! And that was the first generation that really had that attitude. And I think it has caused them problems ever since. You find a lot of them in bankruptcy right now because of that. I think you find that they don't understand that there are compromises you have to make whether it's at work or at PTA or somewhere else where you have to make compromises and to work with other people. They just, uh, if it's not their way, it's not right.

Interviewer: It's the Latch Key Kid generation as well.

Dr. Brown: Well… you're talking to the wrong person about that. I told you that my parents were schoolteachers and I was a master at getting home before they did! It was that hour that I had by myself that I thoroughly enjoyed as a kid and I saw NOTHING wrong with it! They trusted me and they knew I wouldn't do anything I shouldn't do. But I have a problem with the Latch Key Kid thing being negative. I didn't find it negative at all… I enjoyed it. And I think it was because there wasn't anybody around to tell me what to do. But anyway, the generation we are talking about… it's also when this thing of materialism really came to the forefront. You know, they thought they should start off where their parents were and also thought they should have every new thing that came along. But that's continued to the following generation and they've added to that. Uh… I do think there's something in this country they're contributing and it has continued with their children and that is they think they are not, for the most part, they don't bring the prejudices towards others that my generation and your generation had… um, I

think their children are even better at it than their parents but uh… that's good. I think Generation X has established an environment where race doesn't matter much as it did to earlier generations.

Dr. Brown: The Generation after that is even better. I know a lady that is about fifty and has a daughter that is just now graduating from college, like 22 or so, and so they were standing in the store one day and their mother said, "See that black man over there?" And the daughter said, "Mom, why didn't you just say that man over there?" I think that generation started changing that dynamic. I think that's important. I do think that Generation X has been more entrepreneurial than any other generation. If you don't believe it, just go talk to Bill Gates or Michael Dell. They have just started some industries that have had major influences on our lives.

Interviewer: And they're giving back…

Dr. Brown: They are now… they finally are doing that. I don't know what changed Bill Gates but I do know before he started giving away money I heard Ted Turner say on a program one night, that he was beginning to give his money away and someone asked him about Bill Gates specifically. Turner replied that it was great that Gates was making all that money, but when was he going to learn to give it away? And it wasn't long after that that Gates started giving it away. What they contributed is being entrepreneurial and building new products and changing our way of life and as they are getting older they are teaching us to give of our resources to help other people. So, you know, for all the faults of other generations, good things come about. It's interesting that our generation and the generation following them were materialistic but that materialism may have led them to be innovators and now that they are getting later in life, they are saying, okay what can I do with this wealth?

Interviewer: Uh- huh, and watching my children grow up as you have yours… they just seem wiser at that age than I was…

Dr. Brown: Oh yeah… without a doubt. If you look at the way education has gone, like first grade is doing what third grade used to do… it's just grown exponentially. Um, on to the Y's… First of all, they have to have all of the electronic goodies that are on the market and every time there's a new one, they have got to have the newest one… uh, I think they have too much time on their hands, quite frankly, that they need to be given responsibility to do something productive… um… not negative on them… just seeing the way they're behaving.

Interviewer: But they're the generation they are thinking that might pick up some of that loyalty and respect of the Traditionalist Generation. We've done something right with this generation even though they are all the things you said, they are seeing more of a continuity of respect than with the X.

Dr. Brown: I think you're right. I think that is correct. But there is a curse on them that more is expected of them for some reason. We expect them to accomplish more in a short period of time than our generation. I don't know that is always good. I think they are… because of their education and their environment, they learn to comprehend things faster than we do. Uh, but I think what they haven't learned is how to get along with other people. They don't spend time

talking to other people and playing with other people as much. I think the kids in that generation probably did better in sports because they learned how to work together as a team.

- **How would you like to be remembered?**

Dr. Brown: I never thought about that. I would like to be remembered as somebody that made other people think. I'm just not going to go any further, that's all I am going to tell you!

- **How do you think you will be remembered?**

Interviewer: Your syllabus!!!!

Dr. Brown: You know, that's probably on the right track! Because I will probably be remembered as somebody that was too detailed! You are asking me questions I can't answer… you've got to ask somebody else!

Interviewer: Laughter

- **How would you like to preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?**

Dr. Brown: That's not simple. I think it's really important that we remember our past. And I am talking about before even you and I were born. We need to remember the past and where we have come from… both probably within our families and as a nation… uh… You know ETSU is going through this year's celebration for their 100th year and part of that process is thinking about what happened in the past and I think that's good… we need to understand and appreciate what the past is about. You find more and more families separate because they can't do that. Looking up genealogy and some of those things… I think it is good to understand the past. I think it is easier to preserve the past because we have the media and the publication capabilities to allow us to do that. I also would like to see… I am a great believer in preserving buildings and environments from the past instead of demolishing them. You know, if you went to Germany and somebody talked about tearing down a two or three hundred year old building, they would wonder why you were tearing down a new building. We think it needs to be torn down when it's fifty years old and I think we don't learn… I think one way that I would like to see the past preserved is by preserving what we have built and recycling it for somebody else and not just destroy it. I think people need to be able to see what the past was like. I think people that live one hundred years… if the world continues that long!

Interviewer: Laughter… that's another discussion!

Dr. Brown: I would love to see this country, at some point and time if it survived that long, to have buildings and communities that were three or four hundred years old. I think that's important. We can also capture the past by reporting what we are doing. Like I have said, I think technology is doing a fantastic job with that and so I don't think we are going to have a lot of trouble capturing the present… we've got video and audio and all of this stuff… wow! And how will it impact the future… how would I like to impact the future… I guess that's what you're asking… right?

Interviewer: Um hmm

Dr. Brown: I would like for future generations to look at the value of other generations and take the good from each generation and apply it to theirs. You know the Big Book (Bible) deals with human relationships… and they haven't changed and people relate to each other like they did then, they argue with each other like they did then… the technology we have, the toys we have… all that may change… but people don't change… they are still the same. And how would I like to impact the future? I would like a requirement that people had to spend at least four hours a week talking to other people without interruptions or other distractions. I am serious. I don't think we take time to talk to other people and by that, Lisa, I don't mean talking to a family member and essentially telling them what to put on Facebook or Twitter page. I mean talking about life, the world, the philosophy, and whatever you can get into the conversation. If I would tell any generation that that would help them, I think the surprising part is that… and I know people who are heavy into technology do not agree with me but I think the technology is leading us to become more isolationist. And that's why I made the statement. I saw something yesterday that said the average teenager sends over 3,000 text messages a month.

Interviewer: Do you text?

Dr. Brown: I do when I have to but I don't have to text everything I am doing!

Baby Boomer Generation

- **What is your date of birth?**

Dr. French: May 21, 1954

- **What is your current age?**

Dr. French: 56

- **What is your country of birth?**

Dr. French: USA

- **What challenges and or events shaped your formative years?**

Dr. French: Well, um I went to first grade in Alabama and then my parents got divorced and my mom and brothers and I moved to Chattanooga, and so, um… when I was 12 my parents remarried each other. And the reason that they got a divorce… I did not know at the time but I know now that was my dad was an alcoholic and also a compulsive gambler and he would gamble away grocery money and things like that and my mom would have to go to his aunts who lived in the town we were living in and ask for money to feed us… even when she was working. Her job could put a roof over our heads but it couldn't pay all the bills. I guess this was the final straw. One last time she wasn't going to ask for money anymore. When they remarried when I was twelve, my dad was still an alcoholic and still a compulsive gambler. But, in retrospect, I recognize that in retrospect my mom was addicted to my dad. And during the time of their divorce nothing was really different for us than when they were married. If my dad was in town, he stayed with us. If my dad was out of town, then he didn't stay at our house. When they remarried, my dad was a member of the electrician's union, but he was a traveling electrician and he would go where the jobs were. If he was out of town, allegedly working, he wasn't here. But at 12, I felt like he had moved back in to tell me no. In reality, he wasn't there much more, but I thought that his role was just to come in and tell me no, and um, I didn't feel like he had earned that right because he had done nothing to contribute. But my dad was also a product of the times that he grew up in and so a story that was told to me… I never knew his mother… she died before I was born… but, the story that was told to me was that one time he said something about a colored lady smoking a cigarette and his mother slapped him and said, "That's a colored woman." You know… because she was black, she couldn't be a lady. So that's how he grew up… well, I am coming of age with the Civil Rights Movement… I mean that's all happening and I think I was thirteen when Martin Luther King was killed. I wrote about that in my diary. And so my father had this very prejudiced attitude. Both my parents were fans of George Wallace and um I can remember the Selma March in Selma, Alabama, and, my dad makin' fun of the Selma March by dancing and calling that the Selma March. And my friends in high school called my dad Archie Bunker and he was flattered! So that's how I grew up but I was also… I don't know where it came from… um, but I have always had this very strong sense of right and

wrong and respect for people. Just everybody. My mom has always been able to meet people as individuals and the ironic thing was… as time passed… so could my dad. As he got opportunities to meet black people as individuals, he would make a decision as to whether or not he liked them, based on the individual. So, if they were good workers, he liked them, and if they were lazy, he didn't. But I grew up in this family where prejudice was kind of a way of life, and, early on, I vehemently rejected that outlook… was very much in favor of the Civil Rights Movement and was very attuned to what was going on and just felt real strongly that people are people are people. But I do remember MLK's death and that people in Chat was under curfew because of riots and people in my family have tempers and so we never had firearms in our house. And I remember, my dad coming home with a gun the night before curfews because there could be riots in our neighborhood and our neighborhood was 100% white and so my mom told me to come into the house until he got rid of the gun because my family… that was just not a safe thing to have at our house. So those were the things I remember about that time period. I also was… as I was growing up… very much a hippie… very much a pacifist… I wore black armbands protesting the Vietnam War about every day of high school. I loved Joan Baez and so that… she was an active passivist… and that is a little bit where I subscribed to that philosophy… and reading Siddhartha about Hermann Hesse and things like that just really had an impact on me and… um… I was aware of world events and things like that. And so, I am not sure of what other things shaped my formative years but I remember feeling physically ill when the protestors were shot at Kent State and one of my best friends, who probably was a pacifist in terms of Vietnam also but had the ability at that time to look at the bigger picture… wrote a poem from the perspective of the National Guard. So then I started learning to look at gray, I guess, but her poem was… like with only eight weeks of training they sent me here. And I don't know any other words but I know that she talked about as the National Guard, I thought I would be against the enemy and not my friends… I never would have looked at it from that perspective if it had not been for her so that , I think, the first time I really started realizing that okay… the war in Vietnam was horrible and nasty and vile… but the young men who were drafted and who chose to go rather than be locked up or leave the country, they aren't vile. So I guess that started some maturity from looking at things – or trying to – from a lot of different perspectives. I was nineteen or twenty when Nixon resigned but I can remember when Watergate kind of broke and that Nixon first said he was not a crook and then being impeached and resigning… um… I remember Gerald Ford all of a sudden as our president and he was not elected. And so I started to about politics from a different view and… uh… probably is when, as a generation, we probably stopped looking at politicians as heroes and because of Nixon… his need for service was overcome by his need for power and Agnew with tax evasion and the politicians that got us into war. All that was probably when we started… I guess became disillusioned. Those are some things that I know impacted me. Rock n Roll… definitely!! I was not, in keeping with my hippieness, I was not a Motown fan. I am now! But I wanted protest. I liked metal… I liked Hendrix… I loved the Doors… and, of course, I liked the Beatles. I was serious about music that I couldn't listen to other stuff. I mean I could listen to it on the radio but if I was buying an album, I could only listen to those other bands. I feel like I have to be real congruent in what I believe and what I do and I um… I don't know what else to say about formative years.

Interviewer: The things you are saying… as a Baby Boomer also I can relate to but I can also see the differences between us… the tempers in the family, yes!

Dr. French: My mom was teacher and she went back to teaching when I was in the sixth grade. And that was the first time she taught during my lifetime. But when my younger brother Charles started school, then she decided that being on a teacher's schedule would work. Before that, and she didn't like teaching… that was why she wasn't teaching. But, before that, she had to have someone keep him anyway so she could work as a secretary… and, she worked year round. When Charles started to school… I was eleven… so even on the teacher workdays, I was old enough to keep him so um… when she started teaching, I was in sixth grade. Her school was integrated. Chattanooga had two school systems at the time… Chattanooga City and Hamilton County hers was a vocational technical high school and so it was integrated from the time she worked there. It was probably the only integrated high school in Chattanooga. There were three all black high schools and the others were probably all white… hers was the only integrated one at the time. She also taught with both black and white teachers… it was also at this time that she participated with a lot of sensitivity groups and things like that. She said she remembers being at a teacher's conference in Nashville and being at a restaurant and the waitress saying that you all must be teachers and Mother thinking why. And then she looked around and realized that they were the only integrated people at their table and that there weren't other fields that just leant themselves that easily to that transition.

- **In what ways has life changed since your parents and grandparents were your age?**

Dr. French: When my grandmother was my age… I was probably staying with her… that was probably the summer we moved to Chattanooga… I stayed with my grandmother until my mother found some place to live. My grandmother lived in Dalton. My mom would drive to work and we stayed with my grandmother for a couple of weeks. My grandmother worked, so she must have been taking vacation to watch us. I remember watching American Bandstand and I remember Grandmother trying to do the twist to Chubby Checkers. That time in television. My grandmother and my great-grandmother lived together in this little two bedroom, one bathroom house… the house that my mom grew up in. My grandmother never owned a car… never wore a pair of pants but was very much the stereotypical about grandmothers… everything wonderful about grandmothers was my grandmother! But while she did not look down on people who did wear pants to work, but I remember, she was the secretary of the central office in Dalton… the superintendent's secretary, and at one point, people started asking if they could wear pants to work and the superintendent's response was that when my grandmother wore pants to work, than they could! Probably early 70s… that is one of the things that changed tremendously. All during my professional career which was in Dalton, Georgia… but when I went to teach in Dalton, I wore slacks to teach in more days than not. That is an example of how things changed. My grandmother never owned a microwave um… her washing machine almost until she moved out of the house was a wringer. She burned her trash in the backyard… no garbage pick up. She um she had a television… one… she retired from work when she was eighty! She crocheted, worked, and cooked. She was a good cook. I lived with her the year I taught fifth grade and she would fix us breakfast every morning, she would pack me a lunch, and then she fixed supper every night. Now we would go out every once in a while but, you know, that usually. The television mini-series Roots was on the year I lived with her and we watched that together. I think she is where I got my total acceptance of people because she always just cared about taking care of people. It didn't matter who they were or what they did. Two weeks ago, my brother and I took my mom to a surprise birthday party for an eighty-nine year old cousin she had never met. And my mother's father was one of six children, I think. He only had one sister and she has

twelve children. Well, Louis, was the oldest surviving of the 12 and his two sisters gave him the surprise birthday party… and so, we went and mother introduced herself to him. She said, "I am Harold's daughter. Do you remember Harold?" He said that he did remember Harold. Louis is eleven years older than my mother is. We were chatting with cousins we had never met and I asked Mother, because they were in Jamestown, TN, and my grandparents were in Dalton, GA. I asked my mother why… as close as they were… why had they never met each other? She said because they didn't have a car! The only way they would have met anybody was if they were coming through and stopped and some did. And I was talking to another cousin that was there. She was probably Mother's age or a little bit younger. She said that she asked her aunt why they had never gotten together with cousins and her aunt said we didn't have a car. That automobile you see in that picture was somebody else's and you know I also asked her aunt why there had not been more pictures of them when they were younger and she said… "We didn't have a camera!" You know the only time anyone ever took a picture was if someone came to visit and took a picture. That kind of… that is how my grandmother lived and my mother grew up and now we take 100 different digital pictures and we ditch the. ones we don't like and we all have microwaves and we are in instant gratification. My mom didn't learn how to drive until after I was born because they didn't have a car. I think that one time Mother got mad at Daddy and drove from Florence, ALA to Dalton, GA even before she had a license… but, you know, she just needed to go home for a little bit. Anyway… those kind of differences. While I was living with my grandmother, my brother Brian was working on his Master's and he was taking a Geriatrics course. He was going to write a paper about Grandmother and so he sent me the questions and told me to interview her and to write the answers. You know I asked her about the Great Depression and she said she fed everybody lots of oatmeal! She said a lot of the Depression glass came in oatmeal boxes and she said I feed the cats out of that… I just don't like those dishes because of how we got it. Just talking to her… she worried about feeding the kids… but that was all that she really… you know, she did what they could. I remember Grandmother was more excited about man on the moon and John Glenn orbiting the earth than I was because she knew how monumental it was and to me it was just something that was happened. My mom grew up on those serial movies… you know… Flash Gordon and stuff like that on Saturday… But I especially remember my grandmother being amazed at what was going on in the sixties.

- **What was available during your childhood and teen-aged years as regard technology, money needs, family relations, etc.**

Dr. French: We had a television… I don't ever remember not having a television but I remember during my lifetime there was a period of time that we didn't because we talked about going to the neighbor's to watch something… and then, when we did get a television, they stole cable from the cable company. My dad was an electrician and the people next door had cable so he drilled a hole so we had cable too! We also lived in that generation… or maybe it's just a class of people… you know there were jokes that you might be a redneck if you had a television on top of a television… well, we had a television on top of a television! When the larger TV on the bottom quit working we got a smaller one and put it on top of it… but we kept it! That's another thing that's changed, though. We dispose of things or we replace them. If we can't find something, we're likely to just go out and buy another one rather than to keep looking for it. We tried to fix things then. There were repair shops. If we had a broken toaster, we took it to the repair shop. Now we just go buy a new toaster. When I think about all of the garbage we've made with this replacement mentality instead of the fixing mentality… the technology we had

would have been the television… a radio… I had a radio in my bedroom and I listened to the radio all the time. Eventually I got a stereo… those little portable stereos… I was in high school I'm sure by then… and we had one telephone and it was in the dining room so if you were on the phone, you were in the dining room talking and anybody could hear everything you were saying. I could only stay on the phone for ten minutes at a time and that was pretty much the technology that was available.

As far as money needs as a child and young adult, I never saw allowance. My dad, if he was leaving to go out of town, he would give me his change. I would hang on to the change and convert it to dollars. We always ate at school… a school lunch… my mom fixed us a hot breakfast and we always sat down at the supper table together in the evenings. Even when buying lunch sometimes meant finding extra coins in the couch, she still wouldn't let us take our lunch to school. She thought that it was better nutrition if we ate at school, and that was something that she could do for us. There was no free or reduced lunch program at that time. If there had been, I know we would have qualified. When my brother was like in the third grade, he worked in the cafeteria washing trays and earned his lunch free. You can't do that anymore! But um I babysat as soon as I was old enough to babysit but I didn't have a job until I graduated from high school because my mother she thought that school was my job. I didn't have spending money but I'll tell you one of the things that we used to do on Saturdays with my friends. My mom would drop us off in town and we would window shop and then we might go to a movie or eat lunch at a lunch counter and then she'd pick us up… but we had to dress up to town… we had to wear dresses. There were two movie theaters in Chattanooga at that time and I guess another theater opened when I was a senior in high school. It had two or three screens… three television stations. My mom has a cell phone and she texts! She texts because she says the grandchildren won't answer the phone but they will answer a text! Money was tight and family relations were strained just because of that at least in my particular family.

- **How has lifelong learning occurred during your professional career?**

Dr. French: Well, when I went to college not knowing what I was going to major in. I went to TN Tech. That was the only college I had applied to. I wanted to go to UTC because I had a boyfriend going there right behind me. But my parents told me I could either go to TN Tech or I could go to work! I didn't want to go to work… I had been working at a drugstore all summer and was miserable. So, I went to college and as I looked at the requirements, I thought about Journalism and I thought about Pre-Law and for one of those I had to have foreign language and for the other one I had to have Chemistry and I thought I didn't want to do either of those so I was undeclared my freshman year in college. At the end of my freshman year I was a Girl Scout Counselor at the camp I had attended as a kid. I was on the waterfront staff canoeing, sailing, and swimming and it was… and remains, probably, the best summer of my life. But when I went back to school in the fall, I had to declare a major so I went to the counselor's office and said I didn't have a clue. If I could be a counselor 365 days a year that's what I'd do and he suggested teaching. I said there are no teaching jobs because there was a glut of teaching jobs at that time. He said if I were hiring a camp counselor, I would hire you, just based on what you said. If you are willing to go find a job where there are jobs than that's what you need to do. I said okay and I majored in elementary education. My mom, being practical, decided that I needed to minor in something and I minored in library science because she felt that if I couldn't get a job teaching, I could get a job as a librarian. So because I built in that minor, I didn't have room for electives…

um I think I took one elective my entire time… and that was my sophomore year… and that was Vegetable Gardening! You know… the hippie me wanted to know how to return to the earth… I knew my senior year that I did not need to be a librarian when I did a practicum over the Christmas break and the librarian wanted me to do her inventory and I would get books all accounted for on a particular shelf in their area and a class would come in and I would not want them to touch the books! I thought, oh my gosh, that is not someone who needs to be a librarian. But I was almost finished with that minor. I graduated with a degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Library Science. Couldn't find a job… I mean I had applied in Ohio… because that was where Mike was from so I thought we could go there when he graduated. I looked into going to Australia because they wanted women in Australia at that time, but you had to give up your citizenship and I wasn't willing to do that. Every time someone would come to campus recruiting I would go. I applied everywhere I needed to apply. My best friend in college didn't have a job either so we were going to go to Gatlinburg and work in a pancake house and my grandmother called my mother and said, you know, we have three openings still in Dalton. And so I applied. I called Gail and she applied. Because she was an Elementary Ed and Special Ed major, she was offered a job the day before I was and then I had my choice of second grade or fifth grade and I chose the fifth grade. I was hired 8 days before school started and the rest is history. I just taught fifth grade a year. Mike was still in school and Dalton in 1976 had Elementary Guidance counselors. They had them at four of their seven elementary schools and so I knew they were going to be adding them. So I went back to TN Tech as a head resident for two women's dorms and got my master's in Educational Psychology and Counseling. I had been gone for a year and I returned to Dalton as an elementary counselor. I was a counselor for 20 years. So I got my masters and I thought that I wanted a doctorate. When Carrie was a year old I applied to GA State for a program in Educational Psychology and 80 people applied, 3 people were selected, and I was not one of the three. I was not interested in getting my specialist's degree because I knew that eventually I wanted to get my doctorate degree, and the West Georgia College brought a specialist degree to Dalton and because I was not going to stop there, I just didn't do that but I started thinking that I could be making more money while I'm not getting my doctorate. So I got in on the tail end of that in Dalton and had to finish it all up by driving two and a half hours to class but that was in 88 and I got my doctorate in 96. Every time I have gotten restless in job, I would go back to school. I have gotten lots of certifications along the way, and just things that I was interested in and then, now, all I'm doing is going to school. I love it. The day I defended my dissertation I got home that night… and the culture in Alabama was not like the culture here… you didn't take people with you. There were three of us from Dalton who got ours at the same time and we were all on the same track and Rick and I defended our dissertation the same day and Debbie defended hers two weeks later. But Rick and I drove back to Tuscaloosa and Mike took me out to dinner and I just couldn't quit smiling. We were at dinner that night and Mike asked me which one I was going through next! It was just a given that there would be more. Once I get this tenure thing under my belt, I will start taking advantage of the fact that we can take classes and I will take classes.

- **What challenges have you faced in the higher education setting?**

Dr. French: Writing… I am used to doing work, not writing about work. And I got here my first year and I got involved in the re-visioning committee at University School and that led me to being able to be the interim for a semester and as soon as that was over I got involved in Kingsport in developing and implementing a teacher leadership academy and I just do work… I

am just used to doing work and getting involved in it, so the writing has been my challenge. And now, when I think about research I need to be doing for my writing all I am doing is other people's research and reading their dissertations. That's my challenge.

Interviewer: It kind of closes you in a box, doesn't it?

Dr. French: Yep. It's also opportunities. Washington County has invited us in to do some professional development. I can't say to call me back in two years after I have gotten my tenure! Because we are doing professional development with the high schools and if we said no, they wouldn't ask us again.

- **How have you made a difference professionally?**

Dr. French: Um… I do get in and work shoulder to shoulder with people. I am a learner as well as a leader. And so the fact that I learn with people, allows me to influence people. I learn from my students. So that is one way I think I have made a difference. I think we are growing some wonderful leaders but I also have a student who is a school guidance counselor because of me. I have another (former) student who lived with us on two separate occasions when he was thrown out of his house. He eventually went to prison for three years but once he got out of prison, he hasn't been back to prison and because he had the sense not to go back to Dalton. He's in Los Angeles now and we talk once a week and you know it's those kind of connections that you still have with people that make you know you made a difference. There are individuals that I know… some that are still here today because of our relationship and then just the work I see being done in this community. What my students are like. I like this community but it is not as diverse as what I'm used to… that's a problem for me… but it is what it is and I like it a lot.

- **What special capabilities has your generation contributed in the workforce?**

Dr. French: I think that we created the workforce! When you think about NASA and all of the inventions that came out of NASA… and when you think of Bill Gates… he's one of us. All the technology… I mean there's just so much that came from our generation. I think we also… what we contribute to it too… we're the workhorses… and being a nine to fiver is not a bad thing but we should be more about results and not about time. But that's not who our generation is. Our generation is about putting in the time and getting the work done. Partly because time is associated with the Boomer work ethic, we get more done instead of: This is my job. I can do a phenomenal job and go play golf, or go home to my kids or whenever… we say I can get this done… and then… whatever. I think that that's what we contribute to the workforce. There's so much stability and sweat that Boomers have contributed to the workforce. How we are hurting the workforce, I think, is because we are so rigid in our view that time is tied to production. That if you're not there early and stay late, then you're not pulling the same weight as someone who is there early and stays late. And, when I was a principal and I looked at other principals who didn't keep the same hours that I was, I did not look at them as being slackers. I thought to myself… how on earth can I be so disorganized? It takes me much longer to do my work… but I know that I emphasize different things in my work. Reflection. But that's something that we do to hurt the workforce right now… we are imposing ourselves on other generations who don't need these decisions or rules. We think that in order to be more productive, we should work longer… we know we get good ideas in the shower! However, the other generations may be more productive

by having some freedom and some flexibility! That will increase their productivity… and it's not all about time. I think that there has been a cost to the Boomers contributing to the work ethic… and the cost to that is that many times we put work first. That's why when I had an opportunity to go to the central office from the principalship, I really was not ready to leave the principalship… and Mike told me… before you say no, talk to Megan. Megan was finishing up the tenth grade. Her response was, "Well, you love your job." I said, "Yes, I do love my job and I also hate my job! I always know where counseling openings are, and the job that I am going to is the one that I always thought I would have, I just did not get to be a principal first. I'm not ready to take it or not. She said, "I'd like for you to take it." And I said, "Why?" Megan's response was that she was tired of her mom calling her at six thirty in the morning to make sure she was up and I am tired of you getting home at eight o' clock at night. I said, "Done." But you know, that's what we do… I had students that were dropped off at six thirty in the morning so I knew I had sacrificed some things along the way too.

- **What special capabilities does each generation have to contribute?**

Dr. French: Well… I have worked with people from the Greatest Generation. They were in the workplace when I was first teaching and they helped contribute to the culture with their stories and their sense of professionalism. I feel that that's something that they contributed that impacted me tremendously. That sense of professionalism definitely imprinted on me. And then, I think what Generation X and Generation Y have contributed is creativity, entrepreneurship, um… the balance that we didn't have. And they have helped us see… if we are open to it, how important the balance is and the absolute just the freedom to not let work be your life… or the fortitude to realize the importance of balance. Y's have displayed conservatism to their values, as did the Traditionalists; whereas we, (The Boomers) were the rebels!

- **How can generational gaps and stereotypes get in the way of what could be great working relationships? How can these working relationships become more effective?**

Dr. French: I think we impose ourselves on other generations instead of looking at them and seeing what they have to offer. Imagine if I had gone to someone in my mother's generation to ask them how to use Excel! Nate, one of our student workers, I showed him a PowerPoint that I had that someone else had developed and I told him I wanted this feature on a regular PowerPoint and I wanted the comments with these slides to be included. I gave it to him and he did it. I could have eventually done this myself, but it was taking me five days for me to figure it out! I gave it to him and I it back the same day! It looks wonderful! If we are not free to ask the younger generations what their skills are and what they can help us with, then we are not taking advantage of those gifts. It's all about strengths and we have to think about that. Our generation (Boomers) is still about fixing weaknesses.

- **What will future generations learn from you? What have you learned from varying generations?**

Dr. French: What people will learn from me is that all people are worthy of respect. And that it, you know, one of my gifts in public schools was that it didn't matter if the parents had just gotten out of prison, I talked to them the same way as I talked to a parent who was a doctor or a judge.

It's the respect issue and I think everybody deserves that respect. I think that's one thing they can learn from me… and I think I absorbed that because of the turmoil of the 60s and early 70s with the Civil Rights Movement and war protests and things like that. I think that's where those events… how they had an impact on me. That's how I treat people and I think that they will learn that how I treat people and how I respect people's gifts and to learn on strengths as opposed to fix what is wrong. I don't know that the Baby Boomers ever had an open mind… I think it was our way that was the right way and that the other way was the wrong way.

- **How would you like to be remembered?**

Dr. French: As a smart person and as a team player and as a person whose beliefs were congruent with her behavior. My mom told me when I was getting ready to interview for this job… If they ask you what your strengths are, tell them it's your integrity. If they ask you what your weaknesses are, tell them it's your integrity. It does make me who I am.

- **How do you think you will be remembered?**

Dr. French: As someone who had an opinion about a lot of things! (Took the rest of this sentence out per request of participant)

Generation X

- **What is your date of birth?**

Ms. Cox: August 13, 1975

- **What is your current age?**

Ms. Cox: 35

- **What is your country of birth?**

Ms. Cox: United States

- **What challenges and or events shaped your formative years?**

Ms. Cox: Probably the biggest challenge and the first thing that comes to mind… and I am sure this is typical of my generation… is the divorce of my parents. I think that more than anything has shaped who I was then, who I have become, the way I interact with people… because they were married for I think thirteen years, and I was probably in the fourth or fifth grade whenever they got divorced and I had a younger brother, so I was the older sibling. I kind of had an idea of what was going on… I mean enough to know that things weren't going well in the household but not enough to really understand it. I mean I joke with my husband that I could work for the UN as far as peace keeping missions because I tried to keep the peace between my parents and tried to keep my brother happy and, in a way, it was a good thing for me. I don't see how they were ever married to begin with… it is a miracle that I am even here! How they ever got along is amazing to me. They are as different as night and day. But to learn how to deal with both of them and to limit the impact… nobody goes into a marriage planning on it to fail… but then when it does, you deal with it the best you can. And even today, I mean as an adult, now my parents have been divorced for longer than they were ever married and longer than I ever knew them as married, but now it has resurfaced because I have children of my own and so now, the same arguments they had, the same issues from twenty years ago really are still there. I think I learned how to handle it as a child and as I got older and became an adult, I can remember thinking I am not a kid anymore. These are my children and I can take control. I can remember right before my first son was born, I sat both of my parents down and I said, "Now look… he will not go through what I went through or you will not see him and that's just how it is." They both remarried other people fairly shortly… not instantly or anything… within a little bit after they were divorced so I have had the same step parents for longer than my own parents were together. We get along fine now… I mean there were some issues early on but with having these new people to live with… a new set of parents… but now I kind of feel blessed because I have two of everything! It gets a little hectic around the holidays! But I would have to say if I had to say one event that shaped my formative years that would be my pinpoint.

Interviewer: But you do feel that you have learned from this and it is not all negative.

Ms. Cox: No… I think I wouldn't be who I am today if it hadn't been for the experiences I had with them. And I can't imagine… like I said… my parents staying together… that's a foreign concept to me! I think one thing that it taught me that was probably an unintended consequence of it was the value of an education, and my parents are probably hating this now, because I have been in school so long and it looks like there is no end in sight! But I saw my mom struggle as a single mother, and take… she never went to college and she didn't have an education, so when that happened… you know, it wasn't like my dad deserted us. He just moved to a different house. He was still around and he still supported us financially, but it is different with one income per household versus two and I saw how much she had to struggle, and I thought, I will never put myself in that situation, you know, I will never depend on handouts or other people and so I think it instilled in me this drive to say that that won't happen to me. I'll make sure that won't happen to me. This wouldn't have come about if it hadn't been the two of them.

Interviewer: And I'm sure your marriage is stronger for it.

Ms. Cox: I think so. I threatened my husband the night before we got married. I said, "You will have to kill me to get out of this!" Just make sure you're sure before you say I do! His parents are actually older than my parents. They had him at the same age I had my son! I joke that one of these days my daughter-in-law will be saying that about me! His parents have been married for almost forty years and that just seems crazy to me because all of my friends' parents were divorced… like how do they do that?

- **In what ways has life changed since your parents and grandparents were your age?**

Ms. Cox: Wow! What hasn't changed?

Interviewer: How old is your mom?

Ms. Cox: My mom… now let me think about this… she was born in 1953.

Interviewer: Okay, so she is a year older than I am. I will be 56.

Ms. Cox: Since my parents were my age?

Interviewer: Yes.

Ms. Cox: It would be easier to ask what hasn't changed… I mean when my mom was my age in the 80s, she had a teenager in high school. One thing that comes to mind immediately is that my generation, I mean my circle of friends… we've all waited longer to have our children… and I don't know if part of that is just the people within my social circles… maybe because we put more of an emphasis on going to college and finishing graduate school and then maybe when that's over… maybe I'll think about having babies. That was not top priority. And I know for my mom, she was married right out of high school and she had me… I think she had me when she was 22 or 23.

Interviewer: That's what we did!

Ms. Cox: I was nowhere near ready to have babies at that age!

I kind of felt like an old maid! I was 24! I think that was a big difference. When I look at the way technology has changed… I mean I think about how I communicate with people on a daily basis… I hardly ever talk on the phone anymore. I write letters to my husband's grandmother just because that's the only way she will correspond with anyone.

Interviewer: That's a dying art.

Ms. Cox: Yes it is. I have a letter from her in my car that I need to answer but she gets mad because we type them instead of hand writing them! I tell her, "Grandma, that's the best I can do… get an email account!" You know my parents didn't know how email worked and I think how did the world work without this instant gratification. When my grandparents were my age, I just imagine this glamorous lifestyle they must have had, you know from the old movies! Seeing them going out dancing… having a great time of it… but you know it was war time too so that would have had to be frightening. Of course, it is war time here but that just doesn't seem as close. I think back then it was necessary for people to work and sacrifice the way that they did otherwise they couldn't have ever been successful. Now the ways that wars are won isn't so much on the front lines or on the battlefield. It's more strategy and nuclear, you know…

Interviewer: It's like a chess game.

Ms. Cox: It is… so, it's just not necessary for us to sacrifice the way they did… but I think people in your generation, possibly in Vietnam and started to question… well why are we in this war anyway?

Interviewer: My generation questions everything and continues to question everything because we were anti-establishment. Every generation has a rebel factor but I think my generation (Baby Boomers) is known for it. And now your generation is saying why are we going to Afghanistan when there are still troops in Iraq?

Ms. Cox: It's just a different world. Deep down I still have the same values that my parents and grandparents had. That's not a wide thing… maybe that's just a more local or regional thing because of strong ties with church and family. Things are important now to me that were just as important in my parent's generation. It's just the way that it is expressed has changed. I think that the core values are still there. I was very close to my grandparents when growing up and I am happy that my family hasn't ever been spread all over the country… I mean, we lived next door to my grandparents when I was a kid so whenever I got home from school I would go straight to my Nana's house and she would have everything to eat that I wasn't supposed to have at home! I saw her pretty much every day. You know if my mom had to go somewhere, I always went to my grandma's house. On my dad's side of the family, my grandparents lived close by as well. They were a little further away in the county but still nearby and so I saw them on a regular basis and I can remember my grandma would always take me school shopping and buy me new clothes and buy me an Easter dress every year… you know, just these little traditions and things that… I try to do the same type things with my kids now. Even silly traditions… I caught myself… on Sunday night… my husband's family was in. We had a birthday party because he was turning six. On Monday when I was packing up his lunch I put a post it note in his lunch that said Have a great Monday! Love, Mom. I started thinking about when my mom did this. I would go to camp and she would leave me little notes and I would find them and it would be a little

surprise. I knew they were there. I like to surprise my son the same way so, yes, I see a lot of the same kinds of traditions. I know my family foundation won't change. Whatever else goes on, in the world, at the end of the day I have this system in place that is not going to change. That security is so important. I wonder if Generation's X's often portrayed lack of security is connected to their parent's high incidents of divorce? I think they could be. You are loyal to your parents and then they split up. So goes some of Generation X's sense of loyalty to others.

- **What was available during your childhood and teen-aged years as regard technology, money needs, family relations, etc.**

Ms. Cox: Some things that I remember vividly growing up… um… I can remember playing Pong and Atari. I loved Pitfall. I have searched and searched… my uncle… we lived next door to my grandma and grandpa and I had an uncle who was closer to my age than my mom's… there was a big age difference between them… he had an Atari and he had Pitfall. We would go over there and it seemed like for hours we would play, but I'm sure it wasn't because my mother wouldn't have allowed it! It was just the greatest thing you've ever seen! I remember in school… um… computers weren't something that were just an automatic… I mean it was probably in second or third grade. I was in gifted class and we got to play Oklahoma Trail on the computer… It was probably still DOS driven! It was just the neatest game… you hitched up a wagon and you took your family. But because it was on this computer thing, it was great! Computers were probably the biggest bit of technology. Some other things I remember… we had a laser disc player before VHS. And the reason I remember this so well… we were snowed in and we had two discs from the video store and we had the movie Against All Odds which my mom wouldn't let us watch because we were too young and it was R rated. The other one was Paddington Bear! We watched Paddington Bear over and over because that was all we had to watch… um, cable television, I guess… another bit of technology that came along during my childhood… maybe not for the rest of the world but it took a while to get cable where we lived. I remember when they ran the cable lines out to where we were… ooh… we could get all those channels! During cartoon-watching age we had an antenna so we got CBS and NBC. And I had friends who talked about Ritchie Rich and the Wonder Twins and all these things I didn't get to watch because they came on ABC.

Interviewer: I'm reliving my children's growing up because I have a son your age so I'm thinking about this stuff… lots of technology in the 80s and 90s. It was sometimes hard for my generation to keep up… issues abounded in the workforce. Have you ever felt like you couldn't keep up technologically?

Ms. Cox: Not yet… because I have tried to stay… and I think being a student has helped me. I have tried to stay current just because I had to… really. Though I do see that with some of my co-workers… I'll ask them if they have a Linked In account or Facebook and they will say What????

Interviewer: How to avoid stereotyping amongst the generations and how to be able to work together because I'm sure you're working with two or three generations right now.

Ms. Cox: Yeah.

Interviewer: And the changes… the things that we can learn from you and you from us and learn together…

Ms. Cox: Money needs… I didn't get an allowance as a child as I remember… my childhood… I never was worried about money but we understood that money was tight and I think part of that was having a single mom… I knew that my dad had these child support payments he had to pay… I didn't understand exactly what that was… my brother and I didn't really understand why or all of the details around it or anything. So I never got an allowance. My mom never set these household chores… it was… you will do these chores because I am your mother and I need you to do them. You know we had to pull together and do this. When I was in high school I did get a job as soon as I could which was when I turned 16. My dad helped me get my first job. It was wonderful… it was another before technology thing. I worked at a steel stamping place that made like 14k engravings… that like go into the insides of rings and I copied all of their purchase orders and documentations on to a microfiche which I haven't seen one of those in so long… this was in the early 90s.

Interviewer: Do you feel like the job… the work ethic was instilled in you?

Ms. Cox: Yes. Very much so… probably too much, if anything. Knowing that money wouldn't always be there… when you had extra… put it in the bank and save it… my parents teaching me responsibility. It's funny… as my mom remarried her husband was very successful and she didn't have to worry about money issues. My dad remarried and he was still successful, just not as successful as my mom's husband was. The difference between my brother and myself… you know when I went to high school, teen-aged girls and their mothers tended to butt heads and my mother and I did that very much! And so, one of the great things about having divorced parents was that I would just move in with Daddy! So throughout high school I lived with my dad. My brother lived with my mom. My brother is four years younger than me… and uh, just the difference between the two of us and our work ethic… and I don't know if it was just because I am the older one or just our personalities or what, exactly, but, um, he didn't have a job through high school. They gave him a car… whatever he wanted. I worked through high school… and nobody ever gave me anything. And that's how my dad, he did that purposely, and talking to him now, I understand why he did it. It was to teach me to be a responsible person. I can remember… just to highlight the difference between the two of us… my brother got a speeding ticket in a school zone and my mom and stepdad had some political connections and called and got him out of it. I got a ticket driving home from work to eat lunch during spring break and my dad said that it was a good thing I was working during spring break. I would be able to pay for that ticket! But I am glad now that he did that and I can see it now. But I couldn't see it then! I worked throughout school. One thing that was made very clear to me that I think is the reason… not that I worked so hard at a job… but that I worked hard academically… I knew that my parents didn't have money for me to go to college. I knew that if I wanted to go to college, and that was the expectation, that I would, I knew I would have to find a way to do it myself. And so you're going to be in clubs, you're going to make straight A's, you know, nothing is going to get in the way of this. I actually went to college on work study and so you know worked my way through college with that and didn't have any debt whenever I graduated. It was wonderful. I worked very hard for it.

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Interviewer: You worked very hard for it and I'm sure you had a life balance that you had to maintain.

- **How has livelong learning occurred during your professional career?**

Ms. Cox: I think I could be the poster child for lifelong learning because my family makes such fun of me! Every time I graduate I say I'm finished and then within a couple of weeks, I say… now that looks interesting! My husband is currently ready to kill me because part of my cognate courses. I took a pharmacy class because I work in the School of Pharmacy.

Interviewer: Uh-oh… I see where that's going!!

Ms. Cox: I told him… I think that I could be a pharmacist!! (Laugh) I am just saying I don't want to be a pharmacist but I think I could! You know it's really pretty neat…

Interviewer: You're not going to get over this… I am so like this and I am 55!!

Ms. Cox: I wonder if this is something within me and I am like why do I feel this need? And I push it on other people… like my husband… and I'm like… well, I work at ETSU now… you could come to school! You could get an MBA!

Husband: But I don't want an MBA.

Ms. Cox: But you need an MBA! Don't you want to go back to school?

Husband: No honey, I don't ever want to go back to school!

Interviewer: If you value education like you do, it's very hard not to… like you said, you want to sell it!

Ms. Cox: And I get… it's not even like the means to an end… I have so much of it which I know makes me a complete nerd! We had like Higher Ed Finance last spring and when that class was over, the first Thursday night I was home… I love my family but I was like, "I love you guys but I miss those guys!" We had so much fun together!

Interviewer: I love to hear that kind of passion about what I am doing!

Ms. Cox: And it's like this about everything… I just can't stop myself and I am turning my children this way too! My little boy is 6. He just started kindergarten and he has already asked me how many years he will have to go to school and I said about 25! "What do you mean Mommy? What grade is after kindergarten?" I tell him you can just keep going!! He can become a doctor or a lawyer or whatever he wants as long as he keeps going to school! Education feeds my passion… it does. I didn't realize how much I liked school until I am away for it for a while… and then I think, I need something. Even if this wasn't this structured program (ELPA) I think I would always be trying to learn something new… I mean I just can't help myself. I remember the six months I wasn't a student, I was dragging my husband off to dance classes, I was taking a photography class… you name it… I would go ooh a cooking class… let's take

that!! I just really love to learn new things. I think it's just… I don't understand why all people aren't that way!

Interviewer: And to me that is not a generational thing. I think it is an intrinsic motivator. It is who we're from and all that kind of stuff. At least, that's how I am.

Ms. Cox: You know I can't imagine my life being less busy and hectic! I am a true lifelong learner, I think… I will be that little lady on the billboard that says, "She's 100 years old and she's still going to college!" I have been able to pull it off, you know, especially since I started working in Higher Education. That was my husband's worst nightmare!! He's like she can go to school for free forever! I keep telling him not taking advantage of that would be like turning down money!! And I am still the geek who, before the semester starts, I get excited about getting new binders, paper. I like everything about it!!

- **What challenges have you faced in the higher education setting?**

Ms. Cox: As an employee or as a student?

Interviewer: Probably both… generationally speaking, think of both. I would say more probably in the workforce.

Ms. Cox: The biggest adjustment for me was when I moved away from home for the first time… and just managing life… along with college, but you know, as far as academically, I have always thrived. In the workforce? That's a whole different story and I think that's because of a couple of different reasons. I come from a non-academic background so I worked outside of Higher Ed for years before coming in. And I had no idea of what I was walking into. I didn't think about how different the culture is and how academic people are… I was not at all prepared for that. I'm used to a world where management gives the rules, we follow the rules because we get a paycheck for doing so, and it not's complicated. But you take on higher education and that just goes out the window in about ten minutes! So that was a shocker to me. It's been interesting too, I think, because I don't have academic credibility yet… not in some people's eyes. I am not on the faculty. I am an administrator. That's different. You know that and I don't understand it… I mean it frustrates me to no end. If there would be one piece of my job that I could change it would be faculty, for some reason, thinking that I am trying to control what they do. I mean I just want to make sure that the job gets done. We have an assessment plan which I am responsible for making sure it gets done. The whole shebang… they are worried about this and they voted on this and they created this document and then gave me the charge from my job description position that I make sure that they (faculty) follow the plan. And then I go try to do it and they want to fight and pick with me… My job is to make sure we do what it says. It is so different. The frustrating part for me is that I am like you were the ones who put me in here and then they get mad at me for trying to hold them to it!

Interviewer: How do you handle that and how are you handling different generations that are coming to you?

Ms. Cox: A lot of times this happens but not always and sometimes they're just a strong personality conflicts and I can handle that effectively and it is not as frustrating as the collective

faculty mentality. And some of them are younger or my age, and I don't see it as much with people that are in my generation as me… I never really thought about that before.

Interviewer: Yep… Baby Boomers. We like to argue about everything. Woodstock, Vietnam, Sit-ins, Free-Love, etc. Compare your generation to that… compare that… are you debaters, are you arguers. We all have to be in certain roles but are you more collaborative in your thinking?

Ms. Cox: Probably, yeah.

Interviewer: It's not the Ivory Tower Theory.

Ms. Cox: And departmentally where I am at least we have a kind of academic department and a pharmaceutical sciences area. That is the traditional academia bunch. Then we have practical pharmaceuticals. These are the people who work in pharmacies at the hospital and they're more of the business type and the difference between those is striking. But some if it may even be generational because truthfully most of those are a little bit younger and I never thought about that. Now I am going to have to pay attention. I really don't really understand it… the faculty mentality… because I really believe that at the heart of it they are here for the same reason that I am… to put out the best product, educationally, that we can for these students. And so why can't we all just get along and work together and make it happen? So maybe that's the generational thing. I want to get everybody on board, you know, and say, "You guys came up with this plan… let me help you facilitate this work as much as I can… then I just get that push back.

Interviewer: Kind of observe it a little bit more if you have time. What's happening in a lot of corporations and settings of Higher Ed is that they are almost forcefully putting these generations together so they will collaborate and they will work out their differences and no matter what working environment you're in or what age you are working with, there are going to be differences.

Ms. Cox: I am very much so learning the higher education environment and I am… the ELPA program has been instrumental for me in doing that because everything we talk about in class… I'll think… I just dealt with that last week! Or I'll deal with something in a meeting at work and I will think… here's a resource for you! We just talked about this… just studied it. This has been very good for me.

- **How do you think you have made a difference professionally?**

Ms. Cox: Hmm… I wonder if I have yet? I know I have but not as much as I want to. There's so much more that I want to do. Just within my current role or throughout my entire career?

Interviewer: Probably your entire career.

Ms. Cox: At my previous job I made… unfortunately the plant is now closing… was… ummm… was creating a training program which generationally that was an interesting experience because during my last job there I worked as a supervisor and I trained all the new employees who came in. And just being promoted to supervisor was a little bit of an issue… I was one of the younger employees there… not the youngest by any means, and one of the less of an experienced person… I had more education just not as much real world application in that

setting and I remember one of the individuals I worked with in particular was so worried because he was older than me… probably about 10 or 15 years older than me and had been there for a long time. I thought how would I feel if I was him? It never was an issue but I think part of that comes with my UN peacekeeping and training! There was never an issue with his work… I focused on him and focused on his work and I kept it to the book… this is what it says to do and how to fix it to make it better. I never had any problems. But then… the neat part… they were hiring a lot of temporary employees and we had three gentlemen from Eastman who had retired and just got bored and they wanted to work part-time. And so I trained them. And one of the men I trained… he was seventy years old and he was so much fun to train! I felt like I was training Grandpa! Sweetest little man! You had to go slower, and a lot of the computer stuff, especially, we had a hard time with because I was used to training kids younger than me who could pick up on how to log in and here's what you do… but with him I would have to take a piece of paper and I had to write everything right down to these are the buttons you push. He was a very smart man and he knew the chemistry behind it and the reactions, but the technology sometimes, because we had this computerized system and it was sometimes just a barrier. But it was a lot of fun to train him. And he was just wonderful. I missed him so much when I left and I can remember that at Christmas he snuck in a bottle of Peppermint Schnapps for Christmas… he told me that he got it for me and my husband so that we could relax during the holidays… and not to open it until I was at home!

Ms. Cox: My husband and I love to watch war movies… anything that took place during World War II or during the forties… Everybody looks so glamorous in the movies! I would have loved to have lived like that!

Interviewer: The Traditionalist Generation… I can still see Barbara Stanwyck with her long cigarette holder!

Ms. Cox: Oh yes… I mean boys who are my age can just not dance like that! We went to dancing lessons… I dragged my husband… had had my first son, wasn't going to school and had to learn something new! We learned the cha cha, the waltz and all kinds of things. He pretty much did this for me! He practiced for a while but then he broke his leg! We went to a Valentine's Sweetheart Dance and talk about being fish out of water… I mean everyone there was at least four times our age… I mean it was all like our grandparents and they were dancing circles around us! They were cutting the rug! We finally stopped dancing and just watched! They were amazing.

- **What special capabilities has your generation contributed in the workforce?**

Ms. Cox: I think I see myself as I look at the context of your study sort of as a bridge between the older… the powerful, the establishment and the younger generation because I don't know all of the newest and latest and greatest technology but I know enough about it that I can work with it and I can show people how to use it effectively. And I think that is maybe one of the talents that I could bring to the table that someone else wouldn't and I am able to say when I don't know something about technology and can learn from others who do to make this work for all of us.

- **What special capabilities do you think each generation has to contribute?**

Ms. Cox: The biggest perspective I have on the Traditionalist Generation is probably from my grandparents and from the movies. And I just view them as being steady as a rock and just wise and patient… you know, being able to wait and make the right decisions which I know personally I struggle with. I like to move, move, move. I would imagine that those younger than me are just ten times worse! The patience and wisdom that they bring to the table would be, to me, their greatest asset.

Baby Boomers… even though it frustrates me, I think that one of the greatest assets of the Baby Boomers is that you question everything and that you don't trust as easily. I think that I can be, sometimes personally, too trusting, too accepting of authority and I don't automatically look at things with a critical eye and think about how else could this play out? What else could happen? I know that this is something that I value with my dad in particular. When I am trying to make a decision, I still don't do anything without consulting my parents first. Our parents really make us who we are…

Interviewer: So you think we (Baby Boomers) are argumentative, huh?!

Ms. Cox: But I think that it can be a good thing! Frustrating thing… to really make you think that I have never thought about that before and now I am and so just to examine all the different possibilities.

Interviewer: And you all are like that too… maybe not from an argumentative point of view but your world has been so global that you really do have legitimate things to question about!

Ms. Cox: Everyone trusts Google! I think, though, that ours doesn't come from a position of mistrust which a lot of the Boomers… especially when I think about the 60s… I mean that's where it stemmed from. They (Boomers) didn't trust the people in power. I think, personally, just because I am naturally curious and I want to know what else is out there. I want to see what ways these people are doing the things they are doing. It's a different kind of questioning and I don't think my generation looks at it as critically as the Baby Boomer might.

Interviewer: You know like integration and segregation have not been a big part of your life but they were a huge part of my generation.

Ms. Cox: Yes and we just take that for granted… diversity… I guess my generation is pretty adaptable. We find a way to make it work.

Ms. Cox: Generation Y? I haven't worked with them enough. You know I still think of Generation Y as being the students they are not my peers yet.

Interviewer: Okay say that one of these students (Gen Y) is getting ready to graduate and work with you… one you know well… what do you think they could bring to the table?

Ms. Cox: Energy because they are younger! Their knowledge of technology, I think is important, their group… they are very good at working in teams. It's just natural to them to just automatically pick up on something. Actually, I am taking a class where I am working on a project with three pharmacy students. Part of this is probably because of my profession, but the first time we met, they called me Ms. Clavier! I said to not call me that that I was a student just

like them! They are just so… they don't have any issues with leadership, I guess, because here I am the only non-pharmacist of the bunch and the assignment is which is the better choice for you as a student pharmacist… chain or independent community pharmacies? And so I came into the project… randomly drew as the leader of the group and I came into that first meeting and I said, "Okay guys, I think this is how we should approach this… They readily agreed! They are really easy to work within a team environment and I don't know in the long term what that would be like because I haven't worked with this generation enough to know. I think I am still learning about them.

Interviewer: Something that keeps popping up in my research is that Generation Y seems to have more of a sense of loyalty which goes back to the Traditionalist Generation within the workplace, etc.

Ms. Cox: My biggest concern about working with Generation Y is that they're more accustomed to having things given to them, not earning them. They don't have to work as hard… oh, Mom and Dad will take care of it. Mom already has that in place for me. I just have to show up for that! That is one worry that I would have… that they would just expect things.

- **What will future generations learn from you? What have you learned from varying generations?**

Ms. Cox: From me! From me as an Xer. I still think of myself as being so young and I feel like I haven't even learned lessons from myself yet.

Interviewer: Would you like to think about these next four questions and meet again later?

Ms. Cox: I want to mull over this a little bit. It's hard to say. I think it depends on how I want to be remembered by my children as compared to how I want to be remembered by my co-workers. Let's go on to how I think I will be remembered and maybe that will lead to the other. I think as far as how I would like to be remembered by everyone… I want to be remembered as someone who did the right thing and who made the right decisions… somebody who worked hard… that's important for me. I want to be remembered as having a very strong work ethic and someone who is passionate about life… passionate about my job… passionate about my family. I want to be remembered as somebody who had a lot of responsibility but I was able to manage them all effectively because that's really hard for me sometimes. I bite off more than I can chew. But I like this about myself. I like being productive. I hate spending a day where I feel like I haven't gotten anything accomplished. I am not good having time off so I don't have time off for myself! I don't know how to do that! I have to stay organized and be a well-oiled machine to function appropriately… it has to be that way. I like structure… I think my kids will remember that… maybe they'll talk about that in therapy one day! (Laugh) I can't begin the week with things out of place. I will stay up all night on Sunday to make sure I am ready for Monday. Anything I can do to buffer the week's stress I will do. Same as work. I am working to get systems in place in my job to make things easier for people next time and it's so hard that first time out… lots of work the first time but once it is done, it will become like habit and just fall into place. One thing I hope I'm not remembered as is being controlling or a dictator.

- **How would you like to preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?**

Ms. Cox: Just on a day to day, I preserve the past probably a little to the extreme. When you walk into my house there is not a blank space on the wall anywhere. Family pictures are everywhere… they are in the bathroom they are in my bedroom… preserving the past is important to me. I mean my laundry room, for example… both of my grandmothers have passed away but they had handkerchiefs and I worked with my aunt and we made a little curtain that is sewn together with their handkerchiefs! So now every time I walk into my laundry room they are there… my Grandmas! My whole house is just this living breathing family monument!

Interviewer: You and I have a lot in common! We can be from different generations and still be a whole lot alike!!

Ms. Cox: This affects the way that I relate to people of different generations as well. Relating this to how I would deal with different generations of my family in differing situations helps me to know how to do it in the workplace. I preserve the past. Capturing the present… who has time?

Interviewer: Think about that one if you'd like…

Ms. Cox: I suppose I do this at home by preserving and capturing traditions with my children during holidays and stuff. Christmas is a perfect example… we have two trees… we have one downstairs and upstairs. We have old and new ornaments… new one of the kids every Christmas and lots of my grandfather's crocheted ornaments that he has been making since I was tiny!

Interviewer: What about impacting the future?

Ms. Cox: My biggest impact for the future would have to be my influence as a mother. How I raised my own children and the values that I instilled in them… but then, also through my job now I have a really good opportunity to impact the future. I think I just need to grow a little more comfortable in the role I have here and try to find my place a little more… and then we'll see.

Generation Y

- **What is your date of birth?**

Ms. Carrie: 2-22-88

- **What is your current age?**

Ms. Carrie: 22

- **What is your country of birth?**

Ms. Carrie: USA

- **What challenges and or events shaped your formative years?**

Ms. Carrie: A couple of things… Every summer my parents would take my brother and I to Michigan and I on a river with a whole bunch of their friends and they grew up and they were born in the 50s, so they like grew up in the 60s. So we were with all their friends and younger kids too and we would stay in tents near the river and there was a cabin and we would float down the river in old tire inner-tubes and go kayaking and swimming… and there was always a fire going. They would put railroad ties in the fire and let it sit all day long and then we would have make-shift saunas made with two by fours and plastic and once we were really hot, we go jump into the river and the river was probably like 50 some degrees… like really cold water.

Interviewer: So good memories… did you go every summer did you say?

Ms. Carrie: Yeah… There were probably a couple of summers that we didn't go, but it was really fun and all those people that went up there… I don't know… very intelligent and creative and kind and um… there was always good food, fun conversation, and playing music. It was like a cultural experience… lots of different generations all in one area.

Another thing that definitely stands out for me happened in 1998… um… my parents, they took my brother and I… we went to Michigan and then we went on a six week vacation all around the United States. We went over to North Dakota and Montana and then we went to areas of Idaho and Colorado and Utah and we just went to different national parks and went hiking and camping and I got to see a lot of the United States at a young age. This made me really appreciate traveling and culture and art and I really appreciate that because it did make me a little bit of who I am because at that young of age there are not a lot of people that can say they have been that far and seen a lot of things. So my parents really emphasized being open-minded and seeing things for what they really are and be creative and go to art galleries and go see things and experience things. We try to still go on a trip at least every year or so.

Interviewer: It sounds like you are very close to your parents.

Ms. Carrie: Yes… I try to go see them at least four times a year. I think when I was in high school I wasn't as close to my parents because I was in high school and in my own world. But once I was in college, I really began to appreciate who they were and all of the things they have done for me. I think my mom is probably one of the sweetest people in the world and my dad is my best friend.

- **In what ways has life changed since your parents and grandparents were your age?**

Ms. Carrie: Well… from what my parents say… money has definitely changed… Definitely money has changed… technology is the big one as it is everywhere and they have had to learn how to use it. My dad is a little bit better at technology than my mom still has trouble with the remote! So my dad is always the one who sets all the movies ☺ She is pretty good with the computer, but I still have to explain a lot to her. I wasn't around my grandparents that much. They all lived in Illinois and so I didn't see them very much and then my grandparents on my dad's side… they died pretty young and um my grandparents on my mom's side… my grandfather died when I was in elementary school and my grandmother died my freshman year of high school. I didn't get to have that grandparent experience as much. I think that grandparents are people that really shape your lives and they are really important people. I think it would have been good for my brother and I to have had them around more than we did.

Interviewer: Were there people in your life… older people who were like grandparents to you?

Ms. Carrie: Um… not really. I think that grandparents kind of almost frightened me. When I was younger, we would go up to my grandfather's and grandmother's on my mom's side, and I can distinctly remember this one time that I was in their house and my grandma had a drink on the table. I grabbed it and she yelled at me. And ever since then, I think I have had this kind of like fear equated with yelling… like when people yell at me… and now, I think, I'm a little bit better with it. It really got to me if somebody yelled at me. So I think I was always a little bit distant from my grandmother and after she died I really regretted that. I do have good memories of my grandpa. I remember sitting with him outside in front of the garage in little chairs and eating those rod pretzels! But now, since I really did not have that grandparent experience, I tend to really appreciate older people. One of my professors… I really got close with her and I was over to her house and we would make pies and I would help her with little projects she was doing. Like she was building a barnyard building in the back. I helped her put in the insulation and we just talked about all of the stages of life and I remember we would just chat about things. So I think she was kind of like a grandmother to me for a while. She was very wise… and I think older people… they have the potential to be very wise and we can learn a lot from them because they have gone through so much. A younger person can't begin to understand all of those emotions and experiences and everything.

Interviewer: That's good that you had different role models in your life and it helped to fill that grandparent void.

- **What was available during your childhood and teen-aged years as regard technology, money needs, family relations, etc.?**

Ms. Carrie: When I was in elementary school, the technology… it was still very minimal. They had the old Macintoshes with the floppy disks… but then, when I got to middle school, it was like every year technology increased by like tenfold. I mean the pagers came out and then the giant cell phones came out and now there are smaller cell phones and cell phones that you can just put in your ears… it's like every year something else is coming out that's smaller and smaller! I guess in 8th grade we had computer class and in 9th grade we had computer class… in college everything is on the computer so every year you have to learn more and more. If you don't, then you are going to be behind.

Interviewer: Your generation and Generation X… you don't know life without technology.

Ms. Carrie: Right. If people today can't use their cell phones, they are lost. Or if people's computers crash, they are lost. I think this has really played a negative role with the younger generations. They don't know how to be creative and they don't know how to really think about things around them. It's actually pretty sad. They fill their lives with socializing and games and things on the computer but they don't know how to go outside and play a game or make a game or do a lot of things that kids should know how to do. Being creative and playing with things and being hands on and stuff and they are not going to learn how to communicate if they are always on their phone texting or emailing or something. Young people today don't know how to write a letter or how to go call someone on the phone and have a really good conversation because if you're emailing or Facebooking or texting, there's only so much that can come out of a conversation. You don't have the expression… you don't have the facial features. In nursing, we do a lot of things on computer and will be doing more. This allows us to spend more time with our patients and technology makes it a whole lot easier to find information.

Ms. Carrie: I don't know that my experience might be different from others, but my parents grew up in a time or were around their parents and grew up being frugal. My dad especially. Like when I was younger, I thought that we were the poorest family on the block. He made it a point that we did not spend a lot of money and we did have an allowance and we did have to work for that money. I hated it at the time but I'm really glad that I learned how to save money because I grew up in a fairly wealthy area and a lot of kids around me did not know how to manage money. And I can say that I know how to manage money and how to save money. I'd have to say that I'm very fortunate because my parents do have money and so I didn't have to work in college. I could spend my time focusing on school. I did have summer jobs and I was fortunate that I could take a loan from my parents… and I was paying them back. My parents have taught me a lot about money.

Ms. Carrie: I have to say that my relationship with my parents, even with some struggles, has been amazing. My brother and I fought a lot as kids. I was the youngest one and I always wanted to hang around him and his friends and be a part of his life. I can remember just laying in bed sometimes and crying because I wanted to be closer to my brother. When my brother was in high school, though, he got into a lot of trouble and he was in and out of prison. This was hard on my family life, because when my brother was home, there was yelling and fighting and it wasn't easy. As a kid, I felt like an only child for much of my life because my brother wasn't there. When he was there, it was hard too. He's good now. I am not a very emotional person. I tend to suppress things or not to put a whole lot of energy into emotions and I think a lot of this is because of my older brother. Having that experience, suppressing emotion is kind of my way of

coping. A defense mechanism. For me, it was easier to think of myself as an only child instead of saying that my brother was a criminal. That has shaped who I am... such a challenge... not knowing if the police were calling or coming. Now he is working and doing really well.

Interviewer: Do you think he appreciates your parents now?

Ms. Carrie: Absolutely. I sometimes use my defense mechanism emotionally to deal with problems of my patients in nursing. I really don't get very attached and this has actually been a blessing in some ways in that I don't put a lot of energy towards the past. I try to look at now because if you look too much to the past or to the future, you kind of lose touch with what is going on in the moment. You miss a lot... it's helpful not to dwell on things so that you can grow and learn.

- **How has lifelong learning occurred during your professional career?**

Ms. Carrie: I just graduated in May.

Interviewer: How was your nursing school experience?

Ms. Carrie: Pretty good... I really appreciate everything I learned and I want to continue to learn throughout my lifetime and every day! There is always something new to learn. I think my workplace is interesting because there are several different nurses on my floor and they all have different styles of nursing and background. I can be with one nurse one day and another the next and learn entirely two different schemes of knowledge. Plus each person is going to teach differently which is nice, as well.

Interviewer: You just have a myriad of chances to learn things through different lenses.

Ms. Carrie: I definitely want to continue taking classes and participating in professional development. I have so many interests that I cannot see myself not doing many different things at once. I started dancing in sixth grade. I enjoyed ballet, jazz, and hip hop and I would compete with the group that I danced with at school... um... we would go to national every year... usually in jazz and hip hop. That was also a good experience because I was with a group of competitive performers and it got it me out of my comfort zone and was a great experience. When I got to college, I wanted to continue dancing. Now I dance mostly in a modern dance style. I have taught a couple of dance classes but I mostly dance with a group of friends who also enjoy the exercise and release. In modern dance, it tells a story... kind of more emotional so it really makes you get into your character and to have fun. I remember the first year I was dancing, I was in a piece that was very, very intense. Before the performance, we practiced long hours for over a week. That week drained me in a good way. I was so involved in my character that at the end of the day I would almost cry because of the intensity of playing the role.

Ms. Carrie: I haven't had cable in about three years. I don't really like watching TV. I would rather be outside hiking and backpacking and traveling. I also really like massage therapy. I would like, at some point, to become licensed to be a massage therapist.

- **What challenges have you faced in the higher education setting?**

Ms. Carrie: The challenges of testing! I am not a very good tester and in nursing school, it's a whole different kind of testing. It's not like… there is more than one right answer but one is more right than the other. My first semester of nursing school was very difficult because I had never had to test like that and this was more application-based… so if you were in a situation, what would you do? Well everyone is going to do something different in the same situation based on different factors of which they do not always tell you all of the factors either. If this patient was having these symptoms… what would you do first and what would be the most important? It was very difficult testing and the study work load was hard… lots of information in nursing school… I am really not very good at pharmacology… all the medicines… plus the fact that I don't like to take medicine ☺ I don't like giving meds either! I just feel like we overmedicate people and give them things they don't need and like the commercials encourage them, if they have certain symptoms, that the meds will take care of it. I think in this part of the country and the sometime lack of knowledge or awareness people in my profession are not as open-minded about the fact that there are alternative forms of medicine that have been around for thousands of years that have worked. You don't have to medicate people as much as we do. I mean… part of it is money going into their pocket but there are better ways… looking at the whole person and trying to figure out what's wrong instead of just treating the symptoms.

Interviewer: This might prove to be very challenging for you in nursing… there will be times when you have to give the patient the medicine whether you want to or not.

Ms. Carrie: I think in this area the integrative forms of medicine are not as progressive as they are on the west coast and other parts of the United States. I see myself not staying in this area. However, I am very pleased with my education and I think I have made the best of it like I have also been involved in campus clubs and activities as well as community.

- **How have you made a difference professionally?**

Ms. Carrie: I think in my profession, I have made a difference for others because I am not burnt out and I am new and I have energy and I really do care and I want to learn from the people around me as well as my patients… that's a big source of knowledge just right there and because I am very open-minded, I am willing to go a little bit deeper into a patient's condition and see what else is going on. I think this will be very helpful to me in the long run. I want to have passion throughout my life.

Interviewer: It's such a blessing to have passion for your work… at least it has been for me.

Ms. Carrie: Yes. Professionally I hope to keep growing and to keep learning… I don't want to stop. I want to do as much as I can in nursing and do as much as I can in something else. I would like to take the interests that I have and pull them all together… like massage therapy and art. Cause they do go together.

- **What special capabilities has your generation contributed in the workforce?**

Ms. Carrie: I think that my generation probably has the newness, the… it's like a different kind of drive, I guess. Maybe the older generations would go to college because there was an opportunity and we go to college because we have to. It's expected… so you're going to get it

done. I think my generation, because it is still young, we do have that energy and the driving force and the um… the energy to make things new and fresh and bring upon new thoughts and ideas.

- **What special capabilities does each generation have to contribute?**

Ms. Carrie: The Traditionalists contributed stability and tradition and professionalism, leadership… The Baby Boomers contributed new thoughts and new energy and it was kind of like a generation where you were starting to be open-minded about things; in the workforce, you probably brought in new ways of doing things and kind of like more creative ideas. There was so much going on with the Baby Boomers and you questioned things. I think you had a different sense of foundation… like the ideas were completely different and before this these things and questioning of ideas were not as prevalent. Generation X… that's kind of hard for me.

- **How can generational gaps and stereotypes get in the way of what could be great working relationships? How can these working relationships become more effective?**

Ms. Carrie: Well… often people are only interested in doing things their own way and when different generations are together in the workforce, you're working with two different species of animals! You are used to eating fruit with your hands and all of a sudden it is very different! I think sometimes it is hard to find the foundation amongst differing generations because they can be so different, themselves. What is valued and what is not valued? The more you are with people of differing generations, the more you can come to a similar foundation but when you first get into it… it's like overcoming barriers.

Interviewer: How can this be made more effective… to work with other generations?

Ms. Carrie: I think that if you can take all the positives of each generation and work together, than that's great. Then you can collaborate really well and learn from each other and come up with your own structure and ways of doing things that works for everyone.

Interviewer: Yes… generation Y has grown up with this team concept… the word collaboration.

Ms. Carrie: There is so much to learn from the other generations. Nursing… working in the hospital as a nurse is very demanding. Very few older men or women are doing it… and if they are doing it, you can see that their work pace is different. I feel like that there is more of the younger generation on the floors of the hospitals. However, some of the older generations… are working like in home health or something. We are overworked and understaffed anyway and it is difficult to keep that passion going for a twelve hour time period.

- **What will future generations learn from you? What have you learned from varying generations?**

Ms. Carrie: I am kind of fearful for the younger generation. I don't think they have the same values or work ethics. I feel like they want things just handed to them. I don't feel like they have that family structure or value system. They do look to technology for entertainment but when it comes to values and things, you don't get the values from technology. I am fearful for them and

hopefully they will become stronger with their work ethics. And hopefully they will learn the loyalty and teamwork. Many challenges ahead of them. It seems like the family life is deteriorating but it is coming up and effecting the younger generations. I don't know if it is just now being talked about or now or not, but we need more outlets for kids and ways for them to cope and educationally wise to cope so that they are diverted from doing drugs and having sex and doing things that they shouldn't be doing at their age… or doing things too fast or at a different rate. They need role models… role models are not out there like they should be. Your generation (Baby Boomers) were like presidents and leaders. My generation's role models are like pop singers, actors, and actresses. All they see is… things that are not important… people do not need to spend hours and hours looking for glamour and gossip. The media crams it down our throats. There is so much anger. The media is at our fingertips and why the different generations are and know what to do to find out information. It is spiraling.

- **How would you like to be remembered?**

Ms. Carrie: I would like to be remembered as… someone who cared and that made a difference… that difference could be small like a smile or a hug but I would like to be remembered in a positive way. I know I don't want kids… I feel like there are so many kids out there who do not have a good home and I don't want to bring another kid into the world without helping the kids that are already out there first. Spending an hour or two with a child… there are so many kids that need that… I feel like having a child… if you can't give everything to that child then you shouldn't have children. People have children sometimes to make themselves look better or to heal a relationship or something selfish… that's wrong. They're making a person and if they can't give their all to it then they shouldn't do it. So many people think that it's just a normal thing to have kids… but, I don't know… you can't take it for granted.

- **How do you think you will be remembered?**

Ms. Carrie: I don't know. A lot of people that I have met tell me that I am very sweet. I think I will be remembered as being sweet.

- **How would you like to preserve the past, capture the present, and impact the future?**

Ms. Carrie: I would like to preserve the past by taking it for what it is by taking from it and learning from it… I think a lot of times our history repeats itself… and it repeats itself because you are not learning from what happened! Preserve the past by learning from it. Capture the present… the best way to capture the present is to be in the present and to take it in and not to go back… to take in all of your senses and really be in the moment. Your moment. Otherwise, you hit a roadblock… not easy… must concentrate and not dwell on what has happened in the past or will be happening. Impacting the future… In the best way possible by making a difference and by caring about the future and growing from the past and the present so that the future can be a better place… do things with passion.

VITA

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