

**EDUCATION TO NURTURE THE SOUL:  
AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF A  
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE  
FOR LIBRARIANS**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to capture, describe and interpret an adult education experience that moves learners in an emotional, soulful and spiritual way. Profound and deep learning was revealed through comments such as: *This has been one of the most profound experiences of my life;* and, *Those five days were pure magic.* These comments are the result of experiences at Northern Exposure to Leadership (NEL), which is a continuing, adult learning experience for professional librarians. The Institute uses senior librarians to serve as mentors and facilitators, and is a five-day, residential Institute held every eighteen months at Emerald Lake Lodge, near Field, British Columbia, Canada.

This research is explored within an adult education framework, which is steeped in a rich tradition of creating caring learning communities that honour the histories of learners, listen to their individual voices, and allow for alternative ways of learning and knowing. This analysis and interpretation is set within a broader social context of individual, global and cosmic alienation, and the demise and loss of soul evident in a manufactured, technical and commodified world.

The research indicates that soul in education is nurtured through: relationships with mentors, peers and self; the creation of a professional, caring community; ceremony, symbol and the sacred; risk; struggle and disclosure; ethics; creativity and imagination; physical environment; residential factors of seclusion and shared accommodations; and the use of a variety of teaching methods with a concentration on experiential learning. The confluence of these factors affects careers and lives of learners on a long-term basis.

Ultimately, it is asserted that attention to soul in education elicits an emotional, spiritual and physical response that is affirming for all involved. Soulful approaches breathe life into education and infuse learners with energy, vitality and enthusiasm, and, in the case of NEL, is creating a collegial community with librarianship.

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## *Tribute*

While I was engaged with this research, my husband Brad's silhouette appeared late one evening at the garden door. Reaching for my hand, he drew me out into the garden and the cool September air and showed me the most spectacular and gracious Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) I had ever seen. We awakened our son, Zackary, so that he too might see the splendor of this sight.

As the vision danced and swept the sky, we thought it appeared as a winged eagle in flight. With my feet planted in the garden, I saw, with the aid and company of my family, a bird in flight whose wings touched the horizon.

I thank Brad for giving me my greatest gifts:

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- And for Wings – with which to fly.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*“Those five days were pure magic. I will cherish the experience for a very long time.”*

**Participant comment**

*“I was transformed by the experience, and my life has been changed.”*

**Participant comment**

*“Many of the participants found the Institute both humbling and inspiring: humbling, because it broadened our perspective from our own work, our own type of library, our own worldview to glimpse the bigger picture of the profession and the Canadian library scene; and inspiring because we saw around us a group of keen, active, enthusiastic professionals. Participants and mentors alike commented on feeling refreshed, feeling a renewed optimism about the profession, and a renewed commitment to try to make a difference within it. We felt lucky to have been there.*

**Haigh, 1995**

*“I believe I was touched at a soul level, while there.”*

**Participant comment**

*“What I brought home with me is the following: a renewed commitment to the profession of librarianship; a sense of personal power; and a passion to contribute to this great profession ...”*

**Franklin, 1996, p. 15**

*“Most definitely, this has been one of the most profound experiences of my life so far.”*

**Participant comment**

The foregoing comments are from participants to Northern Exposure to Leadership (NEL) and Snowbird Leadership Institute, which are professional, continuing education experiences for librarians. I myself was a participant at Snowbird Leadership

Institute, and then was a member of a team that subsequently created and now facilitates NEL.

NEL is a five-day, experientially based leadership institute attended by 26 librarians new to the profession, 8 mentors (team facilitators) who are seniors in the profession and 4-6 facilitators who design and deliver the program. It is a residential experience held every 18 months at Emerald Lake Lodge in Field, British Columbia, Canada. At the time of this writing, four Institutes had been held in September, 1994; February, 1996; September, 1997; and February, 1999. The mark of excellence, and that for which NEL is noted, is the profound impact that the Institute has had on the lives of the participants, the mentors and the facilitators. It is a personal growth experience that has captured the magic and enchantment of both the place and the persons who are the Institute.

Comments about NEL such as those above intrigued me, and I had numerous questions about them: What did people experience at Northern Exposure to Leadership? What inspired comments such as those above? What elements are perceived to be powerful enough to have moved people in this deep way, particularly at a soul level? If they were so moved, did this experience have a long-term effect on their careers or their lives? And if so, how might that have happened? Underlying these questions are some considerably more elusive, but potentially more important: What is to be gleaned about adult education from the Institute? And, is there something to be learned here about the relation of the soul to education? Essentially, I wanted an enriched understanding of the meaning that the experience had for those involved and what the essence of the experience was, and I was curious about what this investigation might mean for educators.

Based on personal experience, and an initial investigation of relevant literature, I suspected components which were influential and impacted participants at a deep level were: the opportunity to network and form relationships with colleagues in a caring and respectful environment; the creation of a professional mentoring community; the incorporation of celebration, ceremony and the sacred; factors related to experiential and residential learning; and, aesthetics including physical environment, location, accommodations and food.

With this in mind, I investigated what participants, mentors and facilitators think and feel about the Institute in retrospect and how they recall thinking and feeling while there. For this study, I solicited and recorded their reflections, ruminated about their stories, assessed similarities between them, and made linkages to relevant literature and theory. The study is interpretive by design and explores, describes, documents and interprets NEL as a soulful, adult educational experience.

This study presents a representation and interpretation of the participant collective in which those involved may place their own experience and perhaps come to a fuller understanding and interpretation of it. It also provides for the librarian profession an historical record of the Institute. At a pragmatic and personal level, this investigation allowed me the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about relevant areas in the literature, which may improve my practice, both at NEL and in my work as a leader in my profession.

In a broader context, this research may contribute to ongoing pedagogical discourse in the area of education and its relationship to elements of soul such as that

directly explored by educators such as Dirkx (1997), Sardello (1985, 1992), Lauzon (1998) and Erickson (1995). In doing so, it is built upon the education and adult education foundations offered by many including Dewey (1963), Knowles (1984), Grace (1998), Belenky et al. (1986, 1997), Noddings (1992, 1995), Shrewsbury (1987), Schniedewind (1987), Mezirow (1991, 1995), Scott (1997) and Taylor (1997), all of whom I will briefly discuss here. It also includes residential learning theory offered by Collins (1985) and Fleming (1998), and considers the intersection between education and work discussed by Hart (1992) and Fenwick (1998). Briskin (1996) writes about the relationship between work and soul which is also valuable to this study.

Moore, in *The Education of the Heart* (1996a), argues that in its deepest forms, education is the art of enticing the soul to emerge from its cocoon, and its cave of hiding to meet its potential. This research is about such enticing. Too, it may contribute to the ideas presented by writers on soul such as Moore (1992, 1996a, 1996b), Hillman (1989) and Elkins (1995). Taken together, it is my hope that NEL might serve as a site where factors which impact the soul can be explored, thus enriching our understanding of how we might better learn and grow together.

This rendering of NEL is designed to address professional as well as academic communities. It is part of a doctoral program intended to provide practitioners the opportunity to undertake applied research that integrates theory and practice, where research *informs* practice, and practice *inspires* research. Written to speak to practitioners and also meet academic criteria, this thesis is presented in the first person,

and employs a literary style incorporating metaphor and poetry, which convey the richness and depth of feeling present at NEL.

Given the topic of this thesis, which is an exploration of the intersection between education and soul, this work is intended to represent a fluid, imprecise framework. It should in no way be approached as rigid, exact or formulaic. In this way, it is a dance – each dancer must choose their<sup>1</sup> own garb, pace, and melody. Similarly, this rendering of NEL is largely the result of some of the choices I made. It reflects my own ideas and application of literature and theory to questions as I posed them. Another researcher would have posed different questions, and created a different rendering of NEL. Therefore, this should not be read as the definitive statement about NEL, but rather, one that reflects my own interests in soul as evidenced in, and elicited through NEL.

An undertaking such as this is somewhat presumptuous. It presumes not only to have captured aspects of another's soul, but to have understood it in some measure as a unique phenomenon, linked and related it to other souls, and then communicated a sense of that totality in writing. Moreover, such liberties may be considered invasive; this research requires that respondents to the survey reflect upon and reveal aspects of themselves and their experiences that have occurred at a very deep human level – indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> In this work “their” will be used for both singular and plural possession, as was done prior to an arbitrary decision to stop doing so by grammarians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest explicit advocacy of this usage has been found in Kirby’s “*A New English Grammar*” (1746), and was enacted as an act of Parliament in 1850 (Bodine, 1975). Pragmatically, use of *their* in this paper is done to avoid the genderization of non-specific persons, to protect the privacy of respondents by masking their gender, and to avoid the cumbersome and awkward *she / he* and *his / her*. Fundamentally, it is done in an attempt to counter an historic means of women’s oppression.

at a soul level. While respondents had choice in the instances of such feeling that they chose to share, this study still asked that they think about deep, personal feelings.

Too, some might suggest that to research the soul is near folly. But, “to recognize that the soul of a man [sic] is unknowable, is the ultimate achievement of wisdom. The final mystery is oneself. When one has weighed the sun in the balance, and measured the steps to the moon, and mapped out the seven heavens star by star, there still remains oneself. Who can calculate the orbit of his [sic] own soul?” (Wilde, p. 119-120).

Knowing and understanding this, I was compelled to persevere. I did so for the purposes stated elsewhere in this text, but in doing so am reminded that as one person trying to understand others, try as I might, I may not have always gotten it exactly right. (Yet, getting it *right*, as we will come to see, is not the point of exploring soul.)

Understanding this, I am most humbly thankful for being able to take the liberties and make the presumptions inherent in this rendering.

The primary concern of this research focuses on elements of soul, as well as spirituality and emotions, as they relate to adult education. To that end, I will begin this exploration with a discussion about soul, what that word has meant historically and how conceptions of soul are manifest today. I will describe the erosion of the place of soul in the world and the resulting disorientation and alienation endemic in Western society. I will present a brief overview of some related adult education theorists and discuss their contribution to an explication of soulful education. I will proceed with a portrayal of those writing in the area of education and the soul, and incorporate ideas regarding the relationship between work and education in terms of soul. I will present research and

findings using NEL as a site of exploration with an interpretation of how soul has been attended to at NEL, and the implications of that for education, both at NEL and education more broadly.

I will assert finally, that being moved at a deep level through education can breathe life into human consciousness and allow us to see, understand and interpret things either differently or in a way that enriches their meaning. In doing so, soulful education has potential to enrich the lives of both students and teachers, and contribute to deep and profound learning.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPTIONS OF SOUL: PAST AND PRESENT**

#### **Definitions of Soul**

The Greek word for soul, *psych*, also means *butterfly* (Briskin, 1996). This conjures a vision of mythical beauty, and lightness and peace – it seems an embodiment of nature itself. It represents the ability for soul to alight if we advance upon it with rigidity or with too much intent. Perhaps, as Briskin suggests, we need to move in toward soul quietly and respectfully; sit close to it awhile, learn what we are able, and move in closer over time:

If we approach it with objective reason, we risk pinning its wings to study it. And if we sentimentalize it, making it only a concept for our best intentions, then we risk it flying away from our benevolent net. To approach the soul with respect and rigor, we must be prepared to appreciate its capacity for metamorphosis, its contradictory nature in its habit of taking flight and remaining still. We must be prepared to follow its path as it has appeared in ancient traditions and as it still appears in our day-to-day lives. (Briskin, 1996, p. 12)

This suggests that we may not want to “pin the butterfly” in our attempt to explore and understand soul; we are well served to afford it a fluid nature. We can hardly say for certain what soul means today, or how it may change tomorrow. It is amorphous and dynamic. Likewise, research based on such a phenomenon is best undertaken (and read) with a very open frame of mind, which also allows the ideas and suggestions to be fluid, along with the visions it conjures in the reader’s mind. Such an opportunity may elicit for the reader ideas of creative application, enjoyment or moments for reflection.



Soul, posits Moore (1996a), is a strange word. While we use it, and it is ever common, a definition eludes us. We have to be satisfied with descriptions, ancient and modern, that help us to meditate upon its meaning. Such a description is offered by Elkins (1995), who suggests:

Soul resists our Western need for operational definitions. The soul reminds us that there is another world, a world far deeper and more primordial than our logical processes. Soul is the door to this ancient imaginal world; she (Greek and Latin words for soul are both feminine nouns) is mythic and poetic in the deepest sense of these terms. To know the soul, we must lay aside our rational ways of knowing and open ourselves to the world of reverence, feeling and imagination ... , imagery, poetry, art, ritual, ceremony, and symbol. We meet the soul when we are stirred by a person or music, moved by a poem, struck by a painting, or touched by a ceremony or symbol. Soul is the empathic resonance that vibrates within us at such moments. She is the catch of the breath, the awe in the heart, the lump in the throat, the tear in the eye. These are the signs of the soul, the markers of her presence that let us know we have touched her or she has touched us. (p. 85)

Hillman (1989) attempts a concrete definition of soul, and suggests, ironically, that we cannot look to science to assist us. He claims that soul refers to the deepening of events into experiences; makes possible, whether in love or in religious concern, a special relation with death; refers to the imaginative possibilities of our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image and fantasy – that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphysical.

Barrett (1986) challenges us to consider the body as well as the soul, spirit and emotions. He writes: “The body we know is rarely sharply distinguishable from the soul: in our moods and feelings we are not often sure what part is physical and what not. There is no sharp dividing line between” (p. 20). He describes a psychophysical unit: “What we

call body and what we call soul are abstractions, aspects of one unitary reality and process. In our ordinary experience (which must always be our primary point of departure and return) we cannot always tell where body ends and soul begins....As our mood lifts, our body soars with it, and as our body sags, the spirit droops with it” (p. 26).

Some writers such as Hillman and Elkins make distinctions between the soul and spirit. Elkins (1995), for example, distinguishes soul from spirit, and asserts that the latter has to do with height. Spirit is the phoenix rising from the ashes; soul is the ashes from which the phoenix arose. Similarly, Hillman (1989) suggests that spirit may rise above or move beyond the valley of soul, and is escapist, literalistic, artistic, and creative. Finally, some, including Hillman, suggest that soul has to do with religion, while others, such as Elkins, say that it does not.

Further, and most importantly, the definitions of soul and the discourse concerning it include a worldview, and a concern for others. Writers such as Cousineau (1994), Sardello (1992) and Moore (1992) take great care to make clear that while each person has soul, soul is much bigger than each individual, and is an aspect of the world in its totality. Like love, it is pervasive and creates connections between all persons and communities and elements of the world. It is in the heart of our bodies, and in the canyons of the land, and in the waves that connect one star to another. In this sense, it is less a thing than a way of viewing the world, our responsibility to it, and the joy in it. Soul, in this sense, is a conjoining of all that is, and portrays how in honouring it, we may live well together.

Conceptions such as spirit, emotion, the body, religion and the world can all be considered closely related to soul. Here, I will generally and simply use the term *soul*, which I intend to represent a confluence of all of these interpretations or elements. *Soul* seems to more accurately reflect what I intend to capture, which is being moved at a deep personal and individual level within an educational context. Soul is not unlike the Northern Lights referenced in the Tribute. It is akin to a mythical dance that touches the senses and resonates at a visceral level beyond them, and sometimes leaves us standing at the edges of language, agape – uncertain even, how to define it.

### **Historical Aspects of Conceptions of Soul**

Barrett, in *Death of the Soul* (1986), explores the evolution of the human understanding of mind, consciousness and faith in the divine and the decline of the soul by exploring evolution from the beginnings of the New Science and mechanization to the present. Mechanization experiments with and explores matter that has been thoroughly schematized, abstracted and mathematicized, but does not explore it in its full multi-dimensional immediacy. Scientific materialism has become the dominant mentality of the West and rules not so much as an explicit and articulate philosophy, but more potently as an unspoken attitude, habit and prejudice of the mind. Barrett claims that technology exists within scientific materialism, wherein the very being of humanity is reduced to mechanization and humans are presented as extensions of machines, or as cogs within them. This is what Charlie Chaplin attempted to portray in the film *Modern Times* (1936). In this film, Chaplin portrays machines, in the construction of material objects, as of

greater importance than those humans who operate the equipment. In this view of the world, humans and their souls become secondary to mechanization.

While Chaplin's film is of the early 1900s, it can be argued that humans are still as entrapped, and secondary to production (mechanized or intellectual) at the close of the twentieth century. Drawing on Marshall McLuhan, Sardello (1992) offers an explication of the ways in which technology has left us devoid of soul, and suggests that it renders us divorced from deeper elements of ourselves and the world around us. He argues that with mechanical technology, parts of the body are extended into the world. For example, the wheel is both an extension of, and an acceleration of, walking, which leaves us unable to cope with the increased pace because it disturbs the senses. With electronic technology, the brain is exteriorized into the world resulting in disorientation and a false sense of feeling personally connected with and able to view and understand the world. Yet, this is an illusion. With television, for example, while viewers believe they see a picture, they merely see electronic dots on a screen. If television damages the soul, he argues, it is not because of content, but because of the medium, which viewers forget is a momentary, synthetic world of which they are not an active part. They not only then live within an illusion, they have an inflated view of the power of technology. He alerts us to the inherent dangers in this by casting his explication in the light of the movie *Blade Runner*, in which technology is highly advanced. The world depicted in *Blade Runner*, however, was a horrible disaster: electronic gates blocked garbage strewn streets where seamy characters lurked. He also reminds us of the change of heart of scientists such as Pascal, who invented the calculator which is a predecessor to the computer. Pascal, after a

brilliant scientific career, experienced the power of soul, and a being greater than himself. Upon this encounter, he relinquished his scientific work (Sardello, 1992). Sardello suggests that the manic urge to create a technological world arises when the soul can no longer be felt as a creative force in the world, which is not to say that technology is inherently evil, just that it sometimes displaces more soulful considerations. This mania can only be balanced by strengthening the forces of soul, and nurturing a conjoining of all souls to create a world soul, as can be done through education.

Paradoxically, while the human mind has created technologies, scientific methodologies and science itself, it has not left us the tools to understand fully the human mind, or the more subtle dimensions of our existence. Barrett notes: “In the three and a half centuries since modern science entered the world, we have added immeasurably to our knowledge of physical nature, in scope, depth, and subtlety. But our understanding of human consciousness in this time has become fragmentary and bizarre...” (Barrett, 1986, p. xvi).

Yet, Barrett suggests, for Christians in the seventeenth century, there was a special exemption for the soul. It was not a natural phenomenon; it stood outside of nature. But the effect of this placement was to leave the soul “perched precariously on the edge of matter ...” While soul is not detectable to our physical senses it can be likened to an aroma that permeates all things. Given that soul was not detectable, nor quantifiable, there is little wonder that it has been displaced.

Barrett places the dislocation of soul within a broader context of human understanding of our place, or displace, within the universe. Over time, we became

aware of the vastness of the cosmos, and that we were neither at the centre nor the edge of it, but merely a small planet nowhere in particular in a teeming universe. A growing sense of cosmic alienation, a driving force of scientific materialism and a growing ideology of scientism have left us floundering about without a foundation upon which to build or even retain a sense of soul. The nineteenth century had begun to recognize this loss, and religion, myth, magic and philosophy have all begun to grapple with it, suggests Barrett. I would add, so too have counselors, teachers, writers, poets, and artists – as well as taxi drivers, doctors, homemakers, lawyers and librarians. In short, all of us have.

Matthews, in *Singing the Soul Back Home*<sup>2</sup> (1995), suggests that in addition to common needs, such as health, work and relationships, we also have needs resulting from urban Western life. This includes the need to address the soul-loss, which is manifest in feelings of incompleteness and meaninglessness, alienation, addiction, and lack of self-esteem and vision on a personal as well as a social level. Socially, we suffer from poverty, oppression, war, racism, exclusion, ignorance, sexism, materialism, and consumerism. Even our ecosystem suffers. “Western society allows us to be aware in our body and in our mind; it sometimes permits us to be aware in our psyche, but it gives no importance to soul, parts of which have become homeless” (p. 25). While modern medicine and psychiatry deals with what they see as mental illness, and the criminal justice system and the welfare state try to cope with social ills, the more subtle aspects of distress and imbalance are ignored or marginalized.

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<sup>2</sup> While Matthews concentrates her writing on Shamanism, her insights into and understanding of the soul are useful to add depth to the portrayal of the soul here.

Matthews (1995) ponders:

...what of those who believe there is no subtle reality? These are a strange tribe, the first of their kind in the history of world anthropology. We live in extraordinary times when people disbelieve in spiritual worlds and beings. This total disregard for subtle reality makes it very hard for the mystics and visionaries who perceive it to live in our society. I am not speaking of people of extraordinary gifts, but of everyone who experiences mystical insights and knowings on a daily basis. The common, mundane nature of mystical experience is one of the best-kept secrets; its neglect and cover-up has given us a society in which we have no framework for speaking about our mystical perceptions – be it a sudden impulse or synchronicity, the urge to write a poem or song, or a vision of immense beauty. (p.13)

Matthews argues further that when we are distant from these dimensions of our lives, we become unbalanced, lose touch with reality, and fall into disease, separation and disharmony. She suggests that “most mature adults have lost the key to subtle reality, except in dreams; they are imprisoned in a cage of physical reality, doomed to walk the mundane round of existence without sparkle or soul” (Matthews, 1995, p. 22). We are, indeed, hollow.

## **The Hollow Men**

by T. S. Eliot<sup>3</sup>

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar...

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us – if at all – not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men...

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

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<sup>3</sup> Eliot, 1959, pp. 245-248.



The hollowness is evident. Today, many of us and many professions are lured into a web of seductive technologies of personal computers, electronic notebooks, the internet, cellular telephones, digital television, microwave ovens and PowerPoint presentations. This Promethean<sup>4</sup> quest leaves us lurching and lunging to drive the future, and force it upon ourselves. The blue haze I might have peered through as I chatted with friends over a glass of wine or a cup of coffee at a neighbourhood café is no longer from dim lights and cigars, but from web surfers whose screens cast an eerie light of another world. But that other world is not an inner one, of the soul, but one premised on digitization and technology.

In my own profession of librarianship, for example, I am struck by the hum and tap of computers where I was once, long ago, entranced by the crackle of cellophane on the childrens' books I borrowed. Where I once listened to frogs and birds outside the basement library window, I now hear the scurry of cars and the impatience of jackhammers as they work to be rid of the old and get on with the new. Through conversations with academic colleagues, I am struck by their anxiety about getting the latest facts, figures and theories to relay to their students, and ensuring that lectures are now delivered via PowerPoint. Librarians aspire to be cybrarians. Teachers want more "meat" and less "sentiment" in learning environments. Staff relations officers want to become conversant with the current mechanics and methodologies of managing and appraising staff and measuring its productivity. Yet, I am hopeful that many, like me, remember:

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<sup>4</sup> Promethean, as in the Greek demigod, who stole fire from Olympus, and taught men to use it (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1933).

### *The Book*

*There is no Frigate like a Book  
To take us Lands away  
Nor any Courses like a Page  
Of prancing Poetry –  
This Traverse may the poorest take  
Without oppress of Toll –  
How frugal is the Chariot  
That bears the Human soul.*

Emily Dickinson<sup>5</sup>

Inside and outside of librarianship, many long for a full, meaningful and magical life. In this longing we are today witnessing an increased interest in spirituality across North America. Bookstore shelves are increasingly stocked with books bearing the word *soul* in the title, and eco-tourism is an emerging industry.

Some are seeking this renewal through an interest in First Nations' culture, which usually derives from a sincere and heart-felt interest to infuse greater spirituality into their lives. Matthews suggests that those without a spiritual tradition often warm themselves at others' fires, but ultimately they must return to their own hearth and make fire there (Matthews, 1995). However, I would add that, as Matthews herself notes, some of these traditions span many locations of the world and many cultures. The use of rocks, the circle and drumming, for example, are found globally (Redmond, 1997). The point of this writing is not to explore or justify the approach to the quest for soul, but more specifically to assert that it is underway, and to explore the way in which educators can make this a greater part of adult education experiences.

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<sup>5</sup> This poem is in the public domain, and does not hold copyright.

I believe that the search for an understanding of the soul, and our desire to include the richness of soul in our everyday lives, will achieve more cogency in the years to come. Each culture has its own roots, songs, stories and traditional wisdom. And by inclusion, each family and person has aspects of these as well. We are experiencing an increased quest to uncover, and perhaps create anew, these elements that add colour and texture to the tapestries of our lives. Many of us are trying in our own way to make spiritual, soulful connections, and striving to make our lives more meaningful at an individual level. We are constructing our own stories by which to live, and not accepting a pre-packaged product, religion, or approach.

As we enter a new millennium, we are at a unique and pivotal time in human history. While we may continue on a path of scientism, we may also begin to entertain and explore questions of soul, what that means, and how we might capture or recapture a sense of it and its place in our lives – within the context of our families, our communities, our professions, our institutions and our educational forums.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SOUL AND EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Early Ideas Regarding Education**

Education is a social construction, which means that it is designed and determined over time by both individuals and the societies of which they are a part. The forums in which education occurs, such as the family, the economy, the state, work, religion, and leisure activities, are as broad and diverse as society itself. As a social construction, humans are able, indeed required to construct and reconstruct education according to values we hold and esteem. The objectives and inherent definitions of education generally, as well as adult education specifically, vary and shift as do the times of which they are a part, and which they reflect. Therefore, this research can be employed to contribute to the ways in which adult education is undertaken to create more soulful educational environments, respectful of and attending to, full human beings in all of our dimensions.

In this section, I provide a brief overview of educational theories, either those pertaining to adults, or those that in some way speak to or reflect ideas of soul. While these ideas are primarily presented in the context of adult education, they are not exclusive or distinctive to adult education, and may apply to the education of children and youth as well. Children and youth too want and need to work in supportive environments, they have souls that need to be engaged, they have experiences they want to share, and they may have a desire to help determine what they learn and when. I write about adult education because that is my area of experience, and the specific context of my research.

This overview provides a foundation upon which soulfulness in education can be premised and a context within which to explore the same. These theories provide important underpinnings for the suggestions regarding soul that I will make in this writing. The call for soulful education is a natural extension of the foundational work of many adult educators, because humans must be cared for as persons in order to be cared for as souls.

Today, it is hoped that education achieves at least some of the goals set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD):

Education is one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war; it is seen as an expression of affection for children and young people, whom we need to welcome into society; and, it helps to create a world that is a better place in which to live, where people have learned to respect the rights of women and men, to show mutual understanding, and to use advances in knowledge to foster human development rather than to create further distinctions between people. (Delors, 1988, p. 13)

This laudable notion is premised upon an evolution of educational discourse, as relayed through the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and educational scholars and practitioners.

While the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers a vast array of definitions for the word *educate* and *education* which include “to feed” and “to train (animals),” it also offers those of more humanistic considerations such as “to lead forth” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1933, p. E.44). Sardello (1992) extends this definition: “Education is a cultural enterprise, and as the word itself says, education concerns guidance of soul into the world” (p. 49). Sardello’s views of education are consistent with the focus of this research; the further incorporation of soul into education is vital to humanistic learning environments.

Dewey (1940) asserted that “all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously at birth...” (p. 3). For Dewey, education was an integral part of life and should not be separated from it or offered as preparation for it. Lindeman (1989) (who employed ideas presented by Dewey) asserted that adult education is intended to create greater social democracy and that it can be premised upon a number of points:

- Education is life, rather than a preparation for it;
- It should aspire to laudable goals, such as *growth* where learners integrate emotions with thought, and not focus solely on technical objectives;
- The purpose of education is to add meaning into the whole of life and provide opportunities for individuals to express themselves;
- The emphasis in adult education needs to be on the specific contexts in which adults find themselves, focusing on learner determined needs rather than subject matter or teacher preferences;
- The resource of the highest value is the learner’s experience.

Lindeman (1989) saw learners in all of their humanity, not simply as students. He wrote:

[Learners] want to count for something; they want their experiences to be vivid and meaningful; they want their talents to be utilized; they want their total personalities to be shared in communities of fellowship. Briefly they want to improve themselves; this is their realistic and primary aim. But they want also to change the social order so that vital personalities will be creating a new environment in which their assumptions may be properly expressed. (p.9)

People participate in educational experiences as human beings with a past, and hope for a future. Learners channel what they are learning through their experience, and

filter it through their frames of reference. In the process, their personal histories become an important element that they bring to the classroom. Students not only want to bring their experiences to their educational contexts, they can do no other. Recognizing the histories of students, and acknowledging those histories and the stories that relay them, are a means by which teachers can attend to soul within a learning context. Because students' histories are integral to who they are as people, attending to their histories attends to their souls.

In addition, as suggested by Freire (1968), teachers can use students' histories and experiences as a point of departure and from there, move toward laudable goals together with students. Freire suggests that educators need to respect the expectations and choices of students, but he also asserts that teachers should not be neutral. As intellectuals, teachers cannot be mere facilitators, but must strive to first understand their students and then together move towards greater social justice (Freire, 1968). In doing so, teachers would do well to also attend to the needs of learners to earn a living, seek leisure activities, etc. In this framework, although the centre of power shifts to the learner, the teacher's power is not lost, but shifts from power as domination, to power as creative energy.

Building on the insights of Lindeman and Dewey, Knowles introduced the concept of *andragogy* in North America, which is the education of adults, as distinct from that of children. Some of Knowles' theories replicate those already noted. In addition, Knowles suggested that adult learners are self-directing, autonomous beings; they want to learn in a climate of mutual trust and respect, collaborativeness, supportiveness, openness,

authenticity, pleasure and humanness (Knowles, 1984). Environments such as these also attend to soul, as this research will show.

### **Contemporary and Critical Approaches to Education**

While many of these concepts are still popular today, there is criticism that Knowles individualized education, and in doing so, detracted from the more democratic, community minded and socially spirited purposes of earlier forms of adult education. Some thinkers such as Collins (1998) assert that Knowles' conception is too individualistic at the expense of community, and that there is not enough attention to that which is for a more common good. While this is defensible, having a community focus is still likely to reproduce patriarchy, perpetuate the status quo, and maintain hierarchies unless challenged at more structural social levels. Existing power inequities, exclusion and marginalization must be directly addressed in order to be countered. This needs to be done at both individual and group levels, and as this is undertaken a balance must be sought between being individually focused and community focused. I will explore further the relations between individuals and community, and argue, essentially, that attention to individual soul, as presented by those such as Sardello (1992), is extended to a conjoining of souls in community to create community soul, which is also necessary.

Another contemporary theory which some may consider related to soul is transformative learning theory. Transformative learning theory, as originally presented by Mezirow (1991), is based on a cultural context of learning in which individuals learn through a process of internalization of definitions, assumptions, values, and typifications



communicated by significant others and society generally. Mezirow describes this process as *formative* in children. Adults, he suggests, encounter the need to change when the schooling and socialization they received as children no longer suffices. Adult learning then is potentially *transformative*. When entire perspectives change, such as those with which individuals view and assess the world, *perspective transformation* occurs. Further, the autonomous individual free from oppression is illusory, and Mezirow sees transformative theory as having the potential to be emancipatory. He states: "in order to be free we must be able to name our reality, to know it divorced from what has been taken for granted, to speak with our own voice. To do so, it becomes crucial that the individual learn to negotiate meanings, purposes, and values critically, reflectively, and rationally instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 3). Transformation theory provides a description of the dynamics of the way adults learn to do this.

Mezirow suggests that we allow our early formed meaning systems to diminish our awareness of how things really are in order to decrease our anxiety. Overcoming limited, distorted and arbitrary cognition through reflection on assumptions that formerly have been accepted uncritically is central to development in adulthood. Transformative learning is a ten-step process that begins with a disorienting dilemma. Disorientation is an acute internal or external crisis that serves as a catalyst for change, which occurs within a context of personal and sociocultural factors that influence the process of learning. Critical reflection involves a process during which adults reassess their ways of perceiving the world as well as the premises and assumptions they hold. During this process,

individuals call upon their memories in order to recognize what they know in order to interpret old beliefs. Reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions or premises are found to be distorting, inauthentic, or otherwise invalid, and new perspectives and meaning structures are constructed. This transformation is based on logic and represents movement through cognitive structures and processes by identifying and judging presuppositions (Mezirow, 1991).

Taylor (1997) presents an important and useful literature review of research studies related to transformative theory as proposed by Mezirow. He indicates that while there have been numerous articles regarding theoretical critiques, there is limited published research regarding its viability as a model or implications for practice of transformative learning theory. His literature review focuses on practice, rather than theory, which informs this practice-based research using NEL as a test site. In his overview, Taylor examined and interpreted research reported in three academic journals, two Master's theses, ten conference proceedings and thirty dissertations.

Taylor presents a number of researchers who found elements important to transformation. His findings can be grouped as follows:

- Spirituality was cited as important by: Lucas (1994); Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994); Hunter (1980); Pierce (1986); Scott (1991).
- Relationships were cited as important by: Cochrane (1981); D'Andrea (1986); Gehrels (1984); Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994); Harper (1994); Holt (1994); Hunter (1980); Morgan (1987); Pierce (1986); Pope (1996); Saavedra (1995); Sveinunggaard (1993); Vogelsang (1993).
- Compassion, caring, sharing or trust were cited as important by: Gehrels (1984); Ludwig (1994); Saavedra (1995); Scott (1991).

- Intuition, unconscious, affective or other ways of knowing were cited as important by: Brooks (1989); Cochrane (1981); D'Andrea (1986); Egan (1985); Elias (1993); Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994); Hunter (1980), Lucas (1994); Pierce (1986); Scott (1991); Sveinunggaard (1993); Taylor (1993).
- Self-responsibility was cited as important by: Hunter (1980).
- Environment or immediate context was cited as important by: Clark (1991); Schlesinger (1983); Scott (1991); Weisberger (1995).
- Courage, risk and creativity were cited as important by: Scott (1991).
- Collective needs, or adoption of higher order values was cited as important by: Scott (1991); Sveinunggaard (1993).
- Identity, self-acceptance or understanding and accepting others was cited as important by: Pierce (1986); Scott (1991); Sveinunggaard (1993); Lucas (1994).

Through investigation of this directly related body of literature, Taylor (1997) concludes that “transformative learning is found not to be just rationally-based, but is reliant on intuition, other ways of knowing and empathy” (p. 47). He adds that the studies he investigated clearly show that transformative learning is not just rationally and consciously driven, but incorporates a variety of non-rational and unconscious modalities for revising meaning structures.

Taylor (1997) observes that Mezirow recognizes relationships *indirectly* in the context of rational discourse, but fails to recognize the more subjective aspects, such as trust, empathy and support, which Taylor found to be the most common element of all of the studies he investigated. Connected ways of knowing such as modeling, interpersonal support, social support, networking, developing connections, building community, learning-in-relationships, and trust are also important.

Although Taylor's investigation confirms much of Mezirow's thinking, he suggests that a holistic and contextually grounded view of adult learning is needed to complement that offered by Mezirow. A holistic view would also consider affective learning, nonconscious learning, relationships and the collective unconscious. While Mezirow might mention these aspects, they are not given the weight they deserve in comparison to rationality and logic. Taylor also makes the point that holistic learning incorporates unconscious knowing and nonconscious learning. This is learning done outside of one's focal awareness, and thus contradicts Mezirow's intentional construal.

In Mezirow's more recent (1995) writing however, it appears that he is moving toward incorporation of other ways of making meaning and of knowing. In his contribution to Welton's *In Defense of the Lifeworld*, he engages in a discussion of tacit knowledge, or what he calls "presentational construal" which he defines as our sense of directionality, movement, entity, colour, style, texture, sound, feelings, physiological reactions, empathy and identification with others, to name a few. As a tribute to his authenticity regarding moving beyond the cognitive, he eloquently writes: "There are obviously several different functions of presentational construal including: ...inspirations, like our feelings at beholding great beauty or great virtue; aesthetic judgment, ... love ... acts of conscience...intuition....non-verbal play...solidarity... transcendence...feeling a sense of oneness as with humanity or with God" (Mezirow, 1995, p. 41). Mezirow suggests that we use presentational construal when we make value decisions. Yet, how Mezirow views this is unclear, for he writes "Consciousness ...becomes a matter of managing attention rather than one of having sensations. This unresolved issue is central

to the persistent mind-body dilemma posed by Descartes over three centuries ago and to the ancient and fruitless debate over the nature of consciousness” (Mezirow, 1995, p. 42).

The discussion about the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness is ongoing, but is not pursued here, nor are the intricacies and recent developments of Mezirow’s theory. This is for two reasons. While Mezirow may now be discussing non-conscious factors, his foundational work has been premised upon that which is cognitive, rational and logical, and this research is not concentrated on rational processes, nor does it explore them as they occur within individuals. Additionally, as practice-based research, my research has a different focus than does Mezirow’s. Here, I am exploring if and how people were moved at a soul level, and why they believed, in retrospect, that they were. It is more an explication of the environment and context within which that occurred. It is not, however, focused at the same level or centre of learning as is Mezirow’s transformative learning theory. Mezirow focuses, in large measure, on the process that exists within each individual at a psychological or cognitive level. The intent of this research, however, is to explore not what happened within the processes of each individual, but to explore the elements of the educational experience that caused a general feeling of being moved at a soul level, or resulted in the gestalt of a soulful experience. My work is focused less on the internal processes each person experiences than it is on their interaction with the environment, including the other people in it. Too, the catalyst for this NEL research group is not a crisis situation as described by Mezirow, but rather, it is a caring, relationship-based educational experience. Certainly, although Mezirow’s

ideas may be related to this undertaking, his work involves a different level of exploration than mine does.

Scott (1997) comes closer to this investigation of soul and adds to the discussion of transformation and soul. In doing so, she provides another approach to the relationship between the two, and explores transformation from two perspectives: critical social theory and analytical depth psychology in relation to the grieving soul. Critical social theory, she claims, fundamentally assumes that social structures and collective culture shape reality and individual identity. The concern is how we all fit our various subjectivities, races and genders together in the same cultural, moral and ethical space. Transformation here is achieved in rational ways using cognitive processes and dialogue to uncover how things actually are as compared to how those in power present them. Personal transformation is viewed as either a dialectic in social interactions or a by-product of social forces at play.

Analytic depth psychology, Scott suggests, which began with the writings of Carl Jung, focuses on the personal aspects of transformation. This approach to transformation theory attempts to assist people to understand their authentic interior selves and gain understanding about their lives. This form of analysis works at a deeper level of the collective unconscious of individuals, which is below our conscious selves, and is intensely personal. It comes to a conscious level in different ways for different people, and can be revealed through dreams, internal images, or slips of the tongue – all more powerful than rational thought, she argues. It cannot be pushed or planned for as a goal-oriented, technical or rational process. This depth orientation focuses on profound emotional experiences that force us to grieve the loss of what used to be a meaningful state of being

before we move into another state that is deeper, wiser, and more in tune with matter, the body and soul, and the material world. Living from a depth orientation is understood as a mythical journey that is played out in various ways depending on life circumstances.

Although transformation from a rational perspective is achieved through dialogue, transformation from a depth perspective is sitting with the images as we descend into a darkness within ourselves. Scott suggests that dialogue and reflection may complete a transformation, but prior to the cognitive process, dark work in the interior world of each individual is needed. The rational ego needs to be quieted before the internal images can be attended to, and this requires readiness, willingness, and openness. An ethereal or subtle body experiences things through the skin and muscles and holds the information there.

For social critical thinkers employing transformative theory, cognitive meaning structures, or a way of making meaning, changes as a result of transformation. Comparatively, what changes for depth orientations is consciousness itself with the emphasis on not becoming critically aware, but rather on becoming aware about what is essential in life.

Scott suggests that what we experience at a personal level, we recognize at a global level. When we then sob for our own losses we are sobbing for global losses. She believes that at the entrance to the twenty-first century, a door is waiting for us to open as we gather as individuating souls ready to act in new ways, for the benefit of all.

What Scott contributes to this research, even though it does not investigate the ways in which its individual subjects were transformed, is a well articulated and well

argued example that transformation can occur at various levels in various ways. Additionally, Mezirow, Taylor and Scott all contribute to the conceptualization of soul and the learning and life experiences to be discussed and relayed in this paper. Their work is important to this research because it is part of an emerging dialogue about the role of tacit knowledge, intuition, feelings, caring, empathy, and compassion, as well as the heart, spirit and soul in education. Too, the research undertaken here may support the claims of those examined by Taylor as well as those of Scott who suggest that transformation is a complex and dialectic process. In addition to cognition, it involves elements such as those discussed later in this research: relationships, caring, respect for self and others, ceremony, context and place, courage, risk, creativity, spirituality, and other ways of knowing, including those affective.

The discussions about transformation theory are occurring concurrently with those within more critical frameworks. One example of this is Grace's (1998) critical theory of adult learning that values, and respects the knowledge and experiences of educators and learners and fosters egalitarian communities. It is called the Theory of Adult Learning Community (TALC). In part, TALC:

- Encourages educators and learners to share leading roles and inform and challenge one another, as part of a holistic learning community. In this way, community is formed and evolved, issues of power are raised, and differences of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, and ability are honoured. Given the increasing trends toward global communities, adult educators would do well to be attuned to culture, age, race and subcultural educational values and preferences. As an example, stories,



myth, legend, and ceremonies are also well included in educational settings. In this critical framework, both individuals and community are honoured, as they also are in the discussions concerning soul in education.

- Emphasizes that theory and practice can inform one another, and focuses on knowledge production recognizing that knowledge is socially and historically constructed, as indicated earlier in this document.
- Asks critical educators to address the instrumental, social and cultural concerns of people, and recognizes education's instrumental function and calls for balance in the economic forces that result in learning to earn.

The TALC framework supports and reflects the view of education to be presented here.

Another emerging body of literature that reflects alternative approaches to education also contributes to this discussion. The importance of attending to alternative ways of learning and knowing is being discussed at many levels. Ways in which people of different cultures, genders, races, ages and socialization patterns come to learn and know should be considered in adult education. This may well be a challenge if, as Belenky, et al. (1997) suggests:

**Conceptions of knowledge and truth that are accepted and articulated today have been shaped throughout history by male-dominated majority culture. Drawing on their own perspective and visions, men have constructed the prevailing theories, written history, and set values that have become the guiding principles for men and women alike. Our majority of educational institutions – particularly our secondary and post-secondary schools (even those for women) – were originally founded by men for the education of men. (p.5)**

Because traditional education is a model for and an influence on adult educators, it is possible that adult learning theories are (white) male biased. Positivistic and empirical ways of knowing, perceived as rational, logical and objective, have prevailed in the education system and are culturally and economically valued. Subjective ways of learning, such as intuitive, affective, personal, tacit, internal and experiential, are also well placed within educational forums. Belenky, et al. draws attention to alternative ways of knowing which will be addressed here.

Noddings (1992) explicates one important affective dimension based on an ethic of caring. She contends that a primary, fundamental and basic human need is to receive care. She argues that a caring educational forum cannot be achieved through formulaic means, because it is manifest in different ways. Sometimes it is shown through toughness, sometimes tenderness, sometimes with hugs, sometimes with respect and deference. A caring relationship is one characterized by engrossment where the caregiver has open, nonselective receptivity, or attention, for the cared-for. Engrossment is defined as emptying oneself of self-concern, and seeing, hearing and feeling what the other is saying. This may last only minutes or occur sporadically over longer time frames. On the part of the cared for, reception, recognition and response are required.

In teaching and learning relationships, care is best extended over long periods of time and is built on trust. Noddings argues for care in school, and against the persistent undervaluing of skills, attitudes, and capabilities traditionally associated with women, such as care. Noddings wrote another book published in 1995 in which she discusses moral education in the ethic of care. This explicates the importance of modeling care, engaging

in a dialogue with students about care, allowing students the opportunity to practice care, and confirming and encouraging the best in others. The idea of care marks an important, articulated attention in education that addresses and legitimizes the concept of care, which lends support to the conception of soulful education. As this research will show, care is a key factor in the soulful education experienced at NEL.

Feminist pedagogy, as presented by Shrewsbury (1987), adds another dimension to this discussion. Although benefiting from a variety of definitions, feminist approaches to education can be described as the creation of environments that nurture empowered learners who respect each other, who have a direct interest in course material and who are motivated to apply learning to social action. Shrewsbury characterizes such classrooms as a liberating environment where teachers and learners are subjects rather than objects, and are actively engaged with the material being studied, with a reflective process in an inclusive, non-sexist, non-racist, non-violent, democratic environment where power is shared.

Feminist pedagogy is about joy and excitement in environments that overcome oppression. Critical thinking is founded in each learner's history, and affords respect to the history of other learners. It allows learners to explore the complexities and paradoxes of life inherent in seemingly simple things. Shrewsbury suggests that such environments have empowerment, community and leadership as central components. Here, power is shared with learners to develop their thinking about their goals, encourage independence, enhance the stake that everyone has in the success of the course, care about each other's

learning, develop skills of planning, negotiating, evaluating and decision making, reinforce self-esteem, and expand students' understanding about the material (Shrewsbury, 1987).

Schniedewind (1987) describes feminist pedagogy as a process beyond academic content, and in doing so makes a distinction between feminist pedagogy and feminist process. While feminist pedagogy assumes that teachers have more expertise, power and knowledge than students do, feminist process assumes equality. She also suggests that procedural skills be taught in feminist classrooms: communicating, developing a democratic group process, cooperating, integrating theory and practice, and creating change. These should be taught so the learners learn *how* to participate in feminist classrooms.

All of these are laudable ideas and interpretations of education. They provide a useful framework and a necessary foundation upon which to create a civil and just classroom, and by extension, a civil and just society. The Hamburg Declaration (1997) reads:

Adult education [is] more than a right; it is a key to the twenty-first century. It is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society. It is a powerful concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice. Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life. Learning throughout life implies a rethinking of content to reflect such factors as age, gender equity, disability, language, culture and economic disparities. (p. 1)

Although the intent of this is both moving and striking, one might also consider this in context with a sentiment from Gandhi. When asked, of all the things he had witnessed, what made him the most sad in life, he replied “The hard-heartedness of the well educated” (Kozol, 1980, p. 180). Indeed, we know that those with the most education are still getting wealthier while those with less education are getting poorer. The gap between the wealthy and the poor is increasing, and given the greater costs associated with education, increasingly only the wealthy can afford it. Certainly, education itself is not a panacea. Although there are many educational opportunities available, and humans have made great discoveries, there still seems to be a prevailing mood of disenchantment and disillusionment, high unemployment, increasing disparities throughout the world, and an ecosystem gasping for breath (Brown, et al., 2000).

Education alone is not enough, and although it cannot address all of the social, cultural, instrumental, and political concerns of society, it can create a forum in which social contradictions and inherent tensions are discussed. Its practitioners can also recognize the way in which knowledge is constructed, and can attempt to achieve a balanced approach to conflicting ideas and demands. Given this potential, practitioners can work toward greater understanding of the unique perspective of many diverse groups. In doing so, educators can also continue to investigate how and under what conditions education intersects with work. This exploration can be extended to include soul within the workplace. Further, adult education cannot be considered generally, and specifically given the professional NEL site of this investigation, without consideration of the work place.

## **Adult Education and Work**

In the world of work, adult education is often used to further corporate interests at the expense of both individuals and the community. In this environment, individuals suffer when they and their education are viewed as a means to an end. Goals are predefined to enhance the bottom line, and processes are structured and predetermined. Attempts to build work teams, and movements such as Total Quality Management are critiqued as being a means to extract more labour from the labour force. Educational programs are designed to meet a corporate agenda, and do not necessarily consider learners' interests. These arguments are well expressed by Fenwick (1998) in *Questioning the Concept of the Learning Organizations*, in which she suggests that learning is distorted into a tool for competitive advantage, and further that when learners are expected to learn more, learn better and learn faster, they are always in deficit. This interpretation views employed learners as "resources," which is a distorted view of people as commodities.

As we enter the twenty-first century, some major corporate and academic enterprises are now developing a process of aligning personal goals with institutional goals. It is believed that through this alignment, managing and appraising staff as well as measuring its productivity will be more effectively achieved. While this is done under the guise of "greater accountability" it is a means through which organizations hope to achieve competitive advantage, or at least counter the threat of corporate marginalization. One must question the degree to which the threat is real, and the degree to which this is a movement intent upon increasing productivity.

Similarly, Hart (1992), on a global scale, explores and critiques the existing division of labour and marginalization of many of the world's people who represent racial, geographic and gender minorities. She explores adult education from various points of view including employers, mainstream and marginally employed persons, and those unemployed. She asserts that through the current paradigm and structure of work, economic and power inequities are increasing, and that the dichotomy between the work and natural life is destructive. She argues that "the control of workers' feelings or needs is a new development in the history of labour discipline, representing new and highly effective forms of worker control" (p. 12). Further, she claims, adult education "supports the formation of an industrialized mind which is becoming incapable of experiencing its own experience..." (p.12). She writes that "if we want to survive, physically, psychologically, and spiritually, we need to learn new, alternative ways of dealing with nature, with each other and with ourselves. While education can, of course, not be expected to bring about such transformations, it is nevertheless placed in a position of central importance" (p. 211).

In order to achieve greater equity and human dignity, adult educators have an important role to play. Hart (1992) claims: "Educational theory needs to study systematically the abilities, virtues and sensitivities that are needed for a communal existence, abilities which crystallize around respect and love for life, and which can therefore not be removed from the material and sensuous dimensions of life. This means paying attention to the non-cognitive dimensions of learning which are rooted in such life-affirming experiences as joy, pleasure, passions and creativity" (p. 213).

The current work situation of mechanized labour has been traced historically by Briskin (1996) who formulates linkages to the decline of soul in the workplace. Briskin explores the demise of soul in human labour during the rise of capitalism which suppressed soul in the workplace in order to create a more compliant labour force. He traces the means of this through the use of the panopticon<sup>6</sup> in which workers can be viewed at their work, to time-clocks and Taylorism<sup>7</sup> on through to modern technology and automated systems which track labour productivity. Once human bodies are controlled, souls are easily suppressed.

Briskin supplements his analysis with an exploration of the perpetuation of the cult of efficiency and the work ethic. In this environment “the underlying rules that govern the system – where power is actually located – are invisible. Domination is not simply a function of one thing, whether surveillance, architecture or punishment; it is an elemental force that feels pervasive. Everyone feels watched and judged” (p. 81). And all are caught. The watchers too are watched, and feel the pressuring scrutiny to lesser and greater degrees from peers and colleagues, and within professions.

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<sup>6</sup> Briskin (1996) describes the panopticon in detail (pp. 76-79) as a development of Bentham (1791) who realized that power would become contingent upon the ability to control human minds, bodies and functionality. Bentham set out to build an architectural structure that would enable constant scrutiny of those within it. School children, workers, convicts and patients could all be secluded and observed at a distance, so that an overseer could view every aspect of behaviour and movement to achieve desirable behavior and order, and maintain a system of hierarchy, classification and surveillance. The panopticon for labour was developed during a time of changing economic conditions, when the newly industrializing areas needed a large labour pool and thus could be “a mill for grinding rogues honest and idle men industrious.”

<sup>7</sup> Taylorism emanates from the thinking and work of Frederick Taylor (late 1800s) who feverishly sought efficiency, precision mechanization and management in the workplace. Much of the dehumanizing nature of work is traced to his tenets, the legacy of which is a workplace with little human value, collective purpose or individual meaning (Briskin, 1996).



This represents an approach that changes people from the inside out, wherein individuals are required to tame their own human nature. When people police themselves for the benefit of capital, their very souls are at risk. They may come to wonder who they are, ponder the authentic nature and needs of their souls, and question whether or not they truly have one. Two sociologists tried to capture elements of this: Emile Durkheim called this *anomie*, and Karl Marx called it *alienation* (Ritzer, 1983). In my estimation, when there is a sense of detachment in relation to our labour it may be because human souls are transmogrified by capital. Thus, it could be said that as people sell their labour, they sell their souls. If they indeed, inherently, put their souls on the auction block along with their labour, they are, in essence, *selling their souls*. Hades cannot be far behind.

All is not yet lost. Briskin suggests ways in which soul can be “stirred” into the workplace. Similarly, the founding values of adult education have not been abandoned in the workplace, and many educators are working to attend to the expressed needs of workers, as well as foster critical thinking and reflection. In writing about the relationship between human resource development (which is often driven by corporate values) and adult education, Dirkx and Deems (1996) highlight the tensions as well as the opportunities. They suggest that adult educators be mindful of them, and work to enhance education in order to achieve a more just and democratic society that values the natural foundation of human existence. They base their writing upon the premise that work is inherently meaningful, and suggest more attention be paid to communication and dialogue in organizations.

One way in which the corporate world and other groups and agencies are striving to create meaningful adult educational experiences for professional workers is through residential learning environments. Residence has an impact on the nature and tenure of education, what occurs there, and the degree to which participants learn. Residential learning is different from other educational forums, including conferences where delegates are relatively independent. In forums such as these, the group undertakes the same activities, and dines and boards together: a shared experience is engendered. As noted by Collins (1985) "The point to be stressed is that in the case of adult residential programming it is not merely the physical accommodation of participants that is of concern: *Residence itself becomes an integral dimension of the learning experience*" (p. 70). Such situations Collins defines as short-term of four or five days, as is NEL.

Fleming (1998) has recently noted that factors associated with adult residential learning are often overlooked. Much empirical research in this area is needed, especially that which liberally includes the voices of participants, which I do here. Fleming presents a framework that she views as a holistic approach to the residential experience, which guided her study. This included: detachment from the familiar, personal growth and identity, learning domains and processes, impact of time, sense of community and fellowship, and environment (pg. 261). After completion of her research, based on respondent comments of those who experienced residential learning, she identified the following themes: building relationships in residence, learning in residence, individual change, detachment, and continuity. These elements are explored in the context of this research as well.

So far in this chapter I have considered some aspects of the evolving state of adult education, particularly as they relate to soulfulness. These ideas present an iterative quest by the many minds and hearts of those who want to achieve adult educational environments that are inclusive, dialogical, joyful, emancipatory, civil, just, egalitarian, caring, respectful of alternate ways of learning and knowing, and are considerate of individuals and communities, both locally and globally. In this, as in the last thing to escape from Pandora's box, we *hope* that our efforts have a positive and healing effect for ourselves, our families and on the communities in which we live and work. Ours aims are high, our intentions sincere.

I have discussed here early approaches to adult education, as well as aspects of critical, alternative and feminist theory to provide a framework and a point of departure for this research. The intention of such inclusion here is to describe the ideas of those upon whose work my own is built. Although I may not explicate each of these ideas at length, I have where possible, and will continue to do so, make specific links from the literature to my own research. In these discussions, many educational writers have alluded to soul, I would argue, in discussing how we might better learn and grow as individuals and in concert with other human beings. Another group of writers, such as Dirkx, Sardello, Erikson, Jagla and Lauzon have specifically addressed soul and education. I will now turn my attentions to those.

## **Soul and Education in the Literature**

Although it appears that relatively little has been written about the relationship of the soul to education, some writers have referenced soul specifically, or similar concepts. The following is an overview of that literature.

Dirkx in *Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning* (1997) speaks directly to the mythos inherent in transformative learning, which involves very personal and imaginative ways of knowing, grounded in a more intuitive and emotional sense of our experiences. This aspect of transformation, the way of mythos, reflects a dimension of knowing that is manifest in the symbolic, narrative and mythological. In this assertion, Dirkx suggests that the conception of transformative learning as presented by Mezirow (1991) represents logos which is the triumph of objectivity, logic and reason over instinct, ignorance and irrationality. In this, transformative learning theory as presented by Mezirow is incomplete, Dirkx argues, and shows through a mini case study. In employing transformative theory to examine his case, the affective, emotional, spiritual and transpersonal elements evident are understated. In attempting to apply logos, he was reminded of the inherently illusive, mysterious and messy nature of learning. Viewing the same case through the lens of mythos, powerful images were realized.

The way of knowing through soul, Dirkx argues, gives voice to a centuries old reemerging deep and powerful way of imaginative and poetic expressions of self and the world. He suggests that self-knowledge requires that we care for and nurture the presence of the soul dimension in teaching and learning. In his writing, he describes what it means to attend to, understand, and facilitate learning through soul, as well as nurture and care

for soul. This is done by recognizing the holistic and messy nature of education, by focusing on the present, and by recognizing that learning takes place within the dynamic and paradoxical relationship of self and others. Teachers attend to soul when they acknowledge its presence within the educative environment, respect its sacred message, give it space and consideration, and provide a voice through which it can be heard. Yet, he asserts that our interest in learning through soul is not to 'teach' soul or to facilitate soulwork, but to allow it to exist.

In 1985, Sardello published *Educating with Soul: A Phenomenological Archetypal Reflection on Higher Education*, in which he suggested:

Perhaps learning is not the pursuit of wisdom or the expulsion of ignorance. At least, the depth psychology of learning and education does not locate psychological transformation in the transition from ignorance to knowledge. For we are forever between ignorance and knowledge. Education seeks the beautiful, the unattainable. The beautiful Lady guides education. Constantly out of reach, she is the transformation figure that keeps us between ignorance and knowledge. We are satisfied with neither because that is not what is being sought....The psychological object of education is beauty. (p. 438)

Sardello suggests further that through this we seek an ordering which Plato calls *katharsis*, which is a reordering of the life of the soul. It is therapy of soul in community, of soul in the world. Yet, we have lost sight of education as a quest for beauty and see it as a quest for credentials and training. Today, he claims, we live in a disease ridden and narcissistic world. He suggests that a path to a healthier world requires a re-visioning of education, where we re-introduce imaginal connections with the things of the world. We need to be more soulful in the processes of education and concentrate less on its ends, its tasks, and its goals

(Sardello, 1985). Later, Sardello suggests that the endeavour to bring about learning through soul should belong primarily to adult education. Presently, however, there are no forms for this kind of learning because care for the soul has become incarcerated in the institution of psychotherapy. As it is, according to Sardello, adult education is primarily concerned with the improvement of technical skills, or personal enrichment. He writes:

Education ... concerns the drawing out of soul to conjoin with world soul, and participation in culture consists of living in the unity of soul visible in the world. This is a far cry from what currently passes as education, for here education is an ongoing unfolding of soul. Education instead has become an institution whose purpose in the modern world is not to make culture, not to serve the living cosmos, but to harness humankind to the dead forces of materialism. (1992, p. 50)

Although Sardello's criticism might be over-stated, and there is evidence to counter it, it is useful to state his point here, so that we are reminded of the limitations of education as it exists today. In order to incorporate soul into education, learning should occur in community and approach myth, fairy tale, story, symbolic imagery, poetry, drama, painting, music and film as events of the world soul. As we will come to see, NEL incorporates a number of these dimensions.

Erickson (1995), in *Stirring the Head, Heart and Soul*, explores how one stirs children at a head, heart and soul level. Her treatise in this text, however, focuses on the cerebral, and attends little to the heart and soul. To the degree that she does attend to these aspects, it is more a discussion about the means to support learners in a school environment, and less about what it means to learn at a soul level, or how such learning

can be recognized. Rather, she focuses on social trends and social change, creating concept-based and integrated curricula, and assessing and reporting student progress. It is beyond my area of expertise to evaluate these areas, and in any case, they are not directly related to this study. Erickson does have one chapter called: “Stirring the Head, Heart, and Soul: Creating a Love of Learning,” but dedicates a mere 4.5 pages (there are 208 pages in the text) to the heart and soul.

However, what Erickson does say is of some interest. She describes a Jewish student, Joanna, who created a multi-faceted class project based on the Holocaust, during the presentation of which she brought her grandparents to class. Joanna’s teacher encouraged his students to bring passion to their work, modeled enthusiasm and empathy for their efforts, and displayed appropriate emotions during presentations. Erickson suggests that when feelings are tapped in a non-threatening environment, learning can be enhanced.

While Erickson focuses on primary and secondary classrooms, she offers ways in which teachers can support students, which may then stir the hearts and souls of those they teach. She offers some ways that can be done that are applicable to all students, of any age:

- modeling values and ethics – positive enthusiasm, empathy, reason, dialogue in conflict, honesty and caring;
- knowing and connecting interpersonally with each person – asking each one about his or her thoughts, activities and opinions;

- supporting risk taking – encouraging each child to try, even if he or she fails, and setting an environment of trust and belief in abilities;
- building on success – valuing quality effort and praising growth for quality learning;
- allowing and planning for different patterns of learning – getting out the magnifying glass to read the work of the gifted writer who discovered that by writing microscopically one could get more thoughts on a page;
- seeing the giftedness in everyone, even the problematic – the “verbal motor mouth,” the graffiti artist,” the “takeover leader,” and “the social butterfly”;
- acting as a facilitator of learning;
- encouraging open dialogue; and
- allowing cooperative learning.

Erickson also highlights the importance of encouraging creativity and artistic expression in stirring the heart and soul. She calls for the appreciation of multiple forms of intelligence which integrates technical, sensory, emotional and interpretive ways of knowing.

Erickson suggests that we can also stir the hearts and souls of learners by nurturing a passion for learning.

Jagla, in *Teachers' Everyday use of Imagination and Intuition* (1994), offers a treatise on how teachers can use their own imagination and intuition as a positive and powerful force in the high school classroom, as well as the imagination and intuition of students. Jagla writes of the close relationship with imagination and creativity, which is related to soul. Thus, although not stated explicitly in Jagla's treatise, her work can be



interpreted as being about elements of soul in teaching. She offers an excellent discussion about the use of imagination to bring the curriculum and subject matter alive in the classroom, and relays examples of excellent teachers who bring vitality to a subject because of their own passion for it, and investment in it.

Lauzon (1998), in *In search of a future: Adult education and the psychology of the soul*, argues that adult education is at a turning point. Steeped in a rich history of working for social change and civil society, it is now being used to advance the global economy and in the process it has become commodified, along with culture. He suggests that this is based on the idea of an empty, dead self, devoid of emotions or soul. In this forum, however, he believes that a vision-logic is emerging to replace a rational-logic, which is based in rationality and has become dysfunctional. Vision-logic will lead to a deepening of spirituality and the ability to tolerate ambiguity and paradox, and it demands that we learn to live well with others and the environment in peace.

Lauzon argues that North American society will need to develop a new model of education that is consistent with the emerging vision-logic, and the model he suggests is based in the psychology of the soul, or depth psychology. He describes this as being about healing and becoming whole again, and moving toward self-love, which allows us to love others and to work toward egalitarianism. In doing so, we are called to be respectful of others, their histories and stories. This model does not search for grand narratives. To reclaim soul in this way, an epistemological shift is required that moves us from being discoverers of knowledge to being constructors of knowledge. In order to construct knowledge, we will need to recognize knowing as a creative and imaginative process that

legitimizes alternative ways of knowing other than through rationally constructed models. We need to listen to heartfelt voices, and allow those, rather than mindful voices, to guide us, and in this process must be prepared to celebrate as well as to grieve.

Lauzon argues that the implications for adult education are indefinite, and need to respond to context, allowing an ebbing and flowing manifest in the needs of individuals and collectives. Ebb and flow will occur as individuals recognize the cages in which they sit and the iron bars which grid their perceptions, which will be done by employing our autobiographies and remembering our physical bodies, both of which have much to tell us as we deconstruct and reconstruct our identities. Thus, adult education that honours soul should help learners see more clearly how they view the world. In doing this, adult education as a political enterprise must continue to seek social justice and empowerment for those who are oppressed.

There are relatively few people writing about soul in education. Yet, because it is an important and interesting concept, there is much that can be contributed to this area. In our efforts to attend to soul in education, we may benefit as well by observing the efforts of related professions. Incorporating soul into adult education is not unlike the call of Elkins, a psychology professor, for a repatriation of aspects of the soul to psychological discourse and to therapeutic practices. In doing so, he challenges his colleagues to return to their historic roots, and to make the soul the centre of their work as well as the measure of their discipline.

Elkins (1985) suggests that a theory of psychology from the perspective of soul has epistemological implications that would help free psychologists from the rigid

scientism of the profession and would legitimize other approaches to knowledge. It is his ultimate contention that his profession will be able to address human pain and suffering only when it addresses needs of the soul. The soul suffers when it is not nurtured by love, goodness, truth, beauty and passion, and experiences agony when it confronts death, meaninglessness, isolation and loneliness. Elkins challenges his professional colleagues to explore ideas of soul, because many of them were drawn to psychology in the first place because of an intuitive knowing that they were meant to be healers of the human soul. If it is the case that attention to the soul is a means by which people may heal, it can be claimed, as I do here and as argued by Lauzon, that there is also a similar and substantial relationship between the soul and education. It might be said that education is sometimes a means through which healing is achieved. Knowledge of the world, and the structures and power relations within it, as well as knowledge of self, are essential to understanding our environment. Our environment brings at times pain, and as we increase our understanding of the context of our pain, we can move towards healing.

At this juncture, we are well positioned to incorporate soul into learning and human growth. We have a humanistic history of early thinkers and teachers such as Dewey, Lindeman, Freire, and Knowles upon which to build. We are being challenged to be inclusive, diverse and community minded by the contemporary thinkers discussed here. This particular research and writing, on education which enriches and nurtures the soul, may well represent and be indicative of an emergent body of thinking to be explored in the coming decades. These ideas can contribute to deep and soulful learning in adult educational forums as represented by NEL. This may be done by reminding educators to

attend to the histories of individuals, to share power and voice in caring, safe and egalitarian environments, to attend to the importance of relationship with ourselves, each other and the environment, and to allow the messy nature of learning. Dialectically, forums such as NEL may contribute to and enrich our understanding about how to make adult education more soulful, by being a site in which soulful learning can be explicated.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **NORTHERN EXPOSURE TO LEADERSHIP: A CASE IN POINT**

NEL is a five-day, residential program held every eighteen months at Emerald Lake Lodge in Field, British Columbia. The Institute offers a unique leadership education opportunity for new professional librarians in Canada, and was designed and is offered by senior library leaders.

Leadership themes include vision, risk taking, courage, creativity, inter-personal relationships, self-understanding, self-leadership, celebration, communication, advocacy and organizational dynamics. These themes were selected based in part on similar leadership institutes, and were deemed important by the programmers as well as library leaders. The themes were developed by the programmers, based on their own skills, interests, insights, passions and preferences and have evolved over time. The Institute provides an opportunity for participants to hear from library leaders about these topics, and how the demands of each are balanced with those more personal. Library leaders are invited to participate as mentors and serve to facilitate group work as well as act as guides, coaches, and role models. In these ways, the program has been one that emanates from a profession coming to appreciate and benefit from its own leadership.

NEL is designed to be a highly individual and personal opportunity for self-awareness and growth. It employs both experiential as well as direct delivery methods of teaching with a concentration on the former. It recognizes that individuals learn in a multitude of ways, including those traditionally encountered, such as direct delivery, reading and discussion, and gives participants the opportunity to learn by experience

through activities and simulations, as well as group and individual work. It draws on learners' histories, and addresses their real, immediate and future concerns.

The vision of NEL is to contribute to the vitality, growth, and success of the library profession well into the twenty-first century by positioning professionals to be proactive, effective and consequential voices in a dynamic and sophisticated information environment. The mission is to motivate professional librarians who have been identified as having leadership potential in order to assist them in developing, strengthening and exercising their individual leadership abilities so that they are better prepared to create, articulate and achieve organizational visions for the benefit of library service and society at large. The goals are to instill progressive and effective leadership strategies, attitudes and skills by:

- providing participants with an individual and personal learning experience in order to build a foundation upon which they can develop leadership skills;
- encouraging participants to recognize and initiate creative innovations and seize opportunity, especially when there is risk involved;
- guiding participants to appreciate and thrive in a changing political and demographic environment;
- encouraging participants to build individual networks; and
- affording the library profession a forum in which to begin to create a community of library leaders.

## History

The need for a leadership institute had been long recognized in the library community in Canada, and a number of individuals, associations and groups had been interested in launching such an initiative. That need was propelled by an information driven economy supported by rapidly changing technology that threatened to leave librarians in its wake.

When the opportunity arose to send a participant to an American leadership institute, Margaret Andrewes, then President of the Canadian Library Association, nominated me to attend. I attended the Snowbird leadership institute in 1993, which is held annually in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. Upon return to my home institution at the University of Alberta, it was noticed by the Library Director, Ernie Ingles, that I was walking somewhat taller than I had at the point of my departure for Snowbird five days prior. (And for someone of a stature of 5' 1.5" every fraction was discernible.) In answering his query about my experience at Snowbird, I described what I believed to be among the defining and most important aspects of that educational experience. Foremost, I *felt* a gestalt of respect, care, and quality. Rarely before had I been treated with such respect for my abilities and my person. Indeed, I was treated as a leader, and in that sense, was treated better perhaps than my abilities at the time would have warranted. By virtue of being nominated and selected to attend, I understood that from the perspective of colleagues and the Snowbird Institute, I was a leader, intelligent, and my contribution, both existing and potential, was highly valued. My person – not simply as a professional, but as a human being – was cared for. People cared about who I was, how I felt, and

what I thought. And while I don't always recall now what I learned there, I recall how I felt.

This gestalt of respect and care was exhibited in a tangible way through the quality of sessions as well as the quality of service. The Snowbird Leadership Institute was directed by the late Dennis Day of Salt Lake City Public Library. Day was a grand and gracious man who assisted us in every way possible to make NEL a success. He advised us in terms of administration, ethics and program, and supported us in our bid to acquire funding. He sincerely cared for the profession, and in no way was proprietary about the successes he had achieved with Snowbird. He was greatly assisted by Nancy Tessman, a staff member, as well as the facilitators, Becky Schreiber and John Shannon. This effervescent couple contributed much to Snowbird. They had a quality of presence, of being in the moment, of extending great care, and of shining brightly that is rare in an individual, let alone a couple. Their personal spirituality added a special component to Snowbird, just as the spirituality at NEL is unique to the persons who created it. This aspect models the recognition that each participant is a full human being complete with spirit and soul, and honours that recognition. It is also indicative of the uniqueness that individual teachers bring to their work, and the distinct contribution that each makes. Finally, Paul Sybrowski, President of Dynix, Inc.<sup>8</sup>, also extended great personal kindness and generosity towards me.

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<sup>8</sup> Dynix, Inc. was later acquired by Ameritech Library Services, which financially sponsors NEL.



One way in which sincere caring was exhibited was the attention to my needs, preferences and desires as a person. They listened to my troubles and invited me to find a stone, in which to vest my burdens, and throw it away. I gave up a lot that day – which attended to and honoured my past, as suggested by Freire, but also allowed me to move forward. They not only *cared for me*, as suggested by Noddings, but they *took care of me*. For one dinner, as an example, they hauled (by some feat of magic) tables, chairs, white linen, candles, and china to the top of a mountain – simply to serve thirty or so, new librarians dinner. They did this for us, and by inclusion, they did this for me. It was striking that someone would expend such energy on my behalf, and I was reminded of a poem by Judith Duerk (1993, p. 18) “How would your life have been different if there had been a place for you to go when your life was difficult...?” ... if someone prepared a place for you?

Experiential learning was also memorable. After completing 18 years of formal education, the Snowbird Institute was the first time that I felt as though I were an integral and important part of the learning dynamic. Not only did my participation seem necessary and valued, but experiential learning afforded me a nearly unprecedented opportunity to engage with learning in a new way. I was able to internalize the material in a way I had done only minimally prior to Snowbird.

As I described Snowbird to Ingles, I said that we needed to do this in Canada, not really imagining that we actually would, never dreaming that he would take me at my word – and being a little aghast when he did. Who were we to do such a thing? How could we possibly? Little then did I really understand leadership, especially that of Ingles.

Within two years, NEL was launched, and maintains as a cornerstone the above concepts, but has become a uniquely Canadian experience, designed by Canadian librarians.

Ingles began the process by inviting members of the library community to meet to discuss how a Canadian leadership institute might be achieved. Those individuals shared their ideas and passion, and contributed to what eventually became Northern Exposure to Leadership. A subset of that group ultimately became responsible for the design and delivery of NEL. It consisted of: Ernie Ingles as the Director, Director of Libraries, University of Alberta, and a past president of the Canadian Library Association; Pat Cavill, a private library consultant from Calgary, Alberta, and a past president of the Canadian Library Association, who is the primary facilitator; Don Caplan, a private consultant; and myself, a librarian at the University of Alberta. Fran Trehearne, a human resources expert, also assisted. Ernie Ingles invited this group to work with him to create NEL.

Subsequently, Karen Adams, Director, Library Services and Information Resources, University of Alberta Libraries, and Trevor Hamons, a private consultant, also became programming members; Ken Haycock, Professor and Director, School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia delivers and leads a session on Myers-Briggs. Senior librarians volunteer their time to work with individual groups at the Institute itself, and serve as mentors.

Early in the process, a conscious decision was made to keep the Institute at arm's length from any formal body. NEL was designed to avoid a quagmire of well intentioned, but policy bound organizations, committees and boards. The construction of NEL is the result of a group of caring, impassioned, committed individuals, who informally, through

discussions and professional feedback, seek and take council from the profession more broadly. The decision to design NEL in this way was taken to ensure that the team directing NEL had the autonomy, the freedom and the flexibility to set and pursue its defined vision, mission and objectives.

### **The Players: Participants, Mentors, Facilitators**

#### ***Participants***

NEL is designed for librarians who have graduated from a library school within the last seven years and have worked in a professional capacity for at least one year.

Participants are those who meet these criteria and who have exhibited, in the opinion of nominators, leadership potential, as well as the ability to share with others their enthusiasm, positive outlook, and vision for library services of the future. Nominations are sought from employers, professional colleagues, associations, and library schools.

Persons being nominated are asked to submit a short resume, and a one-page synopsis of achievements, career goals and expectations of the Institute. Twenty-four participants are selected by a small committee, and every attempt is made to either call or meet with potential participants prior to being selected for the Institute. The intent of these meetings is to give participants some idea of the demands of the Institute, to learn more about their expectations of NEL, and to answer their questions.

The selection committee seeks to achieve the greatest diversity possible, and considers elements such as type of professional work, geography and culture. It strives to include participants who represent all regions of the country, different nationalities,

cultures and first languages; socio-economic status (and offers some financial support for those who need it); gender; type of library including academic, public, special, school and government; and, type of work including reference, administration, collections, and technical services.

### ***Mentors***

Professional leaders are invited to serve as mentors. They participate voluntarily, which sets a tone of commitment, community, and collegiality. Mentors are friends and colleagues of the facilitators who openly share the ways they have maintained passion for their work and the efforts they extend to enrich and enhance each other's careers.

Mentors have been librarians, consultants, and corporate executives, and rotate from year to year.

Ideally, mentors are willing and able to take risks; model leadership qualities; are fully present; exhibit good will and caring; believe in the group process and the Institute; are open; are aware of their own preferences, biases and approaches; are forthright in encouraging members to develop their own standards; exhibit personal power, stamina, curiosity, authenticity and personal dedication; and have a sense of humour. They strive to listen more than they speak, reflect, clarify, summarize, empathize, question, link, support, model, suggest, and initiate as appropriate. Mentors engage in group discussions, which provides them an opportunity to talk with participants about what has motivated, helped, hindered and inspired them in their professional activities.

Additionally, they typically share how they have balanced those activities with their

personal lives. Mentors engage in daily discussions with facilitators about how the day's activities have gone, may seek advice on how to deal with any situations that may have developed, and offer suggestions for improvements. In a professional newsletter, one participant wrote:

The mentors were extremely approachable and friendly. They worked along side [sic] us in our respective teams. We shared these experiences with them, creating a unique bond. This closeness was important to me because I have never had the opportunity to have personal contact with leaders of the library profession. Usually, these people would have been out of reach for many of us. As I reflect on the words they spoke to us, I see more possibilities for my own career. I have a better idea of the direction I want to take, as well as what I need to accomplish along the way. (Franklin, 1996, p. 14)

### ***Facilitators***

Facilitators are responsible for program design and delivery, selecting participants and mentors, securing funding, making logistical arrangements, promotion and all other arrangements required. For this group, the pilgrimage to Emerald Lake Lodge is prepared for well in advance. We embark on this journey ever and always full of anticipation, expectation, enchantment and wonderment (and of course, some degree of anxiety).

The Institute employs a co-leadership model, which takes advantage of specific area expertise, allows for back-up if someone is sick or otherwise absent, provides participants the opportunity to experience a range and variety of facilitator styles, and allows the facilitators time to replenish energy and prepare for subsequent sessions.

## **The Program**

The program combines experiential and theoretical learning, with an emphasis on the former. The program:

- models leadership, group work, team building and collegiality;
- engages participants in discussions about leadership, what it means, how it is recognized, developed and sustained;
- exposes participants to a variety of leadership styles, including those that are innovative and may fall outside of traditional North American and European thought;
- provides an opportunity to learn from team-based approaches;
- offers participants an opportunity to develop, hone, and practice leadership skills;
- engages participants at an intellectual, soulful, spiritual and physical level; and
- recognizes that participants are whole human beings with roles and responsibilities other than those within the paid workforce.

A full agenda<sup>9</sup> for the program is included in Appendix A. I will present an overview of the program,<sup>10</sup> however, some aspects of the program are considered either confidential or sacred, and are therefore not described in detail.

The facilitators arrive at Emerald Lake a few days early to ensure that the site is ready to accommodate our group and to prepare our learning area. The mentors arrive

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<sup>9</sup> Although the program is designed and the scheduling arranged by the entire NEL team, the colourful graphics are attributable to Pat Cavill, of Pat Cavill Consulting, Calgary, Alberta.

<sup>10</sup> This program description is based on the NEL program binder authored by the NEL facilitators.

next and are given an orientation session. They are briefed about their role as mentors within the context of the Institute, and informed about its aims and objectives.

Participants arrive next, are met as they disembark from their respective airplanes, are escorted to a general gathering area, and are driven to the lodge in British Columbia.

Along the way, they engage in activities designed to get them acquainted. Upon arrival at Emerald Lake Lodge, they are greeted and check into their rooms where they find welcoming messages, working materials and soul food – chocolate.

The first evening at dinner, they are introduced, and break into four self-selected groups of six participants and two mentors each. They remain in these groups throughout the five days, which allows for group cohesion, for trust to build, and for the assuming or sharing of roles within the group. The objective of this initial phase is to help participants feel welcome, unique, central to the process, and involved in it.

One of the first tasks within each group is to determine ground rules. The Institute has a couple to begin with: participants must tell someone if they are not going to be where they are scheduled to be, and they are given a general guideline about confidentiality. Corey and Corey (1977) stress the importance of defining what confidentiality means, why it is important, and the difficulties and limitations of enforcement. Given the highly personal and powerful aspects of NEL, confidentiality is necessary. The four groups are then invited to add to the list of ground rules as they desire and deem useful.

In addition to the groups, two other elements run throughout the five days. Firstly, participants are asked to anonymously complete a comment card each day. They

are told that the cards will be read aloud the following morning, and responded to if required or appropriate. Each evening, after the cards are completed, they are read and considered by the mentors and facilitators. This sometimes results in minor changes to meet the expressed desires of the group. The second feature that runs throughout the five days is storytelling, in which mentors tell their personal and professional stories about aspects of their lives and careers. This is done at the end of each day in a series called Northern Reflections, which is described in more detail in a subsequent section in this document.

The opening of the Institute is designed to give an overview of leadership, to discuss the desired outcomes of the experience, and to encourage participants to allow themselves to be open to what they will encounter. They are encouraged to, as much as possible, put biases and preconceived notions aside, and to participate in the sessions with a minimal degree of anticipation. Participants are given a stone, invited to place their biases and issues in it, and toss it away. The objective of this is to experientially encourage participants to be open-minded and engaged in the moment.

The first series of sessions is intended to aid self-understanding and is called Understanding Yourself. The first session in this series is an investigation of the Myers-Briggs inventory, which was completed prior to arrival at the Institute. This is intended to give participants an opportunity to develop an enriched understanding of themselves and their own leadership potential. It also relays the inherent message that participants are the point of departure for what is undertaken at the Institute. They are the topic of discussion, rather than material about other topics. This helps to relay the intention of the



Institute to be a highly personal experience. It also assists in making learners the subject of the learning rather than the object, as described by Shrewsbury (1987). The next session is designed to explore and increase the levels of risk they are willing or wanting to take. The final session gives participants an opportunity to brainstorm about their hopes, dreams and desires for their future as professional librarians, as well as reflect upon their vision for the library community.

The next series of sessions is called Finding Passion, Courage and Vision. The sessions in this section are designed to have participants discover passion and courage as the basis for advocacy. They learn a model for advocacy planning, experience the visioning process and learn a model for vision creation. This section has an evening of celebration, called the Celebration Dinner, which involves participants, mentors and facilitators each sharing with the whole group something about themselves of which they are proud. They wear clothing to reflect that achievement to the dinner celebration, which may be a metaphor of the topic of their celebration. Typically, this is a colourful evening of rich sharing and a turning point of the Institute, which results in firmer group bonding and community building.

The next series of sessions is called Coping with Change: Professional and Personal Perspectives. The objective of this series is to help participants view change in a positive light and provide them with experiences and tools to help them understand change and transition. This section employs an organizational simulation activity called CHAOS, which portrays organizational dynamics.

The next series of sessions is called **Taking it Home: Living as a Leader**. The objective of this series is to have participants understand and be comfortable with how the theory and experience of the previous four days translates into real life. It is designed to assist them in developing an action plan to implement when they get home, and to discuss the issues that may arise as they make the transition or experience “re-entry” back into their home and work lives. They are also provided the opportunity to meet with mentors and facilitators on a one-to-one basis in order to discuss any ongoing or outstanding issues, questions or concerns.

The final series is called **Reflections of Emerald Lake**. The objective of this series is to evaluate various aspects of the week, and to close on a positive note that blends learning, community, nature and spirituality. Participants are not evaluated, which suggests that they are respected peers, accepted as they are, that their learning is their responsibility and the degree to which they learned anything at NEL or not is for them to determine. Of particular note in this series is an aboriginal sweet-grass ritual, which involves gift giving of a blanket. This is referenced often by the respondents in this study, but like a number of aspects of NEL, is considered sacred to the confidentiality of the Institute, and is not described in full detail here. At the close of the Institute, the participants return home, and the mentors and facilitators remain for an extra day of debriefing, relaxation, reflection and planning.

Overall, the key characteristics of this Institute include its residential learning context, as well as the profession-based nature of its creation, design and delivery. A professional group of librarians saw the need to enhance leadership skills within the

profession, and undertook to do so. The Institute is a forum in which librarians new to the profession can meet, interact with and learn from senior library professionals, in a caring environment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE METHODOLOGY**

#### **The NEL Research Process**

To briefly recap, I was intrigued with the NEL experience, based on comments and written articles that began to appear in library journals shortly after the Institute began. I had questions that I wanted to explore such as: What had people experienced at Northern Exposure to Leadership? What inspired comments such as those I had encountered, and are noted in the Introduction to this document? What elements were perceived to be powerful enough to have moved people in a deep way, particularly at a soul level? If they were so moved, did this experience have a long-term effect on their careers or their lives? And if so, how might that have happened? Underlying these questions were some considerably more elusive, but potentially more important: What was to be gleaned about adult education from the Institute? And, was there something to be learned here about the relation of the soul to education? Essentially, I wanted an enriched understanding of the meaning that the experience had for those involved and what the essence of the experience was, and I was curious about what this investigation might mean for educators.

In order to situate myself vis-a-vis the research, I began my research by recording and reflecting upon my own experiences at the Snowbird Leadership Institute, paying particular attention to elements that had the greatest impact on me. Those elements, in turn, were incorporated into NEL during its design and creation. At this time, I also sought and was granted on February 22, 1999, permission to undertake this research by

the Director of NEL. I combed through all of the program evaluation forms that had been submitted as well as the daily comment cards for 1994, 1996, 1997, and 1999. I also studied all of the articles and columns that had been written about NEL. This was done in order to get a picture of the gestalt of the Institute from the perspective of the participants. Some of the published material is referenced in this study.

I then designed a survey instrument reflecting the soulful aspects of the Institute that I wanted to consider. It was sent as a pilot to 11 participants and 3 mentors to determine if it was likely to yield the kind of information I hoped to acquire. Of those, 7 participants and 1 mentor responded. To complement that, I conducted four in-person formal interviews with participants, and had informal discussions with the mentors who had not responded, to further test the survey instrument. The transcripts were e-mailed to the interviewees for review. In these interviews, I also wanted to see what additional questions arose that were important to my study but were not reflected in the survey instrument. One question that arose in discussions concerned experiential or activity based learning. Given that this question, I thought, was closely linked to my thesis topic of soul in education, I subsequently added a question about this to the survey instrument prior to its use with the entire group.

Following that, I solicited, collected, recorded and interpreted stories from those involved in NEL. On July 1, 1999, I mailed through Canada Post and also e-mailed through the internet the questionnaire (included in Appendix B) to all of the mentors, facilitators, participants, inviting them to write a reflection of their experience.

The instrument was very open in terms of the questions posed and I accepted any length of response. The questions were designed to meet the objectives of the research with a specific focus on outstanding experiences at NEL, the impact NEL had on their careers, and the degree to which they were moved at a soul level. I intended that this approach would enable respondents to be as open and candid as possible, allow them to stress whatever aspects they desired, and would not result in influencing or directing responses. I began the questions with a very open ended one, regarding their experiences generally, that did not “direct” responses, and followed that with a transparent question regarding soul specifically. While wanting to avoid the “halo” effect wherein respondents give the responses they think are desired, I also wanted to be transparent in the research process. This also allowed me to be explicit about the nature of my research and did not then require that I attribute to soul what respondents may attribute to something other than soul, which would have been done had I not asked about soul directly.

Two reminders were sent by e-mail: one on July 29, 1999 and another on August 3, 1999. A third, more formal reminder was sent by the Director of NEL on September 13, 1999. After receiving the responses, I followed up with ten respondents to acquire clarifying information, through the internet, in person or telephone calls. Questions posed at that time emanated from the responses that I received from the initial questionnaire. As an example of this, one participant responded that her career improved greatly as a result of NEL, and I inquired about the way in which that happened, which is discussed later in the section on ethics.

The research design was iterative and emergent, as is interpretive research. It involved the use of a questionnaire initially, and that was enhanced through interviews as they were opportune, timely, feasible and cost-effective. As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999), it was pragmatic, grounded in the lived experiences of participants and involved employing numerical analysis in the interpretation process. The potential for focus-groups was also considered. However, a very rich data set was available resulting primarily from the questionnaires as well as the interviews, so focus groups were not pursued. Moreover, the questionnaires and the use of email seemed to result in greater personal sharing and disclosure. This may have been due to the pseudo-anonymity, time for personal reflection, and writing as a form of deep release that these approaches offered, which is less possible when a researcher with a tape recorder is waiting expectantly for an immediate response. It may also be characteristic of the specific population polled, which is typically very comfortable with the written word.

Because e-mail is currently a newer method of conducting research and acquiring data, and I used it in my research, I will comment briefly on that. Much is being written about the advantages and disadvantages of e-mail, so I will not explore that to a great degree. Within the context of my study however, e-mail was very useful. It enabled me to contact my respondents very quickly, very easily and at no additional cost. Two-way communication was convenient for many respondents, and for me. I was able to follow up to acquire more information, to thank respondents for completing the survey, and to send out reminders easily and quickly. Many, although not all, respondents found typing responses expeditious. This also allowed me to receive the data in digital form, which

obviated the need for extensive data entry. This was a particularly appropriate group with which to use e-mail, because most librarians are very computer literate. Some of those most computer literate, however, preferred to answer the survey in hand-written form for a variety of reasons. Overall, using e-mail through the internet was very effective.

The submissions from the participants were grouped into emergent patterns, categories and themes, to cull out important, salient and pertinent aspects. The resulting patterns were then regrouped, described and interpreted using theories and ideas discussed throughout this document which is a method described by Marshall & Rossman (1999, p. 114) and Tesch (1990, p. 97).

### **Qualitative Methodology**

The method of inquiry used in this research was primarily a qualitative approach, which is exploratory in nature, and interpretive by design. This approach allowed themes, ideas and concepts to emerge inductively from the research, and allowed me the flexibility to interpret the data outside of rigid guidelines. Employing an interpretive approach requires that the researcher does work (makes interpretations) to make meaning from the data in order to enrich our understanding of events or processes. In this research, such interpretations were made at the level of interpreting the confluence of the collective of responses, and to a lesser degree, of the individual responses themselves. This investigation was intended to be descriptive in order to document and describe NEL; exploratory in order to identify important categories of meaning, and to investigate little understood areas of meaning; and, explanatory in order to identify plausible aspects



shaping the experience (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 33), all of which are accommodated with an interpretive method.

This approach was chosen because 1) it suited well the nature of the research question; 2) it was appropriate considering the role of the researcher in relation to the population and educational forum to be surveyed; 3) it accommodated the intent of the doctoral program to connect research to practice. In the sections that follow, I will deal with each of these in turn.

### **The Nature of the Research Question**

The concept of soul is an elusive and uncomfortable one for many. Particularly in a world heavily influenced by science, we are much more accustomed, at least in some academic arenas, to dealing with that which is quantifiable, observable and tangible. Zukav (1989), a Harvard educated physicist, has himself struggled with the transition from the world of science to those beyond. He suggests this struggle has been shared with great minds and souls such as William James, Carl Jung, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein. Of them, Zukav claims:

I came to understand that what motivated these men was not Earthly prizes or the respect of colleagues, but that they put their souls and minds on something and reached the extraordinary place where the mind could no longer produce data of the type that they wanted, and they were in the territory of inspiration where their intuitions accelerated and they knew that there was something more than the realm of time and space and matter, something more than physical life. They knew it. They could not necessarily articulate this clearly because they were not equipped to talk about such things, but they felt it and their writing reflected it. (p. 13)

This sentiment has been expressed more recently by Heshusius and Ballard (1996) in *From Positivism to Interpretivism and Beyond: Tales of Transformation in Educational and Social Research*. In this work, the editors invited researchers to reflect upon their own personal transition from positivist to alternative research methodologies. The contributors recount their personal internal and external struggles to become reawakened to somatic, tacit knowledge. One contributor reflecting on all of the contributions in the text summarizes the experience of the transition as the “dark night of the soul” and a “coming home” of the researchers to their true selves.

Research concerned with aspects of soul encounter a number of fundamental challenges. One is the claim that it is very difficult to acquire ‘scientific’ evidence of the relationship between soul and education. Hillman (1989), for example, a prominent writer about soul, speaks against positivistic approaches in favour of interpretive ones, in order to capture an understanding of the elusive realm of soul. A second challenge to research of this nature is the difficulty in understanding, expressing in terms of language, and being willing to share, finally, such a personal experience. Prior to this study, a journalist with *Quill and Quire* observed: “Afterward, participants expressed difficulty describing what they got from Northern Exposure. Among the comments: ‘it was good to learn what people from other library sectors ... were facing’; and ‘I have lots of good contacts now’; to ‘I found out a great deal about myself’; and ‘I’m sure that the six days changed me’ ” (Aspinall, 1994, p. 19).

Certainly, there was difficulty in describing the experience itself. I anticipated that there would be an even greater degree of difficulty in expressing aspects of it that related

to the soul. As noted earlier, this is a topic that is somewhat removed from Westernized daily interactions. In the first instance, we may not recognize the relationship to soul, be able to identify it, or even be able to articulate it. Describing what it means to be moved or touched at a soul level does not lend itself easily to be shared through words and texts. Some elusive aspects of our lives take us to the edges of language and there render us mute. Perhaps it is “a catch in the breath, a tear in the eye, a lump in the throat” (Elkins, 1995, p. 85) because it is difficult to express in words. Perhaps soul is more closely aligned with or related to the body than it is to the mind, where words live. Or perhaps it is not of the body, but of some other visceral place that has no locality, that has no name, other than *soul*.

As noted in the introduction to this document, there is ambiguity surrounding the definitions of soul, spirit, emotion and the relation of soul to religion, to the body or to the world soul. Regarding these terms, I make no formal distinctions. For our purposes, both for that of understanding and creating soulful educational environments as well as the specific utilization of NEL as a case in point, it is unnecessary. Soul, spirit, and emotion, as well as the body and the community, are all to be considered in educational contexts. Moreover, making distinctions among such phenomena may further complicate and obscure an already amorphous and ephemeral concept. It would potentially create greater difficulty in responding to an already challenging survey by requiring respondents to ferret out which reactions were soulful, which were spiritual, which were emotional, and which were of the body, and to assess which were individualistic and which were conjoined with the world. Therefore, in my questionnaire, I included all three words: soul, spirit and

emotion. This ambiguity is no different than it has been throughout history; however soul is defined, it is an elusive aspect of our lives, and difficult to formalize.

### **Researcher Role and Position**

Elkins (1995) writes:

I believe each of us must seek to know the soul personally and experientially, and only from this kind of knowing can the common understanding we seek emerge. It seems to me this epistemological approach is always necessary when dealing with such phenomenological realities. If the phenomenological referent is not present in our experience, then we only fool ourselves that we understand when we come up with some abstract definition or logical construct to represent it. Without the personal, experiential referent, such intellectual abstractions simply hang in space, empty and devoid of meaning. (p. 84)

My role as a participant at another similar leadership institute, as well as my role as a facilitator within NEL, positions me uniquely to understand and interpret the findings of this research, because there is a common ground of understanding. Although a limitation of interpretive research is that results can also be interpreted from other perspectives, specific and informed perspectives can also strengthen the research. As suggested by Krall (1988), the histories, stories, experiences and interpretations of researchers must be acknowledged because they are entwined with research undertaken. My role and position is acknowledged here, and while recognized as an opportunity for learning also left me in a sometimes unusual position.

The position I held as an insider sometimes left me with a dilemma regarding what I shall call the observed / reported gap. In reading the responses from some participants,

it is apparent that respondents disclosed on the survey and in the interviews only that which they chose to disclose, and justifiably so. Some respondents to the survey claimed not to be moved at an emotional, soulful or spiritual level. Yet, what I believe I observed at NEL through their actions (i.e. tears, extreme annoyance, frustration, etc.) or their words (i.e. "That was unconscionable; I'm really angry"), was inconsistent with their response in the survey. The dilemma, as a researcher who wanted to capture the experience, as well as a programmer who must also respect the confidentiality of NEL, left me with the question: Do I question further, dig deeper, and mention what I observed and heard, or not? As a researcher honouring soul, I chose not to. While I wondered why this may be the case, it may indicate an advantage of a convergence between research and practice, where each can inform the other.

### **Where Practice Meets Research**

With the type of doctoral degree for which this research is undertaken, incorporating myself in this research is of particular importance. This research is part of a practice-based degree designed to draw theory and practice closer together. In such a construct, theory *informs* practice and practice *inspires* theory. To that end, I have used theory to more fully understand and guide my practice as well as inform this research, as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 37), and I have allowed, indeed elicited, my own voice, experiences and interpretations to inspire this research. Through this dialectic, I am hopeful that readers of this work will perhaps be informed and inspired, and that this will contribute to our collective understanding of soul in education. Although the

incorporation of personal voice is useful, I am also mindful of the discussion, or indeed debate, between remaining as objective as possible in terms of data interpretation, as suggested by those such as Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 28), and allowing or at least acknowledging subjectivity. LeCompte, et al. (1992) suggest that the role of the researcher, as well as the personal situation, beliefs, feelings, and so on, are inherently part of the research and must be at least acknowledged, and in some cases fully explicated, to enable a fuller understanding of the research subject. They suggest that objectivity and subjectivity should not be dichotomous, so that we might be better able to discover and exploit the merits of each. In the latter, researchers can come to more fully understand themselves. “The new interest in subjectivity, as we see it, is considerably less with whether or not our work is trustworthy (which virtue we do not scorn) and considerably more with how self and subject have intersected and with what effects. Trustworthiness will be judged by readers who will determine the fit between what they read and what they know and have experienced” (LeCompte, et al., 1992, p. 717). For educators generally, they may make similar determinations from the broad and rich experiences they have as practitioners.

Objectivity is also important in order that I give a fair and accurate representation of these findings, and also so that I am alert to how my practice may be improved, consistent with the intent of this doctoral study. While an overall enjoyable process, merging subjectivity and objectivity has not always been easy. I often struggled with what to include, what to omit, and whether or not such contributions would be deemed *objective*. I consoled myself with the understanding that while this may not always be so,

there is increasing recognition for the need of individual voice, if for no other reason than that it is inherently present in the research. Finally, this is the more soulful approach, in that allowing my voice to be heard is soulful both for the writer as well as the reader. Ultimately, I determined that research on soul must model soul, and the one I know best is my own.

In order to meet as well the requirement for truth value and credibility, I have also included extensively the voices of the participants. The responses to the survey instrument were extremely rich, textured and replete with thoughtfulness, candor, depth and humour. I have tried, where possible, to let those voices speak for themselves, and in some cases, the reader may draw interpretations, and make meaning of those voices. The voices of respondents are of immense value to researchers and readers, and including them liberally gives greater transferability. Further, as noted by Fleming (1998) residential learners' voices must be heard to greater degrees in research regarding residential learning. The doctoral program of which this research on NEL is a part is also intended to be of value to my practice, and to my colleagues. Including the voices of my colleagues liberally, I believe, may assist them to recognize themselves in these voices. One of my objectives in undertaking this research was to provide for those who have attended NEL an opportunity for further reflection, interpretation and understanding of their experiences, if they so choose. I believe that reading the rich responses of other respondents will further enable that process.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), qualitative studies have limitations in terms of generalizability or conclusiveness. This research is limited because the unique

nature of the educational experience is limited to the professionals who are exposed to this type of experience. Thus, it has limited applicability to other professional and adult educational experiences, although it could serve as a model for other professional groups, and in so doing may have *transferability*. As well, some of the interpretations emanating from this research may be of use to educators and writers.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE FINDINGS:**

#### **THE WORDS AND THE SPACE BETWEEN THE WORDS**

In order to present clearly how I arrived at the conclusions I did, I will provide information about the response ratios and a brief description of the initial questions posed in the survey instrument. I will then introduce through an overview the key elements that were identified as moving respondents at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level. I will proceed with a fuller analysis of those responses and follow with a discussion about the degree to which respondents believed that NEL impacted their professional careers and personal lives on a long-term basis. I will then present the results and offer a discussion regarding the instructional methodologies employed at NEL, which will be followed with an analysis of learning through soul. This interpretation will be liberally supported with the rich, diverse, heartfelt and textured comments<sup>11</sup> of the respondents, as suggested by Fleming (1998).

Including the pilot and final surveys, 121 persons were surveyed; 16.5% (n=20) were mentors and facilitators, and 83.5 % (n=101) were participants; 72.7% (n=88) were female, and 27.3% (n=33) were male. Of all those surveyed, 50.5% of participants responded, 55% of mentors/facilitators responded; 66.7% of males responded, 45.5 % of

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<sup>11</sup> In some cases, the comments have been slightly modified in order to allow for coherency when comments were separated if they covered more than one topic, or to make complete sentences where not all of the response was used. Such modifications are very minor and in no way changed the nature of the response.

females responded. Including the responses from the pilot study as well as the interviews, the response rate overall was 51.2 % (n=62). Of those who responded, 17.7% (n=11) were mentors / facilitators and 82.3 % (n=51) were participants. Also of those who responded, 64.5% (n=40) were female, and 35.5% (n=22) were male. Given the nature and intensity of the Institute, and the time that has elapsed since some of those contacted had participated, an overall response rate of 51.2% was considered respectable. Although it may have been advantageous to have a higher response rate, the responses that were received were rich and complex and provided a substantial body of research on which to base the analysis.

The first question asked respondents about their experiences generally at NEL. I wanted to provide an open-ended, non-leading question that would afford respondents an opportunity to reflect upon what of note happened to them, which may include a memorable moment about which they think frequently, or an experience that had a notable impact on them or moved them in some way. To determine the key factors which resulted in participants and mentors feeling moved at a deep level, I counted the occurrences of each factor as identified by the respondents when asked about what they remember most about NEL, or what influenced them most. Table 1 in Appendix C reflects those factors.

Respondents were then asked if they felt they were moved or touched at an emotional, spiritual or soulful level either at the Institute or because of it. If respondents were moved, they were asked to describe that feeling or the situation that provoked it. Of the total respondents (n=62), 93.5 % (n=58) said they were moved at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level; 6.5 % (n=4) said they were not. Of respondents, 97.5% (n=39) of

females and 86% (n=19) of males reported that they were moved at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level. One female and three males said they were not.

For those moved at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level, I then asked for more specific information regarding aspects of the Institute that may have impacted the degree to which respondents were so moved. Respondents were asked to rate to what degree they believed a specific set of factors, which I listed, were important to create those feelings. The results of this can be found in Table 2 in Appendix C. Table 3 in Appendix C is a further breakdown of more detailed information about those results.

Of the 48.8% of persons who did not respond, it is difficult to know how they would have responded. It may have been the case that they were not moved at a soulful level, or it may have been the case that they were. It may have been the case that this was a typical professional development programme, that they were moved more than they wanted to share, or that they wanted to maintain the confidence of the Institute. It is impossible to know.

The foregoing sets of questions regarding respondents' memorable experiences at NEL, if they were moved at a soul level or not, and the importance of elements in relation to soul, are interpreted as a group in the sections which follow. This analysis will begin with an overview of the findings.

### **The Gestalt of NEL: Its Soul, Its Emotion, and Its Spirit**

I will introduce these findings by giving a brief description about the broad, overarching impressions that respondents had of NEL. The comments here are intended

to provide an overview of the gestalt of NEL, in order to provide a framework for the description of the key influential factors that follow. This brief array of comments is also presented to portray the overarching richness and depth that the NEL experience affords, as well as to set the tone for what is to follow.

One of the under-girding themes is the elusive nature of NEL; many who have attended NEL and published articles about it, identified distinct difficulty in describing it.

As noted by one participant:

*There are several things that I think of ... I remember the feeling of embarking on an adventure before I went and a feeling that I had had a momentous experience that I couldn't yet define when I left. Since then, I have likened it to losing your virginity... you feel changed but no one else can tell except maybe the others who were there.*

Although it is difficult to describe, NEL has a powerful and profound impact on many, as the following participant noted:

*When I got back home, I felt that I wanted time to process what had happened to me. I felt so tender and new, that the rough and tumble of every day was too much to bear right away...like I needed to grow another layer of skin.*

Many respondents wrote about the rich and vivid memories they have of NEL, and describe a very happy and fulfilling experience that was accentuated in a tranquil and beautiful setting where they met and spoke with peers and mentors in a caring and respectful environment. One participant noted:

*My overall experience at Northern Exposure was one of the happiest times of my life. I have vivid memories of breathtaking scenery, fabulous food, stimulating discussions, wonderful people, and a shared understanding and respect – like a colourful patchwork quilt or tapestry.*

Another participant draws attention to a number of elements that represent what the research identifies as key factors that influence soul in an educational environment.

The following participant comment highlights the aspects of personal growth, challenge, risk, and emotion, as well as ceremony and the sacred:

*I was moved or touched by the challenging things, the odd things, the funny things. Seeing my name on a card upon arrival at the airport and feeling important. Admiring the view from my cabin window. Wondering why I was out of breath after climbing only a few stairs to the Conference Centre. Discovering that I am an ESTJ on the Meyers-Briggs scale and being the only one like this in the whole group. Sitting down and hammering out a shared vision statement for the profession with individuals from a variety of library environments. Reading the vision aloud in a fashion that bordered on drama. Crossing the line when asked a series of sensitive or difficult questions. Contemplating questions that might have been asked and thinking about how I would have responded. Listening to Robert Service poems high in the Rockies. Surviving a late night drive on a snowy mountain road. Walking along a mountain trail and reflecting on events happening in my life at the time. Sitting in a circle listening to Native voices. Finding it necessary to cry just at the moment when the pipe was passed to me and not really knowing why. Flying home on the same airplane with about 8 NELLies all carrying blankets. Hearing a flight attendant speculate on whether there had been a sale on blankets. Sitting alone not really wanting to talk to anyone. Realizing that when I got home it was very difficult to explain to friends and colleagues what the whole NEL experience was about. Feeling somewhat pressured to act differently because of the experience. Accepting the fact that NEL was a significant event in my professional life.*

Speaking more directly to what the foregoing participant mentioned, the next participant addresses directly the emotions that were elicited at and because of NEL, as well as the nature of the environment as one in which emotions could be safely expressed:

*I had a stop-over on my way home from Calgary. I had about an hour's wait and decided to call my sister. She asked me how "it" (NEL) was and all of a sudden I started crying. I think my emotional outburst really frightened her. I was a mixed-bag of emotions and needed to channel some of my feelings. I had a similar outburst when my husband picked me up at the airport. So, NEL touched me, to say the least, on a very deep emotional level. The five days stimulated me on an intellectual level, but more importantly, I was inspired emotionally by my colleagues and mentors. The place was magical...the snow, the mountains, the seclusion and the food! Everything was incredible. I was touched by stories and inspired by others' experiences and passion, and grateful for the friendships that I made. The place was a spiritual haven. The ceremonies and rituals played an important part in my spiritual connections. I will not forget the blanket ceremony.*

The totality of being moved at a soul level, influenced learning very positively, as this participant noted:

*When you are touched at this soulful level you never ever forget it and therefore you learn more and remember more than you would in a traditional educational setting. I suppose it is the feeling of "passion" that makes the educational experience everlasting. We cared about what we were learning, because we were learning about ourselves. This caring is what made it the best educational experience ever.*

These brief comments identify and articulate the unique and profound nature of the NEL experience. The following sections identify the elements that result in, and provoke the above. These elements are portrayed in the pictorial which follows on page 87, and include: Human Factors: A Professional and Caring Community; Relationships with Mentors and Peers; Personal Growth; Celebration, Ceremony and the Sacred; Risk; Struggle and Disclosure; Ethics; Creativity and Imagination; Physical Environment, Residential Factors; Impact on Life and Career; Teaching Methodologies; and, Learning Through Soul.

## **Of Pageantry, People and Places: Key Factors Impacting Soul**

### ***Human Factors I: Professional and Caring Community***

Kahne (1994) suggests:

democratic communitarians endorse societies in which members share commitments to one another and work together on common projects. They strive for free and full communication, social harmony, shared interests, scientifically informed debate, experimentation, and a sense of what John Gardner (1990) refers to as a *wholeness incorporating diversity*. They seek to promote the support, sense of common mission, and sense of belonging that can come out of community and to avoid the envy, alienation, destructive competition, and exploitation that can result from the self-serving behavior of individuals. (p. 239)

Many of the community ideals noted by Kahne above were expressed in the responses to the NEL survey, particularly communication, shared interests, wholeness incorporating diversity and a sense of belonging. These elements were supported by a key aspect of the soulfulness inherent in NEL which is the building of a caring community within librarianship. While part of the vision of NEL was the creation of a network, it seems to also be creating a community within the profession that is premised upon care. This factor represents a community of professionals at senior and junior levels, which binds the group and transforms the group into a community.

At NEL, senior and junior members of the profession meet, work together, talk, share ideas and stories and build a network of colleagues. The role of mentoring and the use of workgroups are important in this process. This is similar to Delors' (1988) suggestion that education should be an expression of affection for people, whom we need

to welcome into society, offering them the place that is theirs by right. One mentor referred to this invitation as a rite of passage:

*The most obvious thing I recall as a mentor at NEL was that my vocation as a librarian was affirmed in particularly arresting ways. I had always been a "dedicated leader" among librarians, but had not participated in the "rites of passage" as a professional that NEL entailed (that's because we didn't have such rites to honour our incoming generations before NEL). Nor had I fully appreciated the continuity of purpose, commitment and philosophy with all types of libraries and all ages of librarianship, from ancient times to the present, until then, despite having a strong connection with the traditions of librarianship. What's my mission in relation to the next generation? I often think of the meetings I had with individual participants that last afternoon, when I began to see just how isolated, limited, and generally unhonoured most of the participants were in their work settings across the country. That led me to understand the role of senior library leaders in encouraging our next generation more clearly.*

An invitation such as this by library leaders enhances commitment to the community, and in this case, to the profession of librarianship,<sup>12</sup> as this participant noted:

*The issues around leadership also reaffirmed my commitment to the profession of librarianship – I learned that change can be effected from within and that I owe as much to my organization as my profession.*

As Moore (1996b) suggests, those who serve community find that the extension of oneself can be enriching, inspiring and thrilling. "Community makes the heart come alive and in that particular way brings charm and deep satisfaction to a person's life" (p. 121). A mentor observed:

*I realized that after some years of the soul-destroying cutbacks, down sizing and prevention of career advancement, I had inwardly become too pessimistic about the future of the profession in spite of often saying I couldn't afford the luxury of pessimism. After NEL, I became much more optimistic about our prospects. This optimism probably made it much easier to begin the planning for the conclusion of my own career.*

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<sup>12</sup> While this is clearly impacting this junior library group, one can speculate how this might be extended to enrich the profession at mid-career levels as well. See *Recommendations* for further discussion.



The atmosphere is one in which the organizers and mentors participate for the purpose of service to the junior members of the group, in order to assist their learning, and help them to feel welcomed and respected within a professional community of colleagues. This participant appreciated being part of a professional community:

*I very much get a sense that these people do form a community across the country and you see that when everybody comes together at CLA, for example...I feel much more that way now than I would have before NEL... There is the sense that you're part of a professional community.*

Even among mentors who already knew each other as colleagues, new depth was achieved among relationships with peers as well as with new professionals. This mentor appreciated getting to know colleagues better in a unique setting:

*NEL has made it easier to see my place as an existing professional in a positive light, and connected me to the emerging professional in a way that cannot happen inside the work place. It has also given me the opportunity to know my own colleagues better, and in a different setting.*

The next participant found the drawing together of other professionals to be reinvigorating and encouraging, as this participant noted:

*I happily discovered that there are some very energetic, skilled people in the library and information field. I live in an area with few librarians and sadly, many of them could be classified as stereotypical librarians. While there is nothing wrong with this, for a young person in this profession it is disheartening to work with people who are not proactive about programmes and services that a library can provide. Often, they would rather just work in the status quo until it is time for them to retire. I found that I was encouraged by the people that I met at Emerald Lake and had a renewed sense of purpose in my work.*

The feeling of reinvigoration is also extended to how participants view others in the profession, and the profession itself. Some want to encourage others who advance the profession by promoting the services libraries offer, and by being a library advocate, as the following participant noted:

*I am proud to have been a participant in the first ever Northern Exposure to Leadership, proud to have been nominated by my (then) supervisor. The whole experience contributed to my self-confidence, and my interest in, and dedication to libraries. When involved in hiring now, I always ask myself if the candidate could be described as a library advocate, which is a concept I didn't really think about before NEL.*

In addition to interpersonal bonds, community also impacted the degree of learning, as this participant noted:

*Learning means much more to me and stays with me longer if it is attached to something that I value. The reinforcement of our community, something that I value highly, was an important part of the learning for me.*

The Institute intends to develop participants' shared interests in and commitments to common goals, encourage them to experiment, and to make space for all opinions, even dissenting ones, in order to foster personal and social growth. Participants are encouraged to engage critically, reflect, and work together to achieve collective or individually desired outcomes. An implicit group norm or expectation at NEL is that everyone is there to learn, to grow and to participate. This is done in an environment that is focused on individual experience in an open, warm, trusting and supportive environment. Group cohesion is formed, and it is expected that people conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of others. The mentors' primary role is to facilitate group learning, and to exhibit care and understanding toward the participants.

Caring is a key factor at NEL, and is an important dimension in community, as well as in individual teaching/learning relationships. Noddings' arguments for caring within the learning construct are well supported here. As noted earlier, a caring relationship is one characterized by engrossment where the caregiver has open, nonselective receptivity, or attention, for the cared-for. By engrossment, Noddings (1992) means to empty oneself of

self-concern, and see, hear and feel what the other is saying. It seems that this element is present at NEL, and also that it is modeled, as Noddings advises, through the participation of the mentors. One participant determined:

*One of the aspects that made the greatest impression on me at the time was that a group of well established, high profile "mentors" should care enough about the future of Librarianship in Canada to run and participate in such a program.*

Another important aspect is not just that participants are cared for, but that they are taken care of. As the following participant noted:

*Knowing that everything was so well taken care of, and so enjoyable, let me get down to the business at hand.*

Another participant noted:

*What had the biggest impact on me was the way we were treated – the way everything was done with excellence. It made me realize that I need to find an environment that really values excellence in a way that I don't feel I'm being valued right now. So it was that overall tone of excellence; everything started on time and ended on time and we were treated like royalty, basically.*

The previous participant highlights the way in which people come to feel cared for and respected and the importance of that both within educational forums, but also within the workplace, as well as within a profession. Caring, in my view, enables a group to become a community, senior professionals to become mentors aside from bosses, peers to become friends, ceremony to become spiritual and place to become magic. This is well expressed by the next participant, which also highlights the importance of acceptance and the non-judgmental nature of NEL:

*The acceptance of the mentors and leaders was a palpable force that had a significant impact on me. The majestic, awesome beauty of Emerald Lake helped me to open and be receptive to positive statements ...from the leaders and mentors. Being in that setting*

*with those people made me feel very much bonded with everyone present – part of a caring community.*

While some felt a strong sense of community, and were inspired by it and embraced in it, others did not, as this participant reported:

*I have mixed feelings about NEL. While I have encouraged others to go to NEL, I have found that the NEL designation has become (in my opinion) somewhat snobbish or arrogant - that there is an elitism about it which I'm not sure is what I want to promote. Don't misunderstand me, I found NEL a good process and am really close friends with a number of the participants, but the dynamic of the NEL alumni is not what I would have hoped it would be. One of my friends recently commented that I was quite common because I rode the bus every day - and I suppose I am common in other respects and am uncomfortable in "elitist" surroundings.*

Another participant characterized it metaphorically as “an old boys club”:

*While NEL is a special honour for those who attend, I wonder if it doesn't create an illusion of elitism among us and also appear to non-NEL participants that we are attempting to form an “old boys club” that excludes those who aspire to be leaders.*

This criticism levied against the Institute in the survey responses by two persons is that the nomination / selection process, or the Institute itself, is elitist: only those who meet the criteria are nominated and selected to attend. Of those who are nominated, about 60% are selected. It remains undetermined how many are eligible in the country and therefore difficult to determine what percentage is nominated, although I suspect about 25% might be nominated. Unfortunately, while the Institute seeks to be inclusive, it simply cannot accommodate all who would like to attend.

The nomination and selection process seeks out individuals who have exhibited leadership potential in order to enhance and nurture that potential, and in order to further develop leadership skills. Yet, it implicitly suggests that those selected have been identified as leaders, or that they are leaders. In this, there is potentially a degree of self-

fulfilling prophecy because when people are told that they are leaders, have training in that capacity and believe they are, they are more likely to become so. From this, two unresolved sets of questions arise: If *everyone* could attend, would they feel less exceptional and less like *leaders*? And, if everyone could attend, would the Institute ultimately be less effective? Or, might the Institute have greater success in achieving its vision of leadership training and community building if the program were available to greater numbers? Might it be the case that if as many librarians as possible developed their leadership skills, the community of library users would more greatly benefit?

Two respondents believed that there is a tension between the professional benefits of NEL and perpetuating privileged opportunity. While it is advantageous to welcome and guide new and even mid-career professionals, this can be critiqued as perpetuating the “old boys club” by sustaining an apparatus that maintains and reinforces privileged selection. On the other hand, comments such as the one by the following participant indicates that many, even those attending NEL, still may feel marginalized in terms of opportunity or advancement.

*My résumé credentials are not mainstream, and my age and inability to relocate seem to be major stumbling blocks in my continuing in librarianship. Many jobs are being given to young graduates (and in [geographic location omitted], especially males) for their "energetic and modern approach." Yet for "a woman of my age" with my passions unconcealed, a history of varied careers, self-motivated learning style, and interactive personal approach, I feel overlooked and undervalued in my place of employment. I have heard similar stories from nurses and teachers - interestingly also "female" professions that give much lip service to the mature student, but little encouragement is provided in reality to support the new career. Previous experience and training is also not acknowledged unless they are degrees or other certified credentials. The harshest critics of the mature female student trying to (re-)enter the work force are their same-age, same-sex, and professionally well-established peers. These experiences have been very painful and disheartening.*

In librarianship as elsewhere, many new professionals suffer in a rut of marginal employment or unemployment resulting from the large number of baby-boomers who hold desired and favoured positions, as well as because of the reduced budgets many libraries experience. There are also broader issues within librarianship, such as those faced in many professions and occupations, which are related to sexism, ageism, racism, etc. Because these tensions and biases exist, those associated with NEL must be ever mindful of ways and means to counter them. Approaches to address this are discussed in the Recommendations section at the end of this document. Overall, however, the results of the survey indicate that the development of a professional community premised upon welcoming and care nurture the soul, and by extension, serve well the profession.

### ***Human Factors II: Relationships with Mentors***

A closely related element to community is mentoring. "If mentors didn't exist, we would have to invent them," claims Daloz (1999, p.17). Indeed, we have created them through myth and story and legend, and they have existed as historic figures. Mentorship (like soul) has a long history. Mentor was a senior and trusted friend in Homer's *Odyssey*. Mentor, a chief council member of Ithaca, was asked by Odysseus to assume the role of godfather, and care for the son of Odysseus, Telemachus, while Odysseus went to fight the battles of Troy. Mentor does so, and later, possessed by the god Athene, the Greek goddess of war, helps Telemachus. Athene, through Mentor, helps to prepare the ship that Telemachus was to use by gathering food and friends, and later guides Telemachus away from danger as he seeks to find his father (Colum, 1918).

Throughout history, people and communities have met the need for renewal and sustainability through the use of mentoring. Mentoring has been a process in which to watch over and guide the young, to invite them to participate and to assist them to meet the challenges they encounter.

Mentors are:

suffused with magic and play a key part in our transformation, reminding us that we can indeed survive the terror of the coming journey and undergo the transformation by moving through, not around, our fear. Mentors give us the magic that allows us to enter the darkness: a talisman to protect us from evil spells, a gem of wise advice, a map and sometimes simply courage. But always the mentor appears near the outset of the journey as a helper, equipping us in some way for what is to come, a midwife to our dreams, a keeper of the promise. (Daloz, 1999, p. 18)

Sound mentoring within education, within a profession or a career, or within a life, can sometimes be a primary factor in the course one takes, as well as in the richness and satisfaction one enjoys. In many cultures, some now more past than present, this role was assumed by teachers, elders, grandparents or older relatives, and some religions ascribe this role to godparents or their counterparts. This can be done on a formal or informal basis, and can be achieved either by design or default.

In a profession such as librarianship, there is typically no formal process that results in a mentoring relationship. In some cases, library school students may be provided the opportunity to partner with working professionals, but this is usually on a short-term basis. Thus, many new and mid-career librarians do not have professional mentoring relationships. However, it is important to the success of many. Chatman (1992) found that mentoring in librarianship, as in other professions, is a major factor in sponsoring the

directors for major library positions. Mentoring relationships provide opportunities for learning and sharing of ideas and approaches, creating networks and forming contacts, and for recommending proteges for positional advancement. As described by one NEL participant, mentors can provide career advice:

*The one-on-one sessions with mentors of your choice had the greatest impact on me. I presented each of the 3 mentors with my personal work dilemma and asked them what their take was on it. Each of them responded the same way - I was in a no win situation and had to look at a different option, in my case moving from the library to a teaching position and I took their advice and it worked out great.*

As noted by another, mentors can also be of great value just with a brief word or small compliment that is meaningful:

*I was inspired by the mentors – Karen Adams, Ernie Ingles, Donna Brockmeyer and Penny McKee, were the four people that touched me in some way – either by a compliment, words of encouragement, or by helping to unravel and understand some feelings inside of me.*

While mentorship can be perceived as beneficial on one hand, mentoring can also be critiqued as perpetuating an elite or otherwise advantaged group. Much research is required to dismantle the paradoxes of mentoring, the benefits and the limitations, which is beyond the scope of this research, but does warrant further investigation.

Various types and levels of mentoring occur at NEL. One type is educational and is embedded in the learning groups. In the learning groups, two mentors work with the participants throughout the five days. In this process, the mentoring is educationally focused, rather than career focused. This occurs on a group-to-group basis, as well as on an individual basis. Another type of mentoring is career or professional mentoring which



also occurs at two levels. At one level, individuals are mentored on a one-to-one basis, as this participant noted:

*My one-to-one meetings with the mentors/facilitators meant a lot to me. This probably has something to do with the fact that I'm most comfortable talking to one person at a time. I enjoyed the insights and observations that these three people who I deeply respect offered.*

At another level, there was an overarching feeling of mentorship offered by the group of senior librarians to a group of junior librarians. As noted by this participant:

*I was touched that such important people would take the time to organize and carry out an Institute.*

Another noted:

*The guides and mentors were obviously very emotionally invested in the Institute, and that feeling stays with me. I remember being met at the airport by Tom Macdonald, of Dynix. I was not expecting to be met, but thought I would find a sign pointing me in the right direction. Being met was a nice beginning. I also remember being driven here and there throughout the Institute by the guides and mentors, which gave everything a very personal feeling. I remember feeling, and still feel, that one day I would like to contribute similarly in such a dedicated fashion. They seemed to support each other well as a group, and I would love to belong to such a supportive work group someday.*

Although this type of group-to-group mentorship is not the focus of much of the literature on mentorship, this framework was important to those who attended NEL, and warrants further study. Mentorship of this nature becomes important to the development of community at the group level, and by inclusion, at the individual level.

The previous comment also illustrates that participants appreciated the attention, care and consideration of “high profile leaders” and this instilled in them confidence in their own abilities. Mentors appreciated the opportunity to “give something back,” gained

hope and faith that the future of the profession was in good hands, and sometimes felt they received as much as they gave.

Over the course of the five days, individual participants meet and talk with senior librarians, which may also be extended into ongoing mentoring relationships once NEL has ended. Participants and mentors alike are encouraged to seek out those short and longer term relationships; they can be rewarding for both. One point that was mentioned concerned the ongoing and regional lack of mentoring that participants experienced upon return to their places and regions of work.

The lack of mentoring has problematic implications. A small number of respondents indicated that they felt pressure as the result of NEL to assume leadership roles, and achieve success when doing so, or were worried that they might raise expectations that they couldn't meet. As this participant described:

*Over time, I continue to be interested in leadership and to evolve and refine both my skills and my understanding....sometimes it seems like so much more than I could ever attain...other times I catch myself doing something really good and think okay, that's what it's about...there is sometimes a real struggle to maintain a sense of how you can be a leader in your own organization...I realize that some of the initiative rests with me but I also think that it rests with organizations to foster and mentor...something that doesn't always happen. Although I know that I could really use regular mentoring and several of the NEL mentors are in -----, I haven't really pursued that...I think that I am afraid of raising expectations that I couldn't meet...I don't know where some of those folks get their energy and I know I don't have as much and I don't want to be in a position where I feel I am making excuses for being less of an achiever.*

This comment has a number of issues embedded in it concerning the ongoing struggle of assuming leadership positions, and meeting or failing to meet the expectations that some perceive others have of them. Ongoing, post-Institute mentoring may address some of these issues; ideas regarding such mentoring are discussed more fully in the

Recommendations section at the end of this document. Although there are not always easy answers to questions such as these, there is an opportunity to consider them within the context of the Institute as well, during Northern Reflections.

At the end of each NEL day, an hour is dedicated to story telling in a series of sessions called Northern Reflections. These sessions are an opportunity for each mentor to share with participants a candid and heart-felt portrayal of the experiences, challenges, triumphs and values that shaped and directed their careers, and the ways in which they coped with the tensions of balancing home and family with active and engaging work lives. One participant appreciated a discussion about how to balance work and family responsibilities, for example:

*I was literally moved to tears when a mentor was talking about struggling with the isolation that she had faced and trying to balance her family and her career. She said that she couldn't find the answers for us but that we have to keep working on that. That very much spoke to a point that I am at in my life right now.*

Another clearly appreciated the comments about the importance of balance:

*Quite frankly, the men's [stories] were dull, dull, dull. But listening to the women (Jo, Jocelyne, Karen) made me remember that work is squeezed into life, not the other way around. Kids have to be raised, mortgages paid. The power of life lies not in the career but in what happens outside of it.*

The Northern Reflection series of sessions has been very useful for all concerned with NEL. It represents a lens through which listeners can view, assess, interpret and more fully appreciate and understand their own careers and lives. Stories, Witherell and Noddings (1991) share, "attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives" (p.1). As this participant noted:

*I had the chance to reflect on why I feel like I am in such a hurry for everything good to happen to me professionally. The Northern Reflections sessions were such an insight into the professional and personal experiences of the mentors that served to give me the message "slow down and listen." Why did I think that I could accomplish a lifetime of service and recognition in seven years? Who made me feel that that was an expectation? Why was I beginning to feel like I would be failure without a "marked" achievement or accomplishment? These sessions gave me an incredible opportunity to see what was realistic over a lifetime career – and these were extraordinary careers!*

Northern Reflections was also a means through which the participants come to see the mentors as "just people" and helps the participants to ascribe "human faces" to those whom otherwise might have been considered a distant and remote leader within the profession. One participant shared:

*Having the faculty and mentor tell personal stories I found very moving. It opened these leaders of our profession and gave them human faces, and made me very appreciative of the sacrifices that they had made to become leaders.*

Another added that, with human faces, mentors were not so unlike the participants, and the resulting association may inspire participants to believe that they too could create dreams and reach them:

*The Northern Reflections were inspiring. So many different paths blazed and roads followed. Again very personal experiences shared publicly. And very interesting to listen to people you respect and admire only to discover that they are just "ordinary" folks, like you. That you can accomplish as much and make a difference by seizing / creating opportunities, taking risks, and following your dreams.*

The "human face" also aided group bonding and trust. Another participant appreciated the honesty of the stories and commented upon the way in which they can result in greater group bonding:

*I enjoyed the honesty of the mentors. There was personal risk for them in the process of sharing with us stories of their personal and professional lives. That honesty brings a group closer together quickly.*

Similarly, another appreciated what they termed self-disclosure, and this resulted in trust:

*I enjoyed the insights and observations that these three people whom I deeply respect offered. I also found the disclosures of particularly my team mates and mentors to be quite evocative – the intimate sharing of experiences between new friends and the trust that was imparted with it.*

For the story teller, telling their stories is an opportunity to pause and reflect upon their own histories, how they have evolved, the meaning they have had, and the way in which the story teller may want their histories to inform their futures. Cooper (1991) suggests “Telling our own stories is a way to impose form upon our often chaotic experiences and in the process, to develop our own voice. Listening to our own stories is a way for us to nourish, encourage, and sustain ourselves, to enter into a caring relationship with all parts of our selves” (p. 97) – as one mentor commented:

*One of the most memorable moments for me was deciding what “fire side” account of myself to give.*

To close, the Northern Reflections sessions contribute to the creation of community that forms at NEL, and validates other ways of knowing and making sense of our work and personal lives. It adds a dimension that joins “the worlds of thought and feeling, and [stories] give special voice to the feminine side of human experience – to the power of emotion, intuition, and relationships in human lives. They frequently reveal dilemmas of human caring and conflict, illuminating with the rich, vibrant language of feeling the various landscapes in which we meet the other morally. Through the poignant grip of story and metaphor we meet ourselves and the other in our mutual quest for goodness and meaning” (Noddings and Witherell, 1991, p.4). This is well portrayed by the poignant anecdote of one participant:

*I remember the story telling. At the dinner where everyone celebrated them-selves, Holly told a story. It was an oral tradition story about a wolf and a child. I thought that was just marvelous. I returned from the Institute and I hadn't seen my son in five days – he was a year and a half old. The first thing I did was grab him and hug him and we played a bit and then I told him that story. He was lying on his back and I had never told him an oral story before – I read to him from books. That story had lots of noises, pitter-patter (hands patting on knees) and shouting and moving around. I toned it down for the baby and he loved it and he was mesmerized. That really impacted me. I'm not a children's librarian and I would never have thought to do anything like that. It was a wonderful experience. I told Holly about that last night and she was thrilled. And it even brought tears to my eyes – it was not something I would have done before the Institute.*

### ***Human Factors III: Relationships with Peers***

The foregoing anecdote illustrates the strong and meaningful bonds created among participants in work groups. NEL uses work groups of eight persons, which remain constant throughout the five days. Dirx's research and writing discusses the relationship between the use of groups in educational settings and soul. He suggests that we recognize the person sitting in the present group, participating in the discussion, but that we also observe this adult learner as a child, a member of a family, a youthful learner in high school, or a hurt child chosen last for volleyball. We become conscious of these images, with a mixture of fondness and pain, and the two extremes seem to tug at the edges of our awareness (Dirx, 1997). One participant simply proclaimed: *I loved all of the people in my group by the end of it.*

Dirx (1997) suggests that soul beckons us to a relationship between an individual and their broader world, and our emotions and feelings are a language that help us learn about relationships, the world and our place in it. How we make sense of ourselves and others are critical aspects of learning. This connects the heart and mind, and mind and

emotion, as we focus on the concrete and the present, which deepens the understanding of the meaning of learning in adulthood. Learning about where individuals fit into the world, based on their own needs and preferences can be elicited through group interaction as we gain insight through how others see us, as this participant noted:

*During our risk taking session I shared my risk and revealed how much I want to get out of my job and move on. Through a process of discovery with both mentors in my group and with the participants in my group I was able to see that the need to leave was not coming from where I had originally defined it to be. The process of confronting that issue and coming to terms with what I needed to do to move forward and be happy was extremely painful but very necessary. Had I not undergone this process I would surely have left and still not come to terms with what was really at stake. I would in the end have been haunted by it.*

Taylor (1997) suggests that “It is through relationships that learners develop the necessary openness and confidence to deal with learning on an affective level, which is essential for managing the threatening and emotionally charged nature of the transformative learning experience” (p. 53). A number of respondents indicated the importance of relationships within their workgroups, both with other participants and with mentors. A mentor noted:

*Maintaining the same group through the week was excellent because there was daily improvement in communication and in the group dynamic. It was fascinating to watch the individuals who were reticent at the start of the week unfold as the week progressed, clearly demonstrating a level of trust.*

The strength of group bonding was evident, and a formal representation of that depth was noted as important by this participant:

*I remember being asked to take off our name tags at a certain time. I liked that. I liked that we agreed to wear them consistently until that time. It was a good way for people to work on the process of remembering names – a skill that is useful in all aspects of our lives. It also gave a strong message. We were no longer strangers.*

Group bonding occurred at the individual group level as well as at the broader group level. Although it could be expected that NEL would provide an opportunity for networking, it is clear that it has become, for some, much more. The intensity and the depth of sharing both within groups and with room-mates has resulted in inter-personal connections that were characterized as friendship. Although these relationships may not be actually maintained over an extended period of time, they are part of participants' memory, and influence the resonance of the Institute. One participant wrote:

*The moments I tend to think of most frequently are the informal ones spent with friends that I made there. I had a lot of fun during those informal, non-allotted times.*

Similarly, another added:

*My fondest memories are of working with my small group. These were/are great people and we had lots of laughs.*

The next participant observed that perhaps not all of the activities and discussions in the working groups went smoothly all of the time, but despite inter-personal differences, the group worked through difficulties:

*I remember how surprised I was at how well my working group got along. There were one or two groups that year which could not seem to reach a consensus on any issue, but our group seemed fairly cohesive, and well able to work together, in spite of some personal differences that arose. I enjoyed working in that group, being part of a team.*

It is the practice at NEL to encourage groups to work through difficulties that may arise from time to time. As suggested by Dirkx (1997), this type of approach, rather than teachers or facilitators attempting to resolve differences, honours the soul of the group as well as its members.



The use of productive work-groups can also serve as a model that can be transferred to the workplace. As noted in the description of NEL, modeling is an important teaching element at the Institute because it is more easily remembered and transferred to situations outside the Institute. The following participant used a work-group activity in the workplace:

*I liked the creation of ground rules. I have used this idea with the library staff in different ways, mostly subtle. Using this with a combination of humor has helped us deal as a group with difficult people and situations in ways that were productive and not hurtful. There are no surprises this way.*

Another participant found a particular session which modeled diversity particularly useful in the workplace:

*The biggest frustration at my workplace was that all the older people I worked with were expecting me to bring them up to speed with the Internet and computers. I was frustrated because they were not taking initiative to learn themselves. I felt that they were putting an incredible burden on me, and I was actually starting to feel very resentful towards them. But during Fran's session on diversity, I noticed that some of the mentors admitted that they felt computer illiterate. I started to view my coworkers in a different light. I actually felt honoured – that I could contribute to their education in some way. I felt that instead of it being a job, I actually had something to contribute. For me, that was the starting point of shedding my negative feelings towards my coworkers and I realized that I was important.*

The working groups at NEL were a means through which greater understanding and tolerance of, as well as appreciation for others, was achieved. In many cases, strong bonds were formed, and friendships made. Group work also added an opportunity for enhanced self-understanding and personal growth, which was also an important element at NEL that moved deeply those involved.

#### ***Human Factors IV: Relationship with Self***

NEL had an overall effect of being a personalized educational experience in which respondents reported a greater understanding of and appreciation for their own abilities which had the overall effect of improving self-confidence and self-esteem. Personal strengths, accountability, growth and self-leadership were accentuated at NEL and occurred through a number of sessions, as well as through the program as a holistic unit. This could be interpreted as a result of all of the key factors identified in this thesis as elements that move people at a soul level. In addition to that, there are some specific ideas and influential sub-factors which are evident in the comments that follow.

Early in the program, elements of understanding personal preferences are addressed through the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator tool. As well, individual and community visions are designed and individual plans of actions are developed for implementation when participants return home and to their workplaces. Taken together, the program and the overall tenor of NEL resulted in participants achieving personal growth, self-leadership and personal direction. This participant shared:

*I think that the most critical thing that happened to me at NEL was that of personal growth. I became more in touch with myself as a result of my participation. I have always had a problem with self-confidence in my professional life but I feel that as a result of what I learned at NEL, I grew in terms of my leadership potential.*

This too was observed and believed by one of the mentors:

*The opportunity the program offers to take quantum leaps in personal development was important. Compacted into that one week is a microcosm of what many of us have struggled through over a period of maybe 10 - 20 years. People who are intellectually and emotionally open can gain understandings from NEL that might take years to acquire otherwise.*

The affirming experience of NEL begins at the initial nomination stages. For some, support from supervisors or others who may have nominated them gave participants greater confidence within their workplaces, and also enhanced self-esteem, as this participant expressed:

*The fact that I was selected by my Library and by NEL to go at all was a confidence booster and an indication of what my bosses thought of me & my work, and perhaps of how others outside the Library perceived me and my potential.*

Although the idea of leadership is not the direct focus of this research, it was alluded to or mentioned by a couple of participants, as the one above. The nature of this topic was influential in the way in which participants thought about themselves. Being thought of as a leader, identified as a leader, and being selected to develop leadership skills positively influenced the way participants thought of themselves. This was the result not only of the nomination and selection process, but resulted from the topics explored at NEL and those considered in this document as well.

Through the program elements, but also through the nature of NEL itself, NEL was a soul enriching affirmation of self. All involved were held in high regard. One way in which this is done, such as that suggested by Belenky et al. (1986), was through the recognition of the uniqueness of each individual. Through attention to the voices that arise from within, as compared to relying heavily on those from without, people felt affirmed. As noted by one respondent: *I felt a new sense of empowerment. I felt that my voice counts and is worth listening to.* Educators generally, and those at NEL, are increasingly aware of the importance of personalizing educational experiences which is a means through which we can attend to the soul of individual persons. In hearing their

voices as learners, educators model the esteem in which they hold students which enhances the esteem in which students then hold themselves. This participant made that direct observation:

*The most moving, impacting aspect of NEL for me was the experience of being treated like a peer by the leaders and mentors. Throughout the conference, these people communicated in countless ways the message that they thought I was worth investing in; they believed that I could become a leader in the library profession.*

The “countless ways” to which this person is responding are expressed throughout this document, and are manifest in the way in which those involved were cared for, respected and heard. The totality of environment, place, general tenor and treatment are alluded to in the following participant comment:

*I believe having gone to NEL instilled more confidence in me – a greater calmness in the face of constant change and adversity, something I’m finding I need and use as I take on more significant leadership roles in my job. I don’t think much of what was delivered at NEL was groundbreaking or original, rather it was the way in which it was delivered that gave it so much impact.*

Personal growth can be explicated by exploring some of the specific sessions that assisted mentors and participants in greater self-understanding and self-direction. One of those sessions employed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a personality inventory tool. Respondents answer a set of questions by recording their preferences or approaches and are scored on a scale concerning Introvert/Extrovert, Intuitive/Sensing, Thinking/Feeling, Judging/Perceiving. This tool was used to give participants an opportunity to more fully understand themselves as well as appreciate that there are distinct and identifiable differences between human personalities. While they might know this at a cognitive level, this session provided an opportunity for participants to explore

that idea while discussing specific differences through an interpretation of their own preferences and those of others within their groups. Generally, people understand that not every person has similar thoughts, opinions, preferences, and feelings, but still often assume others are much like they are. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator highlights that not all people are the same, and is useful in understanding, adjusting to and managing the differences. This participant appreciated both opportunities for growth:

*It is always great to learn about oneself and reactions as well as those of others. It helps me deal with situations of potential frustration and anger and helps me see so much more in others.*

At an individual level, Myers-Briggs is designed to enhance self-understanding of one's own preferences and tendencies. Myers-Briggs offers an opportunity for participants to look at their own preferences and tendencies, as liberally as one might define that, which in turn personalized the experience of NEL. This next participant mentioned the importance of the Myers-Briggs to self-understanding:

*A specific aspect of the NEL experience that had the greatest impact on me is related to the session on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. I have completed this test three times (mid 1980s, early 1990s, and just before attending NEL) and the results have always indicated that I am an "INTJ." During Ken Haycock's presentation, as well as during the small group discussions about MBTI, I became more and more concerned that I hadn't been honest with myself when answering the questionnaires. I was brought up in a home where we were discouraged from showing much emotion – I think this was reflected in my answers. I spoke briefly with Ken after the morning session, borrowed some additional reading materials, and got to work. By evening, I came to the conclusion that I had been denying the "F" part and I am actually an "INFJ." Everything then made much more sense. I have reviewed the material again in preparation for writing this response and it still makes sense. What a great feeling!*

Although this person agreed with the use of the tool, they did not agree with their original categorization. The individual attention and the flexibility of the presenter in using the

tool afforded the participant the opportunity for greater reflection. This in turn allowed them to achieve a feeling of greater self-understanding, and greater satisfaction in the results. For others, as with this mentor, the tool became a way of acknowledging their own uniqueness:

*I saw myself as a leader differently after NEL, in a couple of ways. I have an alternative profile, formally in terms of Myers-Briggs characteristics, but evident in many ways. Generally I had felt that my characteristics are too off-the-path for standard exercise of capital-L Leadership (by that I mean the “major institution” path), so I just did my own thing both locally and nationally. Since then I have greater faith in my own instincts, strengths, and approaches, and have been more inclined to honour the distinct ways in which they work.*

Understanding self and drawing on inner wisdom is an important concept for soulful action. People are sometimes, I think, wiser than they, or others, know. It is sometimes the case, for example, that when we encounter an important idea, we might think “I knew that” and believe that the speaker or teacher, for example, is reminding us of an inner wisdom. We do know much, and paradoxically, we know little. Listening to inner voices and inner wisdom is a soulful approach to education. When we feel we know little, I believe we can then draw upon our personal resources to guide us. Each individual has a source of personal power – it might be a sense of humour, an ability to calm stormy waters or the ability to inspire others to participate. Whatever our strengths, it is well to use them, and students should be encouraged to do so. One participant wrote in a professional journal:

When Donna Brockmeyer-Klebaum ... was speaking about leading yourself, I realized I do not have to be a CEO of a library in order to be a leader in my profession. Through my experience, I have found ‘personal power’ to create change because ultimately, the power for change lies within the individual. At NEL we discover

that a leader is not someone who will necessarily be a CEO; a leader is someone who can make a difference in their profession by bringing energy, passion, and vision to their workplace. A leader is someone who leads themselves first. (Franklin, 1996, p. 15)

Self-leadership at NEL was also considered through a personal and individual action planning session in which participants, building on their own strengths, and drawing from their own objectives and desires, create a plan of action for implementation upon their return home. This participant noted:

*Most people want to learn more about themselves and their approaches which helps them respond better to change. The program that is offered does this. I think the action planning at the end was very valuable with participants identifying long term commitments. I believe that components such as Leading Yourself are particularly important elements of the overall experience.*

Some of the mentors also made strong assertions of personal growth, exemplified in this comment:

*I attended my first NEL pretty much as just another speaking gig. While I assumed there would be changes in the participants I did not expect there to be significant changes in any of the mentors and the like. ... by the end of the session I had undergone several changes for the better. I can also state on a very personal note that elements of the final healing circle in NEL I (a totally new experience for me) moved me deeply on a number of levels and led me upon my return to a serious attempt to salvage a failing marriage. While it was not salvaged, because of the change in me, things were able to be said and things came out that made the eventual parting humane and non-corrosive. I believe the ritual, particularly the inherent neutrality and "forgiveness" of aboriginal ritual was an important element in opening participants to change.*

Because NEL is a highly personalized educational opportunity, there is potential growth and human connection for all involved. Human relationships with peers, mentors and self were among the most important and key factors that moved deeply and at a soul level those involved. For educators, it is important to understand that human relationship, especially in adult forums such as NEL, are pivotal.

### ***Celebration, Ceremony and the Sacred***

Dirkx (1997) suggests that learning through soul calls for a more central role of imagination and fantasy in our instructional methods and content. Stories, narratives, myths, tales, metaphor and ritual capture aspects of the world not always readily accessible through many teaching approaches. NEL uses celebration, ceremony and ritual that all attend to, and honour, soul.

Ritual and ceremony are important aspects of soul and offer a moving and magical element to NEL. An early ritual is used in which participants and mentors are given a stone, invited to invest their baggage, barriers or other impediments to learning, into the stone, and to throw it away. Results from this research indicated that this was a useful and meaningful experience. One participant noted:

*Yes, I was moved at an emotional, soulful and spiritual level, and this is very difficult to explain. I suppose the only words I can find are the following: I was moved to tears, moved to new ways of thinking, I felt a sense of boundlessness that I was completely opened up where all my fears, feelings, and doubts were exposed to myself and others. This was like a healing, like being cleansed or set free of so much baggage. Afterwards I was in a state of euphoria (for lack of a better word) ... I felt something when we threw the stones away – I was ready to throw that stone and ready to move on.*

Another activity that occurs mid way though the five days is a Celebration Dinner. At this dinner, participants and mentors are invited to wear clothing or bring items that reflect an aspect of themselves or an achievement they have made of which they are proud. During dinner, each person stands and shares with the whole group what it is they are celebrating about themselves. While this can be an intimidating and difficult activity, and one not often undertaken in one's life, the effect can be very soulful, as well as important to group development. It is a moment in the program that achieves inter-personal



openness in a positive light (as compared to a negative light which might involve disclosing a failure or challenge) and group bonding. One participant noted:

*The sense of group, which was particularly strong after the Celebration Dinner, was very evident. Our group in particular felt that we had developed a synthesis for dealing with problems presented to us quickly and effectively.*

Another wrote:

*I was most moved by the Celebration Dinner ... I learned about myself and others in the library community.*

Celebration and honouring of self are important aspects to valuing who we are, which enriches soul. Some cultures are premised upon this idea:

The Balinese have much to teach us about the (non) art of celebration. The making of splendid occasions occupies much of their time. If you ask a Balinese what he does, he will proudly answer, "I am a Baris dancer" or "I am a mask maker." If you persist and ask again, "No, I mean how do you get your rice?" he loses interest, his voice drops, he may turn away, deciding this is a pretty boring conversation. "Oh that," he will say. (Kent, 1997, p. 121)

Closely related to celebration of self is commitment to self and to others. A commitment circle activity invites participants to make a verbalized commitment to themselves, the profession or to others of importance. Of this activity, a participant noted:

*I learned how to make commitments to myself at NEL. I am a great maker of commitments to others (personally and professionally) and am bound by them to keep them and fulfil them. I realized at NEL that I never make commitments to myself and have undertaken to change that. NEL gave me the opportunity to take the time to discover how important I am to myself. I need to celebrate myself and the power that I have to control my positive destiny.*

Opportunities such as these become soulful because they resonate at a deep personal level which is closely related to how we perceive ourselves in the world, and at work – which is

explored more fully later in this document. The opportunity to explore aspects of this within a professional context, with others who had similar dreams and aspirations, became emotionally moving, and stirred the soul. As this participant noted:

*There are two moments that I frequently return to: the commitment circle and the healing circle. I guess I return to these because I am baffled by how strong my emotional reactions were to these ceremonial processes. All the more so for someone like myself who tends not to openly express feelings of emotion. Perhaps listening to everyone else share their own feelings and passions about life and librarianship began to resonate with my own. I began to recognize the same hopes and dreams: wanting to participate, make things change, to make things happen. What we do (as librarians) is important to us. I think that's what I was really responding to.*

A final closing ceremony, based in part on Aboriginal cultural practice, occurs at the end of the Institute. The ceremony is designed to give each person the opportunity to express thoughts or feelings they have about elements of the Institute, themselves, or their experiences that they would like to share. A final ritual in which participants are given a blanket and welcomed into the profession by its leaders leaves those involved very moved and feeling honoured and respected. The respondents indicated that this was one of the most memorable moments for them, and moved them beyond all else – as one participant wrote:

*The final ceremony touched my soul. I appreciated the giving of time, energy, memories, and symbolic gifts (blankets) to the participants. That was a time for each of us to feel special, individually and collectively.*

The ceremony honours each person, the community and the natural environment. A mentor noted:

*I came away from both with a new and deeper understanding of the sacred. Sacredness has had enormous significance to me for many years, but I was amazed at how broad and deep it became – especially after hearing the female spiritual leader at NEL II. It broadened my notion of stewardship. Librarians in some sense have the stewardship of*

*the recorded memory of mankind [sic]. I was much affected by the treatment of the relationship between the human being and the earth, which does not belong to us, either; we are stewards of a certain trust in relation to the earth. This was a powerful connection for me.*

Some also indicated that it was among the most spiritual life moments they have known. For others, it was an opportunity to recapture something lost, or to be reminded of the importance of the sacred in their lives, as noted by this participant:

*A moment I recall most was during the sweet-grass ceremony, a spiritual experience. This is a rarity for me, to experience anything that I would term spiritual. Once a Christian believer who lost her faith, I guess I fight hard not to let that part of me come alive. Maybe it's a protective gesture ??? – that way I won't have to deal with the unsettledness that was so painful during the period when my faith failed me. In any case, the sweet-grass ceremony gave me the safety to experience this facet of myself again.*

For others, such as this participant, the ceremony became very specifically tangible, in a spiritual way:

*I had what you call a spiritual experience - an event that owed itself to many things. Such as - changes that were taking place in my personal life, the magic and majesty of the mountains, the intensity of the session(s) and certainly the appearance of Bruce Starlight. The religious closing ceremony had very special meaning for me because of my past involvement with shamanism and my own spiritual beliefs and needs at the time. However, I'm still not sure if such an event was appropriate for the group and believe that those who believe in the traditional church may very well have felt awkward about the entire event. I loved it and hope that I might one day see Bruce again. In terms of real impact I would say Bruce Starlight moved me at a spiritual level. Bruce really sent me over the top - it was a terrific experience. The power which came across in the pipe ceremony cannot be described appropriately - as they say "you just know" – a silence that cannot be described but spiritually uplifting. The intensity of the sessions and the group bond which developed all had something to do with the greatness of the event.*

Although the ceremony was designed to honour each person, such expressions are not common in our experience, and may elicit feelings of unworthiness, as this participant shares:

*Another memory is of the blanket giving ceremony, and of my fellow group members'*

*faces streaming with tears. (Mine was the same.) The beauty of the gesture was overpoweringly powerful – there was a feeling of unworthiness – I can't possibly be worthy of such a wonderful gift – coupled with a simultaneously occurring feeling of worthiness – yes, I am, and will be, worthy of this.*

However, this person did decide that they were going to be worthy of such caring, attention and gift. This is an important element of soul as well: to accept such treatment and gifts, and to feel worthy of them. For some, the ceremony left people with an individual feeling of hope for themselves in the future, as this participant noted:

*The closing service was great. Coming from a church affiliated institution, I am very used to experiencing and sharing in moments of a spiritual nature. I use the blanket daily and continue to covet its use (in a positive way, of course). I remember the speaker talking of being true to oneself. I wish that I could say that I have learned from that. Does anyone really ever achieve this? Always good to have goals, I guess.*

Ceremony, ritual and attending to sacred aspects of our lives has, for many, become a rare event, and a great loss. As individuals and as a society, we need these elements to provide a richness, depth and sense of the sacred. They have been part of all ancient cultures, in one form or another, as exhibited in honouring the gods and goddesses depicted on cave walls and ancient stone carvings. Re-emerging shamanism, witchery, meditation, yoga and drumming circles are becoming more common as approaches to healing. For some, organized religion serves well; for others, it does not. Adult education can be a forum in which to explore elements of the sacred, ritual and ceremony in an inclusive fashion outside of formalized religion.

At NEL, an aboriginal sweet-grass and pipe ceremony was chosen because it is part of the Cree ancestry of the Director at NEL. The ceremony has significance in Ingles' own history, and he believed that it would bring a rich and appreciated dimension to NEL.

I too attend sweat-lodges and aboriginal drumming circles, and was very comfortable with this choice as an activity, as were the other program planners.

The vast majority of respondents found this to be the most profoundly moving experience at NEL, and moved many at a deep soulful level. Some respondents felt privileged to experience another culture, as this respondent noted:

*The sweetgrass / pipe ceremony was also profoundly moving on the level of having the opportunity to peek into, and at some level participate in, another group's ritual - one vested in a lot of significance and mystery. I felt privileged to be able to take part in it.*

Another participant echoed the idea just presented, but added another dimension that illustrates that sharing of another culture sometimes allows us to learn more about ourselves and each other. In this case, the openness of this cultural ceremony helped this group to be more open themselves and to glimpse in others that which would otherwise be unseen. As one mentor expressed:

*The opportunity to share a ritual from the original peoples of North America was profoundly moving. The two men were gracious in presenting to us, and I was reminded of other rituals I have been able to experience. I was acutely aware of our privileged window on something both ancient and, fortunately, still living. I was deeply affected by hearing the admissions of some of the men, in particular, of what previous NEL experiences had meant to them. Because there's a cluster of people in the group I have known for some time, I can observe personally what changes have occurred in them, but it was especially moving to hear change acknowledged by others. What a powerful event!*

A couple of respondents indicated that some people were less comfortable with this experience, as this participant noted:

*The session with the native elders disturbed me a lot. I was glad that there was an attempt to welcome us. But I have to say that the circle left me cold. It did not feel genuine, somehow. I'm not sure it was appropriate to bring religion into it. This is a touchy subject, I realize. I felt that, rather than being an inclusive activity, it was a "let's all feel the white man's guilt" session.*

Not all those who felt uncomfortable spoke so strongly, but the sentiment was still expressed, as by this mentor:

*One of the most memorable moments for me was participating in the final gifting ceremony. The ideas of gifts and gifting recurred throughout the retreat, but the element of ritual and the sense of completion made this session particularly moving for me. The morning's effort to reach into Native American culture, while perfectly appropriate, was not essential to the event and felt just a little strained to me and a little distracting from the morning's essential business.*

While some see it as a privilege and an opportunity to learn aspects of another culture, others see it as an unnecessary event or perhaps even an appropriation of an already exploited and marginalized group. This idea has been expressed through aboriginal criticism as well. For my part, as an educator, I am always interested in sharing with learners aspects of other cultures. Through activities such as these, educators are able to encourage compassion and tolerance for diversity by enabling exposure, and consequently, understanding of cultures other than our own. Too, this sort of activity can be interpreted as inclusionary of those who attend NEL who are of aboriginal ancestry, while engaging in more European approaches to ceremony could be seen as Eurocentric. Clearly, a balance is needed when fine lines such as these are tread. Where such exposure is viewed as exploitation and appropriation, it is well to proceed with care and to remain mindful and respectful of the feelings and opinions of others.

While striving for balance, it is useful to remember that many aboriginal traditions are also part of the histories of many global cultures. Drumming, for example, has been ascribed to those of Mediterranean, Asian, and European ancestry (Redmond, 1997). The use of circles has been important as well, such as that discovered at Stonehenge, near

Bath, England and with the pyramids. It is well for the soul that we allow and attend to our collective history. As this participant comment illustrates, there are many similarities, as well as opportunities for sharing, between religious and cultural traditions:

*Receiving my NEL blanket and a hug from Mr. Ingles I found devastating. I don't know why, I just wanted to cry most of that afternoon....the time I felt moved at a spiritual level was during the sweetgrass ceremony when everyone shared a few words. As a Buddhist, I found this a very powerful and communal experience and an amazing sharing of our humanity, frailty and compassion. Very wonderful.*

Overall, the ceremonies which were part of NEL helped to solidify the community that the group work initiated. Like caring previously discussed, it seems ceremony allowed colleagues to become community, as this participant noted:

*Yup. I have no other way to explain bawling when we left the way I and many others did. We were touched at a deep level. The smoking of the pipe and the blankets are the most remembered ceremonial/ritual aspects for me. I remember feeling, for the first time to any significance, heartfelt feelings for people I had only allowed to be colleagues before.*

Ceremony solidifies community, encourages exploration of personal spirituality and reminds us to honour self – all of which is deeply personal and soulful. While ceremony was typically a safe activity of soul at NEL, risk was less safe, but also soulful for some.

### ***Risk***

The creation of a risk activity was an ongoing challenge at NEL. While the Institute seems to have worked remarkably well, NEL programmers continuously worked on this element. What this research indicates, however, is that risk is inherent in the Institute, as it is in life, as this mentor notes:

*If I were to pick one moment that will remain with me always, it would be the snowstorm of '94! To leave the comfort of the lodge in the Rockies, where we enjoyed a fine dinner, rich entertainment and much camaraderie, and suddenly find ourselves virtually lost in a*

*snowstorm and at great risk, was a riveting experience. To me, it symbolizes everything that NEL (and life) is about....*

Designing a risk activity is almost impossible because once a facilitator or teacher asks a group to take a risk, it is at some level, no longer a risk. It is instruction at best, oppression at worst. Risk, by definition, must be self-selected in terms of level, type, and timing. In order for individuals to feel they have taken a risk by their own choice, they should be free to choose the nature of the risk, assess how much of a risk they will take, determine under which circumstances they will take a risk, and select the timing of the risk, along with a number of other considerations. In a removed and decontextualized education environment, such as NEL, this is very difficult to simulate.

What was striking about the results of this research project, is that some respondents found taking a risk to be a soulful activity, one that moved them at a soul level, or one that had an identifiable and positive impact on perceptions of self. Another finding in the research was that participation in some activities at NEL were a risk in and of themselves, or individuals independently deemed them to be so, although they were not designed as such. This again indicates that risk is self-selected, and individually defined.

The risk activity and the discussions about risk at NEL were generally viewed in a positive light. Participants were engaged in discussions about risk, which relayed the idea that risk is a leadership quality. Moreover, a number of respondents indicated that attention to, and discussion about risk at the Institute, and a tangible positive experience with it, enhanced their ability to take risks on an ongoing basis after the Institute had



ended. The risks they were later able to take involved direct action, as expressed by this participant:

*One of the themes that I got out of the Institute was the importance of taking risks. This really spoke to me, because before I went, there were a number of things that I thought should be done where I work but that I did not do because there seemed to be so many obstacles in the way, and I was afraid of being perceived as “reckless” if I did anything chancy. I knew that I wanted to do those things and I was personally willing to take a chance on them not succeeding, but I felt that in so doing I may have been perceived as being unprofessional. The theme of risk-taking that was so strong at the Institute gave me an external rationalization or justification to do some of the things I wanted to do anyway, and, more importantly, instilled me with a mindset that is more willing to go with the things that I think should be done, even if I can't prove that they will be beneficial before I do them, or if proving that they would be beneficial would be so laborious as to negate the benefit of doing it in the first place (I think the latter is more common!) This gives me a greater feeling of self-confidence, because I don't feel that I have to be able to prove the worthiness of everything I would do before I can propose doing it.*

One example of greater risks taken was courage to express opinions, and to allow our voices to be heard, as this participant described:

*I feel that I hold myself back at times because of my fears of taking risks. NEL has helped me to be more open and honest with opinions in times when I am being asked for them and in times where I feel it's my responsibility and my job to state those opinions. I've often felt reluctant to voice opinions/suggestions that might be unpopular with some people, but NEL has taught me that risk taking is key to advocacy. And I am determined to be a strong advocate for libraries (among other things.)*

Although designing a risk activity is challenging, it is useful to attempt to do so, and to have discussions about risk. Doing so at NEL enhanced courage to take risks, as well as provided examples of success at having taken a risk, and subsequently experiencing success. Some risks involve aspects of struggle and disclosure, as well as ethical considerations, which is explicated in the two sections which follow.

## ***Struggle and Disclosure***

In regards to soul and struggle, Elkins (1995) suggests:

Soul ...makes a place for depth as well as height, for failure as well as triumph, for weakness as well as strength, for infirmity as well as health, for poverty as well as riches, for wisdom as well as knowledge, for woundedness as well as healing, for flaws as well as perfection, for depression as well as joy, for the loser as well as the winner, for the beaten as well as the triumphant, for the outcast as well as the accepted, for the downtrodden as well as the privileged, for tears as well as laughter, for roots as well as wings, and even for death as well as life. Soul enters when our spirits have been crushed and our egos have fallen apart. She moves gently and quietly amid the ruins of a destroyed life and begins to build again. She stays with us when everyone else has left and holds us through the night until the dawn breaks again. Through the night, she sings us songs we have never heard yet somehow know by heart. She tells us stories of courage, not the courage of dashing heroes and heroines but a deeper courage that only grows in the valleys of defeat and despair. In the cracks of our shattered lives, she plants the painful seeds of hope. All this is the work of the soul ...”  
(p. 86)

Similarly, as shared by Oscar Wilde “There was no pleasure I did not experience. I threw the pearl of my soul into a cup of wine. I went down the primrose path to the sound of flutes. I lived on honeycomb. But to have continued the same life would have been wrong because it would have been limiting. I had to pass on. The other half of the garden had its secrets for me also” (Wilde, 1911, p. 65).

Some respondents to the survey reported struggle and frustration at NEL. This is to be expected when forty people, mostly unknown to each other, and some with long (and challenging) histories, are gathered together into a secluded mountain resort for five intense days. Yet, as Elkins (1995) suggests, struggle is an activity of soul, and moves us.

It is well to be mindful that soul movement, and learning, are not always easy. In this, I in no way endorse painful and oppressive education, such as the residential schools experienced by Aboriginal peoples, of which we are so aware in the prairies in Canada. In terms of this research and struggle involving soul, I am speaking about the self-selected and respectful struggles that are ideally emancipatory for self, and respectful of others, as this participant noted:

*Notable experiences for me included getting so mad at one of the people in my group, a special librarian, because her values seemed to me to be so corporate and seemed so at variance with the more 'social good' values that both draw me to the profession and keep me in public libraries and that I always assume are at the heart of our commitment. It took me awhile to remember that I also value diversity and that I needed to walk that talk. It was challenging to have to deal with that diversity in trying to find common ground to come up with our own vision statement.*

In some cases, the frustration allowed opportunity for reflection, as this mentor suggests:

*I found the hardest part of the whole exercise to be the evening debriefings<sup>13</sup> of the mentors as we rarely were in synch. Some were too tired, some too picky, some too jocular, some too serious, some too relaxed for this group to really jell "on the fly." I always came away a bit frustrated from these evenings even though we often made good decisions together. This may be simply a case of the self-discipline that most of the mentors (at least those who were CEO's) imposed upon themselves during the day. When we were with peers we let go maybe too much. I suspect the chemistry of the mentors and leaders while mentoring is worthy of study in its own right.*

Given the intense and personal nature of NEL, self-disclosure was common, and ranged from personal to professional issues, such as admissions of being homosexual, or not liking one's job. Corey and Corey (1997) note that some groups – short-term intensive workshops, in particular – may arouse strong, previously hidden feelings, and

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<sup>13</sup> This refers to mentors meeting each evening to review participants' daily comment cards, discuss any issues that might have arisen, to debrief, and to relax.

may propel participants to make precipitous decisions that affect not only their own lives but also the lives of family members. Although mentors do not address such issues and concerns by design, they were sometimes called upon to address them by default. In these instances, mentors were advised to seek assistance from the programming committee or another mentor if a group member was making inappropriate, or at least, out of the norm, personal disclosures. At times, these discussions were brought to the mentor meetings held nightly, at times they were resolved at a personal or more individual level, and on occasion, participants were advised to seek appropriate professional help if indicated or required. There were limited attempts to address major issues at the Institute, as that was beyond the scope of the NEL mission, and beyond the areas of the expertise and training of mentors and programmers. In the interim, NEL strove to be as supportive as possible, and sometimes cautioned participants about making precipitous decisions too soon after the Institute ended.

Disclosure was sometimes very emotional. In writing in a professional journal, one participant noted:

At times, the participation required us to face personal challenges, which often left us emotionally exhausted. We had to expose our weaknesses, prejudices and fears in order to be enlightened. This often resulted in a few tears, which we shared with each other. The tears we shed were a welcomed cleansing and symbol of our renewal. It soon became very apparent why it was called "Northern Exposure"; we were exposing our innermost selves." (Franklin, 1996, p. 14)

Simply, one participant commented: *I wept openly in front of people I barely knew.* This was not always a comfortable situation for all, as this participant expressed:

*Right after the experience (and to some extent during NEL) I felt touched and moved. However, after some time I began to resent this, I felt that in some ways I had been violated or manipulated into feeling certain things and revealing more than I normally would – too exposed! After some time had gone by I realized that this was my own fear of 'letting go' of rational thinking and opening up a vulnerable side.*

There is potential at NEL for participants or mentors to feel over-exposed. This, along with elements of risk and struggle, are more fully addressed in the section on ethics that follows.

### ***Ethics***

The Canadian Library Association has a Code of Ethics to which many librarians ascribe, and ethical considerations are an important part of professional as well as daily life. As suggested by educators such as Erickson (1995), modeling ethics and values are well placed in educational environments. Although NEL<sup>14</sup> does not have a code of ethics to which programmers and mentors subscribe at the Institute, they are mindful of ethical considerations.

In one instance, there was some concern about a program element. I undertook an ethical audit that was a process to evaluate the ethical nature of the session in question. The audit involved an analysis based on the ethical principle of respect for persons and was tested by using the role exchange test in which the evaluator places themselves in the

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<sup>14</sup> This is something NEL could consider. See the Recommendations sections for further discussion.

particular situation subject to the action. Erring on the side of caution, NEL changed the program to be less controversial. The session in question was a risk taking and diversity workshop. Participants and mentors were asked to self-identify (by stepping over a line on the floor) who had had certain types of experiences in their lives. For example, they were asked who had been a victim of child abuse, who had been married more than once, who was homosexual, etc. This was intended to portray the ways in which people are stereotyped, how unfair that is, and how we can be more tolerant of and supportive towards others in the workplace. However, NEL programmers did question the degree to which they were exploiting those who trusted their judgement, when they asked those involved to disclose things without warning which could later cause them stress or discomfort. The audit previously mentioned indicated that NEL should probably not undertake that activity again.

However, this doctoral research added another consideration to that question. One of the people who did make a very personal disclosure indicated that this session has been very advantageous in their work and their personal life. This person noted that it is now *“easier to tell people about all kinds of things, family secrets, personal aspects of my life, coming to accept myself as a good person despite everything. There was self-realization on where I want to go in my life.”* When asked if this person felt manipulated, violated, or offended, this person felt *“positively challenged, caught up in the moment to disclose very personal information about myself, which led to a feeling of trust with the group.”* This participant has pursued a number of increasingly responsible work

positions, achieved much success and noted “*NEL helped me with self-confidence and encouragement through networking with others to push myself to the limit.*”

While this participant’s response may not endorse the activity, and does not discount the ethical audit, it does indicate that sometimes both risk and struggle are useful activities. Further, it may indicate that while ethical considerations are important, it is difficult to ascertain what is ethical and what is not. Perhaps being mindful of soul, acknowledging the darker side of people, and experiencing struggle can have positive effects in terms of personal growth. Overall, ethical considerations and a session on ethics has proven useful, as this participant suggested:

*The light went on for me during Karen's presentation on Ethics. The conflict that I have had with one of our managers has always seemed to be as a result of some chasm between us in regards to our ideals of public service. It suddenly occurred to me during Karen's presentation that the chasm is an ethical divide. I have always taken for granted that all librarians share the Code of Ethics (CLA or ALA Bill of Rights or any other) which provides guiding principles for service and intellectual freedom. He and I don't share a code of ethics. We don't share the CLA code. He has been trained as a professional librarian in a Canadian library school and does not believe in the tenets of the code. The chasm is deep and wide but at least I recognize the source of the divide.*

For many at NEL, risk taking was a soulful experience, for others, being creative was soulful.

### ***Creativity, Imagination***

Hillman, in *A Blue Fire* (1989), argues that a psychology of soul is grounded in the processes of imagination. Ideas that emanate from the imagination are ways to envision, and by means of vision we can more fully come to understand and to know. Such knowing and understanding is extended to ourselves, and to our souls, as well as to the

world around us: “The implicit connection between having ideas to see *with* and seeing ideas themselves suggests that the more ideas we have, the more we see, and the deeper the ideas we have, the deeper we see” (p. 53). He suggests that our ideas change as changes take place in the soul, for as Plato said, soul and idea refer to each other, in that an idea is the “eye of the soul” opening us through its insight and vision. In this view, the soul is revealed in our ideas, and is a means by which we can come to know ourselves and the nature of our souls. Because we are always in the embrace of an idea, we can come to know ourselves by reflection upon that which moves us in daily action.

Similarly, Elkins (1995) suggests that soul and art are closely related. Soul is the creative and inspirational force behind all artistic creation, be it poetry, music, lyrics, dance, passion, eloquence, comedy, theatre, painting, sculpture, or writing. Elkins further suggests that art is the perfect container for the soul: “Like soul, art belongs to the non-rational, imaginable world and can contain and mediate the soul without doing damage to her nature. Try to hold the soul in rational concepts and you will pierce and kill her with the spear-like lines of logical thought, but place the soul gently in a painting, poem, or sculpture, and she will live ... long after the artist has died and turned to dust.... Soul gives us art and art gives us soul” (Elkins, pp. 86-87). Imagination is a faculty of the soul.

Scott (1997) suggests that soul work is transformative on both personal and global levels, and that it is not easy work. It is hard, painful and makes one vulnerable. She notes that often people go into a kind of hibernation, work on art projects, or use their hands in some way. Women have historically sewed; Jung built sand castles. Painting, pottery, massage or woodworking help, because work with the body that has been



neglected is required. The body is often regarded as an appendage or house, while a reintegration of the body and mind is soul-work. As we will see in a subsequent section, (*Learning Through Soul*, page 157), the body is, for some, integral to the process.

Creativity is important at NEL as a soulful experience, both as a means to express soul, but also as a means to create a soulful environment. Artistic elements are components of NEL, including music. In 1997, one participant brought a set of bagpipes and led a procession through a darkened starry night to one of the facilitators who was ill in bed. Creativity and art are present. Participants create metaphors of barriers becoming opportunities through the sculpting of brightly coloured construction paper. One group crafted a phoenix rising from the ashes, while another created a fence that, once the pickets were un-hooked, became doves flying away. Participants create a vision statement for libraries of the future, creatively manage an organization, do story-telling, don garb that reflects a personal achievement, and design and perform the final banquet entertainment, which is an inspired presentation of comedy, theatre, music, poetry, dance and satire.

For the programmers of NEL, designing and creating it took much energy and imagination, and was a soulful undertaking. The programmers have been impassioned by this work, and each has invested much. For my own part, conducting this research and infusing it with my own ideas has been most soulful.

For participants, creativity was somewhat important, as suggested by this person:

*Preparing the skit was an interesting experience especially since we managed to get some of the self described "unmusical" members of our group to, well, play music.*

Yet, overall, this aspect was moving only in a limited way, as suggested by this participant:

*The only ones [factors which were soulfully moving] that I felt were only somewhat important were creativity in terms of skits...not in terms of thinking though...I would have liked a bit more time to process what we were going through...though I know that time comes at a pretty high cost.*

Again, even this aspect might have been more moving for the mentors and facilitators, as this mentor expressed:

*I think I learn more from the skits on the last evening than anything else. What the participants choose to satirize and even pillory is a good indication of what they have learned and what they will remember.*

From this, a question arises: If educators believe, as I do, and as Jagla (1994) asserts, that allowing for creativity in the classroom is educative and important, why is it not the case that more participants found this important as well? At NEL (and perhaps elsewhere in education), is it the case that we encourage enough of the sort of creativity that participants prefer? Are we drawing on the right sort of creativity participants would prefer? Would they prefer to design the creative activities themselves? Is creativity as important as it is believed to be? In terms of NEL, these questions remain largely unanswered, and could form the basis of additional research to be explored more fully in the future. There is further consideration of this element in the Recommendations section.

### ***Physical Environment: The Place of Pan***

“A cry went through late antiquity: *Great Pan is dead!*” Pan, in Greek mythology, was a nature-god, a rustic god, or a wood spirit. He is sometimes depicted as

half man and half goat with horns, a beard and tail. His body is completely covered with fur. He lived in woods and caves, traversed the tops of mountains, and protected flocks of sheep. In Plutarch, he is pronounced dead, and given that his death coincides with the birth of Christ, it is sometimes believed that this signifies the end of an old world, the birth of a new one.

This captures the sentiment that nature had become deprived of its creative voice and its independent living force of generativity; its soul as well as our psychic ability to connect with nature, were lost. With Pan dead, Hillman suggests, so too was Echo, a nymph beloved by Pan, who could only reflect what she heard. Hence, humans could no longer capture consciousness by reflecting within their natural instincts.

Nature no longer spoke to us – or we could no longer hear. The person of Pan the mediator, like an ether who invisibly enveloped all natural things with personal meaning, with brightness, had vanished. Stones became only stones – trees, trees; things, places and animals no longer were this god or that, but became *symbols* or were said to *belong* to one god or another. When Pan is alive, then nature is too and it is filled with gods. (Hillman, 1989, p. 97)

Of course, who is to say that Pan is dead? Perhaps Pan is repressed, as Hillman later suggests. And how might we release Pan, awaken Pan within educational forums, and for what reason? The suggestion I make here, to awaken Pan in education, is one way to enrich an educational experience, and a profound means by which we can more ably lead out the soul.

Dirkx (1997) argues that attention to the physical aspects of the learning environment reflects the soul's affinity for the particular and the concrete. Caring for the

physical space, as well as the natural environment, is as important to nurturing soul within a learning group as our physical bodies are to nurturing soul within our individual lives.

A magical physical environment is the site of NEL, which is held at Emerald Lake Lodge, near Field, British Columbia. While Emerald Lake is secluded and serene, it is relatively easy to reach, located just 10 km. off the TransCanada highway, two hours from Calgary, Alberta. It is indeed an amazing site, as expressed by this participant:

*I will always remember the beauty of the mountains – the scenery was so awe-inspiring and so peaceful that I knew something wonderful was going to happen the moment I walked into the resort area.*

The main lodge emerges from the landscape in hand-hewn logs constructed in 1902 by the Canadian Pacific Railway. It graces the shores of the still and shimmering Emerald Lake, the colour of which reflects its name, and sits on a small peninsula reachable by a footbridge. Since 1902, renovations have realized a beautiful main lodge that is unpretentiously elegant and welcoming. Inside, a curved stair leads to two session rooms with windows to the mountains, adjacent areas for quiet conversation, relaxation or reflection, and to a games room with an antique billiards table, chess boards and a piano. The guest cabins are beautifully appointed with willow furnishing and down duvets, and are replete with wood-burning fireplaces and private balconies. This was appreciated by this mentor:

*The general ambience touched me at a soulful, spiritual level. Being able to light a fire, slide under a sumptuous duvet, and gaze out at snow-topped firs, Christmas lights, and a dark sky straight in front, with the fire dancing just a bit to the right was sheer delight.*

Although Emerald Lake has down duvets and great fieldstone fireplaces and an open shore-line pit, the enchantment is also in what it doesn't have. There are no closely

accessible restaurants or shops, no televisions or radios or traffic noises (unless you're there at the same time as a German film crew), few computer outlets, and no cell phone transmitter stations. The seclusion and relative silence offers an increasingly rare opportunity for reflection and contemplation. The focus and reflection this type of environment offers is instrumental for education to permeate to deeper levels which increases opportunities for internalization. This environment attends to the soul, which enhances learning. As Moore suggests:

Silence is not an absence of sound but rather a shifting of attention toward sounds that speak to the soul. In a moment of silence you may feel your heartbeat or hear your breathing. Silence is a positive kind of hearing, which requires turning off the knob that tunes in to active, literal life and turning on the one that amplifies the movements of the soul. (Moore, 1996b, p. 105)

In another work, Moore (1996a) writes: "Sometimes the spirit of a place is so strong you may think you see its face and glimpse it gamboling over a field or peeking out of a forest, but at other times you struggle for words to describe it" (p. 145). The power of the spirit at Emerald Lake persuades its visitors that gods live there. As one draws breath, a living force takes residence; such a presence engages the soul in ways that sterile or bleak environments cannot.

Many Canadians are appreciating the value of spirituality and nature. They create refuges alongside lakes, streams, and oceans, and in the mountains. Eco-tourism is becoming extremely important to many which could be argued to be a kind of soulful or spiritual recognition of and respect for the natural environment. In some measure, they want Pan alive. "When Pan is dead, then nature can be controlled by the will of the new

God, man, modeled in the image of Prometheus or Hercules, creating from it and polluting in it without a troubled conscience” (Hillman, 1989, p. 97).

Nature should be honoured and respected. Like little else, it has the capacity to humble, as well as to inspire. I sometimes say that in Saskatchewan, my home province, one can die in a day – either from exposure and hypothermia in the winter or exposure and dehydration in the summer. On the other hand, the skies are alive with the colour of sunset during harvest and the sound of gathering geese in the fall.

So too does the natural element at NEL both humble and inspire. The mountain peaks and scree slopes are distant and massive and cold. We know they are deadly, even though we may feel safe, as in the poem *David* by Earle Birney:

That day we chanced on the skull and the splayed white ribs  
Of a mountain goat underneath a cliff, caught tight  
On a rock, Around were the silken feathers of kites.  
And that was the first that I knew a goat could slip.  
(Birney, p. 349)

The waters feign safety when frozen, but are not always frozen, and are not always safe.

And of course, in the majesty of this, we are tiny and sometimes frail.

Yet, while that is true, we are also inspired and gently held. The nature gods serenade us to be big. The mountains sit with ease so tall that they inspire us to be gracious and open in thought and deed and vision. They are young and craggy with shards like fractured crystal, because they have not had the eons of weather to round their reaches, as have other, older mountain ranges. In that, they reflect the new librarians who attend NEL: both are ungroomed, perhaps impetuous and critical, but sharp and brilliant and strong.

The trees belong there, and through their belonging offer comfort so that we too feel we belong. The Roman philosopher Seneca observed, "If you came upon a grove of old trees that have lifted their crowns up above the common height and shut out the light of the sky by the darkness of their interlacing boughs, you feel that there is a spirit in the place, so lofty is the wood, so lone the spot, so wondrous the thick unbroken shade" (Cousineau, 1994, p.160). Such it is at Emerald Lake. You feel there is a spirit of the place, which is what many cultures through history have believed of trees. It was recently suggested to me by a Cree woman that I "go into the woods and put down some tobacco, or hang prayer flags. Talk to the trees. They will listen to you; they were people once." Too, the truly emerald waters lap at the shores of our consciousness and speak for our peace. The magic and mystery is alluded to by this participant:

*The setting was fabulous. I can't quite put my finger on it now, but the mountains, trees, snow, isolation, quiet, etc. somehow reinforced the whole experience. All of these moments and experiences really came together during the healing circle when Bruce and George helped to connect us to our experience and the importance of our surroundings.*

Nestled into the mountains, alongside the lake, and insulated by the trees, the setting holds us collectively in the palm of her hand. Together, these gods conspire to nurture our souls. In this holding and this nurturing we are reminded that we are part of the nature we see, and as such we belong. We see in the beauty of nature, the beauty that lies in each of us, both within ourselves and in our physical bodies. We are part of this; we are of the earth. Emerald Lake reminds us of this. Moore writes "Spiritually, nature directs our attention toward eternity, but at the same time it contains us and creates an intimacy with

our own personal lives that nurtures the soul” (Moore, 1996b, p. 5). A participant phrased it this way:

*Part of the physical isolation, beauty and inherent sacredness of Emerald Lake is an offering, to those who chose, to find the earth's voice and hence to touch their own soul. For all participants, I believe, the physical surroundings enhanced awareness of the immensity and power of the land, so easily lost in the closed circles of everyday life. It is so remote, so beautiful, so close to the earth and its spirits or gods. One cannot be there and not be affected by the vastness of the earth. It brings together both the sense of isolation and how small we are in the large scheme of nature, and which I believe inspires a need to connect with each other, to share part of our lives at a very deep level because we may feel so insignificant alone. I found my sacred place at NEL, discovering that spiritual connection at Emerald Lake that has allowed me to re-connect to it in other times and places.*

Although Moore suggests that we need to slow down to be moved by nature, this is not always the case. Sometimes in a session in which we are so busy and intent, and the discourse so serious, I gaze out the window and am arrested by the triteness of our work in comparison to what one beholds through the glass. In our rushing, I am frozen. I am reminded how small my work world is, and how immense the universe. Nature can remind us who we are, and who we are not, what we can achieve, and what we cannot.

Yet, while the setting was wonderful, it also has the result of creating an intense physical forum, from which it is difficult to extract oneself. This is a theme in this participant comment:

*NEL was a very emotional experience. I imagine it was designed that way. It was an experience of risk and fear couched in the security of a safe environment, but one from which there was no escape - physically, mentally, or emotionally - it was just not possible to not participate - an interesting combination of sensations. "Exposure" is a very apt term for this experience.*

Collins (1985) suggests that “If successful, the sessions at residential conferences become quite intensive and require the serious engagement of participants” (p. 71). Although



intense, he does suggest that participants be given time to get away and have time for reflection, of which there is little at NEL. Although participants are physically secluded, they can certainly be given psychological time and space for reflection – this is considered again in the Recommendations section at the end of this document. Residential aspects contribute to the seclusion, but also to the soulfulness of adult educational experiences such as NEL.

In summary, the environmental factors, physical setting and seclusion were inspiring and spiritually moving. The residential factors of sharing accommodations and meals were important to the soulfulness of the learning experience, and are considered next.

### ***Residential Factors: Bunking in and Breaking Bread***

Fleming (1998) found in her research that residential learning had a strong impact on relations forming. She notes:

Participant descriptions of relationships reflected the differences they perceived between developing relationships in residence and in their normal lives. In particular, they noted an association forms among a group of people that is different from that which is normally possible in a traditional classroom. Participants used terms such as *fellowship, togetherness, community, and family* and referred to the formation of a *cohort, group cohesion* and the *coalescing of groups* (p. 264.)

She found that the residential factor was a “necessary dimension for creating significant interpersonal relationships” (p. 264) given the limited amount of time. A number of key elements were identified as influencing the nature of the relationships, and could be

claimed to have impacted the relationships that formed at NEL as well. Two include intimacy, and the dropping of facades. Regarding intimacy (shared sleeping quarters), a participant wrote:

*I was moved when my group met at a member's room and we talked about why it was we became librarians in the first place. I was moved to discover that my fellow group members had become librarians for some of the same reasons I had. I felt a real sense of community and a connection to these people whom I had known for only a short time and this for me was a spiritual experience.*

Those involved also dropped their facades (professional titles, roles, behaviours).

Relationships formed between those who would not normally meet (crossed rank). This also may lend support to the belief that issues of power and rank are less an issue at NEL than they may be in other contexts. A participant noted:

*The opportunities to socialize at meal times and in the evenings was important. Playing various snooker games with Paul, Ernie, Ron, Richard and Louis: an opportunity to sort of step outside of NEL for a few moments and just hang out.*

Those involved with NEL also shared meals. While food feeds the body, it also nurtures the soul. In an educational setting such as NEL, mealtimes provide an opportunity to sit and relax and become acquainted with colleagues. The dining room at Emerald Lake is elegant, but cozy and informal. The furnishings are as one would expect in a rustic but upscale mountain lodge. The lighting is soft and the windows admit the mountains and lake.

The early guides at Emerald Lake came from Switzerland, Austria and Germany. They learned from the local First Nations people to cure and smoke game and fish, gather seasonal berries, and forage for root vegetables. This early means of sustenance evolved into the cuisine offered today.

Meals begin with a basket of bread. Bread has an ancient and rich tradition associated with symbolism and the sacred. The discovery of bread ovens in ancient goddess shrines dating to 7200 B.C. indicates there may have been a sacred bread tradition in which the oven represented the womb of the goddess (Redmond, 1997, p. 46). Bread appears later in many ceremonies and religions, as in Christianity as the body of Christ and as a means to feed masses. It also represents transformation: grain to flour to dough to bread.

The soul has to do with depth and down, and the root vegetables offered at Emerald Lake Lodge inspire, if only viscerally, a sense of grounding, and of the earth. Miniature beets, white turnips, purple onions, small red potatoes and baby carrots are soul food. So too, is the cornucopia of wild mushrooms: porcine, chanterelles, morels, puffballs, lobster mushrooms, and pine mushrooms, which evoke images of the mossiness of soul. Much of the food served in the dining room is unprocessed and close to the earth: wild rice, squash, flowers, herbs, spices, berries, lentils as well as wild game and fish, sometimes cooked in birch bark.

During the Paleolithic era, when meat was a staple, tribes lived in a symbiotic relationship with animals. Cave paintings, preserved in chambers deep within the earth, depict a mystical human / animal relationship, rather than a glorification of the hunt (Redmond, 1977). Taken together, foods such as these potentially remind us of the earth in a direct, inter-relational way, rather than one distanced by processing and packaging, and one of symbiosis and honouring rather than consuming and presuming.

The setting, the meals themselves and the service combine to create an environment that supports learning. Contrast this to typical educational forum food-fairs in cafeterias or hotel chains. Certainly, attention to meals and service quality nurtures the soul in a significant way, and supports learning. Some were very comfortable with the meal arrangements of group dining, as indicated by this participant:

*The dinners were good in that I felt that I could be myself. I felt comfortable being with the other participants. I felt at ease and that I could be quiet and reserved or take the opportunity to be more open and revealing about myself and my feelings.*

Others were less comfortable: sometimes meal-sharing can be stressful, and some would prefer more privacy as they dine, as noted by this participant:

*The only thing that had a negative impact on me was the eating arrangements. Being of the personality type that I am, I found it very difficult to be forced to choose or be chosen as dinner companion three times a day. I can't help feeling that when I sit with people I don't know very well, that I am inflicting myself upon them, and they might rather not eat with me. I found it very uncomfortable to have to go through that at every mealtime. Just the way I am, and probably everyone else enjoyed it very much.*

In summary, sharing accommodations and meals allowed participants to become closer, more comfortable with each other, and more open. It also allowed groups of people (such as seniors and juniors in the profession) to mix in a relaxed way (chatting, playing pool) which would otherwise be less likely.

*It was lovely, but...*

Four people involved in the study, slightly over 6% of respondents, said that they were not touched at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level. This is not to say that they did not enjoy the experience, or did not learn from it. Those who were not moved at a

soulful, emotional or spiritual level did find the experience to be enjoyable and memorable, as this participant noted:

*I don't think I was touched at a deep level. I certainly look at NEL as a very positive and enjoyable experience but I do not consider it to be in any way akin to a religious or emotionally charged experience. I have very fond memories of it and I very much appreciate what it does for early-career professional librarians but its meaning for me was not one of emotional/spiritual connection.*

The next participant comment illustrates the difficulty as well, in answering the survey due to the nature of the survey, but also because of elapsed time:

*At the time of the Institute I would have said I was touched at an emotional level and might even have admitted being touched at a soulful level. It was a very emotional and "heavy" 4 days. I still feel somewhat emotional when I think of NEL because of the intense nature of the Institute and the connections I made to others and because of the greater sense of purpose regarding librarianship that I obtained there, but nearly four years later I can not now say I was moved at a spiritual or soulful level either at the time or since.*

While this group were not moved at a soulful level, some participants did recognize the powerful experience that others had:

*NEL was a very thought-provoking and enjoyable experience, one that has left me with pleasant memories that I will cherish, but that's about as far as it went for me. I do recognize, however, that NEL was a major emotional/spiritual/soulful event for a number of the attendees (perhaps even a majority?); I certainly respect the more emotional / spiritual / soulful experiences that they had at the Institute.*

One participant noted that the more an environment is structured or designed to create a soulful, spiritual or in other ways, deep and profound educational environment, the less it is likely to have the desired effect. This participant noted:

*Sorry, but I think I sat stony faced through most of the retreat. The more conditions were established to allow the soul to emerge, the more for me it doesn't. I get touched by the mundane – by what happens in little gaps in life. Big events like NEL are a blast but nothing like the dew encrusted spiders' webs one happens upon early and unexpectedly one Sunday morning. The Institute simply didn't touch me that way.*

While some did not find NEL to be a soulful activity, it does seem that they found the experience to be beneficial, over the short term, as well as the long term.

### ***Impact of NEL on Career and Life***

Respondents were asked if they believed the experience of NEL had a lasting impact on their career. Long-term impact can be viewed as powerfully moving, because of the life impact, or can be viewed as an interesting element in and of itself that arises from the research. However, the factors which emerge that impact on career and life replicate, although not exhaustively, those that moved people at a deep level just discussed.

Over 62% of participants and 63% of mentors believed that NEL had a lasting impact on their careers. Over 33% of participants and 36% of mentors believed that NEL had a long lasting impact on their lives. Tables reflecting this as well as the remaining responses are listed in Appendix C, Tables 4 and 5 respectively.

NEL had a lasting impact *on career* for over half of the participants, and *on life* for a third of participants. Fleming determined that “The residential dynamic seems to capture and envelop the whole learner, enabling her to bring all of herself to her learning, and to take away from that experience all that she is able to take” (p. 268). In her research, the impact was more short-term than long-term. As noted above, these findings are generally similar for the mentor group as well. It does seem that the combination achieved at NEL, as both a residential experience, and one that aligns seniors and juniors within a professional-based learning dynamic, does result in a lasting impact. However, the

question regarding long-term impact merits further longitudinal study, given the relatively short time between each NEL and the time of this survey. The main themes largely replicate those discussed elsewhere in this text, and are therefore presented here with greater emphasis on respondent commentary.

One of the primary ways in which NEL impacted respondents on a long-term basis was through renewed interest in, and energy for, the profession. One participant characterized it this way:

*Yes, the experience of NEL had a lasting impact on my career and life in general. It renewed my energy at the time, and renewed my interest in librarianship and learning. I still hope to someday be driven by a strong vision of my own, and to be able to help as many people as the NEL people have. I continue to work towards being part of a strong library community in my region.*

For some, that energy was complimented by a more positive outlook which resulted in an increased desire to assume leadership roles, as this person describes:

*The Northern Exposure experience for me was life changing, career affirming and enlightening. The largest impact it left on me was to change the nature of my thinking – I learned the power of positive thinking and afterward I felt that I could do anything with my life or career if I wanted to. I suppose it gave me a sense of empowerment that profoundly changed me. I had always been a positive person who believed in myself but when I came to NEL I was starting to doubt everything especially the choices I had made. I was having second thoughts about the choice I had made to go to library school, to become a librarian and then to take a job in the dreaded public library. NEL came just in the nick of time for me for I was starting to lose my interest in my work. After NEL I decided to remain a librarian and stay in my hometown public library because I know I can make a difference. It may sound strange, but I truly feel that my library needs me not only now in my work as a public service librarian, but in a future leadership position (which I am slowly working toward).*

Some credit NEL for their changing jobs, or seeking new positions, as this participant described:

*Yes, NEL had a lasting impact on my career. Within a year of my return I was in a teaching position and had walked away from the “library” although I was teaching in a library tech program. Two years after that I assumed responsibility as the program head, the experience in that position landed me my new job as Head, of the ...[library department].*

Some felt that such encouragement, though, resulted in a feeling of obligation to contribute. This participant illustrates how they are managing the feeling of obligation:

*NEL instilled in me a sense of obligation to participate actively in my organizational and professional life – not necessarily at all times, but at least from time to time. And because it is only 2 years since, the choices I made immediately following NEL are still in place – namely to take on positions of leadership in both my place of work and in my territorial library association, both of which bear 2-year terms. NEL inspired me to take the risk of putting myself “out there.” I have learned from this that this kind of role is not for me – whether or not I have done a good job (and one can never really know, I suppose), it is an unhappy one for me. My preferred role of participant but not leader is the one to which I will return. Such self-knowledge is valuable in one’s quest for peace, and I would never have known without NEL because I would not have tried. I refer here to the formal kind of leadership – chairing committees, associations, etc. - not the qualities of leadership that anyone might exhibit at various times.*

Although not everyone is comfortable with assuming leadership positions, the participant above reported trying to address that sense of obligation, and attaining greater self-understanding in the process. It is valuable to notice that although participants may feel a sense of obligation, they are managing that feeling in different ways, and report the ways in which they are working to find a comfortable balance. While some felt the need to accomplish much, others felt a release from feeling that they had to accomplish much, or be all things to all people:

*At NEL I realized that what I do and what I had done up to that point was okay – that I was a good worker, that I was valued and respected among my colleagues, and I did have something to contribute. NEL helped me realize that I did not have to “kill myself” or stretch myself so thin that it was affecting my health.*

Another participant made a similar assertion:



*NEL impacted primarily on my career. Although still difficult, I am now more willing to stay where I am. I am less eager to move up the professional ladder as quickly as possible. There are other influences keeping me here, but the experience at NEL makes it easier to bear.*

Although NEL is intended to enrich and develop leadership skills, and does encourage professional involvement, some of those who do not wish to pursue such activities, or find doing so difficult for any number of reasons, find support to avoid doing so. This support was in some cases attributed to NEL generally, but respondents did not identify specific aspects of NEL that assisted them in feeling content to maintain a level of involvement that suited them. However, one might surmise that they may feel more comfortable doing less because they feel accepted and validated in community with others.

Another way in which respondents realized a long-term impact was due to the feeling of and appreciation for community and the profession, as discussed beginning on page 88. However, the difference here is that the feeling of community impacted career. Although the next participant could think of no specific impact, they mention a general feeling of being connected to a larger community, as this participant wrote: *there is the feeling of being connected to a larger, important, group.* For some participants, who are quite physically disconnected from colleagues, NEL became an otherwise unavailable opportunity to connect with others:

*Meeting other librarians was a great experience, since I work in a small library, in a small town, and don't have many other opportunities to meet English librarians. I have once or twice contacted some of those I met, in order to ask advice concerning work. These will hopefully be contacts that I can call upon throughout my career.*

For another, the feeling of connection was extended to a feeling of having faith in the profession by meeting those they would call leaders and mentors:

*I believe that the experience has had a great impact on my career. I went to NEL wondering how I was going to get out of libraries and move on to my next career. Librarianship is my second career and I was beginning to feel the need to move in a new direction and to be honest, I was hoping that it would be one that would take me out of libraries. I work in a very dysfunctional work environment and there are few here that I would or could envision as mentors. There has been poor leadership within our institution for quite some time and I had begun to feel rather hopeless about this environment ever becoming a positive opportunity for me. At NEL I had the chance to sit back and gain a new perspective on my current work environment, where I need to grow and go and my future (either here or elsewhere). I gained insight that there may be a path out of this despair and it may be within myself. I am hopeful that even if no concrete opportunities for advancement come for me inside this workplace, I am a different person within myself and can survive and even lead from within. I believe that I will now be able to recognize it when the time comes to leave and move on.*

The person above also alludes to the long-term impact of greater self-understanding, self-confidence, self-appreciation, as this participant also noted:

*I shed a lot of tears at NEL – it was like a cleansing was taking place. Along with this cleansing feeling I was also crying because I was a bit fearful of the challenges that lay ahead. I now had to face the world with this new resolve and with a vision. At work I had to learn to stand up for myself and not feel that I constantly had to prove myself. In my personal life I was truly on my own. I shed the obsession that I had with trying to make somebody love me that could not love me for me. I gained self-acceptance and self-confidence at NEL.*

For some, NEL helped them to recognize the challenges that they saw for themselves in their futures. For others, NEL was a reminder to recognize the challenges they had met, to give themselves credit for that, and to remember to look at the bigger picture in order to see that more clearly:

*I did have an experience at NEL that could be described as an emotional, spiritual, or soulful one. I will do my best to describe it: The weather tended to be overcast and drizzly when I was at NEL. As a result, the path up to the lodge was often wet and slippery so I was always looking down to make sure that I wouldn't have any unpleasant*

*surprises. One morning, on my way up the path to breakfast, I paused and looked upwards. The path seemed to go up and beyond the lodge and lead directly to a snow-topped mountain. A ray of sunlight had just burst through the clouds and had transformed the snow into sparkling diamonds. Of course I knew that there were mountains all round, but I had been so busy concentrating on not slipping, I had forgotten that they were there. I realized then that this experience could be applied to my view of life. I do have a tendency to get so concerned about the details and the negative aspects of a situation that I can miss the satisfaction or the thrill of knowing that I really have made a contribution or accomplished something significant. I later took a photograph of the path and the mountain to remind me of this moment. I have 8 by 11 inch enlargements of the photograph on my desk at work and on my dresser at home. The picture certainly doesn't come anywhere near to replicating the splendour of the mountain, but it is enough to keep my memory alive.*

On the other end of the continuum, some mentors reported being pleased to give something back, at this point in their career:

*Certainly it has had a lasting impact on my career. I just do business differently, inside and out! Specifically, there's a group of people out there for who I have a continuing responsibility. I seek them out when I can, and I listen to them. Many of them, in turn, keep my candles lit, and mentor me in their way. It surprises them when I say that, but I know it to be a common experience among mentors. NEL had a strong role in the integration of my professional and personal life, which were never terribly far apart in the first place. But the integration is more comfortable, a better fit.*

Even for a mentor who was nearing the end of their work career, NEL had a long-term impact on their work:

*On my career: in one sense, little, since I am at the end of the "go-to-business-daily" phase. However, the sharper understanding I have of my emotional nature will contribute to the writing and free-lancing that I will continue to do. So, in the broad sense, there will be considerable impact.*

While the foregoing section on career impact also addresses in some measure life impact, a number of respondents also reported specific life changes. For one participant, long-term impact was achieved through greater insight about and understanding of family members:

*One moment I recall was during the workshop on change when I realized my family / spouse was not going to change the way I had hoped, that they wanted to stay in Egypt, as it were. This was a shocking realization – no, not a realization because I had always known this deep down. No, at that moment I was forced to accept a truth I didn't want to admit.*

The next participant, who reported greater self-understanding, reported long-term family benefits:

*I believe that my personal life has benefited from this experience. The spill-over from my happy home-life will be beneficial to my work-life.*

The search for long-term effects continues for some. Although believing that NEL was significant, this participant, like others, reported an ongoing search for ways to incorporate the experience into their life in a way that will make a difference:

*I find this to be a very searching question, which frequently plagues me. I found NEL to be an extremely significant experience, which I judge should have had a significant impact on my career. The problem is, it has made no discernible difference. I see this as totally my own lack, not a deficiency of NEL. I keep remembering different lessons about being a leader, making a difference, etc. – and thinking that I ought to be able to implement some of that in my work life now. But the fact is, I haven't been able to. I only hope that eventually I will.*

The previous comment speaks to an issue that could be linked to the earlier comments regarding ongoing mentoring. Thoughts regarding this are in the Recommendations section, at the end of this document.

In summary, NEL had a long-term effect on participants that affect both life and career, with a concentration on the latter. Career effects include a feeling of renewed energy and commitment to the profession, and a greater feeling of being part of a larger community. On personal and individual levels, respondents reported greater understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of self as well as family members. For mentors, the opportunity to give

something back to the profession was also noted.

### ***Teaching Methodologies***

Respondents were asked what they thought about activity-based learning (i.e. Chaos) and participant-based learning (i.e. group discussions) compared to direct delivery or lecture based methods of instruction that they experienced either at NEL or outside of it. Similar to the previous question regarding long-term impact, this question could be claimed to have moved respondents soulfully, although it was not directly linked to a question about soul in the survey instrument.

In this question, respondents may have given more than one response regarding the type of teaching methods they prefer. Therefore, these data are not based on number of respondents (n=62), but on the actual responses themselves. As Table 6 in Appendix C illustrates, the majority of participants preferred experiential or discussion methods, but a nearly equal number together preferred “a good balance” and “liked all types.” The mentors / facilitators generally thought that a good balance is important, and that balance was achieved at NEL.

Many educational leaders (Pfeiffer, Dewey, Kahne) have recognized the importance of experiential learning. Pfeiffer (1988) notes “experiential learning is not accomplished by merely listening or reading. A great deal of research has shown that people need to be involved in what they are learning; cognitive understanding must be reinforced by experience” (p.3). The following participant alludes to the interconnection

between cognitive understanding and experience and that each informs the other, while the experience itself is remembered:

*I think the activity based learning and the participant based learning both had more impact on me than the direct delivery or lecture based methods of instruction at NEL. I don't know from which method I learned most, but I seem to remember more of the activities and discussions than I do of the lectures.*

The above quote illustrates that there is sometimes uncertainty about how we learn and what we learn, and that we are sometimes more able to articulate what we remember.

However, as noted by a participant in the next quote, a combination of methods is important:

*My general learning style seems to lend itself to lecture based methods of instruction, and I don't often get too much out of group discussions. Certainly some of the activities, the chaos one comes to mind, were illuminating – but these are generally good at driving home a point made in other learning situations. I don't think it's very fruitful to consider one learning method in complete isolation, they all contribute to the learning experience. The NEL stressed the group and activity based learning which, in the context of the situation, was very appropriate.*

NEL strives to use experiential learning methods as much as possible and does so through the use of interactive presentations, simulations, case studies, physical activities and group discussions and tasks. The Institute also uses direct delivery methods, but mainly as a means to introduce and provide a foundation for group discussion, exploration and the development of personal or professional strategies. Interactive sessions are designed this way in order to allow participants to process theory into understanding and transfer that to action. NEL also employs as a fundamental teaching methodology experiential learning, as did Dewey. Dewey (1963) argued for experiential learning, wherein spontaneous discovery and excitement would replace drill and practice. He

stressed the importance of replicating social life (i.e. gardening, building, running a business) to create a learning environment that would be democratic, build community and replicate real life experiences and situations. NEL does this, as this participant describes:

*Both the activity-based and the participant-based methods are, in my opinion, far more beneficial and rewarding than lecture-based methods of instruction, where they are feasible. They were definitely feasible at Northern Exposure in the instances where they were used. For example, what better way to teach people about chaos than to actually create a chaotic situation in which they are nonetheless required to meet certain expectations (just like so many jobs we have!)*

One life aspect NEL aims to replicate is leadership. An aspect of experiential learning, as described by Kahne (1994), is that such learning has the capacity to build bonds among students' at the same time lead students to experience the struggle of working collectively toward socially meaningful goals. In addition, the open-ended nature of these experiences mean that there is rarely one right answer or approach. It may well be the case that each participant has a different experience, and assesses it differently, which is appropriate for individual learning. This allows learners a freedom and flexibility in learning that they achieve through each experience. Learners and teachers can both draw from the learning situation. Moreover, experiential learning is a means by which teachers can guard against using their power to construct knowledge for the participants. Given that this targeted group of new librarians is new to the profession, and they are interacting with senior members, it is a good idea to actively create situations where mentors guide the learning, but do not direct it. Experiential learning allows the students to create and guide the learning context so that they are not overly influenced by the values of the mentors and facilitators. Through the discussion and the activities, the participants are invited to make

observations and interpretations from the activity with the assistance of a facilitator and mentors. However, the influence of the senior professionals will exist in some measure. The value for hard work, professional consciousness and dedication to the profession is implicit in the mentors themselves, and relayed to the participants. Yet, NEL programs are designed to remind participants, for example, that they need to make their own choices about the way in which they create balance in their lives, and the experiential model allows an opportunity for that.

Experiential learning as a teaching methodology supports an individual construction of knowledge. It does this because it has potential to allow each individual to draw from the experience what they need, and to make their own interpretations of it based on their own language, culture, race, and values. It can avoid the limitations of language and ethnocentrism placed on learning by didactic models, and even the written word. It is a learning dynamic which can assume the nature, values and culture of the learner, and in doing so, is not prescriptive. As this participant noted:

*The activity-based learning seems to reach a different aspect of the personality than lecture-based instruction, which is aimed primarily at the mind. Activity-based learning relies on more intuitive learning; instead of having conclusions, lessons, etc., expressed verbally, the participant draws his or her own lessons from the experience.*

Experiential learning allows participants to see themselves readily both in the learning situation as well as how that replicates who they may be in daily life, as this participant observed:

*When I think back to the "Chaos on the Lake" experience I always smile. I enjoyed this exercise and I learned so much about myself from this exercise. I remember that at one point I had four beanbags (widgets) in both hands and I was about to try and catch another with my knees! An impossible task, but not unlike how I had been operating at*



*work. I never knew when to say "Enough is enough." On the lake, I found my voice and I finally said it "I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!!!"*

The following participant mentions the importance of discussion and interpretation of experiential learning, which can be offered to illuminate the experience the learners choose, or as the teacher designs. It can be inclusive, and can both draw from and contribute to other modes of learning – both those within formal educational contexts and in other life experiences, as this participant notes:

*I learn better from experience and participation ... though I sometimes like guidance in processing those two things to get the maximum learning value.*

Similarly, a blend also allows for needed breaks in active participation and allows time for needed reflection:

*Most of the activities and discussions were enjoyable, but I think that it is nice to have some direct-delivery sprinkled in here and there, so the participants aren't too exhausted. I enjoyed the mix, and appreciated the occasional opportunity to just listen, rather than constantly talking.... The lecture based gave us time for reflection, which I find personally very important.*

Some participants stressed the importance of including the body in the learning experience, as this participant observed:

*As I get older, I realize that I learn best if all three of my centres are engaged – head, heart and body. The activity based learning truly engages all three centres and I remember how hard it was to stay present to the experience – not over-thinking or over-talking. I learned most from the chaos exercise. Group discussions were not all that different from the direct delivery or lecture based models as they have no physical element to engage the body. Fundamentally, we learn best what we learn in the body.*

Sometimes, activity-based learning was simply an opportunity to get up and move around, as this participant related:

*I loved the activity based learning technique. It was great to get up and move around and get the blood flowing to the brain. I also really think that the participant based*

*learning is an effective method. It is great to learn from other people and get different perspectives.*

Physical, interactive learning also adds a dimension of identifiable fun, as this participant noted:

*I thought that the group discussions were very conducive to learning and exploring new ideas. I preferred this approach to the lectures at NEL or that I have experienced at university. The activity-based learning lent some fun to the learning process.*

As much as experiential learning, discussion and lecture can compliment one another, there are still those who prefer direct delivery methods:

*Participant-based learning – Useful, though not an adequate substitute for direct delivery and lecture methods. I think the group discussions were valuable, though in general I felt the mentors had the most helpful things to say – not surprising given their vast experience and obvious success. I think it is also important to hear about the wider experience of one's cohort; on the whole, though, my preferred method of learning is a private one - via direct delivery, reading, and lecture.*

The different preferences of the participants, as well as the need for discussion about interpretations of more experiential models, indicates that a good mix of methodologies is important:

*I appreciate the combination of styles. I learn best, over long periods of time, when information is delivered using a variety of teaching methodologies. Some of the content was well suited to lecture, and other pieces were perfect opportunities to spend time outdoors in an activity. The blend was wonderful.*

Finally, modeling and the life experience inherent at NEL was also an effective teaching methodology. NEL chooses leaders in the profession to serve as mentors who are able to model leadership, and also employs teaching approaches such as those described in the mentor section above. As well, the sessions are also designed to allow modeling, as described earlier. An example of this was the use of group ground rules,

which participants can employ within work contexts once they return home. Another such example presented at the Institute is the creation of a vision through collaboration and teamwork, rather than as a one-person construct delivered to an entire group or organization. The following participant described a situation that makes this point very well:

*The program elements or the topics of the programs were essential. They are important in that they direct the Institute, but the experience around that content is more important. I compare it to an exercise in which I had written a paper on leadership and I had read everything there was to read about it at that time. I formed my own opinions and thought critically about it and felt at least at the time that I finished that paper that I maybe learned everything there was to learn. All that I had to do was to take the words off the page and apply them. What I learned at NEL was that there was much more beyond the words on the page, much more to being a leader, being able to learn from other people, being able to teach other people. Even though the pages said that you need X,Y,Z to be a leader, I met a dozen leaders at the Institute that were not X,Y,Z. They were still leaders – they had made it to the top of their profession. Or if they were a candidate like me, I was pretty confident that they were going to be very successful in life, and that nothing is black and white. It was the “experience” of it that was what I learned from. Especially in our profession, we can research anything and pretend that we know it, but...*

Individual interpretation and meaning, combined with appropriate validation, caring, empathy, authenticity and aesthetics, seem to provide an opportunity to acknowledge, engage, understand and nurture the soul. Experiential forms of teaching and learning, which can be marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox, invite expressions of soul by triggering a flood of memories, images or fantasies (Dirkx, 1997). This, in my estimation, is one of the primary roles and privileges of the educational process. Experiential learning methods combined with appropriate discussion and interpretation, as well as some lecture and modeling allow adult learning forums such as NEL an opportunity to create soulful learning environments.

### ***Learning Through Soul***

For those who believed they were impacted at a soulful, spiritual or emotional level, respondents were then asked if that impacted the nature and degree of their educational (either as a teacher or learner) experience.

Of all respondents to the survey (n=62), 63% (n=39) said *yes* they believed being moved at a soulful, spiritual or emotional level positively impacted the nature and degree of their educational experience; 4.8 % (n=3) said that *no* it did not; 16.1 % (n=10) reported that they were *unsure*, or unclear about the question, and 16.1 % (n=10) did not respond.

Again, to reiterate the important insights of Dirkx (1997), the interest in learning through soul is not to 'teach' soul or to facilitate soulwork. To nurture soul is to recognize what is already inherent within our relationships and experiences, to acknowledge its presence within the teaching and learning environment, to give it space and consideration, and to provide it a voice through which to be heard. Soul enters into the teaching / learning dynamic through many of the forms discussed throughout this work.

Those who did report a different and powerful educational experience *because of* the soulful, spiritual and emotional levels, had interesting insights. One participant learned things about themselves they might otherwise not have learned, because they were open – in a new way – to learning :

*I believe that the emotional and soulful impact that I experienced allowed me to learn things about myself that I would not have been able to learn. I felt my whole self open to learning and changing in a way that I have not experienced since I became a mother.*

*Something happened to me that allowed me to experience a change that will impact my life as a whole and will be with me forever. I believe that I would have learned "information" and have been engaged in learning about leadership at the Institute at another level than I did, had I not experienced the accompanying change in soul.*

The next respondent also reported being more open, but at an emotional level, which aided learning:

*I do think the level of spiritual/soulful impact had an effect on me as a learner. I think it made me more open to other people on an emotional level and moved me to disclosing more about myself.*

Emotional learning allows learning at a deeper level, which the following participant describes as more serious, significant and profound:

*Whew! The fact that NEL had some emotionally charged parts to it added an unusual twist to the education. It made it more interesting, more fun and at the same time more serious, significant and somehow profound – it wasn't just about leadership after all was it? It is not often that a course combines all those elements.*

Another participant described the emotional connection in this way:

*I believe that if something is capable of striking at such a deep level (soulful, spiritual or emotional) it can only serve to maximize the educational experience. One can nod one's head in agreement with something that is said. However, if what is said strikes an emotional chord, there is a definite connection.*

The emotion described by respondents was about a depth of emotion – as it is during disclosure; a mix of emotion – as in stress; or as a height of emotions – as in exhilaration.

The next participant describes how this mixture of emotional experiences makes learning at a soul level difficult to describe to others:

*NEL was unique in comparison to any other professional experience. The fact that I was overwhelmed, exhilarated, intimidated, stressed by the people and activities did impact the experience at different levels. If I had to measure or compare levels, I can say that I was impacted at an emotional level. I reacted, or, didn't react in situations, trying to predict an emotional outcome. The soulful and spiritual levels are more difficult to ascertain. The fact that the experience was a combination of all these levels may explain*

*some of the difficulties encountered when trying to describe it to others.*

The question regarding the relationship between soul and degree of learning was a difficult one to answer for many. The next quote illustrates the inter-connected nature of learning with emotion at NEL and posits that the difficulty may be because of the interconnected nature of emotion and program.

*I think the main component of learning was based on the emotional / soulful impact of the experience, so I suppose I could say the spiritual impact enhanced the educational experience. I really don't know how to answer this. The emotional impact was inseparable from the educational experience. I learned most from the emotional aspects of the Institute, I guess.*

To assist in interpreting the question, one respondent filtered this question through an actual learning activity. They used the risk activity to explicate or illuminate the question, and in so doing indicates that they emotionally *felt* the benefits of the risk experience, and now feel less anxious about taking risks. This response and interpretation may indicate that experiencing emotions in a safe environment, with positive results, is a good way to learn. This participant writes:

*Telling people what the benefits of risk-taking are in a class or lecture environment may not be the best way to impart a change in risk-taking behavior, or any other behavior with a large emotional component. By designing the learning process in such a way as to provoke an emotional response, it is possible that I became more inclined to take risks because I felt what it was like to do it and was able to experience the positive outcomes that came from the supportive environment of NEL. This has made me less reluctant to take risks since NEL, because I feel less of the apprehension and anxiety about taking risks than I did before NEL.*

Yet another participant describes the importance of feelings in this way:

*I recall a saying of my son's second grade teacher: "They may not remember what you said, but they'll certainly remember how you made them feel." For me, in thinking about*

*my experience, I likely can't remember everything that was said, but I certainly came away with some very strong feelings.*

The connection between head and heart, or thoughts and feelings is a significant and important one, as this participant simply states: *Yes, I believe that the deepest learning takes place when our heads and hearts connect.* Similarly, others found that the spiritual, soulful and emotional aspects *reinforced* the content, as this participant described:

*This is difficult to assess. When I think back on NEL as an "educational" experience I have trouble identifying what exactly I took away from NEL. For me, a lot of the experiences were centered around reawakening or rediscovering aspects about myself and my view of the library profession: things that I had almost "forgotten" about. Or things that I already knew about myself, but hadn't formerly realized, such as, I have a history that has involved taking risks. Something I'd perhaps taken for granted. I was expecting more "management" related educational programs, based on my impressions of the literature we were asked to read. I was surprised and somewhat relieved to find out this was not going to be the case. Some of the general techniques, like preferred futuring, and library advocacy, are the educational highlights that stand out when I think back. But NEL is really more of a "gestalt" as you suggested in your summation [at NEL]: you here; you there; the profession; taking it home; etc. So I guess that because the "spiritual" aspects reinforced the overall effect of the programs it did have an impact on my educational experience.*

For some, being moved at a deep soulful, spiritual or emotional level is closely linked to thinking, as this participant noted:

*Overall, my NEL experience prodded me to think. Most importantly, it made me think (more) about what I'm doing right and wrong in my work life and in my personal life; what I could do, what I could do better, what I should stop doing. I find myself coming back to thoughts I had at the Institute, comparing how I'm doing now to what I thought back then.*

Certainly, being moved at soulful levels is not divorced from thinking, and may be closely related to it.

Still others related to a physical reaction, or a learning in the body that deepened, and solidified the learning, and perhaps stored it in a different place, perhaps visceral, for long-term retrieval rather than within one's consciousness. One participant noted *we learn best what we learn in the body*. Another wrote:

*Absolutely, all one has to do is think back to a boring university class! I think NEL made its participants more attuned to their surroundings and feelings; it opened my mind and heart like heat opens the pores of skin.*

Even some of those who were not moved at a spiritual, soulful or emotional level, thought that they experienced a special educational experience. One participant noted: *I wasn't impacted at a soulful level but I still feel I was the recipient of a special educational experience.*

Adult learning forums that are able to elicit emotion in a spiritual or soulful way can result in profound and deep learning experiences. This type of learning can resonate very strongly at places within the mind, the heart, the soul, or some visceral place within the body – all of which are difficult to describe or even to locate. Such difficulty should not deter teachers from trying to create environments which nurture soul, for in such environments, learners can draw meaning which may resonate profoundly or last a lifetime – which many would describe as the aim of education.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **The Converging Wisdom of Those at NEL**

At the outset of this research, there was a mere handful of comments, both written and uttered, that intrigued me. One such comment was: *Most definitely, this has been one of the most profound experiences of my life so far.* Another one was: *Those five days were pure magic.* Now, some months later, there is a rich, moving and insightful portrayal of those who have experienced the adult educational forum of Northern Exposure to Leadership as it relates to, and awakened, the soul.

Initially, I posed a number of questions: What did people experience at NEL? What inspired comments such as those above? What elements are perceived to be powerful enough to have moved people in this deep way, particularly at a soul level? If they were so moved, did this experience have a long-term affect on their careers or their lives? And if so, how might that have happened? Underlying those questions are some more elusive: What is to be gleaned about adult education from the Institute? And, is there something to be learned here about the relation of the soul to education? Essentially, I wanted an enriched understanding of the meaning that the experience had for those involved and what the essence of the experience was, and I was curious about what this investigation might mean for educators. The findings presented here are a product of these questions, for other questions would have elicited other responses, and many questions remain to be asked regarding NEL.

To begin the process of answering those questions, I explored literature related to this topic. This research is grounded in a rich history of adult education literature, and included the writing of educators and thinkers such as Dewey, Freire, Lindeman, and Knowles who support the idea of adult learners as autonomous thinkers who bring their histories to the classroom, and believe that those histories should be used as a point of departure in learning. It draws on the writing of those such as Belenky et al. who remind us to listen to the unique voices of each person, which come from within the individual, and who also remind us to attend to alternate ways of knowing. It relies upon the conceptions of caring and ethics as important educational approaches that nurture the human dimensions of learning as explicated by Noddings. It incorporates other feminist approaches, such as that offered by Shrewsbury and Schniedewind, which provides support for soulful education by arguing for empowered, interdependent learners respectful of self and others, where teachers and learners work in environments that are non-sexist, non-racist, non-violent, and democratic. In these sorts of classrooms, excitement is encouraged and joy is nurtured; forums for dialogue and communication are created, and power is shared for the development and enhancement of community.

This research also draws on writers in the areas of work and education such as Collins, Hart, Barrett, Briskin and Fenwick, who remind us that adult education, while attending in some measure to the realities of labour, should not be driven by technical rationality as a means to a productive end. This research is also well guided and supported by those writing in the areas of soul such as Moore and Sardello and those specifically related to education such as Dirkx and Lauzon.

With those questions, and that theoretical base, this research used an interpretive methodology to survey the 121 past participants and mentors (including facilitators) to NEL. Of those, 51.2% responded. A very large number, 93.5% of respondents, reported that they were moved at a soul level at NEL, and offered a rich text of ideas about why they believed that was so.

Returning to the research questions, and interpreting the results, I asked: **What did people experience at Northern Exposure to Leadership?** In essence, NEL is a five-day residential learning experience. It is an experientially based, and highly personal, leadership institute attended by 26 librarians (participants) new to the profession, 8 mentors (team facilitators) who are seniors in the profession and 4-6 facilitators who design and deliver the program. Mentors and participants work together in groups throughout the five days on such leadership topics as vision, risk taking, courage, creativity, inter-personal relationships, self-understanding, self-leadership, celebration, communication, advocacy and organizational dynamics. It is held every 18 months at Emerald Lake Lodge in Field, British Columbia, Canada.

At the outset of this research, I asked: **What inspired comments such as those regarding the profundity of NEL and what elements were perceived to be powerful enough to have moved people at a soul level?** The elements that moved respondents most include: human relations within a professional, caring community of mentors, peers and self; the incorporation of ceremony, symbol, and the sacred; risk; struggle and disclosure; ethics; creativity and imagination; physical environment; residential factors;

impact on life and career; and, teaching methodologies – which all combined to result in learning through soul.

The element most strongly commented upon was the human relationships that were formed between peers and mentors, as well as the increased understanding, appreciation for, and acceptance of self. Participants and mentors alike noted the importance of the personal and professional relationships, as well as the friendships and networks that were formed. Working in consistent groups was important to that process, and those involved felt like they were part of a caring community. There were many who noted, appreciated and were moved by the caring of mentors, which enabled participants to feel affirmed and appreciated. They felt they were connected through the experience, and that they now had a “human face” and recognized as just persons, those who were otherwise a group of remote, unknown, larger-than-life leaders. It was noted that participants particularly appreciated that such “high profile” leaders would take time and invest energy in creating and sustaining such a rich opportunity for young professionals. Group work with mentors as well as the personal story telling that the mentors offered for participants were augmented by informal socializing and shared meals. The nature of the mentoring was educational and professional, and occurred on a person-to-person basis, as well as a group-to-group basis – as senior to junior professionals. Taken together, the diversity of the mentoring was affirming, informative and relayed feelings of community and caring. This participant addresses the human factor, and hints at career related issues:

*There was the realization that we are all human and all essentially made of the same substance. That we all have the same potential for fear, happiness, joy, courage, desperation, and so many other senses and emotions. It is what we do with these that will*

*be the mark of our success, not the weakness of having had the fear or experiencing the desperation. The realization of all of this was a great source of strength to me – to see such great leaders who have had (and continue to have -- damn those boomers!) such great careers also be human was a revelation. I don't have many wonderful mentors around me here in -----, but I now have many in my fellow participants and mentors from NEL.*

The work related issues are complex, and positive and negative. As well as being moved at a soulful level at NEL, the majority of respondents noted that it did have a long-term effect on their careers or their lives. This was found in a renewal of energy and interest, sense of community within the profession, and feeling affirmed as a professional. Some respondents noted seeking out leadership positions, getting more involved with professional activities, and generally feeling that they could achieve anything they wanted to. Many mentors felt re-energized in their work, and satisfied in the knowledge that they had “given something back” to their profession. They too, in turn, commented upon the hope that the participants inspired, and upon the faith they had that the future of the profession was in good hands.

As a professional adult education experience, NEL is closely related to the workplace, as well as the professional community. While this may be critiqued in some measure by readers or scholars from any number of vantage points, it was evident that people invest much in their work and professions and care about them deeply. A sense of identity emanates from work, and to be respected within that role as a professional moves people at a very deep and soulful level. As this participant noted:

*The discussions touched my vocation about which I am passionate and can be moved to tears. My choice of profession has much to do, for me at least, with living my values, with the heart of my soul.*

However, as noted by a couple of respondents, when respect and affirmation are not found upon return to the workplace, dissonance results that can be painful to the soul. Some respondents noted that the absence of any changes in their work position left them feeling “plagued” with questions about why they were not advancing, or frustrated and disheartened that they were not.

There is a need, identified both in this research as well as in the literature, to incorporate aspects of soul into the work-place. Yet, it would be unfortunate if employers sought to appropriate soul as a means to extract more labour from the labour force. It would be regrettable if soul became the latest iteration of the work ethic under the spirit of capitalism, as the total quality management framework has been criticized for doing. It can be envisioned that corporate opportunists may seek to exploit this dimension of human existence. Yet, some respondents alluded to the lack of soul in the workplace, and resulting feelings of alienation. In terms of work, a balance between incorporating soul, while not exploiting it, is important. Writers such as Dirkx (1996) and Briskin (1996) address the need to incorporate aspects of soul within the workplace as well.

Another important aspect relating to human relationships concerns the relationship with self. Participants felt greater self-respect, self-understanding and self-acceptance. One participant noted being moved that she now knew that *it was possible to live a vision of an expanded self*. A number of participants noted that subsequent to NEL, they had a greater awareness of their own needs and preferences, as well as a greater ability to negotiate the difficulties they faced within their relationships at work and at home. Through self-understanding, some noted that now they were more comfortable with

remaining in their current job situation and not aspiring to greater hierarchical positions, such as this participant noted:

*After the retreat, the most profound effect on me spiritually was that I have wanted to remove myself from the very things that I think NEL promotes - ambition, inspiring others, rising to new heights in career etc.*

People were both affirmed as individuals and as members of a group. Rather than feeling alienated in a profession or as a human being, people felt connected and an important and integral part of their profession through the NEL experience. Perhaps affirmation in their role and place in the world, rather than their cognitive view of the world, as well as the connection with mentors and peers, resulted in feelings which impact at a soulful level. People came to care for and respect each other. As one participant said:

*There are some very sad moments where people are sharing incredibly personal things and you feel like this is part of your own family. Not that its happening to you, but you feel this incredible compassion for what people have gone through. And you realize the real lows that come in life and the importance of having support around you.*

Taylor (1997), through his research, suggested that the collective unconscious is important in transformative learning. When one transcends their own individual needs, and is able to recognize, appreciate and align with the needs of others, such as a professional group, learning for self and others is achieved at a greater level. As suggested by Sardello, when teachers care for the souls of students, and when we care for the souls of each other, souls coalesce and conjoin into greater caring for community. Like love, when we love others as well as ourselves, we create love and caring in the world that is bigger than the sum of its parts. Sardello (1992) writes "Education is a

cultural enterprise, and as the word itself says, education concerns guidance of the soul into the world. Education in this sense concerns the drawing out of soul to conjoin with world soul,” (pp. 49-50) and in doing so, create the world’s soul. As we seek to find a way to save the planet ecologically and the diverse people who populate it globally, it may serve us well to nurture the idea that we can construct, or indeed are, of one soul.

Education has an important role in an undertaking such as this. Yet Sardello (1992) claims “education has become an institution whose purpose in the modern world is not to make culture, not to serve the living cosmos, but to harness humankind to the dead forces of materialism” (p. 50). How can we then move from such a construct to one of soul, as described here? It is well to not only acknowledge and appreciate what this type of environment offers to the soul that promotes learning, but to bring that understanding to a conscious level in order that it can be nurtured further in adult learning environments. Aspects of soul should not be ignored or viewed as non-rational, but should be recognized and respected in an interdependent way, along with conscious and rational ways, of learning, knowing and being.

Other human dimensions, related to the foregoing, that were noted as important to move people at a soul level include: commitment, inspiration, reflection, pride, risk, struggle, passion, faith, hope, disclosure, intensity, enlightenment, challenge, adventure, creativity, imagination, ethics and change. These elements were found in an environment where there was trust, respect, caring, humour, comfort and sharing. The overall effect was one of self-acceptance, healing, spiritualism, community, and catharsis, as this participant noted:



*I cried for about eight hours straight in the car on the way home. I couldn't explain it at the time, but I felt this overwhelming feeling of unburdening and emotional lightening. After that, for a long time, I was filled with a tremendous peace and sense of self.*

There are a number of elements to consider which augment relationships with self and others. The symbolic events at NEL were also very important in affecting the soul. The ceremonial, ritualistic and celebratory events were often noted as a means to connect with and appreciate inner dimensions of self. This element was also noted in relation to feeling connected with a broader community. The investing of baggage into a stone and tossing it away was a ritualistic physical means through which respondents became open to learning. The celebration dinner mid-way through the Institute was an opportunity for greater group bonding, both within the small work-groups as well as with the larger group. And the final series of rituals, including the commitment circle, the sweet-grass ceremony and the blanketing ceremony solidified the community feeling, enabled participants to feel authentically valued by library leaders, and even allowed and permitted a cathartic moment of tears which many noted would normally be avoided.

Another aspect that was important in the experience was the physical environment. NEL was held in a secluded place of natural stillness and beauty. As one participant put it, "I knew something magical would happen" the moment she arrived on site, with the surrounding mountains to serve as "stairs from the valley and steps to the sun's retreats" (Birney, 1959, p. 347). The natural environment was considered central to the experience of eliciting soul, and inspiring learning, as was the opulent accommodations and luscious meals. One participant noted:

*Part of the physical isolation, beauty and inherent sacredness of Emerald Lake is an offering, to those who chose, to find the earth's voice and hence to touch their own soul.*

Part of the impact that NEL has can be attributed to the environment itself, but also to what the environment means in the lives of some, if not many of the participants. As average income earners, many young librarians would not have much opportunity to enjoy an experience such as this. As one participant wrote:

*I was touched by the wonderful way that I was treated by the Institute. I have spent so long as a student and as the director of a poor library, that I have come to feel that doing things on the cheap is normal, and perhaps all that librarians deserve. It was a delight, then, to be treated with such opulence, and such attention to detail.*

This comment incites one to wonder: What is the relationship between how people are treated and how they come to view themselves and what they deserve, what they learn, what they are capable of achieving, and what they may contribute to the growth and well being of others? In learning environments, physical aspects are important to the esteem with which they hold themselves as learners, and influence the way people learn. This in turn may have negative implications for poor and under-funded educational programs.

The residential aspect of the Institute was also a factor in nurturing soul. Unlike many conferences or adult learning experiences, participants both stayed together and were part of the group for the entire five days. They shared sleeping quarters, did not return home to family, and were not interrupted by their offices. Although seclusion was not addressed directly in the survey instrument, it was alluded to by some and during the literature research it became more evident that this was an influential component. Fleming (1998) determined seven key factors that were important to learning in residence and attributed this to the experiential component of "being in the learning" (p. 267).

Interpreting these findings, Fleming describes *experiential* not as a teaching methodology, but used the term to refer more broadly to the residential experience. The seven factors her study deemed important were: free time required to discuss, process and reflect; group reinforcement and support; being immersed in the learning and detached from everyday lives; more opportunities to learn throughout a twenty-four hour time period; having fun and playing; personal relationships; and living together forced participants to go beyond their own comfort limits of personal interaction. These are factors for participants at NEL, although there has been consistent requests for more free time, which is addressed in the Recommendations section of this document.

Participants were asked about the experience as it related to the teaching methodology employed at the Institute to discover any potential relationship to soulful education. The majority of respondents indicated that they prefer experiential or activity and discussion based methods, and would have liked to have more outdoor learning. However, direct delivery methods were also important and some indicated that a good balance between the two is necessary, and was achieved, at NEL.

While all methods of instruction are important and useful depending on the context and the intent of the learning, it was also found that being moved at a soul level enhanced the learning achieved and the over-all experience. When asked, 62.7% of respondents noted that they believed being moved at an emotional, spiritual or soulful level positively influenced their learning. Yet, many expressed difficulty with answering the question, which is reasonable given the elusive nature of the concept. Those who did respond indicated that soulful, spiritual and emotional aspects positively impacted their learning

experience by *eliciting feeling*, which help with both learning and remembering, that it *reinforced* the learning, and that the learning was experienced *in the body*, perhaps in a visceral place, that has a great impact. One participant noted:

*Much of the learning at NEL took place through-and because of-the spiritual, soulful aspect. In reflecting on this, I've come to the conclusion that all effective learning has a soulful, spiritual component. The nature of this component almost always determines whether the learning that takes place is positive or negative; a positive soulful, spiritual aspect will mean that what is learned will be viewed in a positive light; a negative soulful, spiritual aspect will mean that what is learned will be viewed in a negative light.*

The previous comment also reflects the idea that to be moved at a soul level can be either positive or negative. As Elkins (1995) reminds us, soul “makes a place for depth as well as height, for failure as well as triumph... for woundedness as well as healing” (p. 86). In intense educational situations, sometimes learning is joyous and sometimes it is simply very hard, at least initially, and involves struggle.

We might now ask: **What then, might this mean for educators?** Again, the word *education* itself means *to lead out*. I have suggested here that an important aspect of leading out is to lead out the soul, so that it might conjoin with, and create anew, a world soul, which in turn, may create a more sustainable world. As I have argued here, we can nurture soul in education by creating holistic environments. A professional community, such as that within which NEL is placed, is an excellent forum in which to explore such a model. In such a holistic forum, learning occurs in community and incorporates a caring relationship with self and others; story; creativity; ritual; celebration; spiritualism; aesthetics; struggle; experiential and affirming learning that engages the

hearts, minds and bodies of participants – and finally, quite simply, magic. How each educator makes magic, is an independent, creative and soulful enterprise.

Peterson and Hart (1997) argue that there is an urgent need for us to re-form our educational policies and practices with ideas that reflect what students most often cite as enlivening their spirits: environments that give them hope and determination, a sense of control over their own lives, and a reconnection with their past as well as the present, with those around them, and with their spiritual selves. A moral and spiritual approach to education views the relationships between teachers and students as pivotal, and places the student as the centre of the educational process. This constitutes teaching not from the top down, but from the inside out.

The existence of soul within the learning environment fosters a pivotal source of vitality, energy, enthusiasm, and vigor. Learners are more able to bring their histories in all their dimensions to the classroom, be awake in the moment, and envision a full and multi-faceted future. How these ideas are transported to other forums by other educators is a question to consider. One might ponder how some of these elements can be incorporated into environments that are bound by location, such as downtown Toronto, bound by finances, or bound by institutional policy. As noted at the beginning of this research, this writing represents one way in which soul has been incorporated into an educational forum. The ways and means of doing so are unique to each educator. Educators who wish to create environments and opportunities that are soulful need only look into their own souls and that of their students, consider their environments, their needs and desires and draw on their creativity, as a collective and in concert with others.

And as mentioned earlier, that process itself is soulful. Soul enters into the teaching / learning dynamic through many of the forms discussed throughout this thesis. In order to be attentive to soul as educators, we would do well to be attuned to our own souls, and attentive to the souls of others, adults and children alike. We might then breathe life into the classroom, perhaps through some of the means discussed in this text, and most certainly through the creative means each teacher designs, and each learner offers, within their unique educational setting.

Although the educational forums we create may be soulful, and nurturing of soul, one might ultimately ask, as did one participant to Northern Exposure: *Yes, it was wonderful, but did we learn anything?* Again, as in the beginning, I would refer to Sardello, who suggests that learning is not *merely* (I would add) the pursuit of wisdom or the expulsion of ignorance, for we are forever between ignorance and knowledge. The object of education is *also* (again, added) to seek the beautiful (Sardello, 1985). If that is the object, we can quite likely say with certainty, that NEL was beautiful; its magic nurtured many souls. As this participant noted:

*There were moments that touched self-perception, self confidence, self worth as well as binding one to the careers and lives of other persons. There is a magic at Emerald Lake / NEL that is felt by most of the participants and many of the mentors and others. If one is prepared to allow it, the magic insinuates itself under ones professional and emotional facade to enrich and relieve many facets of our lives.*

This writing has become, ultimately, a rendering of that magic, and itself a celebration of it. And of course, whether or not something is learned, is for each individual person to determine. I most certainly believe that while people might forget what they were told, or even what they learned, they will remember how they felt – even if they forget what

caused them to feel that way. If learners felt *valued* and *cared for*, that will remain with them, in their souls or in some visceral place, and that will impact their lives.

## **Recommendations**

Research steeped in practice and intended to improve practice results in a number of insights for the researcher as a practitioner, and sometimes, as in this case, for the site which is the subject of the study, and for educators generally. With due respect for the accomplishments of NEL, and with consideration for its funding base, some recommendations for NEL are offered here, as well as a general recommendation for practitioners. A brief word about the insights of the researcher are offered in the final section: *On Ending and Beginning with Self*.

### ***Communities Within Communities***

A couple of participants drew attention to the potential of NEL, and opportunities like it, to perpetuate elitism or an “old boys club” which privileges a select few. Although many attending NEL felt that the experience created community, it can also be described as creating a community within a community. While the creation of community is valuable, and although the programmers at NEL are mindful of being inclusive in terms of age, race, gender, geography and type of library work, there is still the perception and feeling that NEL offers advantages to a select few. Therefore, care must be taken to be as inclusive as possible if NEL is to be of maximum benefit for the library profession as a whole. NEL promotional material and calls for nominations should reinforce that NEL is a learning opportunity for growth and development of leadership skills for *all* new librarians. Characterizations about NEL should accent that all are encouraged and welcome to apply,



and while NEL would like to accommodate all, its capacity is limited because of limited funds.

A number of participants also noted struggles within their organizations, and the lack of opportunities for positions or advancement; one participant mentioned the “great careers baby-boomers continue to have.” Related concerns and frustrations were described which are thought to be related to sexism, ageism, sexual preferences, etc. Although the library profession, like other female dominated professions such as nursing and teaching, continues to grapple with these issues, more attention should be given to this by the library leaders who are involved with NEL. NEL planners should arrange for sessions at annual conferences to be offered which address the responsibilities of senior librarians with respect to junior and mid-career librarians regarding these types of issues. While it is the case that such sessions do already occur, it may receive greater attention if they were offered by library leaders, and were cast as a leadership issue, to complement the feminist and egalitarian context they now have. Perhaps a different cohort of people might attend those sessions, such as senior librarians in positions of authority, which may advance greater positive social change. Further, all library leaders associated with NEL should be ever mindful to promote professional opportunities for all librarians’ growth as well as career advancement.

### ***Follow-Up and Ongoing Mentoring***

Another recommendation is that NEL programmers explore the means by which follow up could occur. This may occur in the form of another shorter, two-day session, or a session at a library conference. This was noted by participants as well:

*I find myself recently thinking about my experiences after the Institute...that while I reported on my experience to the Library...I couldn't really explain it...I wonder if there is any merit in providing some follow up a month or two after the Institute...I certainly have enjoyed the reunions.*

Another participant noted:

*I think that while NEL did have a profound effect on my life on different levels, it is more difficult to maintain/share the camaraderie that is a product of NEL since I am geographically so far away from the rest of the group. Besides the NEL list-serve I've had very little contact with my group members and I believe part of that is the isolation factor. Also because so many of the participants were either from the west coast area or Ontario, they knew or knew of each other beforehand which probably facilitated longer lasting relationships after the Institute was over. I realize that the Institute does everything possible to foster connections and long-term relationships, but this is something that is bound to be felt by participants who are from further away than most.*

Another reported:

*I am feeling somewhat unconnected with NEL at the moment. I have had little contact with any of the participants since the Institute. The listserv is a good idea, but there seems to be little activity on it. When I left the Institute I was very up and felt that we had established what amounted to an instant network. But as I mentioned there hasn't been much.*

Working to create a strong and vibrant list-serve would also be useful. Follow-up should also take the form of follow-up mentoring. A number of participants noted lack of mentoring in their places of work or regions in which they lived, as well as difficulties that arise when the expectations and hopes that emanate from the Institute are not met. NEL should consider assigning a mentor to each participant for at least periodic check-in or

follow-up, if not ongoing mentoring. The ways and means of this could vary as the NEL planners decide would work best, but it is something to consider.

### ***Creative Opportunities***

NEL should consider engaging learners more actively in discussing the sorts of creative opportunities they would enjoy. Such a dynamic learning context requires willingness and courage because it means sometimes that we must “fly without instruments” (as suggested in the comment below), but perhaps in an Institute that values risk, this could be done. As one mentor observed:

*A memorable activity for me was working at our learning tasks with the other people at my table. It was regularly exciting and moving to see the participants working in a group context to come to grips, sometimes hesitatingly or reluctantly, with our learning tasks. It was fun and enlightening to see my fellow mentor “working” our group. It was fun and challenging to decide when to prompt questions and when to try to answer them, when to shape the conversation and when to let it take its course, etc. All this teaching activity happened in real time, with no opportunity to confer or plan ahead of time; it felt exhilarating, like flying without instruments.*

### ***Free Time***

Programmers at NEL should reconsider the issue of free time, and schedule more of it into the program. Participants request it, and the literature indicates that it is a good time for reflection. There was also a request to experience more of the outdoors, and free time would allow those involved to spend more time outdoors in ways each prefers.

### ***Story Telling and Incorporation of Learners' Histories***

The importance of story telling is found increasingly in educational literature as a way to enrich learning, as is the importance of acknowledging adult learners' personal histories. Although NEL uses story, it is the stories of mentors that are shared. This opportunity should be extended to participants. It might be interesting and useful to have a session in which participants tell a story to their small work groups about themselves, as a means by which to introduce themselves. Alternatively, participants could tell a story about themselves at some point during the five days, as a means through which to reflect about where they have been, or project about a place to which they would like to go, or an end they would like to achieve.

### ***Emotional Support and Code of Conduct***

There are many issues that arise at NEL and a great deal of emotional feelings surface. In environments where this sort of intensity is evident, especially within helping relationships, problems involving intense feeling such as extreme trust, distrust, loving, liking, disliking, frustration, use or abuse of power and so on occur. Such feelings may occur between facilitators and participants, between participants, or between facilitators. For those in roles as adult educators, the resulting challenges are complex. While NEL has typically had a human relations / counselor at hand to assist in dealing with any such issues that might arise, it is important to continue to pay attention to these concerns. As discussed by Robertson, the field of adult education has not embraced the challenge of preparing and supporting adult educators to deal with these issues. Robertson (1996)

makes a number of recommendations which NEL should consider, such as formalizing guidelines for dealing with issues, and developing a Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct for those involved with NEL, as well as maintaining an ongoing relationship with a formally trained adult educator.

### ***Expand the Opportunities to Mid-Career Librarians***

There are indications, discovered informally, that mid-career librarians would also benefit from the extension of the community being formed to include those other than junior librarians, such as mid-career librarians. NEL programmers should initiate a dialogue within the profession about the ways and means to create an opportunity for this, perhaps modeled on NEL, or through an expansion of NEL to include other groups.

### ***Recommendations for Teaching Practitioners***

Recommendations for practitioners are somewhat difficult to write, given the diverse nature of the work practitioners undertake, and the diverse ages and types of groups with which they work. If you are such a practitioner, and seeking suggestions here, I suspect your challenges are many, and your situations varied. There are numerous suggestions embedded within the conclusion of this document, particularly following the question: *What then, might this mean for educators?* Additionally, I would add that you attend your own soul, follow your own heart and listen to your inner voice. As you do that, allow and encourage your students to do the same. Together, in a caring, respectful and compassionate environment, share power by not assuming it, and design how you will

live and grow together. Teaching and learning in a soulful way is a creative undertaking. Use your imagination. Take risks. Trust yourself. You'll know what to do.

### **Areas for Further Research**

In addition to recommendations related to the topic of this research, research also results in unearthing a number of unanswered questions that were not addressed by the research. In this case, many questions remain, and some of them are offered here.

#### ***Long-Term Impact of NEL***

An area that could be investigated more fully over time is that concerning the long-term implications or impact of NEL. This research touched on that, and could be more fully explored because these are questions of interest to the programmers of NEL as well as within the profession of librarianship.

#### ***Gender Bias and Exclusion in Librarianship***

This research alludes to the potential perpetuation of what respondents have called "the old boys club." Research on librarianship as a numerically female dominated profession occurs within librarianship. Continual and ongoing research is needed to erode the perpetuation of patriarchy, and stratifications, both hierarchically and laterally, within the profession.

### ***Women and Soul***

Much of the literature that speaks directly to soul, has been written by men, such as Moore, Sardello, Cousineau, Zukav, Elkins. As a female researcher, I would have valued the perspective and incorporation of the perspectives of women. Thus, more research and writing by women relating to soul would be a most welcome addition to the literature.

### ***Mentorship***

From this research, it seems that mentorship occurs on a group-by-group basis as well as on a person-to-person basis. This warrants further investigation, especially as it occurs within professional contexts.

### **On Ending and Beginning with Self**

When Socrates addressed the senators of Athens at his trial he didn't ask for their mercy or forgiveness or even defend himself. Instead, he asked why they weren't ashamed of spending their lives hoarding money and fame and '*caring so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard at all?*' (Cousineau, 1994, p. 120)

It is a great gift, to regard the soul, and to explore it as a topic such as this. The opportunity to undertake research of this nature, and to engage in educational discourse of this sort is a privilege for so many reasons, not least among them is the self-growth that the researcher experiences. This topic, in particular, has been delightfully moving and

fulfilling; it has enhanced my ability to attend to my own soul, enriched its dimensions, and informed my attempt to honour the soul of others. For this, I am grateful. While not always easy, it was an informative process. I am a different sort of teacher as a result of this research, and this doctoral program generally. I now consider the importance of soul, and understand more fully its place within education. I now more fully appreciate the importance of learners' histories, their voices and their preferences regarding learning – both in terms of content and in terms of methodology.

This research has reinforced some ideas about education that I already had regarding the importance of experiential learning. What it has illuminated for me is the need to balance experiential learning with alternate methodologies. Balance aids in interpretation, analysis and integration and also allows for breaks in active participation which allows time for needed reflection, as this participant reminded me:

*Most of the activities and discussions were enjoyable, but I think that it is nice to have some direct-delivery sprinkled in here and there, so the participants aren't too exhausted. I enjoyed the mix, and appreciated the occasional opportunity to just listen, rather than constantly talking.*

Equally important, I've learned that education is not neutral. Nor is NEL. I engaged with NEL with the constant small voice inside my head that questioned the degree to which NEL promotes equity and the way in which it might perpetuate privilege. I've considered that issue more fully and the small voice still resonates. However, I now am more comfortable in the knowledge that NEL does make an important difference in the lives of many. It enhances the profession through inspiration. Many librarians at NEL feel worthy and cared for, in an unprecedented way. In a world where people are so often told



in subtle ways that they are unworthy, or undone (as in the need for “lifelong” learning), NEL is a soulfully affirming voice and an example of education that acknowledges the wonder of each. It is a good thing. This research helped me to appreciate that. It also allowed the opportunity to think about how NEL can minimize negative effects and has allowed a forum in which to encourage senior library leaders of influence to work toward the creation of an egalitarian and gender equitable profession.

Good teachers seek to know and understand who they are. As a metaphor, and literally, this research has enabled me to do that. Scott (1997) suggests that soul work is transformative and that is not easy. It is hard and makes one vulnerable. She notes that often people go into a kind of hibernation, work on art projects, or use their hands in some way. In development of the brain, the body is often regarded as an appendage or house, while a reintegration of the body and mind is soulwork. Doing this research enabled me to paint, an ability I never knew I had, and painting has enabled me to see myself and the world differently. It has allowed me to see colour. Where I once saw only greens and blues and reds, I now see hues of ochre and lavender and chartreuse and crimson and pumpkin. Painting was a powerful teacher for me and was crucial during this process. It offered a channel into my soul and a conduit to allow elements of my soul to be released. Painting provided animation of the idea that each of us is unique and sees the world uniquely. Upon that seeing, we then each uniquely render it. Art, in its doing and its viewing, has a unique capacity to awaken the soul, and teach it, like little else.

Historically, education for me has been a process of developing my thinking self, with a concentration on cognition. I recall learning well the process of scientific method,

and doing well in law. Undertaking this doctoral study, however, has allowed me flexibility, room to move, to grow and to be. It has afforded me both the permission and the reason to read the types of literature that have been only at the margins of my life. Now, this seems so central to who I am and who I am becoming. Reading *When the Drummers Were Women*, an historical account dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC of women drummers and goddesses, allowed me to gain an historical appreciation, to compliment a sociological interpretation, of the oppression and silencing of women. Recent interpretations such as those of Gilligan (1982) and Belenky, et al. (1986, 1997) coupled with my advisor's encouragement to let my voice be heard, gave me voice. Such reading also allowed an interpretive methodology that is closer to my own view of an expanding world beyond that of positivistic interpretations.

I have developed a further appreciation of aspects of soul, including the importance of place. I found it useful to undertake this research in a place that nurtured soul. I was just this moment in the coffee room refilling my cup at the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker Canada Centre, at the University of Saskatchewan, where I work. The room overlooks the beautiful South Saskatchewan River valley. I didn't write in a room such as that, though. I wrote in what used to be the Director's windowless office, where I painted the beige walls salmon. There is no place to look out there, no window, so I had to look within – which, I think now, in retrospect, has served me well. I was immediately surrounded by some of Diefenbaker's books: his *Oxford English Dictionary* in 13 volumes; his collection of *Empire Club Address*; the *Masters of Eloquence* series (I should be so lucky); a 23-volume set from 1913 of *Canada and Its Provinces*; and, *The*

*Makers of Canada* in 21 volumes. I also had a collection of aboriginal, carved walking sticks and buffalo markers, as well as other art, which I acquired to support local artists. Finally, I had a nearly two foot quartz sculpture of a squatting woman, elbows on knees with head in hands. She became my muse, and is the epitome of all I strive for: to live with grace and to remain humble. I have been blessed.

### **Closing**

To sum, this research has enabled me to pause in an otherwise hectic life and consider a great question.

By cultivating ... the ability of living in uncertainty without despair or surrender, we can respond to the godless hours and spiritless days with soulful moves from the garret and pulpit back to the street to answer the ground level question, *How should I actually live my life?* (Cousineau, 1994, p. 120).

It is crucial that peoples of the Western world begin to seriously explore aspects of soul in all dimensions of life. Or, perhaps if we do not, as Moore (1996a) suggests, ours will be a dangerous time. This will be because human community and civility are not humanistic achievements; they are the work of the ghosts of memory and the spirits of place, of the genius in things, and the soul of culture. If we believe that attending to the soul is necessary in culture and in society generally, and we believe that education plays an important role in the development of society, then soul is well placed within education. Educators are positioned to attend to and nurture the souls of learners, and in doing so, draw on their histories, listen to their voices, and share power and process in the development of educational initiatives. Perhaps educators may help learners avoid the

tragedy noted by Wilde (1911): “It is tragic how few people ever ‘possess their souls’ before they die” (p. 82).

As indicated here, this professional adult educational forum attended to and nurtured soul through: attention to the importance of relationships within a professional caring community with peers, mentors and self; ceremony, symbol and the sacred; risk; struggle and disclosure; ethics; creativity and imagination; physical environment; and, residential factors such as shared accommodations and meals. These, in addition to the use of a variety of teaching methods, with a particular concentration on experiential learning, resulted in a long-term impact. More to the point, the confluence of these moved over 93% of respondents at a soul level. For many, NEL profoundly moved them, taught them in a unique way, and quite simply, made magic.

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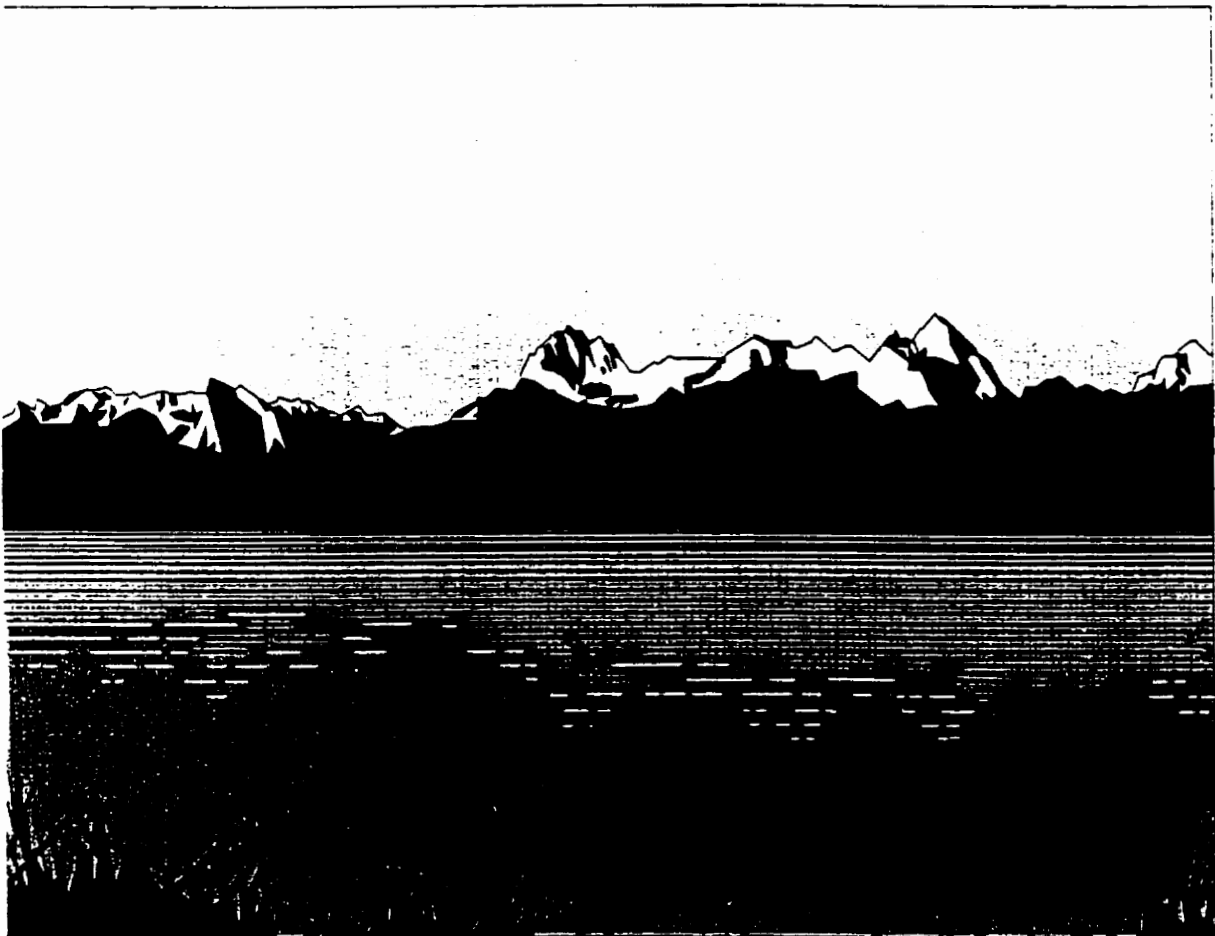
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## Northern Exposure to Leadership Participant's Agenda for February 11 - 16, 1999

### Participant Introduction and Orientation

- noon Drive to Emerald Lake.
- 3:45 pm Check-in at Lodge, unpack
- 5:30 - 7:00 **Dinner, Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge**
- 7:00 - 7:30 **Introductions and Orientation** (*Vice-President's Room*)
- 7:30 **'Born to Lead'** (*Vice-President's Room*)



## "Finding Passion, Courage and Vision"

7:00 am Breakfast, *Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge*

8:30 - 8:45 **Daily survey**

### All sessions today in Vice-President's Room

8:45 - 10:15 **Finding your Passion and Courage**

10:15 - 10:30 Break

10:30 - noon **Finding your Passion and Courage, cont'd**

Noon Box lunches - *eat wherever you'd like to.*

1:30 - 3:00 pm **The Power of Vision**

3:00 - 3:15 Break

3:15 - 4:30 **The Power of Vision, cont'd**

4:45 - 5:15 **"Northern Reflections"**

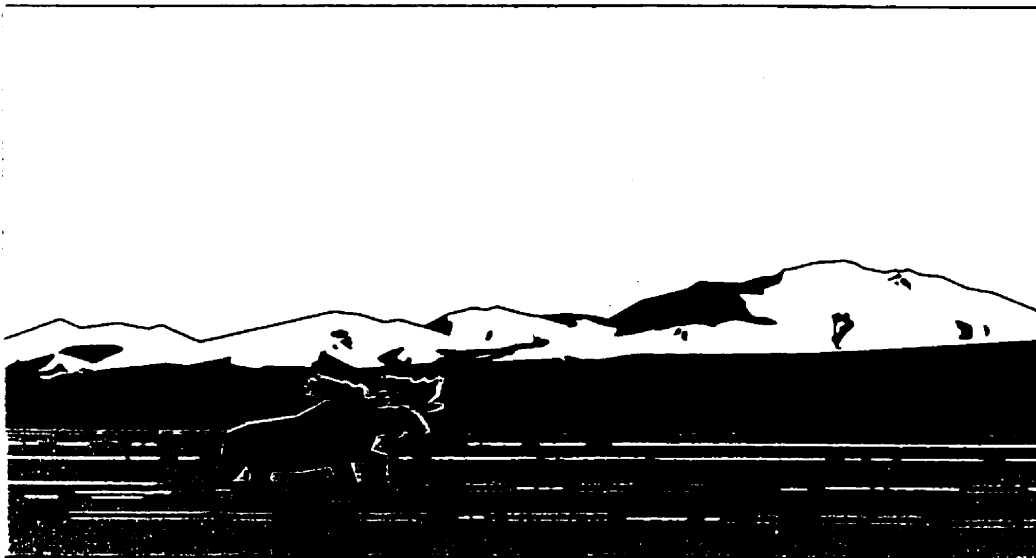
7:00 **Celebration Dinner** (*Cilantro's*)

9:15 Hand in **Daily survey**



## "Coping with Change: professional and personal perspectives"

7:00 am	Breakfast, <i>Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge</i>
8:30- 8:45	<b>Daily survey</b>
9:00 - 10:15	<b>Ethics: know your profession, know yourself</b>
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - noon	<b>Getting Through the Wilderness.</b>
noon - 1:15	Lunch, <i>Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge</i>
1:15 - 3:15 pm	<b>Chaos</b> ( <i>on the frozen lake</i> )
3:15 - 3:30	Break
3:30 - 4:15	<b>Chaos</b> ( <i>Vice-President's Room</i> )
4:30 - 5:00	<b>"Northern Reflections"</b>
6:00 - 7:30	Dinner, <i>Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge</i>
7:30	Hand in <b>daily survey</b>
7:45	Evening free



## "Taking it home: living as a leader"

7:00 am Breakfast, *Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge*

### All this morning's sessions in the Vice-President's Room

8:30 - 8:45 **Daily survey**

8:45 - 10:00 **Bridging the Strategic Gap**

10:00 - 10:15 Break

10:15 - noon **Leading Yourself**

Noon Lunch, *Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge*

1:00 - 1:45 pm **Northern Reflections**

2:00 - 5:00 **Learning from Leaders** (*Individual locations*)

5:00 - 7:00 **Free Time**

7:00 **Closing Banquet**, *Cilantro's, Emerald Lake Lodge*

9:45 Hand in **Daily survey**



## "Reflections of Emerald Lake"

7:00 am	Breakfast, <i>Dining Room, Emerald Lake Lodge</i>
8:30 - 8:45	<b>Daily survey</b>
8:45 - 9:15	<b>Working Groups</b>
9:15 - 10:30	<b>Honouring Ceremony</b>
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Closing remarks</b>

Participants check out of Lodge

Participants travel to Calgary airport by bus.



***Northern Exposure to Leadership:  
Questionnaire for all Participants and Mentors***

***July, 1999***

**Thank you for participating in this study. Your responses will provide valuable information to:**

- Explore the meanings and understandings that people have made of Northern Exposure to Leadership, as well as the impact it has had on their professional and work lives;
- Help you understand and interpret your experience in relation to others' understandings of theirs;
- Contribute to the discipline of education especially in the areas of experiential learning, adult education and the role of soul in educational practice;
- Contribute to my doctoral research for the project "*Education to Nurture the Soul: An Exploration of Influential Elements at Northern Exposure to Leadership.*"

**The questions are intended to be a guide to evoke your thoughts and responses and give you the freedom and flexibility to respond in the way best suited to you. The questionnaire may take up to one hour to complete.**

**Please contact me, Donna Brockmeyer-Klebaum, or my research supervisor, Dr. Tom Sork, if you have any questions or concerns.**

**Please mail this form or email your responses to D. Brockmeyer-Klebaum at the address below:**

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- 1. I am interested in knowing about your experiences at Northern Exposure to Leadership. What of note happened to you? Please feel to comment on any elements you wish, such as on a moment that you think of frequently, or on experiences that had the greatest impact on you or moved you the most.**

**2. Do you believe the experience of NEL had a lasting impact on your career, or your life generally? If so, please explain.**

- 3. What did you think of the activity based learning (i.e. Chaos) and the participant based learning (i.e. group discussions) compared to direct delivery or lecture based methods of instruction that you experienced either at NEL or outside of it?**

**I am interested in knowing if NEL moved you at an emotional, spiritual or soulful level. The next three questions are intended to collect information about those aspects.**

**The conception of soul is an elusive one. Dr. David Elkins suggests that to know the soul, we must lay aside our rational ways of knowing and open ourselves to the world of reverence, feeling, imagination, imagery, poetry, art, ritual, ceremony, and symbol. Soul is empathic resonance; it is the catch of the breath, the awe in the heart, the lump in the throat, the tear in the eye.**

- 4. Do you feel you were moved or touched at an emotional, spiritual or soulful level either at the Institute itself or because of it? If so, please describe.**

**5. If you were impacted at a soulful, spiritual, or emotional level, to what degree do you believe the following conditions were important to creating those feelings?**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
A. A caring environment	1	2	3
B. Mentor / organizers attention and support	1	2	3
C. Ceremony / ritual	1	2	3
D. Shared commitments	1	2	3
E. Celebrations	1	2	3
F. Risk taking	1	2	3
G. Physical setting	1	2	3
H. Shared meals	1	2	3
I. Community, connections	1	2	3
J. Feeling heard	1	2	3
K. Feeling respected	1	2	3
L. Program elements	1	2	3
M. Reinforcement that you can make a difference	1	2	3
N. The learning/teaching you experienced	1	2	3
O. Experiential or activity-based learning	1	2	3
P. Struggle	1	2	3
Q. Music	1	2	3
R. Creativity (skits, etc.)	1	2	3
S. Story telling	1	2	3
T. Other (please specify) _____			

**6. If you believe you were impacted at a soulful, spiritual, or emotional level, do you think this impacted the nature and degree of your *educational* (either as a teacher or learner) experience? If so, please explain.**

**7. Do you have any other comments, concerns or points you would like to make? If so, please do so here.**

8. Could you please supply some identifying information? Be reminded that this information will be kept confidential and that responses will be identified by code only.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

9. You were a:      Participant: \_\_\_\_\_      Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

10. You are:      Female: \_\_\_\_\_      Male: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Your age is:      20-29: \_\_\_\_\_      30-39: \_\_\_\_\_      40-49: \_\_\_\_\_      50-59: \_\_\_\_\_      60+: \_\_\_\_\_

12. In which library sector are you employed?

Public: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic: \_\_\_\_\_

Special: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_.

13. In which year did you attend Northern Exposure to Leadership?

1994: \_\_\_\_\_      1996: \_\_\_\_\_      1997: \_\_\_\_\_      1999: \_\_\_\_\_

14. In which of the following would you be willing to participate?

14a.      An *in-person* interview?      Yes: \_\_\_\_\_      No: \_\_\_\_\_

14b.      An *email exchange*?      Yes: \_\_\_\_\_      No: \_\_\_\_\_

14c.      A *telephone* interview?      Yes: \_\_\_\_\_      No: \_\_\_\_\_

14d.      A *focus group* at a conference or other convenient location?  
Yes: \_\_\_\_\_      No: \_\_\_\_\_

*Again, thank you for your contribution to this study and for your support.*

Please return this form to D. Brockmeyer by July 31, 1999

**APPENDIX C: TABLES**

**Table 1: General topic areas mentioned when asked what respondents remember most, or what moved them at a soul level**

**NOTE:** These questions regard what impacted respondents most, or moved them at a soul level, are grouped by type, and are listed below. The corresponding numbers represent the number of the respondents (N=62) who stressed each factor. Each respondent may have noted more than one factor, and most did. These findings indicate general topic areas discussed, and do not reflect every instance of use for every word. These numbers should not be construed to represent exact references to various aspects of NEL. Categories were created and numbers were tallied to give me a broad, but numerically based, impression of the occurrences of the aspects mentioned.

<b>Broad Topic</b>	<b>Specific Aspect</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
<b>Human factors, Others</b>		
	People, relationships	28
	Mentors	14
	Work groups	10
	Personal stories	10
	Conversation	05
	Community	03
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Human factors, Self</b>		
	Personal Development	13
	Myers Briggs	11
	Self-confidence	08
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Symbolic Events</b>		
	Ceremony / Ritual	22
	Celebration	05
	<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>



<b>Program</b>		
	<b>Specifically experiential<sup>15</sup></b>	12
	<b>Content (generally)</b>	08
	<b>Total</b>	20
<b>Environmental Factors</b>		
	<b>Physical Environment</b>	15
	<b>Food</b>	05
	<b>Total</b>	20
<b>Professional Considerations</b>		
	<b>Own Career</b>	07
	<b>Profession generally</b>	07
	<b>Total</b>	14
<b>Emotional</b>		09
<b>Commitment</b>		08
<b>Inspiration</b>		06
<b>Reflection</b>		05
<b>Pride</b>		05
<b>Risk</b>		05
<b>Struggle</b>		05
<b>Gestalt</b>		05
<b>Passion</b>		05
<b>Faith / Hope</b>		04
<b>Disclosure</b>		04
<b>Life Changing</b>		03
<b>Creativity</b>		04
<b>Healing</b>		03
<b>Letting Go / Catharsis</b>		03
<b>Humour</b>		03
<b>Change</b>		03
<b>Transportation (driving issue)<sup>16</sup></b>		03
<b>Powerful / Intense</b>		03
<b>Enlightening</b>		02
<b>Visioning</b>		02

<sup>15</sup> A number of respondents refer to an experiential simulation of organizational interaction called CHAOS, which is held out of doors.

<sup>16</sup> A few respondents referred to a rather harrowing drive in a mountain, whiteout snowstorm.

<b>Honoured / Respected</b>		<b>02</b>
<b>Uncomfortable</b>		<b>02</b>
<b>Thinking</b>		<b>02</b>
<b>Sharing</b>		<b>02</b>
<b>Comfortable</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Room-mate</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Challenged</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Humbling</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Adventure</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Airport<sup>17</sup></b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Hokey</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Skeptical</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Cultish</b>		<b>01</b>
<b>Balance of career and family</b>		<b>01</b>

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<sup>17</sup> This refers to participants being met by the mentors at the airport.

**TABLE 2: Provided List of Factors Impacting Soul: Average Rating out of 3**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mean</b>
a.	A caring environment	2.8
b.	Mentor / organizer attention and support	2.8
c.	Ceremony / ritual	2.7
d.	Shared commitments	2.4
e.	Celebrations	2.6
f.	Risk taking	2.5
g.	Physical setting	2.6
h.	Shared meals	2.4
i.	Community, connections	2.5
j.	Feeling heard	2.6
k.	Feeling respected	2.7
l.	Program elements	2.4
m.	Reinforcement that you can make a difference	2.6
n.	The learning / teaching you experienced	2.4
o.	Experiential or activity based learning	2.6
p.	Struggle	2.0
q.	Music	1.7
r.	Creativity (skits, etc.)	2.1
s.	Story telling	2.4
t.	Other	

**Table 3: Provided List of Factors Impacting Soul: Detailed Response Information**

**Key: Q = Question Element: (See Findings for more information).**

- a. A Caring environment
- b. Mentor / organizers attention and support
- c. Ceremony / ritual
- d. Shared commitments
- e. Celebrations
- f. Risk Taking
- g. Physical setting
- h. Shared meals
- i. Community, connections
- j. Feeling heard
- k. Feeling respected
- l. Program elements
- m. Reinforcement that you can make a difference
- n. The learning / teaching you experienced
- o. Experiential or activity based learning
- p. Struggle
- q. Music
- r. Creativity (skits, etc.)
- s. Story telling
- t. Other

**R = Respondent Number**

**S = Sex (F = female; M = male)**

**A = Age (1 = 20-29; 2 = 30-39; 3 = 40-49; 4 = 50-59; 5 = 60+)**

**R = Position (P=participant; M=mentor; F=facilitator)**

**TABLE: Elements impacting feeling moved at a soulful, emotional or spiritual level.**

Q =>	S	A	P	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t
<b>R</b>																							
1	F	4	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	F	4	M	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	F	2	P	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	
4	M	3	P	2	3	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	
5	M	2	P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	M	3	P	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	2	
7	M	4	M	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	0	2	3	0	3	3	3	0	1	3	2	
8	F	2	P	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	

9	F	3	P	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	
10	F	3	P	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	X
11	M	4	F	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	X
12	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	
13	F	5	M	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	3	3	
14	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	
15	F	4	P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
16	M	2	P	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	
17	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	
18	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	
19	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	X
20	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	
21	F	3	P	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	
22	M	4	F	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	
23	M	4	F	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	
24	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	1	2	2	3	1	1	3	
25	M	2	P	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	3	
26	F	3	P	3	2	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	
27	F	1	P	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
28	M	2	P	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	
29	F	2	P	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	
30	F	3	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
31	M	2	P	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	
32	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	
33	M	3	P	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	
34	F	2	P	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	
35	M	3	P	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	X
36	F	3	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	X
37	M	4	M	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	X
38	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	
39	F	2	P	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	
40	F	2	P	3	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	
41	M	2	P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
42	M	2	P	3	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	
43	F	4	M	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	X
44	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	
45	F	1	P	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	
46	F	2	P	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	
47	F	1	P	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	
48	M	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	
49	F	2	P	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	
50	M	2	P	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	
51	F	1	P	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	
52	F	2	P	3	3	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	
53	F	1	P	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	
54	M	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	3	3	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	
55	F	3	P	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	
56	M	2	P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

57	F	2	P	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	X
58	M	4	M	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	2	2	X
59	M	3	P	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	
60	F	4	M	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	
61	F	2	P	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	
62	F	2	P	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	2		
SUM				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	1	1	
				6	6	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	1	7	2	3	
				0	0	2	5	7	4	0	7	3	9	5	5	6	7	7	7		1	5	

Other, noted by an X above included:

<i>Giving</i>
<i>State of mind at the time of the Institute</i>
<i>The people</i>
<i>I also found the various mementos very important as well – not so much at the time but I treasure them now.</i>
<i>Mentor self control (to hear; not to be heard)</i>
<i>Impact of being met [at the airport]</i>
<i>Initial bonding on the bus</i>
<i>Solitary and small group digestion time (rated 2; other than room mates, we didn't allow much)</i>
<i>I think the condition of having been recommended and chosen to participate was important to all.</i>
<i>Shared accommodations. No radio, TV, telephone, computer.</i>
<i>The participants: Nellies. They ultimately make it work and individually or collectively I imagine that they could derail the process pretty quickly if they wished.</i>
<i>Uniquely Canadian</i>

**Table 4: Lasting Impact of NEL on Career**

Response	Participants (n=51)		Mentors / Facilitators (n=11)		TOTALS (n=62)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	32	62.7%	7	63.7%	39	62.9%
No	6	11.8%	2	18.2%	8	12.9%
Too Soon to Tell	5	9.8%	0	0	5	8.1%
Not Sure	8	15.7%	2	18.2%	10	16.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	51	100%	11	100.1%	62	100%

**Table 5: Lasting Impact of NEL on Life**

Responses	Participants (n=51)		Mentors / Facilitators (n=11)		TOTALS (n=62)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	17	33.3%	4	36.4%	21	33.9%
No	0	0%	0	0	0	0
Too Soon to Tell	4	07.8%	0	0	4	6.5%
Not Sure	5	09.8%	0	0	5	8.1%
No Answer	25	49.0%	7	63.6%	32	51.6%
<b>TOTALS</b>	51	99.9	11	100%	62	100.1%

**Table 6: Preferences Regarding Method of Instruction**

**Note: Totals are number of responses given, not number of respondents. Each respondent may have given more than one response, therefore total percentages are calculated upon responses given, rather than number of respondents.**

Responses	Participants		Mentors / Facilitators		Total 100%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Prefers Experiential/ Outdoors/ Discussion</b>	25	36.8%	3	27.3%	28	36.4%
<b>Good Balance</b>	14	20.6%	6	54.5%	20	26%
<b>Likes all Types</b>	11	16.2%	0		11	14.3%
<b>Prefers Direct Delivery</b>	6	8.8%	0		6	7.8%
<b>Prefers "More" Outdoors</b>	3	4.5%	0		3	3.9%
<b>Pilot (question not asked)</b>	9	13.2%	2	18.2%	9	11.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	68	100.1%	11	100%	77	100.1%