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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE VIABILITY OF LEARNING JOURNALS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL
METHODOLOGY FOR ADULT LEARNERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Gale R. Mazur

July 8, 2008

Cara Garcia, Ph.D.—Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Gale R. Mazur

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the students and faculty of Chapman University College who have been a source of inspiration and encouragement and from whom I have learned so much.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was a collaborative effort that would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and inspiration of others. I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to those who contributed to this dissertation journey.

Thank you to my dissertation committee who are all remarkable educators. Dr. Cara Garcia, my dissertation chair, coached and guided me through the research process. Thank you for your thought-provoking insights that gave me direction and kept me focused and motivated. I appreciate the thoughtful contributions of Dr. Farzin Madjidi, which enhanced my research; thank you for serving on my committee and demonstrating throughout the program the meaning of organizational leadership. And thank you Dr. Jan Jackson for your support, encouragement, and guidance, which made the research at Chapman University College possible. You are a wonderful role model of teaching excellence, mentor, and friend. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have a dissertation committee whose commitment and enthusiasm made this effort challenging and rewarding.

Thank you to the students, faculty and administrative staff at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College who make teaching such a joy. I appreciate the enthusiasm and support I received in doing my research. Without the willingness, cooperation, and interest of students and faculty to support this effort, this study would not have been possible; I thank all who volunteered. And thank you to the administrative staff members who were so helpful in facilitating the coordination of the study.

Thank you to the many wonderful people at Pepperdine University who have given me opportunities to learn, grow, and have fun. I appreciate the camaraderie of the

colleagues of my Pepperdine cohort whose friendship, support, and humor have enhanced this journey. I also thank the many outstanding Pepperdine professors, who challenged and encouraged me while making learning enjoyable. And a special thank you to Pepperdine's administrative staff and especially Christie Dailo, who made maneuvering through this process easy.

And finally, thank you to my husband Gerry and family who believed in me; without your support and encouragement this would not have been possible. I truly appreciate how you kept everything running while I focused on this effort. Your love, support, and good humor gave me perspective while keeping me motivated. My hope is that my children, Dan and Kari, find the joys and benefits in their education as I continue to have in mine.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study used student and faculty focus groups to examine learning journals' effectiveness as an instructional methodology for adults enrolled in undergraduate and graduate Organizational Leadership (OL) degree programs. Learning journals are assigned to encourage reflection; however, concerns have arisen from student complaints that they constitute busywork. The study's purpose was to examine learning journals' viability by determining to what extent they deepened and broadened students' understanding of leadership, generated greater self-awareness, provided a leadership development tool, and encouraged the application of leadership knowledge.

Students nearing degree completion as well as faculty teaching in the OL programs participated in qualitative focus group interviews. There were 9 focus groups conducted; transcripts were used for data analysis. Frequency analyses measured the strength of themes and patterns that emerged validating the findings and conclusions.

The study found that learning journals are a viable instructional strategy for many, but not all adult learners enrolled in OL degree programs. Journaling can deepen and broaden students' understanding of leadership by internalizing and integrating learning as well as providing a study tool. Learning journals generate greater self-awareness in many students through increased self-knowledge and recognition of personal strengths, feelings, and emotions. Learning journals contributed to personal and leadership growth and some found them an effective problem solving tool. Journaling encouraged students to apply learning through changed thinking and behavior.

The focus group participants offered suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of learning journals. They recommended journaling assignments with clearly defined

requirements and instructor feedback. The purpose and value of journaling should be introduced in orientation and reinforced by instructors. Finally, alternative strategies to build reflective thinking skills such as dialogue should be considered.

This study raised several issues requiring further research. Although participants had a strong preference for structured journaling, an examination of what constitutes a well-designed assignment is needed. Second, the study was limited to participants who completed their degree requirements and had multiple journaling assignments; exploring the perceptions of students earlier in the program might yield different outcomes. Another area of inquiry was raised when participants suggested incorporating alternative strategies to build reflective thinking.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

Philosopher and educator Dewey (1933) wrote that an aim of education is reflective thinking because it “enables us to know what we are about when we act. It converts action that is merely appetitive, blind and impulsive into intelligent action” (p. 17). In reflecting, we consider and contemplate complex ideas, changing surface learning into deep understanding. Reflection creates new knowledge by providing different perspectives and insights into ideas and experiences; it enhances our capability to see beyond what is and visualize new possibilities and outcomes. By thinking reflectively, we understand the importance and implications of learning and experience, which enable us to apply them in our lives (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Lockyer, Gondocz, & Thevierge, 2004). True education extends beyond teaching information, knowledge, and skills; it facilitates and encourages students to reflect carefully and actively on learning so they understand its meaning. Education is most relevant when learning is applied beyond the classroom to enhance learners’ professional and personal lives. This is accomplished through reflective thinking.

Developing the capacity for reflection is a key learning outcome in the Bachelor’s and Master’s of Arts in Organizational Leadership (OL) degrees offered by Chapman University College, an accredited institution that provides a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs for working adults. The OL programs, offered at more than 12 Chapman University College campuses throughout California, are designed for employed professionals with strong interests and experiences in business, management, and administration. The coursework emphasizes linking leadership theory and practice,

giving students the possibility of immediately implementing what they are learning, as well as preparing them for future and longer-term challenges. Students working toward a Bachelor's of Arts (BAOL) are typically employed in or aspire to entry- to midlevel management positions; those pursuing a Master's of Arts (MAOL) have or seek senior-level and executive leadership roles. Students choose Chapman University College because they want personalized education that meets their needs as adult learners and prepares them to address successfully the challenges of leadership in a rapidly changing world. Chapman University College believes that developing skills in reflective thinking deepens and broadens students' understanding of classroom learning, enabling them to transfer and apply learning to their professional and personal lives.

Assigning learning journals as a vehicle for reflection is an instructional methodology that is frequently used in the OL programs at Chapman University College. The faculty believes learning journals are an excellent strategy to achieve the stated goal of developing the capacity for reflective thinking in undergraduate and graduate OL adult learners. Through journaling, students develop the skills of reflection required for thoughtful action, better equipping them to handle successfully professional and personal challenges.

Learning journals, which have been described as “a means to systematically document learning and promote self-analysis, reflection and positive action” (Burnett & Meacham, 2002, p. 412), are not uncommon as an assignment in higher education. Educators have documented the value of learning journals as a way to deepen students' understanding of complex course concepts in more than 30 disciplines, including literature, mathematics, computer technology, and science (Haigh, 2001; Langer, 2002;

Moon, 2006). In addition, journaling has been found to facilitate the integration of learning with prior experiences and feelings, improving the professionalism and practice of teachers and nurses (Kreber, 2004; Lyons, 1999; Spalding & Wilson, 2002). In justifying the use of learning journals in a doctoral program for executives, Nirenberg (1998) states this instructional strategy “melds job-related experience, personal insight and academic theory in a practical, immediately relevant way” (p. 58). Such evidence supports the use of learning journals as an effective methodology in higher education. Learning journals encourage reflection, which changes information into understanding and enables students to transform learning and experience into new knowledge that can enhance their success professionally and personally.

Statement of the Issue

Instructors in the undergraduate and graduate OL programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College frequently assign reflective learning journals as a significant course component; however their viability as an instructional methodology for adult learners studying OL has not been validated. For the purposes of this study, viability is defined as a measure of how capable or effective learning journals are in producing greater learning. Specifically, faculty members say they assign learning journals to enhance the educational experience by developing reflective thinking skills, deepen and broaden students’ knowledge and understanding of course concepts, provide a tool for personal assessment and development of leadership skills, and encourage the interpretation and application of knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to their students’ professional and personal lives. Although very limited research has been identified on the use of learning journals in leadership programs, these beliefs are

confirmed by educators who have researched and documented the outcomes of using journals in a variety of disciplines in higher education (Kerka, 1996, 2002; Moon, 2006).

Students enrolled in OL programs at Chapman University College often complain about learning journals, claiming they are busywork without value outside of the classroom. Unable to connect the relevance of learning journals and reflective thinking to professional and organizational effectiveness, they describe workplaces that reward action not reflection. These comments are validated by studies of management education in business environments that have traditionally emphasized experience and active involvement, or learning by doing, over reflective thought (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). For example, The Center for Workforce Development estimates the transfer of education and training from the classroom to the workplace is very low, with employees learning 80% or more of their job skills on the job (Cyboran, 2005). Although evidence exists that journaling is effective in academia (Moon, 2006), limited research exists on its use in as a tool to improve workplace performance. These factors raise serious questions about benefits of journaling beyond a class assignment, and its value as a methodology to develop reflective thinking skills that facilitate the application of learning.

In addition, there is evidence that journaling doesn't ensure deepened learning, the development of reflective thinking skills, or positive action. In one study of teachers, approximately half the participants resisted journaling, seeing it as record keeping or busywork (Kerka, 1996). Although journaling can be invaluable to learners who actively take control of interpreting their learning experiences and setting goals for personal development, its benefits are lost when it is seen as a passive or solely descriptive process (Moon, 2006).

The Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology to develop the capacity for reflective thinking in adult learners enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate Organizational Leadership programs at Chapman University College. The importance of developing reflective thinking skills to prepare learners to take appropriate and thoughtful action is strongly supported by Dewey (1933) and educational theorists who followed. Freire (2005) was instrumental in drawing attention to the need for critically reflective practice by suggesting reality can be transformed through dialogue. Emphasizing process over content, Kolb (1984) developed an experiential learning cycle that proposed reflective observation was necessary to create new meaning and knowledge from experience. In transformative learning theory, Mezirow (1991) wrote that learning required critical reflection to change one's mental framework and interpretation of reality. And according to Schön (1983), reflective practitioners such as educators, doctors, and managers intuitively knew how to handle unique and crisis situations. Although differences exist in their theories and approaches, and none necessarily recommended that reflections be written, it can be concluded that modern and influential scholars have recognized the value and importance of reflection in learning.

Especially in today's world, actions and decisions are often guided by rapidly changing knowledge and information rather than past experience and tradition, making it essential that leaders consider the complexity of situations, see different perspectives, and visualize alternative possibilities (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). Developing the capacity for reflective thinking is fundamental to success as a leader, and a key learning outcome of

Chapman University College's OL programs. Because learning journals are frequently assigned to develop reflective thinking skills in working adults pursuing degrees in Organizational Leadership, the effectiveness of this assignment needs to be researched.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions to examine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in MAOL and BAOL programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College:

1. To what extent do learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership?
2. To what extent do learning journals generate greater insight and self-awareness?
3. To what extent do learning journals provide a tool for students to assess and develop their leadership skills?
4. To what extent do learning journals facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives?

Significance of the Study

This research focused on determining the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in the OL programs at Chapman University College. It had significance in four distinct but interrelated areas.

Students of OL quickly recognize the complexities of studying leadership. With more than 300 definitions of the term *leadership*, Burns (1978) concluded that leadership "is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p. 2). Although

journaling has been used successfully in a variety of academic disciplines, including literature, mathematics, and science (Moon, 2006), little if any research has been done that demonstrates it is a viable strategy for adult learners studying leadership.

Second, a key learning outcome of Chapman University College's OL programs is developing the capacity for reflection. Although an essential skill for leaders who must assimilate information and make decisions in a rapidly changing world, reflection does not come easily or naturally to many. Studies have found journaling facilitated the development of reflective skills, which improved the professionalism and practice of teachers and nurses (Lyons, 1999; Moon, 2006), but there is limited if any research into its viability for students of leadership.

Determining whether reflective journaling provides a tool for working professionals to self-assess their current leadership skills and explore possibilities for self-improvement is an important outcome. Although educators have found that journaling promotes self-directed and continuous learning in academia (Hiemstra, 2001), there is no evidence of its impact on students of OL.

Last, this study is significant because it explores the extent to which learning journals facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives. Studies of adult learners who were working professionals found that management concepts and strategies were implemented through reflection and journaling. For example, Varner and Peck (2003) used case examples to illustrate how students in a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) program applied course concepts. "One student used his journal to focus his thinking on his expectations for himself and for his staff. The inquiry helped him clarify and shape

specific goals that he used in his new role as a work unit leader” (p. 66). Whether this is true for OL students must be determined.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Its focus is one program (OL) at Chapman University College. Although Chapman University College offers other degrees, it is not possible to generalize the results to other degree programs offered such as Criminal Justice, Education, and Psychology.

Chapman University College has more than 12 campuses in California offering degrees in OL; however, this study is limited to one campus located in Irvine. There is no assurance that faculty and students at other campuses match the profile of Irvine, and it may not be possible to generalize the results to other OL programs in the Chapman University College system.

This study is limited to one private institution of higher education (Chapman University College) that offers degree programs for working adults. The results of this study may not be applicable to other universities and colleges, although there are many institutions with degree programs designed for employed professionals.

In exploring the experiences and perceptions of OL students and faculty regarding learning journals, a limitation is the possible influence on student motivation of the instructor’s enthusiasm and clarity in describing the learning journal assignment. Students may have more positive reactions when faculty members promote the value of reflective writing and provide clear expectations of the requirements of the assignment.

Finally, another limitation of the study is possible researcher bias. As an adjunct faculty member at Chapman University College who teaches in the BAOL program and

regularly assigns learning journals, the researcher recognized the potential for bias and strived to be objective.

Operational Definitions

Course is a 9-week class taken for three credit units in the graduate or undergraduate OL program.

Faculty includes full-time and adjunct instructors in the OL program at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College.

Instructional Methodology is a strategy or technique used to produce learning.

Learning is “the act or process by which behavioral change, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 10).

Learning Journal is a written assignment designed to encourage reflection by documenting and interpreting learning for self-analysis and personal growth.

Organizational Leadership Program is designed to provide the knowledge and skills effective leaders require. The undergraduate program is aimed at students in entry- to midlevel managerial positions; the graduate program prepares professionals for senior-level and executive positions.

Reflection is the process of examining information and experience cognitively and affectively to clarify and interpret its meaning, which can create new knowledge and perceptions (Boud et al., 1985; Boyd & Fayles, 1983).

Student refers to a working adult who is returning to college for a bachelor’s (undergraduate) or master’s (graduate) degree in OL from Chapman University College. To attend Chapman University College, a student must have 3 or more years of work experience.

Chapman University College is an accredited institution of higher education offering bachelor's and master's degrees structured for working adults. Although degrees are offered at more than 12 campuses located in California, this research is specific to the students and faculty at the Irvine campus.

Viability is a measure of how capable or effective a methodology such as a learning journal is in producing the desired outcomes.

Organization of the Study

This descriptive study, which used qualitative data collected from students and faculty from one campus of Chapman University College, was organized into five chapters. The issue, purpose, research questions, significance and limitations of the study, and operational definitions are found in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, the literature relevant to the use and impact of learning journals is explored, and the importance of reflection and its connection to adult learning considered. The methodology of the study, including the research design, population studied, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis, are described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the data analysis and findings from the primary research. Chapter 5 integrates the findings of the primary and secondary research to draw conclusions and answer the research questions of this study; recommendations for future research conclude the study.

Summary

This chapter has described that the purpose of this research is to assess the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for undergraduate and graduate students in Chapman University College's OL degree programs. Learning journals are often described in the professional literature as a valuable approach to

deepen and broaden students' understanding of leadership, encourage reflection generating greater insight and self-awareness, enable students to assess and develop their leadership skills, and facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives. Although there is evidence of the value and effectiveness of learning journals in many academic disciplines, little if any research exists on their viability as an instructional methodology for adult learners studying OL.

Chapter 2:

The Literature Review

“The journal holds experience as a puzzle frame holds its pieces. The writer begins to recognize the pieces that fit together and, like the detective, sees the picture evolve” (Williamson, 1997, p. 98). For centuries journaling has been a tool used to understand events and experience as well as seek balance, direction, and meaning in life. Many notable people such as Augustine, Samuel Pepys, Benjamin Franklin, Leonardo da Vinci, John Wesley, and Carl Jung kept journals or diaries (Lukinsky, 1991; Moon, 2006). History comes alive when students read the diaries of Anne Frank, Amelia Earhart, and Admiral Richard Byrd describing their experiences hiding from the Nazis, copilotting a first transatlantic flight, and surviving winter at the South Pole (English & Gillen, 2001; Summerfield, 1987). In addition to reading the diaries of others, students are increasingly asked to keep journals to explore their learning through writing as a way to delve deeper and more fully understand the meaning and application of course concepts. Journaling has been used effectively for centuries as a vehicle for personal reflection, and during the past 50 years its use as an instructional methodology has grown (Fulwiler, 1987).

A review of the literature on the use of journaling in higher education as well as in leadership and management development programs provides a framework for assessing the viability of journaling as a strategy to enhance learning for working adults enrolled in degree programs in OL. This chapter defines what learning journals are, discusses the purpose educators have in requiring them in a variety of university courses, and considers documented outcomes, benefits, and drawbacks of journal assignments. The practice of

requiring learning journaling is then examined through a discussion of modern learning theories and the role reflective thinking plays in adult learning. The importance of reflective thinking for leadership and managerial effectiveness is explored, and strategies organizations have used to teach and encourage it in executives and managers considered. Ethical considerations in requiring journals are identified, and the dilemmas they pose explored. Finally, the research methodologies educators have employed to study the effectiveness of learning journals in higher education and management development programs are considered. Through this review of the literature, documents are explored that discuss the use of learning journals as an instructional methodology, and evidence is presented that journaling can deepen and broaden understanding of course content, foster reflective thinking that leads to greater insights and increased self-awareness, provide a tool for personal development planning, and encourage the application of knowledge and skills to adult learners' personal and professional lives.

Review of the Literature

Learning Journals Defined

The word journal has its roots in the French word *jour* (day). The corresponding word journey came to refer to the amount of traveling that a person could do in a day. In turn, the word journal has come to mean daily writing about one's journey (English & Gillen, 2001, p. 87).

Journals are used to record and reflect on events, experiences, and learning. In higher education, "The learning journal is a systematic way of documenting learning and collecting information for self-analysis and reflection" (Kerka, 1996, p. 2). Different terms such as diaries, learning logs and reflective writing are used in the literature, often

interchangeably with learning journals, to describe a process of recording and connecting thoughts, reflections, feelings, and actions. A variety of formats are described; entries may be handwritten, recorded or taped, word processed, or maintained electronically, but all for the same purpose of systematically documenting learning, encouraging reflection, and positive action (Burnett & Meacham, 2002; Moon, 2006).

As assignments, learning journals are structured in a variety of ways. At one extreme, an instructor may require a journal, but offer no constraints on format or content. More typical are structured journals that range from being autobiographical to asking students to respond to posed questions, or discuss specific experiences or classroom exercises. Students may be required to do double-entry journaling in which they first summarize their understanding of assigned readings or course content, and then interpret and personalize it. Another form of double-entry journaling is to record experience descriptively and then later reflect on its meaning. Dialogue journals are collaborative efforts that foster the exchange and development of ideas and reflections typically between student and instructor; however, the use of dialogue journaling among students during team assignments is growing. Finally, the popularity of the Internet has seen the emergence of the use of web logs or blogs in which individuals post their thoughts, ideas, and opinions on specific Web sites (Brookfield, 1995; Hiemstra, 2001; Moon, 2006). Journals may be formatted in different ways, be individual or collaborative efforts, or kept privately or posted publicly. The format and content of learning journals vary, and the literature does not identify any systemic attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of one journaling technique over another (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). However, there is agreement that learning journals, whatever their format and structure, are used to

document and enhance learning, encourage reflection and analysis, and promote thoughtful action.

The Purpose of Learning Journals

The fundamental purpose, whether stated or assumed, in assigning learning journals in higher education is that students learn from them (Kerka, 1996, 2002; Moon, 2006). Through the reflective process of journaling, students recognize their own learning, connect it to prior knowledge and experience, and create new and personal meaning from it.

It has been argued that requiring learning journals can facilitate moving students through the taxonomy of educational levels developed by Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956). Journaling transforms learned information and knowledge into comprehension and understanding, which provides a basis for learners to recognize how principles, ideas, and theories can be applied outside the classroom. Writing in journals encourages analysis, helping learners see relationships among ideas, and synthesize and evaluate new insights and knowledge (Moon, 2006; Varner & Peck, 2003).

The value of journaling as a methodology to enhance learning is illustrated by an adult learner training to be a teacher (as cited in Wagner, 1999):

The utilization of a journal as a method of self-reflection has proven to me to be a method very much worth considering for continued use beyond the period of study....Through skeptical at first (not being a diary writer from the past) I have found that the method of self-reflection has forced me to take time out from the usual hustle and bustle of teaching and to review my classes, my students, my techniques, my approach (especially to individual students) and most importantly

myself. It has enabled me to look at the dynamics of what I am doing from a more objective perspective and help remove (if it is at all possible) the emotional tainting that so often clouds our judgment. This method has clearly shown to me the development that has occurred in me and the approach that I now take to my responsibility as a teacher. (p. 265)

The Outcomes and Benefits of Learning Journals

Educators who have used learning journals report that they are an effective instructional methodology that facilitates learning by deepening and broadening students' understanding of course content; developing the skills needed to be expert and lifelong learners, building specific skills including writing, reflective thinking, and problem solving; facilitating self-discovery and personal development planning; encouraging behavioral changes and application of learning outside the classroom; and assessing student learning and their teaching effectiveness. The discussion and examples that follow of the outcomes, benefits, and possible drawbacks of assigning learning journals in higher education illustrate that they can facilitate learning for many but not all students in a variety of ways.

Through research and observation, educators have found that learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of course content, often making theoretical concepts live. Moon (2006) documented the use of journals in more than 30 disciplines in higher education. "These disciplines range far from the humanities and arts, where the home of journaling writing might seem to be, to the sciences and applied sciences of engineering and computer studies" (p. 3). Across disciplines, educators consistently report that journaling can transform passive learning into active involvement. As an

example, in describing how learning journals helped business management students understand and relate their experiences on a team project to the course lectures and textbooks, Shaw and Fisher (1999) wrote:

Without this [journaling] assignment, students spend most of their time worrying about executing the project and very little time reflecting on and learning from it. Direct feedback from students in their journal entries has indicated the effectiveness of this method of encouraging self-analysis and learning. Statements such as, 'I thought all the stuff you were talking about in the lecture was theoretical hogwash, until I actually looked at what was going on in our group,' were common. (p. 16)

Students claim that journal writing is time consuming and requires more effort than studying for quizzes and exams, but many also recognize that journaling deepens and broadens their learning far more than studying for tests. As one adult MBA student wrote: "I learned considerably more in the process of writing these journals than I would have in taking a two or three tests" (as cited in Varner & Peck, 2003, p. 76). Through journaling, students are able to recognize their learning and consider its value outside of the classroom (Morrison, Rha, & Helfman, 2003).

Learning journals encourage the skills required to be expert and lifelong learners by building metacognitive awareness of how one thinks and learns (Dunlap, 2006; Haigh, 2001; Yoo, 2001). In journaling, students often reflect on how they approached learning and thinking about course content, which facilitates their growth as expert learners who recognize and understand the strategies and tactics needed to achieve learning goals. Students use journals to clarify their purposes in learning, draw inferences, identify

relationships, and understand underlying meanings and their importance to them. For example, 40 university students in a biology course were randomly assigned learning journals or scientific reports. Students who completed learning journals demonstrated superior outcomes in terms of the quality and depth of their knowledge; and their performance on the final examination was stronger than students who prepared reports. McCrindle and Christensen (1995) concluded that journaling was more effective than report writing in helping the biology students identify effective learning strategies; they used journaling to consider the purpose and importance of what they were learning, identify different methods to facilitate understanding, and relate course materials to the world beyond the classroom. Not only did keeping learning journals improve the students' performance in the course, it encouraged insights and skills that equipped students to become expert lifelong learners.

Educators have found that requiring a written learning journal builds specific skills. Across disciplines, journaling has been identified as an ideal vehicle to help students learn to write. Because journals are typically written in conversational, colloquial language, they are less threatening to adults who struggle with academic writing. As students articulate their thinking in completing journaling assignments, writing skills improve (Jarvis, 2001; Moon, 2006; Nirenberg, 1998). Journal writing is a way of thinking "that helps you find out what you know, what you don't know and what you need to know" (Fulwiler, 1987, p. 23).

In addition to building writing skills, journals are assigned to develop reflective thinking, which is the process of examining information and experience cognitively and affectively to clarify and interpret its meaning and create new knowledge (Boud et al.,

1985; Boyd & Fayles, 1983). Cognitively, journaling builds critical thinking skills; affectively, it enables students to manage their reactions and emotions to learning situations. One way journaling encourages critical thinking is through the examination of the assumptions underlying thoughts and actions (Brookfield, 1991; Cranston, 2002; Jarvis, 2001). Exploring ideas and assumptions in journals “may help adults break habitual modes of thinking and change life direction” (Lukinsky, 1991, p. 212). Thinking critically about the impact of experience and learning is clearly seen in the journal entry of one student teacher (as cited in Dart, Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, & McCrindle, 1998), who wrote:

I am very excited to discover the variety of learning styles there are. I discovered I am a visual learner—no wonder I enjoy working in visual mediums. I will have to be diligent in teaching to include strategies for all learning styles and not just favor my own. (p. 303)

This example illustrates that journaling enabled this student teacher to recognize her learning and critically reflect on how to improve her professional practice as an educator.

Equally important as developing critical thinking skills, journals provide adult learners with a tool to examine their feelings. In requiring journals in an advanced mathematics course, Beveridge (1997) observed that only a third of journal entries focused on understanding course content; the majority discussed students’ feelings about their successes or failures with mathematical concepts, and reactions to working on team assignments. Journals provide an excellent venue for learners to acknowledge, process, and manage feelings, as revealed in the following journal entry in which a business professional (as cited in Cunliffe, 2004) openly discusses feelings of anxiety and concern:

Today I feel as though I have shared too openly and trusted too much. In turn, I feel that there is nothing left in disguise and I feel vulnerable....The more I offer, the more taken for granted my source of information seems to become (at least in my mind), and therefore the lesser the value of my perceived influence. When I desire clarification or need assistance, I am often puzzled by the reaction [of class members] to my attempts at open discussion....Through all of this, I have still not altered my behavior. My desire to share and communicate openly overpowers my feeling of exclusion. Why? (p. 414)

Problem solving and decision making are critical skills that journaling facilitates (Daudelin, 1996; Dunlap, 2006). The challenges and problems working professionals face provide a rich source of experience for reflection and learning. Through journaling, learners can identify and analyze difficult issues, explore alternatives, evaluate risks, and see different perspectives. Not only do they gain insight into problems, but also often into their approach and skills in handling them. For example, in assessing decision-making effectiveness, one professional (as cited in Marienau, 1999) wrote, “Although I do not desire to be void of emotion when making decisions, emotions can cloud issues” (p. 141). Journaling provides a safe haven to explore emotional reactions to problem situations and how feelings may impact beliefs, behaviors, and actions (Boud, 2001).

Learning journals are frequently assigned to foster self-discovery and personal development planning (Moon, 2006). Often, students are so focused on earning top grades that they overlook life lessons that may emerge in academic settings. Requiring learning journals can redirect their attention and provide valuable insights and self-awareness. In describing the growth and development of technology doctoral students,

Dunlap (2006) stated:

Journaling activities can encourage students to recognize their accomplishments throughout an instructional event (activity, project, course), and reflect on their personal development of important professional content, skills and dispositions. The journals gave students a voice by allowing them to describe—in their own words—the changes they were experiencing and the accomplishments they were achieving, enabling me to track their perceptions about their professional development. (p. 22)

Encouraging behavioral changes and application of learning outside the classroom are frequently cited as key purposes and benefits of assigning learning journals (Lyons, 1999; Nirenberg, 1998). When students connect learning and experience, new knowledge and insights lead to thoughtful action and improved performance. For example, 35 management students were required to keep journals as part of a project management assignment; qualitative analysis of their entries revealed improvements in handling interpersonal relationships, team communications, and stress-time pressures. Loo (2002) concluded, “Journaling can be a useful tool for managers to record and critically reflect upon their own work performance with the aim of improving their management skills and performance” (p. 67). In another instance, an engineer (as cited in Rigano & Edwards, 1998) struggling to work more effectively in team assignments described his growing commitment to listen actively when he wrote, “I am attempting to listen for what people are saying. This takes a conscious effort and is not easy” (p. 440). Throughout the literature, there is documented evidence of changes in behavior and the application of learning outside the classroom through the use of learning journals.

Finally, educators assign learning journals to assess student learning and their teaching effectiveness (Fenwick, 2001; Spalding & Wilson, 2002). Journals provide a window into learners' thinking and learning, enabling instructors to evaluate understanding of course concepts, identify gaps in learning, and incorporate instructional content reviews as needed. Students offer positive and negative feedback about the course, often giving suggestions for improvement. Journals give students a vehicle to express their feelings through written dialogue to which the instructor can respond. For example, one student (as cited in Ramsey, 2002) challenged the instructor's approach by asking:

You've mentioned often how you do not want the class to look to you for authority. What is your feeling now that the semester is more than half done? Had you taken more authority would the class be further along? (p. 390)

Learning journals provide educators with a unique tool to establish dialogue and obtain feedback from students, which enable them to assess learning and teaching effectiveness.

Although there are many recorded positive outcomes and benefits of assigning learning journals in higher education, there is evidence that learning journals may not be an effective instructional methodology for all adult learners. Some students may resist and even resent the assignment; others may not grasp the concept of reflection or develop the skills to do it. For example, to understand whether journaling promoted critical reflection in working adults who were seeking computer technology certifications at Columbia University, Langer (2002) analyzed journal entries and interviewed randomly selected students. He reported that more than half the students expressed initial anxiety over the journaling assignment, and some were insulted, feeling "journals were better

suited for children than for adults” (p. 347). A panel of reviewers determined the majority of journal entries summarized course materials; few were identified as being critically reflective. These findings led Langer to conclude, “Students may not understand the concept of critical reflection. Instructors need to teach key concepts before expecting students to understand the value of learning journals and how to use them” (p. 347). In summarizing the study, Langer stated that some but not all students benefited from maintaining learning journals.

Another study demonstrated that critical reflection may be more intuitive than learned, and raised the concern that reflective thinking may not be a learned skill. In analyzing how novice and experienced adult educators approached problem solving, Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998) found that an innate orientation to reflection was far more significant than tenure in determining teachers’ strategies. Whether new or experienced,

The non-reflecting practitioners sought to identify, as quickly as possible, a self-perceived acceptable solution that was available within the confines of the present situation. The reflecting educators interactively generated solutions by involving others within the situation. They looked beyond the parameters of the context to address the problem. (p. 104)

In summary, learning journals have been found to be an effective instructional methodology that facilitates and enhances learning in many students enrolled in higher education. Educators have documented a wide range of outcomes and benefits that accrue from this assignment. Journaling deepens and broadens students’ understanding of course content; develops the skills needed to be expert and lifelong learners; builds specific skills, including writing, reflective thinking, and problem solving; facilitates self-

discovery and personal development; encourages behavioral changes and the application of learning outside the classroom; and enables instructors to assess student learning and teaching effectiveness. Although a single instructional methodology may not meet the needs of all students, a review of the literature reveals that there are many positive outcomes and benefits of assigning learning journals to adults enrolled in higher education.

Theories of Learning

The rationale for using reflective journaling in higher education is grounded in modern learning theory (Brookfield, 1995; Hubbs & Brand, 2005). Educational theorists and philosophers who were instrumental in shaping commonly used instructional philosophies and methodologies have consistently recognized the importance and value of reflection in fostering learning that deepens understanding and promotes thoughtful action. Dewey (1933) laid the groundwork for reflection in the educational process when he wrote that a goal of education was developing reflective thinking skills as a way to prepare students to take thoughtful action. In 1970, Knowles introduced what many considered the revolutionary theory of andragogy, which stated that adults and children learn differently, and provided principles for adult learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). During the same period as Knowles, Brazilian activist and educator Freire (2005) proposed the traditional educational system be replaced by dialogue between teacher and student that resulted in praxis or informed action that made a difference. In his model of experiential learning, Kolb (1984) demonstrated the interrelationships of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation in the learning process. Finally, Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory emphasized

critical reflection as a way to change one's mental framework and interpretation of reality. A brief review of the contributions of these influential educational theorists is appropriate to understand the importance of developing reflective thinking skills in adult learners. Although none of the theorists being profiled suggested learning journals as a specific methodology, educators who followed them have supported the use of journaling as a way to build and develop reflective thinking as a learning outcomes (Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Moon, 2006).

John Dewey. Dewey (1933) advocated education that fostered meaningful and purposeful learning that empowered students to be reflective and take thoughtful action. He argued that knowledge was derived from and grounded in experience and viewed learning as a process of inquiry that began with uncertainty and required reflection to find ways to resolve, clarify, or otherwise address issues. Seeing thinking as natural but reflection as a skill that must be taught, Dewey defined reflective thinking as the:

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends....it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality. (p. 9)

Emphasizing student rather than teacher-centered learning, Dewey (1933) saw current wisdom and accepted principles as hearsay and opinions, not true knowledge. Instead of expecting students to accept passively the concepts and ideas of others, he believed learners should observe for themselves and formulate their own conclusions. Believing knowledge was situated in context and could change with new information and experience, Dewey maintained that rather than focusing on memorization, education

should broaden the intellect and develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. By vigorously raising questions, seeking additional information, and tenaciously thinking ideas and alternatives through, knowledge is revised and extended (Dyke, 2006; Fisher, 2001).

According to Dewey (1933), reflection required both skills and attitude; neither alone was sufficient. He identified essential attitudinal traits, including open-mindedness; “freedom from prejudice, partisanship, and such other habits as close the mind” (p. 30); whole-heartedness; “genuine enthusiasm” (p. 32); and responsibility, “to consider the consequences of a projected step...[and] to be willing to adopt those consequences when they follow reasonably from any position already taken” (p. 32). It was the teacher’s role to select educational experiences that nurtured and sustained the necessary attitude for reflective thought.

Dewey is the first modern philosopher and educator to identify the value and importance of reflection in education (Boud et al., 1985; Kember et al., 1999). Prominent educators who followed agree that reflection is a key component in the education process.

Malcolm Knowles. In the early 1970s, Knowles revolutionized adult education by suggesting that adults and children learn differently. Lacking knowledge and experience, children learn when the teacher is responsible for directing and controlling learning experiences. Knowles theorized that because adults possess the maturity to be responsible and self-directed in learning, they must be taught differently than children. Referring to adult learning theory as andragogy, Knowles established six core adult learning principles. Learning occurs in adults when learners need to know, their self-concept as responsible adults is validated, prior experiences are recognized, they are ready to learn,

learning is applicable to life situations, and the learners are motivated (Knowles et al., 2005).

In these principles, Knowles (1983) emphasized the importance of self-directed learning and personal experience in the process of adult learning. “Because of our experience we have often developed habitual ways of thinking and acting; preconceptions about reality, prejudices, and defensiveness about our past....To overcome this problem, adult educators are devising strategies for helping people become more open-minded” (p. 4). For adults to transform experience into learning, facilitators must create environments and implement strategies that validate experience and encourage critical analysis of its meaning. Although Knowles did not discuss reflection as an andragogical strategy, he recommended activities such as self-assessment and proactive reading, which require it (Hiemstra, 2001; Hubbs & Brand, 2005). In addition, Boud (2001), Brookfield (1988, 1995), and Moon (2004) have argued that reflection encourages critical thinking necessary to transcend preconceived assumptions and develop open-mindedness.

Paulo Freire. Brazilian activist, educator, and author Freire (2005) was instrumental in drawing attention to the need for critically reflective practice in which people could transform the world through reflection and action. Seeking to empower oppressed people with literacy programs that encouraged social and political awareness, he intertwined reflection and dialogue as a means to achieve learning that resulted in social action. Likening the traditional educational system to a bank in which the teacher deposited information, Freire argued that the passive nature of this approach promoted repression. In the banking concept of education, “the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing deposits....knowledge is a gift

bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (p. 72). Not acknowledging the experiences and reality of learners was paternalistic, and condemned them to silence.

Through his unique perspectives on educating peasants in Brazil, Freire proposed an alternative to the traditional banking system of education. In his methodology, dialogue between teacher and student was foundational, leading to mutual understanding and action. Dialogue enabled learners to ask questions, challenge assumptions, dispute conceptions of social reality, and explore new possibilities. “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Dialogue based on the lived experience of the teacher and students led to deepened understanding and action to make a difference in the world, which he called praxis.

Freire’s emphasis on situating education in experience, dialogue, and praxis has had considerable impact on the development of educational practice (Brooks, 2004; Cunliffe, 2004). Meaning and knowledge emerge that can lead to significant change when learners are actively involved as equal participants in a process of inquiry, dialogue, and reflection.

David Kolb. Seeing learning as a holistic and lifelong process, Kolb (1984) offered a definition that is essentially reflective: “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it” (p. 41). Drawing from Dewey’s notion of active learning, Kolb proposed a four-stage model of experiential

learning that included concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation; learning required moving through all four stages. To summarize briefly Kolb's theory, learning starts with an experience. To learn from that experience, the student must contemplate the occurrence to recognize what happened, and examine it from different perspectives; it is through this reflective observation that meaning emerges. Abstract conceptualization requires the use of logic and reasoning to analyze the experience and intellectually understand it. Reflective observation and abstract conceptualization enable the learner to make sense of an experience, which leads to the development of ideas and generalizations that guide experimentations and future action.

Recognizing fundamental differences among experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation, Kolb (1984) acknowledged conflict was inherent to learning. The four stages of the model are diametrically opposing forces: affect (concrete experience) versus cognition (abstract conceptualization) and perception (reflective observation) versus behavior (active experimentation). Learning from experience requires moving through all four stages, which Kolb called integrative competence.

Experiential learning requires learners to be open to new experiences, reflect and think about these experiences from different perspectives, and develop new ideas and try alternative approaches to solving problems. Unless they move through each of the four stages of experiential learning, students may have experiences but cannot transform them into meaningful knowledge. Learning requires experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Burnett & Meacham, 2002; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999).

Jack Mezirow. Through critical reflection, which leads to transformative learning, Mezirow (2000) theorized that adults could be freed from prior conditioning when they changed and broadened their perspectives.

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning, perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets), to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 7)

Seeing transformative learning as the primary but not the only goal of adult education, Mezirow (1998) described three kinds of knowledge adults seek. Instrumental or technical knowledge is objective information that is typically learned through the study of the trades, technologies, and sciences. Practical knowledge is understanding ourselves, others, and the social norms; it is gained through communication and validated by others. Finally, transformative learning is “emancipatory knowledge, the self-awareness that frees us from constraints” (Cranston, 2002, p. 64).

Because reflection is the cornerstone of transformative learning, Mezirow (1991) distinguished thinking that is non-reflective from reflective. Non-reflective thinking occurs when prior learning and experience is ignored; reflection requires critique and evaluation.

We can use higher-order cognitive functions without consciously focusing on and deliberately examining the validity of prior learning; the resulting action in this case is thoughtful but non-reflective, as when we identify a pattern of relationship, recognize a theory, name objects or events, make a judgment, generalize or

explain. In reflection, we check back on our problem-solving process: were our generalizations based upon a representative sample, our inferences warranted, our logic sound, our control of the variables appropriate, our anticipated consequences of alternative actions inclusive, our analysis fully discriminating, or evidence convincing, our actions consistent with our values? (p. 106)

In illustrating reflective and non-reflective thinking, Mezirow (1991) identified specific actions that result when different cognitive and affective processes are employed. Understanding reflective thinking requires a brief description of non-reflective. The first and most basic of non-reflective thinking is *habitual action*, which involves applying information and knowledge that was previously learned, and through frequent use is performed automatically; riding a bike or driving a car are examples of habitual action. *Thoughtful action* accesses but doesn't evaluate existing knowledge; as a result, knowledge, meaning, and perspectives do not change. For example when experienced professionals find their work routine, they may act without reflecting on their actions. Even when their actions are thoughtful, they may miss opportunities for improvements. Unlike cognitive thoughtful action, the third and final type of non-reflective action, *introspection*, is affective and refers to recognizing thoughts and feelings about oneself or others. For example, becoming aware of negative feelings toward another is introspection, while deciding to avoid the person is thoughtful action. Habitual action, thoughtful action, and introspection are non-reflective, occurring without any examination or evaluation of assumptions, prior knowledge, experience, or learning.

According to Mezirow (1991), "Reflection is the process of critically assessing the content, process and premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an

experience....Reflective action is making decisions or taking action predicated upon the insights resulting from reflection” (p. 104). In this statement, he identified three types of reflective thinking and action. The first is *content reflection*, which considers “*what* we perceive, think, feel or act upon” (p. 107). *Process reflection* examines “*how* we perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feelings or acting” (p. 108). Finally, *premise reflection* is becoming aware of “*why* we perceive, think, feel or act as we do” (p. 108). Of the three, premise reflection is the most challenging; ingrained assumptions may be so deeply embedded that they may not be recognized as assumptions.

Transformative learning extends beyond acquiring knowledge and skills or changing behavior. Mezirow saw true learning as a lifelong, thoughtful, and reflective process that required questioning existing beliefs, seeing new alternatives, and finding new meaning that transformed perspectives and understanding (Cranston & King, 2003; Grabove, 1997).

Modern educational theorists and philosophers, including Dewey, Knowles, Freire, Kolb, and Mezirow, recognized the importance and value of reflection in learning. In an analysis of their writings, differences can be found. Dewey discussed education in general, whereas Knowles centered on adults. Dewey, Knowles, Kolb, and Mezirow emphasized the process of individual learning unlike Friere who focused on group dialogue to achieve social change. Yet, their ideas share some similarities; all wrote that adults were self-directed and learned by deriving new meanings from reflecting and connecting prior and new experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Acknowledging the theoretical importance of reflection to learning, it is appropriate to examine the definition and process of reflection.

Reflection and Learning

Educators who are currently in higher education and working with adult learners agree that reflection is a critical component of learning. Lockyer et al. (2004) wrote:

Reflection appears to be the engine that shifts surface learning to deep learning and transforms knowing in action into knowledge in action. Reflection changes current knowledge, experiences, and feelings into new knowledge...Reflection draws on any combination of formally taught knowledge, reading, tacit knowledge, experience, critical incidents, and emotions to create new knowledge. It enhances the capacity to visualize new realities and outcomes. (p. 50)

In a review of the literature on reflection, Atkins and Murphy (1993) identified only two definitions of reflection, both of which are frequently cited. Boyd and Fayles (1983) defined reflection as “the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in changed conceptual perspective” (p. 100). According to Boud et al., (1985), “Reflection in the context of learning is a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations”(p. 19). Both definitions imply that reflection occurs in response to an experience, and the outcomes of reflection are changed perspectives and new understandings. However, there is a subtle difference in these definitions that merit note. For Boyd and Fayles, reflection is solely a cognitive process that derives meaning from experience. Boud’s et al., definition recognizes the importance of emotion in the reflective process; new meaning emerges by connecting and interpreting feelings as an essential part of understanding and evaluating the experience.

In this study, these definitions were blended to define reflection as the process of examining information and experience cognitively and affectively to clarify and interpret its meaning, which can create new knowledge and perceptions.

Several authors, including Boud et al., (1985), Mezirow (1991), and Schön (1983) proposed stages or levels in the reflective process. In an analysis of their writings, Atkins and Murphy (1993) found terminology rather than substance the major difference, and synthesized their efforts into three key stages: awareness, critical analysis of feelings and knowledge, and new perspectives. In addition, from the work of these scholars, Atkins and Murphy identified essential skills needed in critical analysis to transform feelings and thoughts into true learning. A brief discussion of the stages and skills required for reflection follows.

Reflection begins with awareness. The impetus may come from feelings of dissatisfaction, discomfort, or disillusionment arising from uncomfortable feelings and thoughts when one realizes his or her knowledge and beliefs are insufficient or in conflict with the situation. Schön (1983) calls this the experience of surprise, puzzlement, or confusion. Boyd and Fayles (1983) describe it as a sense of inner discomfort, whereas Boud et al. (1985) suggest it may be prompted by positive feelings or events such as curiosity or successfully completing a difficult task. Without awareness, reflection cannot occur (Atkins & Murphy, 1993; Scanlan & Chernomas, 1997).

The second stage in reflection is a critical and constructive analysis of the situation, which involves an examination of information, knowledge, and feelings. When existing knowledge and feelings are explored and connected to new information, fresh explanations and understanding may emerge. Beyond creating cognitive knowledge,

Boud et al. (1985) emphasized that positive feelings could replace obstructive ones. Crucial to this stage are the skills necessary to reflective thinking that transforms experience into new learning. Self-awareness is essential for an individual to recall accurately and recount salient events as well as honestly assess his or her impacts. By critically analyzing the situation, assumptions can be identified and challenged and additional information gathered as needed, which enables examining and interpreting the experience from different perspectives. After this analysis, synthesis is necessary to integrate existing and new knowledge to draw reasonable conclusions. The last but essential skill required during the second stage of reflection is evaluation to ensure the analysis was complete (Atkins & Murphy, 1993; Mezirow, 1998; Scanlan & Chernomas, 1997).

New perspectives or learning is the third and final stage of the reflective process. As a result of critical analysis, new knowledge emerges, which allows true learning to occur. This final stage may result in a new awareness that begins the reflective process again.

Reflection is the process of examining information and experience cognitively and affectively to clarify and interpret its meaning, which can create new knowledge and understanding that leads to learning. It is an integrated and cyclical process of three stages—awareness, critical analysis, and evaluation—and requires key skills to transform feelings and thoughts into true learning.

Reflection, Leadership, and Managerial Effectiveness

During the past 15 years, leadership has emerged as a field of study, and many universities and corporations emphasize leadership over traditional management

education. For example, Chapman University College and Pepperdine University have both successfully established degree programs in OL. Books and scholarly articles abound in which experts differentiate leadership and management. Leaders are described as individuals who recognize that the world is constantly changing; they focus on people, empowerment, collaboration, diversity, purpose, and doing the right thing. Conversely, managers desire stability and often resist change, valuing control, competition, uniformity, process, and doing things right (Covey, 2004; Daft, 2005). Yet while many authors argue that leaders and managers are different, others disagree. According to Drucker, “[As] for separating management and leadership, that is nonsense.... They are different to be sure, but only as different as the right hand from the left or the nose from the mouth. They belong to the same body” (as cited in Covey, p. 362).

To understand the value of reflection and journaling in a leadership program, it is useful to acknowledge the similarities in the roles, responsibilities, and functions of leaders and managers. While there is limited research demonstrating the significance of reflection and journaling to leadership effectiveness, there is evidence of its value and importance to managerial efficacy. Argyris (1991) and Schön (1983, 1987) provided the theoretical frameworks that support the importance of reflection in managerial and professional success. In addition, the Harvard Business School has incorporated reflection and learning logs into its Advanced Management Program designed for senior-level executives (Hollenbeck, 1991). Companies such as AT&T, Aetna, Motorola, and PepsiCo have developed strategies that encourage reflection in their internal management development programs (Sherman, 1994). This trend has been reinforced by a survey of best practices in executive development among 77 U.S. companies, which found the

development of reflective thinking skills a key to well-designed programs (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999).

The increased awareness of the value of reflective thinking to organizational leaders is rooted in the recognition of the complexities of managerial work in times of rapid change (Corley & Eades, 2004; Daudelin, 1996). Whether called a manager or leader, a key determinate of effectiveness is the ability to learn by transforming information and experience into new and relevant knowledge. In the past, executives and managers were able to depend on tradition and prior experience to guide their actions; but in a world of accelerating change, the past no longer can be a reliable or single predictor of the future. Managers are forced to make decisions and take action in a whirlwind of changing information (Dyke, 2006; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). Skilled executives understand that future success depends on the continuous acquisition and synthesis of new information and knowledge.

With rapid change comes uncertainty and ambiguity; executives and managers are faced with difficult decisions often involving ethical dilemmas that have no precedent. At the same time, scandals such as Enron and WorldCom have increased the pressures for ethical standards and decision making. Increasingly, organizations are recognizing that executives must be prepared to respond appropriately to complex situations that may not have precedent.

According to Cunliffe (2004):

[Critical reflection] offers a way of surfacing these pressures by encouraging us to examine the assumptions that decisions are justified solely on the basis of efficiency and profit, that there is one rationale way of managing, that maintaining

current managerial practice is paramount, and that as professionals we know what is best for others. In examining these assumptions we can uncover their limitations and possibilities, become less prone to becoming complacent or ritualistic in our thoughts and actions, and develop a greater awareness of different perspectives and possibilities and the need to transform old ways of theorizing and managing. (p. 408)

Chris Argyris. According to management theorist Argyris (1991): “Success in the marketplace increasingly depends on learning, yet most people don’t know how to learn” (p. 99). Argyris found professionals approach problems and difficult challenges with single-loop learning in which existing policies and practices are assumed correct. Single-loop learning is a defensive and safe strategy that avoids feelings of vulnerability or incompetence but often fails to resolve the issue. Argyris suggested an alternative, double-loop learning, which requires self-awareness and commitment to identify and question fundamental and underlying assumptions when faced with complex and challenging situations. Double-loop learning is difficult because managers may fear what they uncover, but it is essential for learning and problem resolution to occur.

Although Argyris does not use the term reflection in his writings, it is implied as a key component to double-loop learning. The importance of reflection in learning from experience in business organizations is not well understood because it has received far less attention than the action component of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (Marsick & Watkins, 1999). Yet without reflection, true learning from experience that leads to new knowledge and meaning cannot occur. Seibert and Daudelin (1999) state reflection and critical thinking:

[Enable] managers to determine the extent to which a newly encountered situation is like or different from others they have encountered. If it is similar, they can appropriately apply past knowledge; if it is different, they can identify what needs to be learned. (p. 5)

Donald Schön. The importance and value of reflection to professional practice and effectiveness was the focus of Schön's (1983, 1987) research, which examined the ways professionals, including managers, architects, teachers, doctors and others, work. Arguing that a vital attribute of all professional practitioners is that they reflect on experience and learn from it, Schön differentiated between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Reflecting-on-action occurs after an event, and involves evaluating and learning from the experience. Reflecting-in-action happens during the event; it is thinking about what one is doing while doing it. In describing reflecting-in-action, Schön (1983) stated:

If common sense recognizes knowing-in-action, it also recognizes that we sometimes think about what we are doing. Phrases like thinking on your feet, keeping your wits about you, and learning by doing suggest not only that we can think about doing but we can think about doing something while doing it. (p. 54)

Schön (1983) theorized that reflective professionals were more competent in handling situations of uncertainty, instability, and conflict when problems were initially undefined and solutions not obvious. The expertise of highly successful practitioners was derived from experience and characterized by their abilities to generate intuitively and spontaneously solutions to unique and unusual problems. He contrasted reflective practitioners with those who advocated technical rationality, which assumed professional

practice is a process of problem solving through the application of scientific theory and systematic knowledge that was specialized, firmly bounded, and standardized. Schön saw technical rationality as an incomplete problem-solving model because it failed to account for practical competence in unusual and divergent situations.

Managers were among the practitioners Schön (1987) studied. Although he found their reflection-in-action essentially the same as other professionals such as architects and doctors, he identified a significant difference:

In management as in other fields, art has a two-fold meaning. It may mean intuitive judgment and skill, the feeling for phenomena and for action that I have called knowing-in-practice. But it may also designate a manager's reflection, in a context of action, on phenomena which he perceives as incongruent with his intuitive understanding. (p. 241)

Successfully solving problems and making decisions require managers to draw on existing organizational knowledge such as the corporate mission, organizational culture, and job descriptions as well as professional expertise. The phenomenon of organizational life strongly influences managerial professional practice. Although Schön found effective managers consistently paused in the midst of action to consider what was occurring (reflecting-in-action), the impact of organizational knowledge lessened the likelihood of them reflecting-on-action after the event. Although Schön's research was based on a limited number of case studies, he provides documented evidence of the importance of reflection to managerial efficacy (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999).

Management education. Many corporations invest in management development programs to prepare leaders and managers for greater responsibilities and challenges. In

addition to building skills in communication, interpersonal relations, and teaming, many experts believe management development that truly prepares participants for future challenges must emphasize critical thinking and reflection (Corley & Eades, 2004; Morrison et al., 2003; Reynolds, 1999). In addressing how to prepare capable leaders able to understand and address the uncertainty and ambiguity of future challenges, Reynolds (1998) stated:

Management education...should not be to fit people into institutions as they currently exist, but to encourage them in questioning and confronting the social and political forces which provide the context of their work, and in questioning claims of common sense or the way things should be done. (p. 198)

There is evidence that university-sponsored and in-house corporate training programs are incorporating reflection into management development. For example, the Harvard Business School used reflection, learning logs, focus groups, and interviews to evaluate effectiveness of their Advanced Management Program for senior-level leaders (Hollenbeck, 1991). When asked to analyze their learning from this program, executives spoke of gaining broader perspectives economically, politically, and socially. Many described increased self-confidence, a greater willingness to speak up and take action, improved decision-making and change-management skills. Others focused on people skills. One executive described becoming more tolerant of others while another said, "I developed extremely good listening and questioning skills. When I use them, I get a lot better and more substantive participation from my people" (p. 252). More than 85% of the participants said that the time and money invested in this program were worthwhile, citing examples of increased responsibilities, promotion, and significant contributions to

organizational strategies, growth, and profitability. In addition to Harvard, many leading universities are requiring course work in reflection in their executive development programs (Sherman, 1994).

When reflection is incorporated into in-house corporate management development programs, consultants and trainers report improvements in managerial effectiveness. For example, one researcher interviewed 24 managers who were identified as being skilled in influencing significant change in a recently deregulated *Fortune* 100 company; the interviewees attributed their successes to critical reflection training that was reinforced by senior executives (Brooks, 2004). In another study of management training designed to encourage creativity and intuitive awareness, participants were asked to record insights gained (Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007). One student observed, “What you perceive as a potential problem may turn out to be insignificant with the passage of time” (p. 198). Another wrote, “Jettisoning baggage in the form of thoughts about thought was an overriding factor...it gave me a base to reflect, and capture ideas and thoughts” (p. 199). Through this reflective process, participants recognized their learning and put it into practice. Finally, a *Fortune* 500 international manufacturing organization developed a successful reflective process that began with individual analysis of critical situations, and expanded into team dialogue in which assumptions were challenged, problems reframed, and new alternatives identified (Daudelin, 1996). Although corporations often focus on action and results, there is a growing awareness of the value of developing reflective thinking skills because “reflection leads us to ask questions about intended and unintended consequences. Questions drive the process because they stimulate fresh thinking” (Marsick & Watkins, 1999, p. 24).

There is significant evidence that reflective thinking is a critical component to managerial success as theorized by Argyris (1991) and Schön (1983, 1987). Respected executive development programs offered by universities such as the Harvard Business School have included reflection and learning logs in programs designed for senior-level executives who overwhelmingly found participation beneficial (Hollenbeck, 1991). Several studies reported the addition of reflective thinking to in-house management development programs enhanced managerial effectiveness. If similarities in the roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers are acknowledged, then the conclusion can reasonably be drawn that reflection and reflective thinking are key to leadership.

Ethical Dilemmas of Journaling

Educators in a variety of disciplines have raised concerns about the use of learning journals in higher education, highlighting several ethical dilemmas that merit discussion. One issue frequently raised is the possibility that journals may create feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability, and even fear in some learners that outweighs their value in facilitating learning. Another asks what, if any, action should be taken when inappropriate disclosures are made in journals. Last, consideration must be given to whether journals should be assessed. Although the occurrence of the first two ethical issues may be relatively rare, their importance cannot be trivialized. The third issue of assessment is one that faces all instructors who assign learning journals (English, 2001; Kerka, 2002).

In an educational setting, assigned journals are read by the instructor, which may inhibit or even threaten some students (Boud & Walker, 1998; Elbow & Clark, 1987; Spalding & Wilson, 2002). Learners who write poorly or struggle with the concept of

reflection may become frustrated and even feel inadequate to do the assignment. Others may feel vulnerable by exposing their feelings or inner thoughts, particularly to an authority figure; just knowing the instructor will read their journals may restrain some students from writing honestly or engaging in meaningful reflection. Still others may be more concerned about meeting the instructor's expectations than learning from reflective writing. The potential that journaling assignment may inhibit thoughtful and honest reflection in some indicates that journals may not be an effective instructional methodology for all students.

Second, there is always the potential for learners to make inappropriate disclosures in their journals (Boud & Walker, 1998; English, 2001). For example, someone may confide a highly personal and sensitive revelation such as marital difficulties or being harassed by another student or faculty member, include confidential information about business dealings, or reveal an act of unethical behavior such as cheating on an examination. Although students should not feel constrained and be comfortable in journaling, it is possible that their reflective writing may create embarrassment or divulge information about others upon which the reader may feel professionally obliged to act. Breaking confidentiality and whistle blowing are among the ethical dilemmas that may arise from a journal with inappropriate disclosures.

A third ethical dilemma posed by learning journals is assessment. Some educators argue that reflective writing cannot be accurately or fairly evaluated (Brookfield, 1995; Cranston, 2002). "Grading also forces us to make uncomfortable value judgments. For example, although one rationale for using journals is to provide students with practice in written communication, is it reasonable to penalize poor writers?" (Varner & Peck, 2003,

p. 59). Yet others support assessment, often offering clear rubrics of expectations (Creme, 2005; Kreber, 2004; Loo & Thorpe, 2002; Spalding & Wilson, 2002). For instance, Cunliffe (2004) outlines grading criteria included in course syllabi that states learning journals will be evaluated by assessing the extent to which students demonstrated critical thinking and reflection in journal entries, identified and challenged assumptions, linked personal experience to course materials, and made connections between theory and practice. As an instructor of advanced mathematics who assigns learning journals, Beveridge (1997) highlights the complexity of the assessment issue:

Some students use the journal to complain about the course, me, math; some explore feelings; and some use it to communicate personal issues affecting their ability to learn....The dilemma I face is that I feel that students won't give reflective writing a chance unless it is assessed, while serious reflection requires the student to write openly and this requires safety. (p. 41)

There are no easy answers to the ethical dilemmas posed by learning journals. In journaling, learners are asked to examine their learning and beliefs, explore assumptions, relate theoretical concepts to their personal and professional lives, and derive meaning through the reflective process. Many argue this makes journaling impossible to evaluate while others question whether students would do the assignment thoughtfully without assessment. Educators are validly concerned that some students may be inhibited or even threatened by the assignment while others may make inappropriate disclosures. These ethical dilemmas highlight the importance of educators carefully considering their purpose, the benefits, and possible ramifications of requiring reflective journaling. In assigning journals, "adult educators need to challenge themselves by asking questions

about their practice, deeply considering the implications of their actions, and putting the learners' needs at the center of their decision making" (English, 2001, p. 62).

Research Observations

Scholars and educators have used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodologies to study learning journals. Briefly reviewing the strategies and outcomes of these various approaches may provide insights into the advantages and drawbacks of design alternatives in determining the viability of learning journals for adult learners pursuing degrees in OL at Chapman University College.

Educators in a variety of disciplines have employed qualitative strategies to study the value of learning journals. Researchers report analyzing learning journal entries to identify and classify themes and patterns as well as monitor the development and growth of learners. In discussing their findings and conclusions, researchers frequently use student journal entries as evidence. For example, when Beveridge (1997) analyzed 4 years of journals kept by mathematics students, he identified three categories of journal entries: managing feelings, processing content, and controlling the learning environment. From this analysis supported by specific examples, Beveridge argued that learning journals were effective in encouraging a "learning process that involves the whole person...by providing a tool to address affective, as well as cognitive issues" (p. 42). In a similar qualitative study that analyzed the content of journals kept by pre-service teachers, Dart, Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, and McCrindle (1998) identified four themes in students' learning journals: thoughts on the subject matter being taught, classroom effectiveness, connections between theory and practical experience, and personal development. Using specific journal entries as evidence, the researchers concluded

reflective journaling encouraged personal development and accountability for classroom performance as teachers. In addition, case studies that qualitatively illustrated the growth and development of specific individuals through journal entries were found in the literature. Rigano and Edwards (1998) illustrated with journal entries the development of interpersonal skills an engineer needed for career advancement. Spalding and Wilson (2002) combined an analysis of journal entries and interviews with four teachers in a case study that found developing reflective thinking skills was beneficial in meeting the challenges these individuals faced in the classroom. Throughout the literature and across disciplines, there are examples of content analysis of learning journals that used journal entries as evidence to support the findings and conclusions of the research.

One study was identified that analyzed journal entries quantitatively rather than qualitatively. Researchers reviewed students' reflective journals to assess the depth and quality of their reflection (Kember et al., 1999). A coding rubric was developed based on Mezirow's (1991) levels of reflection that ranged from habitual action to premise reflection. After eight faculty members coded anonymous journal entries independently, their results were tabulated to assess internal consistency, and were found to be statistically unreliable. The researchers determined "the differences arose from the coders' interpretation of the meaning and significance of what the students had written in their journals. It was not a function of ambiguity or lack of precision in the coding categories or their definitions" (Kember et al., 1999, p. 26). The lack of internal consistency was created when what one faculty member considered non-reflective another saw as reflection. In another study, four faculty members coded journal entries of known students and their coding was determined to be statistically reliable. Yet, this

research raises the issue of the reliability and validity of researchers interpreting the meaning and significance of journal entries written by others.

In a mixed methods study, McCrindle and Christensen (1995) randomly assigned biology students learning journals (experimental group) or scientific reports (control group), and measured learning outcomes with tests results and interviews. Quantitatively, students assigned the learning journals performed significantly better than the control group on tests and earned higher grades in the class. Qualitative interviews confirmed the experimental group developed more effective learning strategies than the control group.

Loo (2002) combined a quantitative survey and qualitative journal entry analysis to measure the effectiveness of journaling for business students assigned to work in project management teams. In addition to identifying themes including interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and communication that emerged from a content analysis of journals, Loo's statistical analysis of survey results found that only 22% of the students found journaling difficult while 75% said reflective writing gave them insight into their learning. Although only 33% said they would continue journaling, 84% said reflection on learning was important and something they would do in the future.

Finally, Langer (2002) interviewed adult learners, asking about their perceptions and feelings regarding the learning journal assignment. With less than 5% of the students having prior experience journaling, Langer found some students didn't understand the purpose of journaling, experienced anxiety over the assignment, and saw little value in it. In discussing his findings, Langer stated:

The responses among non-traditional students....speak to the need to consider student reception and perceptions of the journal writing assignment in order to

evaluate its usefulness as a tool for developing critical reflection among traditional as well as non-traditional students. Some results of the study support the existing literature. For instance, the study was consistent with the literature in demonstrating that learning journals can improve knowledge transfer for students....On the other hand, some of the results are at variance with those in the literature. In comparison to indications in the literature, a smaller percentage of students demonstrated critical reflection in their journal writing....The results of this research suggest that non-traditional adult students can find it difficult to understand what is meant by reflection and how it applies to their practical goals of changing careers. (p. 349)

In the literature, there are examples of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology designs that were used to study the effectiveness of learning journals in higher education and management development programs. Although qualitative content analysis of journal entries is frequently used to identify and classify themes and patterns as well as monitor the development and growth of learners, a quantitative study (Kember et al., 1999) raised the possibility of reliability and validity concerns when researchers interpret the meaning and significance of students' reflective writing. Another quantitative study found that students learn from journaling, and when surveyed responded positively to the assignment. Finally through qualitative interviews with adult learners, Langer (2002) identified variances from the literature that supports the use of journaling as an instructional methodology to encourage reflection and enhanced learning. When the focus of the research was shifted to adult learners' perceptions of the value of journaling, the results were mixed, which led Langer to conclude that further

study and exploration of adult learners' experiences and perceptions of journaling is needed. His findings indicate a direction for this study.

Summary

In this chapter, the literature was reviewed to provide a framework for determining the viability of using learning journals to enhance learning for adults enrolled in degree programs in OL at Chapman University College. Although the format and structure of learning journals vary, consistently they are assigned to facilitate learning by encouraging reflective thinking and positive action. Educators in a wide variety of disciplines report that journaling is an effective instructional methodology that enhances learning by deepening and broadening students' understanding of course content; developing the skills needed to be expert and lifelong learners, building specific skills, including writing, reflective thinking, and problem solving; facilitating self-discovery and personal development; encouraging behavioral changes and application of learning outside the classroom; and assessing student learning and teaching effectiveness. The theoretical frameworks established by modern educational and management scholars, including Dewey, Knowles, Freire, Kolb, Mezirow, Argyris, and Schön, advocate the importance and value of reflection to learning and managerial effectiveness. Ethical considerations in requiring journals were considered, and the dilemmas they pose explored. Finally, the research methodologies educators have employed to study the effectiveness of learning journals in higher education and management development programs were discussed to provide a direction for this study.

The research into learning journals spans a wide range of disciplines, including business, teaching, nursing, technology, mathematics, and science. Educators and

scholars have found journaling is an effective instructional methodology to encourage reflective thinking that deepens and broadens learning, generates self-awareness, encourages personal development, and facilitates the transfer to knowledge and skills outside the classroom. This review of the literature provided a strong theoretical foundation for further research into the viability of using learning journals for adults enrolled in bachelor's and master's degree programs in Organizational Leadership at Chapman University College.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology of using qualitative interviewing to evaluate the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate OL programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Offering a thick description, the rationale for a qualitative methodology, the research design and procedures used to collect and analyze data, and the measures employed to enhance internal and external validity are discussed. The population and sampling methods are identified as sources of data. This chapter concludes with a review of the research instrument and data analysis procedures.

To determine the extent to which learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership, generate greater insight and self-awareness, provide a tool for students to assess and develop their leadership skills, and facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives, a research design using qualitative focus group interviews was utilized for data collection and analysis. This methodology was appropriate because it offered an inquiry process that enabled in-depth exploration of the strengths and issues of using learning journals as an instructional methodology in the OL degree programs at Chapman University College. It was chosen after a careful consideration of the purpose and advantages of both qualitative and quantitative designs. According to Creswell (1994),

A qualitative study is...defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with

words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Alternatively a quantitative study...is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true. (p. 1)

Qualitative and quantitative research designs constitute different methods of inquiry. At one level, they are grounded in differing perspectives about what knowledge is, and how one understands the world and the ultimate purpose of the research. The methodology selection is influenced by the researcher's view of what constitutes reality and whether the purpose of the research is to gain an in-depth understanding of complex issues or test a specific hypothesis. At another level, the terms refer to the research process of collecting and analyzing data and the types of generalizations derived from that data. The choice of a qualitative or quantitative design is impacted by the need for flexibility in research methods and the researcher's role in data collection (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A brief discussion of these differences and how each influenced the design selection for this study follows.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are grounded in fundamental differences in perceptions of truth and reality. Researchers who employ qualitative methods recognize that reality is perceived differently among study participants. Unlike quantitative research, which "assumes there are stable, social facts with a single reality, separated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals...[qualitative research] assumes multiple realities that are socially constructed through individual and collective perceptions or views of the same situation" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 12). It was a reasonable

expectation supported by the work of Langer (2002) that OL students at Chapman University College had different experiences and reactions to learning journals. A qualitative design that embraced multiple perspectives was more likely to provide a complete and realistic assessment of the extent to which learning journals are a viable instructional methodology for MAOL and BAOL majors.

The purpose of the research also influenced the design. Qualitative research is concerned with finding meaning through the perspectives of study participants. Values, opinions, and biases are acknowledged and embraced as a method of inquiry to understand the range of ideas, thoughts, and feelings that may emerge. This is unlike quantitative designs, which seek to establish relationships and explain causes in unbiased and value-free ways (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this study, the research purpose was to examine thoroughly the viability of journaling as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in OL degree programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Rather than minimizing the experiences, insights, and feelings of participants as required in a quantitative design, this study's intention was to identify and examine the perceptions of adult learners and faculty members regarding the value of learning journals; using a qualitative design accomplished this purpose.

Third, research methods and processes differ in qualitative and quantitative designs. Qualitative studies use inductive logic in which themes, patterns, and categories emerge from participants rather than being identified in advance by the researcher. Offering some flexibility in research strategies and procedures, qualitative designs allow the researcher to revise decisions about data collection strategies based on information as it emerges. Conversely, a quantitative study uses deductive logic in which theories and

hypotheses are stated and tested in sequential steps established before the study commences. The controlled environment of the quantitative design allows researchers to make generalizations that predict, explain, and understand cause and effect. In qualitative studies, the findings and results typically cannot be generalized beyond the specific research population but provide in-depth analysis for that population (Creswell, 1994; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Using the inductive logic of a qualitative design allowed for the emergence of data into themes, patterns, and categories based on the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of OL faculty and students who have used learning journals; it provided for the collection, synthesis, and evaluation of data to create a holistic picture of the extent to which learning journals are a viable instructional methodology for that specific population.

Last, the role of the researcher varies in qualitative and quantitative studies.

Creswell (1994) wrote:

The quantitative approach holds that the researcher should remain distant and independent of that being researched....The qualitative stance is different.

Researchers interact with those they study...the researcher tries to minimize the distance between him- or herself and those being researched. (p. 6)

A quantitative design requires researchers to be detached and objective to avoid bias; in qualitative methods, the researcher and participants interact socially through individual interviews or group discussions. Researchers using a qualitative design should be skilled and possess “disciplined subjectivity” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 13); they must recognize and examine critically the influence of values and biases. However, establishing social relationships with participants is valuable. Being comfortable with the

researcher encourages greater openness in participants when expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

A qualitative method of inquiry to evaluate the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the MAOL and BAOL programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College was used. This methodology acknowledged that adult learners and faculty may have differing experiences and perceptions that create multiple realities; using a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore these complexities. Although the findings cannot be generalized and apply only to OL programs at one Chapman University College campus, a qualitative design enabled a thorough examination of the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners by answering this study's research questions:

1. To what extent do learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership?
2. To what extent do learning journals generate greater insight and self-awareness?
3. To what extent do learning journals provide a tool for students to assess and develop their leadership skills?
4. To what extent do learning journals facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives?

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to examine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in OL degree programs at Chapman University College

through an in-depth exploration of the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of students and faculty members. It built on the work of Langer (2002), who used qualitative interviewing of adult learners assigned journals in a computer technology certification program. When asked about their experiences and perceived value of journaling, students' responses ranged from positive to negative, which led Langer to conclude that further study and exploration of adult learners' experiences and perceptions of journaling was needed.

The research design of this study was qualitative interviewing of OL students and faculty at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Qualitative interviewing is an inquiry process done in a natural setting that involves active interactions among two or more persons and aimed at understanding "the meaning of respondents' experiences and life worlds" (Warren, 2002, p. 83); it is a guided conversation in which the researcher listens for meaning to find common patterns and themes that emerge from the ideas, thoughts, and perceptions of the participants.

To obtain the perspectives of several groups or audiences, the methodology employed was focus group interviews. With 140 BAOL and 50 MAOL students, sufficient population existed for three focus group interviews with each group. During the past year, approximately 10 OL adjunct faculty members assigned learning journals, making it possible to schedule at least two focus groups. Because full-time faculty offered valuable insights into the purpose, rationale, and benefits of learning journals, it was important to include this audience as a small focus group. There are differences in group and individual interviews, but Flick (2002), Fontana and Frey (2000), and Gubrium and Holstein (2002) agree that both constitute qualitative interviewing.

The focus group, the qualitative interviewing strategy of this research, is “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan, 2002, p. 141). Initially used in marketing research, focus group interviewing has gained popularity in academic research because it enables researchers to generate reliably, efficiently, and economically information from a larger number of respondents than is possible in a series of individual interviews. The goal of focus group interviewing is not to gather facts, but to explore the range and depth of meaning as participants communicate and share understanding (Platt, 2002; Tierney & Dilley, 2002). As factors that influence opinions, behavior, and motivation emerge, the researcher gains insights into the reasons differences exist in beliefs and perspectives among various groups.

There were several advantages to employing focus group interviewing as the data collection methodology for this study. Interviewing in a group rather than individual setting permitted data to be collected from larger number of respondents in a condensed time period. Using a group process provided richer data than could be gathered through individual interviews. “By creating a social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another’s perceptions and ideas, the researcher can increase the quality and richness of data through a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 360). The interactions within the group produce data and insights that would not occur without it. In addition, the group process encouraged the discussion to focus on the most important topics and issues, making it easier for the researcher to assess the extent to which there were relatively consistent and shared views among participants. Focus groups also offer “some quality controls on data collection in

that the participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other that weed out false or extreme views” (Patton, 1990, p. 335). Group dynamics moderate the impact of unusual or radical opinions, providing a more realistic picture. Finally, focus groups are usually enjoyable experiences for participants, so they are more willing to participate (Flick, 2002; Krueger & Casey, 2000). The advantages of richer data that provided a focused and realistic picture of participants’ ideas, thoughts, and experiences as well as the increased likelihood of participation were strong arguments for using focus group interviewing for this study.

Although focus group interviewing offered several advantages, there were some issues that required addressing, including the number of groups, and group composition and size. The purpose of a focus group is to listen and gather information to understand how people think and feel about an issue making multiple groups essential. “The biggest issue in determining the number of groups is the underlying diversity in what people have to say....When groups become repetitive, you have reached the point of theoretical saturation” (Morgan, 1998, p. 78). Three focus groups are typically needed when the participants are moderately diverse and the topic is moderately complex. In addition to the number of focus groups, group composition and size are major considerations. According to Morgan, compatibility among focus group participants is a key concern. “When the participants perceive each other as fundamentally similar, they can spend less time explaining themselves and more time discussing the issues” (p. 59). The number of participants in each focus group is influenced by their predicted involvement and time requirements. During a 1- to 2-hour time frame, each participant should have the opportunity to share his or her ideas, experiences, and insights about the topic. When

participants are knowledgeable, have experiences with emotional connections to the topic, and/or there may be controversy, smaller focus groups with five or less participants are appropriate (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

These considerations offered guidance into determining the number, composition, and size of the focus groups required for this study. Because there are distinct groups of participants that may have had different experiences and views on learning journals, separate focus groups for undergraduate, graduate, and adjunct faculty were required. It was difficult to predict when theoretical saturation would occur. However, when there was sufficient population, two to three focus groups of 2 to 5 participants for each distinct population or audience were planned.

In summary, qualitative interviews using focus groups was the methodology employed to examine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in OL degree programs. The use of this design was supported by scholars who have increasingly recognized that “interviewing results offer true and accurate pictures of respondents’ selves and lives” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 646).

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability were important considerations in research design. “Determining the accuracy of the account, discussing the generalizability of it, and advancing possibilities of replicating a study have long been considered the scientific evidence of a scholarly study” (Creswell, 1994, p. 157). Unlike quantitative research that relies on sophisticated statistical methods to test and prove hypotheses, qualitative studies that interpret reality pose challenges in ensuring validity and reliability. A discussion of the measures utilized to enhance internal and external validity and reliability follows.

Internal validity refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings; internal reliability describes the extent to which one researcher's findings will be found again. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), "Validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher" (p. 324). In studies with strong internal validity, the findings are an authentic and accurate description of the participants' thoughts and perceptions. In qualitative research, internal validity receives more attention than reliability. Qualitative research designs study people and multiple realities, making internal reliability problematic; repeatable findings can be difficult to obtain since human behavior is not predictable (Flick, 2002).

Rather than attempting to determine whether the results of this study would be replicated in a second study, the researcher employed strategies designed to strengthen internal validity. As suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006), a variety of data collection and analysis techniques were employed to enhance the accuracy, authenticity, and trustworthiness of the findings.

1. Expert Review for Content Validation. An educator and expert in organizational research who is familiar with University College's OL program reviewed the interview guide instruments (Appendix A). After the researcher explained the purpose of the research and research questions, the educator and expert agreed that the questions posed for the focus group interviews would fulfill the purpose of the research and answer the research questions.
2. Procedural Documentation. The interview guide and step-by-step procedures were outlined to ensure consistency in the interview process.

3. Oral Summaries. The focus group interviews included frequent oral summaries by the facilitator of key points; participants were asked to verify mutual understanding.
4. Focus Group Debriefs: Immediately following each focus group interview, the researcher and note taker discussed and documented what was said and what occurred during the session.
5. Recording of Interviews and Transcripts. In order to minimize researcher bias in interpreting the data, each interview was recorded and literal transcripts used for interpretation.
6. History. To limit the possibility that results could be impacted by the passage of time and/or specific events, the focus group interviews were conducted within a 1-month time span.

External validity and reliability focus on the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations or can be generalized beyond the specific research population (Creswell, 1994; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The goal of this qualitative research was to understand in-depth the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in the OL program at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College, and one of its stated limitations is that the findings cannot be generalized. However, it is the hope of this researcher that the results of this study can be used by other campuses and programs of Chapman University College as well as other institutions in considering the use of learning journals as an instructional methodology. For this reason, the issue of external validity has not been ignored, and a thick description prepared as a strategy to strengthen the possibility of generalizing the findings of this study. The thick description

includes detailed information about the OL program offered at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College, the research design, and its procedures. This is being done so that readers can determine whether their situations matched the research situation and whether finding could be transferred (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Janesick, 2000).

Subjects

The sources of data for this study were students pursuing O L degrees and OL faculty at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College, which offers accelerated degree programs structured for working adults. Each school year is divided into five nine-week terms; and in each term, six or more MAOL and BAOL courses are scheduled. Students attend classes on a part-time basis, and range in age from mid-20s to 50 plus. Of the 375 students enrolled at the Irvine campus, approximately 140 undergraduates and 50 graduate students are majoring in OL. All undergraduate and most graduate OL courses are taught by adjunct faculty members who are working professionals with advanced degrees. Chapman University College allows each adjunct to teach up to six classes annually. In addition, there are two full-time faculty members who oversee the OL programs, mentor adjunct faculty, and teach graduate OL courses.

Selection Criteria

Several factors were considered important as selection criteria for focus group participants. Limiting participation to OL students and faculty who had had multiple experiences with journaling assignments ensured participants were able to assess objectively their impact and value. In addition, faculty and students were asked to volunteer to participate in this study. As the researcher is an adjunct instructor at University College, any student currently or planning enrollment in a course taught by the

researcher was excluded. This was done to ensure students felt no pressure to participate, and there would be no possibility that participation could impact students' grades.

To ensure compatibility among focus group participants, as Morgan (1998) recommends, 4 distinct groups or audiences were identified for this study:

1. MAOL Students. Graduate students who were within 4 months of completing their master's degree or who had graduated within the prior 4 months were candidates for this study. The MAOL degree requires students to complete satisfactorily eight core OL courses, including an integrative capstone project and several electives, and pass a comprehensive examination. As the majority of the OL master's-level courses require learning journals or reflection papers, students nearing graduation or just recently graduated had extensive experience with learning journal assignments.
2. BAOL Students. Undergraduate students who were within 4 months of completing the OL coursework or who had graduated within the prior 4 months were candidates for this study. In addition to the general education requirements of bachelor's degrees, students majoring in OL are required to complete satisfactorily eight core OL courses plus several electives. Approximately half of the OL courses require learning journals or reflective writing, so students nearing graduation or just recently graduated had multiple experiences with learning journal assignments.
3. Adjunct Faculty. Only OL faculty members who had assigned learning journals as a course requirement within the past the 4 months were invited to participate. Of those who were candidates for this study, many teach and

require journaling in both MAOL and BAOL classes, so no distinction was made in assigning them to focus groups.

4. Full-Time Faculty. There are two full-time OL faculty members teaching OL graduate courses at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College.

Once the selection criteria were established, the researcher met with appropriate administrative staff at Chapman University College to identify candidates for this study. Focus group dates for each group were determined and participants invited to volunteer.

Participants were informed that this research was approved as exempt after a review by the Institutional Review Boards of Pepperdine University and Chapman University College because it was “conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices...[involving] research on regular...instructional strategies” (Hall & Feltner, 2005). Although the adults who volunteered for this study were at minimal risk, participants were informed in writing of the purpose and duration of the research, the benefits of participation, the extent of confidentiality of records identifying the participants, and who to contact for additional information.

Focus Group Participants

Nine focus groups on the viability of learning journals were held at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College within a 4-week time frame, including three graduate and three undergraduate student groups, and one full-time and two adjunct faculty focus groups. As outlined in Focus Group Sample (Table 1), 48 individuals met the selection criteria for participation and were invited to participate; 26 volunteered and attended the focus group discussions, which represented 54% of possible respondents.

Table 1

Focus Group Sample

	Invited	Participated	%
MAOL	17	8	47%
BAOL	19	11	58%
Adjunct Faculty	10	5	50%
Full-Time Faculty	2	2	100%
Total	48	26	54%

Demographic differences in terms of age, gender, and ethnic background were not key factors in this study. However, all focus group participants were working adults, age 25 and older. As illustrated in Diversity of Focus Group Participants (Table 2), it was observed that the focus group participants were diverse. The population included 14 women and 12 men; 28% were minorities.

Table 2

Diversity of Focus Group Participants

	Total	Gender		Ethnic Background			
		Female	Male	Asian	Black	Latino	Caucasian
MAOL	8	4	4	1	2	0	5
BAOL	11	6	5	1	0	1	9
Faculty	7	4	3	1	1	0	5
Total	26	14	12	3	3	1	19
Percentage	100%	54%	46%	12%	12%	4%	72%

MAOL students. Three focus groups of graduate students were held between February 8 and 13, 2008; 8 students, or 47% of those invited, participated. Although there were 50 students enrolled in the MAOL program, only students who had completed the requirements for the MAOL degree, including completing the capstone class and taking the comprehensive examination within the past 4 months, were asked to volunteer for a focus group. Of the 50 OL graduate students at the Irvine campus, 17 met these criteria.

Although demographic differences were not key factors in this study, it was observed that 5 of the participants were Caucasian, 1 was Asian, and 2 were Black. In terms of gender, participants were equally divided, with 4 women and 4 men participating. Of the graduate students, 3, or 38% of the focus group participants, had earned a BAOL at Chapman University College.

BAOL students. Of those who were invited, 11 students, or 58%, participated in three focus groups for undergraduates, which were held between January 30 and February 5, 2008. Only students who had completed the OL requirements for a BAOL degree within the past 4 months and were not currently enrolled in a class taught by the researcher were invited to participate. Because learning journals are assigned in some but not all OL undergraduate courses, targeting students at the end of their program ensured that focus group participants had several experiences with learning journals, making them better able to assess objectively their value. Only 19 of the 140 OL undergraduate students at the Irvine campus met these criteria and were invited to attend a focus group. Of these, 11, or 58%, volunteered and participated in a focus group discussion.

The undergraduate focus groups included 6 women and 5 men. Although the majority of the participants were Caucasian, the respondents included 2 minorities.

Faculty. Three faculty focus groups were held between February 11 and 27, 2008. Five adjunct instructors participated in two focus groups, and two full-time faculty members attended the third. Only faculty teaching in the MAOL and/or BAOL programs who had assigned learning journals as part of the course requirements were asked to volunteer; ten adjunct instructors were invited, and five, or 50%, attended a focus group discussion. The two full-time faculty at the Irvine campus who participated represented 100% of the full-time faculty population. The faculty focus groups were diverse. The participants included 4 women and 3 men; 5 were Caucasians and 2 minorities.

The teaching experience in Chapman University College's OL programs of the 7 faculty respondents ranged from 13 to 2 years. Although they have taught undergraduate students, both full-time faculty members currently teach in the MAOL program only. Of the adjuncts, 4 teach in both the graduate and undergraduate OL programs; the other teaches only BAOL students. Of the 5 adjuncts who participated, 2 have been instructors for more than 10 years; 1 for 7 years, and the other 2 have taught for 2 years. One full-time faculty member, who has a total of 9 years' experience, started as an adjunct instructor. The other full-time faculty member has been teaching for 13 years. Both full-time faculty members and 2 adjuncts hold doctorate degrees; in addition, 2 of the adjuncts are currently enrolled in doctoral degree programs. Of the adjunct instructors, 2 earned master's degrees from Chapman University College and were required as students to maintain learning journals.

Data Collection Instrument

For this study, interview guides (Appendix A) were created for the facilitator to guide qualitative interviewing of focus groups of OL students and faculty. Although

fundamentally the same, the questions asked of students and faculty were slightly different. Students were questioned about their reactions to keeping a learning journal, whereas faculty members were asked about assigning journals in leadership classes. Focus group volunteers received the interview questions in advance to enable them to reflect on their responses and supporting examples

The interview guides used different categories of questions sequenced carefully to ensure participants were given time to consider and discuss the viability of learning journals. As recommended by Krueger and Casey (2000), each interview began with an opening and easily answered question designed to encourage talking and feeling comfortable with the researcher and the other participants. This was followed by an introductory question that launched the topic of learning journals and started participants thinking about personal connections and experiences with them. Two transition questions moved the conversation into the issues of the study, and were followed by four key questions based on the defined research questions. The interview concluded with ending questions designed to bring closure to the discussion, encourage each respondent to reflect on previous comments, and provide the opportunity to raise issues not covered.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study involved qualitative interviews in focus groups. Focus group interviews occurred in a conference or class room at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Each focus group lasted 60 to 90 minutes. The researcher facilitated each session, and a note taker was present, who also served as a timekeeper. With the permission of the participants, the focus groups were recorded; literal transcriptions were used for analysis.

The facilitator followed the interview guides (Appendix A), which provided a sequence of questions asked during each session; two interview guides were created that fundamentally asked the same questions, but were worked slightly differently for student and faculty respondents. Each focus group followed the same process. The researcher, who facilitated the focus groups, began by thanking the participants for their time, introducing the note taker, explaining the purpose of the research project and focus group, and encouraging participants to be honest, as their comments would be reported anonymously. The facilitator suggested a dialogue process during which each participant was given an opportunity to respond to the question before opening a general discussion; this process worked well and ensured everyone had an opportunity to express their thoughts and experiences. The facilitator asked each member of the focus group to introduce themselves. During the key content section, the facilitator asked questions related to the specific objectives of the focus group; as participants finished discussing each topic, the facilitator provided an oral summary to verify mutual understanding of the thoughts and feelings that participants expressed. In concluding each focus group, the facilitator asked the participants for an overall assessment of the value of learning journals and encouraged participants to share any information about the topic that they might have forgotten or omitted (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Having received the interview questions in advance, many participants arrived at their scheduled time with thoughtful responses and examples prepared. As focus group respondents shared their thoughts and ideas, the initial prepared responses expanded and changed during the discussion. It was observed that the group process provided richer and more in-depth data than would have been gathered in individual interviews (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006). The interactions and discussions occurring during the focus groups generated new and fresh insights into learning journals.

Throughout the session, the note taker sat to the side of the group and facilitator, and served as a timekeeper; no other communication occurred with the facilitator or participants. Immediately following the focus groups, the researcher and note taker debriefed the interview (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2004). Combining notes taken during the focus group discussion and the tape recordings, the note taker provided the researcher with verbatim transcripts of each focus group for data analysis.

In summary, the data collection procedures that were rigorously followed for the focus group qualitative interviews have been outlined. Sessions were recorded, notes taken, and frequent oral summaries ensured accurate data collection.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the information gathered from four different groups or audiences, including graduate and undergraduate students, and adjunct and full-time faculty, required a systemic and sequential process to examine the data in multiple ways (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The transcripts and notes from each focus group and individual interview were analyzed to identify meanings, then summarized and categorized into themes and patterns. Comparisons were made from one group to another within the same audience; for example, each graduate focus group was analyzed separately and then compared to other MAOL focus groups. After an analysis of each audience was completed, comparisons were made among all four. The findings of graduate and undergraduate students, and adjunct and full-time faculty members were compared and contrasted.

The qualitative interviews were analyzed using content analysis, which enabled meaning to emerge by reducing, coding, and categorizing the data collected (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2004; Creswell, 1994). Following a rigorous and methodical procedure, content analysis required several steps. Flick (2002) wrote:

The material is paraphrased, which means that less relevant passages and paraphrases with the same meanings are skipped (first reduction) and similar paraphrases are bundled and summarized (second reduction). This is a combination of reducing the material by skipping statements included in a generalization in the sense of summarizing it on a higher level of abstraction. (p. 191)

Through this process, the data was reduced and categorized into patterns and themes, and then interpreted to enable the emergence of a complete and holistic picture. After reviewing the interview notes and transcripts, the researcher used a matrix (Appendix B) to sort and analyze data into themes, first by separate focus groups, and then by audience (graduate and undergraduate students, adjunct and full-time faculty). Once the data for each audience was analyzed, comparisons among audiences were made to identify similarities, differences, and relationships as well as look for new themes and unexpected issues.

In analyzing qualitative interviews, it was important that not too much weight was given to the comments of a verbose participant. Bachiochi and Weiner (2004) recommended that themes that emerge from the group and specific individuals be evaluated by three frequency measures: (a) the absolute frequency or the number of times a key topic is mentioned by any person in a focus group interview, (b) individual

participant frequency or the number of times the topic is mentioned by a particular person, and (c) interview frequency or number of times the topic is mentioned in a focus group interview. Using a matrix (Appendix C), frequency analyses were completed to ensure an accurate picture of the importance of each topic and theme was accurately determined.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the research design and methodology of using qualitative interviewing to evaluate the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the MAOL and BAOL programs at Chapman University College. To answer the research questions of this study, the design called for data to be collected through qualitative focus group interviewing of OL faculty members and students who were within 4 months of completing OL course requirements. Measures taken to enhance internal validity as well as a thick description of the design, data collection, and analyses processes were outlined; the sampling methods and focus group population were identified as sources of data. The research instrument and data analysis procedures were discussed. Following this methodology, qualitative focus group interviews were scheduled and completed. The findings from the data collection and analysis are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4:

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter reports the findings from the data collection and analysis that were completed to determine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the graduate and undergraduate OL degree programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. To provide a framework for interpreting and understanding the outcomes of the focus group interviews, the data analysis discussion begins by considering the respondents' perceptions of the purpose and requirements of learning journal assignments. It continues with an examination of the themes and patterns, which emerged from the focus group interviews, which explored the viability of learning journals by addressing the following research questions.

1. To what extent do learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership?
2. To what extent do learning journals generate greater insight and self-awareness?
3. To what extent do learning journals provide a tool for students to assess and develop their leadership skills?
4. To what extent do learning journals facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives?

Data Analysis

Using verbatim transcripts from each focus group discussion, the researcher employed a content analysis methodology to examine the focus group interview

outcomes; by reducing, coding, and categorizing the data collected, meaning emerged. The transcripts from each focus group were scrutinized to identify meanings, then summarized and categorized into themes and patterns. Comparisons were made among similar groups or audiences; for example, each graduate focus group was analyzed separately and then compared to the other MAOL focus groups. After an analysis of each audience was completed, comparisons were made across audiences; the findings of graduate and undergraduate students, and adjunct and full-time faculty members were compared and contrasted to identify similarities, differences, and relationships as well as to look for new themes and unexpected issues. To ensure that too much weight was not given to the comments of any participant or audience, the themes that emerged were measured by three frequencies: (a) the absolute frequency or the number of times a theme was mentioned by any person in a focus group interview, (b) interview frequency or the number of focus groups that mentioned the theme, and (c) individual participant frequency or the number of times the theme was mentioned by a particular person (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2004). The frequency analyses were tabulated and summarized by graduate, undergraduate, and faculty audiences. The Summary Analysis of Focus Group Interviews (Appendix D) delineates by specific audiences and all participants (a) the absolute frequency or number of times a theme was mentioned in all nine focus groups, (b) the focus group interview frequency or the number of focus groups in which the theme was mentioned, (c) individual participant frequency or the number of individuals who mentioned the theme, and (d) the percentage of individuals who addressed each theme. Frequency summaries have been incorporated into the data analysis as a way to measure the strength and importance of each theme.

Purpose and Requirements: Findings

Each focus group began by asking the respondents to describe the purpose and requirements of learning journal assignments in leadership classes. By reviewing the participants' responses, an understanding of their perceptions of what learning journals are and why and how they were done provided a foundation for interpreting their answers to the interview questions.

There was general agreement among the faculty and graduate and undergraduate students that learning journals were assigned to enhance learning. In describing the purpose of journals, the respondents spoke of capturing, anchoring, connecting, solidifying, and retaining learning. As one graduate student said, "I discovered that the study of leadership was a journey that we all embarked on and you could document that journey with your journal."

Graduate students who had just completed their capstones and comprehensive examinations focused on the value of learning journals and reflective papers in preparing for these significant degree requirements. Faculty members who teach the graduate capstone and all the graduate students who participated in the focus groups emphasized the importance of the journals to capture and organize learning. This is clearly illustrated in the response of one graduate student who said:

I did refer back and use them when I was thinking about what I wanted to write for my capstone because many of my learning journals were reflections of what I thought was valuable. There was a whole section in my capstone that was basically a portion of a reflection paper and how I saw myself as a servant leader. When I read that, I thought that's exactly what I want to say in my paper.

Undergraduate students, who aren't required to pass a comprehensive examination, described the purpose of learning journals to as a way to understand and relate course concepts to their lives outside the classroom. One undergraduate student saw learning journals as a way to "cement" learning. Another said, "It was pretty obvious that the purpose was to provide reflection—to contemplate and ponder the material, to think about what you learned and how can it be related to your professional life and personal life." Other undergraduates saw the purpose of reflective journaling as a way to assess and change behavior. As one said, "The journals forced me to look back and think about what do I want to change, what do I want to do differently, what do I want to keep the same."

When asked to describe the requirements of learning journal assignments, the responses were as varied as the names given to the assignments. Students had written learning journals, learning logs, personal leadership journals, reflection papers, and responded to reflective questions posted electronically on Blackboard. The majority of the undergraduate students reported journaling assignments had ranged from being free-form and unstructured to highly structured. In free-form journaling, students said they earned higher grades if drawings, poetry, and other creative expressions were included. Structured journals generally asked specific questions to encourage the students to reflect on the importance and value of key concepts and how they would apply them. The most structured journal discussed was that of one instructor who required students to identify an incident weekly, and analyze it using Kolb's (1984) learning cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Graduate students reported that they had received the same handout outlining learning journal requirements at the beginning of each OL class. However, the instructors' explanations, expectations, and emphasis on journaling assignments varied. This led to more than half the graduate students saying their understanding of the value and process of keeping a learning journal was gradual. One student, who found journaling so helpful that he has continued it daily even after finishing his degree requirements, said “[Journaling] started as a task, an assignment—not something that was a benefit to us. I never saw it that way until the end...it is a skill and understanding that develops.”

Having experienced a variety of formats for learning journals and reflective papers, 88% of the respondents said they preferred structured assignments that outlined clear requirements and expectations. As illustrated in Table 3, this was true for graduate students, undergraduate students, and faculty members; 23 of the 26 focus group participants preferred structured journals. Respondents who did not endorse a structured approach included 1 graduate student who enjoyed free-form, unstructured journaling; an undergraduate student who didn't see value in any form of journaling; and 1 neutral adjunct instructor.

Table 3

Preference for Structured Learning Journals

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Response	23	88%	7	88%	10	91%	6	88%

The preference for clearly defined reflective writing assignments was reinforced when participants were asked about their best experience in keeping a learning journal. Of the student respondents, 6 graduate and 3 undergraduates or 47% selected a structured assignment with clearly defined expectations and specific questions to answer. As one graduate student described his best experience with learning journals:

Definitely the reflection papers because they were structured, which really helped me. I was more conscious of what I was writing because there was some direction, and I think I purposely incorporated things into it that I wouldn't have if I had been free writing.

In describing best experiences with journaling, four students in two focus groups spoke of the Leadership and Film class, in which they read a leadership theory, watched a movie that illustrated that theory, and reflected in a learning journal connecting the theory, film case study, and their personal experiences. Students explained they enjoyed journaling when they were assigned a visual case study that demonstrated the theory coupled with clearly defined reflective writing requirements; one said he gained a deeper understanding of servant leadership after reflecting on a film about the life of Gandhi.

Reinforcing the preference for structured assignments, 2 faculty members identified their worst experience as assigning unstructured, free-form journals early in their teaching careers. As one said, "When my directions were not clear or focused, they [the students] would say that this [learning journal assignment] was busy work and meaningless." Both faculty members have made the transition to using structured reflective writing assignments that provide clear directions and expectations, and reported significantly improved student reactions and quality in journaling assignments.

In summary, the focus group participants understood that the purpose of assigning learning journals was to enhance learning. At the beginning of their programs, students were often unfamiliar with reflective writing and found that it was a gradual process to understand the value and importance of journaling. Many students and some faculty members described learning journal assignments that ranged from free-form and unstructured to clearly defined and highly structured; however, 88% of the participants expressed a strong preference for structured assignments with clearly defined requirements and expectations.

Deepen and Broaden Learning: Findings

Each focus group was asked whether learning journals deepened and broadened their understanding of leadership and, if possible, to support their responses with specific examples. Of the 26 focus group participants, 24, or 92%, agreed that journaling had been an effective tool to expand and enhance their learning; 2 undergraduate students, who saw no value in the assignment, disagreed. Learning Journals Deepen and Broaden Learning (Table 4) provides a frequency analysis of the number and percentage of total participants as well as MAOL and BAOL students and faculty who agreed learning journals deepened and broadened the understanding of leadership. In addition, four themes were identified as ways in which learning was deepened and broadened; frequency analyses of these themes, internalized learning, integrated learning, learning tool, and feedback, are given. A discussion of the meaning and importance of each theme as well as evidence from the focus group transcripts are provided as a way to examine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology that deepens and broadens leadership learning for adult learners.

Table 4

Learning Journals Deepen and Broaden Learning

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Deeper Learning	24	92%	8	100%	9	82%	7	100%
<i>Themes</i>								
Internalize Learning	20	77%	6	75%	8	73%	6	86%
Integrate Learning	14	54%	5	63%	2	18%	7	100%
Learning Tool	15	58%	7	88%	4	36%	4	57%
Feedback	15	58%	5	63%	5	45%	5	71%

In analyzing the data, four themes emerged on how learning was deepened and broadened through the use of learning journals. Of the participants, 77% described learning journals as a way to internalize learning, enabling them to understand and find personal meaning in leadership concepts learned in the classroom. Among the total, 54% said journaling integrated their learning by connecting leadership concepts and relating theory to practice. Students also saw journaling as an effective tool that offered a study guide and increased retention of course materials. Finally, 58 percent of the respondents raised the theme of feedback discussing the impact of positive, negative, and no feedback on learning journal assignments.

Internalize learning. When describing the impact of journals on learning, a theme that emerged from 20 participants was internalized learning; 77% said the assignment enabled students to understand and find personal meaning in leadership theories and

concepts. One undergraduate said, “[learning journals] helped me understand leadership, internalize the concepts, and go from head knowledge to heart knowledge.”

The theme of internalized learning originated from a pattern of responses that described how journaling encouraged students to delve deeper to reflect and understand course readings and classroom discussions. According to one graduate student, “It helped solidify the material for me. The content became something I had to tumble around rather than just read....Journaling forced me to think about it, and agree or disagree.” This was echoed by an undergraduate who said, “The learning journals made me think about the material rather than just reading and trying to memorize it.” An adjunct faculty member reinforced this, “The journal helps them think through the material, verbalize it, and realize what they have learned.” Deeper and broader learning is produced when students reflect on the leadership theories and concepts learned in the classroom to gain personal meaning and importance from them.

Integrate learning. Another theme that emerged in exploring whether journals deepen and broaden learning was learning integration. Of all the respondents, 54% said journaling connected leadership concepts and related theory to practice; this theme was strongest among faculty and graduate students. To complete successfully their capstone and comprehensive examination, graduate students must integrate all their OL coursework, and most use their learning journals to accomplish this; undergraduates have no such requirement.

Participants in four student and all three faculty groups discussed how journaling helped connect leadership theories, concepts, and personal experience. One adjunct instructor described the process and feedback from the students by saying, “[Journaling]

integrates learning as students have a chance to see where things get connected...they have said this tool really helped me understand leadership.” A graduate student said, “You read the theory, talk about it in class, and then the reflective piece is the application...how are you doing this, how do you see this in your organization, or not see it.” And another student said, “I compared and contrasted what I read to what I experienced at my company.” An example of how students use journaling to integrate learning is a journal entry shared by a faculty focus group member that described the personal struggle of a student who wanted to grow as a servant leader. She wrote, “I get discouraged dealing with my problem children and tend to ignore them even though they are the ones who need the most attention.” As illustrated by this example, journaling facilitates the integration of learning when students wrestle with leadership concepts and relate theory they are learning to their practice.

Each faculty participant spoke of using journaling to achieve learning integration. In describing a structured approach to journaling, one instructor said, “It’s really geared to be an integrating device, where [students] integrate what they are learning—the concepts and the principles—into what they are actually are doing, which is a competency needed by leaders.” All those who teach the graduate capstone related success stories of students who effectively used reflective journaling to prepare outstanding papers describing their leadership philosophy by integrating the MAOL coursework.

Learning tool. Particularly, MAOL students saw journaling as an effective tool to record learning and retain course concepts. Of the graduate students, 88%, and 58% of all respondents, described journaling as a valuable learning tool.

Students found value in journaling as a learning tool in different ways. The majority of the graduate students said that if they had understood the importance and value of their learning journals in completing the capstone and comprehensive examination, they would have put more effort into them. One student's comments illustrate this, "Having just studied for the comp, I realize a better learning journal would have been very useful, and I think we all feel that way. Looking back, we wish we had been more diligent." In retrospect, they realized that a well-done learning journal was an effective tool to prepare for significant degree requirements.

One graduate student, who said learning how to keep a journal was a gradual process, eventually found learning journals to be an effective study tool to participate fully in class sessions. "It became a study habit for me to read something and write the journal at the same time....Then when I got to class, I had topical discussions. It was a preparatory tool."

Undergraduate students found journaling enhanced their retention of text readings and class discussions. In describing her experience with the team-building course, one student said, "I learned so much in the group discussions. I learned from everyone about leadership, different personalities, and how to use different leadership styles. But if I hadn't written it down, I wouldn't remember it." Another student described how journals reinforced learning when he said: "When I walk out of the classroom, I go into the mode of what I am doing and turn my brain off....Journals forced me to think about what I learned."

Feedback. A final theme that emerged in exploring whether learning journals deepen and broaden learning was the importance of feedback. Constructive feedback that

asked probing questions and highlighted other perspectives enhanced the learning reflective journaling offered. Of the respondents, 58% addressed the importance of feedback in their journals. One graduate student said:

All my professors read and made comments. There were thought-provoking notes such as have you looked at it from this perspective. I felt like I was having a discussion with the professor. It gave me an outlet to have an interpersonal relationship where in the classroom you can't because they have to deal with everybody.

Another student echoed this by saying it was valuable when the instructor focused her by asking, "What is your thought process behind what happened in class?"

In addition to student feedback, learning journals are seen as an effective way for instructors to track and measure learning. As one adjunct said, "My goal is that they learn something and are able to articulate it...I see journals as a way of checking on that." Students agree. "I think the professor benefits from the journals. The class gives feedback on how they are learning, and the professor gets insights into the learning process and what the students are thinking." Yet a third perhaps more cynical student thought journals were assigned to "praise the instructor."

Feedback had a darker side too. One student said his worst experience with journaling was receiving criticism from the instructor who wrote in his journal, "I guess you really missed the point." He went on to say that he felt it was wrong to "challenge what I wrote. They were my perceptions."

Several students indicated that some journals were due in the last session, not returned, and they received no feedback on them. When this happened, they were more

likely to see journaling as an assignment without value. Students said that journals were time-consuming assignments and feedback was important to them.

In summary, the majority of the focus group participants agreed that reflective journaling deepened and broadened learning; the themes of internalization, integration, learning tool, and feedback emerged. Learning journals internalized learning by enabling students to understand and find personal meaning in leadership theories and approaches learned in the classroom. They integrated learning by connecting leadership concepts and relating theory to practice. Journaling can be an effective preparatory tool that also increases retention. Constructive feedback on journaling assignments was an important factor in enhancing and expanding student learning.

Insights and Self-Awareness: Findings

Focus groups were asked if asked if learning journals provided greater insights and increased their self-awareness, and, if possible, to support their responses with specific examples. Of the 26 participants, 21 or 81% felt journaling increased self-awareness by offering a vehicle to record and analyze perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about leadership. According to one graduate student, “Honestly, most of my journaling was an epiphany for me—it’s like the light went on.” Several themes emerged; 22 participants, or 85%, found journaling increased self-understanding; it provided a window into their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. It also gave 62% of the respondents a way to recognize their strengths and personal effectiveness. Students discussed their reactions to addressing personal feelings and emotions in learning journals; some found it enlightening while others saw it as threatening. Learning Journals Provide Insights and Self-Awareness (Table 5) provides frequency analyses of the number and percentage of

participants who found journaling increased self-awareness and mentioned each identified theme.

Table 5

Learning Journals Provide Insights and Self-Awareness

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Overall Impact	21	81%	7	88%	7	64%	7	100%
<i>Themes</i>								
Self-Understanding	22	85%	7	88%	8	73%	7	100%
Personal Effectiveness	16	62%	6	75%	6	55%	4	57%
Feelings	18	69%	7	88%	6	55%	5	71%

Self-understanding. As one undergraduate student said, “To be a good leader you need to understand yourself first. You need to know what kind of leader you are—your strengths and weaknesses.” Self-understanding emerged as a theme raised by 85% of the respondents who found learning journals increased their self-knowledge. One graduate student said, “[Journaling] gave me an understanding of what gets me excited, what makes me get up in the morning and be enthusiastic about what I’m going to do today.” Another said, “I think it helped me recognize what I didn’t know yet, what I didn’t understand, and what I wanted to explore more.”

Several students related insights they gained through journaling about their perceptions and prejudices. As one graduate student said, “I think it helped to highlight my own personal bias and inefficiencies...if I was acting pigheaded, the journal helped

me understand that's what I was doing." Another student described his experience in the teambuilding class:

I am a pretty opinionated person and sometimes it's a problem trying to see other perspectives. Reflecting has helped me stop, think, and realize there is probably a different perspective than mine. The thing that keeps coming to mind is the team building class. We had to complete one exercise that I thought was so silly. The team couldn't get it done, and everybody wanted to quit. I was like what are you people doing, we have to get this done. I called them all quitters and they were pissed at me. What I found out was that they weren't quitting—it was a strategic retreat. We were going to come back and analyze the whole thing and come up with a better way. I had an epiphany as I thought of that experience. It offered me a different perspective, and as I wrote the journal reflecting all those things, it started to gel in my brain.

Although the faculty saw journaling as a tool to increase self-understanding, there was recognition that it was not effective for all students. As one full-time instructor said:

Not all students are coming through with deep stuff. I think that to increase self-awareness, you have to really be at a point where you want to learn about yourself. Some have fought that every step of the way. They fought the learning journals and fought classes in leadership where there is a lot of self-examination.

In developing leadership skills, the OL programs at Chapman University College are designed to recognize that leadership effectiveness requires self-knowledge. Although some may resist knowing themselves, many students found reflective journaling an effective tool to increase self-understanding.

Personal effectiveness. A second theme that emerged when participants were asked if learning journals increased self-awareness was personal effectiveness. Of the MAOL student respondents, 75%, and 55% of the BAOL student respondents, described learning journals as a way to recognize their strengths and increase personal effectiveness. As one graduate student said, “If you take the time to write it down, you have to process it; and by processing it, it helps you grow.” An undergraduate student said, “[Journaling] forces you to think about your life outside of the classroom—how I can use this in my personal and work life. It forces you to think about what I do at work and ways to improve.” Another undergraduate student offered an example of how journaling helped her own and be accountable for her actions:

In one of my first Chapman classes, I had a team project that was frustrating....At first I thought I have no way of getting them to participate, I have no power. I can tell the teacher, but that made no sense to me. Writing it all down helped me learn about myself, my expectations, and how to work through the problem.

An adjunct who earned an MAOL at Chapman University College reinforced this, “[Journaling] gave me the awareness of my abilities, what I could accomplish. When I look back at those journals, I see the pictures of light bulbs on the side and think I need to remember that.” As students’ self-awareness increased, they recognized strengths and found ways to enhance personal effectiveness.

Feelings. A final theme that emerged as participants responded to the question of whether journaling gave them greater insights and self-awareness was their reactions to exploring and sharing personal feelings and emotions. Of all the respondents, 18, or 69%, addressed feelings and emotions in learning journals.

Some students saw great benefit in exploring their feelings and emotional reactions through journaling. One graduate student who had always seen herself as analytical was excited about the personal insights she had gained into her feelings and continues to use journaling as a tool:

[Journaling] is helping me more with emotions, figuring out where they are coming from. In meetings, certain things are triggers. I can see if there is a trend, shadow beliefs. Why do I feel at certain times like I have to defend something as opposed to being open to it?

One undergraduate student talked of using journaling to analyze emotional reactions of coworkers, which improved working relationships. Another shared that journaling in an elective class “helped me in my personal life” by finding ways to improve her marriage.

Other students expressed resistance to exploring feelings in their journals. One undergraduate described her worst experience with journaling as responding to personal questions in an interpersonal communication class. Another objected generally to learning journals by saying “A lot of times honestly it’s about feelings...,which for me was pointless. But when you applied what you were learning outside the class, that I actually liked.” A graduate student was vocal in his concerns:

There’s some stuff I just didn’t want to touch. I could see when I was writing that I was approaching it and decided that I didn’t want to go there for several reasons. One, I didn’t necessarily want to share it with the professor. Two, it meant revisiting some experiences that were not necessarily the best experiences for me. Learning journals can be an effective method to explore feelings and emotions.

As one adjunct instructor said, “These can be such powerful tools. But they are so powerful that some people may not be able to look in the mirror, because it truly is a way to look at yourself and your growth and knowledge.”

In summary, the majority of the focus group participants agreed that learning journals were effective in providing personal insights and increasing self-awareness. Participants found journaling increased their self-understanding by providing a vehicle to examine their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. It also enabled them to recognize their personal effectiveness and strengths. Some were enlightened, while others resisted journaling about their feelings and emotions.

Leadership Growth and Development: Findings

When asked whether learning journals have been a useful approach to assess and plan ways to develop leadership skills, the focus group participants responded negatively. The remarks of one faculty member summarized this well, “I have not set it up that way. I think it could be a useful, but I don’t know that the students deliberately use it that way.” The students confirmed that they did not use learning journals to identify or plan ways to enhance their leadership skills. As one graduate student said:

I don’t know if I necessarily did a lot of planning in my journals, but they did get me to a point where I started planning in my head and helping me organize where I want to go and what I want to do.

However, as the focus groups discussed this question, it was evident that learning journals contributed to students’ leadership development as participants described acquiring and expanding skills essential to leadership. Although learning journals were not used proactively to plan leadership skill development, 22 respondents or 85% said

learning journals facilitated leadership growth. As one student said, “This is a hard question for me. I don’t know if it has helped me [assess and plan], but it has increased my awareness of how I like to lead and what comes naturally to me.” An instructor saw it “as a vehicle for understanding thoughts and one’s presentation, which I believe is very important to leadership.” Learning Journals Impact on Leadership Development (Table 6) provides frequency analyses of the number and percentage of participants who found journaling facilitated the development of leadership skills and mentioned the themes that emerged of personal growth, leadership growth, and problem solving.

Table 6

Learning Journals Impact on Leadership Development

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Leader Development	22	85%	6	75%	9	82%	7	100%
<i>Themes</i>								
Personal Growth	22	85%	7	88%	9	82%	6	86%
Leadership Growth	20	77%	6	75%	8	73%	6	86%
Problem Solving	15	58%	6	75%	5	45%	4	57%

From the descriptions of how learning journals encouraged and documented leadership skill development, three themes emerged. More than 80% of the MAOL and BAOL students offered examples of personal growth from insights gained through journaling that led to improved skills in areas such as communication and building relationships with others. Another 77% spoke of growth as a leader; journaling helped

them identify their strengths and passions in leading. The theme of problem solving emerged from descriptions of using journaling as a tool to strategize when faced with a difficult issue or employee. Students found reflective journaling an effective means to explore alternative strategies and possible outcomes in handling the problem

Personal growth. The theme of personal growth emerged from the discussions and examples that occurred in focus groups as to how learning journals developed and expanded interpersonal skills. Of the respondents in all nine focus groups, 85% mentioned this theme. Students were often creative in using journaling to facilitate personal growth, as illustrated by one graduate student, who earned a BAOL at Chapman University College; she turned reflective writing assignments into personal coaching and mentoring:

I would write questions in my paper such as any suggestions would be helpful, or how can I change this behavior, or am I wrong in thinking this? And my professors were really good about writing feedback, which helped me a lot.

Several undergraduate students found learning journals useful in developing communication skills. “[Journaling] really brought home to me that part of the communication process is listening and how to be a better listener.” Another member of that focus group agreed, describing a listening exercise done in class that she understood only after journaling.

Other skill improvements were identified by focus groups respondents. Various participants highlighted enhanced organization, better time management and planning, and improved writing skills. And one talked of developing increased empathy through journaling:

I missed a deadline for the first time in my life. In my journal I reflected on that. It taught me that as a leader there are times in life when you will miss a deadline, and my missing this deadline was profound for me. Now I have more understanding if someone is working for me on a project and they can't make a deadline. I am more understanding and willing step in and help them out.

In all the focus group sessions, the theme of personal growth was considered, and participants offered testimonials and examples supporting it. Journals gave students insights that led to improved skills and personal development.

Leadership growth. According to 77% of the participants, learning journals were effective in facilitating leadership development and helping students identify their strengths as leaders. As one MAOL student said, "I felt like I gained a sense of direction of who I was as a leader, where my passions were in leadership. Journaling gave me good insight to where I need to go after my program."

Students found journaling helpful in understanding leadership effectiveness. One graduate student spoke of using journaling to analyze leaders and leadership changes within his organization. "I used it almost like a mentor program. What did I learn from this leader both in good ways and things I wouldn't do—I looked at their skill sets and evaluated tasks."

Other students recognized their strengths and abilities. As one undergraduate said, "I became more aware of my leadership skills. I'm now more willing to take on things that I didn't think I could do, which is a result of journaling. It is an avenue to work through issues." Another said, "What I experienced was how much deeper I was able to apply my own leadership in what I was learning in my own life."

Students said they gained an understanding of the importance of reflection to leadership effectiveness. This was explained by one undergraduate who found the skills learned through journaling helpful:

I think leadership should have reflective time to make sure you follow the principles you were taught. [Journaling] increased my ability to be reflective because I was forced to do it. Now I use it for more purpose, where before it was for emotional turmoil.

Problem solving. The final theme that emerged when respondents were asked about leadership skill development was problem solving, as students offered descriptions of using journaling as a tool to explore alternatives and potential consequences of handling a problem. Of the respondents, 58% mentioned this theme, saying that when faced with a difficult situation or employee, journaling provided a way to explore alternative strategies and possible outcomes when faced with significant change and difficult situations. As one graduate student explained:

For me the timing worked out well because we were going through restructuring and there was a lot of topsy-turvy activity going on. So putting things on paper helped me get some direction in how to deal with the restructuring. Not just how it affected me, but how it affected other people too.

Another graduate student said, “I remember getting a roadblock and writing about it. I thought this is ridiculous—how do I do it? I used it to strategize.” An undergraduate student described planning a counseling session with a difficult employee in her journal, “It worked really well. Normally I would have hurt her feelings and made the situation worse. [Journaling] helped me clarify what I wanted to say.”

Several instructors described how they encouraged short-term problem solving and action planning as a way to develop leadership skills in journal assignments. As one related:

I give specific assignments such as think about someone in your organization with whom you are having a conflict, and think about things we are learning in this class and how you can apply it. Try it and see what happens. They write about what they tried, what worked and what didn't work. By understanding what works helps their understanding of leadership.

In summary, although journaling wasn't used proactively to assess and plan leadership development, the focus group participants found it contributed to students' leadership growth; several themes emerged from the data. Personal growth came from insights gained through journaling and examples of improved skills in communication, planning, and relationship building were offered. Students also spoke of their growth as a leader; journaling helped them identify their strengths and passions. Problem solving emerged as a theme; journaling was used a planning tool to explore alternative strategies and possible outcomes when faced with complex and difficult situations.

Application: Findings

Each focus group was asked whether learning journals encouraged students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives and, if possible, to support their responses with specific examples. Of the focus group participants, 21, or 81%, responded positively. When a graduate student in one focus group described journaling "as a tool you need to change your life, but also use in the program," a peer agreed by saying "it does change your life."

In analyzing the data, several themes emerged on how students used journaling to transfer the knowledge gained in the classroom to the real world. Of the participants, 81% said journaling changed their thinking and perceptions; as one graduate student explained, “to change behavior, you have to change your way of thinking.” In addition, significant behavior changes were reported by 73% of the respondents who offered illustrations of implementing the leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. Some students found journaling so useful that they have continued the practice and use it as an ongoing tool. Learning Journals Encourage Application of Knowledge and Skills Learned (Table 7) provides a frequency analysis of the number and percentage of total participants as well as MAOL and BAOL students and faculty members who agreed learning journals facilitate the application of learning. In addition, frequency analyses of each identified theme, changed thinking, behavior change, and ongoing tool are provided.

Table 7

Learning Journals Encourage Application of Knowledge and Skills Learned

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Application	21	81%	6	75%	9	82%	6	86%
<i>Themes</i>								
Changed Thinking	21	81%	5	63%	9	82%	7	100%
Behavior Change	19	73%	6	75%	8	73%	5	71%
Ongoing Tool	8	31%	4	50%	3	27%	1	14%

Changed thinking. Of the respondents, 21, or 81%, found that journaling frequently shifted their thinking as they considered the application of classroom learning to their lives. One graduate student described a shift from management to leadership thinking as she shared that she had recently reread her description of how she had handled a problem employee early in her MAOL program:

I thought I knew exactly how I needed to go about handling this—it's textbook Management 101. When I reread the thoughts and feelings I had written in my journal, I realized my philosophy of leadership has changed so much. When I looked back, I thought I was right at that time and handled it to the best of my ability. Today, I would have definitely done it differently. I would have used more leadership rather than management skills.

Another graduate student described how journaling helped him gain an objective perspective of a work situation.

A peer was venting because he thought he had been treated unfairly. Earlier, I would have joined his negative feast about management unfairness, but now I can see both sides. I didn't voice it because it would have damaged our relationship, but I realized he was wrong and at the same time management was wrong in how they handled him. Journaling helped me understand, compare, and contrast a real-world situation to what I was learning.

Instructors also saw journaling as a tool to change thinking. As one said of his structured approach, "I want to teach them a way of thinking...The report back that I have gotten from students is that it helps them deal and analyze the problem, and come up with a better solution." The majority of students and faculty members who

participated in the focus groups said that journaling provided insights that shifted and broadened their thinking.

Behavior change. Focus group participants frequently related examples of behavior changes when asked whether learning journals encouraged them to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives. More than 70% of the student and faculty respondents mentioned the theme of behavior change.

In describing how the OL program and journaling increased her effectiveness as a manager, one student said:

I had had no formal training and knew that I could be a better manager....I realized that I was a more of a task manager than an actual leader. So I did a lot of self-reflecting and reversing roles. I thought: if I was an employee, how would I feel if my manager treated me like that?

Several students said they were now more thoughtful and less impulsive in taking action than they had been earlier in their careers. As a graduate student said, "I am a driver personality, so I take action right away. Writing helped me to think first." In describing how she handles troubling e-mail, another said, "I'm ready to respond and think no, step back, take a moment, self-monitor, think about how this is going to sound, come back tomorrow and answer it."

One graduate student shared how journaling refocused her career:

In one specific journal when we were reflecting on making transitions, I recognized I wanted to go in a different direction. It was weird because I had been focused on one career track for so long when I realized I didn't like what I was

doing....So I definitely applied journaling to my professional life. I took a new job.

In responding to this question, instructors were guardedly optimistic about the application of leadership concepts and principles. As one said, “My hope is they do and I think the better students do. But it is still up in the air whether you can really teach leadership.” Yet there is evidence from the responses of more than 70% of focus group students that learning journals can facilitate changes in behavior.

Ongoing tool. A commitment to journaling as an ongoing tool was the final theme that emerged when respondents were asked whether learning journals encouraged the application of classroom learning. Of the graduate students, 50%, and 31% of all participants, mentioned their commitment to continuing journaling; several students brought their journals with them as proof of their commitment to the focus group sessions.

Students shared why they are committed to the practice of journaling. As one graduate student flipped through his current journal, he said:

I still journal—I use it all the time. I don’t use it exactly the same way, but I didn’t journal before. I just found it to be such a help with the way I do business and the way I think. That’s why I don’t have business cards, contacts, and to do lists. I draw pictures, thoughts, epiphanies, and leadership moments. And so, it has changed essentially the way I do business.

An undergraduate student also praised the benefits of journaling as a way to understand and address the issues he faces at work. By journaling the needs and reactions of coworkers and vendors involved in a conflict, he was able to suggest a collaborative

solution supported by all. Another student said, “If I’m going through an emotional time or faced with a difficult conversation, I practice the conversation in my head, and if I write it down, my thoughts are clear.” Although ongoing journaling may not be practiced by all students, some have found it beneficial.

In summary, when asked whether learning journals encouraged students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives, the majority of focus group participants agreed. Participants found thinking often changed through examining different perspectives in their journals. In addition, behavioral changes were reported, illustrating the implementation of leadership knowledge and skills learned. Some students have continued the practice and use journaling as an ongoing tool.

Additional Findings

Two additional themes emerged in analyzing the focus group data, which although not directly related to the study’s research questions, offer valuable insights into the focus group participants’ reactions to learning journals. In considering the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in the OL program, all nine focus groups addressed ways that their effectiveness could be enhanced. From these discussions, the additional themes of student understanding and dialogue emerged. Particularly, graduate students felt strongly the students entering OL programs at Chapman University College should be oriented to the purpose and value of learning journals to ensure initial understanding, which should be reinforced frequently by faculty assigning journals. Some participants suggested that a dialogue process in conjunction with journaling would enhance the development of reflective thinking skills. Additional

Findings (Table 8) provides frequency analyses of participants who mentioned these themes.

Table 8

Additional Findings

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>n</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
<i>Themes</i>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Understanding	11	42%	8	100%	1	9%	2	29%
Dialogue	9	35%	2	25%	5	45%	2	29%

Student understanding. Having just completed their capstone and taken the comprehensive examination, graduate students were passionate about the importance and value of learning journals to accomplish successfully these significant course requirements. One spoke of being “jipped” because he didn’t understand journaling until late in his program. All the MAOL participants and 42% of all participants felt an early understanding reinforced by instructor consistency would make a significant difference in the viability of learning journals.

Students’ initial understanding of learning journals depended upon the clarity and emphasis of their first instructors. Those who were initially assigned well-structured journals supported by clearly stated expectations and feedback more quickly recognized the purpose and value of the assignment. One graduate student summarized the comments of her peers by saying, “I think [learning journals] should be introduced at orientation. And there needs to be structure and consistency throughout the program.” The focus group participants emphasized that understanding the importance and value of

learning journals at the beginning of the OL program would increase students' commitment and efforts in completing these assignments and their overall value; this led to the recommendation that an orientation be developed to enable initial understanding of the purpose and value of journaling.

Dialogue process. As participants considered the skills required to effectively journal, several suggested a dialogue process be used in the classroom to facilitate the development of reflective thinking skills; a few said they would prefer dialogue replace written journals. This theme was mentioned by 35% of the respondents.

Participants offered rationale and suggestions to support dialogue. One graduate student commented that with a verbal process “there is a different level of learning—it’s not solitude. You’re sharing and getting validation on your thought process, and whether or not it is a good idea.” An undergraduate who found much of his learning came from peers suggested that in one class session students “take your best experience from your journal that may benefit others and share it.”

In addition, respondents shared successes in using dialogue. One instructor begins her classes with “after action reviews adopted from the military, which seem to work better than learning journals.” A student who is a professional trainer has incorporated reflective dialogue effectively into the start of training workshops: “Here’s what we are going to learn, so what. Tell me why this is important.” Yet another instructor cautioned that a dialogue process could be effective under certain conditions.

You can’t do it with 18 people...it must be in a small class that has bonded. They can share each other’s ideas and build on each other’s thoughts on what they learned, how they are using it and why it is important.

In summary, the additional themes of student understanding and dialogue emerged that offer valuable insights into the focus group participants' reactions to learning journals. Participants suggested that the students be oriented to the purpose and value of learning journals at the beginning of the OL program, and instructors consistently reinforce these concepts. In addition, some thought a dialogue process would enhance the development of reflective thinking skills.

Overall Assessment of Learning Journals

At the end of each focus group interview, participants were asked their overall reaction to learning journals and whether they are a valuable assignment in the OL programs. As illustrated by Table 9, Overall Assessment of Learning Journals, 92% agreed that they were an effective and viable assignment. Only 2 undergraduate students found journaling to have little value and suggested it be eliminated as an assignment.

Table 9

Overall Assessment of Learning Journals

	Total		MAOL		BAOL		Faculty	
	<i>N</i> = 26		<i>n</i> = 8		<i>n</i> = 11		<i>n</i> = 7	
Valuable	24	92%	8	100%	9	82%	7	100%

Many participants commented on the role journaling had in enhancing their education. In summarizing her reaction to learning journals, one undergraduate said, "Am I here because I like journals? No, they are a lot of work. I'm here because I see huge value in them." This response was echoed by an adjunct instructor who commented, "I always make them do it, and sometimes kicking and screaming. But at the end, they say wow I'm so glad I did this."

One MAOL student changed his assessment as a result of the focus group discussion:

When I answered this question at home, I said I do not see the importance of keeping a learning journal. But sitting here and listening to my colleagues, I want to change what I put. I think if the value is made clear and it is structured in a way that a person would use it as a learning tool, then it should be done.

Of the respondents, 6 commented that significant learning occurred during the OL programs, but they couldn't say with certainty how much was from learning journals. As 1 graduate student concluded, "I gained a ton of knowledge during my program, but it also helped shift me personally....It truly changes the way you think and your perceptions. Part of it I attribute to journaling, but I don't know what percentage." Another concluded, "I think as people go through the process, that journals are what they choose to make them. They help the people who want to benefit from the program and all it has to offer."

The data analysis and findings of the nine focus groups indicate that learning journals are viable as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the graduate and undergraduate degree OL degree programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Analysis of the focus groups demonstrate that learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership, generate greater insight and self-awareness, and facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to personal and professional lives. Although learning journals are not used proactively to assess and plan development of leadership skills, there is evidence that journaling facilitates the growth of leadership

skills. Most students who have completed the OL degree requirements and faculty who assign learning journals agree that they are valuable.

Summary

This chapter reported the findings from the data collection and analysis that was completed to determine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the graduate and undergraduate degree OL degree programs at the Irvine campus of University College. In their overall reaction to the effectiveness of learning journals, 92% of the focus group participants found them valuable. A brief summary of the findings for each of the study's four research questions follows:

In responding to the first research question that asked to what extent learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of leadership, 92% of the respondents agreed that journals enhanced learning. In analyzing the data, four themes emerged. Learning journals internalized learning, enabling students to understand and find personal meaning in leadership concepts. It integrated learning by connecting leadership concepts and relating theory to practice. Students saw journaling as an effective tool that increased retention of course materials and offered a study guide. Finally, constructive feedback on journaling assignments expanded learning.

The second research question explored the extent to which learning journals provided insights and increased self-awareness; 81% of the focus group participants agreed that journals accomplished this. The themes of increased self-understanding and personal effectiveness emerged from this discussion. In addition, students discussed their reactions to addressing personal feelings and emotions in learning journals; some found it enlightening, while others saw it as threatening.

The focus group participants did not support the third research question, which asked whether learning journals had been a useful approach to assess and plan ways to develop leadership skills. However, an analysis of their responses made it evident that the majority of respondents found learning journals contributed to students' personal and leadership growth and development. In addition, the theme of action planning emerged; when faced with a difficult problem or employee, the students used journaling to explore alternatives and possible outcomes.

The fourth and final research question asked whether learning journals encouraged students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives; 81% of the focus group participants agreed. Respondents said that journaling changed thinking and behavior. Many found it was a valuable tool and have continued journaling after finishing their degrees.

Chapter 5:

Conclusions and Recommendations

To complete this research, which was conducted to determine the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate OL programs at Chapman University College, this chapter draws conclusions from the findings of the primary and secondary research. Assessing the effectiveness of assigning learning journals in OL degrees programs required integrating the data analysis of focus group interviews of OL students and faculty at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College with the secondary research on the use of journaling in higher education and management development programs. This analysis was done to answer fully the research questions of this study:

1. To what extent do learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership?
2. To what extent do learning journals generate greater insight and self-awareness?
3. To what extent do learning journals provide a tool for students to assess and develop their leadership skills?
4. To what extent do learning journals facilitate the application of leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives?

A review of the literature on the use of journaling in higher education and management development programs found documented evidence of the effectiveness of this practice. In higher education, learning journals have been used in more than 30

disciplines to enhance and expand learning (Kerka, 1996, 2002; Moon, 2006). In addition, respected management development programs offered by leading universities and corporations have incorporated reflective thinking strategies and journaling into their programs (Hollenbeck, 1991; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999; Sherman, 1994). The value of developing reflective thinking skills is supported by leading educators, including Dewey (1933), Freire (1970), Kolb (1984), and Mezirow (1991), who believed that reflection, although not necessarily in writing, is an essential component of learning. Reflection changes surface learning into deep understanding, as complex ideas are critically analyzed and synthesized. It creates new knowledge by providing different perspectives and insights, and enhances our understanding of the importance and implications of knowledge and experience, which enables its application to our lives.

Developing the capacity for reflective thinking is a key learning outcome in the Bachelor's and Master's of Arts in Organizational Leadership degrees offered by Chapman University College, and assigning learning journals as a vehicle to develop and encourage reflection is an instructional strategy used at the Irvine campus. However, frequent student complaints that the assignment is busywork and adds little value to their learning raised questions about its effectiveness. The need for further research into the efficacy of learning journals was identified by Langer (2002), who found inconsistencies in the perceived value of journaling among nontraditional students. Langer's work provided direction for this study, which assessed the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the OL degree programs.

Based on the analysis of primary and secondary research findings, conclusions were drawn on the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology in OL

degrees programs. This is followed by a discussion of these conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

During the focus group interviews, MAOL, BAOL, and faculty participants were asked 10 questions (Appendix A) to explore their experiences, perceptions, and reactions to learning journals. In addition to core questions that were directly related to the research questions of this study, focus group participants were asked introductory questions that encouraged feeling comfortable and connecting with the topic and were beneficial in laying a foundation for interpreting the data that emerged.

An introductory question that asked participants to describe the purpose and requirements of learning journal assignments they had experienced provided a framework for data analysis. Having a clear understanding of the purpose and intention of the assignment was critical to ensure the respondents could objectively assess its outcomes, benefits, and value. When Langer (2002) interviewed nontraditional students after a 15-week course that required journaling, he reported that when students didn't understand the purpose of journaling, they saw little value in it. This was not true of the focus group respondents; consistently, OL faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students stated that they understood the purpose of learning journals was to enhance learning; respondents spoke of capturing, connecting, anchoring, solidifying, cementing, and retaining learning. Although the requirements of the assignment varied, the participants shared the same understanding of the assignment's purpose. This understanding parallels the secondary research, which stated that instructors assign learning journals because students learn from them (Kerka, 1996, 2002; Moon, 2006). Having a shared

understanding that the fundamental purpose of journaling was learning provided a similar frame of reference as the focus group participants responded to the core interview questions, which explored their experiences, perceptions, and reactions to this assignment.

Deepen and Broaden Learning: Implications

The first research question of this study asked to what extent learning journals deepen and broaden students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership. With 92% of the respondents agreeing, often offering supporting evidence with specific examples, it can be concluded that learning journals are an effective instructional methodology to deepen and broaden most students' understanding of leadership. In responding to this question, one student explained how journaling transformed information into understanding:

Yes, absolutely. The deep reflection that takes place when you are sitting down thinking about what you will write forces analysis and putting things in proper context. How does it apply to leadership? It makes you think about that when you are getting ready to make decisions or lead people.

The literature does not specifically address the impact of journals in deepening and broadening the understanding of leadership. However, the student's observations are generally confirmed by Hiemstra (2001) as he considers the benefits of journaling in higher education:

Journaling helps adult learners increase their ability to reflect critically on what they are studying or learning. The resulting outcomes from values clarification, that is finding meaning in what is being examined, and developing wholeness as a

professional through critical judgments enhance not only the professional but also the profession. (p. 24)

Throughout the literature, educators report that journaling transforms passive learning into active understanding (Boud, 2001; Moon, 2006), which supports the conclusion that learning journals deepen and broaden learning. Through reflecting in journals, students recognized their own learning, connected it to prior knowledge and experience, and examined and interpreted it cognitively and affectively to create new and personal meaning. It is “a means to systematically document learning and promote self-analysis, reflection and positive action” (Burnett & Meacham, 2002, p. 412).

The themes of internalized learning, integrated learning, learning tool, and feedback that emerged from the focus groups indicate that there are different ways learning journals deepen and broaden learning. This finding is consistent with modern learning theories that recognize adult learning is influenced by learning style, individual motivation, prior experiences, and readiness to learn (Knowles et al., 2005; Kolb, 1984). There is evidence that these themes are supported in the literature on journaling.

Internalize learning. Of the focus group participants, 77% said learning journaling internalized their learning, enabling them to understand and find personal meaning in leadership theories and concepts learned in the classroom; 1 student described it as transforming “head knowledge into heart knowledge.” A graduate student reflected, “I gained a deeper understanding of things as I dug deeper to write the capstone.”

Evidence of internalized learning is found in the literature. In providing their rationale for assigning learning journals to MBA students, Varner and Peck (2003) stated, “learning depends on the reflective integration of theory with experience. Simply reading

about concepts is insufficient” (p. 53). The process of internalizing learning is described in a study of the impact of journaling on pre-service teachers. “Entries in students’ journals indicated deliberate attempts to connect theoretically informed information presented on the subject with how to apply this in their own learning and teaching” (Dart et al., 1998, p. 314).

The responses of the focus group participants, which are supported in the literature, leads to the conclusion that one way journals deepen and broaden learning is by internalizing it. Graduate and undergraduate students understand and find personal meaning in leadership theories and concepts learned in the classroom through reflective journaling.

Integrate learning. Another theme that emerged in exploring whether journals deepen and broaden learning was learning integration. Of all the respondents, 54% said journaling connected leadership concepts and related theory to practice. As one instructor described it, “[Journaling] integrates learning; as students have a chance to see where things get connected...they have said this tool really helped me understand leadership.”

In an extensive study evaluating the impact of journaling on pre-service teachers, Morrison (1996) found students who reflected in writing had increased motivation to study, learn, and improve their practice. “[Journaling] provides students with an opportunity not only to link theory and practice but to integrate personal, intrapersonal, private, public and professional aspects of themselves” (p. 327). Other studies in health care and education have confirmed that journaling facilitates the integration of learning, with prior experiences and feelings improving professionalism and practice (Kreber, 2004; Lyons, 1999; Spalding & Wilson, 2002).

The responses of the focus group participants are supported by secondary research, which conclude that learning journals facilitate the integration of learning in students. Learning is deepened and broadened when leadership concepts are connected, and theory related to practice.

Learning tool. Focus group participants saw journaling as an effective tool to record learning and retain course concepts. Of the MAOL students, 88%, and 58 percent of all participants, described journaling as a valuable learning tool that facilitated preparation for class sessions, offered a study and review tool, and strengthened their retention of readings and class experiences. As one student said, “Journals forced me to think about what I learned.”

The conclusion that learning journals are effective as a learning tool is supported in the literature. Dunlap (2006), Haigh (2001) and Yoo (2001) reported that journaling encouraged students to reflect on how they approached learning facilitated their growth as expert learners. This is illustrated in a study of university students who were randomly assigned learning journals or scientific reports. Students assigned journals exhibited superior outcomes in terms of the quality and depth of their knowledge, and their performance on the final examination was stronger than the other students. McCrindle and Christensen (1995) concluded that journaling was a more effective strategy to encourage learning than report writing.

Feedback. The role of feedback in deepening and broadening learning was the fourth theme that emerged. With 58% of the respondents addressing the importance of feedback in their journals, it can be concluded that constructive feedback that asks probing questions and highlights other perspectives enhances the learning reflective

journaling offers. When done well, journaling “encourages students to think more deeply and teachers to listen more effectively” (Beveridge, 1997, p. 33). To be effective in deepening and broadening learning, giving feedback is a balancing act.

The responder must balance direction and freedom in assisting the writer. If the responder offers too many comments or suggestions, writers may become overwhelmed, losing their voices or the opportunities to work through a thinking dilemma. If the responder offers too little, writers seeking guidance may become frustrated. (Fenwick, 2001, p. 42)

The analyses of the focus group findings and secondary research support learning journals as an effective instructional methodology to deepen and broaden students’ understanding of leadership. Journals internalize learning by enabling students to understand and find personal meaning in leadership theories learned in the classroom. They facilitate learning integration by encouraging students to find connections among leadership concepts and relate theory learned to practice. Students saw journaling as a valuable learning tool to prepare for class sessions, study, and strengthened their retention of readings and class experiences. Constructive feedback that asks probing questions and highlights other perspectives on journaling assignments is important to maximize learning.

Insights and Self-Awareness: Implications

The second research question explored the extent to which learning journals provide greater personal insights and increased self-awareness. Of the respondents, 81% agreed that journaling increased self-awareness by offering a vehicle to record and analyze perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about leadership. As one student reflected, “I

learned that I may know something about myself, but writing it down and having someone else read it is owning up to it....Experience is made more real by writing it down and sharing it.” A graduate student summarized his experience with journaling by saying, “Honestly, most of my journaling was an epiphany for me—it’s like the light went on.”

The literature on learning journals supports the conclusion that the assignment provides insights and increased self-awareness. According to Hiemstra (2001), self-discovery is a benefit for adult learners who journal. “Learning to trust that inner voice and interpret new thoughts or even dreams can increase self-confidence not only in the classroom but in other settings” (p. 24). Morrison’s (1996) work confirmed this observation; the pre-service teachers in his study reported their increased self-awareness from keeping a journal was self-fulfilling, recognizing their own progress was “liberating and self-authenticating” (p. 326).

Several themes emerged as focus group participants considered the extent to which learning journals provided greater insights and increased self-awareness. Participants found journaling increased self-understanding, providing a window into their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes. It also offered a way to recognize personal effectiveness and strengths. Students discussed their reactions to addressing personal feelings and emotions in learning journals; some found it enlightening while others saw it as threatening.

Self-understanding. Self-understanding emerged as a theme when 85% of the respondents said they found journaling increased self-knowledge. Its value was highlighted by a student who recognized that “to be a good leader you need to understand

yourself first...your strengths and weakness.” In describing how journaling helped his self-awareness, one student said, “I’m a pretty opinionated person. I see the world through one set of lenses and sometimes it is a problem trying to see other perspectives....[Journaling] helped me stop, think, and say there is probably a different perspective.” In explaining how he used journaling to enhance self-understanding, a graduate student described his reflective process, “What I do is take a look at a situation and how I performed or behaved. Then I deconstruct it and analyze what I contributed and what I took away from it.”

The literature recognizes that journaling promotes self-understanding. Moon (2006) wrote that journals can be used “for finding direction, for self-understanding, for keeping things in balance. A journal is a place in which the writer can be authentically themselves and can weave their way through the portrayed selves that they feel are seen by others” (p. 82). Journals are an effective vehicle to explore personal values, beliefs, and motives and how they impact our world view and interactions with others.

Personal effectiveness. A second theme that emerged when participants were asked whether learning journals increased self-awareness was personal effectiveness. Of the respondents, 62% described learning journals as a way to recognize their strengths and increase personal effectiveness. As one said, “[Journaling] gave me an awareness of my abilities.” This was confirmed by an instructor, “They begin to see that there are answers within the world of leadership that can help them handle those particular issues they are facing.”

Using journaling as a tool to recognize strengths and personal effectiveness was also reported in the literature. Lyons (1999) says:

Journal writing is a powerful technique that enables students to learn the process and the skills of reflection to improve their professional practice....If knowledge is power, then knowledge about who we are and how we practice is even more powerful. (p. 33)

This observation is supported by Dunlap (2006), who assigned journaling to technology doctoral students. “Reflective journaling activities can encourage students to recognize their accomplishments throughout an instructional event (activity, project, course) and reflect on their personal development of important professional content, skills and dispositions” (p. 22).

Based on the findings of the focus group data analysis and review of the literature, it can be concluded that learning journals are an effective vehicle to provide greater insights and increased self-awareness by enabling students to recognize their strengths and personal effectiveness. This self-awareness builds confidence and encourages the willingness to seek challenging assignments (Hollenbeck, 1991; Varner & Peck, 2003).

Feelings. The final theme that emerged as participants responded to the question of whether journaling gave them greater insights and self-awareness was their reactions to examining and sharing personal feelings and emotions; 69% of the respondents raised this issue. Some students saw great benefit in exploring feelings through journaling, describing how it facilitated getting in touch with their emotions and learning to manage them. Other students saw this as threatening and expressed resistance to discussing feelings in their journals.

The importance of the theme of feelings is confirmed in the literature. “Journal-writing is a process that enables us to experience, address, explore, manage and work

with emotions” (Moon, 2006, p.29). Acknowledging feelings and emotions is essential to producing learning. Analyzing the journals of advanced mathematics students, Beveridge (1997) found a third of the entries focused on feelings, which led him to conclude:

The learning process involves the whole person, which means providing tools to address affective as well as cognitive issues. Anxiety about learning, and particularly among students learning subjects with significant mathematical content, is widespread and this means the affective issues are both very deep and very difficult to address. (p. 44)

Providing learners with a tool to explore feelings and emotional reactions is essential in the learning process (Boud et al, 1985; Moon, 2004). Although some are resistant and even refuse, many students benefit from the insights gained by examining their feelings and emotions in reflective journals. As one OL instructor observed, “These can be such powerful tools. But they are so powerful that some people may not be able to look in the mirror, because it truly is a way to look at yourself and your growth and knowledge.”

The analyses of the focus group findings and secondary research found that learning journals were an effective instructional methodology that provided personal insights and increased self-awareness by offering a vehicle to record and analyze perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about leadership. It increased self-understanding by offering a window into students’ beliefs, values, and attitudes. Journaling also gave students a way to recognize their strengths and personal effectiveness. It can be an effective tool to explore feelings and emotions for those students ready to face that challenge.

Leadership Growth and Development: Implications

Focus group participants disagreed when asked whether learning journals had been used proactively to assess and plan ways to develop leadership skills. However, an analysis of the data found that 85% said journaling contributed to leadership development, as participants described acquiring and building essential leadership skills. As one instructor said, “Reflective thinking is really important to learning about leadership, so my goal is to keep refining how I guide them in that process.”

The literature provides evidence of the value of reflection and journaling to develop skills and improve the effectiveness of organizational leaders. A survey of best practices in executive development among 77 companies found the development of reflective thinking skills key to well-designed programs (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). In addition, studies of the outcomes of incorporating reflective thinking skills into corporate training programs demonstrated improved managerial effectiveness in problem solving, team development, and influencing change (Brooks, 2004, Daudelin, 1996; Loo & Thorpe, 2002).

Several themes emerged from descriptions of how learning journals encouraged and documented leadership growth and development. Students offered examples of personal growth from insights gained through journaling that led to improved skills in areas such as communications, interpersonal relations, conflict resolution, planning and time management.. It contributed to their leadership effectiveness by helping identify strengths and passions. The theme of problem solving emerged from narratives of using journaling as a tool to explore alternatives, consequences and strategize successfully when faced with difficult issues.

Personal growth. This theme emerged from discussions and examples of personal growth offered by 85% of the participants in all nine focus groups. Participants highlighted communication, listening, empathy, planning, organization, time management, and writing skills, which illustrated the value of learning journals in encouraging the growth and development of skills critical to personal effectiveness.

The literature supports the value of reflective journaling in developing a wide variety of skills. In discussing learning journals in higher education, Hiemstra (2001) concluded:

Perhaps the most important benefit for the adult learner is the enhancement of personal growth and development. Journaling can help with such learning goals or expected outcomes as integrating life experiences with learning endeavors, allowing for freedom of expression that may be inhibited in a group setting, stimulating mental development, enhancing breakthroughs in terms of new insights, and even planting the seeds of ambition in terms of future study or research. Journal writing is an investment in self through a growing awareness of personal thoughts and feelings. (p. 24)

Leadership growth. According to 77% of the focus group participants, learning journals were effective in facilitating leadership development, including helping students identify their strengths and abilities. One student spoke of “gaining a sense of direction of who I was as a leader.” Another said, “I became more aware of my leadership skills. I’m now more willing to take on things that I didn’t think I could do.”

The comments of Chapman University College’s OL students are confirmed by studies of the outcomes of management development programs that used reflective

journaling. Hollenbeck (1991) described increased self-confidence, a greater willingness to speak and take action, improved decision making, interpersonal, and change management skills in executives who attended Harvard's Advanced Management Program. Participants in an in-house supervisory training program reported the process of keeping a journal empowering; analyzing emotionally significant incidents helped them understand the situations from multiple perspectives (Clegg, 1997). Loo (2002) found journaling facilitated the development of interpersonal communication, conflict management, teamwork, and meeting management skills in project managers.

Problem solving. The final theme that emerged in leadership growth and development was the use of journaling as a problem solving tool. Of the respondents, 58% mentioned this theme, saying that when faced with significant change, a complex issue, or difficult employee, journaling provided a way to explore alternative strategies and possible outcomes. As a MAOL student said, "The journals served as a way to develop creative problem solving and systems thinking." Some faculty members spoke of structuring journaling assignments in ways to connect course concepts with work-related situations and problems students were facing.

In the literature, problem solving and decision making are discussed as critical skills that journaling facilitates when learners identify and analyze difficult issues, explore alternatives, evaluate risks, and see different perspectives (Daudelin, 1996; Dunlap, 2006). Varner and Peck (2003) encouraged their MBA students to use journaling to solve work problems, and those that did "reported that doing so has given them exceptional understanding of the material" (p. 57). The value of reflective journals as a problem solving tool is summarized by Hiemstra (2001):

Using a journaling technique often helps in the solution of problems. Writing down and imagining your way through a problem using personal insights and reflections on life experiences can be rewarding. Often an epiphany emerges that might not have been possible with some other problem solving technique. (p. 24)

The analyses of the focus group findings and secondary research support learning journals as an effective instructional methodology to document and develop leadership skills. Personal growth came from insights gained through journaling, and examples of improved communication, interpersonal, planning, and writing skills were given. Students also spoke of growing as leaders and gaining an understanding of their strengths and abilities. Problem solving emerged as a theme; journaling was used as a tool to explore alternative strategies and possible outcomes when faced with complex situations and issues.

Application: Implications

The fourth and last research question of this study asked to what extent learning journals encourage students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives. With 81% of the participants responding positively, often offering supporting evidence with specific examples, it can be concluded that learning journals encourage the application of leadership concepts learned. As an MAOL student stated, “Yes, most definitely. In fact, I wrote the second half of my capstone on how I could apply leadership to all facets of my life. I talked about how I took what I learned and applied it.”

The literature provides evidence that reflective journaling encourages the application of knowledge and skills learned. In describing outcomes directly attributed to

journaling, Nirenberg (1998) states that one benefit is “modifying old behaviors and experimenting with new, intentional behaviors” (p. 63). This is illustrated in Loo and Thorpe’s (2002) discussion of the outcomes of requiring students in a project management course to journal:

The use of reflective learning journals was shown to be effective tool to stimulate critical reflection about both one’s own learning and group processes, as well as stimulating participants to take specific actions to improve their learning and team effectiveness....Some participants learned that taking initiative and showing leadership within their teams was rewarding rather than stressful and they will likely be willing to take leadership roles in their future careers. (p. 138)

In analyzing the responses of focus group participants when asked to what extent learning journals encouraged students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives, the themes of changed thinking, behavior change, and the use of journaling as an ongoing tool emerged. Evidence of these themes was found in the literature, supporting the conclusion that journaling encourages the transfer and application of learning to the real world.

Changed thinking. Of the focus group participants, 81% said journaling changed their thinking and perceptions. As one graduate student explained, “It helped me shift personally. It’s great to have all that knowledge, but it does truly change the way you think and change your perceptions.”

The application of new knowledge and learning often begins with changed thinking because it is difficult to change behavior without changing personal beliefs (Dart et al., 1998). This is vividly described by Varner and Peck (2003):

[MBA students] shift their personal perspectives in a cumulative manner across journal entries. For example, one student realized that the apparent individual motivation problems among his coworkers reflected situation, leadership, and organizational cultural problems. As the complexity of the difficulties became clearer, the student moved from blaming his colleagues to assessing potential solutions. In his final entry, he explored options for change and assessed the likelihood of success. Although his prognosis for large-scale transformation was bleak, it was more realistic than his original perspective of “fire the slackers.” (p. 67)

In encouraging reflective thinking, learning journals build critical thinking skills, enabling learners to examine assumptions to clarify and interpret meaning (Boud, 2001; Hiemstra, 2001). When thinking is transformed, significant change is possible.

Behavior change. Of the focus group participants, 73% spoke of behavior change when asked whether learning journals encouraged them to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their personal and professional lives. Students frequently related specific examples, including becoming a better manager, actively listening, thinking critically before acting, and building stronger relationships. Recognizing that journals are not used that way by all students, one instructor observed, “The word encourage is powerful if it is presented as a tool that they can use and apply not only in school, but to their regular life.”

The literature offers examples of behavior changes in participants, particularly in management development programs that used journaling. In assessing the long-term effectiveness of Harvard’s Advanced Management Program, which required learning

logs, Hollenbeck (1991) found behavioral changes, including improved people skills, willingness to execute, and increased confidence, were reported by 85% of the participants and 55% of their spouses 2 years later. In another example, journaling helped an engineer explore strategies to work more effectively in a team environment and improve his relationships with coworkers (Rigano & Edwards, 1998).

Ongoing tool. A commitment to journaling as an ongoing tool was the final theme that emerged when respondents were asked whether learning journals encouraged the application of classroom learning. Of the MAOL students, 50%, and 27% of the BAOL students, mentioned using journaling as an ongoing tool. Several students brought their journals with them as proof and spoke of recent insights that were beneficial in resolving difficult work situations.

There were examples of journaling as an ongoing tool in the literature. For example, according to Varner and Peck (2003),

Nearly every term a student tells us that the journal assignment prompted thought about issues in ways she or he never would have thought of before. Some find the practice of reflecting in journals so compelling that they decide to continue doing so after the class has ended. (p. 67)

The analyses of the focus group findings and secondary research support learning journals as a vehicle to encourage students to use and apply the knowledge and skills learned about leadership to their professional and personal lives. Journals are an effective vehicle to explore assumptions and different perspectives, which leads to changed thinking. In addition, participants offered examples of behavior changes that illustrated the implementation of leadership knowledge and skills learned to their professional and

personal lives. Some students who have continued the practice of journaling as an ongoing tool praised its effectiveness in helping them understand and resolve complex issues.

Overall Viability of Learning Journals

When participants were asked to offer an overall assessment of learning journals in the OL programs at Chapman University College, 92% of the focus group respondents said they were valuable and some offered suggestions to enhance their effectiveness; only 2 undergraduate students suggested the assignment be eliminated. This was validation of their use as a viable instructional methodology and argued that the assignment be retained as a key component in the OL programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College.

This research study, which explored the experiences and perceptions of graduating MAOL and BAOL students and faculty members who had had multiple experiences with learning journals, was broader than many of the studies reported in the literature that analyzed data on journaling from one course and instructor. However, one longitudinal study was identified that confirmed the overall conclusion that learning journals are a viable instructional methodology for a program of study such as Chapman University College's MAOL and BAOL degrees. In that study, students were required to reflect on their understanding of teaching excellence and their personal growth as teachers as they completed several years of course work required for credentialing. When asked about the value of journaling, graduating teachers commented that they learned more from this activity than any another in their program (Woodward, 1998). This supports the conclusion that requiring journals throughout the OL coursework is an

effective strategy that enhances the learning and development of undergraduate and graduate OL students.

Additional Implications

Additional themes emerged in analyzing the focus group data, which although not directly related to the study's research questions, offer valuable insights into ensuring the long-term viability of journaling as an instructional methodology for adult learners enrolled in the OL programs offered at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. All nine focus groups addressed ways that the effectiveness of reflective journaling could be improved, and from these discussions the themes of structure, student understanding, and dialogue emerged.

Structure. Of the focus group participants, 85% endorsed structured reflective journaling assignments that outlined clear requirements and expectations. More than half the graduate students commented that their understanding of the value and process of journaling was gradual; at the beginning of their program they were unfamiliar and unskilled in reflective writing. The focus group participants had experienced journaling assignments that ranged from free-form to clearly defined, but found well-structured ones were most effective in facilitating the preparation of journals that offered valuable insights and learning.

The literature does not identify any systemic attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of one journaling technique over another (Hubbs & Brand, 2005); however, in discussing effective journal assignments, researchers and educators frequently suggest using a structured approach to facilitate students constructing their own learning (Cunliffe, 2004; Ramsey, 2002). For example, in assigning journaling to doctoral

technology students, Dunlap (2006) “provides students with cues or guided questions to help them focus their journal responses...that capture conceptual and perceptual change” (p. 22). Educators who have studied journals often report that clearly defined requirements are essential to ensure learning is produced.

Learner understanding. All the MAOL students and 42% of all participants felt that an early understanding reinforced by instructor consistency would make a significant difference in the viability of learning journals as an instructional methodology within the OL programs. Graduating students wished they had recognized the value of journaling earlier in their programs. Those who were initially assigned well-structured journals supported by clearly stated expectations and feedback more quickly understood the purpose and value of the assignment. With eight of the nine focus groups mentioning this theme, it can be concluded that Chapman University College should commit to ensuring early student understanding consistently reinforced by instructors.

The need for learner understanding was reinforced in the literature. After realizing that 95% of his students were unfamiliar with reflective writing, Langer (2002) concluded, “Instructors need to teach key concepts before expecting students to understand the value of learning journals and how to use them” (p. 347).

As OL courses are taught by adjuncts, who may or may not be familiar with reflective writing, increasing learner understanding within Chapman University College requires a two-prong approach of educating instructors and students to the value and benefits of reflection and learning journals. An orientation might include a brief discussion of the role and importance of reflection in learning (Argyris, 1991; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1991) and the stages of the reflective process, which include awareness,

critical analysis, and new perspectives (Atkins & Murphy, 1993; Scanlan & Chernomas, 1997). In addition, the purpose and expected outcomes of requiring learning journals would be highlighted (Kerka, 2002; Moon, 2006). Although new students may be initially oriented to learning journals, students' instructors must be encouraged to reinforce the journals' purpose and value in assigning them.

Dialogue. As participants considered the reflective thinking skills journaling is designed to develop, several suggested a dialogue process be used in the classroom to facilitate and reinforce these skills. Such an approach is supported in the literature. "Active reflection involves external as well as internal dialogue, and one of the most powerful tools for reflection appears to be meaningful discussion with someone trusted" (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999, p. 207).

Developing the capacity for reflective thinking is a key learning outcome in the Bachelor's and Master's of Arts in Organizational Leadership degrees offered by Chapman University College. Working adults who are pursuing these degrees often come from environments that emphasize action and results over reflection (Daudelin, 1996). Not only do students need to understand the importance and value of reflective thinking, but they also need multiple opportunities for practice and reinforcement. Using a variety of strategies, including journaling and dialogue, to teach and reinforce these skills might be beneficial to ensuring this learning outcome is achieved.

Discussion

This study found learning journals are a viable instructional methodology for many, but not all adult learners enrolled in the MAOL and BAOL degree programs at the Irvine campus of Chapman University College. Reflecting in learning journals deepens

and broadens students' understanding of the theory and practice of leadership by internalizing and integrating learning; and this learning is enhanced with constructive feedback. In addition, many students found journaling an effective learning tool when used as a study guide, which increased retention of course materials. Second, reflective journaling is a vehicle that provides personal insights and greater self-awareness through increased self-understanding, recognition of personal effectiveness, and the exploration of the impact of feelings and emotion. Not only are learning journals found to contribute to students' personal and leadership growth and development, they are frequently used as an effective problem solving tool. Learning journals encourage the application of the leadership knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to students' professional and personal lives by changing thinking and behavior. Some students found journaling so effective they continue to use it as an ongoing tool.

There were variances in the strength of the responses to the research questions and different themes that emerged among the different focus group audiences. A factor that may have influenced the perceived importance and value of journaling is the differing degree requirements in the MAOL and BAOL programs. The BAOL students who participated in the focus groups had completed their required coursework and were graduating; their perceptions of journaling were based on their experiences in OL courses that assigned journals. The MAOL focus group participants had recently completed an integrative capstone project and taken a comprehensive examination; all had used learning journals and reflective papers from their OL coursework to prepare for these significant degree requirements. In responding to the focus group questions, the MAOL students emphasized the benefits of journaling to integrate coursework for the capstone

and comprehensive examination. Not having these requirements, BAOL students focused on the value of journaling in understanding and applying concepts from specific courses.

In concluding that reflective journaling is a viable instructional strategy, the focus group participants offered suggestions to enhance effectiveness. They recommended that journaling assignments be structured with clearly defined requirements and expectations; instructor clarity and frequent feedback is important. Second, students should be oriented to journaling early in their programs to ensure they understand its purpose and value; this should be reinforced consistently by instructors assigning journals. A variety of instructional approaches would enhance students' reflective thinking skills. In addition to learning journals, some focus group participants suggested alternative strategies such as dialogue be incorporated in the OL programs to develop and reinforce reflection skills.

As graduate and undergraduate focus group participants reflected on the significant learning that occurred during the OL programs and the impact it had had on their professional and personal lives, several commented that many instructional strategies were beneficial to the learning process. Although learning journals were effective, it was difficult to measure the contribution of a single strategy to their overall learning. Learning journals must be used in conjunction with other methodologies in designing strong degree programs.

The findings and conclusions of this study were influenced by the research design, which limited participants to OL faculty members who assign learning journals and students who had completed their OL degree requirements; this criterion was established to ensure focus group participants had multiple experiences with learning journals assignments. However, the data analysis and findings did not include the thoughts of OL

and other faculty members who do not assign learning journals and whose ideas may differ from instructors who do. In addition, although the majority of the students participating in focus groups found learning journals valuable, half said that their understanding of the value and process of keeping a learning journal was gradual. Had students who were enrolled but had not completed the OL degree requirements participated in the focus groups, the findings may have been different

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused on the viability of learning journals as instructional strategy for adult learners enrolled in OL degree programs at Chapman University College. Although the conclusions of the research are that journaling is an effective methodology, the findings have raised several issues needing further research.

The focus group participants strongly recommended learning journals be structured, but did not offer guidance on the design of the assignment. The literature describes many types of journals, but doesn't identify any systemic attempts to assess the effectiveness of one technique over another (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). The first area that requires further research is a determination of what constitutes an effectively structured learning journal assignment.

Second, the focus group sample was limited to students who had completed their OL degree requirements, and had multiple experiences completing learning journal assignments. Recognizing that gaining an appreciation of the value of journaling was a gradual process, they recommended an orientation to the purpose, value and importance of journaling early in the OL degree programs consistently reinforced by instructors who assign them. Examining the thoughts, experiences, and perceptions of students earlier in

their programs and/or after participating in an initial orientation is an area needing further study.

Third, learning journals are assigned to enhance learning through the development of reflective thinking skills. As some focus group participants noted, other instructional strategies such as dialogue could serve the same purpose. Looking at the effectiveness of alternative approaches in developing reflecting thinking skills is another area of inquiry.

In closing, this study explored the viability of learning journals for adult learners enrolled in OL degree programs at one campus of Chapman University College, where instructors frequently assign journals as an instructional methodology to achieve the learning outcome of developing the capacity for reflective thinking. The areas identified for further research suggest studies that explore and expand the understanding of strategies that build learners' skills and appreciation of the importance and value of reflection in the learning process. Beyond these recommendations, readers are challenged to formulate their own ideas and questions based on this study that provide further contributions to the research on developing reflective thinking skills through the use of learning journals.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide (Students)

Categories of Questions (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 47)	MAOL and BAOL Students
Opening <i>to get participants talking and feeling comfortable</i>	1. Tell us your name and how long you have been in the OL Program
Introductory <i>to get participants thinking about their connection to the topic</i>	2. Think back on the leadership classes in which you have been assigned learning journals and tell us a little about the purposes and requirements of the assignments
Transition <i>to move the conversation to key questions</i>	3. As you think about keeping learning journals, what has been your best experience? 4. What about your worst experience?
Key <i>to address the critical issues of the study</i>	<i>Learning journals are assigned to enhance learning. In the next several questions, I'm going to ask how effective they have been in several areas and if possible, and ask you to think about an example of an outcome of journaling that supports your response.</i> 5. Has keeping learning journals deepened and broadened your understanding of leadership? 6. Has keeping learning journals given you greater insight into yourself and increased your self-awareness? 7. Have learning journals been a useful way to assess and plan ways to develop your leadership skills? 8. Have learning journals encouraged you to use and apply the knowledge and skills you've learned about leadership to your professional and personal life?
Ending <i>to bring closure to the discussion</i>	9. What is your overall reaction to the experience of keeping a learning journal? 10. As you think about this conversation, is there anything that we have missed? Is there anything that you didn't get a chance to say?

Interview Guide (Faculty)

Categories of Questions (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 47)	OL Adjunct and Full-time Faculty
Opening <i>to get participants talking and feeling comfortable</i>	1. Tell us your name and how long you have been teaching in the OL Program
Introductory <i>to get participants thinking about their connection to the topic</i>	2. Think back on the leadership classes in which you have assigned learning journals and tell us about the purposes and requirements of the assignment
Transition <i>to move the conversation to key questions</i>	3. As you think about assigning learning journals, what has been your best experience? 4. What about your worst experience?
Key <i>to address the critical issues of the study</i>	<i>Learning journals are assigned to enhance learning. In the next several questions, I'm going to ask how effective they have been in several areas and if possible, and ask you to think about an example of an outcome that supports your response.</i> 5. Has assigning learning journals deepened and broadened students' understanding of leadership? 6. Have assigning learning journals given students greater insights into themselves and increased self-awareness? 7. Have learning journals been a useful way for students to assess and plan ways to develop their leadership skills? 8. Have learning journals encouraged students to use and apply the knowledge and skills they learned to their professional and personal lives?
Ending <i>to bring closure to the discussion</i>	9. What is your overall reaction to the value of assigning learning journals? 10. As you think about this conversation, is there anything that we have missed? Is there anything that you came wanting to say that you didn't get a chance to say?

APPENDIX B

Matrix for Analysis of Themes and Patterns

Content Area	MAOL Students	BAOL Students	OL Full-time Faculty	OL Adjunct Faculty
Purpose and requirements				
Best experiences				
Worst experiences				
Deepened leadership understanding				
Insights and self-awareness				
Assess and develop leadership skills				
Apply knowledge and skills learned				
Overall reaction				
Additional comments				

APPENDIX D

Summary Analysis of Focus Group Interviews

Themes	Total Participants			Graduate Students				
	Topic	Grp	Part	%	Topic	Grp	Part	%
Deepen Learning								
Internalize	28	9	20	77%	7	3	6	75%
Integrate	19	7	14	54%	5	2	5	63%
Learning Tool	20	8	15	58%	9	3	7	88%
Feedback	18	7	15	58%	7	2	5	63%
Deepen Total	74	9	24	92%	28	3	8	100%
Self-Awareness								
Self-Understanding	22	8	22	85%	7	2	7	88%
Pers Effectiveness	21	9	16	62%	6	3	6	75%
Feelings	21	9	18	69%	9	3	7	88%
Self-Aware Total	64	9	21	81%	22	3	7	88%
Leadership Development								
Personal Growth	29	9	22	85%	7	3	7	88%
Leadership Growth	29	9	20	77%	8	3	6	75%
Problem Solving	17	8	15	58%	7	3	6	75%
Dev Total	75	9	22	85%	22	3	6	75%
Application								
Thinking Changed	31	9	21	81%	9	3	5	63%
Behavior Change	27	9	19	73%	12	3	6	75%
Ongoing Tool	8	5	8	31%	4	2	4	50%
Application Total	66	9	21	81%	25	3	6	75%
Overall Assessment								
Valuable	24	9	24	92%	8	3	8	100%
Not Valuable	2	2	2	8%				
Additional Findings								
Prefer structure	31	9	23	88%	10	3	7	88%
Orientation	16	5	11	42%	13	3	8	100%
Dialogue Process	10	5	9	35%	3	1	2	25%
Gradual Underst	12	4	9	35%	10	3	8	100%
Prog. vs LJ ?	6	4	6	23%	0	0	0	

Themes	Undergraduate Students			Faculty				
	Topic	Grp	Part	Part	Topic	Grp	Part	%
Deepen Learning								
Internalize	13	3	8	73%	8	3	6	86%
Integrate	2	2	2	18%	12	3	7	100%
Learning Tool	7	2	4	36%	4	3	4	57%
Feedback	5	2	5	45%	6	3	5	71%
Deepen Total	22	3	9	82%	24	3	7	100%
Self-Awareness								
Self-Understand	7	3	8	73%	8	3	7	100%
Pers Effectiveness	8	3	6	55%	7	3	4	57%
Feelings	8	3	6	55%	4	3	5	71%
Self-Aware Total	23	3	7	64%	19	3	7	100%
Leadership Development								
Personal Growth	13	3	9	82%	9	3	6	86%
Leadership								
Growth	13	3	8	73%	8	3	6	86%
Problem Solving	6	3	5	45%	4	2	4	57%
Dev Total	32	3	9	82%	21	3	7	100%
Application								
Thinking Changed	11	3	9	82%	11	3	7	100%
Behavior Change	9	3	8	73%	6	3	5	71%
Ongoing Tool	3	2	3	27%	1	1	1	14%
Application Total	23	3	9	82%	18	3	6	86%
Overall Assessment								
Valuable	9	3	9	82%	7	3	7	100%
Not Valuable	2	2	2	18%				
Additional Findings								
Prefer structure	14	3	10	91%	7	3	6	86%
Orientation	1	1	1	9%	2	1	2	29%
Dialogue Process	5	2	5	45%	2	2	2	29%
Gradual Underst	2	1	1	9%	0	0	0	
Prog. vs LJ ?	3	2	3	27%	3	2	3	43%

Legend

Topic: Absolute frequency or number of times this theme was mentioned

Grp: Focus group frequency or the number groups mentioning this theme.

Part: Participant frequency or total number of individuals mentioning theme

%: Percentage of individuals in all focus groups who addressed the theme.