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Considering a Voice of the Body for Adult Transformative Learning Theory

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Elizabeth C. Boleyn

Candidate

Organization, Information and Learning Sciences

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Patricia Boverie, Ph.D., Chairperson

Mark Salisbury, Ph.D.

Alicia F. Chávez, Ph.D.

Pamela Arenella, M.D.

**CONSIDERING A VOICE OF THE BODY FOR ADULT TRANSFORMATIVE
LEARNING THEORY**

By

ELIZABETH C. BOLEYN

B.A., Psychology, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, 1992
M.B.A., Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, 2003

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Learning & Instructional Technology**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother, Elizabeth Thompson Cooper, whose nurturing, unending love, moral character, and strength inspired my own perseverance and guided my being in this endeavor.

This work is also dedicated to my late Aunt Frances Ann Cooper Miles of West Point, Mississippi whose humanitarian contributions to this world and blessings to lives of so many individuals continues with joyful aliveness long past that of her own life.

This work is also dedicated to a dear friend currently caught in a liminal space of life itself, Michael Joseph Fetterman, in celebration and honor of his life being in his journey of transformation, wherever that leads him.

This work is also dedicated to Professor Jack Mezirow, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Adult and Continuing Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, who has pioneered transformative learning theory and its continued evolution for nearly four decades, inspiring its continued evolution, inspiring hundreds of scholars and revolutionizing adult learning theory. Thank you for being permeable to encountering, entertaining, and sustaining changes in alternative perspectives (1990).

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ABSTRACT

Unknowingly, much of the population of the Western World are thinking machines who live and learn isolated from somatic experiences. They distrust their bodies in the learning process and are stuck living out unquestioned realities of embodied socioculturalism and rationalism which guide decision making, learning and ways of being. Considering a voice of the body involved delving into the physical dimension of somatic transformative learning from the bodily-lived experiences of seven women who were in a first-level experiential Nia® dancing and movement training program. Together, these women offered a voice of the body offering that phases of transformative learning was moving through processes of being stuck, self-allowing, coming to awareness and being connected within the context of learning by experience. Transformative learning processes were (re)living and trying-on felt-meanings of the lifeworld mirrored within personal experiencing spaces and the social experiencing space of the training. Engaging the human body in transformative

learning was learning by experiencing the body as a site of knowing and learning, capable of generating dilemmas, breakthroughs, and shifting perspectives. Accessing somatic knowledge were other ways of knowing about unconscious habits and meaning-making, offering a somatic perspective for a more inclusive theory of adult transformative learning.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Study Overview

Adult transformative learning theory is multilayered, subjective, and constructivist by nature upholding the way in which learners interpret and reinterpret their sense experience as vital to making meaning for new learning (Mezirow, 1991). In this study, sense experience may be interpreted as the way the human body engages transformative learning from the bodily-lived experiences of seven women in a somatic (of the corporeal human body), experiential movement training program called the Nia Technique, Inc.® white belt training. (For ease in reading and purposes of clarity, the ‘®’ symbol is implicit as belonging to The Nia Technique, Inc. for every instance of reference to Nia, the white belt training, Nia classes or other Nia-specific reference without the repeated use of the specific symbol ‘®’.) In brief, the white belt training was a seven day somatic movement and dance training program to comprehensively explore physical sensation, develop body-knowing, learning to listen, interpret, and consciously respond to body sensation (The Nia Technique, 2013).

Therefore, a ‘voice of the body’ (re)presented co-participants’ bodily-lived transformative learning experiences in this somatic movement training program. The purpose of this exploratory study was to seek out ways the human body experienced transformative learning in the white belt program for possible inroads, insights, and interpretive theoretic understanding for explicit consideration of the somatic in adult transformative learning theory. Setting the focus of this study to ways transformational learning was experienced in the training enabled an interpretive rendering for understanding and explaining the role of the human body in existing transformative learning theory from a somatic perspective. Applying inductive constructivist grounded theory methods, a ‘voice of the body’ were co-participants’

transformative experiences, (re)presented as a conceptual model. The resulting conceptual model provided a basis for plausible theoretic synthesis of an emergent somatic perspective towards a 'more unified theory' of adult transformative learning.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory is an adult learning theory because it rests on the accumulation of acquired experiences in order to “reflect back on prior learning to determine whether what we have learned is justified under present circumstances” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 5). The accumulation of life experiences and acquired knowledge “are dispositions and capabilities that make up our everyday involvement” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 4) comprised within the totality of our individual life-world, loosely defined as “the phenomena of human experience” (Heelan, 2002, p. 17). In addition, “adulthood is the time for reassessing the assumptions of our formative years that often have resulted in distorted views of reality” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 13).

Therefore, the process of perspective transformation [the crux of transformative learning theory] is the central process of adult development (Mezirow, 1991, p. 155) and is “most often explained as being triggered by a significant personal event...a disorienting dilemma, an acute internal and personal crisis” (Taylor, 2000, p. 298) or incrementally, “through a series of transformed meaning schemes” (Taylor, 2008, p. 6); from the ongoing “process of constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world” (Taylor, 2008, p. 5).

Transformative learning theory explains the process of perspective transformation as “transforming our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning-perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets)” discretely informed by our life-world, that “lead[s] to a more inclusive,

discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 14). The process of perspective transformation “is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action” (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162); and concerns “the epistemology of how adults learn to reason for themselves” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 23).

The epistemology of reasoning is a rational, cognitive or mental process primarily concerned with critical reflection or critical dialogue; or otherwise communicating, justifying, and taking action in alignment with our revised interpretations. As such, transformative learning requires participating in constructive discourse (Mezirow, 2012) or critical reflection (p. 85) so that our taken-for-granted frames of references may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified (p. 76).

“Critical reflection can be defined as the mental process of uncovering and challenging our taken-for-granted assumptions, considered as necessary in order to turn an experience into a transformative learning experience” (Cranton, 2006; Kegan, 2000; as cited by Hoggan, Simpson, & Stuckey, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, the transformative learning process hinges on adult learners “being both an active participant in and an observer of the [learning] experience” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 15), thereby elevating experience itself as an immutable force necessary to the process of adult development and “necessary for the transformative process” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 14). However, transformational learning theory requires that the learning experience is construed by the receiver as “triggering a person to critically reflect upon their assumptions, worldviews or habit of mind...providing a new sense of knowing and a perspective transformation” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 18).

Transformative learning has far surpassed andragogy, known as a framework for teaching adults, by providing a theoretical framework for understanding adult learning and guiding the teaching of adults (Taylor, 1998, 2007). In addition, it serves a theoretical framework for research and practice (Taylor as cited by Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 16) including the design and execution of this dissertation project.

The Body as a Site of Knowing and Learning

Jack Mezirow (2012), founder of adult transformational learning theory, explained that our sense of self and who we are is emotionally charged, rooted in beliefs and meaning structures that are mostly outside of consciousness (pp. 85-86). Therefore, transformational learning experiences suggest our sense of self may be triggered by such learning experiences that bring into consciousness our beliefs and incite meaning-making processes necessary for adult learning and development. From their research studies with adult learners engaged in emotionally charged, participatory popular theater, Shauna Butterwick and Jan Selman (2012) posited “unremembered memories are held within the human body” (p. 64). Butterwick & Selman’s findings suggest the human body is a site of knowing and learning ‘mostly outside of consciousness’, as characterized by Mezirow (2012).

Other Ways of Knowing

Other transformative learning theorists, Lyle Yorks and Elizabeth Kasl (2006), have engaged the human body “using guided imagery, stories, music, art, and poetry that emerged as effective means for bringing into awareness the tacit and subconscious forms of knowing, making them accessible for critical reflection” (Yorks & Kasl, 2006 as cited by Taylor & Snyder, 2012, p. 46). Alternatives to critical reflection and constructive discourse have been described as ‘other ways of knowing’. “Some people believe you do not need to go through

the cognitive process traditionally associated with critical reflection but can access this knowing in other ways” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 15).

‘Other ways of knowing’ in transformative learning theory are attributed to studies engaging the human body as a site of knowing and learning. “Assessing knowledge that resides deep within us allows our conscious thinking to interact with our subconscious knowledge, yielding a more holistic understanding of ourselves, our experience and the world in which we live...brought about by one’s reinterpretation of an experiences where one’s view of the world or his/her place in it shifts significantly and one cannot go back to what it was before” (Hoggan et al., 2009, pp. 16-17).

Framing the Inquiry

Therefore, accessing the human body as a site of knowing and learning required activating ‘other ways of knowing’ in order to study ways the human body experienced transformative learning in order to offer a somatic perspective for adult transformative learning theory. A somatic perspective from a voice of the body emerged during an immersive movement and dance training program based in the somatic paradigm of the Nia white belt. The adult learning paradigm of this training was “somatic exercises and techniques of sensation science, body-centered anatomy, music and the movement language of Nia” (The Nia Technique, 2013). Therefore, the white belt program was selected as a site of study because of its somatic paradigm – an emphasis on the human body and body movement - rather than a pedagogical emphasis of learning specific dance moves in a particular form. The aim of this study was to understand ways the human body experienced transformative learning theory from a somatic, experiential paradigm of learning to access

‘other ways of knowing’ and meaning-making experiences of adult learners in an immersive Nia white belt program.

To frame the context of the inquiry, I present my personal preface, the basics of the somatic approach of Nia, explain a Nia class, describe freedancing for purposes of this dissertation, discuss a Nia practice, and present an overview of this Nia white belt training program including my own personal experience. Then, I discuss the need for this study, highlighting points of justification for conducting this thesis project. I proceed with a discussion of the purpose of the study, the development of the research question, and sub-questions. I follow this with an overview of the research design, purposeful sampling assumptions, and an overview of the research methods employed. Then, I present an overview of the organization of the study, my personal statement, and the chapter summary foregrounding the contents in the Review of the Literature Chapter.

Personal Preface

At the time of this study, I had been dancing Nia almost daily for nearly twelve years and teaching for nearly ten years. My own experiences of Nia and the white belt training guided me to choose this as the site of inquiry and to make informed assumptions about accessing the body as a site of knowing and learning in the somatic paradigm of the white belt program; it also prepared me to study the ways the human body experienced transformative learning.

Although I walked a fine line between researcher and passionate practitioner, this study was not about advertising Nia. This study was a rendering of personal transformative learning experiences within a Nia white belt as considering voice of the body and what that could mean for a more unified theory of adult transformational learning. Therefore, it is

important to have basic background information that qualifies Nia as a somatic paradigm of learning to illuminate the white belt training as appropriate context for the inquiry.

Nia Basics

Nia is based in somatic principles of body sensation awareness (Eddy, 2002; Green, 2002; Hanna, 1988, 1991; Rosas & Rosas, 2004; *The Nia Technique*, 2013). Nia started in the early 1980's as NIA: Non-Impact Aerobics. In the 1990's, it changed to NIA: Neuromuscular Integrative Action, appropriate nomenclature with the expanding mind-body field of *Somatics*, a term coined from Thomas Hanna's so named book published in 1988 meaning 'the body experienced from within'. Since then, Nia has evolved into its own as a single phrase: Nia, meaning *with purpose* in Swahili. In Nia philosophy, "anything the body does is dancing" (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 296).

However, Nia has a language for 52 body moves. These moves are defined by their form and function as natural movements basic to the human body's anatomic structure: the base, the core, and the upper extremities (Rosas & Rosas, 2004). Subsequently, following a somatic paradigm, moving "the body's way" (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, pg. 30) is a healing process using the body-healing technology of the 52 moves to notice "your body's way" (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 315) in its current design and function. This process of self-healing and bodily awareness through movement "fosters creativity and spontaneity rather than requiring strict adherence to standard movement patterns" (LaForge, 2007, p. 454). Nia is generally experienced as a 'Nia class' for the first time.

Nia Class

As a student and a teacher of Nia class, I draw from my own subjective experience to explain a Nia class while drawing from *The Nia Technique* (2004) and Ralph LaForge's

(2007) inclusive movement studies. Generally done in bare feet, a Nia class “combines dance movements and moderately intense martial arts moves infused with subtle mindful techniques designed to heighten body awareness and what Nia professionals call sensory IQ” (La Forge, 2007, p. 454). Sensory IQ is defined as “the measurement of somatic intelligence or awareness of the body” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 314); a basic kinesthetic learner characteristic: body intelligence (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2009; Gardner, 1999, 2006; Levy, 2005; Multiple Intelligences Institute, 2009); and a basic somatic concept: body awareness (The Nia Technique, 2013; Rosas & Rosas, 2004; Eddy, 2002; Green, 2002; Hanna, 1991).

As a Nia black belt teacher, I employ the proprietary somatic format of “seven cycles...each with a unique purpose to fulfill specific needs and deliver specific results” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 178). The introduction of each class is Cycle one, setting a particular focus and intent, “the target of your attention” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 263) as an introduction to each class.

At the beginning of Cycle two, stepping in, I ask chattering minds of the lifeworld to “leave behind distractions as a starting point for all action” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 179); this is a time to prepare the body and mind for movement with deep breathing, smelling the moment, and other definitive physical action to invite being present to the body.. Movement begins with cycle three, warming up, “activating the flow of energy in all thirteen joints” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 173). I thread movement cueing as “words that help you connect to the unique energy and central ideas” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 263). These cues are tied to the focus and intent as a theme throughout the hour class which is supported by crafted eclectic music playlists, integrations of 52 moves choreography, and freedancing.

Freedancing. For purposes of this dissertation, I used alternative spelling, ‘freedancing’, to separate the copyrighted references in this write up. In this work, freedancing meant moving the body with or without music and without any specific choreographic instructions from the Nia teacher or trainer. Freedancing was an important multidimensional canvas for scaffolding learning and practicing the basic somatic concepts presented during the white belt training. FreeDance is defined in *The Nia Technique* (2004) as “encourage[ing] the use of unfettered, unrehearsed movement to stimulate somatic creativity” (p. 313). In addition, while FreeDancing (Rosas & Rosas, 2004) is not one of the 52 moves or a cycle of Nia class, it is a principle of the white belt training program and a flexible platform to “provide a foundation to be free and creative... cultivating and expressing your authentic self” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p, 279).

However, freedancing is often part of a Nia routine delivered by the Nia teacher in a Nia class, usually at cycle four, get moving (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 170), which is “a moderate aerobic component to address cardiorespiratory endurance... teach[ing] move[ing] with self-expression...couple[ing] movement tempo with their emotion” (LaForge, 2007, p. 44). Cycle four (get moving), cycle five (cool down) and cycle six (floorplay) (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, pp. 170-1), are ideal for freedancing as a fusion of the movement experience; an opportunity to move off ‘your spot’ and intermingle with others through movement.

During freedancing portions of a Nia class, I moved from my teacher post in front of the students and participated as a fellow mover with them. Even as a participant, I continued to encourage bodies to move freely within the studio space with the intention of “using play, gravity, the floor, space, time and sound” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 171), although not necessarily guiding from the 52 moves. Instead, I used targeted phrasing to “consciously

creat[e] visual images to trigger whole-body movement in a personal way” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 313) and to encourage personal exploration of the body in motion in ways that feel pleasurable. Finally, cycle seven is stepping out, designed to “consciously recognize through body sensation the self-healing and fitness benefits” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 170). Stepping out, I softly recapitulated our class focus and intent with a definitive body motion to prepare the body for going back into the lifeworld.

For example, I introduced a Nia class focusing on creativity and explained the intention was to break movement habits. During the hour class, the focus and intent was the same for me as well as the students. The procedure was to use classical music during get moving; sometimes cuing in unusual ways; breaking into spontaneous freedancing; sometimes jumping in as a student during periods of repeated choreography; mixing-up the directions as we danced in a group; and changing my own habits of movement along with the group.

Some of my movement cues were: just do it all wrong; be sloppy; everybody, do what she’s doing!; ride a surfboard – oops! we lost that one (spilling onto the floor); let’s catch the next wave; sense your wrist joints like rolling gears; feel tender; feel amazed; everybody, find your treasure in the corners of the room!; move your treasure like a dance partner; sense your toes extending across the street; and so forth. At the close of class, I gently reminded students that our focus and intent was a means to inspire introspection and to encourage awareness or anticipation for potential generated for the personal lifeworld.

The Nia class experience is highly subjective and it is up to the mover to determine what was experienced as creativity, if anything, and if the body noticed anything about movement habits, and so forth. Moving the body without critically reflecting about moving

the body, and coming to the other side potentially feeling something else was of interest to this inquiry into the human body and transformational learning experiences.

Nia Practice

The idea of ‘Nia practice’ is important to the background of this study because it refines a somatic paradigm divergent from a rational paradigm of adult learning, and embodies a rich context for studying ways the human body experiences transformative learning as ‘other ways of knowing’. For purposes of this study, the practice of body awareness is explored through experiencing Nia. However, the somatic concepts presented in this training program and discussed in this thesis are applicable to adult transformative learning regardless of personal experience with Nia or other specific somatic practice. Accessing ‘other ways of knowing’ outside the rational model is accessible in personal ways informed by a somatic overview from *The Nia Technique* (2004) and the metaphoric ‘dancing through life’ system:

You stop sleepwalking through your short stay on this earth and start to wake up. Instead of being driven by longstanding habits, you begin to change these conditioned responses into conscious, intentional actions. As you become more in touch with the sensations of your body, mind, emotions and spirit, you will experience the sensation of holistic union that exists among these four most basic elements of selfhood (p. 297).

From a transformative learning perspective, “meditation, movement or dance facilitates long-term changes in consciousness...with sustained practice over time” (Sussman & Kossak, 2011 as cited by Tisdell, 2012, p. 31). Furthermore, a somatic approach to education holds common values of health, wellness, and bodily attention that are carried over into daily life (Beaudoin, 1999; Green, 2002; Rosas & Rosas, 2004; Tompkins, 2009).

As a Nia teacher, I have heard many stories over the years from students practicing Nia who have begun to recognize their bodies differently in their own lifeworlds. For example, one of my Nia students shared with me that for years prior to Nia class pain in her right hip from an old injury prevented her from being able to sleep on her right side. A week after she attended a Nia class with the focus on ‘hip movements’ with the intent for ‘increased mobility’, she expressed delighted relief that she was now able to sleep on her right side. She attributed her pain-free sleeping to the hip movements she learned and was able to adapt from class the week prior.

What has been transformative for me through dancing and teaching Nia is well-stated by Fowler (1981, p. 4) “finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up [my] life” (as cited by Charaniya, 2012, p. 235). I have benefitted from this life changing somatic awareness in my body, mind, emotions and spirit; I celebrate similar stories in the lives of my students. Teaching and sharing Nia with others and co-creating bodily inspiration with other moving bodies is a source of life-affirming joy, personal transformation. It has been a means for introspection and countless profound connections with other human beings in ways that I am nearly certain I would not otherwise have been afforded the honor and privilege of having.

Nia White Belt Training

The white belt is the first training level and of particular interest to this research endeavor. The white belt program has a learning “focus on physical sensation with the intent to embody the foundation of Nia” (The Nia Technique, 2013). Embodying the foundation of Nia is concerned with “a literal and figurative moving experience based on the Thirteen

Principles that are the foundation of Nia as a fitness, personal growth, and lifestyle practice” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 24).

The Nia white belt training is the only required prerequisite for becoming a Nia teacher. However, women and men take the Nia white belt training to learn about their own body and the basic principles about the body, based in Nia philosophy, as a form of self-discovery, not always with the intention of becoming Nia teachers. When individuals attend the white belt for self-discovery, they actively seek personal transformation “to greater depths of understanding and personal growth...[wherein life circumstances guide people to take the white belt as] an opportunity for exploration and development” (Taylor, 1993, pp. 88, 82, as cited by Charaniya, 2012, pp. 234-5).

Having co-owned a Nia studio and hosted white belt trainings, I found that people sometimes come to know about the Nia white belt from their experiences as a student in Nia classes or other Nia-based experiential workshop. The white belt training is not actively marketed to the general public although anyone can take the white belt training without any background or experience in body movement of any kind. Therefore, its theoretical appeal to kinesthetic learners was important for this study as an opportunity to access the bodily-intelligence of kinesthetic learners to understand transformative learning and the human body.

The Nia white belt training was seven consecutive days and over forty hours of immersive experience of learning from the body, through the body; studying the Thirteen White Belt Principles, (discussed in the Review of the Literature); and engaging in body-based learning and movement practices including seven Nia classes. Each somatic learning

principle was presented in a different way including practicing concepts through body movement and freedancing.

Until recently, the Nia white belt training was taught by a handful of highly seasoned Nia Trainers worldwide in an official business relationship with The Nia Technique, Inc. organization. These trainers each had a minimum of 10-15 years teaching Nia classes as black belt teachers, in addition to years of training beyond fundamental requirements of attaining Nia black belt teacher credentials. Trainers were required to re-take different belt-level trainings annually as an auditing student including meeting ongoing continuing education and other capacity-building business affiliation requirements.

The Need

Since the 1990's scholars have continued to investigate precursors to adult transformational learning (Taylor, 2007). Research has included various concepts and processes inviting interchanging nomenclature for engaging in critical reflection. In addition, various exteroceptive systems, - primarily visual and auditory (Myers, 1998 as cited by Williamson, 2009, p. 33) – have been explored as fostering transformational learning in classroom and training settings. Scholars questioning the resonance of purely cognitive processes have reported the role of the affective, emotional and spiritual domains as conduits for adult transformational learning. Yet the role of the human body itself in transformative learning remains somewhat mysterious and is conceptualized as largely 'extra-rational.'

A Holistic Theory of Transformative Learning

Current transformative learning theory is “lacking a clear definition of multidimensional or holistic transformative learning” (Taylor & Snyder, 2012, p. 46). Exploring ways to combine the 'extra-rational' and 'rational' for a more holistic theory of

adult transformative learning offers opportunities to include “multiple domains on a significant level – emotional, rational, physical and perhaps spiritual” (Tisdell, 2012, p. 26) “involving multiple dimensions of who we are” (p.27). Furthermore, according to cross-disciplinary literatures from psychology, somatic learning, and philosophy, the human body itself and its experiences *are* multidimensional and holistic (Deluze, 1995 as cited by Johnston & Barcan, 2006; Merleau-Ponty 1962/1968 as cited by Anderson, 2012).

A critical justification for excluding therapeutic somatic movement research in transformational learning theory is “...expressed concern about maintaining a clear distinction between education and therapy” (Tisdell, Hanley & Taylor, 2000 as cited by Yorks & Kasl, 2006, p. 46). However, more recent scholars of transformative learning have drawn from in-depth psychology (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 1997; Dirkx, 2001b) and their studies provide a baseline for considering a voice of the body. For example, Robert Boyd (1991) applied in-depth Jungian approaches to the study of transformative learning.

According to *Mosby’s Medical Dictionary* (2009), Jungian psychology is a “psychologic [sic] approach based on the ideas and theories developed by Carl Jung (1875–1961). [Jungian psychology] includes the concepts of the collective unconscious and symbolic archetypes.”

Similar to the Jungian, symbolic or archetypal approach (unconscious patterns of meaning-making and conscious perception), other in-depth psychological frameworks support the study of unconscious processes and transformative learning. For example, gestalt applications are not uncommon to somatic disciplines (Eddy, 2009) or to theorizing and education research (Illeris, 2009; Mezirow, 1985). *Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary* (n.d.), defines Gestalt psychology as: “The study of perception and behavior from the standpoint of an individual’s response to configurational wholes with stress on the uniformity

of psychological and physiological events and rejection of analysis into discrete events of stimulus, percept, and response.” In Knud Illeris’ (2009), *Contemporary Theories of Learning* Preface, he remarks on current trends among prominent learning theorists: “The gestalt psychological interest...today is integrated in such approaches as experiential learning and practice learning” (pp. 3-4). Thus, the in-depth approach seems to link with learning and experience, sharing a common link with a bodily-learning preference referred to as ‘kinesthetic’.

Conceptually, ‘kinesthetic’ adds further confusion in theory and practice of transformative learning in adult learning settings. Most education scholars define ‘kinesthetic’ in terms of pedagogical or evaluative practice: ‘physical behavior’ or ‘motor movements’, separate from the human body acting as loci of learning, or holder of memories and knowledge (Williams 1982, p. 15 as cited by Farnell, 1999, p. 362). In addition, Carolyn Clark (2001) posits “while we know a fair amount about kinesthetic learning and physical skill development, we know little about how we learn from our bodily experience” (p. 83).

In addition, psychoanalytic learning theory attempts to map certain complex dimensions of experiential learning in which personal transformation can occur. This learning theory claims that reflecting only the rational mind “chasms opened up by lived experience that map onto no known or authorized concepts, words, or arguments” (Ellisworth, 1997, p. 188 as cited by Fenwick, 2003, p. 30) may be overlooked. Therefore, considering a voice of the body in a Nia training, wherein experiential learning of movement and dance were the focus of learning, offered potential insight into alternative modes of “reflection, its various manifestations, and the practices that most directly led to its development” (Taylor & Jarecke, 2012, p. 286).

Kinesthetic Learning

Howard Gardner and Thomas Hatch (1989) explain bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is not highly valued in Western classrooms thereby limiting kinesthetic learners' abilities to engage the body as a site of knowing and learning discouraging the development of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence in other learners. Kinesthetic learners codify experience and learning primarily through the physical domain, often challenging adult educators most familiar with utilizing traditional instructional teaching methods (Multiple Intelligences Institute, 2009). Bodily-kinesthetic learners learn best when touching, moving, and processing knowledge through bodily sensation, thus learning best from whole-body activities and experiences (Denig, 2004).

For example, learning by doing is an instructional method that explicitly recognizes the learner's body in the process of learning (Fenwick, 2003). Over time, "repeated actions [learning by doing] have melted, as it were, into implicit memory...becoming tacit know-how, hardly verbalized...re-enacting [the learning] in the course of the body's performance" (Fuchs, 2004, p. 4; Fuchs, 2012). Thus, engaging the body in learning by doing sets the stage for the body as a site of knowing and learning and provides potential access to 'other ways of knowing' tucked away in the unconscious. However, traditional teaching methods keep human bodies at a comfortable distance and keep human bodies distanced from important learning theories.

Kinesthetic Learning Preference

In addition, bodily movements provide access to different forms of knowing, one which appeals to a kinesthetic intelligence (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2009; Gardner, 1999, 2006; Gardner & Hatch, 1989; Levy, 2005; Multiple Intelligences Institute, 2009). In 1987, Neil

Fleming developed an instrument called VARK, which was empirically validated for measuring learning styles (Leite, Svinicki & Shi, 2010). VARK measures preferences for the intake of knowledge and how it is communicated to the outside world. The four sensory intakes→outputs preferences are: (V) visual→graphics and pictures; (A) aural (auditory)→sounds; (R) read and write →symbols; and (K) kinesthetic→space and motion (Fleming & Mills, 1992).

From a January 2010 VARK sample database of 38,374 randomly completed on-line survey reports, 20.5% scored highest in visual learning; 24.7% in aural learning; 27.1% in reading and writing; and 27.7% scored highest in kinesthetic learning preference (Fleming, 2001). These findings suggest a need to consider space, motion and learning preferences in a study of adult transformative learning in a context suited to bring these concepts to bear.

Kinesthetic Intelligence

Even with nearly 30% of self-reporting adults preferring kinesthetic learning, there is limited application from alternative lines of somatic and dance education literatures wherein “[movement and] dance specifically, offer one aspect of human existence that can bring us knowledge and activity that is unique to the [kinesthetic] intelligence” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2009, p. 62). More surprisingly, an array of transformative learning researchers have studied ‘other ways of knowing’ with the body as the site of knowing and learning. Their findings yielded recognition that ‘extra-rational’ modes of transformative learning functioned much like the current ‘rational’ model (Boyd, 1991; Butterwick & Selman, 2012; Hoggan et al., 2009; Yorks & Kasl, 2006). However, these findings are not yet enfolded into transformative learning theory as ‘rational’.

Therefore, comprehending the bodily intelligence that kinesthetic learners already understand affords potential insights to a kind of intelligence that may be assimilated as rational. In addition, adult learners may benefit ‘feeling’ conceptual principles through movement and body sensation that has existed in dance education for many years (Wilson, 2009, p. 4). Consequently, teachers, trainers and leaders may benefit from the advice of transformative learning theorist, Patricia Cranton (2000) who “encourage[s] all educators to know their students’ [learning] preference as well as their own in order to best foster transformative learning experiences” (p. 203).

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore ways the human body experienced transformational learning in a somatic Nia white belt training program towards a more unified theory of transformative learning. Using constructivist grounded theory case study strategies enabled the emergence of a rudimentary, substantive theory “grounded in the data [that] ‘fit’ the context and generate[d] applicable and useful explanations” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 6) as a ‘voice of the body’ for transformative learning in the Nia training. The Review of the Literature Chapter exposes theoretical sensitivity (preconceived concepts) for inductively analyzing the grounded theory process discussed in the Research Design and Data Analysis Chapters.

Research Question Development

This inquiry was roused by the quieted yet inextricable role of the human body as a virtual holding tank of accumulated life experiences overflowing with unconscious embeddedness tacitly directing and shaping our interpretations, determining how we perceive and behave “automatically” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 84). Therefore, building upon the approaches

of Shauna Butterwick & Jan Selman (2012) and Lyle Yorks & Elizabeth Kasl (2006), engaging the human body as both experienced and experiencer within the body-based learning paradigm of the Nia training, was to consider the perspective of a voice of the body to investigate transformative learning theory.

“Placing the human body at the center of subjectivity and learning allows different questions to be raised about the self, the individual in relation to others and in relation to the culture at large” (Brockman, 2001; Kerka, 2002; Morris & Beckett, 2004, as cited by Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 19). These theoretic postulates led me to the central research question. If perspective transformation is the essential process of adult development, and human experience is the instigator that leads to and begets different processes of transformative learning, then in what ways does the human body actually experience transformative learning?

Therefore, my interest is in transformative learning theory and all it entails in a specific somatic learning environment namely the Nia white belt training program. Truly understanding this theory meant investigating learner preferences, personal body sensation-perception systems of meaning-making, the experiential learning setting, and the processes of the human body in transformational learning theory.

Guiding research questions. The central research question of interest was: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning? Seeking the variant ways participants described experiences of transformative learning during the training required careful examination of these personal experiences in order to develop an interpretive rendering in a constructivist grounded theory. “...Research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study. The goal of this

section of the chapter is to explicate the questions, thereby further focusing the study and to forecast the literature” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, pp. 39- 40) review presented in the next chapter.

I divided the central question into four research sub-question topics in order to make clear how transformative learning was experienced in this Nia training. This enabled a flexible space for themes, concepts, and patterns to emerge from the participants’ discussions about different bodily experiences transduced into meaning-making agendas and different learning processes during the training. The four research sub-questions were inspired from research questions in other transformative learning studies (Yihong, 2000, as cited by Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 41); from qualitative research theorists (Marshall & Rossman, 2006); transformative learning theorists (Cranton, 2008, p. 131) and my own prior Nia experience to explore the personal and social aspects of transformative learning and the human body with co-participants in the Nia training program.

I developed four research sub-question categories by topic-type (see Appendix A). The following are the four topic categories with an exemplar sub-question utilized in the data collection methods of this study:

1. Learning and Nia training – In what ways is this learning experience different from other adult training programs?
2. Learning preferences – In what ways do you learn best?
3. Learning and the body- In what ways have you learned from your body?
4. Transformational learning- In what ways do your Nia movements affect how you see yourself, others, and the world?

Repeating variations of these four sub-research areas with participants at different points in the study illuminated theoretical postulates of transformative learning theory including “changes in reflection and the quality of the reflection” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 220). Iterative sub-questions encouraged investigating different ways participants described their processes of making personal meaning and key learning experiences in support of the overall endeavor to consider a voice of the body for transformative learning theory within the Nia white belt setting.

Overview of the Research Design

It was the aim of this study to gather multiple perspectives from participants in the Nia training program and apply qualitative constructivist grounded theory case study methodology “...to distill a consensus construction that [was] more informed” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111) about transformative learning and the human body. The Nia training served as the instrumental case system (Stake, 1995) from which we, participants and I as co-participant in the training, studied different ways the human body experienced transformative learning within it.

Purposeful Sampling Assumptions

I made logical theoretical assumptions including my own prior Nia experience for purposeful sampling methods employed. Therefore, I relied on concepts briefly discussed here about kinesthetic learners to capitalize on the somatic learning paradigm of the Nia white belt to study ways the human body experienced transformative learning. Theoretical assumptions included:

- 1.) Adult learners in the Nia white belt would offer insights concerning kinesthetic bodily intelligence.

2. Individuals enrolled in this Nia body-based learning program would have the skills, or be in the process of learning the skills, to access their own meaning-making experiences from the perspective of their human body.
3. Individuals in this training would have skills, or be in the process of learning the skills, of ‘other ways of knowing’ and be able to articulate different ways tacit information was accessed through their personal experiences.
4. The Nia white belt training program modeled experiential learning where the human body was viewed holistically, not separated by Cartesian dualism (meaning mental processes and lived experience was not body separatism).
5. The Nia white belt somatic curriculum entailed learning and practicing proprietary principles derived from internationally-known somatic education principles, that is, of the body and about the body.

Furthermore, Debbie Stewart Rosas, founder of The Nia Technique, explained the white belt training: “During your training, you will be guided to place attention on your self, on your body, and on physical sensation, using movement to develop cognitive and somatic knowledge” (The Nia Technique, 2010). Therefore, I based my sampling plan on theoretical assumptions that kinesthetic learners in the Nia training would provide a ‘voice of the body’ from a somatic perspective of transformative learning in the Nia training program.

Overview of the Research Methods

This study ‘considered a voice of the body for transformative learning theory’ with seven participating women and their certified Nia white belt trainer. Leveraging the somatic and experiential focus of learning in the Nia training provided a means to understand and explain the human body as a site of knowing and learning and ‘other ways of knowing’ in

transformative learning theory. It was of particular interest to understand how and what about co-participants' transformational experiences emerged as different *sense experiences* and meaning-making processes in the training.

To achieve this goal, I designed and implemented a systematic approach for data collection and inductive analysis based on constructivist grounded theory discussed in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. Using the Research sub-questions by topic and interview questions (see Appendix A), I enacted a type of theoretical sampling for grounded theory using open-ended questions. This enabled participants to elaborate on what was most important to them. The participants were then encouraged to expand these criteria into critically-reflective conversations, allowing rich co-construction of emergent findings rather than a call and respond dialogue.

Over the span of the training, I utilized constructivist data collection methods including three semi-structured focus groups, six semi-structured individual interviews, and observation data with member-checking, meaning talking with participants about what I had observed to clarify meaning. I audio-recorded all focus groups, interviews, and six Nia classes during the training which were ultimately transcribed verbatim. Five weeks after the training, three semi-structured individual interviews were conducted as a post-training reflection discussion. Several months after the training, all participants of individual interviews approved verbatim interview transcriptions. Up to two years after the training, two members participated in theoretical interpretive member-checking of the interpretive analysis.

The detailed schedule of data collection (see Appendix B) outlines different forms and durations of observation units. These units included: 111 training segments

(differentiated by learning events and teacher); 9 hours of informal observation data - data that emerged from member checking conversations (or other overt observation data); and 40 hours of in-session observation data. In addition, over the duration of the study, nine semi-structured interviews with four participants totaled 5.4 hours and three semi-structured focus groups with three to seven participants totaled two hours.

Organization of the Report

This dissertation report is organized into six chapters to convey empirical rigor, illustrate concepts derived from the words of participants, and provide analytic transparency for each stage of the process. In the Review of the Literature, Chapter Two, I explain theoretical underpinnings impinging on this study and provide cross-disciplinary justifications for undertaking this project. In Chapter Three, Research Design, I discuss the strategy and execution plan including excerpts from the data. In Chapter Four, Data Analysis and Process, I explain the execution of this project supported with excerpts from primary sources of data and discuss the impact of study-imposed data collection methods. In Chapter Five, I present the Findings of this study, privileging stories and verbatim quotes from participants (with extended exemplars in the Appendix) including the emergent grounded theory conceptual model. In Chapter Six, Discussion, I present the Findings as a theoretical basis towards a ‘more unified theory of transformational learning’.

Therefore, this dissertation report contains an empirical map for ‘considering a voice of the body’ from multiple lived experiences from seven adult women in a Nia white belt training in order to ground and build a more holistic perspective of the (entire) human body engaged in adult transformative learning.

Personal Statement

My passion for this research project is to establish credibility and understanding in a somatic paradigm for future applications of adult transformative learning in academia – any adult learning environment – and encourage scholarly attention for further research and praxis. It was not so long ago that the practice of yoga became a mainstay in Western society. In addition, while people may be rushing to get to yoga class, a somatic paradigm does not mandate specific choreography to capitalize on the transformative power it offers and relative ease migrating into adult classrooms, workplace training, and other lifeworld learning areas.

Other personal passions drawing me towards this particular area of inquiry emerged from experiences over my twenty-year academic and fifteen-year business career. I have come to understand ways my kinesthetic learning style engenders curiosity and deep immersion in all that I do. I learn best by experience; passionately engaged in the worlds of my teachers, my fellow learners and students, my work, and in the process of learning itself. Therefore, I seek to inspire passion, curiosity, vitality, and the joy of lifelong learning with colleagues, mentors, teachers, leaders, clients, students, friends, and fellows in scholarship, in the workplace, out in the nature, in the dance studio, and in the lifeworld.

Chapter Summary

In different ways, Western civilization condones (without question) fundamental assumptions that the human body is distant and separate from the rational, mental functions of the brain; especially in adult transformative learning. Considering a voice of the body was uncovering ways the human body experienced transformational learning in the somatic, experiential Nia white belt dance and movement training program. Sub-questions of the

inquiry were learning preferences, learning experiences within the setting of the Nia white belt training, learning experiences and the body, and transformative learning experiences and the body. Sub-questions guided this quest to expose theoretic gaps in transformative learning theory.

Conceiving ways in which adult learners experienced transformational learning through the physical body in a somatic training program afforded deeper understanding about: (1) the human body as a site of knowing and transformative learning, (2) other ways of knowing from the human body engaged in an experiential Nia somatic movement and dance training program, and (3) testing empirical findings towards a more unified theory of transformative learning.

Key concepts discussed in the forthcoming Review of the Literature include: overlapping sensitizing concepts of transformative learning theory from different lenses, learning and the body concepts informed by cross-disciplinary literatures, and somatic learning concepts of the Nia white belt program.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter contains the background information needed to understand the study in a concise review of relevant literatures highlighting different theories and concepts that impinged on the study. However, in grounded theory, “the research process itself guides the researcher toward examining all the possibly rewarding avenues to understanding” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 6). Therefore, I presented anchoring elements from adult transformational learning theory as the in situ phenomenon of interest and guiding theoretical concepts. I juxtaposed ontological alternatives for the process of reflection and reviewed the rational model. I have organized this review of selected literatures to function as informing and sensitizing concepts for the research inquiry including:

- The Phenomenon of Interest – ontological reflective practices
 - Epistemology of Problematizing-implications of a rational model
- Other Ways of Knowing - review of selected studies
- The Body as a Site of Learning – review of selected literatures
 - Learning and Nia – 13 white belt principles
 - Kinesthetic Learner and Experiential Learning-review of selected concepts
 - Somatic Concepts – review of selected concepts and implications
- Theories in Practice –guiding theoretical frameworks
- Chapter Summary

The Phenomenon of Interest

The central research question – in what ways did the human body experience transformational learning in this Nia white belt– hinged on informing components of transformative learning theory itself. Juxtaposing key theoretical concepts of transformative

learning theory with an increasing body of cross-disciplinary scholarship serves to convey important considerations for situating the Nia training and research questions appropriately for the purpose of this project; while highlighting key sensitizing concepts undertaking a grounded theory approach.

For this study, transformative learning theory is described as the informing process by which unexamined or misinformed beliefs or assumptions are consciously examined resulting in amended meaning perspectives and altered ways of being in the world. Furthermore, transformational learning theory is “an ontological process where participants experience a change in their being in the world including their forms of relatedness” (Lange, 2004, p. 137 as cited by Taylor, 2007, p. 181).

The notion of ontology (what is reality?) is of interest in this endeavor because both paradigms produce reality with complimentary practices of reflection, albeit within different epistemological frames, thereby providing a platform for investigating the possibility of a more unified theory. And, both paradigms are concerned with altering one’s way of way of being in the world.

The phenomenon of interest in this study was transformative learning from the body’s perspective within the somatic training paradigm of Nia. Epistemological (how can I know reality?) differences are inherent as classic Cartesian dualism. However, important theoretical junctures for transformation suggest different ontologies for transformative dialogue and reflection.

The ontology of a somatic approach concerns the human body engaged in experiential knowledge that involves senses, perception, and mind/body action and reaction (Matthews, 1998). Furthermore, conscious self-reflection imbued by a somatic paradigm is possible by

theoretical nomenclature that the human body itself provides an observer perspective for first-person lived experiential knowledge of the soma (Hanna, 1991).

Fostering such awareness is in the “potency of listening deeply to the body...the process of finding answers to bodily needs and communicative desires through internal bodily awareness” (Eddy, 2009, p.5). Fostering body awareness as a focus of the Nia training seemed to offer transformative potential. “A new perception of our body-soma can result in a new position from which to view the world...Our heightened awareness has the potential to change the way we see the world around us and render us more capable to act intentionally and effectively in it” (Fortin, Long, & Lord, 2002, p. 175).

The ontological concern of transformation learning theory in reflective practices is also of communicative focus. Transformative learning theory recognizes the value of self-reflection with an external, critical and dialogic focus. “Transformative learning... takes the form of critical self-reflection in communicative learning” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 61).

Accordingly, Taylor (1998) explains the necessary components of critical self-reflection:

- Awareness of our assumption and how they affect our thoughts and deeds;
- The ability to evaluate our assumptions for accuracy and validity in relation to our actual lived experience (reality), relationship, and practice; and
- The shift between critical self-reflection and action is pivotal if transformative learning is to have any real impact on the lives of individuals or society as a whole (as cited by Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 14).

The importance of self-awareness for transformative reflective practices is a concern of the somatic and the rational approaches. “Critical reflection and critical discourse have been posited to be the primary processes that facilitate transformative learning...the process

for bringing into consciousness and critiquing the taken-for-granted assumptions that provide meaning perspective or worldview” (Yorks & Kasl, 2006, p. 60). Reflective practices from a somatic perspective entail “being engaged in attentive dialogue with one’s bodily self” (Eddy, 2009, p. 6), wherein inner reflection provides self-inscribed authority to take informed action based upon the knowledge that is produced.

“We, as humans, can learn newly, become pain free, move more easily, do our life work more efficiently, and perform with greater vitality and expressiveness of the lived body” (Eddy, 2009, pp. 5-6). Therefore, active dialogue with the body provides access to sites of learning and reflective awareness capable of bypassing unconscious blocks enabling improvement of the lived experience. Listening to the body and retrieving understanding of the messages it offers...we can achieve valuable insights into who we are and how we relate to the situations we find ourselves in (Rouhiainen, 2009, p. 242).

In her synthesis of somatic literatures studying improvisational (freedancing) movement, Rebecca Enghauser (2007) enumerated five body-listening strategies. I highlighted emphasis on the self-reflective dialogic properties of her findings:

1. Spatial-Perceptual [Dialogue] – The mover must listen to and respond with his or her body in an unpredictable way, thus heightening his or her awareness through spontaneous responses moving in an open-looped or improvisatory structure in a non-analytical manner.
2. Kinesthetic [Dialogue] – Movers dialogue with the ‘feel’ of a movement through imagery and tactile sense and trust his or her own choices, evaluations, and perceptions when doing movements.

3. Breath [Dialogue] – Each person tunes inward to listen to each inhale and exhale. [Dialoging with breath] can be a very powerful way to build and retain concentration, endurance, focus, and flow in the moment.
4. Eco-Somatic [Dialogue] – [Dialoguing with space], movers can perceive space as having a dynamic, fluid relationship with the body rather than existing as a separate entity around it.
5. Creative [Dialogue] – ‘Tuning in’ to what the body’s voice may wish to express is a form of creative [dialoging]. Each mover must listen closely to his or her own own movement preferences and subtleties, and to his or her unique and unperturbed interpretation of possibility as it peels out of each present instant as a [self-reflective] opportunity to create in the moment (pp. 34-37).

However, transformative learning theory places the origin of each mover’s experience to external influencers limited to a processes of linguistic reflection: “Effective critical-dialectical discourse—[is the] the process by which we come to understand our own experience... It is important to understand that the only alternatives to critical-dialectical discourse for assessing and choosing among beliefs are the appeal to tradition, an authority figure, or the use of force” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 60).

From the first person “I” perspective of a lived-body, authority of experience and experiencer is determined with self-reflexivity of body-lived awareness: “Through the self-reflexivity of the body, having a sensation of one’s own body actually involves a sense of ownership, of the individual sensing a lived experience of her/his own being” (Merleau-Ponty 1962/1995 as cited by Rhouhiainen, 2008, p. 245).

Furthermore, the body is required for effective discourse. The body says more than it speaks according to Seitz (2000), where utterances of the body are scientific, rational-based systems of knowing, learning, and communication:

Nonverbal behavior is central to expression and communication starting from infancy [and] continues into adulthood where a large body of kinesic behaviors augments or replaces language (e.g., illustrators, regulators, affect displays, deictics, metaphoric gestures, emblems, and a huge class of procedural knowledge and skills) (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; McNeill, 1992 as cited by Seitz, 2000, p. 24). To be sure, there have been recent arguments made for the gestural origins of language and the fact that both speech and hand control originate from the same neural systems (Corballis, 1999 as cited by Seitz, 2000 p. 24). Choreography and dance, sports, and craftsmanship are but a few examples of nonverbal abilities (p. 24).

Therefore, understanding how the human body engages in transformational learning potentially augments understanding for clear, communicative critical dialogue and reflection. Having greater self-awareness, being attuned to nonverbal communication and underlying meaning structures inevitably enhances the ability to relate to others. In addition, this understanding complements qualities of readiness to engage in critical dialogue and reflection described by Mezirow (2003):

Qualities of emotional intelligence (self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and self-motivation, empathy, and social deftness) (Goleman, 1995) are obvious assets for developing the ability of adults to assess alternative beliefs and participate fully and freely in critical-dialectical discourse (Goleman, 1995 as cited by Mezirow, 2003, p. 60).

Transformative reflective practice “emphasizes insight into the source, structure, and history of a frame of reference, as well as judging its relevance, appropriateness, and consequences” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 61) effecting “a qualitative change in how one knows” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 89). Awareness arising from signals within the body, triggered from lived experiences, can guide us into reflective practices capable of revealing unconscious habits of mind and frames of reference that bind us to our current subjective reality. John Dirkx (1997; Dirkx, 2001b) extended this notion building on transformative learning theory with his research findings that connection with self; inner work, imagination, symbols, emotion, and soul-based knowing can lead to transformation without relying on rational discourse, reflection, or even words (as cited by Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 15).

In a grounded theory study of experiential learning with counselors and staff development, Boyd & Fales (1983) discovered a process of shifting from one perceptual perspective to another that was different for each individual, but emerged with the following stages of reflective learning:

- Sensing inner discomfort
- Identifying or clarifying the concern
- Being open to new information from internal and external sources; having the ability to observe and take in a variety of perspectives
- Resolving-integrating - coming together, accepting of self-reality, creating synthesis
- Establishing continuity of self with past, present and future
- Deciding whether to act on the outcome of the reflective process (p. 108).

These findings offered insight that participants in counseling development programs who applied experiential reflective practices found them to be useful in their own daily lives. In this study, sense perception guided the process of reflection and transformative learning. The lived experience of inner discomfort pointed to a kind of inner awareness that “there’s an undertone of something else...vaguely aware of feeling uncomfortable” (Boyd & Fales, 1983, p. 107). The findings of this study suggest the triggering event and process of reflective transformation was “bringing into critical consciousness the understanding of meaning and inhibiting feeling and taking corrective action” (Mezirow, 1985b, p. 145).

Participants described “a phone call, changes in work situation, dreams, a felt need to plan or prepare for something, a sense of ‘stuckness’, having repeated an unsatisfactory (to self) line of thought or behavior before, a sense of confusion among too many alternatives, or feeling deluged with contradictory information...bringing the unconscious to a conscious level where the problem is conceptualized in relation to self” (Boyd & Fales, 1983, pp.107-8). In this work, authors described the triggering sensation and integrated reflective process as the feeling of what happens: “The experience ...depends not just on the [the experience of it], but also on the sense of self in the act of knowing” (Damasio, 1994, p. 308).

Reflection can be integrated as unspoken dialogue and learning through the body. From a dancer’s perspective, objective reframing (learning new choreography) was a process of integrating meaning-making from life experiences. In her dance research, Celilia Roos (2010) described learning dance as a reflective process of choosing between the external and the internal gaze of perspectives in the process.

She explained the external gaze was discerning shapes and directions and the internal gaze was perceived through memories, emotions and knowledge. She described having a

visible and discernible intention with the experience of processing the material. Her integration process was: reflection, relation and dialogue. Reflection - meeting the material, relation – grew with processing the material, and dialogue – was dancing the material (Roos, 2010, p. 66).

Therefore, reflection was triggered by the presentation of choreographic material that she imagined herself doing as she reviewed the intricacies of that experience. Integrating imagined visions of herself doing it with past memories, emotions, and knowledge of the lived-self was a relating process in the action of being more permeable. The dialogue of dancing the material was between the medium of felt experience and new knowledge realized in her dance. In addition, her reflective process was “implementing the purpose and intentionality of the learning involving the exercise of her conative power... a central influence on perception, remembering, problem solving, and learning” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 14).

This kind of self-reflexivity fosters understanding about how our bodily experiences are influenced by our personal life histories; allowing them to inform us who we are in relation to our local and disciplinary practices, our embodied subjectivity; and can be a means to understand the other in his/her otherness (Rouhiainen, 2008, p. 252). Similarly, in transformative theory, our identity is formed in webs of affiliation within a shared life world. Human reality is intersubjective; our life histories and language are bound up with those of others. It is within the context of these relationships...that we become the persons we are (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27).

Therefore, the lived-body is a version of “learning that reflects on itself...[and] is an order of mental complexity that enables self-direction, a qualitative change in how one

knows” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 89). However, somatic ontology imparts homage to the body’s essential involvement in this mental complexity and self-directed process of changing how one knows. Different ontological reflective practices churned new ways of learning, inspiring sources of knowledge that could be transformative. However, understanding ways the human body experienced transformative learning would challenge epistemology of knowledge, particularly in these four areas:

1. Knowledge is generally viewed as something outside of the learner to be taken in through a learning process (Dirkx, 1998, p.1).
2. Understanding exists in the language used to describe the world rather than in [experiences of] the external world itself (Mezirow, 1996, p. 161).
3. Knowledge and information about persons in the world are embedded in the medium of language (Mezirow, 1996, p. 161).
4. Knowledge is derived from instrumental learning and scientific inquiry regarding the independent reality of the world and a set a shared, subjective, often taken-for-granted interpretations, and a reality created through the process of communicative learning that is socioculturally constructed through language (Mezirow, 1996, p. 164).

Epistemology of Problematizing

“Transformative learning is an adult form of rationality delineating generic processes involved in profound adult learning” (Mezirow, 2004, p. 70). Mezirow (1996) explains that rationality should have the following characteristics: (a) beliefs should contain no logical contradictions, (b) reasons for believing them can be advanced and assessed, (c) concepts will become more intelligible when analyzed, and (d) we have criteria with which to know

when the belief is justified or not (p. 168). Knowledge not communicated through dialogue “with at least one other person” (Mezirow, 1996) is problematized. Ideological determinism, like any other thesis, depends on what reasons can be advanced in its support and the assessment of the rational strength and relevance of the reasons advanced (Mezirow, 2004, p. 70).

In Western society, rationality that is not “objectifying, commodifying, and depersonalizing” (Mezirow, 1996, p. 166) tends to displace dialogic reasoning. One reason for this tendency may be that instrumental rationality, because of its interiority, has implicit extra-rational characteristics including motives, will, intuition, self-concept, interpersonal considerations, and emotions especially, with task-oriented problem-solving (Mezirow, 1996, p. 166).

Furthermore, purely rational values predispose potentially problematic assumptions to facilitators and adult learners in theory and practice of transformational learning. “...The role of the adult educator [is] both as a facilitator of reasoning in a learning situation and a cultural activist” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 62). In addition, the “professional goal of the educator is to foster the learner’s skills, habit of mind, disposition, and will to become a *more* active and rational learner” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 60). Emphasis added to note problematization of “their way of seeing the world is based on a web of values, beliefs and assumptions about how things function and about themselves as individuals (Cranton, 2009, p. vii); requiring “direct intervention by the educator to foster the development of the skills, insights, and especially dispositions essential for critical reflection—and self-reflection—on assumptions and effective participation in critical-dialectical discourse (reflective judgment) (Mezirow, 2003, p. 62). We cannot foster change in others unless self-awareness is mutually developed.

“[Educating from this worldview requires] developing a deeper awareness of our own frames of reference and how they shape practice, or there is little likelihood that we can foster change in others” (Taylor, 2008, p. 13).

In addition, transformative learning theory is problem oriented. “Because we must accommodate to a life of continual and rapid change, most of what we learn is the result of our efforts to solve problems, from the infant’s problem of how to get fed - to the adult’s problem of how to understand the meaning of life” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 5). As adults, these problems become incarnated. “Transformative learning involves liberating ourselves from reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27). Sharpening skills for making best judgments about other people’s belief systems is a prime directive. “The process of critical-dialectical discourse centrally involves assessing the beliefs of others to arrive at a tentative best judgment” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59). In Western culture, discourse is problematic: “Our culture often hobbles discourse by its emphasis on competitiveness, confrontation, and presenting oneself. Race, gender and class often determine who participates in discourse” (Mezirow, 1994, p. 232). Requirements for ideal dialogue may be unrealistic. “The requirements for an ideal dialogue are identical to those which pertain to the ideal of enlightened self-directed learning” (Mezirow, 1985b, p. 144).

Transformative learning theory places the cause of our problems to the confines of our minds, perpetuating doom-loops as “...structures of the mind to which an individual brings to his or her encounters with the world and the self-perpetuating proclivities of those structures” (Mezirow, 1996, p. 160). We cannot speak the causes of our doom-loops. “Habits of mind are deeply embedded and often unarticulated. Habits of mind can also be called meaning perspectives” (Cranton, 2009, p. vii). We cannot see the underlying causes of our

problems. “We can only see the world through our own eyes, and our way of seeing includes distortions, prejudices, stereotypes and unquestioned belief systems” (Cranton, 2009, pp. vii, viii).

Other Ways of Knowing

Multiple ways of knowing focus on non-rational kinds of knowing but “are not in conflict with the cognitive, rational model...allowing space for transformation to occur in ways that supplement cognitive, rational thought, to include the affective, spiritual, imaginal, somatic, and artistic” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 17). Transformational learning scholars acknowledge the role of the intra-personal (inside the individual) aspects of the human psyche in adult transformational learning: “Transformative learning experiences ...are usually associated with a profound change in one’s cognitive, emotional or spiritual way of being” (Cranton, 2008, p. 133). The purpose of this inquiry was to better understand who this profoundly changed being is and what her role is in the process of transformation. Ideally, somatic ways of knowing would be included in the meaning-making process of existing theory:

A frame of reference is a *meaning perspective* – the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions. It involves cognitive, affective, conative and **somatic** dimensions (adapted from Mezirow, 2012, p. 82).

Transformational learning theorists have worked hard to carve out non-rational ways of knowing grounded in transformative learning theory. Each of these scholars has personified the theory, giving it intuition, passion, emotions, energy, experiences, spirituality, and life itself - producing empirical evidence for other ways of knowing, yet with limited headway back to the classic rational theory.

John Dirkx (1997, 2000, 2001, 2001b) explains the work of the soul in transformative learning access the unconscious and ways of knowing beyond words. Dirkx (1998) describes using free-form writing as imagined dialogue that revealed unconscious emotions and moved the group through being stuck. Dirkx (2000) describes a mytho-poetic view where images connect us to unconscious meaning structures expressed as symbols without rational reasoning. Patricia Boverie & Michael Kroth (2001) explain passion as key to transformation in the workplace. Robert Boyd (1991) describes a Jungian approach to study psychic dilemmas as portals to knowing unconscious emotional issues and improved self-awareness.

Jack Mezirow (1991) mentions imagination as a vehicle for seeing possibilities and (Mezirow, 2000, 2012) offers reflectivity can involve intuition - with the caveat of its utility in eventual rational discourse, not truly an 'other way of knowing'. However, Mezirow (2004) encourages collaborating together developing transformative learning theory:

There is need for adult educators who are interested in the concept of transformative learning, such as Merriam (2004 as cited by Mezirow), myself, colleagues, and graduate students, to elaborate on the crucially important roles and relationships of affective, intuitive, and imaginative dimensions of the process. We are all collaborating to build a theory in the process of development (p. 70).

Many scholars in the field of education heed this call to collaborate, especially focusing on other ways of knowing - accessing the unconscious with emotion, imagination and spiritual aspects of self (Heron, 1992; Scott, 1997). Lyle Yorks & Elizabeth Kasl (2006) link self-expression with body memory as other ways of knowing. Meditation can inspire spiritual transformation (Jane, 2006; Tisdell, 2008). Creativity can be a catalyst to unconscious other ways of knowing (Dirkx, 1997; Heylighen, 1992; Zull, 2004). Music,

symbol, prayer, ritual, poetry and expressive metaphor can inspire transformational learning experiences (Dirkx, 1998; Tisdell, 2008); Nature and art can inspire imaginative transformation (Boyd, 1991; Tisdell, 2008; Dirkx 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003).

However, “transformational learning theory does not fully recognize the role of unconscious knowing in transformative learning” (Kroth & Boverie, 2000, p. 136). Unconscious knowing is essentially ‘other ways of knowing’, pitted as such within the epistemology of problematizing. Other ways of knowing have been added incrementally, but not to the mainstay theory. “Creative expression, transformative learning and multiples ways of knowing all intersect at the place where we engage in symbolic learning through intuition...through symbolic knowing, we are able to see alternative perspectives in a way that we cannot access through cognitive knowing” (Cranton, 2009, p. x).

These education scholars have set out to put together a more unified theory of transformation and, incrementally, their work is being acknowledged and utilized in other research projects. I draw from the inspiration their research offers to forge ahead considering a voice of the body for transformative learning theory.

The Body as a Site of Learning

The “extra-rational approach” occurs through creative expression, intuition, imagining and nurturing the soul based on artistic, creative, and imaginative points of view. The body as a site of learning in expressive movement enables “becoming aware of aspects of themselves of which they are not conscious...yet shaped their sense of self, their interpretations of their external world, and their day-to-day actions” (Dirkx, 1998, p. 7). Cranton (2009) explains creative expression can lead to discernment instead of critical reflection learning through “the psychic structures that make up the Self” (p. viii).

Discernment requires a sense of self, rooted in the body and individuation. Marcia Baxter Magolda's (1999) longitudinal research on self-authorship situates the body as knower and learner. She reports that "[adults] used their internal authority to refine their beliefs, identities and relationships to make internal commitments [becoming] more open to continued personal growth" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, pp. 8-9). Her findings suggest that internal self-agency and intrinsic motivation are powerful enough to invoke transformational learning without an "externally imposed disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 13; Mezirow, 1994, p. 223; Mezirow, 1995, p. 50) resulting in kinds of permanent epistemic attitudinal changes in adults over time.

"Greater autonomy in thinking is a product of transformational learning" (Mezirow, 2012, p. 91). In Nia praxis movers are also encouraged to consciously challenge habits of movement (akin to 'habits of mind') and to stretch into highly personalized new ways of moving the body. "A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make informed and reflective decisions to act on his or her reflective insight" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 23). In Nia, raising self-awareness through movement is a key elemental dynamic inviting the mental, emotional and spiritual domains of the human psyche into experiences through the physical domain. "Self-awareness is the foundation of mindful transformation and becoming conscious of how we function psychologically is pivotal to self-awareness... or any other approach used to understand oneself" (Cranton, 2000, p. 187).

The human body has been acknowledged from different perspectives of transformational learning theory across multiple disciplines. From a range of disciplines these scholars have focused on the personal experiencing space of the human body including dance (Juhan, 2003; Snowber, 2012; Standal & Engelsrud, 2013); theater and drama

(Butterwick & Selman, 2012; Østern, 2003); adult learning workshops and specialty programs (Glowacki-Dudka, Brooks, Flynn, Frankenberger, Rediger, & Smith, 2012; Intolubbe-Chmil, Spreen, & Swap, 2012; Howden, 2012; Short & Yorks, 2002); transformative somatic learning (Amann, 2003; Beaudoin, 1999; Green, 2002; Rouhiainen, 2008; Weber, 2009; Williamson, 2009); and transformative body aesthetics (Katz-Buonincontro, 2008; Kokkos, 2010; Mullis, 2006). These studies contain findings descriptive of the different ways the human body is the site of learning. The findings include embodiment, experiential learning, and accessing the unconscious as distinctive and transformative.

The human soul, also the native loci of authentic movement, translates unconscious meanings of the individual alternative languages of intuition, imagination, and inspiration which are central to the affective quality of human nature. Although Mezirow (2000) mentions nonverbal communication without explanation, Boyd (1991) and Dirkx (2000) agree that transformational learning is largely nonverbal. They explain transformational learning as the individuation process of the psyche connected with unconscious shapes thoughts, feelings, and action as well as the affective and spiritual domain (Dirkx, 2000).

Personal stories may be conveyed nonverbally through an individual's posture, gait, movements, and physical gestures. Attitudes may be communicated, consciously or not, from the human body acting as the primary loci of transmission. "Body movement is nonverbal, it communicates...and it cannot lie" (Whitehouse, 1999, p. 42) suggesting the body holds unconscious attitudes, beliefs, history, memories and knowledge.

Learning and the Nia Training

This section enumerates and describes the basic learning principles for the white belt training as important curricular background from which bodies learned about bodies in the study. In this white belt training, listening, interpreting, and consciously responding to the information the human body communicated through physical movement and bodily sensations developed body knowing (The Nia Technique, 2013). Proprioceptive and introspective somatic awareness of the human body in movement supports structural, functional, and expressive integration (Eddy, 2009, p. 8) which is introduced in the training through the principles designed to support the development of body knowing.

13 Nia white belt principles. From *The Nia Technique* (Rosas & Rosas, 2004), the thirteen white belt learning principles of this Nia training include:

1. The Joy of Movement – Joy is the primary sensation you should seek from all movement.
2. Natural Time and the Movement Forms – All of your Nia movements are done in your own personal, natural sense of time and include movements and energy from nine classic forms:
 - a. Martial Arts
 - i. Tai Chi: The slow dance
 - ii. Tae Kwon Do: The dance of precision
 - iii. Aikido: Harmonious spherical motion
 - b. Dance Arts
 - i. Jazz dance: Fun, showmanship, and expression
 - ii. Modern Dance: Creating shapes in space

- iii. Duncan Dance: Free-spirited, honest movement
 - c. Healing Arts:
 - i. Moeshe Feldenkrais ® Method: Conscious sensation of movement
 - ii. The Alexander Technique: Movement from the top
 - iii. Yoga: Conscious connection of bone alignment
- 3. Music and the 8BC System – Nia is practiced to the sounds and silences of the music, using an eight-beat counting systems to organize the movements.
- 4. FreeDance – Anything goes movement-wise. Let go of structure.
- 5. Awareness and Dancing Through Life – In Nia, you become aware that every movement in life is a dance and that every movement can be used to self-heal.
- 6. The Base – Feet and Legs. Your feet are the hands that touch the earth and through your legs they carry the energy of the earth to your whole body.
- 7. The Three Planes and Three Levels – Every movement can be done within three planes – low, middle, and high – and can be done with three different levels of intensity. Mixing the three levels and three planes creates a wide repertoire of movement choices.
- 8. The Core –Pelvis, Chest and Head. Your pelvis, chest, and head are the home of your emotions and your energy centers. The pelvis is a container of energy; the chest transmits and receives energy, and the head directs energy.
- 9. The Upper Extremities – arms, hands and fingers. Your arms, hands, and fingers are tools for healing, touching, directing energy, and creating connections. They are extensions of your feelings and thoughts and allow you to express yourself in personal and purposeful ways.

10. X-Ray Anatomy. The practice of using your eyes, your other sensory organs, and your intuition to see inside yourself is X-Ray Ray Anatomy. You can penetrate the veil of your flesh to reveal the proper placement of your bones, tendons, ligaments, and muscles.
11. Fitness is the Business of the Body. Fitness can be achieved by listening to the voices of the body, setting goals, creating plans, reaching decisions, and attaining results. As in all business, achieving e is a process of making changes.
12. Continuing the Body-Mind-Spirit Education. Healing the body is a practice that never ends. Every new workout is an opportunity to reeducate your body, mind, and spirit.
13. Dance What You Sense. When you experience the primary lesson of Nia – that life should be lived through sensation-you become connected (pp. 24-25; 88).

“Nia is recognized as a form of somatic psychotherapy,” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 7).

The connection between dancing one’s own way and using the trainer as a guide is grounded in the somatic awareness premise. “In Nia, we teach people that dancing is anything the body does” (Rosas & Rosas, 2004, p. 296). Nia Trainers encourage sensing the body and body sensations as a focus for the mind. Students learn the 13 principles by experiencing them, ‘trying them on’, with body movement. In the Nia white belt, moving the body and learning the principles concern process rather than product or specific movement mastery. Being encouraged to experiment with movement invites “a more authentic identity...that reflects a greater sense of connectedness and wholeness” (Tisdell & Tolliver, 2003 as cited by Robinson, 2008, p. 116).

Nia Trainers and seasoned students help create an atmosphere which invites and emphasizes uninhibited honest body movement including loud and whispered sounding and occasional permissible contact with others. This experience can be at once liberating and scary for newcomers, especially for those in which touching or shouting “No!” or “Go!” carries unconscious emotional charge. Somatic dance researcher Rebecca Weber (2009) explains:

Practices of embodiment and kinesthetic awareness can be very foreign and ‘disorienting’ to those who are not used to them, particularly less technically experienced dancers. As movers gain more experience and kinesthetic awareness through the somatic practices, they take more responsibility and enjoyment in the re-patterning of their own movement (p.19).

Moving beyond what is comfortable is central to fostering transformative learning (Cranton, 2009, p. x). It is through creative expression that learners have access to understanding something from a new perspective, and this has the potential to lead to a transformative experience (Cranton, 2009, p. ix). In Nia training, developing body awareness involves observing and sensing oneself in both action and stillness. In this way, the body is felt through actual skin-close contact with the phenomenon, rather than just thought of from a distance.

Kinesthetic Learners and Experiential Learning Concepts

Comfort levels within learning situations define learning strategies and styles (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, p. 168). These may be classified into learning preference or intelligence-type categories (Bloom, 2008; Gardner, 2006; Kolb, 1991).

Kinesthetic learners are perhaps the least understood in both theory and application in adult

education settings. As I theorized in the Introduction Chapter, Nia white belt students/trainer most likely exemplify strong preferences towards kinesthetic learning.

Jay Seitz (2000), writer and neuropsychologist, explains kinesthetic intelligence as the *'bodily* basis of thought':

Kinesthetic thinking lies in orchestrating a sequence of activities; integrating intellectual, emotional, and multisensory experience; and selecting and executing appropriate movement, action or activity (p. 35).

The Nia practice is attractive specifically to kinesthetic learners interested in “moving the body’s way [and] experiencing increased body awareness through physical sensation” (Rosas and Rosas, 2004). “Body awareness or ‘knowing through the body’ (somatic learning) plays a role in the way we react to images and creative expression” (Cranton, 2009, p. x). In Nia, raising self-awareness through movement is a key elemental dynamic inviting the mental, emotional and spiritual domains of the human psyche into experiences through the physical domain.

Kinesthetic learners are body-knowers who “remember best through getting physically involved in whatever is being learned, remember what they do, what they experience with their hands or bodies by movement and touch” (Russell, 2006, p. 351). They tend to express emotions, perform, dance and be athletic (Gardner, 2006). Adult kinesthetic learners prefer to “to move, perceive and apply physical skills” (Lombardi, 2007, p. 8) and are likely to engage in physical activities to suit their natural preferences.

“[Kinesthetic learners will deliberately] create an expressive representation of a new insight, [so that s/he] can later relive the entire learning experience by re-experiencing the expressive representation” (Yorks and Kasl, 2006, p. 55). For example, it is common

practice for dancers to recapitulate choreography by pointing fingers in space ‘marking’ the next move. Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987), author and qualitative dance researcher, explains:

Knowing how to express the aesthetic intent of the movement and how to create aesthetic movement imagery...are forms of bodily-lived (experiential) knowledge. As such, they are avenues for self-knowledge (p. 26).

The human body in experience, in experiential learning, is concerned with a process that “is holistic in the sense that it addresses students in their entirety—as thinking, feeling, physical, emotional, spiritual, and social beings” (Carver, 2008, pp. 150-151). A whole-person approach in experiential learning engages the multiplicity of being-ness. “Far from existing as a static, once-and-for-all psychic structure, an individual can possess a multiplicity of foundational self- states corresponding to varying elemental psychosomatic constellations” (Cantz, 2012, p. 7). In addition, dance researcher Amanda Williamson (2009) recapitulates transformative benefits of an experiential approach with the somatic:

Valuing the uniqueness of subjective experience sourced through experiential learning and experiential sensitivity supports agency, new perceptions, and conscious decision-making in the world (Hannah, 1970; Bauer, 1999; Eddy, 1992, as cited by Williamson 2009, p. 42).

With the body as the site of experiential learning, accessing other ways of knowing provides a portal the tacit undergirding of our meaning structures (frames of reference) and habits of mind. “Frames of reference are structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions. It is the revision of a frame of reference in concert with reflection on experience that is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation—a paradigmatic shift” (Taylor, 1998,

p. 5). Theoretically, “every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses of our body to these impacts” (Polanyi, 1969, pp. 147–148).

Somatic Learning Concepts

Somatic means affecting the body, about the body or relating with the body. “Somatic learning is felt by the body... While the range of learning that is classified within somatic learning is broad and interpreted differently, it is the body itself that continuously emerges as a multi-faceted force for making meaning of our experience” (Amann, 2003, p. 4).

The somatic movement perspective supports the ‘multiplicity of self’ concept. The use of creative expression rests on the assumption that there are multiples ways of knowing (Cranton, 2009, p. ix). The body is not a separated entity; instead the body itself is “looking at oneself from the ‘inside out’ where one is aware of feelings, movements and intentions; a ‘living body’ ... an embodied process” (Green, 2002, 2003, p. 100). The major premise of somatic learning is increasing awareness of physical sensation. To a somatic educator, awareness of movement and body sensation *is* metacognition, explaining that when “...the body transforms, so does the self” (Adler, 1999, p. 173). Furthermore, “because somatic knowledge is experienced directly, it can offer a dimension of learning that is common to all cultural contexts” (Amann, 2003, p. 32).

Somatic practitioners assert that awareness of physical sensation through body movement is a medium of change (Adler, 1999; Chodorow, 1999; Farnell, 1999; Green, 2002, 2003; Halprin, 1995; Leventhal, 2008; Merriam, 2001; Potter, 2008; Rosas & Rosas, 2004; Roth, 1997, 1998, 2004; Whitehouse, 1999). As with a formal somatic practice like Nia “the potential for discovery, insight, recovery, release, and reforming become

foundational and key as tools, for the [instructor to guide] individuals in the healing of the wounds of growth and development and the adjustment to a rapidly changing world” (Leventhal, 2008). Similar potentials foundational for critical self-reflection of assumptions are akin to premise reflection (Mezirow, 1995). Important components for transformative learning involving critical self-reflection are strikingly complementary. Mezirow (1990) illuminates the transformative reassessment process of critical self-reflection:

By far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involved critical self-reflection – reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting (p. 13).

Martha Eddy (2002) urges educators and facilitators of transformative learning to include somatic awareness in academic curriculum. “Until we absorb and practice physical ways of learning, we might argue that we are not fully claiming our individual authority, that which underlies our democratic intelligence” (p. 60). Marion Goldberg (2001) offers a mind-blending summary:

Thought and action are inseparable; therefore the mind cannot be located in a specific place, but everywhere in the body. The implication of this position is that human behavior cannot and must not be subdivided into bits and pieces. We think and act as total unified organisms. Therefore, our approach to teaching and learning should reflect this (as cited by Eddy, 2002, p. 60).

Theories in Practice

Transformative learning theory provided design and execution frameworks for the ways transformational learning was experienced in the body during the study for co-participants. In addition, components described from transformative theory literatures were

employed in methods of data collection, were used to inform interpretive analytic approaches, and were infused into discussions of emergent findings. Finally, transformative theory was then overlaid with our emergent theory into a larger theoretic synthesis towards a more inclusive theory of transformative learning based on the learning experiences of seven women in the Nia training.

It was my goal to foster transformative learning in the process of data collection applying a rational method to a somatic context for a more unified theory. Prompting storytelling in the focus groups and interviews, I took theory to practice. “Through dialogue we deepen understanding of our respective stories, the areas we had in common and the difference of perspective we each brought” (McMorland, & Piggot-Irvine, 1998). Furthermore, creating a supportive relating quality was essential in the study. “Researchers must know their own personalities and psyches such that these do not cloud an understanding of the data...[including] subjective and objective, spiritual and material, self and other” (Clements, 2004, p. 28). Entering a familiar site in new ways required a careful balance of immersion and distance (Glesne, 2006). Ethical and sensitive handling of the data and behavior in the field will increase the accuracy of representing reality and improve rigor (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Chapter Summary

This literature review described components of reflective practices, components of transformational learning theory, other ways of knowing, the body as a site of learning, the white belt learning concepts, kinesthetic and experiential implications, and somatic concepts. Collectively these served in the construction of the sub-questions topics of the inquiry (see Appendix A). This Review of the Literature helped to situate the study to explore the ways in

which transformational learning was experienced through the body using a semi-constructivist grounded theory case study approach.

Conducting this inquiry with the human body as the site of learning in a somatic, experiential paradigm of the Nia training was fertile ground for the study of subjective transformative learning experiences and the body. “We make meaning of the world through our experiences” (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 32). This review narrowed the points of inquiry in order to deeply contextualize individual physical experiences to co-construct a ‘voice of the body’ for transformational learning theory.

In conclusion, the literature background afforded the ability “to entertain a range of theoretical possibilities...giving the researcher material for making systematic theoretical comparisons” (Holton as cited by Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 17). It was my goal to consider a voice of the body for transformative learning theory so that “learning itself becomes more holistic, thereby increasing the chance for learning to be transformative” (Tisdell, 2003, p.42), and to stimulate the possibility of a broadened theory of transformative learning. The next chapter explains the research design and strategy.

Chapter III: Research Design

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time –T.S. Eliot

T.S. Eliot's poem relays the feeling of my journey designing and carrying out this grounded theory case study project. Throughout this chapter, I integrated findings and field experiences, and provided brief exemplars from the data for the design and execution of this research strategy. Exemplars, figures, and tables from the data are included in this chapter because "the quality of a research study is not only revealed in the writing-up of that research, but also that it somehow resides in the research report" (Rolfe, 2006, p. 309).

First, I reviewed the four types of research questions and participant discussions about learning experiences during the white belt training, as well as the body's role in transformational learning. Then I discussed the purpose of the study, explained my philosophy of research, and introduced the qualitative mode of inquiry. I followed up with an in depth discussion of the rationale for employing a combined grounded theory case study strategy in pursuit of collecting and analyzing the data in order to appropriately address the central research question: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning in the Nia white belt training? I have provided an overview of instrumental case study and constructivist grounded theory and guiding theoretical frameworks. In addition I have reviewed the research methods beginning with the IRB-approval process employed in this study, explained the sampling process, and recruitment strategy which included (a) site selection and timing of the study, (b) the sampling process, and (c) gaining access to the site.

In this chapter, I have detailed each source of data with the schedule of data collection including examples of how the data were used in the analysis process. In addition, I have addressed researcher positionality within constructivist grounded theory tradition. Finally, I have discussed the sources of data and data collection methods, followed by a review of ethical considerations, and concluded with a discussion of rigor.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to discover how the human body experiences transformational learning in a basic somatic training program with an experiential body-based curriculum. This study considered a voice of the body for adult transformative learning theory utilizing an instrumental case study design based on constructivist grounded theory analysis. Seven adult women in a Nia white belt training program provided the illustrative material explained herein giving rise to the meaning of a theoretical voice of the body. The central research question was: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning?

Four topic areas were extrapolated from the constructs of transformational learning theory, my experiences as a kinesthetic learner in traditional pedagogy for twenty years, my experiences as Nia teacher and student for ten years, and informing literature. Below are the four topic areas related to the inquiry and *exemplar questions* that served to guide the investigation and initial analysis of the central research question: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning in the Nia white belt training? Additional in-depth questions are located in Appendix A.

- Research topic 1: learning experiences within the context of the Nia training
 - Exemplar question: In what ways is this learning experience different from other adult training programs?
- Research topic 2: learning preferences and the Nia experience
 - Exemplar question: In what ways do you learn best?
- Research topic 3: learning from the body and the Nia experience
 - Exemplar question: In what ways have you learned from your body?
- Research topic 4: manifestations of transformation and the Nia experience
 - Exemplar question: In what ways do your Nia movements affect how you see yourself, others, and the world?

These guiding questions served to capture multiple perspectives over time about the ways participants experienced transformational learning from their body in the Nia training and in their Nia experiences.

Philosophy of Research

According to Michael Crotty (1998), the philosophy of epistemology focuses on the nature and acquisition of knowledge that is possible and legitimate. Employing a semi-constructivist epistemology for purposes of this study, I blended a middle-ground approach rooted in both positivist and constructivist tradition. In other words, my semi-constructivist paradigm is a belief in a larger, guiding truth and also truth construed from individual subjectivist reality (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). For this study, I took an etic stance with transformational learning theory and a constructivist attitude that transformational learning and the body is highly personal, context-specific, and difficult to measure meaning participants would define a voice of the body. Recognizing in this training experience that we

were constructing our own realities in different ways aligned with constructivism. Therefore, my semi-constructivist approach was actually an inductive and deductive approach to “construct grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interaction with people, perspectives, and the research process” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

Exposing my personal philosophy improves transparency, clarifies rationales for research decisions, and explains my analytical persuasion. Jonathan Grix (2002) provides reasons for disclosing underpinning researcher assumptions:

- To understand the interrelationship of the key components of research [including methodology and methods]
- To avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates and approaches to social phenomena; and
- To be able to recognize others’, and defend our own, positions (p. 176).

In answer In accordance with Grix’s (2002) reasoning, I chose a research strategy that allowed me to co-construct meaning with individuals who shared in a body-based learning program in order to contextualize and locate the focus of inquiry to the human body. Michael Polanyi (1958) has argued that *we know more than we can tell* and that this tacit knowledge underlies all of our more explicit knowledge. Locating multiple truths, tacit and explicit, required heightened awareness, reflection, and critical dialoging with participants to understand the ways transformational learning was experienced through the body in the study.

Researcher Positionality

Scholarship addresses the complexities of managing subjectivity in multiple ways. I was not separate from my prior experience, knowledge, or being a co-participant in the

training program. I saw a need to legitimize the human body for instructional design and plant seeds for future research. Therefore, I naturally went to Nia to find people who wanted to take this journey with me because I know Nia as a body practice. I desired to be a shareholder at the convergence of co-creating the development of a voice of the body (Labaree, 2002).

I was intentional with case selection in order to know where to start and be able to draw on shared experiences for interpretive integrity. In addition, I used research methods congruent with semi-constructivism while accounting for subjectivity with fellow participants in the training program. .

Qualitative Research Method

My semi-constructivist paradigm, the research purpose, and nature of the inquiry drove the research strategy. Although not squarely seated within the dichotomy of interpretivist /subjectivist or positivist/objectivist, the design emerged from strengths of both paradigms. However, this was not a mixed-methods study. Qualitative tradition provides relevant literary space for the etic-emic, inductive-deductive, positivist-constructivist approaches to naturalistic studies (Charmaz, 2006; Lett, 1990; Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999; Rolfe, 2006). Furthermore, Diane Watt (2007) research scholar, suggests the complex nature of a qualitative approach emphasizes interpretation and emergent design, but provides no precise formula about how to proceed (p. 82).

In addition, Gary Rolfe (2006) explains that the commonly perceived quantitative–qualitative dichotomy is in fact a continuum:

Any attempt to establish a consensus on quality criteria for qualitative research is unlikely to succeed for the simple reason that there is no unified body of theory,

methodology or method that can collectively be described as qualitative research; indeed, the very idea of qualitative research is open to question...the very idea of qualitative research as an epistemologically or ontologically coherent paradigm is open to dispute (p. 308).

This ongoing debate is well documented and beyond the purpose of sublimating my thinking and knowing approach to the study in order to convey how I moved through the dissertation process. I have carefully documented the research purpose and nature of the inquiry using what many scholars define as a qualitative framework to highlight interpretation and emergent design in answer to the central question: In what ways did the human body experience transformational learning in the Nia setting?

The constructivist nature of transformational learning assumes relativism, where realities can shift when some kind of reflection occurs, thereby providing a defined process from which to investigate how it had occurred differently. Therefore, the qualitative mode was best-suited for exploring the ways white belt participants experienced physical transformative learning enabling the opportunity to “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denizen & Lincoln, 2005, p.3).

It was the aim of this study to leverage the body-focus in this Nia white belt training and gather multiple perspectives “...to distill a consensus construction that is more informed” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111) for the purpose of extrapolating meanings for a voice of the body with fellow participants. “A qualitative approach provides an in-depth study of a phenomena based on a diverse array of data collection materials within its larger context” (Creswell, 2007, p. 244).

In summary, I adapted Gerald Cupchik's (2001) blended paradigmatic approach to studies in the social sciences to highlight the strengths and coherence of this particular qualitative mode demonstrated in this work:

Worlds are multilayered with many levels of interacting structures ongoing simultaneously. Positivists have a great interest in uncovering specific functional relationships between operationalized variables...that are more clearly explained or understood when placed in appropriate contexts that bring them into sharp relief...as processes not essences. Constructivists describe the coherent structure of a multilayered phenomenon; thus strengthening the fabric of understanding. In a semi-constructivist paradigm, both positivist and constructivist methods provide complementary views of the phenomena and efforts at achieving their reconciliation by elucidating the processes underlying them. In so doing, semi-constructivists accommodate the best of positivism and interpretivism (p. 11).

Methodology Rationale

I combined instrumental case study with constructivist grounded theory philosophy to address a major question I had as co-researcher: How do I properly represent the meaning of a voice of the body in my research? My meaning was not to promote an organization or its training, although we share the Nia practice itself and a passion for movement and the human body. My meaning was to co-construct a voice of the body in a way that was accessible and clear by drawing on the processes of transformational learning theory. Participating as researcher and co-researcher within the white belt training I was able to scrupulously investigate the how and why questions about transformational learning and the body.

Reflexive memoing in the research process provided a subjective audit trail of transparency being researcher, participant, and observer in the Nia white belt. As the case under study, the Nia white belt training was the essence of the investigation. . It was the base from which I explored the topics and experiences regarding transformative learning and the body as they emerged from the seven participants.

Rather than take an explicit multiple case studies strategy and risk reducing complex cases to a few comparable variables and thus losing the idiosyncrasies of individual cases (Stoecker, 1991 as cited by Lauckner, Paterson & Krupa, 2012, p. 6), I utilized the instrumental case approach wherein the white belt training served as a means to investigate what occurred within it (Stake, 1995). Combining a semi-constructivist approach to instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995; Eisenhardt, 1989; Creswell, 2007) and grounded theory methodologies (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, 2008), provided a means to locate the study within a defined structure to explore the multiple perspectives and experiences specific to all participants in it.

As a participant and observer in the training, I was fully grounded in the constructivist grounded theory case study; this position afforded me the opportunity to co-construct interpretations about transformational learning and the body. Emerging dynamics consequential within the setting itself impacted different frames of reference within and between study participants. Therefore, the instrumental case study approach enabled me to share the experience from varied perspectives for an in-depth analysis and reflexive interpretation of ways transformational learning occurred through the body.

Recent dissertation authors have employed similar combined research methods for investigating in situ transformation theory to the study of learning transformation. Paul

Scheele (2013) employed constructivist grounded theory in his mixed methods dissertation to seek out how adults overcome their immunity to change, and learn to know or make meaning at higher levels of mental complexity (p. 14). Barbara Rousseau (2010) utilized a constructivist grounded theory case study design in her dissertation asking seven teachers about their reflective journaling practice: How do teachers make meaning of their self-reflection, their personal transformation, and praxis? (p. 16). Choosing a combined grounded theory and case study research strategy to consider a voice of the body for adult transformative learning theory aligned researcher and methodological philosophies to truly leverage the flexibility of the qualitative mode with the intent to increase the integrity and rigor of this research endeavor.

This combined approach provided an organization structure where “each part of the theory is demonstrated by evidence from at least some of the cases” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 29). In addition research findings were displayed as an interpretive portrayal of the studied world (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10) including the use of extant literature.

In the next section, I provided a brief overview for each approach and weave-in contextual background where appropriate in order to (re)tell the Nia white belt story in the case study overview. An in-depth discussion is located in the data analysis section which explicates the practical application of a constructivist grounded theory case design for considering a voice of the body in adult transformative learning theory.

Overview of Case Study

Instrumental case study methodology supported comprehensive understanding through multiple sources of data collected during the training program. Pamela Baxter & Susan Jack (2008) describe Robert Stake’s instrumental case approach in this study:

The instrumental case is used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases (p. 549).

The case study approach has been recognized as a flexible methodological tradition (Creswell, 2007; Denizen & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) which is often comingled with other methodological approaches, whether explicitly stated as such or not by the researcher (Small, 2009, p. 8). Case studies in combination with other methodological approaches have been used to develop and expand theory on topics such as group process (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) and cognitive development (Piaget, 1950). Subsequently, I discussed the purpose for the case, provided background, and explained ways the Nia white belt training was instrumental in this study in the following sections.

Case Purpose

An important purpose for case defined as the Nia white belt training was to consider transformative learning through the body in an experiential group training program explicitly focusing on the body as a site of learning and knowing. This study considered a voice of the body from multiple lived experiences and different manifestations of transformational learning and the body in the training. Therefore, the context of the Nia white belt served as a means to align its learning focus of the physical body in sensation, movement, motion, and dance with the research focus of the ways transformational learning happened in the physical

bodies for participants in this particular case environment. In the next section, I explained ways this particular Nia white belt training was relevant to participants.

Case Background

In the Introduction Chapter, I positioned the inquiry with basic Nia information. In the Review of the Literature, I explained the basic somatic learning principles as body-focused curriculum of the white belt training program. Now, I provide appropriate background to situate the particulars of the case of interest. The Nia white belt training is the first-level of the Nia belt training system which is structured like martial arts. The focus and emphasis of all the belt trainings is on the practice of Nia. The number of Nia classes taught per week and the number of classes attended per week is a way practice is measured in the Nia culture. In the opening session of any belt-level training, the trainers ask the group, ‘How many classes did you teach or take per week and for how long?’ The emphasis on practice also means there is a minimum one year waiting period before one is allowed to enroll in the next belt level.

Nia is a dynamic enterprise, constantly learning from itself and making adjustments to meanings, but not the belt training structure. As of June 2013 (The Nia Technique), the belt trainings were described as follows:

- White belt – Focus: Physical sensation | Intent: To embody the foundation of Nia.
- Green belt – The craft of teaching Nia | Intent: To effectively deliver the Nia experience.
- Blue belt – Focus: Communication, Relationship and Intimacy | Intent: To energize personal connection through self-discovery and communication by following The Body's Way.

- Brown belt – Focus: Sensing and Perceiving Energy | Intent: To live as an energetic being.
- Black belt – Focus: Unlimited Creativity | Intent: To master the basics.

It is important to understand the structure of the white belt in the belt system complex and the emphasis and assumption of Nia practice as a student or teacher coming into higher-level belt trainings but not the white belt training. It is also important to reiterate that white belt is not about learning to teach Nia, although it is a prerequisite for so choosing. The current description of the Nia white belt as of June 2013 (The Nia Technique) is:

The Nia White Belt Training is the first level of a five-belt training series that presents a body-centered approach to health, wellness and fitness. If you have a desire to share Nia in a professional capacity, the White Belt Training is your entryway into teaching. Those who choose to pursue the path of personal enrichment use this training as a starting point for becoming a master student. Over the course of one week, you will comprehensively explore physical sensation through five core-competency areas of study including movement, music, anatomy, science and philosophy. This joyful journey into the self is instrumental in helping you develop body knowing by learning to listen, interpret and consciously respond to the information your body communicates to you via sensation.

The white belt training is a body-centered training program for personal self-discovery, health, well-being, and fitness regardless of Nia experience. White belt does not emphasize teaching skills per se; its focus is to provide a way in to the body through sensation through learning and practicing the basic principles of the Nia philosophy.

However, in order to teach Nia individuals must complete the white belt and purchase a membership, or license any time thereafter.

Many first-time Nia white belt students often come unsure of their decision to become Nia teachers and attend simply for personal growth, self-development, or other reasons which may or may not turn out to involve teaching Nia. As such, white belt students attend with a wide range of exposure to Nia from none to master student, or they may an audit (repeat) student at any other belt-level, including Nia Trainers.

John Creswell (2007) discusses working on a case study and explains how visuals convey simultaneously breaking down the data and reconfiguring them into new forms. “We (re)present our data, partly based on participant’s perspectives and partly based on our own interpretations” (p. 43). Given the case design, purpose, and relevance of contextual background for this white belt training, the case study approach enabled multiple data collection sources in order to consider the range of experiences from study participants.

According to Robert Stake (1995), contextual background provides insights into issues that emerged from his instrumental approach. The white belt training then, was of secondary interest; it played a supportive role, facilitating understanding of something else, which was the transformational body-based experiences of those participating in it (Stake, 1995). Therefore, I developed conceptual bounded systems that “allow[ed] the researcher to observe the phenomenon from multiple perspectives” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 538).

While the case study design defined the temporal limits of this study, the instrumentality of the case was of interest for in-depth understanding from data collected in that particular context (Stake, 1995). I followed Creswell’s (2007, p. 43) visual rendering process in discussing what this white belt training program entailed conceptually from the

bird's eye view and then zoom in on important emergent roles for study participants.

Conceiving different ways the case was contextualized and study participants' perspectives conceptualized is important for the background of the study.

Case contexts. I employed a systematic way to (re)present emerging conceptualizations of participant perspectives as theoretical bounded case systems to convey emerging roles and frames of referent perspectives. I used these visual conceptualizations as theoretic application of bounded systems borrowed from case study design as a means to understand the origins and contextual implications concerning different meaning-perspectives.

According to Stake (as cited by Creswell, 2007, p. 122) individuals are appropriate 'cases' within an instrumental case study approach. Individuals in this study were co-researchers and therefore primary contributors to multiple sources of data. However, in this section, the purpose of these visual (re)presentations was to convey contextual distinctions relevant to case context. The visual depiction of Nested Case Systems (see Figure 1) imparts important case background for participants in this training. In this instrumental case, like other participants, I had several roles with different meanings: white belt student, black belt auditor, a researcher, and a participant and observer.

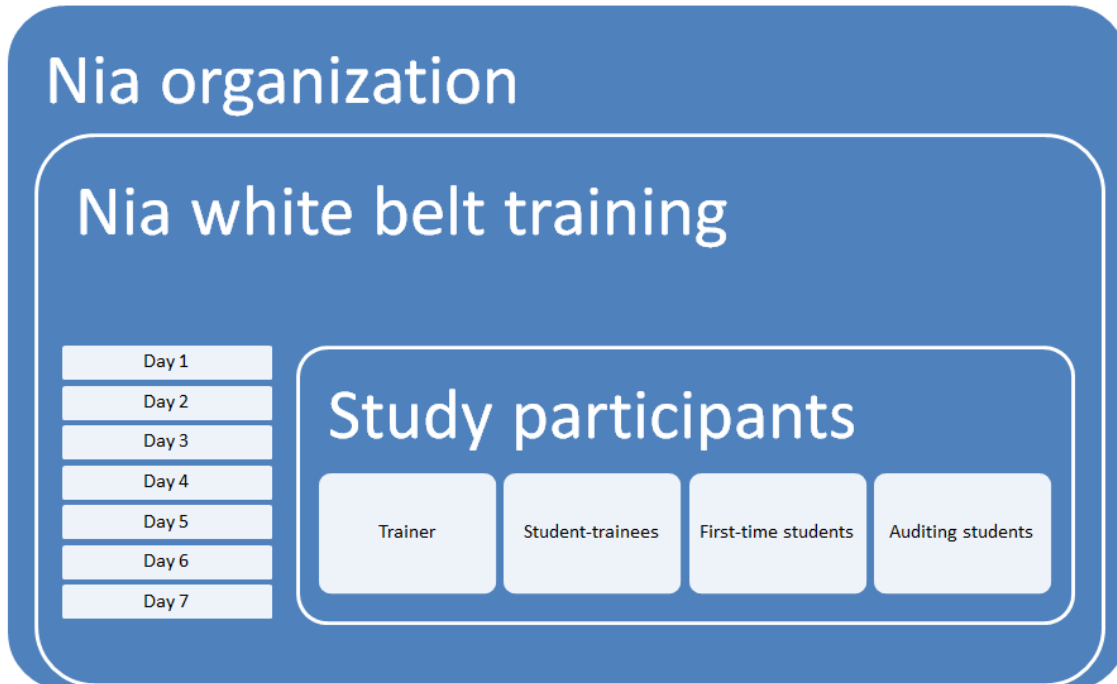


Figure 1. Nested Case Systems.

The Nia organization was the largest bounded system by proxy. Also, implicit organizational developments impinged on the evolution of participant roles in this study necessitating these explanations. The seven-day Nia white belt training was the crux of the instrumental bounded system from which the data emerged. Study participants are conceptually depicted in Figure 1 by role, but represent seven women who participated as co-researchers in different ways.

It is important to distinguish these four initial roles (trainer, student-trainees, first-time students, and auditing students) in this study because these roles became operative within the intersubjective social mix as illustrated by the next visual iteration. As such, it is appropriate to provide concise descriptions of these roles and describe the ways that roles provide critical contextualization for the case background. To note, I applied the theoretic

notion of bounded systems to convey visual distinctions and explain roles within this instrumental case, not to convey a different type of case design.

Roles. Organizational changes at Nia meant black belt teachers could become trainers. This program development impacted this particular Nia training and the roles of participants. The trainer was not the full time trainer in this study. The trainer was also being a teacher to two student-trainees who were enrolled in the trainer program through the Nia organization. This was a first-time role for the trainer and two student-trainees that impacted the context and subsequent perspectives of study participants.

Therefore, roles, meanings, and perceptions changed on Day 1 of the training for participants. When it was revealed that student-trainees would be delivering nearly half of the white belt learning sessions between them, both student-trainees and the trainer were perceived as teachers by first-time students. Furthermore, both auditing students were black belts as were the two student-trainees, and perceived the student-trainees as peers. As such, first-time students perceived auditing students as black belts, not as auditing students.

However, because first-time students and black belt auditors participated together as learners in the curriculum, a semi-permeable system bonded first-time students and black belt auditors together as white belt students. In addition, these important changes surfaced as a teacher profile of three, the trainer and two student-trainees, a separate system outside the semi-permeable container of the white belt student system. From a researcher perspective, these emergent system profiles provided another means for internal constant comparison of meaning-making within and between participants as the training unfolded.

Nia White Belt Instrumental Case

The Nia white belt case system was the situated focus for investigating transformative learning experiences including emerging bounded systems and shifting roles during the training. The Case Profile Systems Figure (Figure 2) depicts major reorganizations within the instrumental white belt case by the end of Day 1, as an important conceptual development for the background of this case.

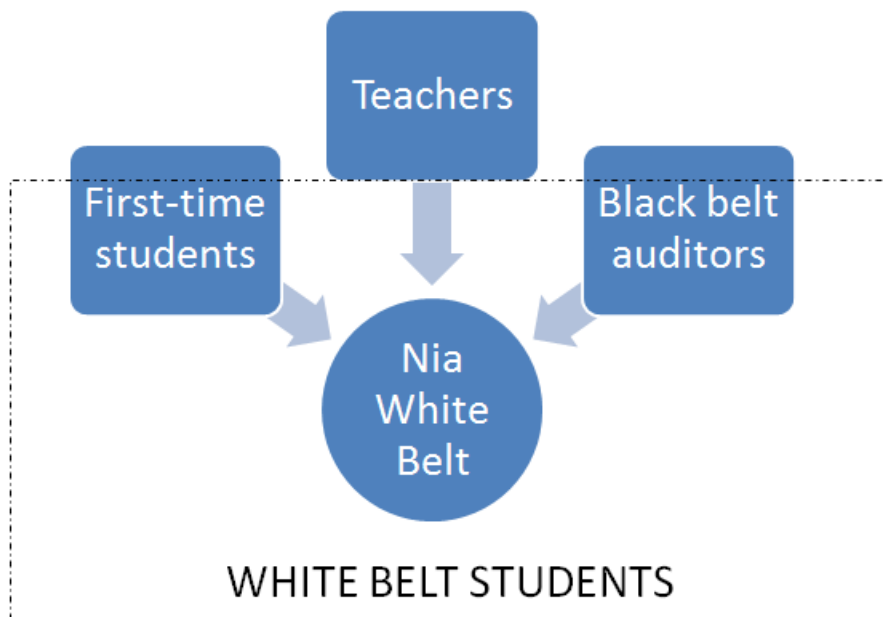


Figure 2. Case Profile Systems.

This rendering (see Figure 2) provided clear descriptions and clarification for the bounded roles of study participants in this white belt training; it also established context for meaning-making in the environment of the instrumental case. These distinctions were important to the background of the Nia white belt training as the instrumental case within which we explored ways transformational learning was experienced through the body. Individuals as participants in this training were co-researchers and are introduced in the data sources section.

To summarize case study methodology, Figures illuminated different inner-workings of social interactionism in the learning setting. Early internal comparisons of emergent roles and meanings for roles enabled a conceptual baseline for tracking transformative learning experiences within the social infrastructure of the training.

The Nia white belt training served as the instrumental case system to explore participant experiences of body-based transformational learning in different contexts:: The learning environment, learning preferences, learning and their body, and transformational learning doing Nia. Methodologically, the instrumental case study design was congruent with a semi-constructivist paradigm to consider a voice of the body for adult transformative learning theory.

Overview of Constructivist Grounded Theory

Constructivist grounded theory provided an approach to address co-participants' processes of experiencing transformational learning through the body, as the aim of this study was to broaden the purview of existing transformational learning theory where "existing theory is incomplete" (Creswell, 2007, p. 66) without a voice of the body. The endeavor was to seek out personal experiences of other ways of knowing and build upon transformative learning theory. Consequently, this work was studying the phenomenon of transformative learning with the intention of expanding horizons of its longstanding establishments. As such, the research inquiry was theory in situ where this methodology was useful when "theory grounding is also theory generation" (Goldkuhl & Cronholm 2003, p. 9).

However, a single grounded theory research study would not be expected to generate formal theory. Formal theory emerges over time (Glaser, 1978) and with reflection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and derives from the conceptual abstraction of a substantive theory across

multiple research studies (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin 1998 as cited by Gasson, 2004, p. 84). As such, constructivist grounded theory was best-suited for the aim of this research, to consider, and therefore otherwise to *enable a possible inroad* for situating a voice of the human body within existing transformative learning theory.

In addition, using extant literature in the ways I have discussed may seem incongruent to qualitative tradition and chosen methodology. Early developers of classic grounded theory suggest the use of extant literature should be avoided in order to prevent contamination; stifling or limiting of the researcher's analysis of the data. Furthermore, they contend that the literature review should be delayed until after completing analysis so that data is not viewed through the lens of earlier ideas and the data is not forced into pre-existing categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p. 37).

However, consulting relevant transformative learning literatures was important for the design and execution of this study, including the discussion of organic findings and subsequent formulation of theoretic synthesis in the Discussion Chapter. In this way, blending emergent findings with extant literature helped connect current theoretic conversations to promote the integration of different perspectives. Kathy Charmaz (2006) explains how the literature is also a form of constant comparison and a practical device to test a more unified theory of transformative learning:

The literature review and theoretical framework[s] serve[d] as valuable sources of comparison and analysis...Comparing other scholars' evidence and ideas with [this] grounded theory, I [show] where and how their ideas illuminate theoretical categories and how [this theory] extends, transcends, or challenges dominant views (p. 165).

Constructivist grounded theory guided methodological decisions to account for interpretations using a reflexive and transparent process (Mills et al., 2006, 2008). For example, composing reflexive and analytic memos were indispensable keeping open-mindedness gathering and interpreting the data as co-researcher. Co-constructed interpretations were sensitive realizations that “neither observer nor observed come to the scene untouched by the world” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 15). However, “researchers, not participants, are obligated to be reflexive about what we bring to the scene, what we see, and how we see it” (ibid. p. 15).

Barney Glaser, co-developer of classic grounded theory (along with Anselm Strauss in 1967), challenge Kathy Charmaz’ constructivist techniques as ‘remodeling grounded theory methodology’ (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2004) in its departures from their original grounded theory approach. *Second Edition of the Handbook of Qualitative Research* suggests that “the original formulation of the [grounded theory] method is still useful, but later works are easier to read and more practical” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 782). Given the epistemological objective-subjective conversation among scholars of grounded theory methodology, it stands that Dr. Charmaz’ version has greater flexibility, particularly concerning researcher positionality. Kathy Charmaz (2006) explains:

Constructivists study *how* and sometimes *why* participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations. Constructivist grounded theorists take a reflexive stance toward the research process and products and consider how their theories evolve...Both researchers and research participants interpret meanings and actions (pp. 130-131, emphasis added).

In summary, constructivist grounded theory guided the research approach to understanding the ways I co-discovered *how* transformative learning was experienced through the body in the Nia white belt. Key *whys* emerged from conceptual and theoretic interpretations woven with relevant extant literature in the Findings and Discussion Chapter of this report. Research design and data gathering strategies encouraged rich accounts of participant experiences and a wide range of data sources. Building a rudimentary grounded theory together was a journey of “knowledge mutually created between the researcher and those researched” (Guido, Chavez, & Lincoln, 2010, p. 15).

In addition, participants’ lived transformational learning experiences in the body were understood further through a deeply reflexive “process of understanding - and ability to understand” (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006, p. 191) using reflexive memos and with a clear ‘audit trail’. Constructivist grounded theory places emphasis on making the researchers visible and their theory about the area of interest reflective of participants’ words (Mills, Chapman, Bonner & Francis, 2007, p. 78). The next section provides an overview of congruent theoretical frameworks utilized for analytic flow and interpretations of meanings for a voice of the body in this Nia white belt training program.

Theoretical Frameworks

Two theoretical frames served different purposes in this grounded theory case approach that investigated ways participants in a Nia white belt training co-constructed meaning for ‘a voice of the body’. Transformative learning theory provided the theoretical basis for the development of the research questions, shaped interview questions, and provided a rich body of scholarship revisited during the final stages of analysis. In addition,

transformative learning theory provided an analytic lens from which to broaden and clarify conceptual and theoretic ideas grounded in the data.

Symbolic interactionism “assumes that interaction is inherently dynamic and *interpretive* and addresses how people create, enact, and change meanings and actions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7). For example, the conceptual case systems illustrations (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) conveyed the immediacy of intersubjective context that impacted the dynamics and meaning-making strategies and frames of reference for co-researchers in the Nia training.

Symbolic interactionism provided the theoretical frame to approach and interpret personal meaning ascription through the body in the dynamics of the learning environment, learning preferences, and key experiences during the Nia training. This lens guided interpretative flexibility to understand how the lifeworld was revealed literally and metaphorically through multiple interpretations, reactions, and interactions in the white belt training.

Herbert Blumer (1969) explains that meaning, language, and thought comprise three core tenants of symbolic interactionism which opens doors to interpretations about the concept of self and interaction of self in society. According to Blumer:

- 1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that these things have for them;
- 2) The meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows; and
- 3) These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the thing he encounters (p.2).

Symbolic interactionism provided the interpretive lens to view the dynamic interplay of the meaning-making process as it unfolded for individuals engaged in this study.

Symbolic interactionism drew my attention to what was important for participants and provoked reflexivity when I co-contributed in different interactions. Through this theoretic lens, I practiced critical reflection which is incidentally connected to transformational learning theory. In analysis, symbolic interactionism meant when I reviewed the transcriptions and observation data, it occurred to me to be sensitive to potential ‘Nia talk’ (intersubjectivity of embodied Nia ‘language games’).

Symbolic interactionism and self-reflexive approach supported the production of a cohesive interpretive analysis of “...transformative learning (the importance of dialogue and reflection) and what is unplanned and unpredictable (the randomness of who experiences a transformation around a shared experience)” (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p. 558) for participants’ meaning-making in this study. Hence, both theoretical frames helped shape and guide the analysis and interpretation of meanings in the study and in the white belt training as it unfolded as a dynamic interplay.

Research Methods

This work was an instrumental case study by design using combined case study constructivist grounded theory analytic techniques. The white belt program was selected because of the training focus on the body in order to reach participants within it who could provide insights into discovering a voice of the body for transformative learning theory. Therefore, in this section, I discussed site selection and the participant sampling strategy employed. The methods of data collection subsection accounts for the purpose and utility of each source of data employed in this study including exemplars and raw data tables.

Site selection. The Nia white belt setting is a somatic learning paradigm compared with other self-development or self-discovery-oriented commercial adult training programs. I chose the Nia white belt training in part because of the explicit focus on physical sensation, the body, and body movement wherein co-researchers experienced transformational learning through their bodies. In this way, site selection was a product of theoretic interpretation to “find examples of a theoretical construct and thereby elaborate on and examine it” (Creswell, 2007, p. 127).

All Nia white belt training materials and curriculum are streamlined through the Nia organization. At the time I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to proceed with the study, I reached out to Nia Trainers with whom I had previous experience. The Nia white belt is a highly personal experience for everyone involved, so I felt it necessary to reach out to trainers that knew me personally in order to allow me as researcher into their sacred space.

I connected with a trainer I had taken Nia class with and had audited a portion of one of her white belt trainings years prior. After explaining my research goal, she agreed to allow her white belt training to be the site of this academic study. She also agreed to support the study introduction protocol within the research timeline. I was honored and continue to be grateful for her contribution towards the success of this project.

Participant sampling strategy. The participants in this study were purposefully sought and chosen based on theoretical concepts and personal experience. Each participant missed a week away from their regular lives; each made personal investments; and all but the trainer traveled between 300 and 2500 miles outside their home state or country to learn about their body through the focus of physical sensation. The purposeful sampling method

was to leverage a variety of kinesthetically-intelligent perspectives about learning in the white belt program. I sought out individuals in a Nia white belt training whose own bodies were the site of knowing and learning by virtue of the somatic paradigm. Through methods of data collection, participants would then have the tools or be learning the tools to tell about their different somatic bodily-learning experiences.

Seeking out participants with different points of view enables the researcher to fully flesh out understanding of the topic in that setting (deMunck & Sobo, 1998, p. 51). Drawing from experience as a Nia black belt teacher and student for nearly a decade, self-identifying as a kinesthetic learner and sensitizing concepts discussed from the literature, I theorized that kinesthetic learners were attracted to learning experiences with the whole body and learning by doing. My theoretic assumption was that people who could *tell* about their body experiences would be present at Nia white belt training.

In this way, participants were “selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other sources” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). Since there are no prerequisites for the white belt training program including any prior Nia class experience, and no requirements to take Nia classes or teach Nia after completing the white belt training, the criteria for the purposeful sampling was to garner informed participants from the widest possible range of backgrounds but whose common interest was the shared experience of a body-centered approach to learning.

The intention of this study was not to promote Nia or publicize secrets of the white belt training, rather to purposely extrapolate an informed sample from the adult population conducive to discussions about transformational learning from the body based on their experiences during a body-centered adult training program.

Methods of data collection. In different ways, seven women co-created a voice of the body for transformational learning in this Nia white belt. The primary source of data was the study participants (referred to interchangeably as co-researchers and members) themselves. As such, relaying study information before they arrived in ways that were sensitive, ethical, open, and clear was a priority. Therefore, a commitment to meeting the ethical standards and IRB requirements for conducting ethical research was instrumental to gaining mutual understanding and creating comfort for making informed choices about participating in this study. In this section, I have discussed this process and provided an overview of sources of data. A discussion of each source of data and its purpose in this grounded theory case study including exemplars of ways data served the research endeavor concludes this section.

Participant Recruitment Procedures

I went to great lengths to remove any inklings of pressure or perceived coercion for white belt training registrants to participate by disclosing what the study entailed with explicit data collection details including risks and benefits, to support their own informed choice. It was important for participants to understand the time constraints with the white belt schedule. In addition, each individual was made aware of participation options and my role as an observer during the training. I was prepared because I studied conducting ethical research and actively maintained current CITI certification.

Having prior experience with the Nia white belt and the Trainer, I was able to construct a starting point. The IRB helped me consider different scenarios. In addition, a member of my dissertation committee, who is also a Nia blue belt, provided important insights about the feasibility of data collection within the time constraints of the white belt

training program. I enacted an aggressive informed consent process accentuating the volunteer nature of participating in the study and full disclosure....

Making explicit the voluntary nature and entering into the study introduction process before the training with each registrant was especially important given that the study was situated within a training program registrants were not aware of at the time they registered. Study introduction methods supported freedom to choose including deliberate discussions about data collection techniques indicated by the IRB-approved communication protocol to ensure full disclosure in advance of the training in the ethical conduct of research.

Study introduction protocol. I contacted the trainer and thoroughly reviewed the IRB-approved Human Subjects Consent Form (see Appendix C). Two weeks prior to the white belt training, the trainer e-mailed each white belt registrant according to the protocol including the following:

- An introduction using verbatim paragraph number two of the IRB-approved Human Subjects Consent Form (HSCF) (see Appendix C).
- The researcher would be the point of contact about the study, following-up within the next two days, and my personal contact information.
- A short statement indicating no personal affiliation with the study and foremost commitment to providing the white belt training; and
- A reiteration of the voluntary nature of study, and that participation was completely separate from the white belt training itself.

I was deliberate and conscientious in the execution of the IRB-approved recruitment protocols. As planned, I waited two days before I started the follow-up with each registrant

by phone and e-mail, being careful to emphasize the volunteer nature and the extra demands of their time to the extent they wished to participate (or not).

Human subjects consent process. Over a period of ten days preceding the white belt training, I followed systematic actions indicated by the trainer's introductory e-mail with each registrant. Making contact by way of telephone calls and e-mails, I (re)introduced the study; highlighted the voluntary nature and confidentiality; and presented and reviewed the HSCF. In the review process, I debriefed each section of the HSCF, asking questions to determine their understanding of the study and their participation. In the communications that ensued, I obtained agreements from five of the seven registrants by e-mail or phone who indicated participation preferences for methods of data collection. Two of the seven registrants waited to decide about participating until the first day of training.

Upon arrival to the site, I met with each participant separately as soon as possible. I repeated the review process in person: answered questions and concerns; reviewed each section of the HSCF, including the risks and benefits; discussed data collection preferences; and signed two copies insuring all parties had an original signed HSCF.

During introductions on Day 1 of training, the trainer and I reminded participants as a group about observation notes and the protective measures. In addition, I prefaced each formal data collection meeting with a brief recap of protective measures (see Appendix D). Confidentiality and protection of human subjects are explained in greater detail in the Ethical Considerations section of this chapter.

Data Sources

The research design was a grounded theory case study. The seven women who provided the data included all teachers and students enrolled in this Nia white belt training.

Because the Nia white belt training is a process of personal body learning, it was important to discuss the meticulous process of recruitment before introducing the co-researchers.

Multiple data sources included the following: (a) study introduction and human subjects consent form review process, (b) demographic survey instrument, (c) observation data, (d) six Nia class audio recordings, (e) researcher log, (f) three semi-structured focus groups, (g) nine semi-structured individual interviews, (h) documents, and (i) literature.

Most importantly, I enacted ethical conduct of research at every point in the process. The focus groups, individual interviews, and Nia classes were audio-recorded and transcribed. Member-checks were confirmed with all individual interview data transcripts. Two co-researchers provided extended interpretive member-checking. Each of these sources of data is explained detail in this section. The expanded Detailed Schedule of Data Collection is Appendix B. The Schedule of Primary Data Sources (Table 1) provides a snapshot of data collected during the study.

Table 1. Schedule of Primary Data Sources.

Data Source	Day before	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Five Weeks Post
In-Session Segments		10	15	20	16	15	23	12	
Non-formal Obs Data	30 minutes	40 minutes	70 minutes	120 minutes	60 minutes	72 minutes	35 minutes	90 minutes	
Session Obs Data		240 minutes	325 minutes	380 minutes	410 minutes	375 minutes	405 minutes	255 minutes	
*Body Moments		2	9	23	22	15	12	6	
Nia class			60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes	60 minutes		
Nia class				56 minutes	54 minutes				
Individual Interview 1	66 minutes								
Individual Interview 1	27 minutes								
Individual Interview 1			22 minutes						
Focus Group 1		50 minutes							
Focus Group 2						44 minutes			
Individual Interview 2								27 minutes	
Individual Interview 2								31 minutes	
Individual Interview 2								16 minutes	
Focus Group 3								30 minutes	
Individual Interview 3									24 minutes
Individual Interview 3									81 minutes
Individual Interview 3									31 minutes
Daily Immersion Time	123 minutes	330 minutes	477 minutes	616 minutes	584 minutes	551 minutes	500 minutes	449 minutes	136 minutes
Totals		Training Session Segments: 111			Non-formal Obs. Data: 9 hours		In-Session Obs. Data: 40 hours		

*These totals are crude accounts to convey immersion as participant and/or observer in addition to scheduled data collection sources.
Body Moments were 'something happened' flags of interpretive significance discussed or member-checked.

Demographic survey instrument. At the advisement of a committee member and approval from the IRB, I constructed a short demographic survey which was printed on plain greeting card paper tucked inside a matching envelope for professionalism and privacy. The surveys contained the following prompts:

Please complete the index cards with pencils provided. 1) First name, 2) Age, 3) Occupation/education /professional training, 4) Marital/family status, 5) Approximate income, and 6) Race/nationality/religion /political stance.

Demographic Surveys were administered during the first structured data collection point with each member. As discussed, the “How long you have been teaching or taking Nia classes” question was included and considered as demographic background information for the purposes of this study to visualize the different ways participants entered into the experience together.

Demographics of Co-Researchers (Table 2) presents a selected compilation of co-researcher demographic data (some data elements were not included at the individual level to obscure identity) using pseudonyms. However, study participants were white women with an average age of 45 years who had different ethic orientations, religious affiliations, and a range from low to high middle class income.

All co-participants were involved with observation data (OD) and on-site member-checking when feasible. For purposes of translating this information, member-checking (MC) level 1 meant I received confirmation that members reviewed interview transcripts. Member-checking level 2 meant we discussed and clarified conceptual interpretations and reviewed verbatim quotes together. In addition, Demographics of Co-Researchers (Table 2) includes a column indicating data collection forms by participant.

Table 2. Demographics of Co-Researchers.

Pseudo	Family background	Lifeworld information	Nia background	Data collection
Renee	single no children	FT business professional PT Nia teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-trainee-Nia Black Belt • Teaches 4 Nia classes/week • First Nia class 9 years ago • First Nia white belt in trainer-role 	OD; FG 3; 3 Nia classes
Ruth	divorced parent	one adult daughter retired school teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time for Nia class • First Nia training 	OD; FG 1
Dawn	LT woman partner divorced parent	3 children <10 PT educator FT business entrepreneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nia student • 1 class/week for 2 years • First Nia training 	All data collection MC 1 and 2
Julie	LT boyfriend no children	FT professional Nia Black Belt Trainer; Nia teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nia Black Belt Trainer • Trains 4 white belts/year • Teaches 4 Nia classes/week • First Nia white belt as trainer and student-trainee evaluator 	OD; FG 3; II2 & II3; 1 Nia class; MC 1
Sara	remarried no children	PT educator PT artist PT Nia teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-trainee-Nia Black Belt • Teaches 7 Nia classes/week • First Nia class 6 years ago • First Nia white belt in trainer-role 	OD; FG 3; 3 Nia classes
Bridget	LT boyfriend parent	2 children < 10 no profession indicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time for Nia class • First Nia training 	OD; All FG; II 1; MC 1
Crystal	remarried parent	2 teenage girls PT professional body healer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nia student-Nia Black Belt • 4 classes/week for 7 years • Second full Nia white belt • First Nia white belt 6 years ago 	All data collection MC 1 and 2
Elizabeth Researcher	single no children	FT student PT business professional PT time Nia teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nia Black Belt teacher • Teaches 2 classes/week • Second full Nia white belt • First Nia white belt 9 years ago 	All data collection MC 1 and 2

Observation data. In alignment with a grounded theory case study design, participant observation data served an important function to help answer descriptive research questions and to build theory (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). “Researchers should focus on observing key events or incidents, relying on experience and intuition about the flow of ongoing activity including personal reactions to events or participants in the case. The [participant observer] should register her feelings, then step back and use this experience to increase sensitivity to the experience of the others in the setting and how they respond, verbally and nonverbally” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, pp. 26-7).

For example, I asked participants about ‘*something different*’ flagged in observation data as potential ‘body moments’ for interpretive member-checking (see Appendix B). I used these potential ‘body moments’ as interpretive points for member-checking significance, including reflective dialogue prompts during private interviews. In this way, observation data “provided the researcher with a source of questions to be addressed with participants” (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 91). In an interview with Dawn, I drew on a ‘body moment’ from in-session observation data that helped us out of an abstractive rut and clarified meaning that permission did not come from outside of her:

Dawn: It's a different- still, it's still pretty abstract for me.

Elizabeth: I heard you say something about, “I wasn't allowed to move my hips like that”, and then I noticed the first thing you did when you got in front was move your hips. I don't know if you realized you did that?

Dawn: Yea. It wasn't that I wasn't allowed - I had never seen that modeled at all in, in my, the people in my life, women or men in my world, and I didn't grow up with

any kind of dance, uh, association, so, um, and it was definitely not part of the, um, culture.

The reflective conversations often led to more questions and deeper connections. This particular excerpt (re)presents one sliver of the emergent concept-category: ‘self-allowing-having permission’.

Observer perspectives. The morning before the training began, the trainer asked me to participate in the training as a white belt student including all the movement activities. I went into the field with the mutual understanding that, “Elizabeth will be attending the white belt as a fellow student but assuming the role of a neutral observer” (see Appendix C). Therefore, I needed to adjust my observation plans. To compensate, I recompiled pre-printed fieldnotes pages from my researcher log binder into a mobile spiral notebook. I was stepping into constant vacillation between participant as observer and neutral observer depending on the curricular activity or social setting. However, changing observation tactics was but a tip of the proverbial (and Jungian) iceberg. As participant and observer, my own body was now instrument of the co-lived social phenomenon.

For example, one of many ‘body moments’ availing different viewpoints as the study unfolded occurred during my first time as participant observer. While freedancing Day 1 of the Nia training, I observed the goings-on, then jotted the following observation data post-activity in my field spiral:

Julie led JOM, AGMW, Freedance. I flew @ the Ts. Bridget stood still. I dance around her. Julie gave XF CCC. Julie: Move I hate-splitz gave example. Sara taking notes. Renee joined in. Julie: I’m gonna choose to sustain sensation of joy.

From these symbols, acronyms, and jumbles, I could (re)tell the story from the perspective of a (novice) participant observer. Wolcott (2001, p. 97) suggested that I should reflect on looking for recurring patterns or underlying meanings of behavior, action or inaction and my participation; and what I am observing and recording in terms of the kind of information I would need to report, rather than what I felt I should collect.

However, my body in movement did not hear Wolcott's (2001) words of wisdom at first. In fact, after this study, I am not sure my body hears anything but lived experience. This first movement activity, I was seeing blurry bodies moving/doing/saying or not moving/not doing/not saying, rather than documenting and tracking moment-to-moment body details. Clifford Geertz (2003) explains 'thick description' in ethnographic observation data is not quantity or description per se; rather 'thick description' is more like 'penetrating discernment':

The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on its author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which [s]he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement-what manner of [wo]men are these?-to which unfamiliar acts emerging out of unknown backgrounds naturally give rise. If ethnography is thick description... the determining question for any given example of [observation data], whether a field journal squib or a Malinowski-sized monograph, is whether it sorts winks from twitches and real winks from mimicked ones (p. 156).

Later that evening during the focus group, I grasped the winks and the blinks while discussing different experiences with freedancing - and I twitched. I realized I could not be in the fullness of my movement *and* be in the fullness of penetrating discernment required of

empirical data. Therefore, I calibrated my body to sustain a student presence enough to attend to the business of ‘thick description’.

Given the case parameters and experiential curriculum design of the training, I had seven days to gather as much information as possible, so I focused on observation data to include as much in vivo (verbatim) language as possible for constant comparison. Non-formal observation data was an important secondary source of observation data to enrich achieving textual ‘thick description’, especially later during data analysis. Member-checking with observation data, I “use[d] conversations to elicit data in lieu of more formal interviews” (Guba, 1994 as cited by Kawulich, 2005) when possible, in addition to facilitating twelve formal meetings during the study.

There were many occasions when I did assume the role of neutral observer. In fact, I often took fieldnotes during activities in the background when it felt permissible. In my observation data and subsequent analysis where applicable, I utilized sketches of how bodies were situated, what they did, who wore what, what was said, what was not said, by whom and to whom, body language, dynamics, interactions, sequences of events, symbolic meanings, body moments, anecdotal moments, and teaching conversations. I used these data as a means to improve credibility of my findings.

With varied and rich sources of data, I was able to cross-reference at micro-levels; especially concerning *what* bodies did freedancing, and what was the ‘feeling’ of different concepts and *why*; in relationship to transformational learning and learning from the body with the body and body movement. For example, when Julie, the trainer, explained the placement of the chakras (energy centers in the pelvis, chest, and head), ‘something happened’ for Dawn:

Julie: (her hands in triangle just under her belly button for chakra placement.) Money issues or family member creates stress. We are first connected here. Digging in the dirt or rearranging the closet helps to ground the base. (Movement activity: sensing the pelvis - everyone finds their butterfly 'pelvic bowl' and moves in circles and bumps.)

Dawn: (her hands on top of her pelvic bone) Is this where my bone is? [Dawn continues holding her body looking surprised, amazed, and curious touching around her hip bones and lower belly.]

Combining sources of data collected in focus groups and interviews helped contextualize my bracketing strategies for observation data. Brackets in this excerpt were informed learning that Dawn had been living distant from her body, especially her pelvis, 'having traumas in my cells' from the 'programming' absorbed by her body having lived most of her life in an oppressive secondary culture. Therefore, observation data were important for enriched understanding that nearly seven years after 'making that break' from the oppressive society, 'finding my bone' was like 'being first time' during the training for Dawn. Bracketed observation data ['looking surprised'] 'finding my bone' enabled 'thick description' for meaning understanding of Dawn's body in Dawn's lifeworld and guided me to bracket [possible lifeworld manifestations in the body] for discussions with other co-researchers.

These brief excerpts provided exemplars for multiple ways that formal observation data supported co-constructing meaning in this study. Formal observation data were collected during white belt sessions. Non-formal (or informal) observation in this study meant observations in between sessions, during breaks, or other opportune times with willing co-

researchers over the course of the study. On many occasions ‘something happened’ in-session that I ‘flagged’ in observation data as potential ‘body moments’.

For example, I observed potential precursors to what might have been a ‘body moment’ when Crystal’s body ignited a ‘body moment’ flag bracketed as [*her body tightened; head looking downward*] during a session. The non-formal observation data were as follows:

[During break, I looked for Crystal outside because that’s where she loved to be. I found her in tears. I assumed it was because of what I observed in class. I asked her if we could talk about what was going on using my spiral, she said, “Yes.” Her tears were about recognizing a sensation from her heart chakra.] Crystal: The sensation was different. I’m aware of my heart energy towards everybody and have recognized developing love energy. I notice I was picking up on my husband’s energy. To be able to notice someone’s heart energy different than mine getting connected to mine.

Crystal described her experience as a sensation-based realization, which was an inroad to tracking her body-based transformational learning experiences that co-shaped the conceptualization of a voice of the body. In addition, my [bracketing] strategy in observation data was tied-in with lifeworld stories unfolding from other sources of data. In turn, I [bracketed] my own ‘body moments’ of significance. I noted reflective judgments, opinions, reflections on and about my own feeling, body sensations, personal reactions, insights, and interpretive meanings or potential connections to emerging themes as they unfolded during the training.

After the first day’s freedancing experience, I experimented with a different method of collecting data. Because each participant was aware my role included jotting fieldnotes, I

sensed and was granted acceptance from the group. Therefore, I took fieldnotes in action and made quick jots immediately after an activity, so that I could draw on what happened later with others. I managed to get enough on paper to reconstruct the experience sequentially and meaningfully; filling-in gaps with co-researchers. Although this was a seven day exploratory study, keeping a reflexive eye on the perspective dynamics within the immediate social structure –observation data related to roles and multiple case systems - was a diligent practice.

However, as I mentioned in the role discussion, I did not attempt to convey every detail about what occurred during the training in this dissertation, only the most salient for the research aim. However, I leveraged observation data to support and detail body experiences with co-researchers and stimulate conversation in other methods of data collection.

To note, given the experiential curriculum design of the training, Julie’s request that I act as participant and observer seemed to alleviate some sensitivity first-time white belt students described as ‘feeling watched’. In this white belt, three individuals, both student-trainees and I, were writing nearly constantly for different reasons during the training sessions. Three of eight women (then seven, starting Day 4) writing during session was especially conspicuous since only a handful of the learning sessions included writing or drawing.

Personal reflexivity. As a fellow participant in a researcher-role, I monitored the conciseness and neutrality of my comments during group check-ins. Reflexivity was a practice when I observed my own ‘body moments’ in the learning sessions. I jotted my own [moments] in my spiral and carefully considered them along with co-researcher data in

deliberately sensitive ways. Participating in movement activities afforded a more inclusive membership as a fellow student and acceptance of my note-taking. Being a part of the white belt student group during learning sessions created opportunities for natural conversations in the moment, leading to deeper discovery about learning experiences and the body.

Nia classes. Seven Nia classes, approximately 60 minutes each, were incorporated into this training. However, only six Nia classes were audio-recorded. I learned another valuable field lesson from this experience: always have extra batteries on hand. At the last moment, the batteries in my audio recording device were needed for the wireless microphone during the first Nia class of training on Day 2. Therefore, six Nia classes conducted by the teachers were audio-recorded during the intensive.

The metaphors and cues Nia instructors uttered in classes encouraged specific body movements. In addition, the ‘focus’ and ‘intent’ as exemplified in the case background for the white belt itself was: Focus: Physical sensation | Intent: To embody the foundation of Nia (The Nia Technique, 2013). In a similar fashion, the focus and intent was determined for each Nia class during the training that connected different body movements with the different body-based principles we were practicing. As participant and observer in these classes, transcribed audio recordings served as an important source of interpretive data which provided context for exploring ways ‘body moments’ occurred during Nia classes in the white belt.

Nia class transcripts provided comparative sources for in-depth analysis of sensory connections with Nia teacher ‘messaging’, ‘teacher wording’, and so forth. In addition, ‘having a focus’ and ‘being intentional’ were personally meaningful in different ways co-researchers experienced themselves, others, and their lifeworld.

Co-researchers appraised experiences of teacher cues, focus, intent, and moving in Nia classes in the study. Nia Classes as Sources of Data (Table 3) provides a key snippet from the six Nia classes as sources of data in this training.

Table 3. Nia Classes as Sources of Data.

Nia Class-Teacher	Focus	Intent
Day 3-Renee	Base of the body	To sense stability and mobility
Day 3-Sara	Steps, stances, and kicks	To heal our bodies
Day 4-Sara	Core of the body	To find the joy in the 52 moves
Day 4-Renee	Core of the body	To move, strengthen, support the core
Day 5-Trainer	Upper extremities of body	Creative arm, hands, and fingers
Day 6-Sara/Renee	Body anatomy	To sense life and energy from inside

For example, Nia classes as sources of data helped to contextualize and conceptualize Bridget’s body moment which she discussed in a focus group:

Bridget: Mine was doing something with my arms. I don’t recall what they’re called. But I was bringing my arms in and out, in and out, and I went to go put my arms down by my side and they like just started floating up. And to be honest, that was like the best feeling that I’ve had.

Elizabeth: What about that in particular was meaningful for you?

Bridget: I felt... I didn’t feel the tense, the stress. I felt very eased, relaxed.

Temporarily, but I did. [smiles, sits back against the couch]

Reviewing Julie’s Nia class transcripts, I pulled the points from class that I noticed may have contributed to ‘something happened’ for Bridget and synthesized a deeper understanding. ‘Feeling very eased’; ‘floating my arms’, and so forth, was part of Bridget’s

personal transformative keystone. Julie’s Nia Class Movement Cue Excerpt (Table 4) provided enrichment and ‘thick description’ for honing Bridget’s physical transformative learning moment.

Table 4. *Nia Class Movement Cue Excerpt.*

Sanjana Nia Routine (2013b, The Nia Technique) Excerpt - Julie

- Elbows help so you can float the space
- Up, Up, Up, Up, Up
- Everybody relax those arms and look, look...
- What you’re gonna do is bring the other hand a little bit out of the vision
- So really conditioning right here: Up, Up
- Yeah, just let those arms purposely dangle...
- Let the arms express
- (audible breath)...mmmmm
- float through the space
- Hands, be aware of your hand and what you’re doing...
- give or receive if you want
- Both hands, both palms, both hands
- (growl sound) and out
- Breathe, express, breathe, express...
- Now your whole self, relaxed shoulders...

This exemplar demonstrated one way that six Nia class transcripts as sources and cross-sources of data served in-depth interpretations that included ‘messaging’, cuing, other spoken ‘words’, sounding, tonal and audible breathing cues, the cadence and sounds of class participation, the music, and movements for in-depth ‘thick description’ of body-based transformational learning experiences in this study.

Researcher log. The researcher log was a source of data that provided a flexible organizational structure for collection and interpretive analysis of the unfolding data in the

study. It contained all field documents and transcribed recordings obtained in connection with this study which allowed me to “assemble the units...” and document a clear audit trail (LeCompte, 2000, p. 148). “Tidying up” (Romagnano, 1991 as cited by LeCompte, 2000, p. 148) was central to the steps involved with in-depth data analysis from multiple sources of data, discussed later in this chapter. I utilized an adapted version of Margaret LeCompte’s (2000) suggestions for the researcher log as a source of practical expertise which contained the following:

- Copies of all handwritten field jottings, sketches, doodles, diagrams and observation notes
- Catalog of computer-stored reflective/reflexive and thematic memos
- Print-outs of all transcribed recorded data in chronological order
- Catalog of computer-stored transcribed data by data type, research question, conceptual ‘theoretical’ category, pseudonym, and chronology including an inventory of multiple 3-ring binders used in paper-based textual analysis
- De-identified copy of the Nia white belt schedule (see Appendix B)
- Copies of all research questions by data collection type (see Appendix E and F)
- Catalog of extant literature reviewed in analysis (see References)
- Coded interviews and focus groups (see Appendix G)
- All IRB-approved study documentation and dissertation committee guidelines
- Print outs of NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010) thematic sorting of open-coded data from individual interviews and focus groups
- Catalog of all sources of data manually-coded data in Microsoft Word and/or Excel (see Appendix H)

- Analytic memos containing short quotes/phrases of raw data in the memo (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 121)

Using the researcher log as a source of ideation prompted reflexive memoing, promoted study integrity, and accounted for evidence of personal bias (Glesne, 2006, p. 52). During the training itself, there was limited time for formal memoing or in-depth analysis. Therefore, initial memoing and conceptual compositions were informal and based on initial impressions and spontaneous member-checks from immersion in a multi-layered and intensive period of data collection. The researcher log was an invaluable source of information that enabled me to go back to the data after some time had passed in order to conduct a formal, thorough analysis.

Semi-structured focus groups. Congruent with a semi-constructivist approach and the chosen methodology, three semi-structured focus groups were conducted with different co-researchers during the Nia white belt training to explore different ways they discussed transformational learning and the body. Focus groups as a source of data directly encouraged social engagement in reflection and discussion of open-ended questions and revealed differing opinions and points of view (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 114) about the body and transformational learning.

The central research question: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning? was explored from four research question topics about transformational learning and the body in focus groups (see Appendix E). The discussion topic areas and number of open-ended interview questions they represented were:

- Learning and Nia training (6)
- Learning preference (4)

- Learning and the Body (7)
- Transformational learning (3)

The four question topics introduced in Chapter one were developed into conversations to explore the *how* and *why* transformational learning experiences occurred through the body in the study. In addition, focus groups as a source of data illuminated interaction observation and thematic data, as well as provided a supportive means to engage in sometimes critical reflection within a safe environment.

Focus group participants fleshed-out their experiences from key events in the white belt learning environment. Discussing learning preferences brought to light connections with transformational learning and the body including articulating tacit experiences of the learning body. Discussions about the manner in which each participant had come to experience themselves as different from their body experiences in Nia expanded understanding and perspectives about how transformation and the body was perceived between co-researchers in focus groups in different contexts.

In addition, the interactions between very diverse co-researchers produced an intricate web of sense-makings in the ways co-researchers talked about the same issue (Markova, Linnell & Grossen, 2007 as cited by Belzile & Oberg, 2012, p. 462). The focus groups as a source of data provided a shared forum from which all participants were experts of their own world rather than differing-leveled experts of white belt. Co-participants gained greater insight into our own worlds engaging in dialogic focus groups.

Repeating variations of these four question-types with participants at different points in the study illuminated “changes in reflection and the quality of the reflection” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 220). Using the accessible word ‘learning’ in the questions encouraged

investigating the participants' differences as they described personal meaning and their learning experiences within the context of the Nia training, the Nia experience, and their own bodies (see Appendix E). Furthermore focus group (and individual interview) question areas specifically encouraged a biological/physiological realm of discourse to produce explanations that involve meaning in the social realm (Farnell, 1999, p. 360).

Data collection protocols helped to set an intentional tone of trust by asking focus group participants to maintain the privacy of the conversation to those present in the room (see Appendix D). I followed this request by promoting a unanimous "I" as an indication of our agreement to confidentiality. At the beginning of all focus groups (and individual interviews), I asked members to be the experts to provide clarity and meaning, and to view me as researcher-inquirer. Before we started, I reminded members about pseudonyms and that verbatim excerpts may be utilized in the final write-up. I reminded them we were being recorded. I announced when I pressed record and when I turned it off. I placed the audio-recording device where it was clearly visible. I did these things for ethical concern and to increase the sense of being held together in a private world to encourage a space of honest sharing, dialogue, and (sometimes critical) reflection.

The Demographics of Co-Researchers (Table 2) at the beginning of this section conveys various approaches used in focus groups and the duration of each meeting which exceeded the expected thirty minutes except for focus group three. The first focus group met at the end of Day 1 (FG1) at a nearby large and private rental home; the second was during lunch on Day 5 (FG2) at the same rental home; and the last (FG3) convened at lunch on Day 7 at the training studio location.

The off-site focus group meetings with members of the white belt student group were especially open. Being safe in the focus groups cultivated porousness for probing into meaning-making transparency, and encouraged articulating bodily learning experiences and meaning-making processes.

The trainer and student-trainees did not attend FG1 or FG2 because of their learning agenda during the white belt. Focus group three was offered on the last day of training during an optional potluck lunch in the studio. All members of the training including the teachers were able to attend this gathering since their practice-training was complete. .

Semi-structured interviews. Following a semi-constructivist approach appropriate for this grounded theory case study, nine semi-structured, open-ended interviews total were conducted at the beginning of the training, the last day of training, and five weeks post-training. Individual interviews provided tremendous flexibility for actively engaging in a form of ‘theoretical sampling’, a forthcoming topic in the analysis section.

Semi-structured individual interviews as sources of data enabled a collaborative process that identified key events and activities from observation including perspectives and meaning-making in consideration of a voice of the body in transformational learning theory. The central research question: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning? was explored from four research question topics about transformational learning and the body in private individual interviews (see Appendix F). The discussion topic areas and number of open-ended interview questions they represented were:

- Learning and Nia training (9)
- Learning preference (2)

- Learning and the Body (5)
- Transformational learning (5)

Semi-structured individual interviews were similar in form and purpose as previously discussed in the focus group section, so I describe how they were unique as sources of data. During interview meetings, my intention was to be reflexive and flexible in the ways meaning was constructed between two people. Asking for meaning-making transparency encouraged critical reflection and in-depth exploration of personal experiences with co-researchers. Often in our conversations we would reach the wonder of *I never thought of it like that* in our journey towards understanding and co-constructing personal meaning.

The interview was a means of establishing *mutual understanding* about perspectives and experiences from curiosity with care, respect, and interactive dialogue, rather than an end to ratify opinions. I did not personally agree with some of the viewpoints, yet the quality of personal subjectivity was valid and true, adding to the richness of a voice of the body. Divergent viewpoints were *invaluable* sources of data. I did not attempt to modify them. Instead, I encouraged articulation and expansion of them.

The purpose was to understand meaning-making, ask clarifying questions from other sources of data, and value the differences. I probed when I noticed inconsistency in word and deed, when I did not understand, when we branched out into another topic, and when I noticed viewpoints changing from one conversation to the next from the same individual. However, I engaged in problem-solving with one member during the last part of a post-interview that I did not code into the data.

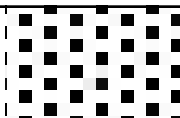
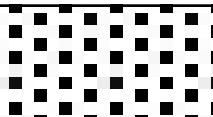

Each interview was conducted with the protective protocols and privacy measures in the same manner explained in the focus group section which enabled comfort, intimacy, and

openness for exploring questions and comments between us in the co-creation of meanings in our meetings (see Appendix D). Additionally, two of the members were involved in extended member-checking the interpretations of findings.

Flexibility for member participation preferences and the Nia training schedule meant that Julie entered into the interviews and focus group the last day of training. Table 5 - Semi-Structured Interviews as Sources of Data at the end of this section presents the duration of the interviews, the locations, and the co-researchers involved. Individual Interviews occurred temporally. Interview 1 (II1) was within the first 24 hours of training; Interview 2 (II2) was on the last day of training; and Interview 3 (II3) was on the first Monday five weeks post-training.

Locations for the private interviews were held at the training studio itself, at a private home, or by way of audio-recorded telephone call. The telephone call interviews five weeks after training did not pose a barrier because we had developed strong rapport. The interviews were scheduled for fifteen minutes but sometimes went much longer than anticipated, depending on participants' schedules and focus of discussion.

Table 5. *Semi-Structured Interviews as Sources of Data.*

Co-Researcher	Interview 1	Interview 2	Post-Interview
Bridget	22 minutes Studio		
Dawn	66 minutes Private Home	31 minutes Studio	81 minutes Phone
Crystal	27 minutes Private Home	16 minutes Private Home	24 minutes Private Home
Julie		27 minutes Studio	31 minutes Phone

Documents as sources of data. In alignment with methodological approaches, ‘artifacts’ or documents were an important primary data source. The literal document that was the Nia white belt schedule contained the learning curriculum, times, and durations for specific events during the white belt training. The white belt schedule conveyed bodily situatedness for the placement and engagement of bodies at concise times in concise ways; particularly salient for the three-stage group meditation process in this study for different reasons.

The schedule was a mechanism of expectancy for particular bodily action, loaded with a range of personal meanings and experiences. The schedule was also instrumental for tracking our curricular progress as the trainer did not reveal to the group who in the teacher system would be presenting what portion of which principle at any given moment, including the student-trainees.

In addition, the Nia white belt schedule itself was a grounding practice that had many different meanings for members of this study. The group agreement to its entailments occurred on Day 1 of training when it was presented to participants by Julie. My observation data about its presentation were as follows:

*Julie: (Julie hands out schedules, anchored herself on my hip reaching for Ruth.)
Schedule is Allies for you. Notice long lunch, don't want you falling behind. I promise to give you breaks. Clearing space at the time it says. Need full participation around time. Utilize the schedule to answer questions. Promise to be on time. I need an agreement from us. I hear, I understand, I agree, I'm in and three claps. It lets me know you understand. (Class follows in unison.)*

The actual white belt schedule is not in this dissertation report to preserve confidentiality and honor copyrights. However, its implementation was a meaning-making hotbed during the training. In addition, observation data, grounded in emerging themes, were developed from its different enactments. Therefore, The Detailed Schedule of Data Collection (see Appendix B) (re)presents a co-constructed curriculum, or emergent ‘white belt schedule’, as multiple mini-segments marked by specific learning activities and co-constructed ‘body moments’. In addition, it accounts for other observation data outside the white belt schedule, color-coded by data collection type.

Literature as a source of data. As discussed in the overview to grounded theory, literature as a source of data informed the development of the research questions, set the tone with the literature review in Chapter Two, and provided the theoretical frameworks for the qualitative inquiry design and analytic execution. Most importantly, the research aim was to explore in situ transformational learning by design wherein the focus of the study was to explore ways co-researchers experienced transformational learning in their bodies.

I visited extant literature once analysis reached a point of ‘reduced returns’ (Charmaz, 2006) and theoretic concepts ‘saturated’ (see Appendix H). “Theoretical saturation is reached when diminishing returns from each new analysis mean that no new themes, categories or relationships are emerging” (Gasson, 2003, p. 84). However, Ian Dey (1999), in his book *Grounding Grounded Theory*, offers alternative views about saturation and sampling in grounded theory:

The term ‘saturation’...implies that data sources have been systematically exhausted. It may be more appropriate to refer to category ‘sufficiency’...refer[ring] to the stage at which categories seem to cope adequately without continual extensions and

modifications (p. 117)...The real concern [with theoretical sampling] is not with the amount of data being collected so much as the quality (p.118).

Subsequently, I utilized extant literature as a comparative source of data whereupon I integrated conceptual findings “theorizing within the work with other theories to show how the work goes beyond, or added to what is already known” (Stern, 2007, p. 114). For example, current transformational learning literature about other ways of knowing (Berger, 2004; Cranton, 2009; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton 2006; Hoggan et al., 2009; Yorks & Kasl, 2002, 2006) had congruity with emergent processes members engaged in learning by experiences of the body.

Other emergent theoretic concepts guided me to seek cross-disciplinary extant literature as a source of data after completing the analysis for integration into the presentation of the findings. In grounded theory case development, the literature provided theoretical constructs and categories the properties of which were used to organize the data and discover new connections between theory and phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 46). Extant literature subsidized the intensive data analysis process presented in Chapter Four; highlighted key transformative learning theory concepts discussed in the presentation of Findings Chapter; and bolstered the development of theoretic propositions contained in the Discussion Chapter.

Using literature as a source of data, I applied an inductive-deductive-synthesis (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2003) approach in the final stages of data analysis. This means that I literally went back and forth between comparing conceptual findings in different ways (inductive) with cross-disciplinary extant literature (deductive) to integrate and present findings (an iterative synthesis of inductive-deductive cycling) in alignment with the research

aim. In summary, the purpose of literature as a source of data according to Strauss & Corbin (1990) was multifold:

- Stimulated theoretical sensitivity
- Provided another source of data [adding to rigor]
- Stimulated questions
- Directed theoretical sampling [with concepts grounded in the data]
- Provided supplementary ‘validity’ (as cited by McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 336).

In addition, I used this ‘synthesis approach’ (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2003) to extrapolate and interpret specific precursors and conditions, illuminate conceptual relationships, and blend components of a rudimentary synthesis towards a more unified theory of transformative learning with the emergent findings in this study. Grounded theory methods provided utility in congruence with the proposed inquiry to consider the meaning of a voice of the body emerging from Nia white belt participants in this study.

Site of Study Description

In the next section, I have described the site of study and provided a brief overview of key components of the learning curriculum for the Nia white belt training (see Appendix B) including explaining the process of gaining access to the site. I preface this section with the disclaimer that details that could provide information about study participant identity is deliberately omitted from this report.

The training studio was a private 400-square foot dance space with wood floors, private changing rooms, and restrooms. There was a high-powered, vibrant sound system and multi-media projector with a large screen. There were more cushions than were used for floor

seating, and each of us were provided with a white belt manual (198 pages) and the white belt schedule.

All participants stayed at accommodations within walking distance of the studio and nearby eateries. The first-time white belts shared accommodations, I shared accommodations with the other black belt auditor, and the student-trainees and trainer stayed in adjacent housing.

The white belt training started at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon and ended the following Friday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. The training including 40 hours of in-studio lecture combined with movement and learning activities, movement practice, daily group meditation and check-in, and seven Nia classes. Day 1 was four hours, the next five consecutive days were 10-12 hours, and Day 7 was seven hours. Between Day 2 and Day 6 we had one to two Nia classes per day. The trainer taught two Nia classes and the student-trainees taught five Nia classes between them. According to the printed white belt schedule, the trainer led twelve of the white belt learning sessions and the student-trainees led ten of the white belt learning sessions between the two of them. Key notes particular for this white belt training:

- For the first time, the trainer was required to assess two student-trainees teaching nearly half of her white belt sessions and all but two of her Nia classes during her white belt training.
- This was the first time that both student-trainees had ever presented any white belt material in a trainer role.
- White belt students did not know student-trainees would be single-handedly delivering training.
- One first-time white belt student dropped out after Day 3.

- The ratio of black belts to first-time white belts was 5:3 then 5:2 out of the women enrolled in this particular training (including researcher as black belt auditing student-participant).

White belt training curriculum. The white belt training was a somatic paradigm of experiential learning about the theory and practice of mind-body concepts, anatomy, music, and movement. The curriculum was centered around ‘embodying Nia’ and the thirteen principles discussed in the Review of the Literature Chapter. Appendix B details key learning components including the duration, units of observation, and the respective teacher-presenter. Learning components included:

- Four learning allies, likened to Don Miguel Ruiz’ (1997) *Four Agreements*
- Three-step daily group meditation process arriving at the studio in the morning and returning back from lunch was:
 - Step one: first-time white belt students rang the studio bell announcing “X minutes until group meditation” at given time intervals such that the entire white belt student group would enter step two in a seated circle at precise times per the training schedule.
 - Step two: the entire white belt student group participated in silent sitting meditation for different durations until the trainer broke the silence.
 - Step three: the trainer and student trainees joined in the seated circle after the trainer posed a question for self-reflection.
- Thirteen White Belt principles containing proprietary somatic philosophy (Rosas & Rosas, 2004)
- Practice of the 52 moves of Nia dance (Rosas & Rosas, 2004)

- Freedance: dancing or moving the body without instruction (Rosas & Rosas, 2004)
- The five stages of developmental anatomy (Rosas & Rosas, 2004)
- Seven Nia classes

Gaining access. Gaining access was a series of revisions, permissions, processes, and procedures. In preparation I worked with the Institutional Review Board to incorporate post-proposal hearing feedback from my committee and obtained final study approval. Then, I obtained approval of the Human Subjects Consent Form (see Appendix C). I requested and obtained written permission from The Nia Technique President to conduct an academic study at this specific certified Nia white belt training event. In addition, I requested and obtained written permission from the trainer to conduct an academic study during her Nia white belt training; and requested and obtained written permission from a representative of the facility in which the training was held for the academic study during the time of the white belt training.

Ethical Considerations

In this section, I have discussed and disclosed the ethical management of field considerations; ethical disclaimers, concerns and considerations enacted in this thesis report; the protection of human subjects; and confidentiality measures I took over the course of conducting this research. Posteriori vulnerability means ethical issues arising in the field when conducting research (Tisdale, 2004, p. 26). In this study I had the opportunity for ethically sensitive considerations conducting research in the field. Some of the issues that I attended to included:

- Appropriate timing and place to conduct focus groups and interviews within a very condensed schedule in order to reduce time pressures for the individuals involved

- Respectfully honoring the decision of one member to discontinue participation in individual interviews because of her need for self-care
- Sensitivity for the two student-trainees as first-time teachers and their pressures to perform well in their practicum
- Sensitivity for the trainer who had added responsibility given a dual teaching agenda as mentor and assessor for the first time for two student-trainees *and* overseeing the white belt training program
- Sensitivity to having different roles as researcher and participant-observer in support of the first-time white belts' learning experiences at the request of the trainer
- Sensitivity to the fact that three, then two first-time white belt students were in a training with five black belts which created a sense of overwhelm for the first-time white belt students
- Sensitivity to the reflexive process such that analytic memos are provided upon request of my dissertation committee and not explicitly included in this report
- Sensitivity to the fact that the trainer and student-trainees were affiliated with the Nia Technique, Inc. organization and whose participation in the study was implicitly professionally bounded

In addition The Nia Technique, Inc. organization President generously extended permission when requested to conduct this research at a certified White belt training with copyright caveats to proprietary material and neither party advertised or sponsored this study. The trainer, who generously granted permission and made it possible to conduct the study at her location, made explicit her non-affiliation with the study in the recruitment process. At

the same time, participants entrusted me to provide interpretive accounts of their key experiences.

Disclaimer. This study neither represents nor attempts to represent, advertise, or make any claim to a business sponsorship from The Nia Technique Inc. organization. The data that emerged from this particular white belt training are unique for the women involved such that the findings are not generalizable to other white belt trainings, as the aim of this study was not to theorize about the white belt training itself, but to develop ‘theoretic’ understanding about transformational learning and the body in the somatic, experiential setting of a Nia white belt training. In addition, careful attention was paid to protect trade secrets and respect copyrights. Nia material that is discussed in this study was properly cited as belonging to the Nia Technique, Inc. and information about the particular training was privatized with great care.

Therefore, this work was regarded with gratitude, moral and ethical duty, respect, personal reflexivity, integrity, and sensitivity. The aim of the study was focused on transformational learning and the body in order to consider a voice of the body in scholarship and plant seeds from which further research may be conducted. “It is a delicate balancing act - enabling participants’ accounts to retain a degree of visibility in the text so that the reader can make a connection between analytical findings and the data from which they were derived” (Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 10). However, I referred to transformational learning theory explicitly in the Findings Chapter along with the data that emerged. I expanded ‘theoretic’ exploration of key findings from the emergent inductive conceptual model with cross-disciplinary literature in the Discussion chapter in order to conjoin perspectives with additional literature supports.

Protection of human subjects. I regarded the protection of human subjects seriously including removing any indication of the location of the white belt, the time of year, exact dates, or other identifying clues about this particular training. There are nearly a hundred white belt trainings or more per year. The exact identity of participants is known (or could be known) only by the President of the Nia organization (who graciously provided permission for me to conduct this study), the participants in this study, my dissertation committee members, and select members of the IRB who approved the study.

I assigned pseudonyms immediately in the field, but because participants came to know their pseudonyms and saw them again in member-checks, I employed a double-pseudonym approach for my final dissertation manuscript. Consequently, I purposely did not disclose exact age, nationality/ethnicity/religion, political stance, or income about participants in this study. In addition, all handwritten observation notes and audio recordings were transcribed by pseudonym. Once these data were transcribed, I used File Assassin (a software designed for deep data removal) and deleted all original recordings from the media card, pen drive, my computer, and external backup drive. My code sheet to track identifying information was shredded along with the demographic survey instrument.

Confidentiality. I privatized and obscured names and location, but I cannot vouch to complete anonymity. That means that although double-pseudonyms were used, obscurity employed, and raw data destroyed, total anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the social webs in which we live. In addition, participants were not bound by a scholarly review board to preserve confidences and identities of what was said by others in focus groups, during the training sessions, or who was there. Certainly when members read this dissertation, they will see themselves and recognize the people with whom they were with. In

reflection, the study introduction protocol with full disclosure and informed consent process seemed to be an effective means such that five of the seven participants chose to alter ways of participation over the course of study for different reasons. To note, the participant who dropped the training at the end of Day 3 did so for personal reasons unrelated to this study.

Rigor

In order to explore ways the human body experienced transformational learning and co-construct a ‘voice of the body’ to describe and understand those experiences in this Nia white belt training program, it was important to have a qualitative methodology that would enable the exploration of existing theory to embark on this exploratory, scientific journey in a setting conducive to this endeavor. Exacting this semi-constructivist framework for qualitative research practice was an enactment of rigor itself. Therefore, the utility of instrumental case design enabled me to locate the Nia white belt training, a place I had been before with different people at other times, in order to set parameters and context from which to co-explore how the phenomenon of transformational learning and the body was going to emerge.

Constructivist grounded theory methodology provided a framework that enabled me to participate in a study that I was passionate about and undertake the investigation in a meticulous way that matched my thinking style. It enabled me to track and account for my bias, and forced me to conduct inductive analysis from the data that emerged using the rigorous analytic approach discussed in this chapter with exemplars from the analysis process. In addition, I provided examples of other studies that employed an implicit constructivist grounded theory case design in the methodology section, and found that this

approach is useful with in situ theory embedded in the research question and complimentary with a semi-constructivist paradigm.

Systematic departures from traditional grounded theory analysis include a single-site, small sample of seven women with different participation styles, and time passage between a surge of initial data collection and in-depth analysis. Although I employed efforts to mitigate theoretical saturation issues related to constructivist grounded theory methodology, this project may be well received as a pilot study.

In summary, qualitative measures of rigor employed included:

- In-depth coding and recoding of multiple data sources (focus groups, interviews, observation data, and memos)
- theoretically bounded-system constant comparison techniques (four participant-type concepts)
- within case and cross case comparisons in data analysis
- focused questions of analysis to guide theoretic concept saturation
- on-site co-researcher constant comparison techniques
- seven step in-depth inductive iterative data analysis process
- analytic transparency
- memos (reflexive, thematic-categorical, and analytic)
- interpretive peer-checking of coded-data from interviews and focus groups
- level one member-checking of individual interview transcripts with all members
- level two extended member-checking with two members

In brief, member-checking of the data collected builds confirmability and addresses credibility relating to issues of trustworthiness. The short duration of the data collection

period itself does not equate to less immersion, but may lend to issues of credibility. Despite a sample of seven, the multiple sources of data contain “a range of different realities with depiction of their associated concerns, issues, and underlying values” (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392) demonstrated by the sources and methods of data collection described herein.

Although this study did not seek contextual generalizability, the Findings and Discussion Chapters offer theoretic plausibility for considering a voice of the body, a somatic perspective, as complementing an expanded horizon for adult transformative learning theory. Finally, “any conclusions, developed through grounded theory are suggestive, incomplete, and inconclusive” (Charmaz, 2005 as cited by Creswell, 2007, p. 66). However, my aim was to present interpretive ‘theoretic’ findings in a way that compels further research and continued consideration of a voice of the body for transformational learning theory.

In the Data Analysis Process Chapter that follows, I explained various analytic processes involved in carrying out the steps of data analysis employing constructivist grounded theory techniques including exemplars from the data for analytic transparency. In addition, I provided analytic transparency into different processes employed in analytic refinement of the data. These processes include excerpts from the data, implications, and outcomes employing study-imposed data collection methods outside the scope of the naturalistic setting. The next chapter provides a general outline of the steps of data analysis and thorough semi-constructivist processes indicated for rigorous analytic execution of the data collected in this particular study.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis Process

Overview

This chapter reveals the detailed data analysis involved with constructivist grounded theory in this project. The scrupulous steps of data analysis, procedures, and analytic processes enacted in the ultimate aim to generate rudimentary grounded theory with existing theory were indicated to consider a voice of the body in transformative learning theory. To begin, I enumerated the research methods employed as an extension of the Research Design Chapter. In addition, I described the utility and potential implications employing critical reflection and dialogue in methods of data collection.

Constructivist grounded theory considers data as reconstructions of experience, not the original experience itself (Charmaz, 2000, p. 514). However, understanding in-depth meanings of transformative learning experiences from the physical realm with co-researchers in the training program required engaging critical reflection and dialogue during the study. Collecting solid data and generating satisfactory constructs provided trustworthy building blocks for analytic processing. Therefore, this chapter includes excerpts from the data analysis processes to improve analytic transparency, credibility and rigor. In addition, I expounded upon study-imposed methods of data collection, analytic and research processes, implications and utility carrying out this work.

Employing grounded theory techniques was a messy and sometimes a jerky concurrent, iterative, and integrative process. Therefore parts of it are difficult to document in a way that fully conveys the complexity, abstract nature, and inductive-deductive entailments. Although the steps of data analysis are documented as if a linear procedure, data analysis was not a linear procedure. In addition, given the combined approach with

instrumental case study, alternative processes of theoretical sampling for methodological congruence are reviewed. Furthermore, the steps of data analysis outlined in my original thesis proposal was insufficient to provide the kind of transparency required to explain this process, as the analysis process itself was also part of the findings.

The findings emerged from a rigorous and detailed process, including one I refer to as ‘building with deconstruction’ demarcating a stalemate of false starts; then using those initial findings to reformulate higher-ordered analysis. In the case study overview, I described utilizing opportunities to present case background where appropriate because the context of the Nia white belt story is rich, yet the write-up is interpretive. Therefore, exemplars from the data are modeled throughout this chapter that guided important analytic determinations where appropriate and concise.

Data Management

Data management was the operationalization of the researcher log as a source of data along with other data management strategies that supported the analysis process. The magnitude of paper matter led me to develop an organized computer folder library with dated file nomenclature that allowed me to track versions of coding, memos, categories, and analytic writing throughout analytical development. In addition, I kept several running documents by emergent concept where I copy/pasted chunks of text. These ‘writing scratch’ documents served to control paper matter and store moving insights, fire memos, and recover segments of emergent data.

I also used sticky notes and poster boards to sort codes and categories as to visually arrange and re-arrange patterns and connections in data. “Integration is probably the most difficult part of doing analysis because it requires sifting and sorting through all the memos

and looking for clues on how all categories might fit together. “Rereading memos, creating the story line, doing diagrams and just plain thinking are all techniques that analyst can use to help them arrive at final integration” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 274). Mapping with color-coded sticky notes enabled me to manage a multitude of connected data fragments that provided a flexible means of reviewing data differently.

Steps of Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an interactive, cyclical journey of classifying, coding and interpreting processes, actions or interactions which captures detailed descriptions of the particular cases to deconstruct and reconstruct emerging theoretical concepts from the raw data (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of this study was to explore ways the human body experienced transformational learning using four research topic areas as a means to guide co-exploration generation of a rudimentary theory. The instrumental case was the Nia white belt training and experiences of seven women who participated in the study.

Questions of Analysis

More weight was given to co-researchers who contributed to all data sources because their meanings were in all data sources. However, all data sources (focus groups, interviews, observation data, and memos) were coded and included regardless of the level of participation. The four research topic areas served the basis for the questions of analysis:

- What sort of learning experiences do members have within the context of the Nia training?
- How do members’ learning preferences influence their Nia experiences?
- How do members engage the body in learning?

- How do members experience transformational learning from their Nia experiences?

These guiding questions shepherded the analytic process for the development of emerging codes into theoretic concepts. Each question of analysis was seeded to explore the wider question with members in the Nia white belt training: In what ways does the human body experience transformational learning? in four supporting research topic areas: (a) learning and the Nia training, (b) learning preferences, (c) learning and the body, and (d) Nia and transformational learning.

I followed constructivist grounded theory steps of data analysis but I did not apply these steps in a linear fashion except for open-coding and line-by-line coding of emerging data indicated in step one and step two. Steps one and two overlapped because the three focus groups and nine interviews were initially open-coded in NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010). At the same time, observation notes were transcribed and coded, followed by a manual recoding of all focus groups, interviews, observation notes; including memos as they emerged in the process. Given the granularity and cyclical work involved in this process, these steps account for the overall process of working with the data, but were not employed in a linear way:

1. Open coding – Each individual interview and focus group transcript was open-coded using NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010) software. Peer-checking of initial coding was completed by a qualitative data consultant.
2. Line-by-Line open coding – All focus groups, interviews, and observation notes were recoded line by line into Word. The Nia class transcripts were transcribed into Excel.

3. Focused coding – As Charmaz (2006) suggests, I selected and sorted codes based on tacit assumptions, explicating actions and meanings, and compared data with data into initial emerging categories. Focused codes connected with the questions of analysis.
4. Thematic memos – I composed descriptive memos about emerging categories, making connections about categories and sub-categories (sub-categories were different versions of or closely associated with key categories enacted in different ways with closely related meanings). I identified thematic categories and concepts (iterative with steps 2-5) and compared them within and between key categories arranging them in different ways by the contexts, actions, and consequences for co-researchers (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 80-81).
5. Memo sorting as sticky note concept mapping – Color-coded sticky notes meant different categories and sub-categories; poster boards meant potential emerging concepts; and sticky-note placement provided a means for memo-sorting using different visual arrangements.
6. Memos – An integrated analysis of earlier thematic memos with ideas emerging from different displays of concept mapping which focused on delving into underlying processes. Advanced analytic memos were mature cross-sections of intensive data analysis that supported the development of core categories into concepts. The process of memoing was iterative with all of the steps. The most significant categories became action-based concepts of the theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 186).

7. Integration – The fine-tuned integration process of core concepts into theoretical concepts included: (a) developing conceptualization tables, (b) constructing an analytic visual diagram containing major concepts and entailments, and (c) connecting key points with extant literature.

Coding the Data-Using QDA

The first step was to code the data. My first swing out was using Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software called NVivo9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010). This form of coding line-by-line was the beginning of conceptualization of the ideas (Charmaz, 2006, p. 11). All interview and focus group transcripts were open-coded on the first pass using NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010). Verbatim transcriptions were coded line-by-line and assigned to a common node in alignment with similar conceptual meaning in the text.

Peer-checking. Because the coding is an interpretive process, I consulted an NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010) expert, Asher Beckwitt, Ph.D., CEO of Asher Consulting, LLC, who specialized in constructivist grounded theory analysis techniques using NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010). Dr. Beckwitt performed peer-checking on a portion of the initial coding of the data. In our comparative coding test of a portion of one interview, we arrived at similar findings and conceptual understanding. We were able to reach inter-rater reliability in our concerted efforts. I retained Dr. Beckwitt during this phase of analysis to coach me with the software.

The value starting with the software was seeking initial emerging themes and patterns in the data. Working with Dr. Beckwitt enabled alternative views of important sources of data, peer-checked by ‘other eyes’. In addition, after being away from the data for over a year, I was able to familiarize myself by close handling of every word within the data,

studying an assortment of grounded theory literatures, and working the data within constructivist grounded theory analysis procedures. Starting with QDA software enabled me to become familiar with emergent coding, initial category development, and initial theme (concept) development.

Qualitative data analysis software programs “can assist in retrieving coded data in an orderly fashion” (Jones et al., 2006, p. 97) and “can enhance the creativity of analysis because they enable the researcher to try things first one way and then another, thus seeking alternative explanations” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 310). As such, I worked within the software with open-coded data to sort categories into initial emerging themes in different ways.

Initial Themes

I compared emerging themes with coded observation notes and developed initial thematic memos for analysis. For example, my initial thematic conceptualizations of 518 codes were: learning inhibitors, body dialogue, interconnectedness, personal meanings of movement, and movement moments with multiple sub-categories for each. I developed initial themes from the open-codes and categories represented by the dot in the forthcoming example software screen visuals. In the software, clicking the dot revealed raw text across the focus groups and interviews connected with that particular verbatim coded category text shown in the table.

I reproduced these NVivo 9 (QSR International Pty Ltd 2010) screen visuals to convey a small sampling of the related categories that emerged in the formulation of initial thematic concepts. These examples were key false starts in my landmark journey towards theoretic abstraction. The following exemplars are to provide transparency into how I worked

with this initial analytic process. The categories emerging from the data led to cross-coding of observation notes and subsequent thematic memoing for each initial and highly tentative theme described next.

Learning inhibitors emerged as a theme describing ways participants experienced learning blocks at times during the white belt training (Figure 3) as depicted in the following sample screen shot:







Excerpts from initial open-coded category sort for: Learning inhibitors	
	started with free dance, inappropriate, or shut down
	having other trainers, felt like being evaluated or judged
	I shut down, stop listening, go somewhere else, get frustrated
	I will freeze or embarrassment or blank canvass
	distractions in physical environment
	still in mind, can't find a way to turn mind off

Figure 3. Learning Inhibitors – Sample Screen Shot.

Using these emergent categories (brief excerpts), I cross-compared with coded observation notes related to ways learning inhibitors were preventing members from learning, including identifying how, why, and what learning inhibitors meant. Observation data enabled me to compare data to a micro-level, including manual re-coding of all data sources during this process (all focus groups, interviews, and observation notes), and compose thematic memos about what learning inhibitors meant across all data sources including observation notes. I looked closely at the salient categories that led to learning inhibitors including analyzing how meanings changed for members about the same event over time.

An example of constant comparison at this micro-level of data analysis was the way in which members' experiences of freedancing changed in one week during the white belt. Learning inhibitors related to 'shutting down' or 'freezing' applied in the context of

freedancing Day 1, but not freedancing by Day 5. In another example, meaning structures presented by learning inhibitors emerged for one member in group meditation activity as 'hating this', shifting to 'conformity', then finally to 'caretaking' over time, analysis, and member-checking. 'Being distracted' within the learning setting, differences in experience levels, and different kinds of mental chatter emerged through refined meaning analysis.

Refining meaning was returning to the context of the text and comparing it to a similar context or different one; taking time to repeat this – being fully immersed in the data daily and seeing something new every time. Refined meaning was reaching points when meanings congealed over time and I stopped reacting to the data with constant questioning. Refined meaning was piecing and cross-comparing different angles of meanings tied with contextual events, language, behavior, and intersubjectivity. Refined meaning was developing questions for analysis and realigning analytic focus with those questions. Refined meaning was memoing composing essays about ideas inspired by patterns within the data. Refined meaning was writing-up different theories about potential connections and disconnections. Refined meaning was changing my coding focus to process and actions, rather than descriptions; eventually leading me to restructuring and digging deeper with in vivo codes, rather than my own meanings. Refined meaning was talking with two members up to nearly two years later to clarify meanings. Refined meaning was starting over again from square one.

Body dialogue emerged from participant discussions concerning the ways they engaged in purposeful internal conversations with their body (Figure 4) exemplified in the following sample screen shot. I went through a similar process with body dialogue including scrutinizing data transcripts again to unearth where members exhibited what they described

as body dialogue. In this way, I examined the raw text from all data sources (interviews, focus groups, and portions of observation notes that were verbatim) more closely for rhetorical meaning rather than content, seeing many places in the text where members engaged with body dialogue to excavate the why, when, how, and what for meaning. This theme also shifted during the focused analysis process.








Excerpts from initial open-coded category sort for : Body dialogue	
	asking what do I do here, I need a decision
	internal dialogue, relax, breathe, being open to experience, take away judgement
	permission from myself or I allow
	have voice in head, dialogue about what gonna do
	looking at myself as I was on stage and detaching from myself, what are you thinking at this moment
	receive whatever is necessary to come in or allowing body to receive information
	strategies for knowing how to check in with myself

Figure 4. Body Dialogue – Sample Screen Shot.

Patterns emerged across the data (focus groups, interviews, observation notes, and expanding thematic memos) descriptive of sensing being present to self, others, and the world through their bodies, their movement, the music, other people, Nia teachers, and dancing. Interconnectedness seemed like a certain place of knowing in alignment with the body, mind, emotions, and spirit for co-researchers. This theme emerged in different ways and means members described experiences of interconnectedness in the sample screen shot shown in Figure 5.








Excerpts from initial open-coded category sort for: Interconnectedness	
	practicing and applying connections out in the world, bringing individual peace, expanding circle
	focus on body, mind, spirit connection
	safe space or supportive and trusting space to allow ourselves know who we are and together
	tangible, concrete, connection between body movement and learning and process
	getting into body and connecting with body, language and experience to connect to grounding
	resonate well with energy of collaboration or connect with other people, and whole group in same place
	imagine myself in space connecting with music allowing body to move, safe little space

Figure 5. Interconnectedness – Sample Screen Shot.

However, as in the previous examples of the initial theme development process, after composing cross-data thematic memos and continuing through the focused analysis, interconnectedness was reconceptualized as the meaning-process it was rather than a description of a process. I eventually fleshed-out theoretic concepts using the words of participants’ in alignment with the questions of analysis.

Finally, the initial emergent themes: personal meanings of movement and movement moments seemed to have distinctive meaning structures as conceptual categories. More importantly, what I discovered during the focused analysis process was that both personal meanings of movement and movement moments were the *result of other processes rather than processes themselves*.

Micro-Coding

I refer to micro-coding as the hand-coding of important word-by-word (focusing on key images and meanings) as well as line-by-line re-coding process of all primary sources of data. Utilizing the descriptive work I had done with the five initial themes enabled “theoretical playfulness” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 71). The micro-recoding process enabled me to make the leap from concrete events and descriptions of them to theoretical insights and theoretical possibilities. I remained attuned to possible theoretical meanings of the data and

codes (Charmaz, 2006, p. 71) as an organizational starting point. Therefore, I re-coded the interviews, focus groups, and observation notes some word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident using simple word processing software. This process enabled further contextual understanding and a teasing-out of the layers of meaning across the data in new ways because I could see the text faster and memo on-the-spot.

I constructed the re-coded documents (referred to interchangeably as source documents) into flexible tables. I inserted the verbatim text in one column and proceeded to hand-code the data at a near word-to-word micro-level or line-by-line level in the adjacent column. I kept a separate column in the source documents for composing brief memos, reflexive jottings, and seed insights for further analysis tracked inside each source document itself. Finally, I re-coded all verbatim and handwritten field data into separate documents by data collection type (see Appendix G: Example Line-By-Line Coding from an Interview) for comparison purposes

Focused coding was a more directed process than initial coding. In focused coding I reviewed initial thematic (category) memos: learning inhibitors, body dialogue, interconnectedness, personal meanings of movement, and movement moments in light of re-coding efforts. For example, the codes for learning inhibitors were scattered across situations, ‘body moments’, important stories, events, and meanings from all sources of data (interviews, focus groups, observation notes, and thematic memos). I identified that learning inhibitors were manifestations of other processes involving something else for co-members as patterns of discomfort in different ways. In addition, to supplement concept-mapping, I cross-referenced focused internal sampling (within and across ‘cases’) with these data: The

Nia class transcripts, key verbatim incident text from interviews, focus groups, and observation data into simple word processing sorting software.

Concept Development

I had several false starts learning the application of grounded theory techniques that I used towards analytical advantage. Perhaps I have identified an additional iterative approach during my learning process that will provide meaningful pith conducting grounded theory analysis for other researchers.

A concept was a theme, using words spoken by members, that presented the sense-making structure of related categories across data sources that included multiple documents and printed logs that I used less frequently. Electronic source code documents included: Three focus groups, nine interviews, observation data-organized by 7 days and Appendix B, level two member-checks, and a growing library of memos. Initial processing of coded raw data matured into emerging categories that I originally misidentified by using my own words as the first five thematic descriptors. I was learning by doing.

In a vivacious process I refer to as ‘building with deconstruction’, I utilized descriptive thematic patterns in the data as a means to understand meaning structures. Deconstructing each theme by what it described revealed key personal meaning-making patterns for co-researchers. Each descriptive theme emerged because of its personal meaning therefore tearing into the foundation of the *what* questions gave roots to building upon the deeper questions of analysis: The *how* and *why* questions.

Descriptive themes exposed deeper personal patterns of meaning-making. Deconstructing descriptions back to their meaning-making origins was seeing what was being revealed, using in vivo language, by the data. However, I could not *see* these structures

until I had done the work of seeing patterns of meaning first. Starting from a place of understanding what was meaningful directed looking behind-the-scenes into meaning structures giving shape to meaning-making patterns across sources of data.

I built upon my initial analysis process in a deconstructive way. In the first memoing process, I had conceptualized *descriptions* from the data with in vivo categories as sub-themes. I saw ways the re-coding process refined emergent sub-categories connected with learning inhibitors and realized that learning inhibitors was my own wording for a descriptive account of an emergent pattern in the data. I initially refined learning inhibitors in members' own words as a concept of 'shutting down' based on the number of times participants used that phrase compared with other sub-categories related to learning inhibitors.

'Shutting down' was identified as concept presenting processes members engaged across the data connected to the questions of analysis. Initially, 'shutting down' took precedence for this process category from the sheer frequency of repeated text within the data. Sub-categories of 'shutting down' surfaced from similar meanings expressed in different ways across the data. Related actions and choices subsumed within the concept of 'shutting down' were categories. "Categories explicate ideas, events, or processes in the data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 91).

I saw ways 'shutting down' occurred, what members did 'shutting down', and how they coped or viewed themselves, others, and/or the world differently in some way (or not). When I considered 'shutting down' in light of its emergent meaning-structure rather than frequency, I saw something else. For example, initial sub-categories of 'shutting down' were: 'freedancing', 'being distracted', 'conforming', 'resisting', 'being judgmental', 'being first

time', 'being challenged', 'being outside my comfort zone', 'being stuck', and so forth. (Appendix H contains a sampling of key in vivo conceptualization tables).

When seeing closely into the meaning-structures of related sub-categories (steps 2-6), 'being stuck' seemed to present the concept with greater integrity and inclusiveness of what was going on there. As such 'being stuck' replaced two earlier iterations as a category, not based on frequency, rather delving into interpreted meaning-structures. I chose this example because 'being stuck' eventually elevated to a 'theoretic concept' through the interpretive analysis process.

Concept-Mapping

Using concept-mapping as an analogy and an important part of the overlapping analysis process, key categories (sticky notes) remained on their respective poster boards (concepts) as long as they continued to reveal connected meaning structures from constant analysis and interpretations across the data (repeating steps 2-4). Each poster board was an emerging concept that contained sticky notes as related categories. Poster boards became concepts and were so named by elevating certain categories into concepts, as in the example of 'being stuck'. Categories (sticky notes) were handled in three ways: (a) elevated into concepts, thus poster-boards re-named; (b) moved to different poster boards as meaning-structures emerged; or (c) remained as sub-categories to that concept. Concepts emerged when related sub-category meaning structures congealed into concepts, which was an iterative enactment of the constant comparison process seeing across and within the data in different ways.

The aim of this study was to understand ways the human body experienced transformational learning in the Nia white belt. Therefore, the questions for analysis

supported the process of focusing the meanings of descriptive conceptualizations into theoretic or action-based conceptualizations. In order to classify emerging concepts rooted in the words of the members and not my own descriptive language, I relied on composing memos and constant comparison.

Constant comparison in the analytic process was checking within and between member codes. Checking within and between coded in vivo text across three focus group code documents, nine individual interview code documents, and observation data code documents enabled seeing members' own process words. As such, this key strategy moved me towards cohesive inductive analysis, using the 'building with deconstruction' process pulling down descriptive categories initially subsumed within five descriptive themes and diving into the meanings behind them.

Theoretical saturation. A comment about the notion of theoretical saturation: Morse (1995) claimed "eliciting all forms or types of occurrences, valuing variation over quantity" is what gives rise to leveraging richness within the data rather than frequencies (p. 147). The refinement of the emergent concept 'shutting down' → 'being stuck' is one example of how I approached 'valuing variation over quantity' which led me to make deeper connections across the data. I learned to rely on variations within meaning-structures rather than textual frequency for interpretive coherence. Member-meaning structures appeared differently, which made it important to see where meaning-patterns emerged as categories, concepts, and eventual theoretic conceptualizations.

Initially approaching the data analysis process in a descriptive way guided me to see into seeming end results within the categories and sub-categories that comprised my preliminary thematic analysis as different operative enactments. In addition, having been

participant-observer during the training, I drew from contextualizing moments less visible in the text. For example, ‘body moments’ flagged in observation data were treated as first time experiences and turning points for meaning-making in different ways. Therefore, integrating my descriptive analysis with overlapping actions provided a way of creating and refining theoretical links that prompted me to “define new leads” and make new comparisons between categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115).

Memo-Writing

I wrote memos in the moment while I reviewed different sets of data, which was one advantage to recoding the data in a more granular way. By memo-writing (memoing) - across data sets, I imported codes and textual elements into my memos as new insights came together. Memo-writing forced me to stop and engage different categories, forming a place for exploration and discovery around the ideas I had about what I had “seen, heard, sensed, and coded” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 82) digging into implicit, unstated and condensed meanings...for analytic mileage and conceptual weight (p. 83).

I did not use an exact template for memos, except by way of an organized nomenclature assigned to specific printed source code binders and respective electronic folders. I found much flexibility in memoing directly in a column created in the data source itself. Printed code binders became cumbersome burdened with sticky notes, highlights, and handwriting to frequent as a primary source for efficient analysis. However, the code binders (containing all transcribed observation notes, interviews, focus groups, and printed memos) were useful for referencing during analysis.

Memos served different purposes in analysis depending on different substantive qualities of emerging data including capturing my own reactions and insights. For example,

codes and categories comprising the five initial thematic memos were outsourced to other memos and expanded upon. Example memos constructed outside of the source code documents included: study reflections; learning inhibitors; the first Nia class; movement moments; personal meanings of movement; interconnectedness; body dialogue; and learning and knowing with the body. I compared incidents tracking back within each theme and generated others. I integrated burrowed codes and categories by comparing them and delineating relationships; elaborating on codes extricating beliefs, actions, and behaviors between co-researchers; pooled and compared meaningful experiences with responses and body movements at different points in time (Charmaz, 2006, p. 84).

‘Hierarchies’ memo was seeded by one member’s repeated use of the term over the training, which stood out from other co-researchers. Initially, I met this term analytically with reflexive memoing asking myself: What is behind my resistance to this word? Subsequently, I followed this notion with a focused comparison of source codes and respective textual references. I began to see patterns of similar meaning from different perspectives. To exemplify this constant comparison and important analytic process, I extracted the following in vivo, verbatim, raw text snippets of affiliated meanings about ‘hierarchies’ between co-researchers from primary sources of data in Table 6.

Table 6. Hierarchies → Power Imbalances Meaning-Making Comparisons.

Hierarchies → Power Imbalances Meaning-Making Comparisons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absurd to have a ceremony, a ritual that was just put in there for a larger group • The person who's sharing your space is expecting and asking for things that you just wouldn't expect • You need to trust I know what I am doing • Never had anybody leave or be on thin ice • Jump through the hoops of the training and that doesn't feel good to me • Just walking in late like they were above us • Just sitting there with their eyes on me, not dancing • I want to stay with my group • I'd be like "wow" having all these black belts • Dominating classroom discussions • No room for answering questions • They are not challenging themselves • They should have known it was to be their responsibility • The men's bathroom is my bathroom • She wouldn't move her cushion over • My girls • Not everyone paid like I did • She just walked by and acted like she didn't even hear me • This is geo-training, people are not paying attention • She should have been more powerful confronting them • As a healer I do not step out of my boundary unless I am asked • Me walking in as a preschool student and walking into college • I was not able to form that kind of connection or relationship with our primary instructor • I am already being critiqued • Whispered in her ear • Lost count of the number of times people said "you should" • Being a support to somebody who's having an emotional breakdown • One of the training persons was kinda arguing with me • No one talks to me like that in my world • No one tells me what to believe • People are coming in who have never even been to a Nia class • White belts come in with so much resistance • They should have been paying us to be the guinea pigs • She thinks she's better than me • I'm not as experienced as they are • It was such a stretch for her that I actually felt like it was abusive • I can't move when people are watching me • This is a cult • People are judging me • She'd bring a little bit more respect to the practice • When she was talking out loud to anybody who would listen • I thought you were going to tell me something I didn't already know • Don't give them advice or caretake them • I watch the struggles happen • I feel intimidated • Hierarchies, hierarchies, hierarchies • Matriarchy isn't the opposite of patriarchy • Selling Nia to me when I already was there because of what I loved about it • None of these pants are in my size • When I wear that top, I notice it's too low on me

Building with deconstructing, I came to identify ‘hierarchies’ conceptual meaning as different kinds of power imbalance experiences. As I saw the data in light of its meaning, ‘hierarchy’ emerged (through theoretic generation) as power imbalances. Power imbalances presented with connected meaning structures related to different perspectives and experiences in the learning setting, personal stories, expectations, and member learning preferences. This particular memoing process hierarchies→power imbalances generated a theoretical connection with intersubjectivity – the ways in which members felt coming into the training that coalesced with highly subjective personal stories and prior events discussed in their lives that led up to being at the training which also co-created a distinctive feeling within the learning environment.

In addition, this focused analysis process illuminated meaning-making and felt-reactions such as these (Table 6) similar to past perceptions and meaning-making from salient points in their storytelling in different ways. Therefore, I continued constant comparison between codes comprising lifeworld histories and identified personal patterns of meaning-making that seemed to carry over from key lifeworld past or in-process moments right into the training space. Connecting these points generated the concept of ‘being first time’. Meaningful stories of impassioned lived moments revealed key lifeworld events that were first time experiences. ‘Being first time’ was a striking elemental characteristic of lifeworld experiences that fused into conceptual coherence.

Certain memos such as power imbalances, group meditation practice, and freedance, took more time for reflexive processing before looking at the data again so I could *see* the data with less bias. The reflexive memoing process was critical in data analysis because of important emergent characteristics such as prior Nia experiences, expressive bodily styles,

novelty to a somatic or experiential learning setting, and the wide range of roles and worldviews between members (see Figure 2).

Memo-writing catapulted me into looking deeper within different categories, connecting them in different ways, and forced me to examine my reactions and personal bias as co-participant and researcher. In addition to conceptual development and significant moment memos, I also kept a running memo by member to organize and compare categories, events, and reflexive insights in order to draw from and extrapolate with as data continued to congeal.

I discussed memo sorting and ways I employed sticky notes for concept-mapping and analysis. To detail its place in analysis, conceptualizations emerged with the support of ‘sorting memos’ using different poster boards labeled as broadening categories. I ‘sorted memos’ with sticky notes and handwritten in vivo text, codes, and jots that seemed especially poignant of the burgeoning category. I ‘sorted memos’ by identifying and linking sub-categories with concepts or emergent action/meaning-making structures. Concept mapping with sticky notes was iterative with advanced memoing intertwined in the process of moving between steps 3-6.

Constant comparison. In advanced memoing, I built on prior memos and filled-in gaps from insights derived from concept-mapping. I continued to refine, compare, and see connections across the data for salient-meaning moments, events, interactions, incidents, and learning perspectives.

The process of constant comparison meant comparing incident to incident to see meaning-structures and conditions for learning that could be identified. This process of comparing emerging concepts to more incidents was for the purpose of ‘theoretical

elaboration, saturation and densification of concepts' (Holton, 2008, p. 278) within and between members and sources of data. As such, I compared within and cross-cases for similar and different meanings, patterns, incidents, and categories from all data sources (focus groups, interviews, observation notes, and memo library). I identified meaning elements for a general structure for how members' experiences were different, what mattered and why the concept mattered. Some of the categories were refined and subsumed by emerging meaning-concepts. Charmaz (2006) explains:

Raising categories to concepts includes subjecting them to further analytic refinement and involves showing their relationships to other concepts. For objectivists, these concepts serve as core variables and hold explanatory and predictive power. For constructivists, theoretical concepts serve as interpretivist frames and offer abstract understanding of relationships. Theoretical concepts subsume lesser categories, hold more significance, account for more data and often are more evident (pp. 139-140).

Advanced memoing was a continued iterative process of the previous steps. I worked with data and refined the concepts into abstract presentations; identifying the gerund form (Charmaz, 2006 p. 49) of words spoken by co-members to crystalize action-meanings of experiences instead of description-meanings of experiences. Participants' experiences, the process they engaged during the study, and the context they drew upon were developed using the steps of data analysis. In addition, I utilized constant comparison, memoing, data sources, and questions of analysis for focused 'theoretic' concept development. Appendix H contains major components of the conceptualization process.

Theorizing. In the midst of memoing and write-ups, I had doubts about my findings meeting the criterion of a theory, even a substantive one. Corbin & Strauss (2008) clearly

state that theory is distinct from description (p. 53). At the same time, I was studying how Charmaz (2006) explains the constructivist approach to theorizing is leading to situated knowledge (p. 136), probing into experience (p. 136), and providing an interpretive understanding of the studied experience (p. 4). Actions are the place for analysis that includes the persons' imagined understanding of the other person's role and response during interaction (p. 127) and that theorizing involves developing abstract concepts and specifying relationships between them (p. 8).

The results that emerged from my analytic efforts were clearly being constructed by me, however carefully I documented the inductive, overlapping analysis process and member-checked with two available participants. There was no doubt in my mind that the constructed 'truth' was idiosyncratic and that any other researcher going on the same journey was bound to discover another truth (Fendt & Sachs, 2008, p. 441). Therefore, I concluded that not only was transformational learning theory itself a 'theory in progress', but so was the meaning of 'theory'.

As such, long-winded analytic efforts developing 'theoretical' concepts were serving a need to consider the body in transformational learning; providing innovative perspectives; allowing skin-close analysis of lived experiences; providing opportunities to explore what worked and what did not work so well; producing plausible propositions among concepts and clusters of concepts tracked back to the data; offering conceptual density; and outlining patterns of action and interactions (Fendt & Sachs, 2008, p. 448).

Implicit meaning-making patterns emerged in part from the critical and reflective dialogue we engaged during data collection. I refer to meaning structures as implicit because their emplacement in meaning-making emerged as patterns in different ways co-researchers

explained what was, and was not, meaningful in meaning-making discussions concerning the research topic areas. Grasping underlying meaning structures provided an important analytic tool for emergent data refinement as well as served in developing relationships and negotiating interpersonal connections for co-creating a sense of safety in the focus groups and interviews.

Although meaning-structures guided analytic refinement, they themselves did not emerge as an explicit concept in the findings. However, enactments of meaning structures uncovered as guiding values and/or beliefs were made explicit through analytic refinement of the data, which is described in greater detail beginning with personal interactions as co-researcher and methods of data collection.

As a benefit of being co-participant and researcher, I came to know these women in deeper ways from engaging in and being witness to different kinds of intentional dialogic conversations in the study. Dialogic methods of meaning-making occurred in focus groups, interviews, member-checking conversations, and dialogic observation data. Embedded meaning structures about different kinds of learning experiences emerged as being influenced by and influencers of ‘shifting perspectives’ concerning learning and the body in different ways for each individual.

Intentional dialogic conversations revealed underlying meaning-structures undergirding the *what, how, and why* that instigated personal meaning-making processes in different ways. Recurring themes in personal stories, personal goals and challenges, and personal sociocultural systems emanated through interconnected symbolisms of personal meaning. Meaning structures were associations with personal lifeworld metaphors, personal beliefs, personal ethics, and personal values that shaped meaning-making experiences and

perspectives in the study. In addition, different forms and kinds of intentional dialogic conversations engaged sense-making, reflection, and critical reflection which instigated self-revealing of self about self, others, and personal lifeworlds in different ways.

Meaning-making, and therefore implicit meaning structures, were illuminated through different intentional dialogic conversations, in the words of co-researchers, ‘processing verbally’ with others. ‘Processing verbally’ with others occurred between co-researchers from in-depth discussions about learning in the Nia training setting, learning preferences, learning and the body, and transformative lifeworld experiences connected with Nia in different ways. However, implicit meaning structures realized as *personal values and/or beliefs* emerged as explicit in refined analysis. This particular emergent sub-process of meaning-making with questions of analysis emerged as ‘being connected-connecting to my’ values or beliefs.

Implicit meaning structures important for refined analysis were revealed through critical reflection and dialogue specifically from participation in study-imposed methods of data collection. Therefore, it is important to highlight these study-imposed dialogic meaning-making interventions because they were not part of the naturalistic setting. Technically, ‘processing verbally’ with others occurred from self-reflective questions posed by the trainer in-session. However, these dialogic interludes prompted other insights about distinctive learning processes, different from ‘processing verbally’ with others that were spurred by critical reflection and intentional dialogue.

In the next section, I explain what I learned about meaning-structures from dialogic conversations that supported analytic refinement in the final stages of data analysis and how meaning structures are defined in transformative learning theory.

Meaning structures. Differences in perspectives and different ways co-researchers considered learning experiences and their bodies over the duration of the study was revealed in part by engaging in critical dialogue and reflection imposed by primary sources of data collection methods. These methods included: Interviews, focus groups, and different member-checking interactions in the form of observation data. Having highly focused time ‘processing verbally’ with co-researchers, and carrying that into refined data analysis enabled me to recognize different patterns and understand meanings about bodily experiences of ‘shifting perspectives’ more clearly.

“Beliefs do not need to be encoded in words. They may be encoded in repetitive interactions and generalized” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 75). In this way, beliefs emerged within personal meaning structures that provided an implicit analytic window to conceptualizing what emerged as ‘shifting perspectives’ from learning and bodily experiences. In addition, personal meaning structures influenced how members engaged with the body, learned with the body, and perceived of different bodily experiences.

The intrinsic concept of meaning structures was an analytic imprint of understanding values or beliefs from which members drew for making-meaning and learning with bodily experiences. In addition, personal meaning structures seemed to influence ‘shifting perspectives’ about perceived abilities, comfort levels, and participation dispositions in the process-concepts that emerged.

By the same token, ‘shifting perspectives’ transpired from engaging in different process-concepts that in turn, seemed to influence personal meaning structures in different ways. These personal, implicit, meaning structures seemed to sway perceptions about which bodily experiences were meaningful, how different bodily experiences were engaged, and

what about those experiences earned their way into meaning-making agendas. Therefore, the analytic concept of implicit meaning structures was quietly intertwined with ‘shifting perspectives’ in the last stages of refined data analysis.

Implicit meaning structures impacted my understanding of co-constructed meaning and how I categorized and conceptualized data. Implicit meaning structures seemed to characterize individuals with a kind of personal lifeworld stamp in refined analysis that helped me see ways ‘shifting perspectives’ unfolded as different learning processes. However, this study did not set out to elucidate or stereotype any member by their personal meaning structures. Yet, ‘shifting perspectives’ emerged inductively with meaning-making experiences sometimes explicitly engaging ‘being connected’ to values and/or beliefs that sounded through as a voice of the body.

Implicit meaning-structures were analytic pathways to understanding different kinds of subjective meaning-making processes. Selected points from transformational learning theory cast theoretic light about the utility of meaning structures in the refined data analysis process. Mezirow (2012) explains different components and implications of meaning structures:

- Meaning schemes arbitrarily determine what we see and how we see it—case and effect relationships, scenarios and sequences of events, what others will be like, and our idealized self-image.
- Points of view are clusters of meaning schemes which are sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments that tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify object, and attribute causality.

- We interpret our experience in our own way and that how we see the world is a result of our perceptions of our experiences.
- Selectivity shapes and demits perception, cognition, feelings, and disposition by predisposing our intention, expectations, and purposes.
- Provides the context for making meaning within which we choose what and how a sensory experience is to be construed and/or appropriated.
- Represents cultural paradigms, worldviews, or learned philosophies.
- Who we are and what we value are closely associated.
- Meaning schemes operate outside of our awareness that we follow automatically unless brought into critical reflection (pp. 82-84).

The analytic concept of (implicit) meaning structures served understanding how members came to make-meaning in the personal domain of the human body and learning by experience. Personal meaning structures conveyed deeper understanding about different experiences of the same incident and personal salience of different incidents. Personal meaning structures also shed light about different ways emergent processes were engaged between co-researchers.

In addition, meaning structures helped my analytic focus beyond surface rhetoric. Discerning personal meaning structures pointed me to weigh-in symbolic interactionism from personal meanings between co-members in different social scenarios. In addition, this analytic concept supported undertaking constant comparison - tracking changes across sources of data by seeing interpretive meanings as closely to as possible with their intended original forms.

Conceptualization. Using actionable data collection methods as primary sources of data shaped my analytic approach, logical understanding, and interpretive refinement of inductive data in light of the theoretical frameworks employed. It was important to illuminate how symbolic interactionism and transformational learning theory were considered in the analytic process as co-participant and facilitator of study-imposed critical dialoging. In addition, transformational learning theory and constructivist grounded theory shared theoretic commonalities that were demonstrated as introspective analytic tools in the conceptualization process. Proceeding with exemplars in this way provided transparency into how I made sense of and interacted with the data as researcher and what gave rise to chartable chunks of conceptualized meaning after repeated iterations of the steps of data analysis. The final stages of data analysis served to show the rigor and personal commitment to concretize important moving moments from multilayered, multifarious, and changing multiple lived realities into a ‘coherent structure of a multilayered phenomenon’.

To begin, I relay a visual depiction containing analytic components embedded within emergent concepts and sub-categories and explain analytic implications. These major concepts were generated from longer conceptualization tables which are located in Appendix H. “When undertaking higher level analysis, researchers ...use integrative diagramming to illustrate the complex interplay [as to what emerged in the data]” (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, as cited by Mills et al., 2008, p.30). The visual diagram (Figure 6) was a snapshot of such complex interplay as my work-in-progress in the final stages of refined conceptual analysis.

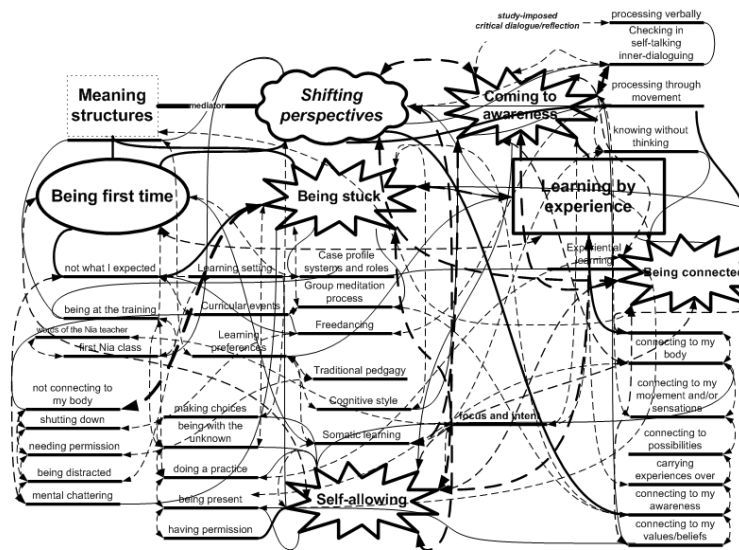


Figure 6. Refining Analytic Concepts.

Refining Analytic Concepts (Figure 6) is a placeholder to illuminate the conceptualization of grounded theory components to explain higher analytic processing and theoretic concept generation from the conceptualization tables (see Appendix H for a sampling of major conceptualization tables). Appendix I contains an enlarged version of Figure 6 which supports analytic implications emergent in the generation of this grounded theory. These concepts are further illuminated with verbatim quotes and discussed in the Findings Chapter.

The starbursts (re)present the processes-concepts members engaged; the oval flags a tentative meaning when it was present, it did feed into other concepts; precursory concept of ‘being first time’. The square (re)presents the shared context of ‘learning by experience’. The cloud was the phenomenon of transformative learning, or ‘shifting perspectives’. Underlined phrases were different enactments of emergent processes as key sub-categories or other analytic considerations arising with the questions of analysis. To note, the [‘] denotes in vivo language and [“] denotes verbatim excerpts from sources of data.

Refining analytic concepts was mapping analytic concepts with organic constructs to understand and explain distilled meanings in the data. The dotted lines were associations between concepts, and the solid lines were dynamic connectors between concepts, while different line widths (re)presented emergent resonance. However, tracking and deciphering different lines is of less importance than the analytic implications the multiple, overlapping, and recursive nature the lines themselves suggested. Multiple lines connecting across multiple concepts implied linear, non-linear and simultaneous processes within the emergent theory.

Precursory is an interpretive analytic concept for the theoretic placement of 'being first time'. Implications of 'being first time' conveyed a distinctiveness in the quality of an experience, as the feeling of what meant a "first time" experience. Different meaning structures accompanying 'being first time' shaped baseline propensities for entering into different kinds of new experiences and what about those new experiences would be inhibiting, fostering, or not perceived as transformative learning experiences, or 'shifting perspectives'.

Therefore, mediator and meaning structures are also implicit analytic concepts. These additional analytic concepts helped understanding the ways in which process-concepts were engaged and sense-making within the context of 'learning by experience' colored 'shifting perspectives' in personal ways. 'Shifting perspectives' emerged as closely-met with meaning structures that served as analytic, interpretive mediators for meaning-making about "the first time" and meaning-making propensities of other concepts.

Theoretic sampling. Data uncovered through the research question types served as a means for constant comparison (see Appendix B). Participants revealed different stories and

perspectives regarding the same topic area over time. Although I did not "...[go] back to locations and comparative groups in the field to discover more ideas and connections from the data" (Glaser, 1978, p. 40), I used four methods of theoretical sampling for constant comparative analysis in the field and ongoing analysis.

First, during interviews and focus groups, I asked reframed questions in repeated instances of the four types over the course of the study and discovered a pivotal process 'connecting to my body'. Members talked about this in different ways in all interviews, focus groups, and participant observations. Although 'connecting to my body' was experienced differently between members, I found that 'being connected to my body' was the desire, intent, and purpose uniting all members across all data sources in the Nia white belt training. However, 'being connected to my body' was also a process members engaged connected to different kinds of learning experiences. Using constant comparison, 'being connected to my body' presented an engagement process from which all the questions of analysis seemed to repeat leading to 'being first time-being at the training' arising with personal shapes of learning goals for the white belt training program.

Doing constant comparison, I identified 'being connected to my body' as a sub-category within Nia class and training experiences: connecting to music, connecting to movement, connecting to other dancers, connecting to cuing, and so forth (see Appendix H). Therefore, 'being connected to my body' was subsumed by the more inclusive process of 'being connected'. Second, I prompted participants with their own words to elaborate for meaning understanding, especially during the individual interviews when time constraints permitted. Third, in analysis, I drew from observational, situational, and sensory (feelings and emotions) points from the data to "maximize opportunities for verifying the story line,

relationships between categories, and for filling in poorly developed categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 187).

Fourth, I engaged in level two member-checking beyond that of strictly obtaining transcript approvals with two available participants where we reviewed emerging categories, checked related meanings of verbatim quotes, and clarified conceptual interpretations together. “Researchers can sample at the site level, at the event or process level, and at the participant level.” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126).

Using four open-ended question types over time as another comparative internal sampling means; prompting elaboration from participant responses using their own words; weaving data points from observation notes, memos, and verbatim responses; and member-checking interpretations of codes, meanings, categories, and concepts in analysis, uncovered categories and sub-categories to cross-compare transformational learning and the human body in the white belt training study. Examples of internal theoretical sampling techniques from interviews and focus groups follow.

Theoretic sampling exemplars. The main purpose and utility of interviews and focus groups was to create a positive dialogic space conducive to exploring experiences of personal meaning for co-researchers during the training in ways that supported personal and social transformative learning experiences. However, in so doing, I was also engaging a critical grounded theory single-site sampling kind of process. The utility engaging in deeper levels of critical reflection was to prompt or probe for thoughtful articulation of underlying meaning structures, or tacit knowledge, that could be made known and considered from different perspectives. These interviews and focus groups were coded/re-coded in the earlier stages of data analysis (see Appendix G).

The purpose of study-imposed critical reflection and dialogue was also to seek multiple perspectives about personal experiences and co-construct a voice of the body with co-researchers in the Nia training. For the duration of the study, over forty semi-structured, open-ended questions, categorized as four distinctive research question types (see Appendix B), prompted ongoing discussions from different angles. The interview questions were “...sufficiently general to cover a wide range of experiences and narrow enough to elicit and elaborate the participant’s specific experience” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29).

Members participated in different ways in interviews, focus groups, member-checks, and observation conversations which brought to light emerging processes explaining the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ and the human body during the study. During interviews and focus groups, we engaged in different depths of critical dialogue ‘covering a wide range of experiences’. I asked participants to ‘elaborate on specific experiences’, being more deliberate by prompting participants, in their own words, for meaning-making understanding.

The following exemplars from focus groups and interviews illuminate a kind of internal theoretical sampling with increasing elaborative dialoging with co-members from primary sources of data collection methods.

On Day 7, I asked a student-trainee to explain what she meant by feedback as a way she learned best from her Nia and training experience in a focus group:

Elizabeth: Please describe the ways and means you have learned best this week.

Renee: Through observation and listening. And, feedback.

Elizabeth: What kind of feedback?

Renee: Feedback on physical movement and feedback on other aspects of what I was delivering this week helped me to learn.

I employed open-ended critical dialoging as a means to “move from a simple awareness of their experiencing to an awareness of the conditions of their experiencing...and beyond this to awareness of the reasons why they experience as they do” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 197). In this example with Julie, I used her words to understand the conditions and reasons for her experiences of transformative learning and Nia:

Elizabeth: You mentioned Nia permeates everything you do. What are the elements for you that have that happen for you, that make it permeate, make it show up in your life?

Julie: All right, well, let's just go with awareness. I am more aware in my body all the time, whether it's just going into my closet in the morning and sensing how my body feels today, not from an emotional place or a mental place...

Individual interviews provided fertile opportunities to deepen critical dialogue with members to “question their previously internalized norms [beliefs]” (Knowles, 1990, p. 98) and “participate more fully and freely in rational discourse to validate expressed ideas” (Knowles, 1990, p. 51; Mezirow, 1991, p. 354).

In this example, Bridget and I engaged in the spectrum of critical dialogue and reflection together. We started by prompting a reframing of the problem. Then, we explored questioning epistemic assumptions causing her discomfort and uncovered personal emotional awareness concerning making a change. In the midst of this passage, Bridget self-corrects, changing to the first person, soma (within body) perspective demonstrating self-aware action

while describing her plan for personal and interpersonal transformation during her Nia training experience:

Elizabeth: In what ways does your Nia experience invite you to change your perspective, which you mentioned earlier “this [training] is gonna change my perspective”?

Bridget: Because you learn to take, I'm learning to take care of myself. I'm trying to listen to how I feel and not what's being said in my brain because that is what is contaminated me is all the assumptions that I've been feeling for 30 years, and they're really, really powerful and you don't realize that 'till you try to get rid of 'em all.

Elizabeth: How did you come about realizing that you wanted to “get rid of 'em all”?

Bridget: I would just look at somebody and I would just, I can just go off and I can, I can write a book on what I think they're feeling, what they're doing, and next thing I know all that's coming out of my mouth is not “I think”, [but] “they think”, “she thinks”, “she wants”. It was nothing coming from “I”. It was all coming from what I thought somebody else was thinking and it was becoming not even true and then I would sit there and I could just conspiracize a whole story that wasn't even reality but yet in my brain I was totally believing it was reality and it was just like becoming of me. I want to see the evidence and that's what I'm trying to reteach myself, that I don't have to assume everything.

In these excerpts, engaging in different depths of critical dialogue, co-researchers explained, explored, and tried on different ways of thinking, being, and imagined doing.

Following Charmaz (1995):

Researchers need to go beyond the surface in seeking meaning in the data, searching for and questioning tacit meanings about values, beliefs, and ideologies. There is an underlying assumption that the interaction between the researcher and participants “produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines” (Charmaz, 1995b, p. 35, as cited by Mills et al., 2006, p.7).

These excerpts illuminated the important function as active co-creator facilitating and engaging the emergent process-concept ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’ with others as a means to support positive personal transformative learning and to illustrate internal theoretical sampling by way of the deliberate interactive nature of our conversations. The open-ended questions used in focus groups and individual interviews, including the semi-structured prompts as slightly revised questions under the four-topic umbrella, illuminated ‘shifting perspectives’ over time.

In addition, the flexible nature of the interviews enabled critical reflection and expanded ability for members’ own elaboration about what was most important about their experiences. In alignment with symbolic interactionism, grounded theory, and transformational learning theory as multiple frameworks guiding methods and analysis, I deliberately prompted reflective dialogue for meaning-making understanding.

Employing these methods, meaning-structures and ‘shifting perspectives’ surfaced in many conversations facilitating the action of understanding emergent process-concepts that “brought about change with more immediacy” (Schein, 1987 as cited by Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 219) in ways these group discussions were utilized as a time away from the classroom for engaging in meaningful dialogic interactions. These important interactions and

co-constructed meanings are included among key findings presented with the emergent grounded theory in the Findings Chapter.

Final stages of data analysis revealed pertinent categories maturing into theoretical concepts; eventually to one tentative precursory concept, four process-concepts, and one context-concept connected with questions of analysis. These findings provided a fresh perspective about ways the human body experienced transformational learning in the Nia white belt. The phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ operated as if a feedback loop between symbolic meaningstructures in the analytic refinement of the data. Co-members’ meaningstructures illuminated what was meaningful about learning experiences before, during, and five weeks after the training.

Integration

The last step of data analysis was the integration with transformational learning theory and relevant extant literature from refined concepts in the data. For theoretical sensitivity, I waited to review relevant literature until concepts grounded in the data had been identified for the later stages of writing-up (Glaser, 2001, 1992; as cited by McGhee et al., 2007, p. 338). However, I utilized literatures intently from guiding theoretical frameworks during analysis (transformational learning theory, grounded theory, and symbolic interactionism). The Findings and Discussion Chapter include:

- The theoretical concepts developed from members’ experiences of the white belt training
- The theoretical concepts developed from the processes members’ engaged
- The theoretical concept developed from the context members’ drew upon

- “Verbatim quotes from respondents used as exemplars of concepts to help build theory” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 784)
- Extant literature for a broadened theoretical discussion of inductive theoretical concepts.

Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter, I recounted the steps of data analysis to shed light on the inductive and interpretive approach underpinning the analysis process. In addition, I offered verbatim exemplars to convey the process of employing constructivist grounded theory with a focus on refining meaning for in-depth interpretive data analysis. Furthermore, dialogic exemplars of critical reflection and dialogue as study-imposed methods of data collection impacted participants’ experiences and improved clarification of co-creating meaning. In addition, these and other co-researcher interactions shaped my analytic approach, logical understanding, and interpretive refinement of inductive data in light of the theoretical frameworks employed. This chapter exposed where symbolic interactionism and transformational learning theory were considered in the analytic process as co-participant and facilitator of study-imposed critical dialoging.

Additionally, transformational learning theory and constructivist grounded theory shared theoretic commonalities that were demonstrated as introspective analytic tools in the conceptualization process. Proceeding with verbatim exemplars provided transparency into how I made sense of and interacted with the data as researcher. I intended to provide analytic transparency into what gave rise to chartable chunks of conceptualized meaning after repeated iterations of the steps of data analysis. The final stages of data analysis presented herein served to show the rigor and personal commitment to concretize important moving

moments from multilayered, multifarious, and changing multiple lived realities into a “coherent structure of a multilayered phenomenon” (Cupchik, 2001).

In summary, “data do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the discovered reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524, as cited by Mills et al., 2006, p. 6). In addition, this study was about process not individuals, so the Findings are not presented as a multiple case study. The Findings Chapter that follows presents the coalescence of each key theoretical concept in the words of co-researchers.

Chapter V: Findings

Grounded theory does not aim to provide full individual accounts as evidence, rather it seeks to move a theoretically sensitive analysis of participants' stories onto a higher plane while still retaining a clear connection to the data from which it is derived (Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 11).

Overview

The introductory quote (Bonner & Francis, 2006) provided insight for setting a tone of juggling theoretic balance presenting these findings. This Findings Chapter is inclusive of key topics clearly connected in the data with sensitivity towards a higher plane being somewhat uneven depending on the conceptual depth and level of detail to extricate intricacies given the need to front-load yet 'seek to move to a theoretically higher plane'. In this delicate endeavor, I retained a clear connection to the data carrying the notes of the voices in gerund form in some instances.

Interpretive findings offer a co-constructed viewpoint of transformative learning from the perspective of a voice of the body. This study took place during a first-level Nia dance and movement immersive training program wherein data collected with seven women emerged as a rudimentary grounded theory explaining the diverse ways the human body experienced transformative learning. These findings present a voice of the body privileging the words of co-participants, recognizing all data sources as important, for an integrated and broadened horizon of transformative learning theory.

Findings revealed a body-based, somatic, rudimentary grounded theory with key concepts explaining ways the human body experienced transformative learning in the Nia program infused with key tenets of transformative learning theory. I have organized the

chapter in the following sections: Findings Preview provides an overview of key findings; The Phenomenon contains an appropriate description of ‘shifting perspectives’ using extant literature; The Findings are introduced with a visual rendering containing the emergent concepts, each of which is presented separately. Each emergent concept is front-loaded with appropriate exemplars forecasting in vivo textual elements in gerund form to denote key overlapping components of the emergent theory to ‘take the story to a higher plane’ without ‘losing connection with the data’. This report is replete with generous excerpts, narratives, and gerund (re)casts grounded in the words of the women who spoke them – including key stories from observation data. Some of the excerpts are (re)cast in gerund form to manage length and maintain a balance of grounded empirical evidence.

In addition, I included selected slices of extant literature within each concept presentation including conceptualization tables where space permitted (see Appendix H for extended conceptualization tables). Extensive excerpts and vignettes from primary sources of data, privileging the words of the women who spoke them, provide ample background and understanding of how and why concepts fit together coherently and understandably. Due to the nature of the fine-grained analysis, several of the introductions and excerpts are lengthy because many theoretical concepts were engaged simultaneously and well-suited for deep explanation. However each concept is clearly aligned with its major concept despite overlapping components.

In conclusion, I discuss components of The Voice of The Body (Figure 7) from the visual rendering as the rudimentary grounded theory, highlighting key takeaways followed by a closing summary in preparation for the Discussion Chapter.

Findings Preview

As a preview of findings, the in situ nature of the inquiry situated the overarching phenomenon, ‘shifting perspectives’, in the words of co-researchers. The phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ emerged with the tentative precursory concept of ‘being first time’ and four processes engaged: ‘being stuck’, ‘coming to awareness’, ‘self-allowing’ and ‘being connected’ within the context of ‘learning by experience’. The findings of the study are grounded in primary sources of data (interviews, focus groups, observation data, and memos) and members’ words are privileged while all data sources were important. Next, I describe the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ as it emerged in the study before proceeding with the review process. In this report, the [‘] denotes in vivo language and [“] denotes verbatim excerpts from primary sources of data

The Phenomenon

‘Shifting perspectives’ may be understood as a blending of shifting self-beliefs (Bandura, 1977 as cited by Meyer, 2009, p.146), reinterpretations of lived-experience, changed ways of thinking (Mezirow, 1991, p. 33), and different ways of being (Yorks & Kasl, 2012, p. 516). In different ways, tapping “creative expression [enabled] deeper understandings of life situations and feelings while challenging rational ways of knowing” (Allen, 1995; Lawrence, 2005; as cited by Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 22).

Experiences of the body cultivating sensory awareness, learning through the body, and conscious movement emerged with symbolic (re)presentations of embedded “epistemic, sociocultural or psychic prior learning” through bodily-lived “explorations of alternative perspectives, transforming old ways of understanding” (Mezirow, 1990, p.18). A voice of the body explains different processes of transformative learning emerged with encounters of

“interconnectedness of life at every level” ‘being connected’ with the body, mind, emotions, spirit and intuition, enabling “seeing [and feeling] the world anew” (Miller, 2002, as cited by Hoggan, et. al, 2009, p.22).

Findings

All concepts in this grounded theory are presented in the words of co-researchers, including each concept, sub-concept, process concept, and context. In addition, selected conceptualization tables serve to convey additional ‘voices’ for enriched understanding. Extended in-vivo conceptualization tables are in Appendix H.

Being First Time

‘Being first time’ presents the action-form of members’ salient first-time lifeworld events that seemed to be re-lived during the training in different ways. In addition, salient first-time lifeworld events seemed to shape learning goals and expectations, participation dispositions, meaning-making, and ‘shifting perspectives’ including specific different ‘first time’ bodily learning experiences that emerged during the study in different ways.

Crystal described ‘being first time’ as a *point in time* in her life presenting an accumulation of recent and in-process epochal changes that led up to her enrollment and shaped her personal learning expectations and goals for this white belt training experience:

Crystal: At this point in time in my life, I am in a transition with regards to my own personal growth and development and being in relationship with myself and being in relationship with my husband-the possibilities that I’m feeling that there is a detachment that I can go do based on my own integrity. Being away [from home] and having gone through the last of the while that I’ve gone through; Mom being awake and taking my mom through her leaving and then the Shiva...A lot of disconnecting in

the process of it right now, and desiring to continue to expand and grow and explore more of my own self.

Crystal's desire for expanding and growing led her re-feel different manifestations of emotional attachments holding her back from grieving the loss of her mother, having a trusting relationship with herself, and ending her long term marriage. Crystal's learning goals in the training seemed to be in alignment with epochal changes in her lifeworld such that she desired 'being away from home' as time to herself to expand, grow, and explore aspects of herself in new ways and experience a different kind of relationship with herself. For Crystal, 'being first time' at this white belt with her multilayered epochal *point in time* emerged with different 'shifting perspectives' connected in different ways to her learning goals during the study.

Bridget described 'being first time' as *my bottom point right now*. She had moved to a new city and after a year, it still did not feel like home. In fact this relocation had created increasingly painful consequences for Bridget physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically giving rise to feelings that she could no longer cope with herself or her lifeworld:

Bridget: At my bottom point, which is right now, is about a year ago when I moved here...I've isolated myself completely. And, I just don't, that's not who I am. I've been finding things to like numb me, and that's not who I am either. I'm a coper and I don't know how to cope anymore...I just cry and cry, but some of that's 'cause I'm homesick...I don't, I don't want to socialize with people here. Because I don't want, didn't want to stay here. This isn't my home. I wanted to go home...

Bridget explained increased anxiety and social isolation because she had to move away from home. She arrived at the white belt in the midst of ‘being first time’ at an epochal change in her lifeworld with what she described as *my bottom point right now*. In addition, this white belt training was Bridget’s first time ever to dance, take a body movement or Nia class, or be at any kind of adult learning workshop. As such, Bridget explained this training as ‘having a last resort’ after ‘trying anxiety medication’, ‘going to therapists’, ‘getting self-help’ and ‘not knowing how to cope anymore’.

In this excerpt, Dawn explained ‘being first time’ with major epochal changes in her lifeworld less than a decade prior to the training as ‘breaking with’ a Fundamentalist religious culture she had lived in most of her life:

Dawn: I mean in my first 33 years of life...I was constantly surrounded by programming that was of a certain, you know, there was written programming, there was preaching programming, there was the messages of everyone in my world believed and preached and acted and spoke the same way. And, there was no deviation from that. So, there’s a lot of messaging, some direct and some not direct that um that just wasn’t uh true for me that I’ve come to break with.

Different experiences of ‘being first time’ shaped different participation dispositions for engaging other process-concepts, meaning-making, and learning for co-researchers in different ways. In addition, different first time experiences shaped and were shaped by ‘shifting perspectives’ within the context of ‘learning by experience’ during the study.

During our first interview, Dawn indicated an interest in taking the training as ‘being first time’ to “become a Nia teacher”. In addition, Dawn described ‘being first time-being at

the training’ as ‘not ever experiencing’ ‘connecting to my body self’ and ‘giving me a balanced reality’ in the following excerpt:

Dawn: So for me to connect to my body self is giving me that balanced reality that I've never experienced before...I see this [training] as being something vital to incorporate in a bigger way to my other areas of life.

During opening session Day 1, Ruth explained ‘being first time-being at the training’ with her learning goals: ‘getting to move’, ‘having new movements’, and ‘finding healing’ for the pain in her body:

Ruth: I like yoga but I like to move and there's so little movement in yoga, but I need to get to move. I liked the [one] Nia workshop I took. I hurt myself in [cardio dance class] and I'm tired of the same movement. I've had so many knee injuries over the years, no wonder my body hurts all the time. I'm here to find something healing for the rest of my life.

Although Ruth dropped the training after completing Day 3, her experiences during the training were important for co-constructing a voice of the body for perspective transformation in this study. Ruth provided important insight as a woman with a long history of other kinds of dance training and body movement experience such that she was comfortable psychically being in her human dancing body but moving her body was painful.

At the same time, external epochal organizational changes emerged as ‘being first time-being at the training’ with two new student-trainee roles in this training such that both Renee and Sara, who had attended white belts previously, were ‘being first time-being at the training’ in their respective first-time roles: ‘doing my best [as a first time trainer]’ and

‘having never done this before’. Between them, Renee and Sara delivered nearly half the learning sessions and taught five of the seven Nia classes during this white belt.

In addition, Julie, the designated trainer, explained ‘being first time-being at the training’ as: ‘having multiple learnings going on’, ‘having more black belts than white belts’, ‘being in a Nia study’, and ‘assessing’ Renee and Sara instead of delivering the material as the only trainer.

Julie explained ‘being first time-being at the training’ in the context of the first-time external epochal changes as providing Nia Trainers and student-trainees with:

Julie: opportunities that are going to be available that weren't available.

In light of the theoretical concept that “externally imposed epochal [disorienting] dilemmas” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 168) are salient precursory events in transformative learning theory, theoretically similar experiences of ‘being first time’ emerged with different kinds of epochal changes. Co-members’ subjective meanings of ‘being first time’ gave rise to the meaning of epochal. . Co-members ‘shifting perspectives’ of ‘being first time’ were not always ‘dilemmas’; or negative first time experiences; not only external experiences; and not always necessarily epochal in nature.

Primary sources of data revealed a complex interplay of different first time experiences unfolding within the learning setting for co-members during the study. The conceptualization of ‘being first time’ emerged as different first time experiences for co-researchers in different ways (see Appendix H). Different kinds of lifeworld epochal changes or epochal events brought every study participant including me (being on an epochal journey to co-create this dissertation work for the first time) to this particular training.

Therefore, ‘being first time-being at the training’ emerged for co-members in different ways, including members who had experienced white belt trainings in the past. Additionally, different first time experiences in the lifeworld ‘being first time’ and ‘being first time-first Nia class’ shaped learning goals for ‘being first time-being at the training’ (see Appendix H). In turn, current lifeworld meanings shaped participation dispositions, learning goals, and the ways and means members engaged different process-concepts and learned by experience.

Being First Time-Not what I expected. Learning goals pulsing with lifeworld meaning arose as ‘being first time’ entering the setting and encountering unexpected changes in the learning setting. The manifestation of key triggers during the training were experiences of personal dissonances in conjunction with ‘being first time-not what I expected’ presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Being First Time - Unmet Expectations.*

Personal Goals	Unmet Expectations & Key Triggers
<i>‘Being first time-being at the training’</i>	<i>‘Being first time-not what I expected’</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘connecting to my body self’ • ‘having a balanced reality I’ve never had’ • ‘being self-sufficient’ • ‘being more trusting of myself’ • ‘focusing on myself for the first time’ • ‘wanting to be comfortable in my body’ • ‘having something concrete I can use’ • ‘finding what I’ve been missing all along’ • ‘accepting intelligence of my body’ • ‘taking care of myself being here’ • ‘being with people who love Nia’ • ‘assessing student-trainees’ • ‘changing every aspect of my life’ • ‘accepting mine and others’ feelings’ • ‘getting to move in healing ways’ • ‘doing my practicum’ • ‘getting out of my head’ • ‘deepening my relationship with healthy emotions, and mind, and spirit, connected to the physical’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘having unmet expectations’ • ‘student-trainees not being part of the group’ • ‘not having the experience I thought’ • ‘being in an atypical scenario’ • ‘being disillusioned by what I expected’ • ‘expecting Nia [training] would be about freedom’ • ‘being told what to do’ [group meditation] • ‘bursting my bubble’ • ‘having an unusual mix’ • ‘having different experience levels’ • ‘having someone leave for the first time’ • ‘having multiple learnings going on’ • ‘having inexperienced teachers’ • ‘not being able to connect with Trainer’ • ‘wondering if the teacher knows what she’s doing’ • ‘being thrown into freedance’ • ‘not being like my Nia classes’ • ‘being late’ • ‘not respecting the practice’

Members came to the event with pre-conceived notions manifested from unique elaborations of personal goings-on accumulated from internal and/or external lifeworld events. Unique present-moment ways of being and feeling shaped personal meanings and different passions for specific learning goals emerging as the sub-category, 'being first time-being at the training'. The theoretical underpinning of unmet expectations arising from 'being first time-not what I expected' in transformation theory is explained in greater detail with extant literature. According to Mezirow (1991):

We develop habitual expectations based on past experience. We expect things to be as they were before. Or, put another way, we uncritically assimilate perspectives from our social world, community and culture. Those perspectives include distortions, stereotypes, and prejudices. They guide our decision making and our actions until we encounter a situation that is not congruent with our expectations. At that point, we may reject the discrepant perspective or enter into a process that could lead to a transformed perspective (as cited by Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 6).

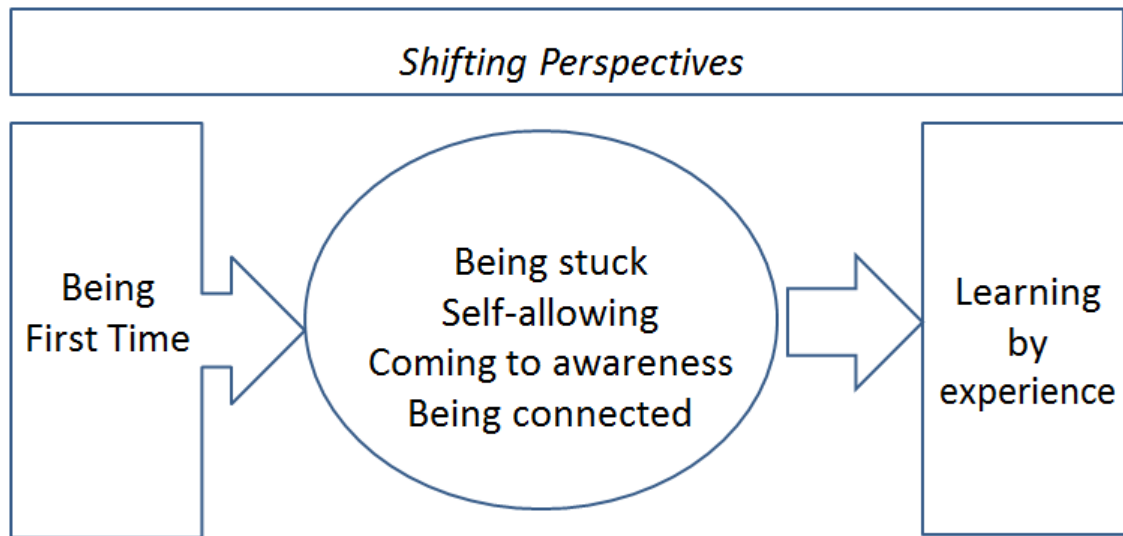


Figure 7. A Voice of The Body.

A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) conceptualizes how members’ perceptions and self-generated bodily experiences sometimes emerged like ‘trigger events’ from different first time experiences. Different first time experiences flowed into the various means members engaged their bodies and meaning-making of different bodily experiences in the context of ‘learning by experience’ in the training.

“Trigger events may be life-shattering [external]... or [internal] personal upheavals, troubling contradictions between meaning systems, external social events, or cumulative internal changes [shifting perspectives]...where generation of consciousness [engaging process concepts] in a secure ‘practice laboratory’ [bodily-experiences, focus groups, interviews, Nia classes, and the Nia white belt training]...can mediate between old perspectives and the application of new ones in everyday situations [learning by experience]” (Taylor, 1989 as cited by Mezirow, 1991, p. 171).

Important past and current first time lifeworld experiences, including first time bodily experiences during the training, shaped personal learning expectations and goals, meaning-

making, and ‘shifting perspectives’ such that different experiences of ‘being first time’ cropped-up in different ways for all members in the study (see Appendix H).

Being Stuck

The process-concept ‘being stuck’ emerged in connection with ‘being first time’ in different ways, particularly with ‘being first time-not what I expected’ (see Table 7). In addition to the unexpected learning setting dynamics, particular learning activities emerged with engaging ‘being stuck’ in different ways for co-researchers.

Perceptions of threat or ‘being uncomfortable’ seemed to be reflective in personal learning goals, complimentary with different lifeworld meanings, and perceptions of self and others’ bodily experiences. In addition, engaging ‘being stuck’ developed into felt-changes in the social learning dynamics. ‘Being stuck’ was closely associated with unmet expectations in ways different bodily experiences of the curriculum ‘triggered’ ‘being stuck’. In addition, ‘being stuck’ occurred from different internal or external manifestations of perceived threats in different ways (see Appendix H).

Internal threats manifested with engaging ‘being stuck’ in alignment with personal meaning-making that seemed to embody the mind as separate from the body. For example, Dawn struggled with ‘connecting to my body in a somatic paradigm:

Dawn: I’ve had to argue back and forth with my body and my mind because I’m more comfortable learning in the mind.

Interestingly, internal threats were experienced as the soma, or body, not hearing the mind, leading to a process of ‘being stuck’:

Sara: I was so trained to point my toe from ballet, using that heel lead for my knee took me four and half year to get it. My body wanted it but my brain was telling me something else.

In addition, internal, self-generated dilemmas instigated ‘being stuck’ in a kind of self-conscious projection-loop:

Bridget: When we were doing those pelvic circles, I felt myself open up and I feel like I’m so afraid of hurting other people’s feelings that I keep shutting down because of that.

Different moments arising with a version of bodily-felt sensation resembling ‘being uncomfortable’ seemed to accompany engaging ‘being stuck’ in different ways. These reactions spilled over into the training setting dynamics, in personal bodily experiences, and through social interactions. Table 8 depicts the conceptualization of ‘being stuck’ as felt-manifestations connected with experiencing some degree of ‘being uncomfortable’. ‘Being uncomfortable’ arising with ‘being stuck’ shaped perceptions of different kinds of threats and led to engaging the body in some process of ‘being stuck’ as a type of bodily holding pattern.

Table 8. *Being Stuck – Trigger Manifestations.*

Being Stuck – Trigger Manifestations	
• ‘shutting down’	• ‘being distracted’
• ‘closing down’	• ‘not listening’
• ‘holding back’	• ‘being frozen’
• ‘tuning myself out’	• ‘not moving my body’
• ‘checking out’	• ‘putting up a barrier’
• ‘not being able to connect to my body’	• ‘arguing with my mind’
• ‘being in a catch 22’	• ‘mental chattering’

Threat perceptions were experienced as a range of different versions of ‘being uncomfortable’ from ‘being outside my comfort zone’ to ‘being traumatic’ particularly when

flowing from ‘being first time’ in among co-members. Some version of ‘being uncomfortable’ unique to each individual seemed to prompt reactions that shaped perceptions and meaning-making experiences within the training setting, during curricular activities, and participation dispositions with other process-concepts (see Appendix H).

In this excerpt, Bridget explains ‘being first time’ to ever dance led her to engage ‘being stuck’:

Bridget: I have never danced before and I have no choreography moves and I guess I am a creative person...So to me the freedance is very, very uncomfortable. And, that is a big time when I do shut down and I just won't let anything else come into me...And so to me it's a huge embarrassment.

External threat perceptions were highly unique to members, seemingly riddled with personal symbolisms tied-in with meaning structures and lifeworld patterns mirrored within the learning setting in different ways. Bodily experiences of ‘being stuck’ was a process of disconnecting from the felt-body reflective of personal lifeworld symbologies (see Appendix H).

In this excerpt, Dawn explained ‘being stuck’ in the group mediation process as personally symbolic of the oppressive community she had come to break with years prior to the training:

Dawn: [Day 3, step three of group meditation] I hate this...This ritual is like a fundamentalist hierarchy going on...I am not comfortable with this practice.

In some ways, ‘being stuck’ was conceptually similar to a habitual body response like flight-fight-freeze mirroring unique personality styles, movement styles, personal meaning-structures, and other forms of embedded sociocultural manifestations.

In this excerpt, Dawn explained ‘being stuck-not connecting to my body’ triggered by perceived external threats emanating from manifested beliefs during the first freedancing activity:

Dawn: [post-interview] I made a conscious choice to not connect fully with myself in freedance because of the extreme discomfort...feeling like, you know, this isn't an appropriate way to throw people in to the situation.

At times, engaging ‘being stuck’ from different kinds of threats emerged as in a theoretical space temporarily preventing members from engaging other process-concepts (see Appendix H). According to transformational literature, this ‘theoretical space’ has been identified as ‘liminal space’. Berger (2004) explains liminal space as the edge of knowing:

The edge is the most precarious-and important-transformative space. It is in this liminal space that we can come to terms with the limitations of our knowing and thus begin to stretch those limits. This makes the liminal zones between our knowing and not knowing both difficult to understand-because they are constantly moving and being redefined-and also of central importance to our work as transformational educators (p. 338).

Similar to the conceptual properties of other process-concepts, engaging ‘being stuck’ affected ‘shifting perspectives’. However, engaging ‘being stuck’ seemed to arise as a theoretical kind of personal experiencing space ‘being stuck-not being able to connect to my body’ until different experiences and/or perspectives were jostled from experiencing other process-concepts.

Another interesting finding with this process-concept was ‘being-stuck-being distracted’ as in the mind was ‘being busy chattering’ such that the body was immobilized

and unable to experience anything else except the sensation of ‘being stuck’ in the physical, mental or emotional realm. In addition, engaging ‘being stuck’, like other process-concepts, occurred simultaneously with other concepts.

For example, Day 1 of training, Crystal explained engaging ‘being stuck-being distracted’ arising from perceived external threats that student-trainees ‘sitting there’ ‘not participating together’ with the group, led to a kind of re-felt lifeworld internal threat ‘being a separation’ that the group was ‘not going to be one’. In her ‘being at a point in time’ first time lifeworld transition, Crystal was ‘being away’ at the training; ‘having time for myself’ to prepare ending her near twenty-year marriage and ‘disconnecting cords’ with marital friends and family wherein these meanings and feelings were especially relevant mirrors of her felt-lifeworld.

In this excerpt, Crystal described engaging ‘coming to awareness-inner-dialoging’ with herself seemingly interrupting her own mental distraction, ‘being stuck-making up a story’, and the physical sensation ‘being stuck-not being in the movement’, realizing the liminal space she held until ‘changing her mind’, and ‘being in the movement’. Crystal explained engaging several process-concepts and sensing a liminal space between ‘being stuck’ and ‘shifting perspectives’ that seemed to neutralize different perceived threats:

Crystal: For me, tonight having the other teachers sitting there, I felt like their, at times their eyes were on me. Um, uh I made up a story “Oh, I’m being evaluated wait a minute, nah, I’m just here to be in the movement” ...So, there seemed to be a separation between uh Sara and Renee that if we were all going to be one, then we were all going to be able to participate together. But, I had to sort of change in my mind, “Well, hold on, they are teachers so it, so they are being an extension of Julie.”

Finally, engaging ‘being stuck’ colored attitudes, participation dispositions, bodily experiences, and the nature of ‘shifting perspectives’ connected with engaging other process-concepts for different members in different ways (see Appendix H).

Self-allowing

Experiences of personal unmet expectations influenced ‘shifting perspectives’, sometimes as if entering a recursive cycle between ‘self-allowing’ and ‘being stuck’ in different ways, hence the theoretical notion of ‘liminal space’.

Ruth described being in a kind of ‘liminal space’ of tension pushing against her edge tolerance ‘shifting perspectives’ between perceptions of having intrinsic choice, ‘being willing to accept’, or an extrinsic forced-choice, ‘having to buy into’ something.

Ruth explained engaging ‘being stuck-putting up a barrier’ when she perceived ‘having to buy into a philosophy’ and ‘something making me feel stupid’:

Ruth: In Nia you have to accept a certain set of circumstances um which I’m willing to accept because I’ve already, like I said, I’ve already done yoga...But that would be something that might hold me back...I might put a sort of a barrier up because I just didn’t buy into all that whatever I’m supposed to buy into or something made me feel stupid.

‘Self-allowing’ was the distance co-researchers engaged ‘self-allowing’ itself in the liminal space of contrasting meaning-structures. Meaning structures unique to each member and her lifeworld blossomed as different ways members experienced and perceived of engaging ‘self-allowing’ other process-concepts during the study.

As the designated trainer, Julie explained her experience ‘being first time-not what I expected’ as ‘self-allowing’ engaging ‘knowing without thinking’ that provided solid

grounding as trainer: ‘knowing’; ‘constantly going back’; ‘pulsing energy allies’; engaging ‘self-allowing-being present’, ‘understanding the work is not about me’. Engaging these process concepts in the face of ‘being first time-not what I expected’ enabled ‘being present’ - ‘watching’, ‘receiving’ and ‘working with’ the multiple different first time experiences unfolding in the classroom in different ways during the training.

In this excerpt, Julie also described engaging ‘self-allowing-being with the unknown’ as different first time experiences ‘being at a greater extent’ applying instructional methods: ‘using pace’; ‘using depth’ in different ways:

Julie: This training, um, allowed me to use pace and depth at a greater extent to just know that I'm working with a variety of different levels and to watch how they're receiving and working with, uh, to, to just, to just go back and, and pulse what, what we call our energy allies. Constantly, uh, with understanding again that the work is not about me.

‘Self-allowing’ was a negotiation process about ‘being open’ to bodily experiences, novelty, and unmet expectations impacting the depths to which members enacted other process concepts. The conceptualization of this important process concept (see Appendix H) was pivotal for pushing through the liminal spaces of ‘being stuck’ and edge tolerances of ‘being uncomfortable’.

‘Shifting perspectives’ sometimes emerged with ‘self-allowing’ enough temporary discomfort not knowing what was going to happen or ‘being first time’, including taking ownership for creating conditions necessary for ‘self-allowing’ the body its own personal experiencing space. “Moving beyond what is comfortable...is central to fostering transformative learning” (Cranton, 2009, p. x). At the same time, ‘shifting perspectives’ was

connected with learning goals and different edge tolerances for ‘being uncomfortable’ and shaped ‘self-allowing’ participation dispositions during the training.

In this excerpt, Dawn seemed to describe a sort of ‘liminal space’ as ‘having to struggle’ between ‘being stuck-shutting down’ ‘being in a group with extreme level differences’ and ‘self-allowing-being in the unknown’- ‘experiencing things different ways’. In this theoretical ‘liminal space’, Dawn demonstrated ‘coming to awareness-inner dialoging’ with herself as possible ‘shifting perspectives’: viewing others’ experiences’ as not distracting long enough for ‘self-allowing-doing a practice’- ‘focusing on her own thing’:

Dawn: If you're in a group of people who are all in the same or a similar place of discomfort, then you can sort of feel free to grow together and focus on your own thing and, you know, focus on yourself and what you're there for, but when you're in a group that has really extreme level differences and it's visibly obvious, um, then that just shuts everybody else down...I've been having to struggle to keep the doors open to say, "Oh, maybe other people experience things different ways."

Sara explained ‘self-allowing-being present’:

Sara: Using my body as a friend, like sensing my body as to a friend, as a part of myself that's wise and absorbing information over my body, allowing my body to receive information rather than just my mind.

Julie described freedancing ‘self-allowing-being in the unknown’

Julie: Freedancing can bring to the edge, challenges us, can unstuck us. Surprised at what I release in my body. I do this for the healing body, mind, emotions, spirit even if I don't know what that means.

Coming to Awareness

The process-concept of ‘coming to awareness’ emerged with four key processes *in the words of co-researchers*: ‘processing verbally’ [with others], ‘checking in’, ‘processing through movement’, and ‘knowing without thinking’ (see Appendix H).

Processing verbally [with others]. Julie initiated formal intentional ‘processing verbally’ with others during step three of the group meditation process, during learning sessions, and at other key post-activities. For example, on Day 5, Julie invited white belt students to engage ‘processing verbally’ and self-reflect about bodily experiences freedancing post-activity. The excerpts below illuminate ‘shifting perspectives’ from two members’ responses:

Dawn described freedancing ‘coming to awareness-processing through movement’:

Dawn: Freedancing when I didn’t think about it made that pain in my back go away.

Bridget described engaging ‘being connected-connecting to my focus and intent’ ‘being purposeful’ and ‘being off the beat’ in the way she chose to freedance her body engaging ‘self-allowing-making choices’ during the session; different from engaging ‘being stuck-being distracted’, ‘self-comparing’ or ‘feeling judged’ by other people in the space:

Bridget: I purposely went off the beat.

Dialogic practices within this somatic setting encouraged self-reflection, ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’ out loud with the trainer/teacher, rather than critical, rational, discursive or critical group conversations. In addition, the self-reflection inspired within the training was specifically directed toward learning ‘checking in’ with body, in contrast to stimulating intensive rational reasoning engaged in focus groups and interviews.

Crystal explained ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’:

Elizabeth: [Day 7 focus group] In what ways has critical reflection, which is sort of talking about your experiences together like this, in these focus groups influenced your perspective?

Crystal: It’s influenced my perspective in increasing my awareness. And by listening to other people’s experiences has connected me with old experiences and starting the practice of Nia and becoming more compassionate and empathetic to the process to the people having those experiences and where my present experience, um, it continues to open up blinders, um, and allows me to see even more perspectives and being creative and um, imagining possibilities of where I can go with that in the future.

Critical dialogue and reflection emerged as engaging ‘coming to awareness - processing verbally’ with others in the words of co-researchers. Engaging intentional dialogue ‘processing verbally’ with others was presented in Chapter Three and Chapter Four of this work including exemplars from the data. Exemplars of internal theoretical sampling in focus groups and interviews shaped the conceptualization of the ‘grounded theory’ and encouraged co-members’ ‘processing verbally’ with others through data collection methods imposed by this study. However, study-imposed methods of data collection were not of the naturalistic setting and therefore explored in the Discussion Chapter – Implications section.

Checking-in. ‘Processing verbally’ with others, co-members demonstrated, and/or discussed methods of **intentional dialoging with themselves** out loud and inner dialoging as internal, intentional ‘checking in’ strategies of ‘coming to awareness’.

“Reciprocity between the inner [first person self] and outer [self in action] world of [coming to awareness] was growing consciousness of actions (or inactions) in various settings that provided tension that led to exploration of contradictory feelings and belief systems” (Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

Crystal explained her ‘checking in’ process as her first person self stepping into her talking self in the moment of interaction as a kind silent listener:

Crystal: I step inside of myself, even as I'm talking, and listen to the words that I'm using. Because whatever it is that I'm saying, I'm just revealing my own self, and sometimes I go, wow, that's interesting, Crystal, where did that come from, you know? Not only for the benefit of the other person, but it's a benefit of me.

In an interview, Julie described asking her body direct questions and taking actions with the information she received. In this excerpt, Julie explained how her body responded providing specific instructions in alignment with Julie’s personal values and goals as trainer:

Julie: To just check in and say, “What is it that you want right now that would provide of you the optimal learning environment for tomorrow?” The optimal teaching environment. I need to go to bed. I need to take a shower...And that’s how I learn.

In a focus group, Julie explained ‘being quiet’ and ‘listening’ to what her body is physically ‘telling her’ in the process of ‘checking in’:

Julie: Being quiet and just listening to what my body had to say. For example, if I got home and I was hungry, I would eat immediately. And if I was tired, regardless of what the clock said, 8:15, I immediately go to bed. My body is physically telling me tonight that it’s tired, that it’s hungry...

Dawn explained having a kind of direct learning relationship with her human body engaging ‘checking in’:

Dawn: The way that your body, um, actually stands or sits or moves in space actually can be an indication of what's going on for me another way. It can also cue me into, hmm, things that I should pay attention to.

Bridget explained engaging ‘coming to awareness-checking in’ listening to her body and ‘shifting perspectives’ about being responsible for her own human body and what that meant:

Bridget: Learning to try to listen to my body. Becoming aware of what it needs and not a machine. What it needs – I learned how to listen to it.

Crystal described another use for ‘checking-in’ as an intentional process to ‘shift perspectives’ within herself to overcome her own habitual learning disposition engaging ‘being stuck-feeling overwhelmed’ from her belief that learning is challenging, to being open to learning something new:

Crystal: For me at first it's a challenge uh to learn something new. So it requires me to have all my senses uh on alert so I'm, I'm looking, I'm listening, I'm um I'm feeling, and time. I have to just allow myself uh set time. "OK, just be here and it will be OK". A lot of inner dialogue as well to say "relax, breathe" and uh just allow myself to go through that process of being open to have that experience.

Dawn discussed what she learned engaging ‘coming to awareness-checking in’ that led her to engaging ‘self-allowing-having permission’ to connect to her body, pay attention to her body, and take care of her body such that ‘shifting perspectives’ about learning responsibility moved from external locus of control to internal locus of control:

Dawn: Knowing how to check in with myself helps me to, first of all, be aware of my physical needs, address my physical needs. The heightened awareness...has, um, helped me to cue into that so I can address those needs so I can be more present and able to fully absorb and learn information.

Crystal explained that ‘checking in’ with her body provided access to information coming in from the mental or spiritual realm of self:

Crystal: The process of, going in and checking in my body is a very big one for me...information coming in from the mental realm or the spiritual realm, going “oh, yeaah, now I understand”. I was in a tense moment there with a relationship. “Ahh, okay, I get to release it now.” You know, and, and just continue to be present in the moment of it.

Intentional external and internal dialogic engagements: ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’, ‘coming to awareness-self-talking’ and ‘coming to awareness-inner dialoging’ provided access to tacit self-understanding and enabled articulating experiences from interior views, including the capability of self-generating ‘shifting perspectives’. These techniques of ‘coming to awareness’ were processes of the human body self-generating new information and discovering or accessing knowledge held within it. Co-researchers explained engaging ‘checking-in’ verbally or nonverbally, as intentional self-dialogue similar to a form of critical self-reflection capable of ‘shifting perspectives’ (see Appendix H).

Processing through movement. Bridget described engaging ‘coming to awareness-processing through movement’ in the way she experienced herself in movement:

Bridget: I’ve never taken any other workshops...I enjoy this workshop actually because it’s working out, you get to work out things with um your movement and you

don't even have to think sometimes. You can just act things out in your movement or get things out in your movement.

'Coming to awareness-processing through movement' emerged in different ways with 'shifting perspectives'; physically moving the human body without specific mental effort. 'Processing through movement' emerged in different ways as the human body did the work of proverbial critical reflection in the action of conscious physical movement 'without thinking' or engaging the mental realm.

Engaging this process stirred new information received as sense-making pieces of the lifeworld puzzle. Sometimes new information coming in from engaging 'processing through movement' was embodied through 'checking in' or engaging other process-concepts.

Julie discussed 'coming to awareness-processing through movement':

Julie: There are times where I'll get stuck get in my habits by doing [freedancing], um, I'll, I'll have amazing epiphanies and breakthroughs and other times I'll get completely stuck in my habits.

Crystal described freedancing during the training and noticing her mother's wedding ring, a simple gold band, had split in two. Later in the day, Crystal's bracelet broke dancing during another freedancing session. I observed her overflowing with tears after the session. That evening, Crystal described 'coming to awareness-processing through movement' and 'checking in' with herself. She explained these symbols arose together as her 'tipping point' that broke into seeing herself detaching and allowing herself to grieve:

Crystal: The ring breaking and then my other bracelet broke. That was during freedance. I noticed it on the floor. It was like all of it. It was like all of these things going on at the same time and then that was a "Oh my God!" – detachment. And so

when I was sitting outside it was sort of like everything clicking – detachment. It was like the tipping point where all the things, everything that’s sort of been happening... “Look Crystal! Look Crystal at what’s going on!” – break, detachment, falling, splat.

Bridget described ‘coming to awareness-processing through movement’ moving different parts of her body that uncovered buried body memories: ‘

Bridget: My body is really seeking to learn the awareness part of the moving your hips and what it has to open up for you and moving your chest. And moving different parts of your body has really opened up emotional things for me that I didn’t know was so buried. I guess – didn’t know was there. And is bringing a lot of awareness to myself. Bringing it out.

In some ways, the process concept ‘coming to awareness’ as it emerged in this study resembled the ‘extrarational approach’ of discernment in transformation theory recapitulated by Cranton (2009):

The “extrarational approach” occurs through creative expression, intuition, imagining and nurturing the soul based on artistic, creative and imaginative points of view.

Rather than reflection, Boyd (1991) and Boyd & Myers (1998), described discernment as the central process in transformation. In this view, transformation is a personal inner journey of individuation-learning through the psychic structures that make up the Self. Discernment, instead of critical reflection, may be defined as perceiving by multiple senses in order to see, recognize, apprehend and recognize as distinct or different; the act of discriminating by way of opening to alternative ways

of knowing and opening to experiences in different ways (as cited by Cranton, 2009, p. viii).

Knowing without thinking. Julie described a relationship with her body almost like ‘being connected’ to her own intuition, engaging ‘knowing without thinking’, ‘waiting and listening’ knowing that the guidance she received mandated bodily actions that she would otherwise regret not taking:

Julie: Um, I always feel like I'm receiving guidance. I felt that before but now it's as if I know, wait to listen. Like it's coming in and I actually listen, as opposed to, ah, I knew I was supposed to do that.

‘Coming to awareness-knowing without thinking’ emerged as drawing on different kinds of knowledge available within the human body in different ways. This kind of knowing emanated as if it were a special kind of trustworthy internal human knowing. Deep knowing seemed to be an accumulation of experiences or other kind of knowing reservoir accessed within the body when needed. Co-members discussed accessing it in different ways and called it different names. It arose in different ways, sometimes with ‘shifting perspectives’ and sometimes as a deep internal resource for creativity, learning, and decision making.

Ruth explained engaging ‘knowing without thinking’ when learning dance. She explained that her mind or thinking was not involved; her body drew from past experience with movement, body memory, or muscle memory:

Ruth: I don't have to think through my mind...my mind's not really involved in the process at all at that point...They would show it to me and my body would follow along but I think that's just because I've had enough experience with movement that

the mind's not involved anymore it's just sort of body memory or something or muscle memory.

Crystal described engaging 'knowing without thinking' when making big decisions:

Crystal: If there's a big decision, um, I will go within my own self to check into my intuitive and check into, to, um, my being-ness, um, and leave it there. Sometimes the answers will come quickly but then sometimes it takes a night or a couple of nights where a decision will take a while to get there but, um, things usually start to reveal themselves.

Dawn described 'coming to awareness-knowing without thinking' as 'having an intuitive sense'; 'not having evidence' but 'knowing I had to' as 'something internally saying to me':

Dawn: I have an intuitive sense that this [Nia training] will change and improve everything about every aspect of my life but that's not really based on any evidence or anything from my past. All I know is this is something I could not, not do. I had to. Something internally said to me I have to take this Nia training.

Elizabeth: You mentioned intuitive earlier, how do receive that or sense that, or how does it occur to you?

Dawn: Well, yeah see, all of this is tricky to, to verbalize because as soon as you ask a question like that my mind splits into two, you know, my mind is busy doing what it does, but that's all very different from what I'm experiencing and knowing. So, I think that this knowing um, um it's not a voice in my head. For me, the knowing is something deep in my core...

Co-members explained ‘coming to awareness-knowing without thinking’ as drawing on different kinds of knowledge available within the human body in different ways. This kind of knowing emerged as if it were a special kind of trustworthy internal human knowing and did not often accompany ‘processing verbally’. Many of these excerpts are from observation data and member checking conversations.

‘Knowing without thinking’ was different flavors of deep ‘knowing’ with limited mental involvement. When engaging the mental realm with this phenomenon, most co-researchers described ‘having no words’, ‘not being able to verbalize’, or ‘not articulating’ it very well. Table 9 contains components for this interesting finding:

Table 9. *Coming to Awareness-Knowing Without Thinking.*

‘Coming To Awareness-Knowing Without Thinking’
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘validating what I already knew’• ‘resonating with my core’• ‘recognizing how much I do know’• ‘having it come to me’• ‘not having to think’• ‘doing it with no thought’• ‘having muscle memory’• ‘sparking creative energy existing within me’• ‘being embodied’• ‘receiving guidance’• ‘checking my being-ness’• ‘knowing deep in my core’• ‘confirming my intuition’

Being Connected

Crystal described sensing ‘being connected’ while freedancing on Day 3. She explained ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ in the ways her body movements of ‘sinking and rising’ carried over memories of being at her mother’s funeral which led her

into different ‘shifting perspectives’ that “it’s all connected”. Crystal’s process of ‘being connected’ was a deep interconnectedness experienced through her body:

Crystal: It was being present with outness in the cemetery. It’s all connected to Nia putting my mom down into the ground – it was just sink and rise. Sink and rise. Again, the symbolisms and everything keeps coming again and again and it’s being reinforced with the people that are around me. I don’t have to worry or feel like I’m not loved. I know that I am. I know that I’m surrounded by such wonderful, connected people who are on their journey that I respect with an energy of just excitement and going forward again.

The burgeoning categories presented with this important process concept are literally ‘being connected’ closely with other process concepts including ‘shifting perspectives’. There was an underlying process involving ‘being connected’ that was intricately ‘being connected’ to what held personal meaning and feeling, partly construed from different points of lifeworld feeling. Therefore, seven key components associated with ‘being connected’ surfaced in the conceptualization process (see Appendix H). ‘Being connected’ was the action experience and feeling of ‘being connected’ *in the words of co-researchers*. These are not direct quotes, but they are in vivo language from multiple co-researchers:

- being connected -connected to my awareness
- being connected-connected to my movement/sensation
- being connected-connected to my body
- being connected-connecting to my [values or beliefs]
- being connected-carrying experiences over

- being connected-connecting to focus and intent; and
- being connected-connecting to possibilities.

To note, the ‘ing’ form of ‘being connected’ differentiated the future-felt-self from ‘being connected’ in the present moment.

Interestingly, ‘being connected’ was a process of ‘being connected’ to other process-concepts, wherein newly acquired bodily knowledge, transformative insight, or meaningful transformation might not have been embodied without this engagement. Engaging ‘being connected’ in diverse combinations with other process-concepts related to highly subjective *hows* and *whats* about ‘shifting perspectives’ were, in fact, transformative learning experiences.

Verbatim excerpts from the data in this section illuminate the personal significance of this emergent concept. I prefaced these excerpts to highlight interpretive instances of the concept. Some are slightly longer because of the subjectivity and construction of meaning within and without the personal experiencing space of ‘being connected’.

Julie described engaging ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ self-generating a sudden experience like an orienting breakthrough, ‘shifting perspectives’ in a condensed moment of intense sensation while eating a bowl of fruit loops:

Julie: Eating fruit loops and suddenly realizing “Oh my God! These fruit loops are unlike anything in the world!” This thing overcomes you, suddenly realizing “Oh my God! I’m just grateful to be alive!”

Bridget described engaging ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ after moving through tolerating ‘being stuck-being distracted’ by her initial emotional discomfort watching her own human body in movement: ‘being the most creepiest thing ever’ when it

was 'being first time'. Bridget explained engaging 'self-allowing-being in the unknown' and 'being connected-connecting to my movement', she found and felt something new within herself:

Bridget: The watching your hands thing – to me at first that was the most creepiest thing ever. But when I was able to really do it and follow it and feel it, I, I found art.

'Being connected' was sometimes precursory and recursive with engaging other process concepts in addition to being an independent process of personal meaning-making and deep sensory feeling. The process-concept of 'being connected' seemed to emerge at times as if a process of 'interconnecting' wherein different kinds of bodily awakenings and personal meanings flowed in with clear harmonic resonation leading to new insights, other connections, new learning, and different kinds of 'shifting perspectives'. Tisdell (1998) sheds theoretical light about this seemingly broad concept:

In somatic knowing, there is an emphasis on the body-mind-spirit connection, rather than the separation; or a relationship between rationality and affective domains of knowledge (as cited by Stuckey, 2009, p. 30).

Sara described engaging 'being connected-connecting to my body' and engaging 'being connected' in multiple ways on the last day of her practicum:

Sara: Nia movements connect me to my body. They help me feel balanced in my feminine and masculine parts...And the spine, connected to the core and having the spine be integrated with all movements...It's deepened my relationship with healthy emotions, and mind, and spirit, connected to the physical. Observing others and watching people's bodies move... I never really thought about it before in that way. And it gives me a sense to appreciate and have love and compassion for all of us.

Like Sara, the following bullet list of direct in vivo quotes from other members illuminates iterations of ‘being connected’ within the feeling of the learning space and people in it. Some of these acknowledgements were discussed at the end of training or during the post-interview:

- *‘being comfortable in the training, people and the space’*
- *‘being more opened with myself and others’*
- *‘having a safe space to practice’*
- *‘letting the deepest parts of me come out’ [freedancing]*
- *‘being less judgmental of myself and others’*
- *‘being in a candy store’*
- *‘having more acceptance of mine and others’ feelings’*
- *‘having compassion for the struggles’*

‘Being connected-connecting to my awareness’ was an enfoldment of simultaneous insights arising with ‘coming to awareness’ and ‘self-allowing-doing a practice’ in different ways. These synergistic qualities gave rise to distinctive sensations as ways of being with self, others, and the world in the present and future felt-self.

In this excerpt, Dawn discussed surprising personal discoveries ‘being connected’ in multiples ways through her body movements:

Dawn: When we were working on that pelvic region and moving our hips and swiveling and just kind of feeling where things were, I had never really allowed myself to engage with that movement and to really feel it or internalize it. I was kind of shocked to discover that it really feels good and it helped my lower back pain. And it loosened things up. And it made me realize that if I’ve not moved that way because of comfort and probably some of my associations and programming and whatever

around that particular region of the body, then I've been kind of missing out on all that sensation and feeling as well as self-connection... So all of that was, um, very, uh, meaningful for me to make that connection and, um, feel that freedom.

Accordingly, the multiplicity of members' experiences 'being connected to my body' emerged conceptually as an explicit sub-concept of 'being connected'. In addition, 'being connected- connecting to my' values or beliefs emerged as different manifestations of meaning-making from engaging 'being connected' more deeply with realized or future-felt personal values or beliefs.

To clarify, this study did not seek to *measure* transformative learning by subjecting members' meaning-making experiences of 'being connected-connecting to my' values or beliefs as negating experiences of 'shifting perspectives'.

'Being connected' arising from different experiences engaging 'connecting to my body' in a multiplicity of ways was integrative with other process concepts and often with transformative learning and meaning-making. Similarly, 'being connected': 'connecting to possibilities', and 'carrying experiences over' was a process of 'being connected' to all possible personal meanings, widening into a sensory glimpse of those possibilities; and carrying-over key lived-experiences, integrating them into the lifeworld.

Dawn discussed engaging 'being connected-connecting to my movements/sensations' and 'being connected-connecting to my' values and beliefs 'having a spiritual practice' 'feeling true for me' as her "positive, joy-seeking" lifeworld. In this focus group excerpt, Dawn reiterated 'shifting perspectives' from an old lifeworld, uttering old words with new meanings, making sure I was 'writing that down'.

‘Having a spiritual practice’ in Dawn’s new lifeworld was ‘being emotionally connected to others’, ‘having tangible motions’ for living out new meanings for old words and worlds. As such, Dawn described her human body engaging ‘being connected’ where ‘having benediction’ was literally ‘stepping’ her body out into actively ‘going forth in joy’; creating experiences in alignment with her lifeworld values and the ways she feels about herself, others, and the world:

Dawn: At the end [of a Nia class] they’ll [the Nia teacher] say something like, you know, “now, step into your day”, the joy, “take this joy with you”. Like sometimes you’re “gathering the joy” and “now, step out into your day” or “share that with others”. It’s so connected to the tangible, concrete motion of going forth in joy to this abstract idea of emotional connection to others. I guess that’s a benediction. See, I’m back to my spiritual practice. Write that down.

The imagined, or future-felt self, engaged ‘being connected-connecting to possibilities’ as realized potentials in altered ways than before. In addition, the process-concept ‘being connected’ emerged as ‘being connected’ to itself as in a felt-sense of being connected-‘connecting to my X’ or any combination of other emergent concepts including: ‘being first time’, ‘being stuck’, ‘coming to awareness’, ‘self-allowing’, ‘learning by experience’ and/or ‘shifting perspectives’. From their book, *Creative Expression in Transformative Learning* (2009), editors Hoggan, Simpson & Stuckey provide a supportive summary for ‘being connected’:

Creative expression is a powerful tool to access knowledge that resides deep within us and allows our conscious thinking to interact with out subconscious knowledge,

thus yielding a more holistic understanding of ourselves, our experiences, and the world in which we live (p. 16).

Learning by Experience

During an interview, Julie explained the challenge of learning and the body without experience:

Elizabeth: How do you learn from physical sensations, movement, motion and/or body shapes that your body does?

Julie: I don't know if I can expand on that without having someone physically have an experience in your body. I have a physical body and I use it as my guide and my source...If you are not aware that you have a physical body, sensing it is more challenging?

'Learning by experience' was learning from self-generated experiences of the human body in this training. By the same token, learning and the human body was a diligent process of 'bringing it back to the body', engaging 'being connected-connecting to my body' so the body could learn by experience.

Sara explained 'self-allowing-being present':

Sara: Using my body as a friend, like sensing my body as to a friend, as a part of myself that's wise and absorbing information over my body, allowing my body to receive information rather than just my mind.

Julie explained that emotional connections with new information improved taking the information into the personal experiencing space of her human body in other adult learning settings:

Julie: I like to find a way to bring [external information] into my body. Is there a way that I can take this information and bring it into my body? If something would come across in a workshop that had an emotional impact on me, can I now take it into the physical? Yes.

On the flip side, Ruth spoke her body's words of refusal when she explained that emotional connections can also prevent learning by experience:

Ruth: If you have a preconceived um or past emotion connected to whatever it is you are being expected to learn, for instance, math...then I'm not gonna even listen because as soon as I hear that my brain just thinks it's, it has to shut off because there's a lot of bad emotions connected with not understanding math you know...Then an emotion gets connected to it so every time it comes up your whole body goes, "Oh no, don't, can't do it".

Physical sensations alone did not qualify as learning in the same way letters have no meaning until they are performance indicators. However, different physical sensations that gained attention enough to enter into sense-making agendas carried weight for meaningful learning experiences and sometimes 'shifting perspectives'. According to Barry Brummett (1976):

Sense data by themselves are not experience. Experience is sensation plus meaning. Sensation alone is meaningless. To all experiences people give meaning, a process which is inherently and uniquely human. It is in this sense that people make their own reality, for we give to experience its absolutely necessary component of meaning (as cited by Brinton, 1985, p. 274).

Dawn delivered an expanded perspective ‘engaging with the body’ and learning by experience:

Dawn: [Day 7] I think that the experience comes from actually engaging with the body, you know rather than just taking in information with the mind...It helps me to be reminded that we’re all human forms...in addition to bringing my focus back to my own body, it helps me bring my focus back to the physical bodies of the people around me. You know, as opposed to just seeing people as ideas or a part of my... You know that they have a physical place in space, in time, with physical needs and so there’s just more connection and awareness to people...

From a humanistic perspective, “place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning” (Tuan, 1979, p. 387). In this sense, ‘place’ was the human body and ‘space’ was the personal experiencing space of the human body in the context of ‘learning by experience’ in this study.

From the perspective of social context, renewed attention to the definition of the context meant the inner world of the human body, the outer world learning environment of the Nia white belt training and Nia classes, dynamics of symbolic interactionism, and perspective transformation. “In order for an event to take on the quality of a salient phenomenon, it must be perceived as possessing a coherent structure and observed against a social or physical background...a social phenomenon is born when recurring social events are noticed inter-subjectively by members and a context of meaning is sought out. Viewpoint enters in when and effort is made to attach meaning to the event” (Cupchick, 2001, p. 4).

Along this line, the event was the personal experiencing space of learning and the human body such that the shared context of ‘learning by experience’ provided the backdrop for constructing realities, learning, and meaning-making. ‘Viewpoints’ or ‘shifting perspectives’ were derived from meaning-making about different experiences of the human body in this setting such that ‘learning by experience’ emerged as the shared context in this study.

Furthermore, ‘learning by experience’ was the shared conceptual context from which members drew in this study. In addition, ‘learning by experience’ seemed to overtake specific learning preferences, as perhaps being its own learning preference including providing the situated context overshadowing the setting itself.

Primary sources of data provided an understanding of meaning-structures about the concept of ‘learning by experience’ in this study. Comparing learning preferences in the Nia setting with learning in other types of adult training settings garnered concepts such as: ‘somatic paradigm’, ‘experiential learning’, ‘learning preferences’ and ‘traditional pedagogy’.

Learning preferences related to traditional pedagogy emerged as a category descriptive of different ways members explained exteroceptive (outside the body) and cognitive learning preferences: ‘having written instructions’, ‘reading and writing’, ‘taking notes’, ‘lecturing’, ‘seeing’, and ‘hearing’. Interestingly, these preferences elucidated an external locus of control: ‘needing structure’, ‘needing permission from the teacher’, ‘needing the teacher to show me’, and ‘knowing what the teacher wants’.

By the same token, co-researchers described shared learning experiences in the Nia training as: ‘somatic paradigm’ and ‘experiential learning’. Learning preferences, ‘somatic

paradigm’, and ‘experiential learning’ shaped the concept of ‘learning by experience’ as illustrated in the conceptualization table (Table 10).

To note, one member changed her cognitive learning preference, ‘reading and writing’ to ‘learning best by experience’.

Table 10. *Learning by Experience.*

Nia Training – Somatic Paradigm	Learning Preferences – Experiential Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘sitting on the floor’ • ‘having my own experiences’ • ‘moving my body’ • ‘dancing’ • ‘not knowing what was coming next’ • ‘having long days’ • ‘engaging my body’ • ‘listening to my body’ • ‘having body awareness’ • ‘connecting to my body’ • ‘bringing the focus back to the body’ • ‘taking care of my own physical needs’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘learning best by experience’ • ‘learning best kinesthetically’ • ‘learning from my tactile senses’ • ‘doing it myself’ • ‘learning from trial and error’ • ‘mimicking’ • ‘learning from others’ • ‘practicing’ • ‘having something come across in an emotional way’ • ‘being able to take it to the physical’ • ‘not sitting still’

Literature offers the context of ‘learning by experience’ in somatic, experiential settings like this one “possess a number of challenges providing a catalyst for a variety of opportunities to explore different parts of self and motivational dispositions” (Taylor, 2008, p. 83) called “felt involvement” (Celsi & Olson, 1988, as cited by Taylor, 2008, p. 83).

Accordingly, the context from which members made meaning emerged as different engagements of ‘felt involvement’ arising from ‘learning by experience’.

Shifting Perspectives

This section presents ‘shifting perspectives’ about the group meditation process as it emerged as salient but with divergent meanings, bodily experiences, and different ‘shifting perspectives’ among white belt students in the training.

Bridget discussed ‘shifting perspectives’ engaging ‘coming to awareness-knowing without thinking’ during step two ‘sitting down’, of the group mediation process:

Bridget: [Day 2] When I feel most opened-up is when we sit down in the mornings after we have, um, cleared our space...I wasn't even trying to let it. I wasn't really trying to get into it and it, it just, it really does. It subconsciously clears your space and that's probably the most I've felt really opened that I could probably talk.

The group meditation process seemed to present a recurring symbol of Dawn's old lifeworld such that her participation disposition was limited and ‘triggered’- ‘hating this’, engaging ‘being stuck-shutting down’. Several times during group check-ins over the week, Dawn spoke about her discomfort with the group meditation process that seemed to mirror her old lifeworld, particularly in ways this group activity was (re)living ‘being like a fundamentalist hierarchy’, ‘being uncomfortable’, ‘being in a cult’ and ‘not having a choice’. In addition, Dawn seemed to engage ‘being connected-carrying experiences over’ from ‘being first time-first Nia classes’ into the training expressed as ‘being first time-not what I expected’.

In these short excerpts, it may be possible to consider the power of body memories Dawn described as her body ‘storing traumas in my cells’ perhaps ‘triggered’ by what felt like old ways of doing her body ‘acting the same way’ as other bodies from an old lifeworld. In my observations, the group meditation process might have activated a ‘no deviating’ memory by its precise guidelines.

In addition, Dawn's ‘shifting perspective’ about this particular group activity continued past the post interview excerpt into interpretive member-checking two years post-study. Two years later, Dawn clarified that her participation in step one observed on Day 6

and Day 7 was engaging ‘self-allowing-making a choice’ and engaging ‘being connected to my’ ethical values- ‘being caregiving’ to Bridget who was the only other eligible white belt student to complete step one.

Dawn: [Day 3 during group check-in] I hate this...This ritual is like a fundamentalist hierarchy going on...I am not comfortable with this practice.

Dawn: [Day 5 during group check-in] This is a cult...This is not like my [Nia] class... if this were like a Nia class with focus and intent it would be better.

Dawn: [Post-interview] It was so absurd to have a ceremony, a ritual that was just put in there for a larger group, didn't apply to us...I'm imagining and hoping that in a different [training] by an experienced instructor, that there would have been context and, um, um, choice.

Crystal explained she preferred her body in motion, that her body in movement ‘shifted perspectives’ to ‘being in a place of calm’ and ‘sitting still’ in silent meditation was neither catalyst for ‘shifting perspectives’ nor an effective way of learning from her self-ascribed ‘learning best kinesthetically’ preference. As such, sitting still for group meditation during the white belt training seemed to mean experiencing a different kind of calm that was symbolic of current lifeworld transitions and personal learning goals to feel herself living out ‘being congruent’, ‘being in alignment’, ‘being responsible’, ‘having integrity’ with her words and actions. In this excerpt, Crystal described experiencing her body in sitting meditation as living out her learning goals and personal agreements:

Crystal: [Day 3] The challenge for me is to sit in silence, to take myself to a place of calm; a place of meditation, no movement. It's like my body's more in movement and action, so I'm the opposite way...[Group meditation] is a ritual that we made an

agreement to honor this ritual... We agreed that we would [do group meditation according to the group schedule promise] and we were told [the steps of the process]. And that's all, and that's what I was doing... committing to my responsibility and my declaration, having honor for my agreement and respect for this work.

Although the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ was presented with other concepts throughout this chapter, comparing ‘shifting perspectives’ on the macro level of a particular shared incident of salience demonstrated a cross-section of diversity and subjective reality construction in personal meaning-making. “The actual process involved in the construction of meaning may be different, but meaning is still constructed; it does not exist as an absolute truth outside of the self...reality is defined by each person” (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 8).

In the opening of this chapter, I introduced the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ as descriptive of ways it emerged in the study. In addition, each concept presented herein included verbatim exemplars and/or conceptualization tables in the words of co-researchers that conveyed different ‘shifting perspectives’. Rosemarie Anderson (2009), transpersonal psychologist and qualitative researcher, explains presenting research findings for studies involving bodily awareness and personal transformation:

To communicate powerfully and resonantly, [A Voice of The Body] inquiry invit[ed] research participants to speak from their own unique and personal perspective born of their own experience. Accordingly, researchers are urged to quote, often extensively, the actual words of participants so to retain and portray the fullness of the participants’ unique voices and phenomenon studied in communicating results. Communicating research findings close to the bone of the experiences themselves,

enables readers to resonate with the stories from within their own bodies by connecting to the felt experience of the tellers (p. 52).

‘Being stuck’, ‘being first time’, and experiences of unmet expectations may not have immediately resolved with ‘shifting perspectives’ as other process concepts sometimes did. However, they served as a felt-catalysts connected to bodily-lived experience that brought attention to matters of personal meaning. “Transformative learning is a dynamic process that involves potentially intense emotions and new ideas that can dramatically shift a learner’s worldview” (Hoggan et al., 2009, pp. 16-17). Edge tolerances emerged as embodied constructions associated with liminal space, discomfort thresholds, and personal triggers associated with these particular concepts. Each concept presented herein included verbatim exemplars and/or conceptualization tables in the words of co-researchers that conveyed different kinds of ‘shifting perspectives’.

Therefore, ‘shifting perspectives’ were customized to each reality such that extracting or listing them would perhaps dilute the message that A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) told concerning different ways transformative learning was experienced for seven women in the Nia program.

A Voice of The Body – Conceptual Review

A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) (re)presented a visual depiction of the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ and the human body as it emerged *in the words of co-researchers* as the rudimentary grounded theory containing the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives, the tentative precursory concept, the four process-concepts, and the shared context of ‘learning by experience’ in this Nia white belt training program.

A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) presents the words of co-participants as an alternative view into the tentative precursory concept of ‘being first time’, the four processes-concepts situated within the circle, the shared context of ‘learning by experience’ and the phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ hovering as integrated in the overarching rectangular shape. This interpretive rendering holds the keys to ways the human body experienced transformative learning in the Nia white belt with seven women co-researchers.

Generating this model reflects the notion of multiple ways of knowing as the human body was not separate from experiencing transformative learning. A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) revealed an inclusive perspective that the human body was inextricably entwined with experiences, perceptions, and learning. Co-researchers conceptualized different bodily-lived experiences of the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and intuitive realms of the human body in transformative learning in the Nia training.

Conceptualization of the processes in which members engaged during the white belt training: ‘being stuck’, ‘self-allowing’, ‘coming to awareness’, and ‘being connected’ are presented in a circle. However, each process stands alone and can emerge in any particular order such that invoking them occurred at different times, manifested different bodily experiences, were enacted for different reasons, and felt in different ways. Additionally, the processes discussed herein were iterative, recursive; and sometimes difficult to verbalize.

In addition, I cannot immediately suggest that ‘shifting perspectives’ was *the* single social process. The analytic interconnections between concepts suggested linear, non-linear and simultaneous processes within deeply entrenched concepts that begat another, emerged together, but were not dependent on any for the other in this rendering.

Members moved through these processes 'learning by experience' in the training at their own pace, in their own styles, and with their own purpose and design. Likewise, co-members' bodily experiences engaging these processes emerged with divergent 'shifting perspectives'. Felt-lifeworlds overlapped with sense-making strategies and personal meanings influenced personal qualifiers delineating meaningful experiences, perceptions, and learning.

This 'grounded theory' was neither linear nor sequential as different processes (within the circle) were often recursive. However, it is important to note the tentative, compulsory position of 'being first time' noted with the arrow touching into the process-concept circle. When 'being first time' was experienced or triggered shades of 'being uncomfortable' or accompanied with a meaning experience within the spectrum of 'being first time-not what I expected', the first process concept engaged was usually some shade of 'being stuck'. Engaging 'being stuck' created a theoretical space like a holding pattern, a liminal space, a stop-gap - until any other concept, including 'shifting perspectives' reached into meaning-making agendas.

However, experiences of 'being first time' did not always trigger discomfort and 'being uncomfortable' did always beget engaging 'being stuck'. Therefore, the notion of edge tolerances was personal thresholds for tolerating 'being uncomfortable' holding a liminal space or taking an action to alleviate the sense of discomfort. Each member related differently to the multifaceted liminal edge and enrolled in various processes differently. . In summary, edge tolerances and liminal spaces emerged with other process-concepts associated with potential discomfort sensations, particularly 'self-allowing'.

‘Being first time’ was tentative, meaning it was not always present in the feeling of experience, but it was precursory when experienced. It impacted entry points of personal engagements with meaning-making (perceptions, learning, and experience), and colored dispositions and feelings of the personal and social experiencing space. Perceptions, learning, and experience related with all process-concepts, particularly ‘being connected-carrying my experiences over’ were literal (re)felt-meanings of the lifeworld projected into highly subjective and very real seemingly unconnected situations.

‘Shifting perspectives’ did not require discomfort according to A Voice of The Body (Figure 7). Although critical reflection and dialogue per study-imposed methods of data collection generated the ‘processing verbally’ [with others] process of ‘coming to awareness’, ‘shifting perspectives’ emerged engaging other process-concepts natural to the somatic learning setting.

Chapter Summary

My research goal was to co-construct a rudimentary ‘grounded theory’ about transformational learning and the human body in a Nia white belt training program. My task as co-researcher in the production of this work was to present an interpretive rendering of what emerged as perspective transformation and the human body with seven women co-researchers in this Nia white belt training.

The phenomenon of ‘shifting perspectives’ was one of many in the ‘grounded theory’ that was presented. Certainly its overarching theoretic position in the conceptual model was directly influenced by the nature of the inquiry itself: To discover different ways the human body experienced transformational learning in this Nia white belt training. In addition, the uncanny (re)production of ‘being first time’ served to be an important precursory concept

despite the auspicious, unrepeatable external circumstances and important lifeworld transitions for co-researchers involved in this study.

Key process-concepts were front-loaded in the words of co-researchers as phenomenon in themselves that elucidated interpretive understanding how and why perspective transformation happened for human bodies in the training. 'Being stuck', 'self-allowing', 'coming to awareness', and 'being connected' were near stand-alone interpretations and descriptive slices of experience as a whole. A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) served as a visual rendering of the theoretical components of this rudimentary inductive 'grounded theory'. This rendering and data presented in this chapter provided a thorough view as one possible view (Charmaz, 2009) towards understanding and explaining different multilayered experiences and processes of the human body engaged in transformational learning in a somatic, experiential Nia training program.

The Discussion Chapter that follows elaborates on key Findings as a basis for theoretical synthesis to explore a blending of the somatic perspective for adult transformative learning theory.

Chapter VI: Discussion

The blurring of distinctions between mind-body-spirit, and the understanding that they have reciprocal effects upon one another, is a core ontological characteristic of a transformative somatic learning theory...The physical, emotional, mental, spiritual – they all have the same address. They are not separate from the lived human body in experience, perception or learning. There is far-reaching interconnection between aspects of the individual, their mind-body-spirit, and the capacity for the human body to affect and be affected by learning experiences (adapted from Johnston & Barcan, 2006).

Prelude

The adapted introductory quote from Johnston & Barcan (2006) describes the multilayered and interconnected ontological subtleties comprising the totality and emergent inextricability of the lived human body in experience, perception, and learning presented by *A Voice of The Body* (Figure 7).

In brief, this chapter is a theoretic discussion of elevated conceptual findings exploring the implications of a potential transformative somatic learning theory. Elevated concepts derived from emergent findings, supported by words of co-researchers as exemplars, provided the ability to compare with existing transformative learning theory to isolate merging and divergent spaces. The goal of this discussion is to leverage theoretic implications of the findings in a conversation that supports the conceptual development and synthesis of its own theory and to broaden transformative learning theory. Tenets of a propositional transformative somatic learning theory suggest: somatic habits of body, somatic meaning structures, bodily experiences of contrasts, bodily knowledge, movement as

cognition/embodied movement, and somatic reflection. This chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for this work, study limitations, and future directions.

Summary of Study Aim, Purpose, and Need

The aim of this exploratory grounded theory case study was to consider a voice of the human body for adult transformational learning theory using a semi-constructivist grounded theory case study strategy to co-create a rudimentary substantive theory with seven women in a Nia training to better understand and explain ways the human body experienced transformational learning. Therefore, considering a voice of the body seemed appropriate language for the research goal to elucidate theoretical understanding of the mostly elusive human body doing the work of transformational learning. ‘Bringing it back to the body’, making the tacit explicit through participants’ words and interpretive accounts, gave rise to a voice of the body that explained ways the human body affected and was affected by transformative learning in a somatic learning paradigm of the Nia training.

The purpose of a grounded theory method was to offer potential insights to further holistic integration of adult transformative learning theory – urging explicit recognition of human body (the somatic) in the process of transformative learning, drawing from a uniquely body-centered experiential education program.

In preceding chapters, I discussed ways transformative learning theory was enacted in methods of data collection, guided in-depth conceptualization of the final stages of data analysis, and cast light on interpretations of what emerged inductively as theoretically similar. The findings of this work were presented in the words of co-researchers as the emergent conceptual model – A Voice of The Body (Figure 7). This model was a semi-constructivist interpretive rendering and rudimentary co-constructed grounded theory

(re)presenting ways the human body experienced transformative learning in this Nia white belt training program.

The conceptual model depicted the phenomenon of interest, shifting perspectives; and the concept of being first time. It also illustrated the four processes engaged: ‘being stuck’, ‘self-allowing’, ‘coming to awareness’, and ‘being connected’ within the context of ‘learning by experience’. Far-reaching capacities of the human body to affect and be affected by learning experiences provided a basis for theoretical synthesis of key findings.

A synthesis of key findings extends the research endeavor toward a more unified theory of transformative learning to include the somatic perspective offered by A Voice of The Body (Figure 7). Therefore, I elevated components of the emergent conceptual model to extend theoretic consideration as a tentative transformative somatic learning theory and explore merges and divergences with existing transformative learning theory.

Comparing and contrasting theoretical tenants from a somatic perspective was a leap of faith making the tacit explicit and questioning the unquestioned. With (emergent) grounded premise, I explain conceptual evidence warranting interruption of ongoing intersubjective assumptions that only allude to the human body. In this way, perhaps this synthesis will pique incentive for addressing the somatic perspective explicitly with long-standing theory - not to dichotomize old wounds – but to broaden trusted theory. In this discussion, I test the conceptual reality that the lived human body legitimizes and compliments placement in adult transformative learning theory. These concepts include: somatic habits of body, somatic meaning structures, bodily knowledge, embodied movement, and somatic reflection.

Since the introduction of transformation theory in 1978, human beings have been stymied by ‘cultural permission’ in theory and praxis. For more than a decade into the twenty-first century, it is time to consider the possibility that we may be caught in our own history and reliving it...“requiring a structural change in the way we see transformative learning theory and its relationships, and move towards a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative theory inclusive of the somatic in the experience of transformational learning” (Mezirow, 1978, p. 100).

Rosemarie Anderson (2001) offers a perspective from the scientific field of transpersonal psychology about the brain, the mind, and the human body in transformational learning:

Even more intrinsic to the body is the awakened body of a vaster intelligence...The mind itself doesn’t wake up in [transformational learning]. The body wakes up in [transformational learning]...We’re drenched in the ideology of mind. I know where the brain is, but as for the mind I haven’t got a clue. But I do know where my body is (p. 17).

Orientation

The intention of this study was to create, with co-participants, a rudimentary ‘grounded theory’ in a somatic Nia white belt training and compare the findings with adult transformational learning theory for potential inroads toward a more unified theory of transformative learning. A voice of the human body as it emerged in this study offered ‘theoretic’ plausibility to further synthesize key research findings, garner theoretical comparisons, and discuss theoretical merges and divergences. Making different ‘theoretic’ connections explicit, I elevated the conceptual model into a tentative transformative somatic

learning theory to “demonstrate how [the] grounded theory refines, extends, challenges or supersedes extant concepts” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 169). Moreover, I (re)introduce theoretic components derived from the conceptual model as elements of a propositional transformative somatic learning theory. Developing abstract concepts and specifying relationships between them (Charmaz, 2006) served the purpose of synthesizing key theoretic findings. Theoretic synthesis illuminated the merges and divergences between the two theories to actualize a voice of the body for theoretic integration.

To synthesize a discussion and theoretical comparison of key findings, I necessarily drew from multiple cross-disciplinary literatures to support the undertaking of elevating the conceptual model to a tentative transformative somatic learning theory. Focusing on different perspectives within transformational learning theory and perspectives drawn from cross-disciplinary literature enabled theoretical comparison. I included co-participants’ voices from the Findings as exemplary snippets, in gerund form, ‘directed toward action’ (Charmaz, 2006; Mezirow, 2009a, p. 22), retaining a voice of the body within analytical “elements that stand out as clearly and distinctly determinable” (Mezirow, p. 23) for purposes of cohesive theoretic comparison.

Synthesis of Key Findings

For theoretical comparative and evaluative synthesis purposes, the rudimentary ‘grounded theory’ model presented in this work provided a basis for theoretical elevation. The conceptual crux merging as the phenomenon of transformative learning had “...both individual and social dimensions and implications...[d]emanding we be aware of how we come to our knowledge and as aware as we can [be] about the values that lead us to our perspectives” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 77). An extension of this conversation leads to a deeper

understanding of the fundamental somatic transformations drawn from A Voice of The Body (Figure 7) as a province of transformative somatic learning.

I preface this discussion by defining the ‘embodied rational’ of Western life as sociocultural embeddedness of living distant from the human body, relying on logic and reason and the over-functioning mental realm as the primary concern of human praxis. This quote, from a study of psychology of the practice of law, describes embodied rational: “Embodied rationality can be applied to reasoning and decision-making processes... decisions involving risk and time, decisions about oneself, and judgments about others” (Spellman & Schnall, 2009, p. 117).

A transformative somatic learning theory suggests *including* embodied rational with the somatic described as: “Embodiment is the human experience of simultaneously having and being a body; the term conceptualizes the body as a dynamic, organic site of meaningful experience rather than as a physical object distinct from the self or mind” (Hudak, McKeever, & Wright, 2007).

Interestingly, processes involving ‘coming to awareness- self-talking’, ‘inner-dialoging’, and ‘checking in’ were important keys to a somatic approach, which together suggest somatic reflection in a transformative somatic learning theory. Somatic reflection was also a distinctive sensation of heightened sensory awareness *and* a process that could present with bodily knowledge. ‘Doing a practice’ was self-directed communing with discrete yet eminent realms of the human body; with the physical realm of body as mediator. Somatic reflection was a transformative, self-generated experience of intentional self-self body dialogue. **Somatic reflection** emerged with:

- ‘coming to awareness-self-talking’
- ‘inner-dialoging’
- ‘checking in’
 - ‘self-allowing-being present’
 - ‘being connected-connecting to my body’
 - ‘connecting to my awareness’
 - ‘connecting to focus and intent’
 - ‘connecting to possibilities’
 - ‘carrying experiences over’
 - ‘connecting to my values and/or beliefs’

Therefore, somatic reflection became an important piece of the somatic transformational learning puzzle by extending the embodied rational, critical dialogic focus of adult transformative learning theory. However, somatic reflection had a different epistemology and ontology, diverging from embodied rational self-reflection. In addition, the unique culture of somatic discourse as ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’ with the trainer, suggested noteworthy theoretical discoveries emerging with bodily knowledge and experiences of contrasts. Consequently, the study-imposed critical reflection and dialogue in the focus groups and interviews emerging as ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’-with others, was not a significant part of the naturalistic somatic learning setting and therefore will be addressed in the implications section of this chapter.

Embodied rational factors resulting from habits of mind, meaning structures, meaning schemes, and frames of reference and unmet expectations manifested as re-felt lifeworlds in the learning setting. These bodily experiences of contrasts within the somatic paradigm had

individual and social implications including contrasting ontologies, sociolinguistics, epistemologies, personal worldviews, and aesthetics. “Because of affectively encoded experience, each person can be said to live in a reality different than anyone else’s” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 82). A transformative somatic learning theory builds on the notion of multiplicity of subjective realities and suggests **bodily experiences of contrasts** were:

- ‘being first time’
- ‘connecting to my values and/or beliefs’
- ‘being stuck’
- ‘knowing without thinking’

Yet, bodily experiences of contrasts were informed by embodied rational *and* somatic preexisting assumptions framed as theoretic **somatic habits of body** and **somatic meaning structures**, which suggests epistemological and ontological underpinnings for a more encompassing theoretic perspective.

Other important key findings offered alternative somatic processes as ‘other ways of knowing’ from rational embodied. ‘Coming to awareness – processing without thinking’, moving the human body, ‘not thinking’, meant not engaging rational embodied. However, **‘being connected to my sensations’ was a sensory-aware human body - key to a transformative somatic learning theory**. Therefore, bodily knowledge emerged with: (a) being connected-connecting to my body’, (b) ‘being connected-connecting to my movement/sensations’, and (c) ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’.

Bodily knowledge evolved from ‘being first time-first Nia class’ and ‘being first time-being at the training’ as somatic movement experiences arising with bodily knowledge; ‘self-allowing’ an opening-up to tacit inner lifeworlds of felt-bodily sediment. ‘Being

connected-connecting to my movement’ and ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ of bodily-lived somatic meaning structures, awakened new awakened vivid bodily knowledge and encouraged cues for tacit knowledge. Increasing bodily knowledge landed inside moving bodies ‘doing a practice’, widening into **movement as cognition** which was ‘self-allowing-doing a practice’ and ‘self-allowing-going into the unknown’ in deeper ways with movement as cognition.

Cognition in the somatic domain was the human body doing the ‘reasoning’ work of embodied rational. Session after session, movement as cognition emerged with different sensations of relived bodily knowledge, loosening bodily sediment, giving rise to sharper somatic transformative insights and/or ‘shifting perspectives’. From repeated sessions ‘doing a practice’, accumulating different bodily knowledge, and increasing transformative insights suggested **embodied movement** was an important key to transformative learning experiences in a transformative somatic learning theory.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, ‘being first time-not what I expected’ and ‘being stuck’ were experiences of bodily dissonance, disorientations, triggers, and so forth, within the somatic learning setting. As such, bodily experiences of contrasts were rooted in both embodied rational meaning-making paradigms and somatic meaning-making paradigms as lived and (re)lived bodily experiences in the somatic learning setting of the Nia white belt. Therefore, in a transformative somatic learning theory, bodily experiences of contrasts, movement as cognition/embodied movement, and somatic reflection were the ways the human body experienced transformational learning by experience in a somatic training program called the Nia white belt.

Epistemological and Ontological Implications

Eminent political philosopher, Allan Bloom (1987) explains entanglements addressing the human body as crises of liberal education and learning:

The crises of liberal education is a reflection of the crises at the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles [the somatic] with which we interpret the world. But...the crisis consists not so much in this incoherence but in our incapacity to discuss or even recognize it (p. 346).

Key findings evolved from the personal experiencing space of the human body adult learner in transformative somatic learning theory addressed engaging 'being stuck', emanating from the very crises that Bloom (1987) described. A kind of precursory epistemic dilemma oriented participation dispositions rooted in ontological shifts for learner and facilitator readiness to engage the human body in a somatic learning paradigm as the Nia training. Engaging the human body in processes towards 'more inclusive, more permeable' epistemological and personal ontological flexibility was required for transformative somatic learning, currently impinged by the overstated epistemology of embodied rational.

However, the mind and its functions were not excluded, contested, nor presented as a monolithic ideal (body and mind as one united unit) in transformative somatic learning theory. The functioning mental realm, among other realms of the human body, was organic in the bodily learning processes of seven women in this somatic training program.

Acknowledging 'a voice of the body' engendered the human body without marginalizing women's bodies. Different functions of the mental realm, emotional realm, and intuitive/spiritual realm are inadequate to explain or understand a more unified theory of transformative learning theory.

A universal approach to experiential context did not decontextualize the social implications of experience, yet it renders to assumed values of Western America, not unlike transformative learning theory. “This [transformative learning] theory addresses the interest of adult education...it assumes the perfectibility of human beings when this refers to improving our understanding and the quality of our actions through meaningful learning” (Mezirow, 2012, pp. 78-9). In addition, a somatic approach shares universal assumptions about human values, “...we want to be...healthy, autonomous and responsible adults” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 146). To these merging theoretical universal presumptions: everyone desires to learn, everyone desires to be healthy, and everyone desires to be transformed, Richard Shusterman (2008), a well published American pragmatic philosopher, argues for a philosophic approach to the somatic:

Empirical knowledge of the body and of somatic practices [has] something to teach philosophy, notably philosophy of the body. We must then think of somatics as a normative system and analyze its ideological construction (as cited by Ginot, 2010, p. 22).

The purpose of this discussion is not to deconstruct ideologies but to reveal theoretical reflexivity while also imparting the value of a more ‘unified’ theory of adult transformative learning epistemologically and instrumentally. Explicitly addressing the human body holistically in the process of transformational learning required a shift in epistemology and ontology for participants. Learners who were less attuned to the somatic necessarily encountered some degree of ontological adjustment.

‘Learning by experience’ enabled direct engagement for the entire human body. This personal embodied experience, which is the somatic in its simplest form, was being able to

learn better. However, tendering this notion must be met with enough persuasion such that considering “another side” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968) may be viewed a worthwhile endeavor.

In this somatic paradigm, participants were engaged “as sensuous beings feeling and perceiving from the first person inside-out, attending to interfacing with the world [within the human body] with tactile senses, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive perceptions entailing whole-bodied perceptual behaviors that proactively contributed to the construction of perceptual experience” (Crossley, 2001). Therefore, considering ‘another side’, that being the somatic experiencing human body in transformational learning, offers an essential epistemological inclusion strategy. Jeff Brockman (2001) explains potential multicultural benefits including somatic knowledge in learning theory:

Somatic knowledge offers great promise in answering the problem of relativism because it recognizes dimensions of knowing (and reality) common within all cultural contexts...The body is a source of knowing common to all contexts, which allows educators to overcome the inherent complications of contextual or standpoint models of knowing...Recognizing the role of the human body in knowing, educators can more fully understand human knowing as well as how assumptions about it affect presuppositions about learning theory (pp. 331-333).

Transformative somatic learning theory directly and indirectly engaged the mental realm, including the process of ‘being stuck,’ as epistemic embodied rational kinds of dilemmas, and components of ‘coming to awareness’: ‘processing verbally’, ‘self- talking’, ‘inner dialoging’ and ‘checking in’. Other somatic processes engaged the mental realm less directly and paradoxically, *consciously* ‘not thinking with my mind’, instead ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’.

A transformative somatic learning theory suggests bodily knowledge, movement as cognition, and embodied movement as core differentiators. Once in a somatic paradigm, the mental realm activated distracting mental chatter. Participants were trying to figure out where to feel, what to feel, and how to feel ‘connecting to my body’, thus leading to the vastness of liminal space without experiencing anything; motionless, except for thinking about it.

In addition, epistemic repression of the human body may be perpetuated as ways the body was “remembered particularly at times of error and limitation [that] helps to explain the Cartesian epistemological distrust of the body” (Leder, 1990, p. 86). Indeed, ‘not trusting’, ‘being a blank slate’, ‘not knowing where to start’ and so forth, emerged with ‘being first time’ and the process of ‘being stuck’ in a transformative somatic learning theory. Therefore, the embodied rational of the human body experienced contrasting epistemologies ‘connecting to my body’, being exposed to a somatic paradigm the first time (including the first Nia class), was a disorienting experience for the mental realm: ‘having my mind blown’, ‘not believing it’, ‘having no idea’, and so forth.

At the same time, engaging ‘self-allowing-doing a practice’ of embodiment, being understood epistemologically as the existential and intersubjective ground of culture and experience (Csordes, 1999), was an ongoing ontological dance that emerged as liminal spaces or edge tolerances between embodied rational and ‘being connected to my body’ as “modes of embodiment do not merely *happen* to a person but are also and continually mediated, at times even consciously cultivated, as the practice of embodiment” (Persson, 2007, p. 47).

Transformative somatic learning theory addresses bodily experiences of contrasts as epistemological and ontological matters emanating from the over-enculturation of the

embodied mental realm, or embodied rational. The somatic perspective acknowledges our human body as making manifest our habits of mind as our human body (re)lived and perpetuated their truth claims. This (re)living phenomenon gave rise to substantiate habits of body and somatic meaning-structures that flesh-out a fuller understanding of entry points for transformative learning and our human body. Nick Crossley (2001), philosopher in sociology and psychiatry, provides an excellent interpretation of habits of body as bodily meaning-structures:

Human praxis is creative and inventive, and human societies are in a constant process of historical movement. But these transformations are nothing without the power of conservation which prevents them from passing with the fleeting moment. However much history and creativity suggest change they require continuity in equal measure. Events must build upon events, developments upon developments. This is only possible because events and developments do not pass into nowhere; because of the sediment within the human body as habits, becoming the ground for the events and developments of the future.

Thus, the inextricability of human bodies in learning, perceiving, and experiencing in the Nia training emerged as the basis for this propositional transformative somatic learning theory. It diverges from current transformative learning theory regarding the epistemology of the (whole of) the human body including:

- the epistemological and ontological implications of habits of body
- the epistemological and ontological implications of somatic meaning structures
- the ontology of bodily knowledge
- the concept of movement as cognition/embodied movement

- the practice of somatic reflection
- the capacity of the human body to self-generate transformative learning by experience (dilemmas, insights, breakthroughs, and otherwise).

In contrast, transformative learning theory upholds that “changes in perception that come about solely through immersion in an experience and the absorption of facets of that experience through the senses are not transformational” (Cranton, 2000, p. 193). Within this study, lie key epistemological points of departure:

1. ‘Absorbing information through my body’ emerged with self-generated bodily-lived experiences, practicing the learning concepts intermingled with social dynamics within the learning setting, where the fusing of bodily sediment with new facets of sensory experiences emerged with transformative somatic learning.
2. Bodily-lived sensory experiences within the human body mediated which and what about (felt or imagined) new bodily-lived sensory experiences were perceived as meaningful for ‘learning by experience’; and how and why about which bodily-lived experiences were meaningful from a somatic perspective.

Somatic habits of body. Thomas Hanna (1988) described ‘sensory motor amnesia’ to explain something like a habit of body, akin to a habit of mind within a somatic paradigm. With sensory motor amnesia, patterns of movement were embedded like habits of mind. Although habits of body as sensory amnesia were evident in the physical realm, other ontological origins of sensory amnesia were recognized through the physical realm: ‘having knee pain’, ‘having low back pain’, ‘being scrunched up’, and so forth.

Over time, our bodies compensate for physical injuries and/or develop routinized body movements, habits, or postures in the lifeworld. For example, Ruth’s history of knee

injuries, emerging from the emotional realm, led to dragging her feet when moving her body. Bridget's anxiety, emerging from the emotional realm, led to a habit of body of tensing her shoulders. Dawn's habit of body restricting her hip movements, emerging from the spiritual realm, led to lower back pain. Her neck pain, emerging from the physical realm, was from prolonged and repeated use of her cell phone without a headset. Sara's habit of body from years of ballet training led to pointing her toes when walking and, without a somatic intervention, mysterious chronic knee pain.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, Sara engaged 'coming to awareness-processing through movement' emerging with bodily knowledge that pointing her toes was causing her knee pain. She engaged 'self-allowing-doing a practice' in her movements 'being connected-connected to my awareness' of the feeling of her lived body walking heel-first, toes down. After over four years of 'doing a practice', Sara no longer had knee pain.

Therefore, somatic processes of 'coming to awareness' "[brought] into critical consciousness the understanding [pointing my toes from ballet training] of meaning [I cannot un-point my toes] and inhibiting feeling [pain] and taking corrective action ['self-allowing-doing a practice' consciously walking heel first-toes down]" (Mezirow, 1985).

From a somatic perspective, habits of body worked like habits of mind. Jack Mezirow refers to habits of mind as "a set of assumptions-broad and generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (2012, p. 83). However, in an earlier work buried in fine print, he wrote: "The reality of everyday life maintains itself by being embodied in routines" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 134). Although, the 'being embodied' to which he eludes is 'embodied routines'; the origin of the word

‘embodied’ is ‘body’; and the phenomena of which he eschews are habits of body and habits of mind.

Somatic meaning structures. In transformative somatic learning theory, habits of body were also bodily reactions informed from bodily sediment, body memories, or somatic meaning structures *and* embodied rational meaning structures. In the same ways habits of mind perpetuated embodied rational meaning structures, habits of body sustained the lived-reality of, and consistency or the feeling of, *both* kinds of meaning structures (embodied rational and somatic) while filtering literal sense-making in learning by experience. “The accumulation of experience harkens back to the body and, more specifically, to its ability to form and maintain habits” (Mullis, 2006 p. 107).

Therefore, bodily sediment as somatic meaning structures and habits of body operated together with “[making] meaning of the world through our experiences... We develop habits of mind ...for understanding the world, much of which is uncritically assimilated. In the process of daily living, we absorb values, assumptions, and beliefs about how things are without much thought” (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 32).

Over time, meaningful bodily-lived learning experiences, including disorienting dilemmas, orienting breakthroughs, and bodily experiences of contrast, accumulated within the human body forming conscious and unconscious somatic meaning structures. As such, habits of body arising from bodily sediment (somatic meaning structures; ‘having a body memory’; ‘storing traumas in my cells’, and so forth), shaped, and were shaped, by the ways our bodies were accustomed to feeling our lifeworld. Habits of body filtered bodily-lived experiences from these familiar somatic meaning structures. Habits of body were mostly

taken-for-granted bodily reactions that supported a subjective feeling of regular lifeworlds, as were their mostly unconscious origins (meaning structures *and* somatic meaning structures).

“Interpreting experience may be within or outside our awareness” and the meaning-making structures that hold the keys to transformative ability “operate outside our awareness” thereby tacitly directing and shaping interpretations, determining how we perceive and behave “automatically unless brought into critical reflection” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 84).

Somatic meaning structures may be understood as “every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses of our body to these impacts” (Polanyi, 1969, pp. 147–148). From a micro/macro somatic perspective, “the body lives inhabiting the world and the world inhabiting the body” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1968). Philosophers Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty provide the perspective that our human bodies brought inhabited lifeworlds into the somatic setting, and the setting became the world of our body. This revealed worlds within our bodies including self-fulfilling prophecies and the roles incurred by other people. As bodily experiences unearthed somatic sediment, so did the feeling of our lifeworld and felt meanings about the world of the setting and other people in it.

From a cognitive perspective, “our experiences of persons, things and events become realities as we typify them. Expectations may be of events or of beliefs pertaining to one’s own involuntary reactions to events – how one subjectively expects to be able to cope. Our expectations powerfully affect how we construe experience; they tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 95). A transformative somatic theory suggests an alternative ontology: ‘involuntary reactions to events’, the feeling of ‘coping’, and

reconstituting ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’, was the work of somatic habits of body. Habits of body were realized from interacting with the world in a way that perpetuated them.

Meaningful bodily-lived experiences were epochal and incremental reconstitutions of their informing origins: somatic and embodied rational meaning structures.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, ‘knowing without thinking’ were lived experiences directly accessing unconscious meaning structures from both epistemologies. The transcendent experience of ‘knowing without thinking’ has been explained in many ways including spiritual experiences, ah-ha! moments, being in flow, imaginal mytho-poetic moments, symbolic knowing, moments of truth, and awakenings,. In this study, the trainer manifested “solutions to previously unanswered or unknown questions” (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 18) from bodily experiences of contrasts, ‘knowing without thinking’, conjuring up ‘drawing a big fat star’; and her embodied wisdom and bodily response in an awkward teaching moment: ‘shaking my arm is not separate from spirit’. However, there was *no* ‘pausing or moving away from the conscious or unconscious conflict’ (Hoggan et al., 2009, p. 18) as suggested by embodied rational.

Although ‘knowing without thinking’ was also important to somatic reflection, its emplacement with the epistemological discussion illustrated key theoretical divergences: (a) in a somatic paradigm, the tacit, unconscious was unearthed through self-generated bodily experiences; (b) transformational learning occurred in the moment of action; and (c) transformative experiences were possible without stepping away to critical dialogue. As such, somatic meaning structures were closely related to habits of body merging with habits of mind and frames of reference in transformative learning theory. Both somatic and embodied rational types of meaning structures were unconscious. They repeatedly guided

personal recasting of bodily-lived patterns of sense-making experiences until a transformative bodily-lived experience, including disorienting dilemmas, orienting breakthroughs and/or bodily experiences of contrasts, provided a conscious bodily knowledge as transformative insight.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, bodily knowledge, movement as cognition/embodied movement, and somatic reflection with or without embodied rational critical reflection, interrupted autopilot. This opening provided possibilities for changing habits of body, the feeling of our lived body in the lifeworld, and/or integrating new bodily knowledge into sense-making about lived experiences including affecting the lived feeling of embodied rational meaning structures.

Bodily experiences of contrasts. “Traditional education teaches people to know the world through the exteroceptive system, primarily the visual and auditory. We learn about our world and ‘what is going on at some distance from our bodies’ (Myers, 1998, p. 102) and the kinesthetic sense (what we feel in and through our body) is undervalued” (as cited by Williamson, 2009, p. 33). ‘What was going on’ by living rationally embodied was carried over into the learning setting as participation dispositions and intrinsic symbologies carried-over as: ‘being distanced from my body’, ‘having a missing link’, or ‘being a machine’. In a somatic transformative learning theory, epistemological shifts from living embodied rational to ‘bringing the focus back to the body’, was making an epistemic passage to the somatic through the experiential.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, lived experience of embodied rational required a “paradigm shift from outside authority [living from embodied rational] to inside authority” (Eddy, 2002). Therefore, personal and social bodily experiences of contrasts

transferred from an external to an internal locus of control: being in ambiguity to having possibility; living from the mind to 'being connected'; not knowing to having clarity; interrupting to being present; being distanced to being in alignment; not being impeccable to being true to myself; not trusting self or others to trusting self and others; focusing on the problem to focusing on intention; not having tools to having a practice; and not having experience to learning by experience.

Ontological bodily-lived experience of contrasts were lived experiences of embodied rational interferences with 'being connected-connecting to my body' wherein "a new perception of our body-soma can result in a new position from which to view the world" (Fortin et al., 2002, p. 175). 'Being stuck' ontologically was manifested as lived bodily experiences of contrasts impinging on learning by experience: 'having a contaminated mind', 'not connecting to my body', 'being judgmental', and so forth.

Increasing the internal locus of control to inside authority was also a bodily experience of contrast in the learning setting: 'going within my body', 'doing my own thing', and 'absorbing information through my body'.

In a somatic transformative learning theory 'being first time-not what I expected' and 'being stuck' emerged as triggers, dilemmas, and/or bodily dissonance experiences of contrasts. 'Being first time-not what I expected' evolved with habits of mind, habits of body, meaning structures, and somatic meaning structures that ultimately served as impetus for 'bringing the focus back to the body'. Meanwhile, liminal holding patterns provided fodder that was filled with iterations of (re)lived lifeworld 'stories' through the body that impacted other bodies. Johnston & Barcan (2006) offer a slightly radical perspective about the human body, affect and intersubjectivity:

The individual is intimately interrelated with his/her environment, as the boundaries of self are not clear-cut and are understood to extend elusively beyond the corporeal boundary. Thus, the effects of environmental phenomena, objects and others, and our reciprocal effects upon them, take on a greater significance (p. 34).

Johnston & Barcan (2006) provide a metaphysical view, suggesting that our bodies radiated a kind of energy or infused a layer of unseen yet bodily-felt intersubjective sensory experience into the sensory-aware space with bodily experiences of contrasts in the somatic learning setting, or learning 'space'. "Space is emotionally and culturally experienced, part of our changing perceptions and our personal story of being in the world" (Lefebvre, 1991 as cited by Hurst, 2010, p. 52). As such, 'being first time-not what I expected' was a manifested bodily-felt unmet expectations converging as personal and spatial bodily experiences of contrasts. Spatial habits of body reactions, infused with personal (re)lived symbolisms, were bodily-felt ripples of sensation that permeated the learning space like a scent: feel-able, perceivable, yet not visible.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, the social space of 'being first time-not what I expected' accumulated aromatic ripples resonating through overlapping personal experiencing spaces as bodily experiences of contrasts. The novelty of a somatic paradigm and the self-directedness of an experiential approach to learning combined developed into bodily experience of contrasts where habits of mind *and* habits of body, particularly for first-time students, was a felt experience. In addition, precursory external epochal events presented as bodily experiences of contrasts that impinged on the lifeworld 'space' of the setting itself. In particular, changes in the organization meant a dual learning agenda for the

trainer, two student-trainees doing their practicum, and the incidence of fewer first-time students than students with prior experience.

These combined uncharted territories of novelty set a tone of mild dissonance within the space and bodily experiences of contrast at the onset of the training. Unfortunately Ruth dropping out after Day 3 and Bridget hurting her ankle Day 4 were external epochal events that stung the learning space, altering the lifeworld of the training setting itself as bodily experiences of contrast. These external experiences contrasts carried over to the learning setting, triggering inner lifeworlds connected with personal meaning, inspired bodily reactions, and produced changes in the sensory aroma of the socially-felt space.

In addition, from a transformative somatic learning perspective, habits of body and somatic meaning structures were made manifest at salient moments of bodily experiences of contrasts in the lifeworld of the learning space and lived inner lifeworlds. Merleau-Ponty (1996) explains these momentary stirs of bodily sediment:

The spectacle perceived...taken exactly as I see it, it is a moment of my individual history, and since sensation is a reconstitution, it pre-supposes in me sediments left behind by some previous constitution, so that I am, as a sentient subject, a repository stocked with natural powers at which I am the first to be filled with wonder (p. 249).

However, being 'filled with wonder' was not the initial habit of body reaction at the onset of a bodily experience of contrast. 'Being stuck' was 'being uncomfortable' or 'being stretched'. Bodily reactions and meaning-making experiences of bodily contrasts led to 'being stuck'. In addition, the somatic training setting, the curriculum, social interactions, and personal participation dispositions were recast as if microcosmic reenactments of different lifeworld realities.

Therefore, bodily experiences of contrast emerging with ‘being stuck’ were inner lifeworld reminders of uncomfortable lifeworld dilemmas or other epistemic struggles. As such, perceptual experience was not bound to the present moment at junctures of (re)lived bodily experiences of contrast. Christine Mahady (2008), author and literary critic, explains bodily experiences of contrasts from a somatic lens:

Understanding oneself as a perceiving body via corporeal memory...literally brings with it another ‘lifeworld’ that might function to interrogate or produce disruption to one’s perceptions of one’s present surroundings and potentially to those surroundings themselves...foster[ing] a heightened sensitivity to disparity in experiences...providing a resource for present and future action (p. 34).

However, bodily experiences of contrast merged with transformative learning theory as personal and social dilemmas. These felt-dissonances instigated a loosening of underlying bodily knowledge and somatic reflection that led to personal transformations about the feeling of unmet expectations in the social setting. Thus, in a somatic theory, bodily-felt experiences of unmet expectations were “...a product of a personal intentional act[s] having social and historical dimensions” (Stubley, 1992, p. 8 as cited by Juntunen, & Hyvönen 2004, p. 211) emergent as “the stratum of the primordial experiences that are attained through our bodily contact with the world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962 as cited by Juntunen, & Hyvönen 2004, p. 200).

Accordingly, first bodily-felt reactions of unmet expectations grew out of “understanding [that] ar[ose] [at] first at a bodily, pre-reflective level” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; *ibid.*) wherein new bodily-lived experiences during the training (re)shaped the feeling of meaning within the learning space. “It becomes difficult to limit my experience to a single

sensory department: it spontaneously overflows toward all the rest” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; *ibid.*) and different “...understanding is manifested in bodily action, which can be seen as a physical metaphor bridging the concrete and the abstract” (Juntunen & Hyvönen 2004, p. 211).

Bodily experiences of contrasts were different sensory triggers that landed into meaning-making agendas connected to the lifeworld wherein ‘being stuck’ or ‘being first time’ was a liminal space ‘filled with wonder’ as conduits for transformation ‘realized’ through the body: ‘realizing I did this to myself’; ‘realizing it’s not about me’. Therefore shifting perspectives were changes in the feeling of the lifeworld of the learning space and the feeling of the lifeworld carried over into the personal experiencing space.

Bodily knowledge. Bodily knowledge was ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ of less conscious, unconscious, or other self-generated experience -different for the sensory palate of meaning-making bodily-lived experience. Bodily knowledge emerged from loosened somatic sediment, meaning structures, body memories, and awareness of habits of body/habits of mind., Other transcendent, bodily-felt states of awareness were sudden orienting breakthroughs or other personally-meaningful acute felt-states of ‘being connected’.

Newman (2006) explains orienting breakthroughs and acute felt-states of ‘being connected’ as “the aliveness we feel when we are actively engaged with reality...it is the consciousness which combines reflection and action” (p. 66). As such, bodily knowledge did not often have words. Therefore, I am relaying the theoretical tenant of bodily knowledge as important to a transformative somatic learning theory in words, which are hardly capable of

conveying the bodily understandings and meaningful sensory integrations within bodily-felt inner lifeworlds and personal experiencing spaces of bodily knowledge.

However, bodily knowledge landed into meaning-making agendas ‘resonating’ with deep meaning such as ‘putting it together’ and ‘feeling right’. Bodily knowledge seemed to come in as emotions, strong sensory images - ‘feeling my heart energy connected to his’. Bodily knowledge was experiencing ‘having boundaries’; kinesthetic visualizations - ‘seeing myself on stage’; having intuitions - ‘knowing a decision will come’. Bodily knowledge transmitted as felt bodily sensations- ‘sensing my body like a wise friend’. Bodily knowledge was a perception - looking and ‘seeing’; transformative insights, transformative learning experiences, or other meaning-making integrations. Bodily knowledge was assimilating new sensory information by “constructing knowledge and through engaged, lived body experiences of physicality, sensing, and being in both body and world” (Freiler, 2008, p. 39).

Bodily knowledge was meaningful as it emerged from multilayered internal or external epochal changes. Meaning was also linked with incremental pilings-up of lived experiences as specific lifeworld constitutions, or a certain feeling of the self in the world, brought into the training moment as: ‘being at a point in time’, ‘being at my bottom point right now’, and so forth. Therefore, what felt like bodily knowledge over the course of the training was actually an infusion of subjective meanings rooted in specific bodily experiences of contrast connected to lifeworlds within the body and the lifeworld (re)presented in the learning space. As such, bodily felt-states of being or imagined future felt-states of being carried over from individual lifeworlds. Personal meaning informed what kinds of bodily

knowledge was perceived as informative, directive, supportive, confirming, or otherwise attention-grabbing for meaning-making agendas in ‘learning by experience’.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, bodily knowledge is a conscious and felt awareness “... within which new experience [‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’] is assimilated and transformed by one’s past experience” (Mezirow, 1985, p. 141). In addition, bodily knowledge emerged with learning by experience, engaging the body in the somatic curriculum. “Experience[ing] anatomy and moving physiology [connecting to my movement]... Developing a felt relationship to body through interoceptive kinesthesia (sensory-perceptual awareness of the internal body)...giving the sensory life of the body attention” (Williamson, 2009, p. 34).

“Bodily knowledge is understood as a corporal form of tacit [and explicit] knowledge [about habits of body, somatic meaning structures, information of and about the human body, and relived other felt-bodily states from the past or present. Bodily knowledge was also sensing a future felt-self as kinesthetic imaginings ‘being connected-connecting to possibilities’]. Bodily knowledge is knowing in and through the body awareness, perception and all the habitual bodily skills we have acquired in our lives” (Parviainen, 1998, p. 51).

Bodily knowledge also emerged from bodily experiences of contrasts, in movement as cognition/embodied movement, and somatic reflection as transformative insights including transformational learning experiences in the moment of action. However, bodily knowledge emerging with movement as cognition/embodied movement and somatic reflection were important findings of divergence from a transformative learning theory; therefore they were instrumental keys for understanding ways the human body experienced transformational learning in this Nia white belt. As such, these findings highlight a transformative somatic

learning theory that was based in bodily knowledge emerging from these divergences. To note, bodily knowledge also emerged with intentional, self-other critical reflective dialogue that was imposed by this study and addressed in the implications section of this chapter.

Movement as cognition - embodied movement. Transformative somatic learning theory suggests learning movement as cognition was a transformative epistemic experience. In addition, movement as cognition and embodied movement were instrumental in discovering personal experiencing spaces capable of affecting self-generated transformational learning thorough the human body in this somatic training program.

Borrowing from Batson (1990):

Integrated change must evolve from sensing the body in a new, more efficient way.

[Learning embodied movement] helps us distinguish the old, dysfunctional movement habit from the new, through a new sensory experience. Repeated new experiences also inhibit the old pattern, clarify and reinforce the new pattern, and create an integrated change (p. 30).

In a somatic paradigm like the Nia training, movement was anything the body did with sensory awareness. Physical movement is a form of knowing itself (Sklar, 2000) and therefore extends the theoretic concept of bodily knowledge into movement as cognition.

Moving the human body as cognition in a transformative somatic learning theory was ‘processing through movement’ where embodied rational was not engaged: (a) ‘being connected-connecting to my body’; (b) ‘connecting to my movement/sensations’; and (c) ‘connecting to my awareness’.

Movement as cognition emerged with sensory information, physical sensations, and bodily knowledge. ‘Connecting to my focus and intent’, was ‘self-allowing-being present’,

feeling physical sensations of the moving body with full awareness. Being focused on sensory awareness crowded out embodied rational so that theoretically nothing else was able to enter the mental realm in its attention and focus, Movement as cognition meant being aware of the sensations coming in as sensory input or bodily knowledge while moving the body with awareness, honing a bodily-felt distinction from engaging embodied rational.

However, movement as cognition, like the somatic paradigm itself, was bodily experiences of contrasts 'being first time'. Freedancing was self-directed movement of the body to music without instructor movement cueing that triggered bodily reactions 'being first time'. Being first time moving the body in front of other bodies in the lifeworld of social atmosphere was 'being stuck'. Grappling with 'being distracted' from the strong arm of embodied rational, habits of body, and habits of mind emerged as different kinds of discomfort.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, 'being stuck' moving the body as cognition was "... unknowing or uncertainty... a passing phase, something to be got through or got over. [Embodied movement was a transformative experience where 'self-allowing-being in the unknown' gently overtook 'being stuck' by embodied rational and somatic dispositions]...welcomes such unknowing and uncertainty as the ground from which something worthwhile might emerge" (Gordon 1999, p. 160 as cited by McCormack, 2003, p. 503).

Therefore, as a theoretical tenant, learning to move as cognition was a multifaceted process before it was embodied movement, embellished with 'doing a practice' and 'self-allowing-being in the unknown'. Interestingly, the felt-lifeworld of the social space also changed: 'having a safe space', 'being free', 'feeling more opened'. Therefore, the lifeworld

of the learning space gradually reflected the lifeworld of the personal experiencing spaces learning movement. From a somatic perspective, moving the body, 'being connected to my body', particularly freedancing without movement instructions, was "stepping into a new [experience] of complexity and chaos...the new that develops with us...is always precariously balanced on an edge of disorder and as an yet unseen order" (Rossi, 1995, p. 14).

Therefore, it was important to make the distinction between movement as cognition and embodied movement to honor the transformations of women in this program going from the complexity and chaos: 'not shutting my mind off' and 'feeling embarrassed'; to embodied movement: 'letting the deepest parts of me come out', 'being who I am', and 'having amazing epiphanies and breakthroughs'. Embodied movement was 'self-allowing-being in the unknown', and 'doing a practice', honing movement as cognition, where 'being stuck' did not impinge on movement as cognition and somatic affinities for 'being connected to my body' strengthened.

Moving the body in movement as cognition towards embodied movement included these movement experiences: (a) freedancing with or without music, (b) practicing learning concepts with body movement, (c) taking Nia classes (with or without freedancing portions), (d) teaching each other body movements, (e) being on the floor in movement, and (f) being aware of body movements in daily life.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, movement as cognition was self-generated learning by experiencing the human body engaged in the activation of different kinds of transformative learning experiences: 'having self-confidence' 'making new connections', 'working things out in my movement', and 'seeing art in my hands'. Stanton-

Jones (1992), a dance movement therapist and philosopher, explains the transformative nature of moving as cognition to: “use movement experimentation to explore new ways of being and feeling, and to gain access to feelings that cannot be verbalized” (p. 3).

Bodily knowledge and transformative insights emerged in the ‘dancing moment’ and ‘without thinking’ with embodied rational, yet self-generated a range of transformations moving as cognition: ‘having a click’, ‘realizing programming’, and ‘having a belief I did not hold’.

Movement as cognition in a transformative somatic learning theory emerged with bodily knowledge and insights about bodily meaning-structures, habits of body that had been instigated or shifted out of other processes, and loosed bits or chunks (incremental or epochal) pieces of tacit or unconscious knowledge, including ‘having memories’. Movement as cognition tapped into the bodily sediment of “unremembered memories [that] are held within the human body” (Butterwick & Selman, 2012, p. 64).

Movement as cognition emerged with bodily knowing and self-awareness capable of self-generating new possibilities, kinesthetic imaginings, and accessing and changing textures of the sediment of somatic memory: ‘re-patterning’, ‘unlearning’, ‘filling gaps’, and ‘releasing traumas in my cells’. Dancer, choreographer, and well-published philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone suggests bodily movement is the mother of all cognition; it forms the I that moves before the I that moves forms movement (1999, p. 253). She specifies in her book *The Primacy of Motion* that “animation is at the core of every creature’s engagement with the world because it is in and through movement that the life of every creature—to borrow Husserl’s phrase from the first epigraph—‘acquires reality’ (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011, p. 117). Engaging ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ in sensory movement self-

generated new bodily knowledge, self-awareness and understanding; acquired new realities, insights and viewpoints that merged with transformative learning theory.

However, three tenants of transformative somatic learning theory diverge from transformational learning theory wherein:

1. Movement as cognition was a process descriptive of critical reflection.
2. Transformative learning experiences occurred in the moment of action.
3. Body movement was transformative learning. Subjective reframing, objective reframing, and sociocultural reframing emerged with embodied movement.

Transformative learning theory makes clear that “critical reflection cannot become an integral element in the immediate action process...about the why for the reasons for and consequences of what we do” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 13). The *whys* emerged as bodies engaged in ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ at times with different forms of transformative bodily knowledge descriptive of ‘seeing where I’m stuck’ or ‘being able to take a stand’, after a session of embodied movement.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, moving as cognition and embodied movement impacts personal and interpersonal space by engaging ‘being connected’ in multiple ways with sensory-aware physical movement. A transformative somatic learning theory diverges from the notion that “a changed way of understanding the world and one’s place within it represents a singularly important form of mental action” (Brookfield, 2000, p. 144).

Listening to the body was the ‘mental action’ of the body *thinking* and “the body movement that comes out of it is a completed emotion or thought. Thus, there is no ‘one-after-the-other’ process, but listening and moving inform each other” (Juntunen & Hyvönen,

2004, p. 210). Although ‘cognition’ in ‘movement as cognition’ implies embodied rational, it was *the action of living out being connected to my body*, ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ of sensory information and bodily knowledge ‘without mental action’ that changed understandings in a somatic theory of transformational learning.

Somatic reflection. In a transformative somatic learning theory, the focus of somatic reflection was ‘connecting to my body’ with the intent of ‘being connected to my awareness’. ‘Self-allowing-making choices’ to enter a self-reflective dialogue was nonverbal and often described as: ‘not being able to put words on it’ or ‘never articulating it’. “Coming into one’s body, and thereby awakening a bodily consciousness, is to repeatedly reassemble one’s sense of self, fragmented by intersubjective life and mental excess, thus, re-creating and forging a ‘wholeness’ of being” (Persson, 2007).

Somatic reflection was initiated by perceiving the awareness of a body sensation by ‘stepping outside myself’ and ‘checking all my realms’. It was a deliberate query to the body from the somatic mental realm about physical sensations. Somatic reflection also incorporated inner dialogue about emotional realm or other felt-insights from the spiritual/intuitive realm...

Somatic reflection was a kind of *living relationship with the body*; a self-self reflective dialogue that was practiced in the training setting and carried over into the lifeworld in a range of ways including: ‘releasing tensions in a relationship’, ‘being cued into something else’, and ‘having a sense of calm’. This relationship was also a somatic discursive action between students and the trainer that stimulated somatic self-reflection in the setting.

In a transformative somatic learning theory, somatic reflection, or ‘checking in’ with the body, was: ‘my body telling me’, ‘asking my body’, and ‘listening to what my body had to say’.

Somatic reflection led to awareness of bodily knowledge and was often followed by taking action on what the body, or other somatic realm, ‘said’. Merging with transformative learning and authenticity, imagination, creative and emotive capabilities of critical reflection (Kreber, 2012, p. 330), somatic reflection was to “engage directly with the productive force of the unconscious in ways that can but do not necessarily need to be brought into a relation of verbal or linguistic signification” (McCormack, 2003, p. 493). However, somatic reflection diverges from ‘having words’ necessary for critical dialogue or validating sensory information or other range of insights and transformations emerging with somatic reflection.

Both theories of transformation address “increased self-awareness [and how it] helps us to recognize exactly how others are different ...working with strengths rather than trying to be what she is not...valuing that learners are different from her” (Cranton, 1991, p. 201). In addition, somatic reflection supported ‘not taking things personally’ and ‘not making assumptions’ by “...diverting our awareness from the opinions of those outside us toward our own perceptions and feelings” (Johnson, 1983, p. 154). Somatic reflection happened during movement as cognition, group meditation, ‘doing as practice’ of heightened awareness, and/or bodily experiences of contrasts.

A kind of heightened awareness of conscious internal processes supported self-regulation, self-care decision making, and personal responsibility; strengthened self-concept; improved ways of being in relationships with others; enabled self-reflexive feedback; , and forged a lived sense of ‘being connected-connecting to my body’.

Somatic discourse. Somatic reflection had a special dialogic utility within the learning setting that I refer to as somatic discourse. According to transformative learning theory, adult learning settings are likely to be some form of “idealized dialogic learning situations...for social development” (Mezirow, 1985). In a transformative somatic learning theory, the focus shifts from embodied rational to a somatic focus. However, self-reflection was directed by the trainer post-activity, and posed as questions to the entire group. The optional response was concise, in the first person, I. Traditional didactic group discussions or group processing was severely discouraged and when they occurred in this particular event, it was ‘being first time-not what I expected’. Bodily experiences of contrasts occurring during breaks in the somatic discourse were portals for somatic reflection: ‘focusing on my focus’; ‘developing the art of listening’.

Somatic discourse emerged as contrasts between bodily expectations rooted in lifeworlds realized in lived bodily experiences of the somatic setting and personal experiencing spaces with movement as cognition. In a transformative somatic learning theory “idealized dialogic learning situations” (Mezirow, 1985) was first-person self-reflexive ‘I reflections’ which followed experiencing the human body in movement, not group processing, critical reflection, or feedback about another to another. A somatic philosophical framework is based on bodily support and self-education encouraging the self-reflexive, non-judgmental, and open-ended processes of self-discovery (Williamson, 2009). Somatic discourse was ‘holding a space’ or ‘creating a space’, for co-creating the movement space, moving the body as cognition, and minimal ‘processing verbally’ as a means for self-reflective praxis.

To clarify the dialectic culture of a body-focused transformative paradigm as a key divergence from transformative learning theory, the ‘secondary culture’ of a somatic paradigm like the Nia training had rhetorical bodily-focused dialogic guidelines. As un-emancipatory as it may seem, having a clear learning agreement at the beginning of this body-based experiential training program included specific dialogic guidelines.

Rhetorical guidelines were monitored by the trainer who interrupted the speaker and would ask her to start again if she: commented on another person’s comment, spoke on behalf of another, made grandiose statements about worldviews, offered opinions about another, gossiped, blamed, or spoke from any perspective other than the viewpoint of the first person somatic perspective. “A first person viewpoint can only observe...[her/]himself from the inside” (Hanna, 1991, p. 32). Interestingly, rhetorical guidelines were not about grammar per se. Speaking in first person was as discouraged as using the second or the third person perspective. To keep the focus on the body, any other response was not self-directed body focus, it was external, un-authored, and other-focused.

Rhetorical guidelines in a learning agreement were enforced and demonstrated by the trainer herself and maintained by members of the group. This agreement served to quiet embodied rational and internalize locus of control, stake ownership over the experience, and give active agency to the body of its speaker. The somatic reflective practice of speaking the body out loud included ‘slowing down’ and ‘listening to my [own] words’.

Therefore, a somatic dialectic culture was meant to foster ‘being connected-connecting to my awareness’ of speaking the body concisely and ‘being present’. Such concise language stimulated self-reflection in the moment of learning and diverted experiences to their origin - the body, learning by experience, embodied movement, and

somatic reflection. Therefore, in a transformative somatic learning theory, somatic discourse was “not dependent or organized according to attention directed toward the other or toward the group” (Ginot, 2010). In a transformative somatic learning theory, the trainer was “the sage on the stage” (Daloz, 1999) during moments of somatic discourse. Enforcing rhetorical guidelines and keeping linguistic habits of body at bay encouraged a practice of self-regulation of emotional, spiritual/intuitive, and mental processing through the body, giving embodied rational a break.

Implications

The in situ positioning of transformational learning was a way to ‘theorize’ about theory and offer a perspective that Edward Taylor (2012) “challenge[s] scholars and researchers to engage emerging [transformational learning] perspectives [to] move toward a more unified field of the study” (p. 16).

However, exacting relevant theoretical specifics required taking some conceptual leaps of faith landing with a moving target that “has caused confusion because often it is not clear what people mean when they refer to ‘transformative learning’ or ‘transformational learning’ as it is variously called” (Tisdell, 2012, p. 22) and its ongoing ‘theory in progress’. This work offers conceptual grounds for a more unified approach to consider the somatic, notwithstanding a yet elusive definition of ‘transformational learning’. I believe that seeking a permanent, clear definition of transformative learning is arbitrary to its constructivist roots. However, matching theories with specific learning aims offers some interesting possibilities for future research.

Key findings offer support with the ongoing 'intra-rational' theoretic conversation:

1. In a somatic paradigm, the tacit, unconscious was unearthed through self-generated bodily experiences.
2. Transformative learning occurred in the moment of action.
3. Somatic reflection and embodied movement were possible mechanisms of action that replaced stepping away for critical dialogue in a somatic transformative learning theory.
4. Somatic habits of body and somatic meaning structures complimented transformative learning theory.

Fostering a somatic approach is suggested with this work in adult learning settings.

Combining the somatic with the rational (despite the mental realm is already inclusive of the somatic) fosters the emergence of prior knowledge as moving the body with awareness, or cultivating body awareness, and brings forth lived experience from unconscious meaning structures that seem to amplify learning and impart opportunity for important personal meaning-making and transformative learning in deeply-felt ways.

Certain prescriptive steps may be indicated for blending the somatic and embodied rational perspectives that mirror the process of attaining body awareness. To outline the theoretical transformative process of blending perspectives, I drew from a qualitative phenomenological study on body awareness with mind-body practitioners (Mehling et al., 2011). These researchers utilized a four-level framework of embodiment (Gadow, 1980 as cited by Mehling et al., 2011) presented in the Discussion Section of their report. I adapted it to a five-level framework that proposed a process towards a holistic theory of transformative learning, also applicable to a personal process of developing somatic awareness:

1. [embodied rational] - the body is taken for granted - 'being a machine'; somatic amnesia; 'mental chattering'; somatic habits of body.
2. [ontological dilemma] - the body is experienced as opposed to self - 'being stuck'; bodily experiences of contrast; 'being physically uncomfortable'; emotional discomfort; 'having a missing link'.
3. [epistemic disorienting dilemma] – “cultivated immediacy” - a new relationship to the body characterized by acceptance, immediacy and the body experienced without objectification – ‘having my mind blown’; ‘being first time’; freedancing, ‘recognizing body intelligence’; orienting breakthrough; movement as cognition; somatic reflection; ‘going into the unknown’.
4. [paradigmatic shift] – “the subjective body” - the body is experienced as a source of learning and meaning. The body is an integral and equal part of the self and the locus of consciousness and subjectivity with its own perspective (Hudak et al., 2007) - ‘coming to awareness’; ‘being connected’; ‘self-allowing’; bodily knowledge; somatic reflection; embodied movement.
5. [transformative theoretical shift] – New baseline theoretic assumption - body-self-environment is “trialectic” (Hudak et al., 2007) - ‘shifting perspectives’; ‘having a new reality’; a more unified theory of transformation (para 3).

A voice of the body in this study said that meaningful learning was being able to engage the human body in the personal experiencing space of learning by experience.

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze offered a similar view about somatic experiential learning: “The body’s capacity for affecting and being affected also defines a body in its individuality...defined by the affects of which one is capable, by one’s ethological capacity”

(Deleuze, 1995, pp. 625–7). Theoretic ‘grandiosity’ of learning by experience as the context for a transformative somatic learning theory was an “extended philosophical treatment of place that explicitly takes into account the lived body as the experiential and agential basis of place” (Casey, 1993, p. xv).

In a transformative somatic learning theory, the human body was not separate from experiences, perceptions and learning. The finest line of meaning-making points of transformation emerged from within the personal experiencing space of the engaged human body as canvas, painter, creator, and the paint itself. The painting rendered itself unfolded beyond the canvas changing genres and mediums; yet blended the microcosm and the macrocosm of the lifeworld within, the lifeworld without, and the lifeworld across.

In addition, the question of learning preference was raised within a somatic, experiential learning setting – does learning by experience subsume all learning preferences and render the context itself to the personal and social experiencing space? If this is plausible, then focusing more on whole-body engagement in the learning process places the onus on the learners to engage the experience. This implication suggests creative approaches to whole-body learning events tethered by clear guidelines.

Future Directions

I found the metaphysical dynamics of intersubjectivity concerning ‘liminal spaces’, ‘learning spaces’ and ‘personal experiencing spaces’ fascinating. These particular spaces were filled with sensory palpability and affectability, and worthy of further investigation for fostering adult transformational learning in experiential settings.

This dissertation work has offered an alternative somatic perspective of transformational learning from my experiences, with seven other women, in an experiential,

somatic movement training program, a Nia white belt. The implications of this work were surprisingly revealing about epistemological and ontological underpinnings of transformative learning theory itself rather than about kinesthetic learning preferences or dancing Nia.

Using constructivist grounded theory, transformational learning theory, and symbolic interactionism as guiding frameworks for analysis; I looked into the origins of meaning-making. “Making meaning is central to what learning is all about” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 11). I believe the somatic is not an ‘other way of knowing’ because I am a lived-being, not separate from my sense-making, learning, perceptions, or experiences. Being aware is somehow ethical, sensible, and even rational. Being an alive, aware, alert, and conscientious human being in the world makes a difference.

The inclusion of the somatic into whole-person in adult experiential learning appeals to literal and embodied rational sense-making. Turning back to John Dewey (2005) may be a reflection of my Generation X socioculturalism; however, moving my body with other people was invigorating and fostered getting to know people and myself in ways that poised chair-sitting and stimulating intellectual debates cannot reach. I discovered that when co-researchers imagined another learning setting, they *all* imagined ‘sitting in a hard chair’. No one liked sitting on the floor for long periods, but moving the body in learning reached far beyond learning the material. It was transformational.

This work suggests ‘bringing the focus back to the body’. I believe that writing the somatic into experiential curriculum design and including movement of any kind in adult learning activities is imperative. When I researched literature about the learning and the human body, I sifted through hundreds of articles about cyborgs, robotics, and technology. I went back a number of years to find Merleau-Ponty and Polyani. What happened to people?

I believe there is a need for rethinking e-learning (single intervention, computer-based learning modules) and the hard chair paradigm. Whole person learning is a potent way to quickly break into personal spaces. However, these findings suggested a phase of learner resistance, especially for teachers, trainers and learners to develop a personal practice of ‘not taking it personally’.

In adult learning settings with student teachers, I believe that it is essential to allow feedback, to provide full disclosure if there are to be novice teachers delivering the program, and to have a constructive feedback mechanism in place. The ‘argumentative culture’ and fear of being evaluated may be contextual within this secondary culture and particular setting; however, being open to post-learning activity feedback with a set of constructive questions and ground rules is important for novice teachers in development and for adults who are helping them learn to teach.

I also believe that seasoned teachers and trainers who are interested in lifelong learning actively seek out feedback from mentors, bosses, colleagues, friends, family, and especially students, where there are clear differences in worldviews, personality differences, or *feelings* of something that cannot be put into words. If dialogue has reached an impasse and avoidance chemistry is lived-experience, why not try another approach? If it matters enough, clear a space, take your shoes off, play music, and ask them to freedance with you – no talking, just move to the music. Go a song or two; feel what unfolds.

If near immediate understandings do not happen the way movement as cognition suggests, then perhaps you *spoke* too soon. I am nearly certain that if you both are willing, much will be said without saying it, and the opportunity to see each other with new eyes may produce understandings that the avoidance chemistry had cast to abandon. While this is

certainly not a mainstream approach, nor the only whole-person intervention to break the bonds of (re)lived experience, I believe it is ethical and responsible for teachers, trainers, leaders and those fostering transformative learning to have a personal manifesto to practice ‘self-allowing-going into the unknown’ and self-generate stretches outside the comfort zone to remain agile, flexible, strong, and open.

Edward Taylor (2007) suggests approaching the study of transformative learning with an action research agenda. Deliberately prompting critical reflection and dialogue in the methods, I was essentially conducting a kind of action learning study. The Nia training did not ‘group process’. It was not therapy. At times, I felt as if ‘language games’ might have occurred when co-researchers were frustrated. However, we got through the social miasma engaging movement as cognition.

I also believe this study was a contributor to keeping the student group together. There were points during the training where each member of the student group wanted to leave and one did leave on Day 3. It was the dedication of these women who contributed in the focus groups, interviews, and member-checking whereby each withstood her edge tolerance and processed feelings, assumptions, experiences, perceptions, and opinions. The positive insights and personal learning gained through these conversations contributed to our learning experiences.

“There [was] reciprocity between the inner and outer world of [co-researchers] as growing consciousness of their actions (or inactions) in various settings provides tension that leads to exploration of their own contradictory feelings and belief systems” (Yorks & Kasl, 2002). I learned that overdoing gesturing during a focus group was distracting. I learned about a fundamentalist religious culture that was fascinating and terrifying to me. I observed

clashing worldviews being lived out and compensatory behaviors from member-checking that I would have never come close to interpreting in the same ball park.

This work provided alternative consideration from the somatic perspective for adult transformative learning theory. Bringing the somatic into experiential adult transformational learning contexts can be made explicit and expand current frameworks to assist educators, researchers, trainers, instructional designers, and lifelong learners in developing creative and effective ways to foster whole-person learning and transformation.

Study-Imposed Critical Reflection & Dialogue

The implications of study-imposed critical reflection and dialogue emerged as an indelible contributing agent with emergent grounded theory. ‘Processing verbally’ with others in critical reflection and dialogue emerged most markedly from the interviews and focus groups. The implications were manifested by the emergence of a sub-process concept, ‘coming to awareness-processing verbally’ with others, which might not otherwise have been present in this emergent theory.

Methods of data collection enabling the opportunity for intentional critical reflection and dialoguing with co-researchers, ‘processing verbally’ with others, was a critical overlapping of emergent theory with transformative learning theory. These methods of data collection thereby provided avenues for collecting important sources of data, for understanding implicit meaning structures, for deliberately engaging the emergent process concept ‘coming to awareness’, and for observing and facilitating ‘shifting perspectives’ in action.

Fostering a culture conducive to critical reflection and dialogue required “...participants [to] have the will and readiness...Feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and

empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in discourse” (Mezirow, 2012, p. 80). In the next section, I explain the conditions that emerged in off-site focus groups and in all individual interviews to establish trustworthiness in this intervention strategy. I also provide a verbatim quote from a co-member describing her perspective.

Fostering critical reflection and dialogue. The atmosphere that was co-created in focus groups and interviews during this study enabled social support, in-depth exploration, and encouraged richness in perspectives. Members co-created a space of openness and safety in focus groups that enabled critical dialogue and reflection that was deeply felt, highly introspective, supportive, occasionally emotionally edgy, and often intellectually stimulating. At times, the dialogue was like speaking a new language because we were discussing tacit knowledge and encouraging new ways of thinking about and explaining different bodily experiences and learning.

Fostering a culture for critical reflection and dialogue enabled exploration of personal experiences in a separate reflective space that was not otherwise available with such explicit focus, intent, and extensiveness. Having a safe atmosphere for important discussions led to a willingness to climb into psyches, re-feel and reveal salient moments honestly, without prejudice. Participants were able to inspect the meaning-structures for what bodies were learning and experiencing in the Nia training.

Crystal, having been to several prior Nia trainings, explained the atmosphere of the focus groups as different from the training setting. ‘Being able to share’ enriched her Nia training experience and enabled ‘comparing and contrasting’:

Crystal: [post-interview] There was so much stuff comin' in and then we all had our experiences in, in the very intense way with each other, with the material, within our

own selves and the environment and the teachers and the trainers and the timing and so much going on...what was so beautiful about, um, this study was that at the end of the day of being tweaked and stretched and exposed to so many different stimuli, to actually have the opportunity to sit with others, having had the same experience, and just be able to share what everybody experienced. And the conversations and, and the sensations that are experienced, um, um, and then, and then comparing and contrasting with other people.

Limitations

Reported words are inadequate interpretations to convey the richness of bodily-lived experiences in this somatic training program. “To truly know something, we must become a part of what we know through engagement” (Anderson, 2002, p. 44).

In a transformative somatic learning theory, perhaps diverging slightly from transformative learning theory, the learning purpose had deep personal meaning such that members sought permanent change in the feeling of the body and the body in the lifeworld in different ways at the onset. Attending this event was a decision that felt right in each participant’s life several months prior to attending the training. Having strong bodily ties to the meaning of this training perhaps conflated the physical reactions in bodily experiences of contrast.

“Since a major part of [my] goal [was] to study what people take for granted, it [was] important that [I] not take the same perspectives for granted” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 57). I would add ‘not taking things personally’ to those suggestions. Member checking of the data collected built confirmability and addressed credibility relating to issues of trustworthiness.

Although great strides have been discussed to address credibility in this study, the sample was small, and divergent in participation because of the dual teaching agenda. The training itself was seven days long leading to issues of authenticity. However, I believe that from this sample, authenticity was demonstrated in the range of different realities with depiction of their associated concerns, issues and underlying values (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). Because of the diversity within the sample, maximum convergence among the data sources represented multiple perspectives. “The credibility of qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600).

“Any conclusions, developed through grounded theory are suggestive, incomplete, and inconclusive” (Charmaz, 2005 as cited by Creswell, 2007, p. 66). Usually multiple coders perform data analysis in grounded theory research to cross-check accuracy in data analysis. I had one peer-check on a small data sampling only. Moreover, I did not obtain focus group transcript confirmations because of confidentiality, and only two co-researchers were involved in more extensive member checking. Due to time constraints in the field, I was not able to member-check all of my observation data. Unfortunately, more than a year passed before I was able to undertake formal data analysis procedures. I also did not visit multiple sites for theoretical sampling as suggested using grounded theory methods. Instead, I used alternative means for theoretical sampling and constant comparison with extensive justification.

In qualitative research “the researcher [functions] as key instrument” (Creswell, 2007, p. 38) and I wore several hats during the training and was part of the social fabric that emerged. My position as researcher, co-researcher, black belt auditor, auditing student and white belt student required flexibility and self-reflexivity. As participant-observer in a

movement activity, I did not conceive of myself as a first-time white belt student, nor did my body know how to pretend not to know what it knew about movement.

Crystal and I had nearly twenty years of combined experience freedancing and were the two black belt auditors. On Day 1, I freedanced like a black belt and tapped a sensitivity ‘having different experience levels’ in the learning space as did Crystal. Therefore, I pulled back and settled in taking a sharper eye to the ambient conditions starting Day 2.

I utilized my field spiral notebook to bracket my own habits of body and monitored my own triggers while vacillating between participating and being a neutral observer. There were moments I had misgivings the entire training was going to end and plentiful moments when I did not ‘see’ all perspectives in that single moment.

Closing Remarks

Socioculturally, in the Western world, individuals are encouraged to live, lead, and learn with the embodied rational. For example, in mainstream leadership development programs and leading-edge teacher continuing education programs, there is a mental stake in ‘leading with the heart’ disguised as employing emotional ‘intelligence’ and deploying an ultimate embodied rational. Reifying the human body as concealed encourages human bodies to be somewhat inauthentic using different mental, social or emotional self-regulation strategies or other practices designed to foster ‘open-mindedness’.

Engaging the somatic is natural and being comfortable in the body is a felt experience. Unfortunately, “bodily impulses are hidden inside us like shameful relics of our humanity because those humans who have the capacity for high level verbal thinking processes are more highly valued” (Block & Kissell, 2001, p. 6). When we hide behind our minds, our bodies work against us. If the tenets hold true that we project our own lifeworlds

into relating and social spaces, it is plausible to suggest that cultivating body awareness would complement developing personal transformation rather than relying on training the mind to override the absent body.

I have crudely referred to this phenomenon as ‘being heads on sticks’, going so far as to hang mirrors up higher on the walls of my home to avoid looking at the whole of my human body. Gradually engaging ‘coming to awareness’ with somatic practice, my body revealed that what my body did placing those mirrors so high, was a metaphoric act of nailing down my uncontested agreement to live dis(embodied), meaning the human body is absent, characterized by an awkward, divided presence (Lewis, 1995) where “too much cerebral work or excessive mental energy, in general, makes people disengaged from life” (Persson, 2007, p. 48).

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Appendix A: Research Sub-questions by Topic

Background and demographic questions	Learning and Nia training questions	Learning preference questions	Learning and the body questions	Transformative learning questions
I1Q1. Demographic survey instrument	I1Q3. How did you come to enroll in this particular Nia training?	I1Q5. In what ways do you learn best?	I1Q6. Describe the physical sensation of learning. In what ways do you realize you have learned something meaningful?	I1Q7. In what ways does your Nia experience impact your perspective or invite you to question your inner assumptions?
I1Q2. How long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia?	I1Q4. In what ways do you anticipate this training will make a difference in your life?	FG1Q2. Please describe the ways you learn best.	FG1Q3. How does your body describe and recognize learning?	I1Q8. How does dancing Nia change your way of being in the world?
FG1Q1. Please introduce yourself to the group and let us know how long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia?	FG2Q3. Please describe your experience freedancing when there is little to no movement instructions.	FG1Q4. What motivates you to learn in Nia?	FG1Q7. What does the 'joy of movement' mean to your body and in what ways does that transfer to your life?	FG1Q6. Describe area/s of your life that is influenced by dancing Nia.
	FG2Q5. In what ways is this learning experience different from other adult training programs?	FG1Q5. What could hold you back from learning?	FG2Q1. Please share what is it like to be open to yourself, to your own physical Nia dancing experience.	FG2Q7. In what ways does your Nia practice lead to new knowledge, meaning or changed perspective?
	FG2Q6. Please demonstrate and/or share about a particularly memorable body movement or sensation you experienced in Nia class today. Please explain the ways this is meaningful to you	FG2Q4. Please explain the optimal forces which contribute to meaningful learning moments in Nia classes for you.	F2Q2. Please explain what contributes to a sense of openness for you.	FG3Q5. In what ways do your Nia movements affect how you see yourself, others, and the world?
	FG3Q1. Describe the ways and means you have learned best this week	I3Q2. What processes have you undertaken that enable you to utilize your learning?	FG3Q2. In what ways you have learned from your body?	I2Q6. In what ways does your experience in Nia influence the way/s you handle personal challenges?
	FG3Q6. In what ways has critical reflection in these focus groups influenced your perspective?		FG3Q3. In what ways does your body seek to learn and create learning opportunities in Nia? In what ways does the body fulfill them?	I3Q3. Please describe the ways your Nia practice influences your approach to decision making.

	FG3Q8. In what ways do you suspect you are or will be different because of this training experience?		FG3Q7. In what ways can your body co-create a space of meaningful learning in Nia class as a student and/or as the teacher?	I3Q8. In what ways and by what means does your Nia practice lead to personal transformation?
	I2Q3. How would your body describe itself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually when learning here compared to other learning settings?		I2Q1. In what ways and by what means do you learn from physical sensation/senses, movement/motion and/or body shapes (or other body-based occurrence)?	
	I2Q4. Describe when your body felt distanced during the Nia training this week and how that impacted your learning experience.		I2Q2. Please describe internal cues you experience in Nia. In what ways does your body communicate with you and how do you respond?	
	I2Q5. In what ways and means has this training experience influenced your perspective about yourself, others and/or the world?		I3Q4. Please explain the ways you have learned to learn from your body and how you came to this realization.	
	I2Q7. Please explain what you will take away from this training experience and how it will be meaningful in your life.		I3Q6. In what ways is your body providing continuous learning and knowledge and how is this useful in your everyday life?	
	I3Q1. In what ways is your white belt experience meaningful to your life now?			
	I3Q5. In what ways is the Nia white belt learning experience different from other training programs you have attended?			

	I3Q7. In what ways has critical reflection in our interviews (and focus groups if applicable) been influential in your perspective about your body, learning and/or your Nia practice?			
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		Participant and Observer Observation Notes Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie-Bridget Crystal-Elizabeth Julie	Principle 2 Practice Session Principle 2 Practice Session Bridget Aikido 'being pushed' Principle 2 Dyad Session activity Principle 2 Dyad Session activity
10:20-10:40am	20 minutes	Observation Notes	Renee, Sara, Crystal, and Elizabeth	Conversation: Travel to offsite Nia class
10:40-10:55	10 minutes	Observation Notes	Crystal-Elizabeth	Conversation: Impressions
11:00am-12:00pm	60 minutes	Participant and Observer	Julie	Nia class
12:00-12:15pm	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Ruth, Dawn, and Elizabeth	Conversation: Travel back to training studio
12:20-12:25pm	5 minutes	Observation Notes	Renee, Crystal, Sara, and Elizabeth	Conversation: Cleavage in the sandwich shop
1:30-1:55pm	22 minutes	Interview 1	Bridget	
1:55-2:25pm	30 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes	Sara Julie	Group meditation process Review Being Late discussion
2:25-4:45	120 minutes	Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie Julie Julie	Music and counting review Counting Music Group Activity Counting Music Group Activity Drawing music Group Activity Drawing music Individual Activity
4:45-5:30	45 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie Julie	Freedance triad and stages overview Listening to music Individual Practice listening to music Individual Writing sounds heard in music Individual
Sunset	20 minutes	Observation Notes	All white belt students	Watching sunset together
Day 2 Review		Theme – body object		
Day 3 6:45am-7:00am	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Dawn, Ruth, Crystal, Julie	Arrival Interactions Day 3
7:00am-8:00am	60 minutes	Participant and Observer Nia class audio recording	Renee Renee	Nia class Nia class with Renee Day 3
8:00-8:20am	20 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes	Elizabeth-Crystal Ruth, Dawn, Crystal, Sara, Elizabeth, Julie	Conversation: Nia class with Renee Day 3 Post-Nia class interactions Day 3
8:20am	50 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes Observation Notes Participant and Observer	Julie + All Dawn-Elizabeth	Group meditation process Day 3 am Group Check-in Day 3 am Moving on the floor-awareness of skin Conversation: Personal Meanings of Assumptions
9:30am	90 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie	Awareness discussion Dancing with life discussion Making Art Activity
12:30pm	10 minutes 5 minutes	Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Elizabeth-Julie-Dawn (phone) Elizabeth-Crystal	Conversation: First time white belts late Group meditation process with two people
12:40	15 minutes	Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie Julie+ All Julie-Dawn Julie-Crystal	[No Group meditation process] Group check-in
12:55	60 minutes	Participant as Observer	Sara	Freedance stages 1 and 2 movement activity

		Observation Notes Participant as Observer	Sara Sara	Overview of Freedance stages 3 and 4 Freedance stage 2 and 3 movement activity
	25 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie Julie-Dawn Elizabeth-Dawn	Reflection discussion Conversation: acting as if 'joy' to music Leggings
2:30-2:45	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Crystal, Bridget, Dawn, Julie, Ruth, Sara	Conversations: Break
2:45-3:45	60 minutes	Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Renee Renee Renee	Base of Body with skeleton model and charts Group movement to feel bones in self Discussion about bone function
3:45-5:00	75 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes Observation Notes Participant and Observer	Renee Renee Elizabeth-Julie Renee	Demonstration and practice of 27 base moves Lecture and demonstrate moves Conversation: Music and a Latte' Principle 7 and base moves practice
5:30-6:30pm		Participant and Observer	Sara	Nia class Day 3 pm
5:30-6:30pm	56 minutes	Nia Class Audio Recording	Sara	Nia class Day 3 pm
Day 3	60 minutes	Observation Notes	Elizabeth-Crystal	Conversation: Body Meanings
Day 3 Review		Theme: Movement metaphors	Elizabeth	
Day 4 6:45-7:00am	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Dawn, Crystal, Ruth, Bridget	Arrival
7:00-8:00am		Participant and Observer	Sara	Nia class-52 moves
	60 minutes	Nia class audio recording	Sara	Nia class-52 moves
8:00-8:20am	5 minutes	Observation Notes	Julie-Elizabeth	Conversation: First-time white belts
8:00-8:40am	40 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation	White belt students Julie + All	Group meditation process Day 4 am Group check-in Day 4 am
8:40-10:10am	90 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie-Dawn Julie Julie	The core of the body Finding the butterfly: chakra moves practice Book Talk Walk as if you have a tail activity Chakra discussion and practice
10:10am	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Crystal	Conversation: Heart chakra
10:25am	35 minutes	Participant as Observer Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie	Group freedance to music with core Group practice hip circles using wall Ribs with special cue
11:00am	10 minutes	Observation Notes	Bridget, Dawn, Crystal, Elizabeth	Conversation: Ruth leaving
12:30	15 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie + All	Group meditation process Day 4 pm Group check-in Day 4 pm
12:45-1:30pm 1:15pm 1:30pm	45 minutes 15 minutes 10 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes Observation Notes	Sara Bridget Sara	Group freedance session Bridget leaves room: twisted ankle Freedance review
1:40pm	50 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie-Bridget Crystal, Dawn Sara-Julie Sara-Dawn	Conversation: You went level 3 Interactions: Bridget's Ankle Conversation: What do I do now? Freedance movement review discussion
2:30pm	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Julie-Crystal-Elizabeth	Conversation: Helping Bridget's Ankle
2:55pm-4:30pm	95 minutes	Participating and Observation Notes Observation Notes	Sara Elizabeth-Julie	Drawing music sounds for 3 songs Conversation: Lyrics to one of the songs
4:30-5:00pm	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Julie	Recapped Sara's session
5:30-6:30pm		Participant and Observer	Renee	Nia class Day 4 pm
	54 minutes	Nia class audio recording	Renee	Nia class Day 4 pm

Day 4		Theme: setting dynamics	Elizabeth	
Day 5 7:00-7:20am	20 minutes	Observation Notes	Julie-Elizabeth	Conversation: Triggers and arrival observations
7:20am	47 minutes	Participation and Observation Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie + All Julie-Crystal Dawn	Group meditation process Day 5 am Group Check-in Day 5 am Body Talk Triggers
8:07-9:20am	73 minutes	Observation Notes Participation and Observation Participation and Observation Participation and Observation Observation Notes of Session	Julie Julie Julie Julie Elizabeth	Hands and arms body discussion Group singing activity Individual drawing on paper Group practice with Nia DVD on projector
9:20am	12 minutes	Observation Notes	Crystal-Elizabeth	Conversation: Body Talk
10:00-11:00am		Participant and Observer	Julie	Nia class
	60 minutes	Nia Class Audio Recording	Julie	Nia class – Day 5 am
11:00-11:20am	20 minutes	Observation Notes	Dawn, Bridget, Crystal, Elizabeth	Conversations: Nia class
11:30-12:25pm	44 minutes	Focus group two	Dawn, Bridget, Crystal, Elizabeth	Focus group two
12:25-12:40pm	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Dawn, Bridget, Crystal, Elizabeth	Conversations: Triggers
12:40-12:45pm	5 minutes	Observation Notes	Bridget, Julie, Elizabeth, Crystal	Conversations: Meanings of Triggers
12:45pm	15 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation notes	Dawn, Crystal, Elizabeth	Group meditation process Day 5 pm [No Group Check-in]
1:00-2:30pm	90 minutes	Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Notes Participant and Observer	Renee Elizabeth-Bridget Renee-Bridget Renee	Internal skeletal anatomy lecture Dyad body-mimicking activity Reflection: what did you see Drawing stick figures of body postures activity
2:30-5:00pm	150 minutes	Observation Notes Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie Julie	Review of Freedance stages and last two Freedancing each of the eight stages to music Practice-teaching Reflective check-in
Day 5		Theme: body triggers	Elizabeth	
Day 6 8:00am	20 minutes	Observation Notes	Julie-Elizabeth, Dawn, Sara	Arrival observations Day 6
8:20-8:50am	30 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation notes	Julie+	Group meditation process Day 6 am Group check-in
8:50-10:15am	85 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation notes Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes: Movement Activities	Renee Renee Renee Elizabeth	Demonstrated floor movements Practiced being on the floor with movement Practiced moves from Nia DVD projector
10:15-10:30am	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Renee, Bridget, Julie, Elizabeth	Conversations: Break Day 6 am
10:30-12:30pm	120 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes (selective) Artifact	Renee Julie + All Julie Julie + All Julie+ Julie + All	Dyad feet matching on floor Circle formation process around white board 'big fat star' Read passages aloud Discussion of artifact and dyad exercise. Group reflection

			Renee-Elizabeth Renee-Elizabeth Julie + All	Dyad writing and sharing Dyad writing and sharing Group reflection on experience
2:00-2:30pm	30 minutes	Participation and Observation Observation Notes	Julie + All	Group meditation process Day 6 pm Group check-in
2:30-5:00pm	120 minutes	Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes Observation Notes	Julie Julie Julie Julie Julie	Reviewed learning to learn with body Interactive discussion about what it means Interactive discussion about natural learning Viewed a routine on the projector Who am I? discussion
5:30-6:30pm		Participant and Observer	Sara and Renee	Co-taught Nia class Day 6
	60 minutes	Nia Class Audio Recording	Sara and Renee	Co-taught Nia class Day 6
Day 6 Review		Theme: learning and the body	Elizabeth	
Day 7	15 minutes	Observation Notes	Elizabeth	Self-reflection: Body state
7:30am-8:00am	27 minutes	Interview 2	Julie	Interview 2: Julie
8:00-8:20am	20 minutes	Observation	Bridget-Elizabeth	Conversation: A different kind of Bridget
8:20am	10 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Julie + All	Group meditation process Day 7 Group check-in Day 7
8:30am-11:15am	165 minutes	Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes Participant and Observer Participant and Observer Observation Notes	Sara Julie Julie Julie Julie Julie	Practiced chakra sounding with voice Freedance the spirit of the music while speaking body sensations out loud. Discussed music and movements Now stop/freeze! What is the sensation? Movement activity to practice dancing and speaking sensations only at certain points in the music. Reflection discussion
11:15-11:30am	30 minutes	Participant and Observer Observation Notes	All	Interaction and conversation observations
11:30-12:15pm	30 minutes	Demographic Survey Demographic Survey Demographic Survey Focus group three	Julie Renee Sara Julie, Renee, Bridget, Crystal, Sara, Dawn, Elizabeth	Focus group three
12:15-12:25	10 minutes	Observation Notes	Elizabeth	Post focus group 3 observations
1:00-2:00pm	60 minutes	Observation Notes Participant and Observer Observation Note: circle ease	Julie + All Julie + All	Discussion about keeping the experience accessible Seated-circle: interactive discussion and reflection
2:00-2:15pm	15 minutes	Participant and Observer	All	Interactions and observations before graduation
2:15-2:30pm	15 minutes	Participant and Observer Artifact: Certificate of Completion Artifacts: small gifts	Julie + Student-trainees	Graduation ceremony
2:30-2:35pm	5 minutes	Participant and Observer	All	Group activity saying goodbye
-End of Training-	-End of Training-	-End of Training-	-End of Training-	-End of Training-
2:35pm-3:30pm	55 minutes	Participant and Observer	All	Observations and interactions post-training
3:30pm	31 minutes	Interview two with Dawn	Dawn-Elizabeth	Interview two
9:15pm	16 minutes	Interview two with Crystal	Crystal-Elizabeth	Interview two
		Interview Observation Notes	Elizabeth	
5 weeks later	24 minutes	Interview three with Crystal	Crystal-Elizabeth	Interview three
5 weeks later	80 minutes	Interview three with Dawn	Dawn-Elizabeth	Interview three

5 weeks later	31 minutes	Interview three with Julie	Julie-Elizabeth	Interview three
		Interview Observation Notes	Elizabeth	
June 2012	e-mail	Member-checking level 1	Dawn-Elizabeth	Received and reviewed all individual interview transcripts.
	e-mail		Bridget-Elizabeth	Received and reviewed all individual interview transcripts.
	e-mail		Crystal-Elizabeth	Received and reviewed all individual interview transcripts.
	e-mail		Julie-Elizabeth	Received and stated she would review all individual interview transcripts.
May 2013	45 minutes	Member-checking level 2	Dawn-Elizabeth	Reviewed themes, use of verbatim quotes, and clarified meaning of understanding.
May 2013	30 minutes		Crystal-Elizabeth	Reviewed themes, use of verbatim quotes, and clarified meaning of understanding.

**Appendix C: IRB-approved Human Subject Consent Form
(first page only)**

**The University of New Mexico
Consent to Participate in Research
Considering a voice of the body for adult transformative learning theory**

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Elizabeth Boleyn, who is the Principal Investigator supervised by Patricia Boverie, Ph.D. professor from the Department of Organizational Learning and Instructional Technology. This research is studying adult transformative learning.

This Nia white belt intensive has been selected as a research study site to investigate the ways learning happens through movement and the body for a better understanding. Elizabeth Boleyn, Nia Black Belt and University of New Mexico Ph.D. candidate, will be conducting the study during **THIS TRAINING**. In order to explore transformative learning in this setting, Elizabeth would like to invite you to participate in gathering your ideas about your personal learning experiences in Nia in individual interviews and/or focus group sessions. The Trainer's role is only to inform you that this training is an academic research study site. She will be inviting up to eight individuals to participate in the study. Your voluntary participation will not interfere with the published training schedule. Participating will mean spending some extra time at the Site on occasion outside actual training sessions. You may be asked to attend individual interviews, focus group sessions, or both. In addition, Elizabeth will be attending the white belt as a fellow student but assuming the role of a neutral observer. At times during the week she will be jotting notes. If you choose not to enroll in the study, your interactions will not be included in the data. If you choose to participate, your identity will be kept confidential, protected by a pseudonym and stringent data storage and deletion requirements so that your personal identity is kept private. This study is not part of the white belt curriculum. Your Nia intensive will not be altered in any way due to the study being offered. This is a fully voluntary study where you may opt out or discontinue participation at any time. You are free to participate in the study of your own accord.

The Trainer's role in the study is to inform you that you may choose to participate and her decision to participate is also voluntary and private. Each registrant will be aware of the study and have a copy of this consent form. However, your participation will be a private individual decision which is separate from the white belt training program entirely. Once you have read, discussed, and understand the consent process with Elizabeth, she will invite you to sign this form to indicate your decision to participate. Should you choose not to participate, you will not be contacted about the study again. Should you choose to consent to enroll in study, you may be asked to participate in one or more individual interview sessions, focus group sessions, both, or neither based on a random drawing. Elizabeth will be contacting you about which portions to expect to attend and the approximate times.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. Please talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study.

Appendix D: IRB Approved Focus Group and Individual Interview Questions and Protocols

Three semi-structured focus groups with a minimum of three participants up to all seven participants were conducted during the duration of the training. The focus groups were a minimum of thirty minutes each. The first two focus groups were held in a large nearby private rental home, which was the preferred meeting place for participants. The last focus group was held at the training space as an optional potluck lunch. The first focus group was held immediately after Day 1 of training, the second was held on Day 5, and the last one was held on the last day where the entire group attended. (Please see the ‘Detailed schedule of data collection’ in the Appendix or chapter three for additional details).

Focus group interview script: To situate me as a researcher, I asked that in this context, I was longer a Nia Black Belt or fellow attendee, instead a researcher-inquirer, asking them to be the experts. I reminded participants that the focus groups were being digitally recorded so that note taking did not interfere with the natural flow of conversation or produce unwanted barriers in the ability to accurately capture what was discussed. I requested each person ask for clarity about questions and to respond as completely as they felt comfortable doing.

To protect human subjects and create an added sense of trust, I reminded them that what they said would not be shared explicitly with any outside member of the Nia community or society at large, including anyone not present in the group meeting. But, I explained that certain excerpts from the group may be directly quoted using a pseudonym in my final write-up and asked if they understood that. In every focus group, I asked participants to agree to uphold focus group confidentiality indicating their agreement to do so by saying “I” out loud.

FOCUS GROUP #1: SATURDAY, 8:00pm

Please complete the note cards with the pencil provided. Each pre-printed card had blank spaces after each of the following statements: First name, 1) Age, 2) Occupation/education /professional training, 3) Marital/family status, 4) Approximate income, 5) Race/nationality /religion/political stance. *This instrument was administered only if it had not already been completed.*

1. Please introduce yourself to the group and let us know how long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia?
2. Please describe the ways you learn best.
3. How does your body describe and recognize learning?
4. What motivates you to learn in Nia?
5. What could hold you back from learning?
6. Describe area/s of your life that is influenced by dancing Nia. In what ways does your Nia influence (list each area mentioned by participant)?
7. What does the ‘joy of movement’ mean to your body and in what ways does that transfer to your life?

FOCUS GROUP #2: WEDNESDAY, 11:30am

1. Please share what it is like to be open to yourself, to your own physical Nia dancing experience.
2. Please explain what contributes to a sense of openness for you.
3. Please describe your experience freedancing when there is little to no movement instructions.
4. Please explain the optimal forces which contribute to meaningful learning moments in Nia classes for you.
5. In what ways is this learning experience different from other adult training programs?
6. Please demonstrate and/or share about a particularly memorable body movement or sensation you experienced in Nia class today. Please explain the ways this is meaningful to you.
7. In what ways does your Nia practice lead to new knowledge, meaning or changed perspective? Please discuss any emerging themes, patterns or categories.

FOCUS GROUP #3: FRIDAY, LAST DAY OF TRAINING at 11:30am

1. Describe the ways and means you have learned best this week.
2. In what ways you have learned from your body?
3. In what ways does your body seek to learn and create learning opportunities in Nia? In what ways does the body fulfill them?

4. ~~In what ways do you recognize learning through the body compared to other ways of knowing? (Question not asked in the interest of time.)~~
5. In what ways do your Nia movements affect how you see yourself, others, and the world?
6. In what ways has critical reflection in these focus groups influenced your perspective?
7. In what ways can your body co-create a space of meaningful learning in Nia class as a student and/or as the teacher?
8. In what ways do you suspect you are or will be different because of this training experience?
- 9) If any of you would you be interested in reviewing portions of the data at a later date, please let me know after we end here. The data will be shared with pseudonyms and the purpose of your review is to offer additional feedback on the initial findings. If you are interested, please see me. Thank you.

Nine semi-structured interviews with four individuals were conducted over the duration of the study up to five weeks after the training ended. Two of these interviews were scheduled during the training (please refer to the ‘Detailed schedule of data collection’ in the Appendix or chapter three for more details). The first was held as close as possible to the start of training and the second on the last day of training. The post-interview was conducted in the most convenient way and time for participants either by phone or in-person five weeks after the training was over. Each individual interview was a minimum of 15 minutes, sometimes exceeding 80 minutes. Interviews were held in private locations during the training: at private homes, at or near the studio, or by phone.

Individual interview script I used before each interview: To situate me as a researcher, I asked that in this context, I was longer a Nia Black Belt or fellow attendee, instead a researcher-inquirer, asking them to be the expert. I reminded participants that the interviews were being digitally recorded so that note taking did not interfere with the natural flow of conversation or produce unwanted barriers in the ability to accurately capture what was discussed. I requested each person to ask for clarity about questions and to respond as completely as they felt comfortable doing.

To protect human subjects and create an added sense of trust, I reminded them that what they said would not be shared explicitly with any outside member of the Nia community or society at large, including anyone not present in the interview. But, I explained that certain excerpts from the interview may be directly quoted using a pseudonym in my final write-up and asked if they understood that.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #1: WITHIN 24 HOURS OF TRAINING START

1. Please complete the note cards with the pencil provided. Each pre-printed card had blank spaces after each of the following statements: First name, 1) Age, 2) Occupation/education /professional training, 3) Marital/family status, 4) Approximate income, 5) Race/nationality /religion/political stance. *This instrument was administered only if it had not already been completed.*
2. How long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia?
3. How did you come to enroll in this particular Nia training?
4. In what ways do you anticipate this training will make a difference in your life?
5. In what ways do you learn best?
6. Describe the physical sensation of learning. In what ways do you realize you have learned something meaningful?
7. In what ways does your Nia experience impact your perspective or invite you to question your inner assumptions?
8. How does dancing Nia change your way of being in the world?

SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW #2: FRIDAY, DAY TRAINING ENDED

1. In what ways and by what means do you learn from physical sensation/senses, movement/motion and/or body shapes (or other body-based occurrence)?
2. Please describe internal cues you experience in Nia. In what ways does your body communicate with you and how do you respond?
3. How would your body describe itself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually when learning here compared to other learning settings?
4. Describe when your body felt distanced during the Nia training this week and how that impacted your learning experience.
5. In what ways and means has this training experience influenced your perspective about yourself, others and/or the world?

6. In what ways does your experience in Nia influence the way/s you handle personal challenges?
7. Please explain what you will take away from this training experience and how it will be meaningful in your life.

SEMI-STRUCTURED POST INTERVIEW #3 FIVE WEEKS AFTER TRAINING by phone or in person:

1. In what ways is your white belt experience meaningful to your life now?
2. What processes have you undertaken that enable you to utilize your learning?
3. Please describe the ways your Nia practice influences your approach to decision making.
4. Please explain the ways you have learned to learn from your body and how you came to this realization.
5. In what ways is the Nia white belt learning experience different from other training programs you have attended?
6. In what ways is your body providing continuous learning and knowledge and how is this useful in your everyday life?
7. In what ways has critical reflection in our interviews (and focus groups if applicable) been influential in your perspective about your body, learning and/or your Nia practice?
8. In what ways and by what means does your Nia practice lead to personal transformation?
- 9) Would you be interested in reviewing portions of the data at a later date? The data will be shared with pseudonyms and the purpose of your review is to offer additional feedback on the initial findings. If you are interested, may I have your permission to keep your contact information for this purpose?

Appendix E: Research Topics – Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Questions

FG1Q1 Background question: How long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia?			
Learning and Nia training	Learning preference	Learning and the body	Transformative learning
FG2Q3. Please describe your experience freedancing when there is little to no movement instructions.	FG1Q2. Please describe the ways you learn best.	FG1Q3. How does your body describe and recognize learning?	FG1Q6. Describe area/s of your life that is influenced by dancing Nia.
FG2Q5. In what ways is this learning experience different from other adult training programs?	FG1Q4. What motivates you to learn in Nia?	FG1Q7. What does the ‘joy of movement’ mean to your body and in what ways does that transfer to your life?	FG2Q7. In what ways does your Nia practice lead to new knowledge, meaning or changed perspective?
FG2Q6. Please demonstrate and/or share about a particularly memorable body movement or sensation you experienced in Nia class today. Please explain the ways this is meaningful to you	FG1Q5. What could hold you back from learning?	FG2Q1. Please share what it is like to be open to yourself, to your own physical Nia dancing experience.	FG3Q5. In what ways do your Nia movements affect how you see yourself, others, and the world?
FG3Q1. Describe the ways and means you have learned best this week	FG2Q4. Please explain the optimal forces which contribute to meaningful learning moments in Nia classes for you.	F2Q2. Please explain what contributes to a sense of openness for you.	
FG3Q6. In what ways has critical reflection in these focus groups influenced your perspective?		FG3Q2. In what ways you have learned from your body?	
FG3Q8. In what ways do you suspect you are or will be different because of this training experience?		FG3Q3. In what ways does your body seek to learn and create learning opportunities in Nia? In what ways does the body fulfill them?	
		FG3Q7. In what ways can your body co-create a space of meaningful learning in Nia class as a student and/or as the teacher?	

Appendix F: Research Topics - Semi-Structured Individual Interview Questions

I1Q1. Demographic survey instrument (sources of data section)			
I1Q2. How long and how frequently have you been dancing or teaching Nia? (sources of data section)			
Learning and Nia training	Learning preference	Learning and the body	Transformative learning
I1Q3. How did you come to enroll in this particular Nia training?	I1Q5. In what ways do you learn best?	I1Q6. Describe the physical sensation of learning. In what ways do you realize you have learned something meaningful?	I2Q6. In what ways does your experience in Nia influence the way/s you handle personal challenges?
I1Q4. In what ways do you anticipate this training will make a difference in your life?	I3Q2. What processes have you undertaken that enable you to utilize your learning?	I2Q1. In what ways and by what means do you learn from physical sensation/senses, movement/motion and/or body shapes (or other body-based occurrence)?	I1Q7. In what ways does your Nia experience impact your perspective or invite you to question your inner assumptions?
I2Q3. How would your body describe itself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually when learning here compared to other learning settings?		I2Q2. Please describe internal cues you experience in Nia. In what ways does your body communicate with you and how do you respond?	I1Q8. How does dancing Nia change your way of being in the world?
I2Q4. Describe when your body felt distanced during the Nia training this week and how that impacted your learning experience.		I3Q4. Please explain the ways you have learned to learn from your body and how you came to this realization.	I3Q3. Please describe the ways your Nia practice influences your approach to decision making.
I2Q5. In what ways and means has this training experience influenced your perspective about yourself, others and/or the world?		I3Q6. In what ways is your body providing continuous learning and knowledge and how is this useful in your everyday life?	I3Q8. In what ways and by what means does your Nia practice lead to personal transformation?
I2Q7. Please explain what you will take away from this training experience and how it will be meaningful in your life.			
I3Q1. In what ways is your white belt experience meaningful to your life now?			
I3Q5. In what ways is the Nia white belt learning experience different from other training programs you have attended?			
I3Q7. In what ways has critical reflection in our interviews (and focus groups if applicable) been influential in your perspective about your body, learning and/or your Nia practice?			

Appendix G: Example of Line-by-line Coding from An Interview

Excerpts from one interview transcript	Code
<p>E: In what ways does your body communicate with you and how do you respond?</p> <p>C: Um, in internal cues, it's through movement. So, I'm stimulated by the external music a lot of times and it goes into my body and then, and then the music, if it's, depending on the beat or the melody, it automatically connects- oh, okay, I like that sensation and I can imagine how my body would be moving. If it's very melodic, then there's a lot of flow-type action. If it's rhythmic, it takes me down to the earth. It's very grounded for me and it comes up from the earth. If it's- also, I think, flowy- comes more from the etheric, more from the sky. But it's a challenging thing to be able to identify where it is in my body, but it just happens. The challenge for me is to sit in silence, to take myself to a place of calm. A place of meditation, no movement. It's like my body's more in movement and action than it, so I'm the opposite way.</p>	<p>Internal cues through movement [movement] Stimulated by music [bodily connection with music] Music goes into my body [feel music in body] The beat or the melody [listening to the music with the body] Body automatically connects [connecting to body] <i>I like that sensation</i> [being aware of body sensation] <i>Imagine how my body would be moving</i> [imagining body movement] Melodic flow action [doing movement] Rhythmic takes me down to earth [connecting to music, being grounded] Grounded comes up from the earth [connecting to music, connecting to movements] Flowy comes from etheric, the sky [connecting to music, connecting to movements] Challenging to identify where it is in my body It just happens [knowing without thinking] Challenge to sit in silence to take myself to place of calm; a place of meditation, no movement. [movement is calming] My body's more in movement and action [learning preference]</p>
<p>E: Describe when your body felt distanced during the Nia training this week and how that impacted your learning experience.</p> <p>C: The opinions and control and manipulation and resistance of the other new Nia students not wanting to go outside of their boundary or listening to them challenge their own self. Um, there was compassion to a point and then I lose my patience.</p> <p>I: What does that feel like in your body?</p>	<p>Opinions, control, manipulation, resistance [lifeworld mirrors of relationships] Students not wanting to go outside boundary [lifeworld mirrors of feeling of own self] Students not challenging their own self [external locus of control] Compassion to a point [being at a point] Lose patience [shifting perspective]</p>

<p>C: In my- I, I shut down. I stop listening. I go somewhere else. I get frustrated because, um, I just, I know I could be absorbing so much more but then I switch my head space around and I go oh, okay, so there's gotta be a pearl in here to be able to watch somebody else. The other factor was also, um...The other factor is, um, the, the quality and the abilities of the teacher. If the teacher is not able- if I'm not able to connect with the teacher and the teacher can't connect with me or if I see that the teacher, um, is, um, obstructed by something else, um, then I shut down. Um, there hasn't been too many classes but if I just find that the teacher is, is not showing their confidence or their connection with the music, then I'll walk out.</p>	<p>Shut down [being stuck] go somewhere else [escaping tension] Stop listening [dis-engage human body] Go somewhere else [going away-lifeworld mirror] Get frustrated [self-generated body state] Could be absorbing so much more [reaching tolerance edge] Switch my head space [shifting perspective] <i>Pearl to watch somebody else</i> [watching others is a learning] Quality and abilities of the teacher [watching teacher] Not able to connect with teacher [needing connection to teacher] Teacher not able to connect with me [needing teacher to connect with me] If I see teacher is obstructed by something else [watching teacher; seeing teacher 'being stuck'] I shut down [bodily reaction of 'shutting down' when not having connection to teacher or self] Teacher not showing confidence or connection to music [watching teacher], [connection to music] I'll walk out [bodily reaction to others' not being connected]</p>
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Appendix H: Selected Conceptualization Tables

Being First Time – Conceptualization

‘Being First Time’	‘Being First Time-First Nia class’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being at a point in time • being at my bottom point • disconnecting cords with relationships • coming to break with [oppressive community] • not being able to cope anymore • burying my mother • pulsing something new • being recently retired • losing everything • having knee surgery • pulsing something new • having never been to a workshop • having never danced • having never done Nia • breaking with programming • walking on balanced feet • being physically active • resisting external pressures • having freedom • going through traumatic divorce • going through a lawsuit • new opportunities for first time with Nia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remembering my first Nia class • awakening • having my mind blown • moving as one • being dramatic with a group • having a culmination of my whole life • tearing up • having a spiritual practice • having the heavens open up • being backwards • being not competitive • being new to me • being freaked out • never doing aerobics again • having emotional connection • freedancing most intimidating part • feeling strength from my core for the first time • standing taller • saying Yes! saying No! • having metaphors of my life • having logistical anxiety • taking caregiving inventory of others in class • doing my hardest moves • feeling my heart race • having sweaty palms • having joy-based messaging • having no idea

Being Stuck – Conceptualization

'Being stuck'

- needing permission
 - not knowing where to start
 - not knowing what to do
 - not understanding what is going on
 - being blank
 - being distanced from my body
 - wanting to split
 - comparing
 - being competitive
 - taking two steps back
 - not having any moves
 - not having any tools in my shed
 - trying to figure it out
 - putting me back
 - having some difficulty
 - being traumatic
 - having emotional intensity
 - being unfamiliar
 - being afraid of hurting people's feelings
 - having to buy into a philosophy
 - being separated from the group
 - not being like, wow!
 - selling Nia to me
 - feeling misunderstood
 - being inappropriate
 - wondering where we are on the schedule
 - breaking rules
 - being rude
 - being late
 - conforming
 - feeling overexposure to more experienced individuals
 - being thrown into freedance
 - being too intense for the intensive
 - being dropped into a pit of vipers
 - being a guinea pig
 - being on thin ice
 - feeling judged
 - being critiqued
 - having to struggle
 - needing the trainer to intervene
 - being all upside down
 - being intimidated
 - having their eyes on me
 - not moving when someone is looking
 - not challenging themselves
-

Self-Allowing – Conceptualization

‘Self-allowing-making choices’	‘Self-allowing-being with the unknown’	‘Self-allowing-having permission’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking that next step • making adjustments to my body • changing my mind • learning something new • taking it in another way • self-correcting • making a shift away • letting go of the judgment • choosing intensity level • overcoming • choosing joy • being polite and gracious • not quitting • not being obligated • consciously choosing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pushing myself to the boundary • freedancing • allowing me to re-pattern • going into a journey • going into a new transition in my life • being willing to jump in • being led to connect • being outside my comfort zone • growing pains of change • being stretched • challenging myself • seeing what I can discover • being in a strange environment • being unfamiliar • acting as if • knowing how to fake it • being new to me • being outside my norm • being curious • being with people I don’t know • freedancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not having to do anything that doesn't feel right • having this feeling of joy for myself • being whoever you want to be • getting to that calm level • doing my own thing in a group • taking care of myself first • seeing others model • giving permission to myself • finding my own voice • moving my hips • being on the floor • not caring if you think I’m selfish • having boundaries • being happy
‘Self-allowing-doing a practice’	‘Self-allowing-being present’	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • going into a little focused zone • going into my own bubble • insisting of myself • having self-control • being grounded • taking care of my body • suspending thoughts and feelings • making myself get through it • not taking things personally • not making assumptions • practicing • meditating • retraining myself • making shifts in my mind • reprogramming my judging mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being present in a different way • looking at myself • being fully present • expanding energy elements • having a sense of calm in the chaos around me • being in the moment in the class • subconsciously clearing my space • not interrupting • being relaxed, alert, and waiting • being present for relationships • listening to the sounds and silence of music • being here, now 	

Coming To Awareness – Conceptualization

‘Coming to awareness- processing verbally’ with others	‘Coming to awareness-checking in’	‘Coming to awareness-processing through movement’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sense to me • justifying • thinking about it from that perspective • learning a hard lesson • coming to a place where I could say... • doing this to myself • creating web of meaning • processing with others • sharing with others • learning by telling others • verbalizing • being logical • being analytical • listening to others • comparing and contrasting • sharing experiences • articulating • processing for hours • liking to talk • asking questions • wanting evidence 	<p>‘Self-talking’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psyching myself up • shifting my headspace • telling myself... • putting a positive spin on it <p>‘Inner Dialoguing’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking at myself • paying attention to more things • taking time to wait for something to come • asking my body • having heightened awareness • being aware • having awareness • listening to my body • stepping outside myself • checking all my realms • scanning my realms • having clues • seeing where there’s flow • seeing where there’s stuckness • my body telling me • doing what my body says • going into my body • getting answers from my body • going to my body first • coming back to my body • confirming within my body • having new understanding • revealing my own self • seeing how I feel • listening to intelligence of my body • addressing my physical needs • giving our bodies what it needs • checking in with my body • listening to my words • noticing where there’s tension in relationships • being able to be present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirming my own intuition • dancing anxiety from my body • releasing cellular trauma • working through things • having abstract mind • sifting through things • being moved through [stuff] • unconsciously processing things • [realizing] getting stuck in habits • having epiphanies • letting go of buried emotions • working things out with your movement • wondering what will be revealed • being surprised • testing out a premise • processing through the body • processing through activity • coming through to the other side • having clarity • taking a stand for my choices • seeing what that feels like • healing • having lessons for me • seeing life as art • having a new belief I did not hold • having breakthroughs • assessing how I feel in a moment • re-teaching myself • having clarity • having a language for my intuition • revealing to me • noticing where I’m off balance

Being Connected - Conceptualization

‘Being connected-Connected to my Awareness’	‘Being Connected-Connected to My Movement/Sensation’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wanting to be shifting paradigms • starting to feel different • wanting congruency within myself • understanding where I want to go • realizing • appreciating more things • something connected at a deeper level within me • feeling like light-bulb eureka • resonating well with the energy of the class • knowing what it feels like to feel good • led to connect with what I’ve known all along • realizing how disconnected I’ve been • something I was missing • feeling something in a different place • being more comfortable • connecting to my grounding • having greater confidence • having a body memory • having a cellular memory • not feeling any negative things in my body • feeling myself in the space with others around me • noticing where I’m off balance • knowing where connections are happening within and without • knowing who I am in my space at that moment in time • coming to place within myself • having love and compassion for all of us • feeling my heart energy connecting to his • having that awareness • being heightened awareness • being open • absorbing information through my body • being scrunched up • stretching out • needing to go outside • being tired • being hungry/thirsty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being able to notice now • having a light bulb connection • freedancing is not the same today • sensing aha • feeling a click • being in resonance • having a new sensation in movement • putting emotion onto movement changes sensation • feeling better at the end • affecting my perspective • making me think about the way I... • feeling the difference in your body • staying until I feel from the body I want to change • acting imaginatively • learning through sensation • learning through touch • connecting new information with physical movement • having all my senses on alert • being connected to my dancing moment • being in the flow • incorporating concepts and ideas into movement • noticing what’s going on with me • making contact • moving in different mediums • balancing the energies • sensing my feet on the floor underneath me • sensing how I’m standing • sensing how I’m walking • taking movement cues from the music • working out a knot in my neck • pointing my toe when I heel-lead • feeling my personality in jazz square • feeling eased • feeling floating

'Being Connected-Connected To My Body'	'Being Connected-Connecting To My Values-Beliefs'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting the picture out of my head and into my movement • trusting intelligence of my body • being in the moment in the class • listening to intelligence of my body • seeing what my body is • knowing what it means to have a physical body • making that connection • going into a new experience in a deeper body way • absorbing information better • getting into the body • getting grounded • getting centered • having self-connection • having a deep level of being • bringing the focus back to the body • being grateful to be alive • dressing for my body • noticing how my body is sitting or standing • trusting my body • being with my body like a wise friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being true to my own self • being congruent • being in alignment • looking for ways to reconcile • connecting with what I believe • living through the truth • being ethical humanist • being nurturing • being caregiving • being ethical • being impeccable with my word • being responsible • being less judging of a person • having a language • making sense logically • holding a space • being guided by my spiritual principles • having freedom • believing what I believe
'Being Connected-Carrying Experiences Over'	'Being Connected-Connecting To Possibilities'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tying in with everything • having a memory • affecting my life • thinking back to something we did • remembering the feeling of the class • establishing my own boundaries • seeing the symbology • having it all connect • being in synchronicity • being graceful by myself in the park • dancing with my kids around the house • having benediction • carrying that feeling of joy into my world • using those experiences in my world • making a home office space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating • seeing the possibilities • leading me to inspiration • seeing the potential • imagining me doing it • visualizing • changing the world • making a difference • cracking the door • pushing me to my potential • having everyone be my teacher • knowing there's a pearl in there for me • being a better mother • breathing the ohm of life
'Being Connected-Connecting to Focus and Intent'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having a body spirit focus • being intentional in a focus • being intentional with my movement • focusing on my focus • connecting my movements to a focus and intent • pulsing intention • being my own teacher • doing my best • setting my focus 	

Appendix I: Refinement of Data Analysis – Figure 6 Enlarged View

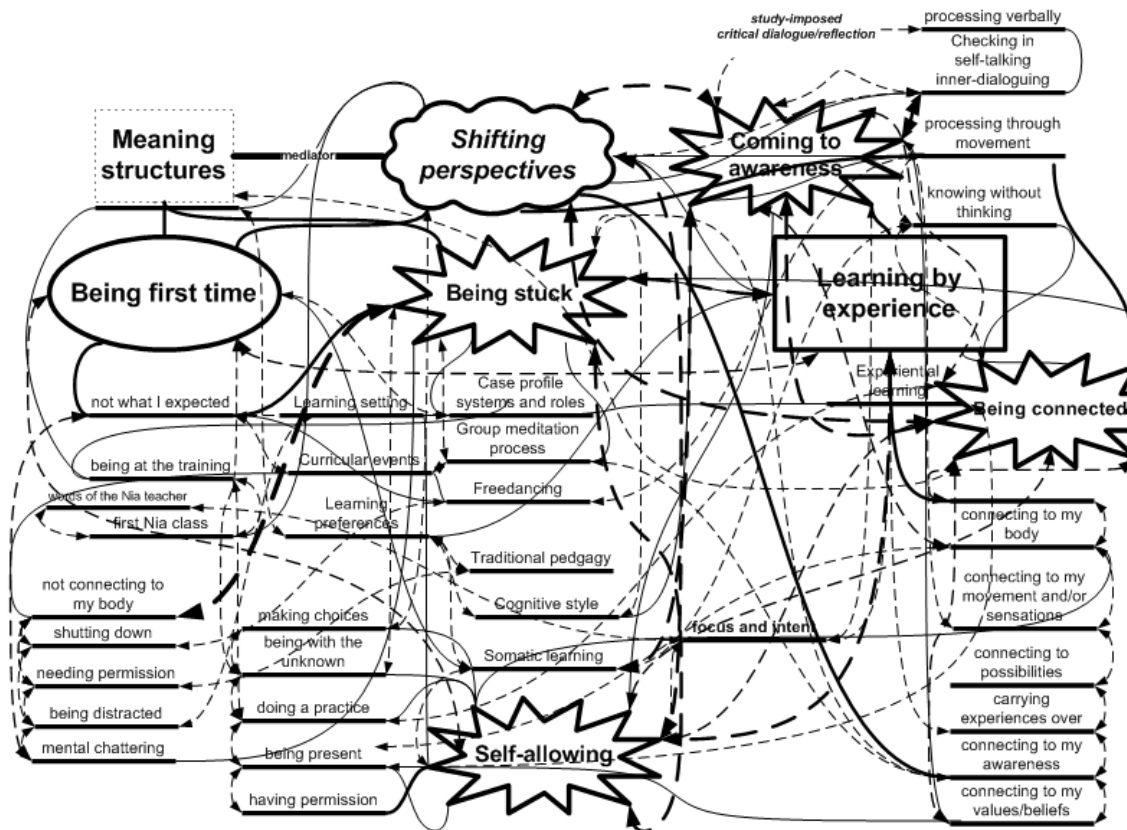


Figure 6. Refinement of Data Analysis.