

7-12-2014

# The Voices of Passion: An Exploratory Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in Undergraduate Teaching

Jennifer Crabb

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ\\_ifce\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_ifce_etds)

---

## Recommended Citation

Crabb, Jennifer. "The Voices of Passion: An Exploratory Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in Undergraduate Teaching." (2014).  
[https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ\\_ifce\\_etds/5](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/educ_ifce_etds/5)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Education ETDs at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Individual, Family, and Community Education ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

Jennifer Sultemeier Crabb

*Candidate*

Counselor Education

*Department*

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

*Approved by the Dissertation Committee:*

Dr. Deborah Rifenburg, Chairperson

Dr. Patricia Boverie

Dr. Eliseo Torres

Dr. Matthew Lemberger-Truelove

**THE VOICES OF PASSION:  
AN EXPLORATORY PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS  
OF  
PASSION IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING**

**by**

**JENNIFER SULTEMEIER CRABB**

B.A., Criminology and English, University of New Mexico, 1994  
M.A., Counseling, University of New Mexico, 2002

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
Counselor Education**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May 2014**

## Dedication

*“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”*

*~Eleanor Roosevelt*

I could not have pursued this educational journey without the amazing support, guidance, and love from my parents, Steve and Barbara Sultemeier. They taught me at a young age that my dreams matter and are important. They taught me the value of education. I truly am lucky to have their love and support through this journey. Thank you for being my inspirations!

I dedicate this to my husband, Wesley Crabb, who I met and married while pursuing this degree. You have supported me through many a long night writing papers and studying. Thank you for always being there for me!

This is for my brother, Brent Sultemeier and my sister-in-law, Michelle Sultemeier along with the lights of my life, my beautiful nieces, Lauren and Katelyn and my amazing nephew, Matthew. You make me smile in my heart and soul! I truly appreciate the support, caring and unconditional love you give me every day.

To my in-laws, Millie and Winston Crabb, who always supported me in my pursuit of this degree. I love sharing this with you all.

To my Aunt Kathy, you inspired me to become a teacher when I first entered UNM – and look at me now! You have always been a mentor and inspiration to me – I love being able to share this experience with you.

Thank you to the rest of my family and close friends.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the chair of my dissertation committee and my advisor through my doctoral degree, Dr. Deborah Rifenburg. Your constant support, belief in me and mentorship encouraged me in ways I can never express. Our laughs and long talks were and continue to be invaluable. Thank you to my “other chair”, Dr. Patricia (Patsy) Boverie. From the moment I entered the Ph.D. program, everyone said I had to meet you – and boy, were they right! You are an inspiration and mentor to me. I appreciate all your support and encouragement through my program! Thank you to Dr. Matthew Lemberger-Truelove – you have given me such wonderful advice and direction on this journey. I value your insights and your perspectives. And, lastly, thank you to Dr. Eliseo (Cheo) Torres, who not only served on my dissertation committee, but has been my direct supervisor in Student Affairs. Dr. Torres, you have been an amazing role model, strong support and constant voice to push through and finish this degree. I appreciate you more than you will know!

A big thank you goes out to the staff of Career Services, (Cathy Chalk, Caitlin Henke, Keith Hitz, Autumn Collins, Heather Ver Brugge, Marty Apodaca, Megan Phillips, Nicole Baca-Montano, Ragina Pena, Tara Hackel, Tommy Nguyen, Richard Ross, Nathan Sweet, Cassandra Chavez, Jayson Capps, Jocelyn Richards, JJ Martin, Jose Lopez-Guerra, and Valerie Tafoya) who have been there for me throughout the pursuit of this dream. I am so lucky to work with each of you – you will never know.

Thank you to my UNM colleagues! You all are some of the strongest and most amazing people – I am eternally grateful to call you colleagues. Thank you to Dr. Kim Kloeppel, Jennifer Gomez-Chavez, Dr. Lawrence Roybal, Vanessa Harris, Dr. Marla

Wyche-Hall, Dr. George Williams, Jr., Andrew Gonzalez, Debbie Morris, Dr. Walt Miller, Dr. Tim Gutierrez, Dorene DiNaro, Natalie Brigance, Summer Little, Wayne Sullivan, Teresa Ortiz, Residence Life staff, Rob Burford, Randy Boeglin, Bird Podzemny, Dr. Mandy Perryman, Dr. Gene Coffield, Dr. John Rinaldi (who convinced me to apply to the Ph.D. program), the Student Affairs Directors, the faculty of the Counselor Education program, the faculty of the OLIT program, and the list could go on and on.

A special thank you to the passionate professors in this study- I learned a lot from you; your passion for students and for higher education is inspiring and hopeful.

Thank you to my students. I have been lucky to teach and work with all of you – but most importantly, I have been lucky to learn from you. You are the reason I am an educator.

Thank you to all my friends, mentors and colleagues as I am sure I left some individuals out. You inspire every student that crosses your path. You truly are passionate educators. The world is a better place with you here – as I am a better person with you in my life.

Passion in Teaching: An Exploratory Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in  
Undergraduate Teaching

BY

Jennifer Sultemeier Crabb

Bachelor of Arts, Criminology and English, University of New Mexico, 1994

Master of Arts, Counseling, University of New Mexico, 2002

Doctor of Philosophy, Counselor Education, University of New Mexico, 2014

**ABSTRACT**

This phenomenological study explored how undergraduate professors from a large Carnegie Very High and High research university in the southwest demonstrated passion through their teaching as experienced and identified by students. The research comprised of interviewing and observing 6 undergraduate identified passionate professors on passion in teaching. Data was collected from a student survey which identified the passionate professors and focus group that reviewed and commented on the emergent themes from the data. This study aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) What constitutes/makes a passionate professor? 2) How is the perceived passion experienced by the student? 3) Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor? 4) According to the passionate professor - Is passion innate? Is it learned? 5) How important is passion in the teaching profession? The phenomenon of passion in education has been a widely studied field, yet mostly limited to K-12 educational areas. This research begins to address a gap in the literature on passion in teaching in higher education, specifically undergraduate education. Recommendations are made to further advance the research in passion in teaching for higher education.

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions .....	6
Definitions and Key Terms .....	7
Significance of the Study .....	8
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Passion .....	11
Learning .....	12
Learning and Higher Education .....	13
Theoretical Framework: Transformational Learning.....	16
Today's Students.....	22
Teaching with Presence .....	24
Self-Awareness .....	26
Authenticity.....	28
Conclusion .....	31
<b>Chapter 3: Design of the Study .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Methodological Approach .....	33
General Description of Site.....	34
Methods for Collecting Data.....	36
Methods of Analysis .....	40
Ethical Considerations .....	41
Limitations .....	42
<b>Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis .....</b>	<b>43</b>
Introduction.....	43
Overview .....	43
The Data Process.....	45



Student Survey .....	46
Student Themes .....	48
Question: What characteristics make them passionate? .....	48
Emotional Connection .....	48
Student Centered .....	49
Learner Centered .....	51
Question: Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experiences as a student? .....	51
The Professors .....	56
The Passionate Professors .....	57
Jack .....	57
Ken .....	61
Olivia .....	64
Steve .....	68
Walter .....	71
Wanda .....	77
Interview Themes .....	81
Student as Learners .....	82
Professional Growth .....	85
Style .....	88
Emotional Connection .....	91
Observation Themes .....	93
Student as Learners .....	93
Openness/Approachability .....	95
Humor .....	95
Style .....	96
Focus Group .....	97
Conclusion .....	103
<b>Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Future Research .....</b>	<b>105</b>
Summary of Findings .....	106

The Student Survey .....	106
The Student Survey Themes .....	106
The Professors .....	108
Themes as Related to Literature Review .....	112
Discussion .....	120
The Research Questions.....	121
What constitutes/makes a passionate professor? .....	122
How is the passion experienced by the student?.....	122
Do students learn more as a result of a passionate professor? .....	123
According to the professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?.....	123
How important is passion in the teaching profession?.....	124
Limitations of the Study.....	130
Future Research and Recommendations for Higher Education .....	131
Final Thoughts and Personal Reflections .....	135
<b>References</b> .....	137
Appendix A: Passion in Teaching Student Survey .....	144
Appendix B: Professor Individual Interview Questions .....	145
Appendix C: Focus Group Questions .....	146
Appendix D: Informed Consent Cover Letter for Anonymous Surveys .....	147
Appendix E: Informed Consent for Professors .....	148
Appendix F: Informed Consent for Focus Group .....	151
Appendix G: Handout for Focus Group.....	154

**FIGURES:**

Figure 1: Theoretical Model .....	18
Figure 2: The Process .....	40
Figure 3: The Data Process .....	45

**TABLES:**

Table 1: Research Question and Data Source Table.....	36
Table 2: Professor Titles .....	47
Table 3: The Passionate Professors.....	57
Table 4: Focus Group.....	98
Table 5: Literature Review Summary Table .....	119
Table 6: Research Questions Summary Table .....	128

“‘Man’ (sic) is only truly great when he acts from the passions”

~ Disraeli (1804-1881)

## **Chapter One (1): Introduction**

For many individuals teaching is considered a passionate profession (Palmer, 1998; Day, 2004). Teaching is a profession that attracts those who are passionate about both learning and their discipline. “Teaching and learning are critical to our individual and collective survival and to the quality of our lives” (Palmer, 1998, p. 3). This chapter explores the study of the phenomenon of teaching with passion in higher education. It looks at relevant definitions of terms associated with the proposed research and ends with the significance of this study in higher education.

We can remember the one teacher that made a difference in our lives as a student. On explaining how they made a difference in our lives, we may describe them as “passionate” teachers. Yet, what characteristics and qualities are shown from this passionate teacher? Are these teachers just “special” in how they teach? Is it a teacher’s innate ability or a learned process that has been developed over the years? Do students learn more from a passionate teacher? And, lastly, can passion be learned? This study will aim to make sense of this phenomenon of what makes a passionate teacher.

## **Statement of the Problem**

An individual may be considered an expert on a particular subject, but that does not always equate to being able to teach that particular subject. “The quality of knowing a discipline isn’t particularly distinctive...If it were, every great scholar would be a teacher” (Bain, 2004, p. 16). Teaching is a very complex and much studied subject in

academia today. Academic achievement is often linked to a learner's ability to grasp the subject matter being taught. Recent studies (Knowles, 1980, Taylor & Kroth, 2009, Thompson & Deis, 2004) show a shift is occurring in higher education.

The focus in higher education is changing from a pedagogical approach to a more andragogical approach or in simpler terms, a shift from a teacher simply disseminating knowledge to his or her students to a more adult student learner focused classroom experience. "The assumptions behind pedagogy, which in the original Greek means "child conductor," do not always fit the needs of the adult learner" (Thompson & Deis, 2004, p. 107). How we teach the adult learner is varied and often depends on the professor. "Some focus more on pedagogical principles (teacher-focused education) and others more on andragogical principles (learner-focused education)" (Taylor & Kroth, 2009, p. 42). Learning how to teach and be effective in teaching does not always come easily to everyone. There is no mandatory training expected for incoming professors which might teach what learner focused education or teacher focused education means. Professors typically learn on his or her own through trial and error or from a handbook given to incoming professors; most educators "learn their craft through experience, modeling themselves on others and reflecting on their practice" (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 31). They become Teaching Assistants during their doctoral studies; they model after their own mentors or experts in the field; they reflect and learn over time through trial and error.

Knowles (1980) discussed five assumptions about andragogy (adult learning) which differs from pedagogy (children learning): 1) the adult learner is self-directed; 2) the adult learner has life experiences that serve as a learning resource for themselves and

others; 3) the adult learner's readiness to learn is developmental and task oriented to their social roles; 4) the adult learner has a more problem centered approach (how do I [student] apply this to the world around me today?); and lastly, 5) the adult learner is motivated internally rather than externally (pp.48-49). Knowles (1980) experienced the "pressure from the educational system to adhere to the pedagogical model...teachers must take full responsibility for deciding what should be learned, how it should be learned, when it should be learned and if it has been learned...the student is to be a more or less passive recipient" of the content (p.48).

In the past, researchers have focused on the methods and styles of teaching and how they influence a student's learning of the subject matter. According to Alex Gitterman (2004), "a preoccupation with what students must learn overshadows attention to how they should be taught" (pp. 95-96). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2011) state that "a teacher is knowledgeable of his or her subject matter without necessarily being able to decompress it in a way that makes it accessible to their students" (p. 280). Gitterman (2004) refers to this phenomenon as "subject-centered education" (p.96). Teachers often struggle with reaching their students in a way that students "get it."

Effective college-level pedagogy looks at teaching from the adult perspective and typically focuses on the learner (the "subject centered education"). "It is no longer necessary to argue that colleges must pay special attention to adult learners" (Daloz, 1999, p. xiii). Adult learners are the students of higher education. Ken Bain (2004) conducted a fifteen year study of one hundred effective college teachers to find out what makes a great teacher. His short answer: "it's not what teachers do, it's what they understand...Most of all, they believe two things fervently: that teaching matters and that

students can learn” (Bain, 2004). Bain concluded that teachers have to know something to teach it, but more importantly have an “intuitive understanding of human learning” (p. 16). Teachers must understand the learner. “Good teaching can never be reduced to technique or competence” (Day, 2004, p. 15); effective teaching has to address the needs and developmental levels of the adult student learner. “The teacher has to know something, but what we know is of value only as we are able to form it such that our students can make use of it for their own evolving ways of knowing” (Daloz, 1999, p. 15). For Daloz (1999), Bain (2004) and many others, teaching is not only disseminating the knowledge to the student, but actually teaching the student to apply this knowledge and understand it in his or her own world view.

Educational methods and teaching styles have been explored in terms of informing teachers of the basics of teaching, ultimately, the theories, techniques and strategies behind being a teacher in order to facilitate the learning process for students. In a review of the related literature, there is limited research on the intuitive nature of teaching or being an educator; most studies focus on teacher preparation in the K-12 educational systems. Fried (2001) states that there is “a clear connection between passionate teaching and the quality of students’ learning...students appreciate their teacher as someone who is passionately committed to a field of study and to upholding high standards within it” (p.47). An individual can be an expert in the field, but not be able to teach that expertise to his or her students in such a way that learning takes place.

There is limited research on passionate professors in higher education. The construct of passion is often difficult to define, as each individual may define passion differently. Yet, when students describe their experience as “passionate,” others



understand. It is “taken for granted” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 25) that we intuitively understand what they mean when they describe passion. This leads to the questions that perplexed this researcher: We know it when we experience it – but can we define passion in teaching? And, lastly, do the passionate teachers know they have it?

### **Purpose of this Study**

“Teaching and learning at its best is not, then an entirely rational set of processes” (Day, 2004, p. 15). Exceptional teaching in a higher education setting may help encourage and inspire student learning. “This is what education is. There simply is no education without a commitment to developing the mind and the character of learners...that commitment must be a passionate one if we want young people to hear and heed that calling (Fried, 2001, p. 29). A question that has not yet been studied is whether professor passion encourages students to learn and become excited about the subject. Little research has been conducted regarding the learner’s perception of teacher subject knowledge based on his or her ability to show passion for the subject. “People are passionate about things, issues, causes, people” (Day, 2004, p. 11). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, passion is defined as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mcSaZ&result=1>).

The purpose of this study is to explore how undergraduate professors from a large four year Carnegie Very High Research Hispanic serving university in the southwest operationalized passion through their teaching as experienced and identified by their

students. Seven professors were identified by their students as “passionate professors” through an online survey administered to sophomore, junior and senior standing students. A focus group of students met at the end of the study to verify and share the themes found through the interviews and observed professors which further validated the findings of this study.

### **Research Questions**

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?
2. How is the perceived passion experienced by the student?
3. Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor?
4. According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?
5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?

The research questions may be construed as quantifiable and imply or suggest causality (such as passion increases learning), yet, this study aimed to explore passion from the perceptions and opinions of the professors and the students. This study was not trying to quantify or predict student learning and passion. This study aimed to gain an understanding of passion in teaching from the perspectives of the undergraduate professors. Again, the purpose of this study is to explore how the undergraduate professors operationalize passion through their teaching.

### ***Definitions and Key Terms Used in this Study***

*Construct Validity* asks: are we measuring what we think we are measuring?

*Criterion Validity* refers to the idea of measuring what the researcher says it will measure.

*External Validity* refers to the degree that one's conclusions in a research study would hold for other individuals in other places at other times. This deals with sampling within a research method.

*Focus Groups* are “group interviews that are structure to foster talk among the participants about particular ideas” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 109).

*Learning* is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study or by being taught”

(<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learning?region=us&q=learning>).

*Passion* is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm.”

(<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>).

*Phenomenological Research* seeks to explain and interpret the meaning of the “lived experiences” (Creswell, 2007, p. 57).

*Purposive Sampling* seeks out certain types of individuals who match certain specified criteria for the study. For the purpose of this study, participants were selected because they were either an identified “passionate” professor as identified or as a student that was a sophomore, junior or senior in class standing.

*Snowball Sampling:* Snowball sampling strategy, also referred to as chain or network sampling, is where participants use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

*Transformative Learning* is defined by Jack Mezirow (2000) as: “the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future actions” (p. 5).

*Triangulation* is the process of using multiple data sources to strengthen the research findings that emerge (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Mason, 2005).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the field of higher education, teaching and adult learning. This research adds to the literature on how students learn by specifically focusing on passion in teaching. How can teachers be more effective in reaching today’s students? Are passionate teachers better at reaching students? Can passion be taught?

The idea that students perceive passion in teaching as part of their overall learning experience may influence how an institution of higher education may view faculty recruitment and retention. Colleges and universities may include passion in their faculty training and development. This study may hopefully influence additional research on passion in teaching to include both student and university perspectives.

This study may assist professors in their own professional development and self-evaluation to the degree in which they are depicting passion in their individual teaching styles. Lastly, university and colleges may benefit from retention of students and

professors through effectively engaging students in passionate transformative learning experiences which contributes to students and professors being more engaged and satisfied.

## **Chapter Two (2): Literature Review**

### **Review of Related Literature**

This section covers the literature related to passion in teaching. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of passion shown by university professors and experienced by students in higher education through a transformational learning framework. It is important to look at current literature in higher education, learning, teaching and passion.

This chapter begins by exploring passion and how it is defined for this study. The theoretical foundation for the study, transformational learning, is explained which will lead into the related themes found in the literature. Transformational learning is an important overarching framework for this study as it models that when good teachers teach with passion – the learning experience of the student is transformed.

The related themes found in the literature review are divided into sub-sections to describe how passion may be described by different researchers studying the teaching profession. Some researchers describe passion in terms of a teacher's presence, self-awareness and authenticity. The relevant literature will also look at today's student and how this may impact the teaching profession from the student's perspective.

As is common with qualitative data, this literature review was ongoing throughout the data collection. Emergent themes from the data influenced the need for additional research.

## *Passion*

While there are many definitions, constructs and meanings of passion, for this study passion was defined, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm”

(<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>).

Passion is a strong emotional reaction to a person or situation. Fried (2001) stated that “passion, uncomfortable as the word may sound, is at the heart of what teaching is and should be” (p. 6). It is “not a luxury, a frill or a quality possessed by just a few good teachers. It is essential to all good teaching” (Day, 2004, p. 11). “The ability to become a great teacher – one who inspires students and seems to connect with them effortlessly – is a gift, an innate talent like musical ability or athletic prowess” (Jenkins, 2011, retrieved: <http://chronicle.com/article/A-Philosophy-of-Teaching/129060/>). Fried (1995) exclaimed that “maybe it’s time to face this issue head-on and resolve to no longer accept an answer that defines a teacher as a ‘classroom manager,’ or ‘deliverer of instruction,’ or ‘assertive disciplinarian,’ or ‘keeper of the grade book’” (p. 50). Teaching, especially in higher education, should be defined in ways that touch and inspire those they teach.

There was limited research on passion in teaching in higher education institutions. Research has traditionally explored the concept of learning, specifically, student’s learning in the classroom, teaching styles and methodologies in the classroom. “An essential component of skillful teaching...is the attempt to find out how students experience learning and perceive teaching” (Brookfield, 2006, p. 5). The way a student

learns and how it translates to understanding what is being taught, is an important measurement for higher education.

### ***Learning***

The Oxford English Dictionary defines learning as “the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study or by being taught” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/learning?region=us&q=learning>). Learning was an important concept for this study. One particular researcher, Marilla Svinicki (1999), explored how learning has changed over time. From early on, learning was typically viewed through a behaviorist model, such as B. F. Skinner, which focused on the responses and stimuli associated with learning. Basically this model represented the teacher teaching a subject, testing his or her students and having students get the correct answers or responses. “The instructor organized the learning environment to ensure that correct responses were likely to occur, and when they did, they were rewarded” (Svinicki, 1999, p. 6). A student would receive a gold star or smiley face on his or her homework when done correctly or no star or frowning face when done incorrectly. The student then was rewarded and positively reinforced for the correct answers or negatively reinforced for incorrect answers.

Learning then moved into more cognitive based learning. Cognitive learning focused on assisting teachers with designing their curriculum and instruction around how students retain information in the classroom. What will help students focus on what is being taught? This learning moved into metacognition which involved more self-directed learning. The learner has a distinct learning goal (student wants to learn multiplication tables) in the process and moves toward achieving that goal. Learning techniques for



teachers involved analogies, metaphors, examples, concept maps, and verbal cues (Svinicki, 1999).

From cognitive based learning, learning moved into more learner focused or learner centered models. Constructivism, social constructivism, individual motivation and learning styles added to the learning models explored here. Svinicki felt that “we must acknowledge that human learning is the product of so many different variables – some of which can be measured, most of which cannot –that our efforts to simplify it are doomed from the start” (p. 16). The focus is on how to create a motivating learning environment for the students. These learner centered models focused on cognitive, behavioral and internal motivational constructs. Svinicki (1999) concluded that the “biggest development in higher education is the simple fact that we are now starting to pay attention to it all...we are moving toward a more unified vision of what needs to be done to make learning happen” (p. 24).

### ***Learning and Higher Education***

Kenneth Feldman (1988) conducted 31 studies on effective college teaching. Feldman asked “both students and faculty to specify the attitudes, behaviors, and pedagogical practices of teachers that they felt were the most important to ‘good’ teaching or ‘effective’ instruction” (p. 292). The study found that “students place more importance...on teachers being interesting and having good elocutionary skills” while faculty place more importance on “teachers being intellectually challenging, motivating and setting high standards for students, and encourage self-initiated learning” (p. 313). Feldman concluded his study by questioning if the similarities and differences he

discovered “affect how well instructors actually teach or how much students learn” (p. 324).

Understanding effective teaching or instruction and how students learn are important concepts. Figuring out what makes a good learning environment for the student may lead to more insight on how professors can provide a quality student learning moment and not just *hand out* information on a subject. According to O’Toole, Spinelli and Wetzel (2000), “the important learning dimensions are (a) presentation clarity, (b) enthusiasm for teaching and (c) fairness and quality of the exams” (p. 338). Yet, how is this enthusiasm shown from the professor to the students? How does it translate to a more effective learning environment? Knowing a topic or subject does not always translate to effective teaching or to students learning the material. “The teacher has to know something, but what we know is of value only as we are able to form it such that our students can make use of it for their own evolving ways of knowing” (Daloz, 1999, p. 15).

“If teaching is one part of the relationship between two or more adults, the second is learning” (Frego, 2006, p. 42). Milton and Lyons (2003) looked at the way professors evaluate their students and how that can impact their overall learning experience. Even when looking at the methods of delivery and styles, including evaluation methods in professors, the research is limited to only the specific modes of teaching and not necessarily the delivery of the teaching. Some research has even explored the idea of students directing their own learning, namely self-directive learning (Allan & Powell, 2007). They explore how students learn in groups and evaluate one another for a new learning experience. Bandura’s Social Learning Theory and how students motivate one

another or themselves in the learning environment is another area that depicts how students can self-direct their learning through internal motivators (Allan & Powell, 2007). Yet, again, there is a lack of information placed on how the professors display passion in what they are teaching and how, if at all, it translates to the overall learning environment for the student.

Ken Bain (2004) conducted a fifteen year study of one hundred effective college teachers to find out what makes a great teacher. He looked at six broad questions:

1) What do the best teachers know and understand? 2) How do they prepare to teach? 3) What do they expect from their students? 4) What do they do when they teach? 5) How do they treat their students? And lastly, 6) How do they check their progress and evaluate their efforts? (p. 15-19).

From each of his questions, he gained insight into what it takes to make a great teacher.

Bain (2004) found the following characteristics:

- Great teachers take their teaching seriously.
- Great teachers know their subject extremely well and have an overall intuitive view of learning
- Great teachers expect “more” from their students.
- A critical learning environment is created that encourages students to question, rethink, and explore ideas around the subject matter
- Great teachers have a strong trust in their students
- The teacher’s world view is one where students want and can learn

- Effective teachers always assess and evaluate their teaching efforts through feedback and evaluative measures.

Bain relays that what he hopes individuals will learn from his study is “the conviction that good teaching can be learned” (p. 21) and that the “notion that teaching ability is somehow implanted at birth” (p. 173) is just not true.

Richardson (2005) points out that there have been numerous changes in the last 25 years on how students learn and how teachers teach in higher education institutions. He stated that there are various questionnaires and instruments which look at how student learners develop different approaches to learning based on teaching methods and the quality of teaching. Yet, again, the quality of teaching is not defined – but mentioned only as a way students learn effectively. Educational research studies look mostly at tools and techniques for the professor to help facilitate the dissemination of information to the student in the classroom. They do not focus on delivery from the professor and how that translates to having passion or apathy about their subject, nor do the studies look at how this perceived passion translates to learning for the student. These past learning models and studies set the path on the concept of learning today; “learners are at the center of teaching and the learning process” (Svinicki, 1999, p. 24).

### **Theoretical Framework: Transformational Learning**

For this study, the theoretical framework is Jack Mezirow’s transformative adult learning theory. Jack Mezirow first introduced his theory into adult education in the 1970’s. Since this introduction, it has been a much studied and often critiqued theory.

Transformational learning is often seen as one of the main goals for adult education (Mezirow, 2000; Cranton, 2002). “College students are adults” (Jenkins, 2011). Adulthood is commonly defined as a “person old enough to be held responsible for his or her acts” (Mezirow, 2000, p.24). This basic premise sometimes evades teachers as they begin to teach the current college student. Mezirow believed that learning occurs through experiences and changes of perceptions, beliefs and values in the learner. It is the “process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-set) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective” (Mezirow, 2000, p.7-8).

Transformative learning theory involves looking at one’s “frame of reference – a mind-set or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations involving values, beliefs and concepts” (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006). Simply, it is how we learn and make sense of our worldview through our experiences and reflections. Through these experiences and assumptions, the student makes sense of the world around him or her. “What happens once, we expect to happen again” (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 32).

Transformational theory assisted this study in providing a framework for how students experience passion in the classroom through their “world of experience” or the “essence” of their experience (Creswell, 2007, p.78). “The example we set as passionate adults [teachers] allows us to connect to [pupils’] minds and spirits in a way that we can have a lasting, positive impact on their lives (Fried, 1995, pp. 27-8). Figure 1 represents the theoretical model for this study. The foundation of the study was dependent on Mezirow’s Transformational Learning Theory.

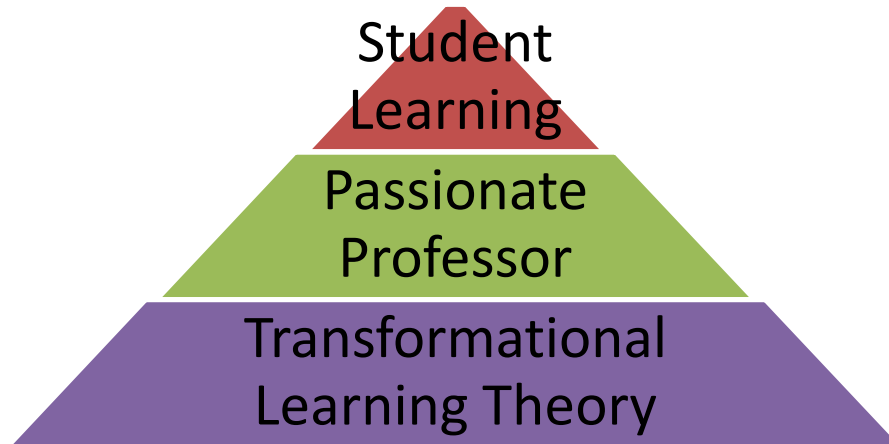


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

Transformative learning happens when individuals engage in questioning what they see or experience in their world view. “Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 19). It is the idea that what the learner was thinking no longer exists or fits the original frame of reference. It opens up the learner to new ideas, new ways and new thoughts. Through critical self-reflection of what individuals formerly knew, transformational learning leads individuals to open up to new ways of thinking. Learners may discard old beliefs or ways to open up to the new thoughts. “At its core, the idea [of transformational learning] is elegant in its simplicity. We make meaning of the world through our experience” (Cranton & King, 2003, p. 32).

John Dirkx (2006) in a conversation with Mezirow (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006) stated that transformational learning occurs at a deeper level, an “inner world” (p. 126). This “inner world,” (values, beliefs, past experiences) interplays with the “outer world” (the new information being presented, new experiences and thoughts) which may change

our current frame of reference. “This perspective on transformative learning directs us to both the process and the outcomes of learning, but it insists that we think of transformative learning as a kind of stance toward one’s being in the world” (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006, p. 128). Mezirow (2000) described how transformational learning can occur through reframing what our assumptions are about a particular topic or idea; he further describes that this can be done through the “ways one learns” (p. 23) (referred to as subjective reframing). This can be accomplished through a teacher’s delivery or method of teaching that causes the student to critically reflect on his or her own previous assumptions about that topic or idea. “Teachers assist students in making connections to their own lives, in order to construct their own knowledge” (Rodgers & Rader-Roth, 2006, p. 270).

Malcolm Knowles (1970’s) reintroduced the term, andragogy to adult learning. Andragogy means a “new technology” of adult learning. Andragogy “is based upon six assumptions: (a) self-directedness, (b) need to know, (c) use of experience in learning, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learning, and (f) internal motivation” (Chan, 2010, p. 25). Knowles looked at adult learners and how they learn. This adult style of learning was very different from the way children learn. Knowles’ concept centered on the idea that adult learners are independent thinkers and typically view learning as an extension of their experiences and who they are in regards to their values, traditions and past learning experiences (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Mezirow (2000) looked at how adults learn and how they make meaning out of what they learn and experience in the classroom. He viewed teaching as a form of mentoring his students. The students have a reciprocal learning agreement, specifically, the teacher/mentor learns from the students as well as

the students learn from the teacher/mentor (Mezirow, 2000). “Learning experiences that we find personally meaningful, however, may challenge at a deep and fundamental level our existing ways of thinking, believing or feeling” (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006, p. 132).

Mezirow called these challenges and meaningful learning experiences “disorienting dilemmas” (Dirkx & Mezirow, 2006, p. 132; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 321).

When researching adult learning, one must understand the roles of educators on their students as well as their assumptions on adult learning. “Learning theory must recognize the crucial role of supportive relationships and supportive environments in making possible a more confident, assured sense of personal efficacy, of having a self- or selves-more capable of becoming critically reflective of one’s....assumptions” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 25).

Mezirow influenced many adult learning theorists early in his career. Paulo Freire (2007), a Brazilian Educator, felt that many teachers viewed education as “banking” and depositing knowledge into students that were specially chosen to receive that information (p.98). This view “ignores the intelligence and judgment and creative abilities of the teachers” (p. 98). It is again, just depositing knowledge or disseminating topics to students. “Education is a process of transformation. As we engage in critical, dialogical, praxical teaching and learning activities, we transform ourselves and the world” (Roberts, 2005, p. 135). Freire believed that teachers have a hard time getting past just lecturing and that knowledge is “unidirectional”; knowledge is disseminated to the students via the teacher and vice versa. “The role of the progressive educator is to challenge the learner’s naïve curiosity in order that they can both share criticalness” (Freire, 2007, p. 97). The teacher and the student must learn together. “Teachers have a



responsibility, as far as this is possible within the constraints of a given educational context, to foster awareness of alternative ideals, perspectives, and ways of life and to give students every opportunity of pursuing these” (Roberts, 2005, p. 132). Patricia Cranton (2001) identified seven facets to help promote a transformational learning environment:

- An activating event that typically exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard, or read
- Articulating assumptions, that is, recognizing underlying assumptions that have been uncritically assimilated and are largely unconscious
- Critical self-reflection, that is, questioning and examining assumptions in terms of where they came from, the consequences of holding them, and why they are important
- Being open to alternative viewpoints
- Engaging in discourse, where evidence is weighed, arguments assessed, alternative perspectives explored, and knowledge constructed by consensus
- Revising assumptions and perspectives to make them more open and better justified
- Acting on revisions, behaving, talking, and thinking in a way that is congruent with transformed assumptions or perspectives (p. 66).

“Development in adulthood may be understood as a learning process – a phased and often transformative process of meaning becoming clarified through expanded awareness, critical reflection, validating discourse and reflective action as one moves toward a fuller realization of agency” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 25). Mezirow’s transformative learning theory represented how students may change their ideas and assumptions about the subject matter as taught by the teachers. Teachers self-evaluate their methods to reach the students at their level. Each new lecture invites students to a new way of thinking. “‘Welcome,’ they [teachers] say in a thousand languages, ‘to the new world.’ This is the kind of critical reflection that is central to transformative learning” (Daloz, 1999, p. 207). A teacher may learn that the experiential learning activity she created increased her student’s grasp of the content; therefore, the following year, she adds this activity to her curriculum.

### ***Today’s Students***

Who is today’s student? Today’s students are known as the Millennial Generation, or “Millennials”, Generation Y, Net Generation, Gen Y, Generation “Why”?, and the latest descriptor, the Digital Natives (Alsop, 2008; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Tulgan, 2009; Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000; Prensky, 2001). This generation was born between the years of 1982-2002 plus or minus 5 years. Research (Alsop, 2008; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Tulgan, 2009; Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000) varies on the exact dates; some dates are earlier and some are later by only a few years. Digital Natives refers to this generation’s understanding and growing up with technology. “Our students today are all “native speakers” of the digital language of

computers, video games and the Internet” (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Each generation is marked by its distinct historical experiences and values. Millennials (Generation Y) have lived through many distinct historical experiences: 9/11; school shootings, such as Columbine; No Child Left Behind legislation; Internet and technology; war and instability in the Middle East; and sub-cultural groups, such as Emo, SKA, Punk and hipster. This generation has proven to have strong values due to its historical experiences. These individuals are optimistic, service-minded, technologically savvy, independent, and socially connected with social networking and technology (Alsop, 2008; Tulgan, 2009; Martin & Tulgan, 2001; Martin & Tulgan, 2002; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

“The “Millennial” generation will soon alter the way professors teach, the way classrooms are constructed, and the way colleges deliver degrees” (Carlson, 2005, p. A34). A recent study conducted by Patricia Vincent Roehling and colleagues (2010) explored how to engage this new generation of students through class discussions. “Students in the Millennial Generation (late 20’s and younger) have been raised in an environment in which individuality is highly valued and information, entertainment and social interactions are unlimited and at their fingertips” (Roehling, et al, 2010, p.1). To engage this generation of students in classroom discussions, professors need to provide active learning, increased understanding of the material, an understanding of all voices and opinions in the class and creating an open and comfortable tone for the class.

Today’s students are extremely technologically savvy, being born into a world of computers and technical devices (iPods, computers, laptops, cell phones (Smart phones), cell phone applications, etc.). They are raised multitasking; “if Millennials are caught

working on a paper during a lecture, it's because they have to maximize what they get done in a given time" (Carlson, 2005, p. A34). Their world view has been inundated with social networking and social media. Teachers must understand these new technological advanced students and become "the *Professor 2.0*" (Perlmutter, 2011). "Showing that you can use and understand the technologies of the world that students live in buys you credibility and respect for everything else you want to teach" (Perlmutter, 2011).

### ***Teaching with Presence***

There have been numerous studies (Kornelsen, 2006; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006; Farber, 2008; Brady & Bedient, 2003) focusing on the exploration of being present when teaching. According to Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006), "presence is defined as a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments" (p. 265). They assert that this idea centers on how teachers can be fully present with their students, with the subject matter and with their own self-awareness as educators. Presence in teaching is needed in today's world with today's students. Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) assert that past research has shown the importance of teacher-student relationship (p. 266). This connection between the student and teacher is important in "student achievement, motivation and engagement and in their capacity to trust what they know" (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 266). Teaching with presence assists in building the relationship between student and teacher.

Lloyd Kornelsen (2006) explored this phenomenon of "teaching with presence" and how this *presence* facilitates learning. "Teaching with presence means teaching in a way that encourages openness, imbues vitality..." (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 74). Kornelsen

found that many of the teacher participants in his study expressed core characteristics that were important to “teaching with presence”: be open and real to their students, walk the walk, and lastly let go of a set agenda or curriculum and go with the flow of the class and learning. These are important teaching methods that may help facilitate the idea of being present while teaching students. By focusing on these characteristics, students would truly feel that the teacher was with them on the learning journey instead of dictating pre-set curriculum that they have done every year with no variation. In Kornelsen’s phenomenological study (2006), one teacher participant recalled, “people know if you’re living what you teach, or if you’re just teaching what you know, or what you’ve read. It doesn’t matter how well a person delivers it, or how well they speak....it makes a difference to them [students] because it becomes real.” (p. 76). The teachers with presence are walking the walk.

Jerry Farber (2008) addressed how difficult it is to be fully present with one’s students:

...there is no consistently reliable technique to achieve presence. The closest thing, perhaps, to such a technique has been to stop at the very beginning of class, hold back the agenda, look around for a minute or two or even more, situate myself, and see what’s happening (p. 219).

Yet, Farber (2008) continues with ideas on how to achieve presence:

(a) I’m unwilling to settle for less; (b) I stay as aware as possible of the people in the room and of how they, collectively and individually, seem to be engaging with

what's going on; and (c) I stay in touch with my own interest, with the sources of my own energy on that day and at that moment (p. 219).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) may refer to this level of presence as “flow”.

“Flow is ‘the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it’” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). It is the idea of losing time doing something. Teachers will often get into their teaching and lose all sense of time and space. Students may remark how fast class went by when they are in the “flow” of learning what the professor is teaching. One teacher described this sense of flow as:

“You’re not even a guide anymore. You’re just there in the conversation, and it moves. It just keeps moving. You’re absolutely aware of everything that’s going on around you” (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 78). Understanding who you are as a teacher and the role you would like to play with adult learners enables teachers to acquire this level of flow or presence.

### ***Self-Awareness***

Critical self-awareness or reflection is a key concept for a professor (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2011; Palmer, 1998; Brookfield, 1995; Mezirow, et al, 2000).

Understanding one’s self is part of the being present concept as discussed in the previous section. A teacher must have a good self-concept in order to be an effective educator.

“Critical reflection represents a potentially powerful way to help teachers identify, critique, and possibly modify existing assumptions and perspectives about themselves as teachers and the teaching-learning process” (Dirkx, 2006, p. 30). Understanding who you are as a teacher and who you want to be aligns with being authentic and real to your

students. Cranton and Carusetta (2004) state “to be able to express the genuine self, people need to know who the self is” (p. 7). This may lead to a greater understanding of why an individual becomes an educator.

Both Palmer (1998) and Dirkx (2006) discuss the importance of exploring the feelings around being a teacher. Palmer (1998) argued that being a teacher is more than technique. Technique just happens. Who an individual is as a teacher takes work. Teaching should show who the teacher truly is – his or her identity and self-awareness. “It draws our attention to the character of the teacher, its importance in the overall quality of our relationships with learners, and the effectiveness of learning experiences that we as teachers plan and facilitate” (Dirkx, 2006, p. 29). When teachers critically reflect on who they are and what they teach, they are dealing with “soul work” (Dirkx, 2006; Palmer, 1998). One particular teacher in Dirkx’s article “acknowledged some of the ‘impersonal’ dimensions of his experience that were derived from events much earlier in life but that continue to share and give meaning to concrete situations of his current life, especially his teaching practice and interactions with certain students” (Dirkx, 2006, 35).

Lloyd Kornelsen (2006) called this type of self-knowledge as “walking the walk”; students will “know if you’re living what you teach, or if you’re just teaching what you know or what you’ve read” (p. 76). Knowing and loving your subject matter can spread to the students. This enthusiasm may lead to increased interest from the students on the subject matter. Palmer (1998) refers to this as the center of the classroom. The subject matter being taught *sits* in the middle of the classroom and the students and teacher discuss this “great thing” in the middle. “A subject centered classroom also honors one of our most vital needs as teachers: to invigorate those connections between our subjects,

our students, and our souls that help make us whole again and again” (Palmer, 1998, p.123).

Fried (1995a) asserted that “every teacher faces one existential question: ‘what am I here for – to journey with young people into the great world of knowledge and ideas or to shepherd a bunch of mostly unwilling students through the everyday rituals of instructions and assessment?’” (p. 50). He continues by exploring what it takes to be a passionate teacher. “As I look into hundreds of classrooms, watch teachers working with all kinds of students’, when I ask myself what makes the greatest difference in the quality of student learning – it is a teacher’s passion that leaps out” (Fried, 2001, p. 160). Fried believes that it takes more than being organized or possessing a desire to teach –it takes passion. He believed that passion is shown through many avenues, styles and techniques. There is not a cookie cutter passion model that will teach teachers how to emulate passion for them. Yet, it is shown through the teacher in such a way that elicits a knowing that the student is in the presence of someone “whose devotion to learning is exceptional” (p. 17).

### ***Authenticity***

Veteran or more experienced teachers may grow more confident in their styles and methods of teaching across their years of experience. Veteran teachers assert that as “they became more confident in themselves and their teaching skills; it freed them to be themselves and shift their attention to the human interaction they claimed was at the heart of the teaching–learning process” (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 79). This self-awareness may lead to what many researchers (Dirkx, 2006; Brookfield, 2006; Frego, 2006; Cranton, 2006; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004) call “authenticity” in teaching.



Laurent Daloz took his readers on an educational and transformational journey using the metaphor of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in his book, *Mentor* (1999) to describe the authentic relationship of the teacher and student (Dante's journey through Hell with his guide/teacher, Virgil):

We walk at times ahead of our students, at times beside them; at times, we follow their lead. In sensing where to walk lies our art, for as we support our students in their struggle, challenge them toward their best and cast light on the road ahead, we do so in the name of our respect for their potential and our care for their growth (p. 244).

This relationship is growth oriented by the roles of student and teacher. Often teachers learn and explore who they are as much as the students learning from them. "If we are to teach with life and vigor and hope, then we must recognize that we teach not just for our students and not just for the world, but for ourselves as well" (Daloz, 1999, p. 245).

Bringing one's self into the teaching classroom has been a much studied subject. "Teaching with a sense of authenticity reflects a profound sense of self-awareness and self-understanding" (Dirkx, 2006, p. 29). Palmer's (1998) look at a teacher's landscape initiated conversations about what it means to teach from your heart: "self-knowledge is at the heart of authenticity and represents the core of authentic teaching" (Dirkx, 2006 summarizing Palmer, 1998, p. 29). As with authenticity, passion in teaching cannot be "easily judged, quantified or measured. There is knowledge of teaching...that cannot be evaluated in the same way as the technical aspects of teaching" (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 81). Measuring a tool or technique may prove useful, but how does one measure how a

teacher touches the lives of the adult learner? “This is why students often describe great teachers as people who ‘bring to life’ things that the students had never heard of, offering them an encounter with otherness that brings the students to life as well” (Palmer, 1998, p. 122).

Patricia Cranton (2004), Palmer (1998), Dirkx (2006), Frego (2006) and Brookfield (2006) would describe Kornelsen’s “teaching presence” as authenticity in teaching. Being who you are in the teaching environment is being authentic for your students. “They see me with all my foibles, my disorganization...I am much more willing to just be who I am and let them see who they are (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 14). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2011) also comment on how “relationship authenticity” plays into the connectedness of student and teacher in the classroom. Once that relationship is established and is authentic, it must be maintained. “You have to be present for them...it never stops because once somebody has opened up to you like that, they trust you, and if you pass them in the hallway and don’t say hello that is not good. You have to be present all the time” (p.16) stated one faculty member in a study conducted by Cranton and Carusetta (2004).

Cranton and Carusetta (2004) define authenticity “as the expression of the genuine self in the community and presented a process by which teachers in higher education come to know themselves and their preferences within the social context of their work” (p. 7). They studied a group of teachers that were identified as authentic teachers. One area, defined as teacher authenticity by their participants, was “bringing one’s sense of self into the classroom” (p.14); “I guess that my conception of it [authenticity] is taking yourself, your real self, not just your professional self into the

classroom...It seems something natural to be who I am in the classroom” (p.14 ). For one teacher, bringing herself into the class meant talking about her family and kids, “most moms are teachers, so I do bring myself to class, definitely. I don’t check it at the door and become the instructor” (p. 14). Their grounded theory study led them to conclude that the *authentic* teacher “is more likely to bring himself or herself as a person into the classroom, be passionate about teaching, know his or her preferred teaching style, and see teaching as a vocation” (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 19).

Katherine Frego (2006) believes that she has chosen to be “authentic with students in ways that I believe increase learning – by motivating, or engaging, or reducing anxiety and increasing confidence... I base my teaching on what I value” (p. 50). She explains that by role modeling behaviors, empowering students in the learning process, reducing anxiety, valuing who her students are as individuals and setting clear expectations of how she will meet their needs all help her reach her students and promote engagement in learning from her students. Brookfield (2006) states: “students recognize that teachers are authentic when the teacher is perceived to be an ally in learning” (p. 6). The teacher wants the student to learn. Therefore, being authentic may lead to increased learning from students.

### ***Conclusion***

Svinicki (1999) stated that “what may be the biggest development in learning for higher education is the simple fact that we are now starting to pay attention” (p.24) to learning from the adult student’s perspective. Higher education institutions are continually looking at how to reach and teach adult students better.

This chapter laid the framework for this study. With Mezirow's foundations of transformational learning and theory to the characteristics of passion seen through the emergent themes of teaching with presence, self-awareness and authenticity, the literature review provided a rich introduction and need for this study. "Accounts by students of all ages across the world about their most successful teachers point to their passionate involvement as a key factor" (Day, 2004, p. 9). The next chapter explores how this study gathered data around passion from the professor's point of view seen through the voices of the students.

### **Chapter Three (3): Design of the Study**

This chapter addresses the design and methodological approach used in this study.

In addition, the sample population and the data gathering procedures are discussed.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?**
- 2. How is the passion experienced by the student?**
- 3. Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor?**
- 4. According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?**
- 5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?**

These questions were addressed through the student survey, the passionate professor interviews and observations in the classroom and then the emergent themes were shared with the student focus group.

#### ***Methodological Approach***

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to inquiry. According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological approach studies multiple individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in question. Phenomenological researchers “attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p 25). Phenomenological research “translates into gathering ‘deep’ information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)” (Lester, 1999, p. 1).

In this study, the phenomenon is the passion displayed by the professor as identified by the student. This passion is expressed or displayed by the professor and

experienced by the student in the classroom. The students' perspectives were examined through their nominations of the passionate professors. This approach was appropriate as it provided insight and access to the students' world of experience in the classroom as exhibited by the professors. "This form of research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). Once the students identified their passionate professors, the passionate professors were interviewed about their passionate teaching. The "researchers act as if they do not know what it means and study it to find out what is actually taken for granted" (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 25).

### ***General Description of Site***

The study took place at a large four year Carnegie Very High Research Hispanic Serving Institution, in the southwest region of the United States. According to 2013 Student Demographics as posted by the Official Enrollment Report, Fall 2013, Office of Institutional Analytics, the total headcount at this institution is 28,644; the ethnic breakdown for the university is 2% African American, 3% Asian, 5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 3% Not Reported, 0.2% Native Hawai'ian, 40% Hispanic, 4% Foreign and 40% white; in addition, 44% are male and 56% are female; the total of undergraduates (full and part time status) is 73% (*Official Enrollment Report*, 2013).

Two types of sampling were used: purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling "selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposely inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). A survey was sent electronically to undergraduate students with a sophomore or above academic standing. The surveys were administered by snowball

sampling via email by StudentVoice, (studentvoice.com), a higher educational tool-survey company. Snowball sampling strategy, also referred to as chain or network sampling, is where participants use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in the study. The researcher asked students, faculty and staff to refer other students to the survey. The undergraduate students completed the online survey (Appendix A) nominating a passionate professor. Purposive sampling was used by the students recommending specific professors who they felt were passionate. The passionate professors can “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon to the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125).

The researcher was an insider (researcher is a graduate student, staff member, and adjunct faculty member for the institution) and an observer participant (was present in the classroom observing the passionate professor) in the classroom (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 61). “Phenomenologists...believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions” (Groenewald, 2004, p. 7). The researcher understood that she was an instrument of data collection. “Acknowledge that no matter how much you [the researcher] try, you cannot divorce your research and writing from your past experiences, who you are, what you believe and what you value (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 39). The researcher immersed “herself or himself in a research ‘setting’ so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (Mason, 2005, p. 84). For this study, the researcher observed the professor in his or her classroom in order to experience the essence of the phenomenon. The researcher took field notes during the observation. As with most phenomenological studies, observation

was an important technique as it helped the researcher understand what the student experienced by experiencing it for him or herself.

IRB approval was granted from the institution. Permission and consent (Appendix D) was collected from the professors for interviewing and observing him or her in their classrooms as well as consent (Appendix E) from the students who participated in the focus group.

### ***Methods for Collecting Data***

The following methods and data sources were collected (Table 1). The researcher ensured data was triangulated; triangulation helped the credibility of the study (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation means “that many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena you were studying” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 115-116). Each research question had specific data collection methods to ensure multiple sources were explored in order to understand the concept of passion in teaching. Triangulation of data collection methods lent to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings because data was gathered from multiple sources. The focus group was a method used in order to check in with the students on the themes which emerged from the study to further add credibility and dependability. The richness and “thick descriptions” (Creswell, 2007) of the data provided the possible transferability of the findings from this study to other similar higher education settings.

Research Question	Data collection Method	Data Analysis Process
<b>1. What constitutes or makes a passionate professor?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Survey to Students</li> <li>2. Interviews with the “Passionate Professors”</li> <li>3. Observation and field notes of “Passionate Professors”</li> </ol>	Analysis of transcribed audio recordings of interviews, focus group and survey responses



	4. Focus group with students	
<b>2. How is that passion experienced by the student?</b>	1. Survey to Students 2. Interviews with the “Passionate Professors” 3. Observation and field notes of “Passionate Professors” 4. Focus group with students	Analysis of transcribed audio recordings; field notes from observation
<b>3. Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor?</b>	1. Survey to Students 2. Interviews with the “Passionate Professors” 3. Focus Group with students	Analysis of transcribed audio recordings
<b>4. According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate to the professors? Is it learned?</b>	1. Interviews with the “Passionate Professor” 2. Focus Group with students	Analysis of transcribed audio recordings
<b>5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?</b>	1. Survey to the students 2. Interviews with the “Passionate Professors” 3. Focus Group with Students	Analysis of transcribed audio recordings

Table 1: Research Questions and Data Source Table

### Step One:

The researcher first sent out an online survey (Appendix A) to all undergraduate students who were classified as a sophomore or above in class standing. The survey asked students questions regarding who they would recommend as a passionate professor and then their perception of what attributes described their passionate professor and how this contributed to their learning experience. This survey helped operationalize the terms needed for the research, specifically passion and characteristics of that style of teaching. A snowball sampling technique was used.

### Step Two:

The surveys were analyzed to determine which professors had the most nominations from the students. The researcher was hopeful that the tallying of the

surveys would reveal the passionate professors and those most nominated would become the subjects of the study. This proved to be the case for this study.

**Step Three:**

The researcher then contacted the nominated passionate professors asking their participation in the study. The professors were chosen by the most “nominations” by the students on the survey (Appendix A). The researcher then contacted the professors asking them to participate. The researcher let the nominated professor know that the research study consisted of two parts:

1. Observation in their classroom. The professor chose which class would be appropriate for the observation. Schedules were confirmed between the professor and the researcher. Traditional in-person classroom was considered for this study.
2. Interview. The interviews were from thirty (30) minutes to an hour depending on the length of the answers to the questions. The researcher coordinated a convenient time for the professor to meet with the researcher. The interviews were recorded; researcher asked permission of the professor to record the interview. A consent form was signed prior (Appendix E) to each interview.

**Step Four:**

The researcher observed the professors in the classroom and took field notes as needed and permissible during the classroom experience. Field notes are taken as “the written account the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 119). The researcher interviewed six (6) nominated professors who were willing to participate. A seventh (7)

professor was nominated but did not participate. The interviews were unstructured, in-depth and audio recorded. The researcher was upfront and honest about her role in the study and in the classroom. This ensured participants' safety and helped gain rapport with students and professors.

**Step Five:**

Once data analysis was complete and the themes emerged, the researcher conducted a focus group of three (3) students who volunteered to participate in the original student online survey. The survey (Appendix A) included a volunteer question aimed at recruitment of the students for the focus group. The focus group was set up to gain further insight from the student participants into the perceptions of themes that emerged through the researcher's analysis. Student Consent Forms were filled out prior to the focus group (Appendix F). This focus group helped clarify any additional themes as seen by the students. Although the number of focus group volunteers was small and unreliable, the comments, insights and reflections were valuable to this study.

**Step Six:**

The last step involved consistently returning to the data due to the new insights from Focus Group transcripts. The Focus Group transcripts were analyzed and compared to the emergent themes from the professor interviews, observations and the student survey themes.

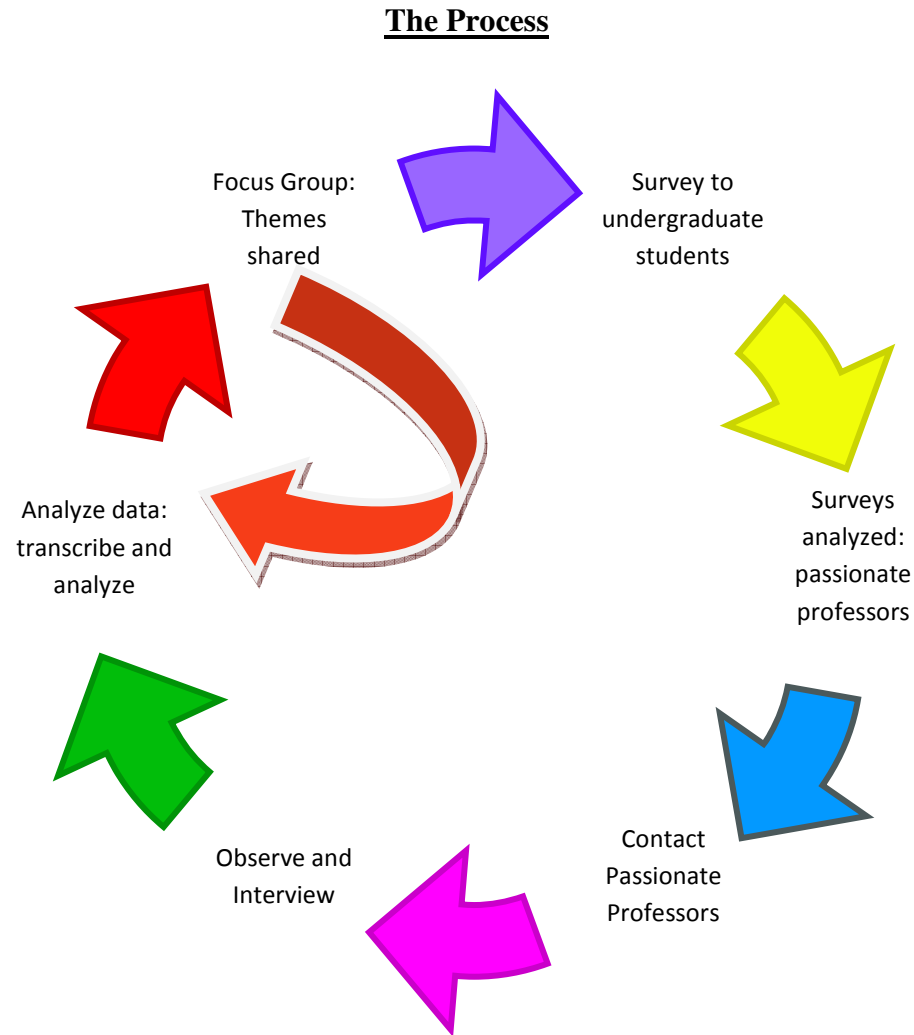


Figure 2: The Process

### ***Methods for Analysis***

In order to reduce the transcriptions and observations into more manageable data, the researcher coded significant statements or insights to help understand how the participants experienced passion from the professor in the classroom as well as how each interviewed professor explained passion in their teaching. This was done by reading the transcriptions and the observation notes over and over again. Creswell (2007) cites this

form of data analysis as Moustakas' (1994) "horizontalization" (p.61). From these insights, the researcher continually re-visited and reduced down into present and/or apparent themes. Once the themes emerged from the data, the researcher wrote out a "textural description" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61) representing the participants' view points of the phenomenon as well as the identified passionate professors' insight on passion in teaching; for this study it was the phenomenon of passion in teaching. The "textural descriptions" were described through the emergent themes. The researcher was aware and cognizant of her own experiences and observations in the classroom. This hopefully added to the richness of the data and the essences of passion observed in teaching. The textural description also helped the researcher in identifying the structural description (Creswell, 2007, p. 61) of the passion in the classroom.

Once completed, the researcher wrote an overarching end result, which Creswell (2007) refers to as the "essence" or the "essential, invariant structure," that leads the reader to hopefully understand and be able to reflect back that they, as a reader, now understand the phenomenon of what it is like to learn from a passionate teacher. These steps are common in phenomenological research as it is getting at the "essence" of the experience of the phenomenon, specifically for this study, the passion in teaching.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participants did not experience any adverse effects as a result of participating in this study. If at any time the participants felt uncomfortable or wished to withdraw for any reason, they were informed they could opt out of the study with no penalty. Informed consent (Appendix D, E and F) was explained prior to the participant's

participation in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity was protected by pseudonyms chosen by the participants and/or researcher at the beginning of the study.

### **Limitations**

This study only captured a view of the phenomenon of passionate teaching as seen through the eyes of the students during the time period of this study at one particular university. It is an isolated capture of the phenomenon.

In addition, the researcher was aware of the “observer effect” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 38). The observable behaviors may change due to being observed by the researcher being present. This might have occurred during the observations of the passionate professors as the observations took place after the interviews.

Further research could possibly lead to more studies on additional areas where passion may be experienced from the students and/or professors. Those could include mentor relationships, employee-supervisor relationships and even more personal relationships.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the design and methodological approach for this study. The research questions for this study aimed to explore passion from the perceptions and insights from the professors and the students.

The next chapter will discuss the findings and analysis for this study. Through the student survey, individual interviews, observations in the classroom and the focus group, the emergent themes will be discussed.

## **Chapter Four (4): Findings and Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This phenomenological, qualitative study examined the experiences of student identified passionate professors on passion in teaching. This study used a purposeful sample of seven (7) undergraduate professors who were identified as passionate through a survey sent to undergraduate sophomore, junior and/or senior students. The passionate professor's experience was described through the initial student survey questions, individual interviews with the passionate professors, class room observation and lastly a focus group of students. This chapter will explore the results of the study.

Audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews were utilized to examine the views of the professors on passion in teaching. Individual interviews lasted from thirty (30) minutes to sixty (60) minutes. After completion, the audiotapes were professionally transcribed. Once transcribed, the researcher checked transcriptions for accuracy.

This chapter presents the key themes which emerged from the student survey, the individual interviews with the passionate professors, observations of the passionate professors and the focus group held with students. The major findings will be discussed in this chapter, while in Chapter 5, I will summarize the findings and conclude the research study.

### **Overview**

For this study, the original intent was to only study the passionate professor's insight on passion in teaching through the individual interviews and the observation of him or her in the classroom. Yet, during analysis of the findings, an additional subject

area emerged in the research: the student's perspective of passion in the classroom from data found in the student survey questions (Figure 3).

To fully understand the phenomenon of passion, student survey responses were explored as well as the professor's experience of passion in teaching. Four questions were posed in an electronic online survey administered to the students:

- 1) Do you know a professor that could be defined as a "passionate professor?"
- 2) If yes, what characteristics make them passionate?
- 3) Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How?
- 4) Would you be willing to participate in a one-hour focus group to review the findings regarding what makes a passionate professor?

Two hundred fifty nine (259) sophomores, junior or senior undergraduate students responded to this survey. Eleven (11) professors had three (3) or more "nominations." In order to be included in the research, professors could be full time, tenure track, lecturer, or adjunct statuses who teach at least one undergraduate course. The nomination could not be graduate students or visiting professors. Four (4) nominations were excluded as the nominated professors were graduate student teaching aides, a visiting assistant professor and part time temporary faculty. Seven (7) professors emerged as eligible for the study as they met the qualifying criteria of full time, tenured track, lecturer or adjunct status who teach at least one undergraduate course. These seven professors were then asked to be a part of this study by participating in a thirty (30) to sixty (60) minute interview and allowing the researcher to observe the professor's class. Six (6) professors



participated in the study. One (1) professor, the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) nominated professor, did not respond to the request to participate in the study after repeated attempts. One of the six interviewed professors could not be observed due to a family emergency for the semester.

### **The Data Process:**



Figure 3: The Data Process

The next section will address the data. While the passionate professors were the main subjects of this survey, the student survey data provided complementary and detail rich data that needed to be included in this study. This section will logically follow the progression of the data as it was collected (see Figure 3).

## Student Survey

The student survey asked undergraduate sophomore, junior or senior students about passionate professors. The survey consisted of four (4) short questions:

- 1) Do you know a professor that could be defined as a “passionate professor”? If they responded yes, they were asked to provide the name and class of the professor.
- 2) If yes, what characteristics make them passionate?
- 3) Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How?
- 4) Lastly, would you be willing to participate in a one-hour focus group to review the findings regarding what makes a passionate professor? If they responded yes, they were asked to provide their name, email and phone number.

Two hundred and fifty nine (259) students answered the survey. Seventy-five (75) students volunteered to participate in the focus group. Eleven (11) professors had three (3) or more “nominations.” Four (4) nominations were excluded due to their faculty status. Data was analyzed from the qualitative questions.

Table 2 represents the various position titles associated with each of the student “nominated” passionate professors and the percentages. Nine percent (9%) of the nominated professors were full professor status. Eighteen percent (18%) were unknown. The Unknown category was created for those that only provided limited information (first

name only, nicknames, etc.) or were no longer in the university system. Eleven percent (11%) were associate professors. Ten percent (10%) were temporary part time faculty.

Their titles were gathered from the university directory.

<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Adjunct Faculty</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Clinical Ed Instructor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Graduate Assistant</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Interession Faculty</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Lecturer II</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Lecturer III</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Lecturer</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Principal Lecturer</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Professor</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Research Assistant</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Retired Employee</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Senior Lecturer</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Senior Program Manager</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Temp Faculty</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Temp Part time Faculty</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Term Teaching Faculty</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Visiting Assistant Faculty</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Visiting Associate Faculty</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Visiting Lecturer</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Visiting Lecturer II</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Professor Titles

When asking the question “What characteristics make them passionate?” the student responses prompted the following themes: Emotional connection, student centered, and learner centered. Sub-themes also emerged for each main theme. Love, passion, enthusiasm and excitement all were descriptors used often to describe the emotional connection experienced by the students with their passionate professors. Care

and concern, understanding, motivational and positivity, knowledge and humor all were characteristics that described how their passionate professors depicted the student centeredness experienced from the passionate professors. And, lastly, students felt challenged by their passionate professors which enabled the students to feel as though their passionate professors truly wanted them to learn in their class.

The second question asked in the student survey, “Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How?” created the following themes: inspire, help, challenge, increase interest, motivate, increase confidence as a student, style and lastly, respect for the professor. These themes all depicted the way in which the student felt their passionate professors aided their learning experience in the classroom. The following section will explain the findings of each theme within the student survey.

## **Student Themes**

***Question: What Characteristics make them passionate?***

### **Emotional Connection**

The first qualitative question of the student survey asked students *What Characteristics make them passionate?* There was a strong emotional connection expressed from the students to describe their passionate professor. Many describe their professors’ love for the subject and their students: “She loves the subject she teaches, which comes through in her teaching”; “She loves all her students”; “he is passionate about the subject and student learning” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Others describe the passion they see in their professors: “he plunges into depths that bring meaning and value to the concepts to ignite passion within his

audience;” “[he] not only exemplifies his passion for exercise science and all aspects of it, but he lives it;” “I could tell she was passionate and absolutely loved what she did, that I am currently majoring in linguistics because of her” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). These descriptions were often followed with statements of the professors’ excitement and enthusiasm shown while they taught. She is “extremely excited about everything she does;” “He always seems excited to come to class;” “It is clear she really enjoys teaching, interacting with students, and her field of study” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). The overall emotional connection to the student was a strong theme as it connected the student to the professor and the learning topic. This connection often implied a sense of commitment from the student to the professor.

### **Student Centered**

The next theme that emerged from the data was Student Centered. Within this theme, many sub themes emerged: care and concern, understanding, motivational and positivity, knowledge and humor. This theme focused on the professors’ dedication to students and their academics. Students expressed that professors were “genuine, understanding, funny, caring;” “caring, intelligent, able to teach anyone, gets to know students to help each succeed individually;” “she is very concerned with the overall performance and wellbeing of her students;” “he cares about his students;” “she truly cares about her students succeeding in the real world” (Student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Students had a strong reaction feeling that professors truly cared about them and their learning. “[She] always encourages her students to go above and beyond;” “his passion for material encouraged me to rise to the challenge” (student

survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Many professors encouraged their students through motivation and positivity. “Her complete motivation, and concrete teaching skills made me enjoy the class like no other;” “[his] dedication and overall constantly on and positive attitude really demonstrate how passionate he is for his subject” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

Lastly, students remarked that professors knew the subject well and also infused humor within their teaching style. “She is VERY knowledgeable;” Another remarked: “She is extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic in relating the course material!!” “True knowledge on her topics;” Another commented: “Very knowledgeable about the subject, there is passion and knowledge in her voice;” “He has an incredible ability to transfer his knowledge into a form that is easily understood;” “[he] has a good sense of humor;” and lastly, one commented: “The humorous jokes and unexpected dancing/movements kept the class entertained” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). When professors used humor and enthusiasm to capture the class, the knowledge and passion was transparent. Students reacted to their enthusiasm. “He is highly enthusiastic about the subjects he teaches and supports his students’ learning through a variety of different activities” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Many often felt this enthusiasm and excitement reflected on the professors’ valuing their students and their academic success. “He seemed sincerely excited for class every day;” “he comes to class everyday excited to see his students” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

## **Learner Centered**

The students in the survey focused on how professors truly care about their learning experience. This theme differed from the previous theme as it focused on how the students learn. This theme addressed how students perceived the professors' commitment to critically thinking and learning the material presented. The professor showed "genuine concern and appreciation of the student's learning and progress;" "She cares about students' learning and she makes an effort to help understand" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Being there for the students and helping them learn the subject matter made an important statement to the students on why these professors were passionate. "She uses as many different teaching methods as she can fit into a lecture (visual aids, stories, repetition, etc.) to accommodate different learning styles" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). In addition, the way in which a professor challenges students stood out as being learner centered and passionate. The professor showed an "eagerness to answer challenging questions;" "He also challenges students to not memorize information, but rather develop a framework of thinking to approach problems" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). These student statements reflect the importance students place on learning from the passionate professor, but also interpreting the challenge from a professor as caring about their learning outcomes in their educational pursuits.

***Question: Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student?***

The second qualitative question asked: *Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How?* This question invoked many thoughtful

responses. Passionate professors inspire, help, challenge, increase interest, motivate, and increase confidence as a student. In addition, teaching style and respect for the professor emerged as themes. “I love going to class, and even when I don’t want to, he makes it worth my time...He is very involved and I’m super grateful to have him as professor!!” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). The passion exhibited from the professors inspired students to come to class and participate. “She is inspiring. She makes you want to soak up information and see things from different perspectives. You can’t be bored during her lectures. I actually look forward to going to class” exclaimed one student. “She is an inspiration to me which makes me push myself that much harder to do better” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Students continually commented on how their passionate professor was an inspiration to them. Having students comment on their desire to attend and not miss class is a strong indication of the passion students felt from the inspiration conveyed by the professors.

Many students reflected on the helping nature of professors; “she pushed me beyond my comfort level and helped me to learn what I like and what I dislike” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Many commented on how professors helped students understand aspects of the class or subject matter. “His willingness to try many different avenues of explanation of difficult concepts has really helped improve my class understanding” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Professors also assisted in skill development; the professor “helped me grow into a very good writer;” “he helped me build the skills I’ll need in the real world and for my future career” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).



Students again commented on the challenge that many passionate professors put forth to their students. “I can easily say I have learned more from [his] classes than any of my other classes.” “She pushed me beyond my comfort level and helped me to learn what I like and what I dislike” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). This idea of “pushing” or challenging students and having them reach further and beyond what they think stands out in their comments on this particular question. “I probably know ochem [organic chemistry] more than any other subject because of her drive to teach and my willingness to learn. Could not have done it without her [the professor]” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

Passionate professors inspired students to do well – and often increased interest in the subject matter just by being passionate with their students. “I gained a new passion to go to class and always looked forward to what class had to offer;” “the open minded environment set by the professor encouraged students to participate and think outside of the box;” “I actually wanted to come to class every week and I worked hard on the homework because I enjoyed learning about it” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). This increase in interest was the largest theme commented on by the students. The increased interest of the subject coupled with the previous themes painted a nice picture of the importance of passion in the classroom. “He makes learning fun” shared one student. “I never look at the clock in that class. It [passion] also made me more excited to read the books and write the papers...her excitement made me excited about the subject” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

This increase of interest created an internal motivation in the student to excel in the class. “I’m always super excited to complete homework;” “I was excited to do

homework and in class exercises because how he teaches makes me feel that I actually understand everything that I am doing” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). This motivation from the passionate professors helped students connect not only to the subject matter, but to their career paths and personal growth and development. “She is inspiring. She makes you want to soak up information and see things from different perspectives;” “His class motivated me to do my own research of issues;” “[she] inspired me to improve academic skill and self-examine” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

Often professors aim to help and increase students’ confidence in their academic ability. The students surveyed shared how professors increased their confidence for their academic achievements. “His attitude created a comfortable environment where I was not afraid to express the way I understood the material or what he was saying;” “he increased my motivation and determination to complete college;” “[she] helped me find my voice when writing” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Students often spoke about the challenges of finding their majors or career paths; many remarked how “after taking his class and hearing his first-hand experience I found my true passion” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). One student stated:

This is my first semester at UNM...and I am a senior citizen... [ the professor] drew me in to becoming a 110% totally committed focused student...to have a professor realize my worth as a student, as well as my value due to my knowledge from experience, makes me excited about what I can learn from the course, the

other students and what I can contribute (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

College is tough. Students focused on the feelings of being successful as students. One student expressed that the professor gave him/her “a feeling that survival is possible” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

Inspiration, helping, challenging, increasing confidence, and motivating were all themes centered on the passionate professor’s teaching style. Students continually spoke about the way their professor taught. Entertainment was a key motivator; “his entertainment keeps the attention of all students, especially myself” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Sharing experiences and stories, asking opinions, offering assistance outside of office hours, using media, videos, and music all helped reach the students. “I feel like I really understand the subject matter because she explained it really well and gave us real world examples. She also used different types of media to get her point across.” “He has a way of ‘vibing’ with students to get them to really think about a subject” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). One student strongly stated that “for once I was not afraid to go to class” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). This one student’s statement speaks volumes about the power of passionate teaching.

A small number of students described how the respect for the professor increased with the passion shown to the students. “It felt that since the professor is so passionate in his work that it is my job as a student to send back the exact amount of input. If my professor really cares about his work I should want to learn above and beyond” (student

survey data, personal communication, April 2013). The passion the professor exhibited promoted the desire for the students to want to do more and be better students. “His passion helps me to learn the material that he’s teaching and it makes me want to study more to make him proud of me as a student” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

Students provided thoughtful and inspirational comments on why passion in teaching is important to them as students. Although for this study, the student responses were secondary to the main research centered on the passionate professor, the student data provided rich and in-depth insight into the phenomenon of passion in teaching. For students, passionate professors were essential to their personal and academic success.

### **The Professors**

The main focus for this research was the phenomenon of passion through the eyes and voices of the professors. Seven (7) professors were asked to participate in the study (Table 3). Six (6) responded and consented to participate. Each professor was interviewed and observed by the researcher. Due to a family emergency, the researcher was not able to observe one professor. The interviews were semi-structured with five questions being the focal point:

- 1) What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?
- 2) How is the perceived passion experienced by the student?
- 3) Do students learn more from a passionate professor?
- 4) Is passion innate or learned?

5) How important is passion in the teaching profession?

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Years Teaching	Position Title	Subject Area
Jack	White	Male	7 years	Temp Faculty	Psychology
Ken	White	Male	30 years	Associate Professor	Health Exercise and Sports Science
Olivia	Hispanic	Female	27 years	Associate Professor	Accounting
Steve	Latino	Male	12 years	Associate Professor	History
Walter	Anglo	Male	22 years	Principle Lecturer	Religious Studies
Wanda	Caucasian	Female	7.5 years	Senior Lecturer III	Chemistry

**Table 3: The Passionate Professors**

Four (4) main themes emerged from the professors' interviews: Student Centered, Professional Growth, Style and Emotional Connection. The following section will provide an overall profile of each interviewed passionate professor followed by the themes that emerged from their interviews.

### **The Passionate Professors**

#### ***"I don't think you can learn the spark" – Jack***

Jack is a white, male professor in the psychology department within the College of Arts and Sciences. He is a temporary faculty member who has been teaching at the college level for seven (7) years. Jack did not set out to be a university or college professor. He thought about computer science, then clinical psychology. In his last year of graduate school, he decided he liked being a teaching assistant. He looked into teaching and found a program at a local community college which enabled him to get

licensed as a high school teacher. At that time, high school positions were limited, so college life called him back. He learned a lot from the local community college courses he took to get his teaching license; “It really strengthened my lecture style and my interaction with students” (personal communication, September 2013). The community college course helped him be a better professor at the college level. Jack explained passion in teaching as a “strong desire to pass on information and a heartfelt sense of that information and excitement about it” (personal communication, September 2013). He often teaches large, four hundred or more capacity, introductory classes in the psychology department. One student remarked that “this professor simply enjoys teaching...with a command of PowerPoint, a witty sense of humor and timing, he puts on a show while lecturing” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

For Jack, teaching psychology is relaying information that has a “direct impact on my students and it’s [topic] highly relatable to them” (personal communication, September 2013). Psychology and specifically some of his more issue related courses, such as Drugs and Behavior class, deal with everyday life behaviors. It has a real life component to their learning. One particular student shared with him that she was able to help her nephew get tested for color blindness due to his lectures on that topic. For him, this was that relevancy to their personal life that makes teaching fun and important. For this student, she remembered the lecture and topic to help her nephew. It’s important. “I had an impact on somebody’s life” (personal communication, September 2013) he remarked about this student; and for her, this professor had an impact on her life. “Applying personal meaning to a subject creates a vastly better remembering and learning experience and [he] makes this easy to do by creating interest and application of

the topics by relating them to what contemporary students experience” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

While observing his classroom, Jack had loud music playing with rotating images on the screen in the front of the classroom. The classroom was filled to capacity with students; 647 students were registered for this class. It was a large lecture hall, stadium style seating. The huge screen was lowered on the front stage area with graphics, words and the rotating images. One image was an ethical dilemma. It was flashy and eye-catching with visual graphics. “I teach a lot the same way I communicate here. There’s an emotional tone, there’s gesturing and I bring in whenever possible video clips and pictures...that really helps to personalize the information” (personal communication, September 2013). His lecture style was energetic, personal and eye-catching. There were videos, jokes, music and quizzes on i>clickers during the entire fifty (50) minute class. Students laughed; students questioned; students participated. As a researcher, I found myself mesmerized and enjoying the class, learning through his videos and stories as he lectured on topics and terms. He showed a puzzle that challenged the class to complete; many volunteered their efforts to solve. Jack used voices and acted out characters to illustrate points on the “stage” in front of the students. He brought to life a story by personifying the voice of one bee giving direction to his bee friend. “If we have a passion behind our teaching, and a connection to it, the students respond to that emotion” (personal communication, September 2013). As I watched students engage with his lecture, it appeared the students were learning the topics through his excitement, his voices, his jokes, and his stories.

Jack really cares about the material that he is teaching. He makes it easy to understand by explaining the subject in detail and communicating it into real-world scenarios or examples. He also uses humor quite a bit to get his point across. He isn't an instructor that just comes to class, lectures and then leaves. He is truly passionate about his students and what he teaches (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

Jack believes that passion is innate. It isn't something learned; "I don't think you can learn the spark. It has to be there" (personal communication, September 2013). The spark is his passion for the students and his subject. As a researcher observer, I found myself reacting to his lecture; I wanted to participate. I wanted to figure out the puzzle with which he challenged students. I found myself laughing at his videos and his stories. I was engaged. One student remarked, "his passion definitely helped me learn as a student. His general interest in the subject made it exciting for me...he makes it easy for his students to understand what is going on" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). For Jack, "you can train someone and teach them to teach it, a book, the teacher course, but they're not going to be passionate unless they have that innate passion for it" (personal communication, September 2013). For Jack, that spark is within the passionate professor.



***“I always believe that you become the passion...you become whatever you’re teaching”***

**– Ken**

Ken is a white, male professor in the Health Exercise and Sports Sciences department within the College of Education. He is an associate professor who has been teaching at the college level for thirty (30) years. Walking into his office one is faced with a multitude of chairs, stress balls, bean bags and “regular” chairs. During his interview he asked me if I minded if he walked around the office and used his white board for illustrations during our interview. For the entire interview, Ken was engaged; he showed me his website and explained how he used it with students; he used visual aids, gestures, and acted out points to illustrate his depictions of passion in teaching.

For Ken, passion begins from the preparation of the lesson plan to the actual teaching; “I always believe that you become the passion, that when you teach, the first part is the incredible prep...because when you don’t know it, they know you don’t know it. But, then you become whatever you’re teaching” (personal communication, July 2013). Ken takes a lot of time in preparing his courses. He utilizes on line and various technological tools, including i>clickers. His years as a gymnast and then also as a professional pantomime helped him in the classroom with his verbal and non-verbal expressions and body work as a professor. “I have control of the body...there’s a part of gesturing that I can add little subtle things...and I’m not afraid to give a lot more movement” (personal communication, July 2013). During our interview, Ken showed me how he challenges the students to become the molecules and show the interactions and pathways for the molecules. It is “probably the best teaching thing I’ve done...” (personal communication, July 2013). This enables the students to really understand it

and get involved. Each student wears a sign and as a group they walk through interactions of the pathways. It is very experiential.

Giving the students encouragement and positive reinforcement is integral to Ken's teaching style. "It truly is difficult to not learn in [his] classes. The way he teaches his classes with such enthusiasm really makes you feel, as a student, like the subject you're learning is exciting; it motivates many student to not only learn the material but to excel..." (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). When posed with the question of whether his students learn more from the passion he shows during his classes, Ken remarked "no doubt about it...but I think empowerment's the key" (personal communication, July 2013). Empowerment for Ken is the underlying key to his passion for students and learning. He believes that in order to be a passionate professor you have to have three (3) characteristics: one has to love the topic, love people and love teaching (personal communication, July 2013). There are some teachers who are more concerned with how they look as a professor to the students and are not necessarily student focused. "There are a lot of teachers out there...more involved with 'look how neat I am'...to me, the heroes in the class are the students" (personal communication, July 2013). Ken truly believes one has to be student centered. It is all about encouraging your students to learn.

I can easily say I have learned more from [Ken's] classes than any of my other classes in the exercise science department combined. He makes learning fun and makes sure every student in the class fully understand the course material. He does this by doing [a] daily quiz, calling on students by name and expecting at the very least perfection. He even gives out A++ on his exams (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

Ken's classroom consisted of approximately sixty (60) students in a stadium seated styled room. He used a teaching assistant to help him with the lessons and classroom management. Ken used a hands free microphone attached to him and he greeted each student as he/she entered the room. The day I observed, Ken was handing back their first exams of the semester. He had positive comments for all the students. "He comes to class everyday excited to see his students and to teach them about the subject he loves" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). One activity Ken had the students do was critically think about their exams and rationalize what he termed "Individual Intellectualism"; if a student felt he/she just did not understand the question correctly – but answered it according to his/her interpretation, he/she could write on the back of the exam and turn it in for consideration. In addition, Ken had the students write out what he termed the "Roses, Thorns and Roots" of the exam. He challenged each student to write on the back of the exam what worked for them in studying for the exam (Roses), what they could have done better in preparing for the exam (Thorns) and then finally, what was their plan for the next exam to improve (Roots). It was a nice reflection exercise which enabled the students to critically reflect on their progress and set realistic goals. As the students did this exercise, Ken walked around helping students and commenting to them individually.

Ken used PowerPoint and visual images for his lecture. Students asked questions and always participated. He regularly asked them for real life examples – pulling in their experiences and stories throughout his lecture. As an observer, the lecture aspect seemed more like a conversation between the student and the professor. He regularly checked in with the students asking if the information was understood; he asked for examples and

also checked in with questions of his own, calling individually on students, often by name. Although the class observed was 60 students, Ken may teach anywhere from a small seminar type class to the large classroom introductory classes. “I try to call on all 24 [or 60] students, if I can get it. And I need to push myself to that...sometimes a student is real quiet, that you just don’t get to call on all 24” (personal communication, July 2013). He regularly repeated past information from previous classes to illustrate how the information is all tied together. One student shared “I have never seen anyone teach or demonstrate the values that they teach more than [Ken]” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). He referenced past students and how this tied into their careers or their future academic pursuits. “You love what you do, you really want to reach out to them, but the real...the best, the passion or the enthusiasm the way I see it is, taking what you love and having them learn it in such a way that they love it too” (personal communication, July 2013). As an observer and interviewer, I walked away learning and being intrigued by a subject that is unfamiliar to me.

***“I’m passionate about what happens to them as human beings” -Olivia***

Olivia is a Hispanic, female professor in the Accounting Department within the Business School. She is an associate professor who has been teaching for twenty seven (27) years. She summed up her experience as a teacher by stating: “It’s an honor and it’s a responsibility and I’m passionate about having them feel competent and excited about learning at the end of the class” (personal communication, September 2013). When first meeting with Olivia, one immediately feels her passion through her non-verbal communication. She uses her hands when speaking and her eyes light up when describing her experiences teaching. Olivia makes herself available to her students.

I do some things outside of class that I think are a little unusual. I have weekend workshops where I just get a big room and I'm there during the time; they sometimes bring their kids; they sometimes bring their dogs. They sit around and work on projects (personal communication, September 2013).

She is at the school on weekends to help students with their assignments and with studying for her exams. This is a way for Olivia to get to know her students and their lives. It's an inside view of what is important to them. "She truly cares about her student's succeeding in the real world. She makes sure you have the right preparation you need" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). In addition to the weekend workshops, Olivia also tries to know each student's name and something about them outside the typical major, hometown, etc. "Even if it is just what kind of ice cream they like...I'm interested in them and I think they know that" (personal communication, September 2013).

The day I observed her class, Olivia walked into the room and began setting up the classroom. She came over to say hello to me. Her classroom was a typical classroom, rows of desks connected together with chairs. A podium was at the front and two screens on each side. There were three blackboards in the front. The class has 34 registered students. Students started coming in and getting settled. As they came in, she acknowledged each one by name. Some approached her to chat about the class. Each student began pulling out name plates which they placed in front of them. It is evident she really doesn't need the reminders as she calls each one by name reminding them of their name placards. Olivia was in constant movement. She walked around the class; she had them do exercises in small groups. She used the screens and computers to display

work and show the accounting methods. She spoke to individuals about their lives. She commented to one student who was sick the week before – and asked him how he was doing and was he able to catch up on what he missed. She commented about how their voice sounded better than it did last week. “I think that feels like family” she explained, when students and professors know more about one another as people and not just students and professors (personal communication, September 2013).

Throughout the class, Olivia’s passion was evident. She got excited when the students knew the answers. She was always quick to give positive reinforcement; “way to go,” “perfect;” “yes, you got it exactly;” “Doesn’t it feel good to get it” (personal communication, September 2013). If a student did not understand or answered incorrectly, she asked him/her how he/she got that answer and helped him/her figure out the correct answer. Students appeared very receptive to this method as they would laugh and were not shy or reserved in offering their answers. She often used humor during her lecture. “Good thing I had my coffee” she remarked when she was figuring out an equation on the board (personal communication, September 2013). The class always responded by laughing or adding their comments. The entire tone of the class was one of camaraderie. As a researcher, I found myself understanding her lesson and wanting to answer the questions. I was engaged.

Students have changed a lot over the years for Olivia. For Olivia, passion in teaching is important. “I think that they [students] remember the emotion of learning maybe more than they learned facts. That emotion hopefully carries them forward so that they think, this is fun, [and] this is meaningful” (personal communication, September 2013). She kind of stumbled into teaching like many individuals do in their careers. She

began her career path in nursing, and then went back to get her master's degree in healthcare, but due to economic changes, she didn't complete that degree. A friend told her about getting her Ph.D.; she told her she could teach and finish the degree at the same time. She worked with student services staff that taught and knew educational theory which helped influence her teaching style. She also shadowed her sister who taught third grade. This all helped her develop her own style. "I was lucky and I was pretty successful" (personal communication, September 2013) the first few times she taught and this helped influence her to continue teaching. "I always think about that with students too. If they succeed at first they are much more likely to work hard and continue" to succeed (personal communication, September 2013). Olivia works hard to reach the students where they are in their own academic pursuits. "My students are learning more than they did five years ago from me, I can tell. They have a deeper understanding. I think that is a result of passion" (personal communication, September 2013). One student shared that Olivia was always "well prepared" and always "really inspiring" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). Olivia uses a lot of different teaching modalities and changes her lessons around each year to make sure she reaches all the students in her class. "They have to do something other than listen...I was teaching [accounting] 202 which is our introductory accounting. I had just explained something I thought I had explained it brilliantly. Then, I asked them to do a small problem and maybe one student could actually do it. I had explained it brilliantly. I thought it was their fault. That just convinced me that listening to me or watching me was almost useless" (personal communication, September 2013). She explained that breaking information down and checking in with students helps students digest the

information. This next year she wants to have all her students send her a picture of his or her studying area at home. She feels this will give her insight into their world and how it fits in with their studying habits, obstacles and academics. For many, their home might be chaotic or they might not have a quiet place to work, so this will help her understand their situations more. She is always changing how she teaches to meet the needs of her students; “I would be so bored otherwise, I have to be honest. I just couldn’t keep doing the same old thing” (personal communication, September 2013).

***“It’s a chemistry that exists between you and all the students together...and that matters a lot” –Steve***

Steve is a Latino male professor in the History Department within the College of Arts and Science. He is an associate professor who has taught for twelve (12) years. For Steve, “passion means that you care about what you’re doing, both in terms of the subject matter being important and in terms of the work of teaching people being important” (personal communication, September 2013). His parents were both in education; his father was a physician who taught medical school students and his mother was a teacher. “I hope that all educators have chosen a subject matter that they care about, otherwise I’m not sure I could be very good at it if you don’t care” (personal communication, September 2013). History was and is his passion: “I love history. I think it is intrinsically interesting” (personal communication, September 2013). For Steve, each semester and each class is different. He definitely gets his drive and passion from his students.



One class you go in there and do your best and it's just crickets out there. Then other classes you come in and say 'hey, good morning' and everyone laughs and applauds. You have no idea why that is, but it's a chemistry that exists between you and all the students together (personal communication, September 2013).

Steve believes his passion is innate. He views it as "performance art" (personal communication, September 2013). He states he is "kind of a ham" (personal communication, September 2013) when it comes to lecturing and getting his students to love history and understand history. One student remarked that "he is a great speaker who involves the class. He never shies away from debate and enjoys challenging students" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). For Steve, "it comes pretty naturally to want to go out there and get them excited and engaged and turned on to the subject" (personal communication, September 2013).

Steve lectures to both small and large classes. The class I observed was a typical class for Steve; a large auditorium filled with over 600 students. There was a large stage in front with a podium and two large screens. Steve had two teaching assistants helping him the day I observed. The class was filled with students. The two teaching assistants set up the room prior to Steve arriving. They placed numbers all around the room for group exercises. The entire class session was movement, energy and laughter. Steve had notes on the podium— but never really looked at them.

You don't want to lose eye contact and just contact with the students. Because if you're at all keyed into how people are reacting to you, you know it and certainly when you've lost them. It's just like a tiny bit of shuffling, a tiny bit of

inattention, you can just tell when you've got them and you can tell when you haven't got them (personal communication, September 2013).

He explained to the class how that day was going to go and prepared them for his session with them. They used i>clickers a lot and the overhead screens. "I'm explicitly or implicitly explaining the importance of what I'm telling them...I started using i>clickers...because I believe that there should be some stand up lecture, but I think there's sufficient research indicating that's not as effective" (personal communication, September 2013). He uses the i>clickers to see where the students are at in their understanding of concepts, but more recently he is using them to see what they are thinking about and what is important to them. This gives the students "the ability to not just choose from among the choices of answers that I give them, but to openly say 'what do you think?'" (personal communication, September 2013). He also had communicated via email to each student about what groups they would be in for this class by assigning them a number.

It is clear that he cares about the subject he is teaching and that he gets the facts as correct as possible. When a student asks a question that he doesn't know the answer to, he will look up the answer or ask someone in the department for their advice and tell the class the next time we meet (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

At one point the class got in their groups to do small group work. It was an amazing sight to see – all 600+ students shifted into groups and met new students. When he began the group work, he and his teaching assistants walked around and interacted with each group. His non-verbal communication showed a lot about his interest. He was

continually nodding, shaking his head, listening and making eye contact with each group's speakers. He was animated and showed interest in each group. As an observer, I could tell he was excited and interested in what his students were saying about the group assignment. For Steve, "teaching is something where you want to make clear that you respect them for being here or they respect you. It's just a way of signaling, 'hey, this is cool'" (personal communication, September 2013).

***"Education is not the filling of a pail. It's the lighting of a fire. That fire gets lit, in part, by the professor"-Walter***

Walter is an Anglo male professor in the Religious Studies department within the College of Arts and Sciences. He is a Principle Lecturer who has taught for twenty two (22) years. Due to a family emergency for Walter, I was not able to observe him in his classroom. My first impression of Walter was extremely positive. He was the first professor to contact me during the summer for my study. Through his email correspondence, I felt his dedication to students. He told me he was excited to participate in my study and that he would come in and meet with me although he was not teaching or working that summer. Walter and I sat down for the interview in his office. Before the interview even started, Walter expressed how interested he was in my study and how I came about wanting to study passion in teaching. He instantly engaged me. We chatted a bit about my studies then advanced to the interview. Walter felt that a passionate professor is one who has "an intense interest and a desire to communicate that interest and excitement to students in a classroom situation" (personal communication, July 2013). Walter believes most of his teaching is through stories and narratives. He begins each day "walking into the class and having a story to tell that day and being excited

about what's going on in the story and what it actually means" (personal communication, July 2013). This helps students understand the often nebulous and philosophical meanings behind religious studies. There is a questioning behind his stories. "I try to bring that curiosity to students every single time I go into the lecture" (personal communication, July 2013). He really wants students to critically think about culture, religion and what it means to them. "To see the students go 'I hadn't really thought about it that way.' To know what it is like to sit in their shoes and to frankly, in some ways, still be in their shoes" (personal communication, July 2013) is rewarding for him. He wants to challenge them each day and show them "that it's interesting to consider this stuff" (personal communication, July 2013). He tries to invoke emotions in his students due to the topics he presents. He wants them to feel and experience the stories and relate to their own experiences and thought processes. It helps him with his passion for the subject and for his students. One student explained that his passion was seen by "his in-depth knowledge and experiences of the subjects along with his ability to invoke understanding [for] others through stories" (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). He likes for his students to question, to feel emotions, whether that be happiness, sadness or even anger at the presented topics.

I want to anger them and if I see that in their eyes...then I know I'm on the right track. That sets up a feedback loop I think for me. If I see students reacting in that way then I can dig deeper into my passion (personal communication, July 2013).

Through the emotions, he feels students connect with the stories he is telling in his lectures. Students often approach Walter and ask if their friends can come and sit in on the class.

I think some students in a large class situation, they can see my passion and they want to be there and they want to hear whatever the day's story is. I have students that, this is fairly regular, who will come to me and ask me, 'my roommate is really interested in this and I told her that you're a really good prof [professor]. Can she come and sit in on your class?'(personal communication, July 2013).

Walter felt that his passion was learned. Teaching was not his initial career choice. But, after he tried it, his evaluations from the students came back positive. "Wow – I got the 'passionate' in those evaluations. It never dawned on me that that would be the case. I, all of a sudden, was 'maybe I have some talent in this way'" (personal communication, July 2013). And he has been teaching ever since. Walter expressed that in the beginning of his career, teaching was abstract – or he felt he was "flailing" and trying to figure out "how to be a teacher" (personal communication, July 2013).

It took me a while to realize, this is useful that if I can show students that I'm really intrigued by this then they can be intrigued by this. I tell the students in my big classes today, I've been studying this stuff for many years and I'm still baffled by some of it (personal communication, July 2013).

For Walter, technology is not an important tool in his classroom. "I think that the surfeit of electronics stimulation is also a problem for students. I have to have

technologies policies in my class to let them know, ‘no, you can’t text. No you can’t surf the net’” (personal communication, July 2013). He feels students need to sit and listen and absorb the information he presents; this is where the emotions connect them to the stories and to their own experiences. When he is teaching topics, such as the Holocaust, he wants students to be there and present with him in class. “Trying to get students to not just go ‘this is uncomfortable. I’m going to go play my Xbox or whatever’ but to actually sit and engage it and to try existentially absorb what this means” is his goal (personal communication, July 2013). But, for most students, this lack of technology is what attracts them to his lectures and classes. Many students often comment to him that his class is “quiet” and often remark it is “relaxing and engaging” (personal communication, July 2013). This may be the reason students fill his classes and bring their friends and roommates to listen.

For many professors, teaching large lecture style classes is daunting. Walter’s classes are often the introductory classes filling stadium style lecture halls of 300-600 students. Students may feel like one in a sea of faces. This is where passion in teaching makes a significant impact on Walter’s teaching. “I think [passion in the teaching profession] is critical especially in large class situations because the anonymity that students feel in large situations is immediately a mark against their ability to engage the information and to learn information” (personal communication, July 2013). For Walter, passion is the connection to the students learning. “If you’re not passionate then the students, they’re going to mirror that...if you’re in front of the class and you’re not passionate then you got to figure that the students aren’t just going to dredge up the passion out of nowhere” (personal communication, July 2013). For the students, the

large size of the class did not deter his enthusiasm; “he was very enthusiastic and confident in teaching Living World Religion. The class held almost 400 students, but he did not fail to get our attention. The humorous jokes and unexpected dancing/movements kept the class entertained” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

Walter shared the importance of passion in higher education. He felt that this was a good topic in a time when higher education is changing.

If passion is an important part of the educational experience, which I think it is, then we should be asking ourselves the questions about online courses and MOOCs [Massive Open Online Course] and considering the very basic fact that any online class is going to take that passion element out of the equation (personal communication, July 2013).

Although he has not taught an online course, Walter felt that after hearing his colleagues share the difficulties of online and its lack of connectivity to students, he often questions “are we getting the same kind of education that they would be getting?” (personal communication, July 2013). It is an important question for this study and for higher education.

What do we want to do in terms of serving the student? Do we just want to make it convenient, or do we want to inspire them? Education is not the filling of a pail. It’s the lighting of a fire. That fire gets lit, in part, by the professor in the front of the class, and I think if you just want to fill a pail, okay, that’s fine. At least just say that’s what we’re doing is filling pails” (personal communication, July 2013).

For him, passionate professors, and his own teaching style, is a lot more than filling a pail. “We are inspiring our students that education is something that is exciting, and it’s lifelong, and it’s continued and that critical thinking, and the aspect that we can learn and we can question” (personal communication, July 2013). This passion around education will have a tremendous impact on students today – and learning in higher education.

In one of my lectures on Confucianism, I talk about the role of role models in society, and we banter back and forth with the students about, ‘Do we have role models in 21st century America?’ I lay out a few things. I say politicians, and everybody laughs. They’re not role models. Celebrities. Nah. Sport figures. Nah. I say, ‘Maybe we don’t have anybody that’s a role model in our culture,’ but then I say, ‘Wait,’ and I ask the students to raise their hands. I say, ‘How many students in the class have had a teacher in the past that they didn’t just think was a good teacher but they thought was a good person? Somebody that inspired them, that they kind of wanted to be like.’

Every time I ask that question, 80% of the students raise their hands. That tells me something really important, that students in that interaction with their teachers, whether it’s K-12 or university, that that inspires the students. That gets them thinking and asks them, ‘What do I want to be? How do I want to be morally, educationally, intellectually’, and if we can do that for the students, give them the opportunity to consider that, then I think we’re educating them in the



ways that they need to be educated and not just filling them with information so they can go out and get a job (personal communication, July 2013).

It's that direct impact on students that Walter seems to make with each of his classes. It's a lighting of the fire.

***“If they laugh, they remember” – Wanda***

Wanda is a Caucasian female in the chemistry department within the College of Arts and Sciences. She is a senior lecturer III who has taught for seven and a half (7.5) years. Wanda always wanted to teach. “I always admired my teachers. I adored them and completely looked up to them...I always had a passion for educating” (personal communication, July 2013). When she started college and advanced to her graduate degrees, Wanda had a strong mentor, one of her professors, who helped her with her teaching and professional goals. She originally wanted to teach high school but her mentor spoke to her about teaching college level – and it inspired her to become a college professor. Wanda defined passion as:

The ability to translate the excitement for a particular topic...some little thing if you can get a student to say you know what, that impacts my life or that impacts my sister or my brother or my mom, to be able to have them take that and own it and do something with it (personal communication, July 2013).

Wanda has many tools and techniques which help her relate and connect to students. “If they laugh, they remember things a bit better” (personal communication, July 2013). Using humor and stories help students connect the topics with their lives. In

describing relationships within chemistry, she often uses the analogy of dating and relationships. There are “people in your life that that are not good for you that you want to get rid of sometimes” and this is the same with chemistry compounds (personal communication, July 2013). It’s a good connection to their lives and what they know and can relate to with chemistry. She does have to keep up with her students and what is popular at the time. After the Breaking Bad series on television, she was often asked about the show and chemistry. She didn’t watch it so she had to learn a bit about it. “I keep having to renew my jokes because things get out of date” (personal communication, July 2013). She also believes having a strong syllabus with the most possible scenarios and details explained, helps set the class up for success. The syllabus has “suggested problems, study tips...I think that goes a long way in saying I care about your success. I’m telling you what exactly you need to do to succeed in this class” (personal communication, July 2013). She also has review sessions for her students.

Similarly to Olivia, Wanda sets up evening sessions for two hours where students can come in and get assistance. “They bring food, they text in between problems...that’s a time for them to sit and reflect on it and if they cannot do what I’m doing in the review then they know that they have something to work on” (personal communication, July 2013). These extra evening session had an impact on her students; one student remarked “she cares about students’ learning and she makes an effort to help and understand” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). Another remarked that her style of teaching made a “difficult subject more interesting. She requires a lot of work and time on our part as students, but she puts in time as well to help us” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012).

She also speaks about career paths related to her topic. She wants students to really understand what a doctor, dentist or pharmacist does in their career, and not the glorified TV versions.

We do talk about careers and one of my goals is always the first day of class to let them know it's not just going to be enough to get through this class and know something; you're going to have to know how to do something. You're going to have to be able to demonstrate that you have knowledge and can interpret things... I really want to physically change their brains. I really want that to be the core of the success (personal communication, July 2013).

For her, as a scientist, passion is often difficult to operationalize without data behind it. Yet, she feels her passion is both innate and learned over time. She feels as though her mentor had a huge influence on her profession and her style. “He was like a second dad” (personal communication, July 2013). She even has dinner with him now to talk about her teaching and continues to learn from him.

[she] picked up on a love for the subject at a younger age, but it wasn't until [she] took organic chemistry...with my professor that I understood the impact that a faculty member could have on people and because he changed my life so much I feel like I'm in his shoes in the same way, kind of following, carrying the torch” (personal communication, July 2013).

He helped her find her passion in teaching, and also fill the shoes of becoming the passionate professors helping lead the way for her students. She emulates her mentor's style from when he taught her as a student. She even “borrowed” his jokes. “I cannot

teach it any other way than he taught it to me. There are little bits and pieces I would get from other mentors I've had, but nothing as strongly as an influence as [him] (personal communication, July 2013).

Wanda teaches large lecture hall classes as well as laboratory classes. The class I observed was full with one hundred and twenty (120) students registered. Most seats were taken. She began class reviewing the previous class and checking in with the students on any questions or concerns. Her humor immediately came through in her use of movie references and relationship metaphors to illustrate points and concepts. When describing a reaction, Wanda described, "Like Dr. Evil's arms" or later exclaimed "this is the classic chem love story" (personal observation, July 2013). The class laughed and related to both examples. She knew individual's names and frequently referred to them when questions were asked. She involved the class by asking questions and having them answer. When answered, she used positive reinforcement "Good job," "nice answer," and "great." She had the class do group exercises and work through problems. They received credit for participating in the groups. While the class worked in groups, she prepared a 3-D model for her next lesson. She used the chalk board at the front of the class to draw out examples and explain the concepts. She was not loud or even entertaining; her style was quiet and reserved. She exuded strength in her abilities and as an observer I could sense her expertise and her dedication to making sure the students understood the concepts and her lesson for that day. I could tell students were comfortable with her through their questions and participation.

Passion is important to Wanda. Her love for being a professor shines through in how she teaches. "[She] always encourages her students to go above and beyond, to

reach their full potential. She pushes us to reach new conclusions, conclusions we developed in the depths of our own mind, but were too shy to speak aloud” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2012). Wanda also shared that this passion translates to the students through her evaluations. Passion is “that one extra thing that makes the difference between a class being acceptable and being outstanding” (personal communication, July 2013). Displaying the passion and “enthusiasm” (personal communication, July 2013) makes the class more enjoyable for the student and ultimately helps the student grasp the material and concepts. Students often comment about her passion for Chemistry.

What’s sad is that they’ve seen people who don’t want to be there and it’s obvious and they’re having to just go through and they don’t get as much out of the class...I think they look forward to coming to class a lot more and if you can make that the situation then you’re only increasing the chances that they’re going to do better and learn something (personal communication, July 2013).

### **Interview Themes**

The six interviews (as one professor did not respond) were analyzed together using Moustakas’ (1994) “horizontalization” (p. 61), which involves reading the transcriptions over and over again in order for the themes to emerge. These themes represent what Creswell (2007) described as a “textural description” (p. 61) of the phenomenon of passion in teaching from the professor’s point of view.

The following themes emerged from the interviews with the passionate professors:

- Students as learners

- Professional growth
- Style
- Emotional Connection

Each theme will be discussed in the following sections.

### **Students as Learners**

In the student survey, the students shared how they felt their passionate professors really cared about their learning and cared about them as students. This was echoed by the professors during their interviews. “I really want to physically change their brains” Wanda (personal communication, July 2013) explained when describing her passion in teaching her students. The professors interviewed all shared the common desire and passion to ensure their students were learning. They wanted their students to be lifelong learners, appreciate the topics and critically reflect on how they relate personally to them as students. Passion meant “the ability to translate the excitement for a particular topic...if you can get a student to say, you know what, that impacts my life or that impacts my sister or my brother or my Mom, to be able to have them take that and own it and do something with it” is really teaching passionately to the students. One professor entitled his passion as “empowerment” (personal communication, July 2013).

Empowering the students to ask questions, to seek out more information and to share their insights with the class all enable students to “buy in” to the topic and take ownership of the topic. He encouraged questions; he never wanted a student to feel fearful of asking a question that he or she may feel is a “dumb question;” “I hate it when I used to be in a class, and if you ask a question, you feel like a dummy...I just never want them to feel

that real yucky feeling” (personal communication, July 2013). This empowerment enables students to learn more.

Often times, the professors would go above and beyond their normal office hours and class time to offer their assistance and time on weekends and late nights. Two of the professors held special study weekend, days and nights where students could come and study with the professors, ask questions, do homework and generally have the professors at their disposal to assist them. “Those are times where it’s completely informal. They come and go as they please. They bring food....that’s a time for them to sit and reflect on it[the subject]” stated one professor (personal communication, July 2013). Another described it as a time for them to bring their family, pets and friends to study. She gets to view their world of studying during that time which allows her to see *how* her students learn. For this professor, it’s personal; “it just becomes a really great chance for them to get to know each other and get to know me.” She wants to know each of her students even if it is “just what kind of ice cream they like” (personal communication, September 2013). It gives her insight into who her students are in and out of the class.

Often the professors remarked about the non-verbal faces of their students; the “A-ha” moments and the “oh no I’ve lost them” expressions. “To see students go, ‘I hadn’t really thought about it that way’...is pretty amazing” (personal communication, July 2013). Another remarked how you have to stay in tune with your students when lecturing; “you don’t want to lose eye contact... It’s just like a tiny bit of shuffling, a tiny bit of inattention, you can just tell when you’ve got them and you can tell when you haven’t got them” (personal communication, September 2013). The professors all wanted to challenge their students and see the learning through the eyes of their students.

There was a deep desire to have students walk away with knowledge that changed them somehow. “You love what you do, you really want to reach out [to] them, but the real... the best, the passion, or the enthusiasm the way I see it is, taking what you love and having them learn it in such a way that they love it, too” (personal communication, July 2013). They had a strong desire to show students the passion through the subject so that it related to their students in real life.

Failing a student is often a tough part of teaching. Many of the passionate professors said they would reach out to an underachieving student numerous times and various ways before having to fail them. The passionate professors again value learning and the student experience. For them, reflecting on why that particular student was not achieving or “getting the material” was the important factor; the passionate professor wants to reach out to the student to assist them in understanding the material. But, even having to fail a student, one professor remarked how it might have changed that student and hopefully it was a learning moment for him or her.

I really hate having students fail. I hate having them fail. I hate watching their faces. I hate what it does to them...I wonder sometimes when I look back at teaching so many years what happened to some of the students that failed in my class. I think that must have a huge impact on the student’s lives. Maybe sometimes it’s a good one, maybe sometimes we need to fail...I don’t want it to be on my watch if I can help that (personal communication, September 2013).



## Professional Growth

This theme emerged as the professors all expressed their own desire to change and keep up with current trends and technology in the classroom. All the professors remarked how keeping up with technology and trends were important to their own professional growth as professors. Many used i>clickers and other technological tools to invoke critical thinking and involve the students with their lessons. “Bringing things that are relevant to the students” is an important aspect of teaching, shared one professor (personal communication, July 2013). “I was not real good at clickers the first time or the second time; I think I’m getting better at it now” stated one professor who uses i>clickers almost daily to find out where and how the students are getting the material presented (personal communication, September 2013). These technological tools, specifically interactive technology, help the professors understand how the students are learning. The i>clickers let them text up to sixteen character answers as well as numeric answers to questions. “I’m not sure who brought the idea of interactive technology to my attention, but I thought, yes, that would be cool, I’d like to get more out of them” (personal communication, September 2013).

Another way the professors keep up to date is using videos and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) to engage their students. To learn these tools often takes a lot of time and energy. One professor maintains a website devoted to articles, videos and other helpful items for his students. He taught himself web design to help create a meaningful website devoted to student learning. The information presented on the website is from questions students have posed during classes. “Every time a student asks a meaningful question...I tell the students these are all from students asking a

question...all my learning needs are based on student questions” (personal communication, July 2013). He often encourages students to “Google” him to learn more about his interests and who he is as a professor. They will then find the learning pages he has created based on what students have asked and taught him. In addition to the student questions, he has podcasts, YouTube videos, links to research, and much more on his website. Another professor uses multimedia in all aspects of his lectures. Loud music and entertaining videos help relay meaningful and unforgettable topic and content to his students. “I think that sort of emotionality and the incorporation of these visual aids really helps to drive home to the students that this is something I ...have great emotion and great intensity for” (personal communication, September 2013). He described having a library of videos and clips on his home computer that he uses and updates frequently for specific topics and/or lectures;

I found it’s important for me to put that extra time in, to find these visual aids and to bring in new content that the students are bringing to me. That’s actually been one of the areas that has been very rewarding to me (personal communication, September 2013).

The discussion around whether passion is innate or learned sparked much debate and reflection within the professors. For some, the desire to teach was a career goal from a young age. “I always wanted to be a teacher. I always admired my teachers. I adored them and completely looked up to them” (personal communication, July 2013). Often playing “school” with their siblings and friends to attending graduate school in hopes of teaching in higher education or K-12, the professors felt that their passion for reaching students and learning was innate in who they were growing up. Another expressed it as a

“love” of the topic; “I always love what I teach” (personal communication, July 2013).

Many expressed that a professor must like his or her topic enough to show the passion for that topic and their student; it is something that comes from within the professor and can't be learned or taught. “You've got to love the topic...you've got to love people, working with people...you've got to love teaching the topic you love to the people you want to help” (personal communication, July 2013). One professor described his passionate teaching as purely innate. “I think we can teach people and train people to do anything, but I think you have to have an innate sense of passion for your subject in order for it to come across...I don't think you can learn the spark” (personal communication, September 2013).

Some professors thought it was innate but could also be learned. One professor remarked that she is typically an introvert and works hard to be natural at teaching, a fairly extroverted act. “It's kind of like gambling the first couple of times I taught; I was lucky and I was pretty successful” so she kept teaching (personal communication, September 2013). She got better and better as time progressed. They remarked that often developing their style took time and effort. This learning curve was often with the assistance and direction of mentors and other professors during their undergraduate and graduate years in school. One professor explained, “It's sort of an adaptation of methods and attitudes and styles of presentation, then channeled through your own personality I'd say” (personal communication, September 2013).

## Style

The teaching style of each professor stood out as unique and developed over time. Their style is often what ignited the passion the students saw in their teaching. For the students, their style helped increase the interest in the topic areas. Through entertainment, stories and humor, professors' passion encouraged students to learn. For the professors, their teaching style was a developed technique which continued to grow and change each year. The professors often used humor, told stories, made connections to pop culture, and used technology to reach their students. In addition, their own flair and style added to what made each of these professors unique.

Through humor and stories, the passion for their students and topic was evident. "I think if they laugh they remember things a bit better" (personal communication, July 2013). One professor liked to joke with the students, "In some of my classes I'll joke with the students and say, 'I'm not a television.' I need some response, I need for you to go, 'oh yes' or 'no, I don't understand this' or whatever" (personal communication, September 2013). Storytelling is a unique way to entertain the students infused or hidden with a learning moment. "I notice when you do tell a story, they do get really...it captures them. It captures them right away" (personal communication, July 2013). For one professor, using i>clickers technology helped infuse humor into his lecture; he had them answer a question and as the results popped up he said "some of you are getting it right and you'll see the votes start to change...okay, no, okay and you're getting it more right, and this flood towards the correct answer" (personal communication, September 2013).

For one particular professor, his style was unique to his own background and techniques. “I always believe that you become the passion, that when you teach...you become whatever you’re teaching” (personal communication, July 2013). His past experience in gymnastics and pantomime helped him master the control of his body which enables him to be extremely expressive during his lectures. “If teachers would be willing, I think a pantomime [class] would be...wonderful in helping them bring out the physical part of movement that you can incorporate in teaching.” He uses hand gestures and experiential activities to get his students moving. One exercise he used actually has the students acting out a molecule and its complicated pathways; “probably the best teaching thing I’ve done ever is with some pathways, they’re so complicated that I have the students get in front, and we act out the pathway.” Another professor adds pictures and funny videos into his PowerPoint presentations to remind himself “to shut up for a few minutes, let the kids think about what’s going on, think about what they’ve just heard and it gives me a chance to reset and re-engage them” as needed (personal communication, September 2013).

Another unique way to interact with students is to learn from them. One professor tries to learn one thing that is personal to the student. “I always want to know something, movies that they like, languages that they speak...one year I had students send me a picture of something important in their lives” (personal communication, September 2013). This particular professor shared that she wants her students to know that she is interested in them – as students and as individuals. She hopes this next year to ask students to share a photo of “how they study at home, where they study, what they

think of when they think of the work that they do at home. To try and get a sense of what they are doing, where they are and what it's like for them to study and work.”

Another professor shared that he is “kind of a ham. It comes pretty naturally to want to go out there and get them excited and engaged and turned on to the subject” (personal communication, September 2013). He really looks at how his body language, his tones and attentiveness engage with the students. He often acts out historical figures and speeches, taking on voices and tones to illustrate points made by historical figures. He continually asks himself, “what can I do to make this more affective, more rewarding, etc.” He further states, “in terms of my personal presentation style and character, I don't like to be bored” (personal communication, July 2013). So, he tries to make it interesting and regularly checks in with students to make sure the topics and content are understood.

Lastly, using relevant pop culture analogies and metaphors add to their style and the students' engagement of the material being presented. “Little funny analogies and connections with movies” (personal communication, July 2013) illustrate the professor's ability to relate. “I haven't gotten so much into Breaking Bad, but I get a lot of questions about that” one professor remarked (personal communication, July 2013). She explained how other science teachers used the Breaking Bad series to illustrate scientific principles and theories; “I kind of emphasize how you try to relate to students keeping something that is part of their daily lives. A lot of people now everywhere you go all they care about is Breaking Bad” (personal communication, July 2013); the students were interested in that series so it came out in the classroom. “I think that's a big part of my passion...bringing things that are relevant to the students” (personal communication, July, 2013).

## **Emotional Connection**

For students, knowing a professor cares about them as a student shows their passion for teaching them. For the professors, showing they care is part of the position of being a professor in higher education. “You can't fake caring. But I think more than anything, if a professor shows he or she cares, the student reads it” (personal communication, July 2013). The student survey conveyed the emotional connection to students as being attentive to their needs, understanding, wanting them to succeed and learn, liking what they teach and knowing their students. For the passionate professors, seeing the students’ success, their learning and growing through the curriculum depicts the emotional connection that created this theme.

For one professor, her passion is not about the subject, “it’s because I’m passionate about what happens to them as human beings. I care about that a great deal” (personal communication, September 2013). As reflected in the previous mentioned themes, the passionate professors all display an interest in their students. They want to see them succeed. They want to see an interest and spark from them on the topics they teach. “We could have a huge impact on their lives. It’s an honor and it’s a responsibility and I’m passionate about having them feel competent and excited about learning at the end of the class” (personal communication, September 2013).

I think it's that one extra thing that makes the difference between a class being acceptable and being outstanding. So, I would say that if somebody had the same infrastructure and same exact policies and blah, blah, blah, but they maybe didn't quite sell the material as much, it would be an acceptable class. The students would probably be okay with it, but I don't think they would really, really get into

it. I think with just a little bit more enthusiasm they feel like you want to be there and you can convey that to them I think it really makes for a much more pleasant classroom and I think when you show them you're giving them that much then they often feel compelled, I think to give back too. I'm hoping that's part of it (personal communication, July 2013).

Being present and showing your passion to the students is one of the techniques these passionate professors displayed.

The other, I think, thing worth thinking about is that the actual experience of being in a classroom with an actual, real life person is important. ... While you're actually in the room with somebody, take advantage of the fact that there's so much non-verbal communication going on. Use that to your advantage, don't just stand still and talk at them. That's just sad (personal communication, September 2013).

Students feel the passion and translate that passion into caring and concern for them as students. Many of the professors shared how students came back and reconnected with them. One professor shared how a student invited her to his wedding years later; while another student came back to share his newly adorned tattoo with her. Having students re-engage or stay connected translated that the professors somehow made a difference to that student.

Whether it was the care and concern shown to the students or the interest in them as individuals, students could feel the passion from the professors. The professors all remarked that it was unique techniques and tools they used and honed over the years to



develop who they were as teachers. As one professor summed up, “Because [we are] inspiring our students that education is something that is exciting, and it's lifelong, and it's continued...and to me, the heroes in the classroom are the students” (personal communication, July 2013).

### **Observation Themes**

Phenomenological research relies on gathering information “through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)” (Lester, 1999, p.1). By observing the passionate professors as an observer participant while they taught a class, the researcher was able to gather the in-depth observation into the phenomenon of passion. Careful analysis of the observation notes produced the following themes:

- Student as learners
- Openness/approachability
- Humor
- Style

### **Students as Learners**

Each observed professor used open ended questions, reflective exercises and “check in” times to make sure the students understood the material presented. The open ended questions included “Why is this important?” “What does this mean today?” “Why is this relevant?” and “Why do we need to know this?” Students always raised their hands to answer. There was not one professor who did not check in with his or her

students nor had any silence upon checking in. Students were comfortable to offer their explanations or ask for clarification.

Many professors used creative reflective exercises to illustrate their knowledge of the concepts being presented. One professor had the large, 120 student class break into small groups to complete exercises around the topic she just presented. The students would then come to the front of the class to share their answers with the professor. She would then award them points for participation. Another professor also broke up his large class, 225 students, into small groups. They too had to work on questions together while he walked around to listen and assist each group. Both professors walked around and offered suggestions, non-verbal head shakes, laughter and insight on their assignments. Another professor had his students reflect on their test taking abilities. After passing back their first exams, he asked them to reflect on the back of their exams first, how they think they did, secondly, how they could improve and finally, what they would do differently on the next exam in terms of preparedness. This same professor allows the students to explain their answers on exams in case their explanation made sense and they just inferred the question differently than he intended. He labeled this “Individual Intellectualism” (personal observation, September 2013).

Often the professors would remark and share learning strategies with the class. One particular professor shared how to look at the databases in a way as to not get confused. She said it wasn’t a technique, but something she does to not mix things up. This technique made the professor “human” and relatable. She was sharing her own learning skills in hopes the students might benefit from her stumbles. As stated earlier, many professors offered unique workshops and study sessions for their students before

tests or large projects. They would promote this during class and make sure students knew this was a time to come and learn.

### **Openness/Approachability**

All the passionate professors in this study had an openness and approachability that made them stand out. They all came to class early and had small conversations with their students. They called them by name; they related to them. One professor inquired about a test in a previous class; another professor answered questions from the students. Students laughed with them. Some told them stories that related to previous class examples. It was very evident the professors were here and present for the students.

As students worked in small groups in many of the classes, the professor would walk around and ask questions, check their work, assess their ideas, offer suggestions and always praise. Positive reinforcement was used with every professor. If a student raised his or her hand to answer or ask a question, the professor would always give positive reinforcement to the student; “nice job;” “good question;” and “excellent.” One professor walked around the large lecture hall and made sure to smile, nod, listen, laugh or just lean in which reflected his interest and attentiveness to the students.

### **Humor**

Every passionate professor used humor in his or her lectures. They all tried to relate and often laughed at themselves in the process. Students responded to the professor through laughing, sharing and participating. Two of the male professors both had a theatrical flair, often using character voices to portray their points. Another professor used jokes to get her students going: “It’s a good thing I had my morning

coffee” (personal observation, September 2013) as they were dealing with number and equations that day. Students responded by laughing and clapping.

Even when calling on students, the professors used names and humor; “I’m going to be mean and call on you ‘Bob’” (personal observation, September 2013). One professor even had fun rules: if someone’s cell phone went off during class, he or she had to bring snacks the next time class met. The class teased and laughed when she thought she heard a cell phone by making snack requests out loud to the individual whose cell phone was ringing.

Another professor had loud music blaring as students walked in prior to class starting. He had funny sayings, updates, announcements and an ethical question pertaining to that day’s lesson on the screen in the front of the auditorium style lecture hall. He had a puzzle on the screen which he began that days lesson announcing “this puzzle will take 16 years to finish” (personal observation, October 2013). The class laughed.

## **Style**

Each professor had a unique style. Whether it was fun and exciting to quiet and steady, these passionate professors exuded confidence in their teaching ability. All the professors depicted the previously mentioned themes: students as learners, humor and approachability. Yet, their styles were all their own.

One professor, Wanda, used blackboards to illustrate her points. She had models and diagrams which she illustrated. She had a quiet demeanor, but used humor that was relevant to today’s student demographics. Students were quiet when listening to her for

she was soft spoken. Another professor, Steve, was on a stage in the front of his class; he used fun voices, relevant examples from today's celebrities to illustrate points that were from the 1800's. Ken had a microphone and a pointer. He walked up and down and continually moved around the classroom. He often infused his lectures with stories and examples from his class; he used a student athlete long distance running example to illustrate his point as many in his class were athletes. Olivia walked up and down aisles, often having to step over backpacks, coats and other debris in the aisles to reach students. She often used humor. Technology was important to her; many students in her class had laptops and she illustrated all her points on two screens which displayed her work via her own spreadsheets. She was quick to lend a smile and an encouraging word to all her students. Jack was the one instructor who was a lot of flash, videos and music. His lecture hall was loud, although his demeanor and presence was not. He used humor; he engaged the class through questions and stories.

All the students in each class were interested, engaged and participated. Many students had laptops or I pads. As an observer, it was noted that none of the students within the observer's view were on other non-academic pages (Facebook, Instagram, email, etc.). They were clearly engaged with the lecture and taking notes. The professor had their attention.

### **Focus Group**

For the student survey, as analyzed previously, one of the questions asked if the student was willing to participate in a focus group. This focus group was to "check in" with the students on the themes that emerged from the data. Participants were chosen

using Random.org website to create a random order of numbers to pick focus group participants. Invitations were sent out to 25 students. Three students showed up for the focus group. This is a small sample for the focus group; it may not be reliable. The focus group participants were given handouts which were collected at the end (see appendix G). The focus group lasted exactly an hour. All three participants were actively engaged in the focus group. The three participants were all female. As shown in Table 4, two were senior class ranking and one was a junior.

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Class Level	Age
<b>Francis</b>	Hispanic/Native American	Female	Junior	18
<b>Pamela</b>	Hispanic	Female	Senior at time of survey – graduate student now	39
<b>Wendi</b>	Black	female	Senior	21

Table 4: Focus Group

The student participants agreed with all the themes as presented. One remarked, she liked the theme of enthusiasm; “I like the enthusiasm. That’s like, my favorite. And you could tell when somebody just has that enthusiasm about the subjects that they teach compared to somebody who doesn’t. It makes a big difference. It really does” (personal communication, November 2013). Another remarked about having professors who are inspiring;

Well, I think, too, it goes when I hear inspire - I was a little bit confused about which direction I wanted to go in my life and I think seeing someone as a role model, you know your professors are. Somebody who loves doing what they're doing inspires you to try to figure it out because you do want that. And when you really do love doing what you're doing, which is teaching and sharing your

knowledge with others and helping others and all of that, it just... It comes out. Even if you don't know all the answers. Like, you don't hide behind the paper. 'I'll get back to you...' I think it's really loving to teach what makes somebody - of course, yes the subject always helps - if they enjoy the subject, but they love doing what they're doing and sharing with others and that makes a big difference. I think that's what contributes as well to being a passionate teacher (personal communication, November 2013).

The theme of emotional connection particularly stood out for this group of students. Each of the students shared a story about the impact a professor made on them early on in their college years and even today. One student shared how one professor told the class that she would learn everyone's name; "And, she did, and we're in a big auditorium" (personal communication, November 2013). She elaborated how much this meant to her as student and how it showed she cared;

I saw her two days ago on campus. Not even close to where my classroom is and it wasn't even a day that I had her class and I walked past her and she stopped and she was like 'Hi, [Tammy]!' And I'm like 'Hi [Joanna]!' And she's like 'You weren't in class, are you OK?' And I'm like 'Yeah, I'm fine. I had a doctor's appointment.' And she's like 'Oh, well, I hope I see you tomorrow.' And then she kept walking...I think that's one of the things that makes you want to go to class. It's like she cares. She noticed I wasn't there. And it wasn't like she was like, 'Oh, you weren't in class yesterday, what were you doing?' It was like she was genuinely concerned that I was OK. And I see that every time I go to class. If

someone's not there, she will go through all of us asking how our day was...  
(personal communication, November 2013).

Caring was a theme that resonated with all of them. Feeling a professor cares for them as a student was important. One remarked how the professor asks them their career aspirations for after graduation. "It makes you feel important. You're not just another person" (personal communication, November 2013). They aligned student centeredness with care and concern. One student shared a story of a professor who was a great researcher and professor. He won a large grant, but turned it down as he wanted to stay teaching that semester; the students were shocked and realized how much he cared about them; "you really do care about us" (personal communication, November, 2013).

Another theme that struck a chord with this focus group was Professional Growth. Knowing that the professors learn from the students as much as the students learn from the professors was important to them. "I think what makes an impression so great is that they are so committed to teaching you and helping you learn but at the same time they're so open to learning things from the students" (personal communication, November, 2013).

The focus group honed in on the question: Is passion innate or learned?

I want to say it's innate but not teaching per se is innate. I feel like teaching is something that can be learned and you can do it well even if you're like "I hate this, I hate this..." but outwardly you are a really good teacher... There is something in people that gives their innate qualities to make them a really great teacher or professor or mom or dad or whatever. And I think that's something that



we're born with. And I think that's what guides us to do what we really do well.  
(personal communication, November 2013).

But, as for passion in teaching, the group agreed that teaching passionately was innate. Their comments mainly focused on how teaching techniques can be taught, but passion is something that is in a person or innate to whom they are as a professor.

I don't know though if you could teach passion to somebody. I think you either have it for something or you don't. I definitely think that you could teach someone the skills of how to be a teacher and to instruct and stuff like that, but... Like my daughter, she has this love and passion for science. She didn't get that from me! When she talks about it, you see it in her face. I mean, she loves it. Say she wanted to teach it, and then to be effective, she would have to learn the skill. So, I think that it comes from both. I think that the passion is just something that's innate in you. You're born with it. You find something that you love and you're passionate about it. It's part of who you are (personal communication, November 2013).

Another insightful student comment regarding passion in teaching was:

[if] you sat ten random strangers in your room and you tried to teach them... I think the thing that would stand out is - they have to want to do it. You can't sit someone down who is absolutely introvert - does not like being around people - and teach them how to be passionate because I don't think it's something they can learn unless they really want to (personal communication, November 2013).

Although the students did not mention the style of the professors, the student's stories turned to sharing the funny and memorable things their professors did in class. Two students had the same professor and shared, while laughing, how he would pass around rocks to lick. He would ask "anyone else can lick it if they want. And he's passing all these rocks around the class. I licked it because I didn't care. This is what this type of rock is [a salt rock]" (personal communication, November 2013). Their style made them remember qualities about the class. The group shared how the things professors do in the class, often through humor, helps them remember the topics. Another student shared how her professor "has all this stuff in his office for his work and what he does and he brings it in all the time...We're learning about clouds and he brings in liquid nitrogen and he just throws it on the floor and he's like 'this is condensation'" (personal communication, November 2013). These techniques and tools help the students remember, and even years later, these students recalled the concepts from the topic.

In the end, the students agreed with the themes presented. One student summed up her experience eloquently:

People ask me, why are you in college? I'm in college to learn not to educate. I'm here to learn as much as I can so that when I go out into the world I'm not just 'Oh yeah, I went to college.' Everyone goes to college nowadays. Literally everyone does. It's about what you learned while you were there (personal communication, November 2013).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the themes that emerged from the student survey, the individual interviews with the passionate professors, the observations of the passionate professors and the focus group with students. The analysis of the data presented the following themes:

### **Student Survey Themes:**

*Question 1:* Emotional Connection, Student Centered, and Learner Centered

*Question 2:* Inspire, Help, Challenge, Increase Interest, Motivate, Increase Confidence as a Student, Teaching Style and Respect for the professor

**Professor Interview Themes:** Student Centered, Professional Growth, Teaching Style, and Emotional Connection

**Professor Observation Themes:** Student as Learners, Openness and Approachability, Humor and Teaching Style

The passionate professors complemented the themes found from the student survey data. Each passionate professor had a distinct style which encouraged inspiration, challenges, motivation and often increased the interest of the students for that field of study. The passionate professors used a number of tools to connect to the students which again led to inspiration and increased interest. All the professors had a strong desire to reach their students, therefore each professor tried to keep up with his or her students in terms of relevant trends and pop culture (Television, movies, social networking, etc.).

The following chapter presents the summary, conclusion and the implications of this research study. This chapter will conclude the findings of the study as well as provide an overview of how the emergent themes relate to the literature review. The chapter will conclude with the limitations of the findings and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter Five (5): Summary, Conclusion and Future Research**

This chapter will provide a summary of the findings from Chapter IV, a conclusion and implications for further research. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?**
- 2. How is the passion experienced by the student?**
- 3. Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor?**
- 4. According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?**
- 5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?**

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the research questions in relation to the emergent themes. As with phenomenological studies, this research is an “attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations” (Bogden and Biklen, 2007, p. 25). This study is a glimpse into the phenomenon of passion through the eyes of the professors as identified by the students. The essence of the study is the passion of the professors; yet, the student’s perspectives provided rich and detailed insight and correlation to the data gathered through the professor’s interviews and observations. This triangulation of data provided a rich and detailed experience of passion in teaching and the essence of that passion in higher education.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **The Student Survey**

Two hundred fifty nine sophomores, junior or senior undergraduate students responded to the student survey. The student survey consisted of four (4) questions: 1) Do you know a professor that could be defined as a “passionate professor”? Then, space to write in the name of the professor and class. 2) If yes, what characteristics make them passionate? 3) Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How? 4) Lastly, would you be willing to participate in a one-hour focus group to review the findings regarding what makes a passionate professor?

Due to the rich and detailed qualitative data which emerged from the students, the researcher analyzed the data from their responses. The following themes emerged from each of the qualitative questions:

### **Student Survey Themes:**

*Question 1:* Emotional Connection, Student Centered, and Learner Centered

*Question 2:* Inspire, Help, Challenge, Increase Interest, Motivate, Increase Confidence as a Student, Teaching Style and Respect for the Professor

The student themes presented an inside view of the importance of passion in teaching to the students. Students shared how their professors displayed passion while teaching. The passion depicted an emotional connection to the subject, to teaching and to the students. The passionate professors showed a love of their field of study and a strong love for students. Through their passion, students felt the passionate professors were

enthusiastic and excited to be in the classroom teaching the subject to the students. The passionate professors were student centered; this was illustrated through their show of care and concern for the student's welfare and learning; they expressed an understanding for them as students; the professors also showed positivity and motivation through the subject being taught. Professors had a strong knowledge of their topic and always infused humor in their lessons. In addition, students felt the passionate professors were interested in the students actually learning the topic. They would challenge them to know and understand the topic. Often these themes were shown through professors checking in with the students, asking them how they were doing, knowing their names and generally showing their interest in the student.

Students also described how the passion displayed in their classrooms helped the students' overall learning experience. The professors were inspiring, motivational and increased their interest in the topic. For some, the increased interest further validated their selected major or career path. Their teaching style helped students feel motivated to come to class, complete assignments and study hard. Many remarked the passion the professors exhibited in class created a respect for the professor and their profession. Lastly, this respect for the professor, their motivation, inspiration, and style increased their confidence as a student. Students remarked they had been questioning continuing in higher education until their passionate professor changed their minds. The passionate professor made such an impact on the students, some even changed their majors or career paths. They were true role models for the students.

Although the data and themes collected from the students were not initially anticipated as significant to the study, after coding the data and categorizing "in order to

develop researcher-generated theoretical constructs” (Saldana, 2013, p. 179), the student’s insights further corroborated the professor’s interview data on passion in teaching. Their data proved to be significant and valuable to understanding the phenomenon and importance of passion in teaching.

### **The Professors**

Seven professors emerged as eligible for the study. Six professors were interviewed and five professors were observed. One professor never responded after repeated invitations to participate. One professor was not able to participate in the observation part of the study as he encountered a family emergency and left for the semester. The semi-structured interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes in length.

The themes which emerged from the semi-structured interviews were student centered, professional growth, teaching style and emotional connection. The observation themes tied together with the previous themes: student as learners, openness and approachability, humor and teaching style.

The professors all spoke about their connection to the students. Each professor had a strong desire to make sure students succeeded not only in their class, but continued on in their career path. They wanted to instill strong critical thinking skills, lifelong learning skills and bring their topic of interest to light for their students. One professor spoke about empowering his students; another spoke about the importance of getting to know her students. The professors would often extend their time on campus to meet the needs of their students by holding special study sessions after hours or on weekends. They wanted students to feel connected to them as professors. The professors spoke about



the need to “read” their students and understand when they have lost them or when they are really getting it. They wanted to challenge students to think outside the classroom and get excited about the topic. One professor shared how difficult it is to have a student fail and what it might do to them in the future. She related how difficult it is to do this, even though she knows it could be a learning moment for them as a student.

The professional growth and development of the professor was explored as each professor remarked how they enjoy keeping their lessons fresh and updated. They like to keep up with today’s students through interactive technology, YouTube, Social Networking and pop culture, such as television shows and movies. Many addressed the ability to utilize the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are hot topics in higher education now. Some addressed them as the “fad” of our time. Another indicated he would like to use them as he would use a visiting guest speaker by inviting the MOOC in during his lectures and class time. Another professor taught himself web design in order to create a meaningful resource website for his students. He continually strived to learn more about web design in order to meet the changing technology advancements and needs of today’s students.

As the student data revealed, each professor commented on his or her style of teaching. It was something developed over time. Each of the passionate professors remarked how they change and adapt over the years. Often, it was their humor and the stories they told that seemed to stand out in their eyes as to what captures their students. Humor often brought the students together in the learning process. Learning was fun and should be fun. Some of the professors were dramatic and theatrical using voices, character role plays, music and videos to illustrate their lessons. Others pulled in

humorous stories and jokes relevant to their topics. One professor spoke about his background in pantomime and gymnastics as adding to his style of teaching; he uses his hands and body as well as verbal communication to illustrate points. All the professors spoke about how they learn from the students each year. They learned how to explain things in different ways; they learned what is important to them; they learned about them.

Emotional connection to the students was very evident in all the passionate professors. The passionate professors all depicted a sense of caring and commitment to their students. They expressed how you have to care about the student, about education and about the topic. One professor remarked how she felt honored to make such an impact on their lives. Education is important. One professor shared his views on being present in the classroom versus online teaching. Although he has not taught an online course, he feels the non-verbal communication in the classroom setting is an important part of showing who you are as a professor and also showing how much you care for them and their learning as a student. For all the professors, the value of education and the commitment of bringing that value to the students were evident in their interviews.

Observing the professors gave the researcher insight into the phenomenon of passion in teaching as experienced by the students. The emergent themes were: student as learners, openness and approachability, humor and teaching style.

Again, the themes overlapped those themes found in the student survey and the professors' interview data. While observing the passionate professors, the researcher experienced the professors' desire to translate the topic material into something manageable and meaningful to the students in the class. By checking in regularly to

make sure there were no questions or confusion on the lesson plan, students felt the professor really wanted them to understand the material. In addition, all the professors gave positive reinforcement to the class through affirmations, such as “way to go,” “great answer,” and “perfect.” Even if a student did not answer correctly, the professor would remark, “Good try” and then try and explain how to think about it in a different way.

In each of the observed classroom experiences, students participated by asking questions, submitting comments, and answering questions. There was never a silent audience when a question was posed by the professor. In addition, students were paying attention. Lap tops and iPads were open and note taking was commencing; the researcher did not see any student looking at other sites on line, such as social networking or email. Students could approach the professors and ask questions. Before each class began, students gathered around each of the professors asking questions, checking in and for some, just chatting with the professor. There was an openness and personality to their classroom. They were approachable to the students. As a researcher, I found myself participating in all their classes. I learned new concepts and terms in subjects unrelated to my own studies. I wanted to participate.

All the professors used humor in their lectures. They often teased and joked with their students. Many professors pulled in current television shows or movies to illustrate points in humorous ways. They often pointed the finger humorously at themselves and pointed out mistakes they made or referenced stories in humorous and memorable ways. This again, was echoed by the students in the focus group. Humor plays a unique role in connecting to the students and connecting the students to the topics and material discussed in classes.

The professors' style again reflected who they were and only added to the strength of their passion as shown in the classroom. Each professor had his or her own style. As stated earlier, some were loud, music blaring, videos playing, while others were more traditional and subdued; each style played upon the strengths of that individual professor. They all were passionate, but their modes of passion were different and unique.

The observational themes further validated the professor interview themes and the student survey themes. All the themes folded nicely together to create an intricate design of what passion means to higher education.

### **Themes as Related to Literature Review**

While conducting the literature review, the amount of information on passion in teaching was abundant for the K-12 profession, yet there was limited research on passion in teaching for higher education. When looking back at the literature review and the common themes which emerged from the literature, there are distinct similarities when compared to the emergent themes from this study.

As higher education continues to evolve over time, there is a renewed focus on the adult student learner. More specifically, colleges and universities are focusing on the challenges of adult education and the changes with technology. Many schools are experiencing the hardships of justifying the pursuit and value of education in these changing times. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are offered to individuals at no cost from many schools. Online learning options for degree seeking students are increasing in numbers. The face of higher education is changing. The professors interviewed all addressed concerns and comments around this changing environment.

Technology was a common thread among the professors when addressing the needs of this generation (“Digital Natives” (Prensky, 2001, p.1) or millennial generation) of adult learners. Many of the professors used i>clickers or were intending to use them in the future. Some professors used social media, including Facebook and Twitter. “This summer I twittered with students out of class and they all had me on Twitter. I’m going to do that more. I’m excited about Twittering, because that’s just a fast way in the business world for them to keep up with what’s going on” (personal communication, September 2013). Professors used multimedia, music and technology to supplement their lectures and teaching styles in order to reach the students. As Roehling (2010) discussed, professors must engage this generation of students by embracing the ever present technology, entertainment and social interactions of this group of students.

These styles all kept the students engaged, challenged and committed to their academic success as evidenced through the observations as well as the student survey data. “I love going to class, and even when I don’t want to, he makes it worth my time that I did” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). As Kenneth Feldman (1988) found in his study on college teaching, students place an importance on “teachers being interesting and having good elocutionary skills” (p.313). Another student remarked, “it really helped me to not give up...he’s one of the few teachers I’ve met that I felt were more focused on getting kids to LEARN the material” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). This interest in the class only further challenged the students to learn. “I probably know Ochem [Organic Chemistry] more than any other subject because of her drive to teach...could not have done it without her” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). Students reflected time and again

how the challenge of the class was inspirational and increased their interest in the subject matter. “I actually wanted to come to class every week and I worked hard on the homework because I enjoyed learning about it;” another remarked: “I was excited to go to class;” and lastly, one shared that the professor “made me invest more time in and out of the classroom and I became interested in what I was learning and in my education” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

The theoretical framework for this study was Jack Mezirow’s (2000) transformative adult learning theory. The idea that learning occurs through the experiences and changes of opinions, values and belief systems in the adult student learner through the courses taught by the professors was depicted through the findings of this study. The rich detail of the students’ themes only enhanced their desire to learn, to be challenged and to be successful in their classes. Students remarked how the passion displayed from the professors enhanced their desire to learn more about their subjects or related subjects. Often times, it solidified their majors, their careers or even for some increased their confidence as a student. In addition, the professors commented on their desire to see students be successful and understand the subject matter. It was often hard for them to see students fail or not be successful during their classes.

Success means totally different things to these different students. For some, it's I want to pass. For some, it's I want an A+ and you have to deal with the extremes and all the way in between whether they're devastated for not passing. You have to turn it into a life-learning experience for them no matter what it is, whether it's failure or success for them or you (personal communication, July 2013).

The passionate professors strive to challenge and to motivate the learning process in their students. “I really want to physically change their brains. I really want that to be the core of the success” (personal communication, July 2013). It is taking that “frame of reference” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8) in the transformative process and altering or challenging it. At times, for many students their world view is changed. They become the critical reflectors of their own world. They start to form their own perspectives from their own values and belief systems. Fried (1995) described this change as having a “lasting and positive impact on their lives” (p. 27-8). Students have the self-efficacy and self-ego to question and learn from passionate professors. It is a “general expectation that they can do it; they know they can and they know that I’m going to support them along the way. Seeing their attitudes change and they grow up over the course of that year” (personal communication, July 2013) is important to the passionate professors. One student summed up the transformative process she experienced: “His [professor] passion makes me want to ask questions and deepen my understanding. I feel connected to the subject and I feel that I am part of a larger learning community” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013).

The literature presented some stylistic themes, including teaching with presence, self-awareness and authenticity. These themes again were seen as very important to both the students and the professors. Kornelsen (2006) described presence as being “real” with the students, being part of their academic learning journey, and not just teaching a pre-set curriculum that they have taught for the past 10 years. “She always taught with a smile on her face like she wasn’t at work, but just talking to a group of people about something she knew” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). For

one professor, teaching in the moment is what makes his connection to the students real. “I think that sort of emotionality and the incorporation of these visual aids really helps to drive home to the students that this is something I...have great emotion and great intensity for” (personal communication, September, 2013). This presence often helps build the relationship between the student and the professor. Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) and Jerry Farber (2008) shared that the relationship is key for the student to feel connected to the material. They all concurred that to be fully present means often times checking in with the students. This checking in was very evident through all the interviewed professors. During their classes, they often paused and asked questions of the students to make sure they understand the material being presented. One professor spoke about how he uses i>clickers to get a “feel” for the students learning the material. “Are they actually getting what I think they’re getting? Is this sinking in?” (personal communication, September 2013).

For all the professors there was self-awareness and an authenticity to their teaching. This was evident in the student comments, but also seen through the humbleness of their interviews and through the observations of their classes. Students stated how their passion was illustrated through their actions and words. “He gets very passionate about something and he will almost scream;” and “[he] always comes to class prepared” illustrated how passion was displayed by the professors in the classroom (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). When discussing the research question of whether their passion was innate or learned, all the professors appeared a bit humble in the recognition from their students of their passion. “I had no idea that I would be at all good being a teacher” (personal communication, July 2013).



Fried (2001) explained that “passion, uncomfortable as the word may sound, is at the heart of what teaching is and should be” (p. 6). They all felt they learned as they progressed through their teaching careers. Palmer (1998) and Fried (1995a) both stated that professors are more than techniques and that there is a need to explore who we are as educators.

All, as discussed previously, have utilized technological tools more in their classes; many of the professors have changed stylistically over time developing their strengths as professors. One professor shared his tools and techniques, but was quick to remark how he wanted to do more storytelling; “I’ll use storytelling...I’m glad you brought that up...because I think I would like to do more storytelling, because I notice when you do tell a story...it captures them. It captures them right away” (personal communication, July 2013). The passionate professors were open and inviting on sharing ideas, tools and techniques. Many remarked how they keep up with trade journals, conferences and colleagues on new ideas for their teaching. This dedication to the profession further highlighted the passion they have for their fields – and for their own self-awareness as passionate professors.

Dirkx (2006) and Palmer (1998) refer to this self-awareness as “soul work.” Technique can be learned. But, who you are as a professor takes time, growth and exploration. Fried (1995a) referred to it more existentially. One knows passion when it happens. “It is a teacher’s passion that leaps out” (p. 160). The idea of understanding who you are as a professor and how that relates to your teaching and to your students is critical in maintaining your passion in your profession. When observing all the passionate professors in this study, the passion did leap out. It was evident.

In addition, the passionate professors wanted to be “real” to the students. Often times the self-awareness leads to this being “real” characteristic. This authenticity shined through for all the professors. “I guess I kind of wonder if I reveal too much of myself, but I want them to know that I’m human too. I’m going to make mistakes just like they are and they are free to point them out and I always own up to it” (personal communication, July 2013). This was expressed by Cranton and Carusetta (2004) who looked at a group of identified authentic teachers. They described it as bringing yourself into the classroom. An authentic teacher “is more likely to bring himself or herself as a person into the classroom, be passionate about teaching, know his or her preferred teaching style and see teaching as a vocation” (p. 19). Another professor shared how he continually learns new information on his topics. “I tell the students in my big classes today, I’ve been studying this for many years and I’m still baffled by some of it” (personal communication, July 2013). He normalized what some of the students might be feeling around the subject area. One professor shared how he often feels a bit of insecurity when teaching a new topic area; “I’m always afraid a student’s going to ask a question I don’t really know...it humbles you” (personal communication, July 2013). Being able to always have the answer is a high order in a world where answers can be found on phones and computers. He further explained how he is more confident with the topics he knows really well, but likes the challenge of new topics and subject areas within his field. But for the students, this authenticity was expressed through the professors’ genuineness, understanding, caring and humor in the classroom. One student shared: “Her professionalism, authenticity, and empathy for students [were] present in and out of the class” (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). The student focus

group cited professors who made mistakes or were humorous in forgetting material. This only endeared the professors more to the students. Again, it made them real to the students. This authenticity was often described as caring about students and their success. “She truly cares about her students succeeding in the real world” stated one student (student survey data, personal communication, April 2013). As stated in the literature review, Daloz (1999) reflected that “if we are to teach with life and vigor and hope, then we must recognize that we teach not just for our students and not just for the world, but for ourselves as well” (p. 245).

Literature Review Research	Study Findings
<b>Learning and Higher Education</b> “the quality of knowing a discipline isn’t particularly distinctive...If it were, every great scholar would be a teacher” (Bain, 2004, p. 16)	Professors and students linked learning and passion as key elements of success. “I want them to gain an appreciation for how much the subject, by the time they studied for a year, is connected to so much of the other topics in their entire four years...to make it personal for them” (Wanda)
<b>Transformational Learning</b> Learning is “the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-set) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8).	“it’s a chemistry that exists between you and all the students together” (Steve)  “they respond to the excitement...it is an automatic reaction...Just the fact that they are experiencing passion charges them as well and...the automatic response comes in” (Jack)
<b>Today’s student- Millennial Student</b> “The Professor 2.0...showing that you can use and understand the technologies of the world that students live in buys you credibility and respect for everything else you want to teach” (Perlmutter, 2011).	Professors all commented about their use of technology in the classroom. “This summer I twittered with students” (Olivia)  Professor used multimedia, music and technology to supplement lecture and teaching style in order to reach their students.
<b>Presence</b> “Teaching with presence means teaching in a way that encourages openness, imbues vitality” (Kornelsen, 2006, p. 74).	“fully engaged in always teaching her students while learning from them at the same time” (student)

	"[She is] well prepared for class and allows her students to learn through creative thinking" (student)
<b>Self-Awareness</b> A teacher is more than technique (Palmer, 1998) Technique just happens. Why teach?	"Her professionalism, authenticity and empathy for students was present in and out of class" (Student)  "You can't fake caring...if a professor shows he or she cares, the student reads it" (Ken)
<b>Authenticity</b> "if we are to teach with life and vigor and hope, then we must recognize that we teach not just for our students and not just for the world, but for ourselves as well" (Daloz, 1999, p. 245).	"She always taught with a smile on her face like she wasn't at work but just talking to a group of people about something she knew" (Student)  "I'm passionate about what happens to them as human beings. I really care about that a great deal. I'm passionate about these students" (Olivia)

Table 5: Literature Review Summary Table

## Discussion

In an article from The Chronicle of Higher Education, Mark Oppenheimer discusses how challenging students to learn and passion in teaching are often lacking in higher education (2004). "Scholars tend to assume that it is their scholarship that matters and that fine teaching will flow necessarily from their knowledge of the subject matter" (2004, p. B7). He laments that teachers should instill critical thinking and be able to test out their belief systems in the classroom. "For smart students to feel challenged and for dull students to lose their cobwebs, they need to learn that academic subjects are both a matter of grave moral concern and a source of exhilaration" (Oppenheimer, 2004, p. B7). That exhilaration is the passion as experienced from the students. One professor, Olivia, agreed with Oppenheimer's view; "We have this narrow view of what it means to be scholarly. We can be scholarly and still focus on education. That's what it used to be, you would think about universities and passionate people discussing ideas" (personal

communication, September 2013). This conjures up images of historical debates over coffee on college campuses, picketing students standing up for their beliefs and values, and professors delivering that outstanding and passion infused lecture leaving students wanting more. This correlates to the assumption that Feldman (1988) discussed in that faculty place a greater amount of importance on being “intellectually challenging, motivating and setting high standards” (p. 313). Yes, this may also occur, but one cannot take out the passion of the subject or the passion for the students in this equation.

### **The Research Questions**

This section will summarize the findings per each research question as summarized on Table 6.

- 1. What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?**
- 2. How is the passion experienced by the student?**
- 3. Do students learn more as result of a passionate professor?**
- 4. According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?**
- 5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?**

#### **What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?**

For this research study, passion was operationalized as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm” (Oxford English Dictionary,

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>).

For the students, passion was emotional connection expressed from the passionate

professors; it was the professor's student and learner centered outlooks. This was expressed through the care and concern for them as students. The enthusiasm shown to the students and the student's individual learning process further exemplified what passion meant to the student.

The professors defined passion in teaching as "excitement for a particular topic;" "an intense interest and a desire to communicate that interest and excitement to students;" "you care about what you're doing;" "I'm passionate about what happens to them as human beings;" and lastly, passion is "a strong desire to pass on information and a heartfelt sense of that information and excitement about it" (personal communications, July, August, September 2013). Passion was displayed through the humor, their openness and approachability, their style and through their genuine concern for student learning.

### **How is the passion experienced by the student?**

For the students, the passionate professors were inspiring, motivating, challenging, assisted students and increased their interest in the subject. Their teaching style enhanced the passion displayed to the students which resulted in an increase in confidence as a student, but also a respect earned by the student for the professor.

For the professors, it was their individual styles and techniques that helped translate to the students their passion. "Walking into the class and having a story to tell that day and being excited about what's going on in the story and what it actually means" (personal communication, July 2013) is thrilling for that passionate professor and for the student. It was their strengths and techniques which, for some, were honed after years of practice. It is the extra time after class, the weekend study sessions, and the time spent gathering

fun and informative videos and clips for their students that brought out the passion. For others it was role models and mentors who helped them transition to being the passionate professors of today.

**Do students learn more as a result of a passionate professor?**

Unanimously, the professors all agreed with a resounding “yes.” Many reflected that there is no hard evidence, but only observations or comments from students. One professor wanted to quantify this answer, but still felt that the students find the material easier to recall if passion is involved or felt from the professor. One professor shared that he sees the answer to this question reflected to him in his evaluations at the end of each semester. Another shared that some students ask to bring their friends, roommates, significant others to class to just sit in when they are not even registered for the class. For him, this was passion.

But, all agreed overall that students learn more from a passionate professor. It is the student’s response “to the emotionality of our teaching...if we have a passion behind our teaching and a connection to it, the student responds to that emotion” (personal communication, September 2013).

**According to the passionate professor: Is passion innate? Is it learned?**

The professors often spoke about whether passion was innate or learned. For all of them, they believed the passion for their subject was innate; “you’ve got to love the topic” (personal communication, July 2013). This passion for the subject or topic was what often translated to the students. “You have to have an innate sense of passion for your subject in order for it to come across” (personal communication, September 2013).

Some believed the art of teaching can be learned or taught, but the style is developed over time. One professor described it as an outcome of his personality; the passion comes through as a love of the subject, yet the tools, techniques and practice of teaching was developed and honed as time went on through his personality and strengths. One professor eloquently stated that one can learn different styles and “try on” different techniques from past role models, mentors or others, but one cannot “learn the spark” (personal communication, September 2013). Another described her passion as her desire to connect and build a relationship to her students; “It’s because I’m passionate about what happens to them as human beings” (personal communication September 2013). It was a tough question to ponder for all the professors.

### **How important is passion in the teaching profession?**

This question evoked a strong reaction from all of the professors. “I think it’s critical especially in large class situations because the anonymity that students feel in large situation is immediately a mark against their ability to engage information and to learning information. If you’re not passionate then the students, they’re going to mirror that” (personal communication, July 2013). The professor shared that colleges and universities need to look at this topic critically. As higher education is changing, the need for passion in teaching is remarkably evident.

Two of the professors commented on the availability and popularity of online courses, specifically MOOCs. One professor shared:

If passion is an important part of the educational experience, which I think it is, then we should be asking ourselves the questions about online courses and



MOOCs and considering the very basic fact that any online class is going to take that passion element out of the equation. All the passion is going to have to be motivated by the student... Even the best-designed online class, however well it's presented, however clearly it's done, the student might see organizational skill behind it, but I'm not sure that they're seeing passion... if the university can start to quantify this idea of passion a little bit more, sees that it's important, maybe then they can make the more broad administrative decision that says, "What do we want to do in terms of serving the student? Do we just want to make it convenient, or do we want to inspire them? (personal communication, July 2013).

Another commented:

I always say if online courses really worked they would be using them to coach football, if we think so highly of football. No one is going to coach football using online stuff. Our students in particular need more of actually the coaching I think. They need to do face to face; they need that relationship (personal communication, September 2013).

For a few of the professors, the fact that they were not tenured professors made a difference in their dedication to passion in teaching. They are able to focus on teaching and not conducting the research per se. One professor shared his view:

I think we still have that problem when we expect tenured faculty to teach not because they're interested or excited about it but because that's one of their duties. I think we do a real disservice to our students when we do that. I would much rather see those people who are ... if they're interested in their research,

great. Do your research. You know, learn new and exciting things, leave the teaching to somebody who's interested in it and excited about it and that the students are going to respond to. Of course, I have a vested interest in this because I'm not tenured (personal communication, August 2013).

He further shared that if we "force" some great researchers to teach when they really don't want to teach, we are doing a disservice to our students. They become a "Jack of all trades, master of none" (personal communication, September 2013). This should be something that higher education administration looks at when deciding their strategic plans for hiring faculty. "Let's hire them for what we're hiring them for and let's find somebody else to do the other parts that they don't want to do" (personal communication, September 2013). If higher education administrators want to hire researchers, then hire researchers; if higher education administrators want to hire passionate teachers then hire passionate teachers. Another professor shared the hiring practices of his particular department. They require their candidates to teach as part of their interview, not just teach to the search committee, but to students. The candidates stood out as either being a passionate professor, or not.

A few years ago a guy came through as one of a number of candidates for a job here. Literally, in the first five minutes of watching him present I was saying to myself, I don't know if I can stand another 70 minutes of this. This guy is talking about intrinsically interesting material and he is just killing it dead. You thought wow, I'm amazed at anybody can make history that boring, that fast. Because literally in the first five minutes, I was like wow, how long has it been? (personal communication, September 2013).

This interview technique has led to his department, in his eyes, having some of the most passionate professors around.

In the previous chapter, Table 2 represented the various position titles associated with each of the student “nominated” passionate professors and the percentages. It is important to highlight that only 9% of the nominated professors were full professor status; the remaining 91% were associate, temporary part time faculty, assistant professors, lecturers, graduate assistants, teaching assistants, visiting assistant/associate faculty, lecturers or unknown (limited information, including only first names, nicknames or were no longer in the institution). The issue of hiring adjunct professors to fill a need in a university or college setting is a hot and often contentious topic right now in higher education.

Overall, the professors all felt that the topic of passion in teaching is extremely relevant and critical at this time in higher education. As discussed previously, higher education is redefining itself. Higher education needs to look at what is important to the students.

Education is not the filling of a pail. It's the lighting of a fire. That fire gets lit, in part, by the professor in the front of the class, and I think if you just want to fill a pail, okay, that's fine. At least just say that's what we're doing is filling pails...Because are we inspiring our students that education is something that is exciting, and it's lifelong, and it's continued, and that critical thinking, and the aspects that we can learn and we can question, or is it just, "Can you get through this? (personal communication, July 2013).

Table 6 represents a summary of the research questions in relation to the professor interviews and student survey as discussed in the previous section.

Research Questions	Professor Interviews	Student Survey
<b>What constitutes/makes a passionate professor?</b>	<p>“I think it means the ability to translate the excitement for a particular topic” (Wanda)</p> <p>“I would stay that intense excitement and a desire to communicate that excitement to other people” (Walter)</p> <p>“It’s because I’m passionate about what happens to them as human beings” (Steve)</p> <p>“Passion for me in teaching is that strong desire to pass on information and a heartfelt sense of that information and excitement about it” (Jack)</p>	<p>“ [she] is passionate because she displays an intense drive for the subject in which she teaches”</p> <p>“There is passion and knowledge in her voice.”</p> <p>“I have come to learn that having a passionate professor makes all the difference in how a student approaches and feels about the subject”</p> <p>“...he has restored my faith in myself as well as faith that there are wonderful, passionate members of faculty still willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that students can help themselves reach limits that were above and beyond any expectations”</p>
<b>How is the perceived passion experienced by the student?</b>	<p>“Syllabus, Stories, funny things” (Wanda)</p> <p>“by each day, walking into the class and having a story to tell that day and being excited about what's going on in the story and what it actually means” (Walter)</p> <p>“I do some things outside of class that I think are a little unusual” (Olivia)</p>	<p>“Passion, sincere interest, attendance, enthusiasm, speech, PowerPoint slides (showed dedication), Invitations to office hours, loves questions, Smiling”</p> <p>“He is unique, charismatic, and passionate on what he teach”</p> <p>“She is understanding and compassionate. Cares for the well-being of all her students in &amp; outside of class.”</p> <p>“[His] humor and creative ways of connecting the material in class to the reality of my generation really inspired me to do well as a student in his class. I was always eager to go to his classes; not only did I enjoy what we were learning in class, I enjoyed how he taught it. I found that [he] challenged me and my peers to stay on top of our work and studies.”</p>

<b>Do students learn more as a result of a passionate professor?</b>	<p>“Absolutely...they respond to the emotionality of our teaching... if we have a passion behind our teaching, and a connection to it, the students respond to that emotion” (Jack)</p> <p>“No doubt about it... I think empowerment's the key” (Ken)</p> <p>“If you’re not passionate - then the students, they’re going to mirror that.” (Wanda)</p>	<p>“She wanted us to pass the course just as much as we did”</p> <p>“I did a lot of extra credit assignments because I didn't want to restrict my learning just to our textbook or our lectures.”</p> <p>“She is dedicated to getting her students to pass her classes. I was falling behind on some online work and my tests where looking poor so she came up to me and told me to go to her office hours and we could sit down and look at the problems and she would help me if i needed help while i finished them there, and ever since, I've been attending every office hour getting help and slowly improving.”</p>
<b>According to the professor – is passion innate? Is it learned?</b>	<p>“It's innate... it comes pretty naturally to want to go out there and get them excited and engaged and turned on to the subject” (Steve)</p> <p>“I don’t think you can learn the spark. It has to be there” (Jack)</p> <p>“You’ve got to love the topic. ...you've got to love people, working with people...you've got to love teaching the topic” (Ken)</p>	
<b>How important is passion in the teaching profession?</b>	<p>“I think it's that one extra thing that makes the difference between a class being acceptable and being outstanding” (Wanda)</p> <p>“If passion is an important part of the educational experience, which I think it is, then we should be asking ourselves the questions about online courses and MOOCs and considering the very basic fact that any online class is going to take that passion element out of the equation. All the passion is going to have to be motivated by the student” (Walter)</p> <p>“I think we see that people who are focused on teaching and really enjoy</p>	<p>“Increased my interest in considering becoming involved as an educator”</p> <p>“She pushed me beyond my comfort level and helped me to learn what I like and what I dislike”</p> <p>“[she] helped me find my voice”</p> <p>“He plunges into depths that bring meaning and value to the concepts to ignite passion within his audience.”</p> <p>“I felt that since the professor is so passionate in his work that it is my job as a student to send back the exact amount of input.”</p>

	<p>teaching make the best teachers and when we force someone to do it, we end up, we're back to our widgets again. We can train the book to anyone. We can train someone to do anything but is that what we want coming out of it ... at the end of the day." (Jack)</p> <p>"if people aren't thinking long term, in terms of that passion, professors are in trouble... They need to do face to face they need that relationship" (Olivia)</p> <p>"For the teaching part of it, it's incredibly important. For research part of it, now and again we've all met brilliant scholars who write fantastic things and come up with fantastic ideas, but who are not really strong personally or interpersonally. We're like wow, she's a genius I can't imagine why she isn't better in person" (Ken)</p>	<p>"The way he teaches his classes with such enthusiasm really makes you feel as a student like the subject you're learning is exciting, it motivates many students to not only learn the material but to excel in the course doing their own research outside of class and coming into class with questions and participation."</p> <p>"Having this class with her my 1st semester at UNM really encouraged me to keep going in hopes of finding more teachers like her."</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Table 6: Research Questions Summary Table**

### **Limitations of the Findings**

This study was designed to examine the phenomenon of passion in teaching through the eyes of the "passionate" professor at one four year Carnegie Very High Research Hispanic Serving university in the southwest. The researcher was a full time staff member, a doctoral student and also an adjunct professor for the institution. As with most phenomenological studies, this is only describing the essence of passion in teaching at this one moment in time, for this one group of students and professors. The findings of this study are not sufficient enough to come to a solid conclusion or to operationalize passion in teaching in higher education; yet, the findings only lead to more questions and the need for more research on passion in teaching.

Another limitation presented was the small amount of research on passion in teaching for higher education. Most of the research concentrated on K-12 education. While some of the studies can align with higher education, pedagogical and andragogical analysis is quite different. The principles for adult education are distinct and separate from adolescent education.

The focus group sample size was not adequate or reliable. A random sample was drawn from the seventy five (75) students who stated they would be willing to participate in a focus group on the student survey. Twenty five (25) names were randomly drawn to participate. Invitations were sent two weeks in advance and then reminders sent a week in advance and the week of the scheduled focus group. Only three (3) students participated. Although the three (3) interested students had high participation, great insight and the focus group lasted an hour, the researcher still would have liked to have seen more participation in this group. The three students were also all females of various ages and degrees.

The phenomenon of passion was difficult to conceptualize as all participants defined it individually. Yet, the themes presented help operationalize the functionality and importance passion can serve in teaching within higher education.

### **Future Research and Recommendations for Higher Education**

As the findings of this study further validated the previous research on passion in teaching, the findings also led to additional areas for future consideration.

This study explored passion through the insights and essence of the passionate professors. The student survey data proved to be rich and detailed, but was not the focus.

The student survey did not seek demographic information. The demographic information may provide more insight on passion specifically to college/school area, ethnicity and cultural implications, and gender breakdown. More research on adult learning and passion in higher education needs to be explored specific to student views.

Being a high research institution, two distinct areas emerged from the professors interviews: tenured versus non tenured professors and the distinction of research professors versus teaching professors. College and University Administration officials need to review the role of passion in education. Are we hiring passionate professors who can teach and inspire? Or are we hiring researchers who might be able to teach, but may want to conduct research? Not all researchers can teach and not all professors can be effective researchers. How we hire professors needs to be addressed. What are the qualifications for hiring our faculty? And, how are these expectations met for faculty? Are there conversations about these expectations on research and teaching? In addition, higher education needs to address the hiring of non-tenured or adjunct faculty members. What roles will they be playing in our institutions as this may play a critical role in moving forward. This study does not look at these differences or even begin to postulate about what that might look like for education.

One professor stated:

I think picking the right career track for me was a big deal and that I think also could have an impact on passion actually because in my job title I'm free to not do research and just focus on teaching and something like that is often not treated very well at different universities...It's always going to be professors versus



lecturers if we're competing for the same resources (personal communication, July 2013).

The passionate professors in this study all felt they could focus and concentrate on the passion in their teaching through all the apparent themes discussed previously.

It's absolutely vital that we have passionate teachers, especially when we get to higher ed and I think one of the problems I've seen is we are a research institute and for a long time, our focus was research and athletics and what was left over went to teaching and I think we still have that problem when we expect tenured faculty to teach not because they're interested or excited about it but because that's one of their duties. I think we do a real disservice to our students when we do that (personal communication, September 2013).

Yet, not all tenured professors want to conduct research or focus solely on research. Many chose this career for the passion in education and teaching. Some tenured professors are overburdened with duties or other obligations outside of teaching. James Lang (2010) discussed how he felt a renewed "spark" in his profession one summer when reading outside his area of topic or expertise. He credited this lack of spark for the heavy course load he carried as a tenured professor along with some outside interests that took more of his time. As he explored this new interest, he found it "inspired new approaches to [my] courses" (Lang, 2010). Lang continues to explore this area of passion for tenured professors. He interviewed Anna Neumann, who wrote a book, *Professing to Learn: Creating Tenured Lives and Careers in the American Research University* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). Neumann explored post-

tenured professors and their continued pursuit of learning and teaching students to learn. She coins a term, “passionate thought” as the name “for the experience of becoming totally absorbed by a research topic” (Lang, 2010). She continues by explaining to Lang that “when a scholar teaches in a way that connects what goes on in class with what goes on in her own search for substantive understanding...a student may be able to glimpse not only that subject but the expert’s live search for it” (Lang, 2010). She later advised new tenured faculty to “design your service and teaching obligations, and advising or mentoring obligations, in ways that let you talk and think about the substantive stuff you care about most. In other words, try to connect your teaching, research, and service with the thread of scholarly learning” (Lang, 2010).

Another distinction for further research on passion is to focus on the difference or similarities of graduate level professors and undergraduate professors. This study only focused on undergraduate professors. It would be interesting to explore the distinction between these two areas.

Another area for further research in the relationship of passion and higher education is online and face-to-face teaching. As society moves more and more in the direction of technology and online classes, research in the role passion may play for these two distinct areas may further stimulate this discussion on the role passion has in higher education.

As this study specifically explored passion in a four year institution, research on passion in a two year community college is needed.

Lastly, can passion be taught? Is it something we can infuse into the incoming new faculty during their orientation or in-service training? Can we operationalize passion to the point that it can be taught to incoming new faculty? Possibly a mentoring program may assist this endeavor by pairing a seasoned faculty member with a new incoming faculty member. Professional development workshops and self-evaluation measures may assist professors in further developing or re-engaging in passion for their topic area and/or individual teaching styles. This may assist university and colleges in retention of students and professors by effectively engaging students in passionate transformative learning experiences.

Although this study's results were not sufficient to come to a conclusion, the findings only further ignite the need to continue to study passion in teaching in the field of higher education. These areas of continued research might be the discussion needed to bring passion to the forefront of education. Higher education needs to address how important is passion to our students, to ourselves as educators and to the future of our educational institutions.

### **Final Thoughts and Personal Reflections**

This study began as a paper for a qualitative analysis class, but evolved to the dissertation it is today. Passion for me was hard to define, but when I heard it expressed from other students I knew what they were talking about or meaning. It was through my own lenses of experience as a student, a staff member and as an adjunct professor that I operationalized passion. When I started teaching, students often remarked on my evaluations that I was "passionate." This led me to question, 'what am I doing?' Is it just

that I like the topic or I am invested in their success? How do I show passion to my students?

As I have grown to teach graduate students at my institution, I have continued to see students describe me as passionate on my evaluations. After this study, I may not have a definitive answer on what is passion in teaching is for everyone; I learned from the passionate professors of my study that passion is individualized and innate to the subject area and to teaching style. But, I do have a new renewed understanding of what it means to me as a student, a researcher and a teacher. Passion means reaching your students and infusing that spark of interest; it means inspiring and motivating them to think outside the proverbial box of values, insights and experiences they have had in their own world view. It is that transformative learning experience for both the professor and the student. It means to teach them something of yourself and why this topic is of value to you and hopefully to them. It is having the students move forward with a good sense of that field; whether they continue on in the field or not, the passionate professor brings clarity for that field. And, lastly, as the students and passionate professors taught me, passion is critical in our educational system as it is that “lighting of the fire;” it is the “spark.” I want to continue to feel that heat and to see the flame burn with our students and our professors.

*“Education is not something we neither ‘give’ nor ‘do’ to our students. Rather, it is a way we stand in relation to them.” ~Laurent A. Daloz*

## References

- Allan, G. and N. Powell (2007). Examining the underlying principles of enquiry-based learning: two instances of where learning sessions start and end. *The International Journal of Learning*, 14, 8, 157-165.
- Alsop, Ron (2008). *The trophy kids grow up*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.
- Bain, Ken (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bloomberg, Linda D. and M. Volpe (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: a roadmap from beginning to end*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Bogden, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (2007, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theories and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Brady, Edward and D. Bedient (2003). *The effects of teacher presence on student Performance and attitudes*. WebCT, Impact 2003, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual WebCT User Conference.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. (2006). Authenticity and power. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 111, 5-16.
- Carlson, Scott (2005). The net generation goes to college. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 52, 7, A34.
- Chan, Sang (2010). Application of andragogy in multi-disciplined teaching and learning. *Journal of Adult Education*, 39, 2, 25-35.
- Cranton, Patricia (2002). Teaching for transformation. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 93, 63-71.
- Cranton, P. (2006). Integrating perspectives on authenticity. *New Directions for Adult*

*and Continuing Education*, 111, 83 -87.

Cranton, P. and E. Carusetta (2002). Reflecting on teaching: the influence of context.

*The International Journal for Academic Development*, p. 167-176.

Cranton, P. and E. Carusetta (2004). Perspectives on authenticity in teaching. *Adult*

*Education Quarterly*, 55, 5, 5-22.

Cranton, P. and K. King (2003). Transformative learning as a professional development

goal. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 98, 31-37.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design choosing among five*

*approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York:

Harper-Perennial.

Daloz, Laurent (1999). *Mentor: guiding the journey of adult learners*. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Day, Christopher (2004). *A passion for teaching*. London and NY: Routledge Falmer.

Dirkx, J. (2006). Authenticity and imagination. *New Directions for Adult and*

*Continuing Education*, 111, 27-39.

Dirkx, J.M. and J. Mezirow (2006). Musing and reflections on the meaning, context, and

Process of transformative learning. A dialogue between John M. Drixx and Jack

Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4, 2, 123-139.

Flumerfelt, S., I. Ingram, K. Brockberg, and J. Smith (2007). A study of higher

education student achievement based on transformative and lifelong learning

processes. *Mentoring & Tutoring*, 15, 1, 107-118.

Farber, Jerry (2008). Teaching and presence. *Pedagogy*, 8, 2, 215-225.

Feldman, Kenneth (1988). Effective college teaching from the students' and facultys'

- view: matched or mismatched priorities? *Research in Higher Education*, 28, 4, 291-344.
- Frego, Katherine (2006). Authenticity and relationships with students. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 111, 41- 50.
- Freire, Paulo (2007). *Pedagogy of the heart*. The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.: New York, NY.
- Fried, Robert (1995). The heart of the matter. *Teacher Magazine*, 7,2, 50.
- Fried, Robert (2001). *The passionate teacher*. Beacon Press: Boston, MA.
- Gitterman, Alex (2004). Interactive andragogy: principles, methods, and skills. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 24(3/4), 95-112.
- Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1). Article 4. Retrieved 10/17/11 from [http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3\\_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf](http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf)
- Jenkins, Rob (2011). A philosophy of teaching. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/A-Philosophy-of-Teaching/129060/>.
- Knowles, Malcolm (1980). Malcolm Knowles on my farewell address...andragogy – no panacea, no ideology. *Training and Development Journal*, 48-50.
- Kornelsen, Lloyd (2006). Teaching with presence. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 111, 73-82.
- Lancaster, Lynne C. & D. Stillman (2002). *When generations collide*. Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.: New York, NY.
- Lester, S (1999). *An introduction to phenomenological research*. Taunton UK, Stan Lester Developments. Retrieved at [www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf](http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf), on

January 29, 2012.

Martin, Carolyn A. & B. Tulgan (2002). *Managing the generational mix. From collision to collaboration*. HRD Press, Inc.: Amherst, MA.

Martin, Carolyn A. & B. Tulgan (2001). *Managing generation Y*. HRD Press, Inc.: Amherst, MA.

Mason, Jennifer (2005). *Qualitative researching*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Merriam, S. B. and R. S. Caffarella (1999). *Learning in adulthood. A comprehensive guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. and Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation. Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Josey Bass.

Milton J. and J. Lyons (2003). Evaluate to improve learning: reflecting on the role of teaching and learning models. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 22, 3, 297-312.

Mok, M, C.L. Lung, D. P. W. Cheng, R. H. P. Cheung, and M. L. Ng (2006). Self-assessment in higher education: experie4nce in using a metacognitive approach in five case studies. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31, 4, 415-433.

Moyles, Janet (2001). Passion, paradox and professionalism in early year's education. *Early Years*, 21, 2, 81-95.

Office of Institutional Analytics. (2103). *Official enrollment report fall 2013*. The



University of New Mexico. Retrieved from:

<http://oia.unm.edu/documents/enrollment-reports/fall-2013-official-enrollment-report.pdf>

Oxford Dictionary (2011). Retrieved:

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>

O'Toole, D., M. Spinelli and J. Wetzel (2000). The important learning dimensions in the school of business: a survey of students and faculty. *Journal of Education for Business*, 338-342.

Palmer, P. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Perlmutter, David (2011). Bridging the generational tech gap. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://chronicle.com/article/Bridging-the-Generational-Tech/128304/> on November 7, 2011.

Prensky, Marc (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *MCB University Press*, 9, 5, 1-6.

Richardson, J. T. E. (2005). Students' approaches to learning and teachers' approaches to teaching in higher education. *Educational Psychology*, 25, 6, 673-680.

Roberts, P. (2006). Freire and Dostoevsky: uncertainty, dialogue, and transformation. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3, 2, 126-139.

Rodgers, C.R. and M.B. Raider-Roth (2006). Presence in teaching. *Teachers and Teaching*, 12:3, 265-287.

Roehling, Patricia V., T.L. Vander Kooi, S. Dykema, B. Quisenberry and C. Vandlen

- (2010). *Engaging the millennial generation in class discussions*. College Teaching, 59:1, 1-6.
- Svinicki, Marilla D. (1999). New directions in learning and motivation. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 80, 5-27.
- Schatzman, L. and Strauss, A.L. (1973). *Field research: strategies for a natural sociology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, W. & N. Howe (1991). *Generations the history of america's future, 1584-2069*. William Morrow and Company, Inc.: New York, NY.
- Taylor, Bryan and M. Kroth (2009). A single conversation with a wise man is better than Ten Years of study: a model for testing methodologies for pedagogy or andragogy. *Journal of The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9, 2, 42-56.
- Thompson, Margaret A. and M. Deis (2004). Andragogy for adult learners in higher education. *Proceedings of the Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies*, 9,1, 107- 112.
- Tulgan, Bruce (2009). *Not everyone gets a trophy*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.
- USUN, Salih (2004). Important learning dimensions influencing undergraduate students learning and academic achievement in higher education. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 3, 4, 15-27.
- Williams, Larry D. (2006). Making learning fun and enjoyable for all students. *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, 78, 4, 21-22.
- Yoshimoto, K. Y. Inenaga & H. Yamada (2007). Pedagogy and andragogy in higher

Education – a comparison between Germany, the UK and Japan. *European Journal of Education*, 42, 1, 75-98.

Zemke, R., Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2000). *Generations at work: Managing the clash of Veterans, boomers, Xers and nexters in your workplace*. New York: AMACOM Books.

## Appendix A

### Passion in Teaching

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in this qualitative research study.

For this study, passion is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>).

#### Please answer the following questions.

1. Do you know a professor that could be defined as a “*passionate professor*”?

Y or N

Name of Professor:

Class:

2. If yes, what characteristics make them passionate?

3. Did his/her passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How? (Increased interest in subject, excited to do homework, exercises, etc.).

4. Lastly, would you be willing to participate in a one-hour focus group to review the findings regarding what makes a passionate professor? Yes or No

If yes, please write your name, email and phone number so I can reach you! Thank you!

Name:

Email:

Phone:

## **Appendix B**

### **Professor Individual Interview Questions**

**For this study, passion is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “strong and barely controllable emotion”; “state or outburst of strong emotion”; an intense desire or enthusiasm for something”; “a think arousing enthusiasm” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/passion?region=us&rskey=mciSaZ&result=1>).**

**You have been identified by your students as a “passionate professor”.**

- 1. What does passion in teaching mean to you?**
- 2. How does your passion show through to the students?**
- 3. Do students learn more from a passionate professor? Why? And How?**
- 4. Is passion innate or learned?**
- 5. How important is passion in the teaching profession?**

## **Appendix C**

### **Focus Group**

**Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Focus Group. I would like to share my overarching themes that emerged from the interviews with the “passionate professors” as well as share the themes from the student survey identifying the passionate professors.**

- 1. Do these themes make sense to you – as students?**
- 2. Do you have any additional comments?**

## **Appendix D**

### **University of New Mexico Informed Consent Cover Letter for Anonymous Surveys**

#### **STUDY TITLE**

#### **The Voices of Passion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in Teaching**

Jenna Crabb, a doctoral candidate in the College of Education, Counselor Education program is conducting a research study. The focus of this research is passion in teaching. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified by a staff member or a friend at UNM as an undergraduate student classified as a Sophomore, Junior or Senior.

Your participation will involve taking a short survey on passion in teaching. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. There are no names or identifying information associated with this survey. The survey includes questions such as “Do you know a professor that could be defined as a “passionate professor”?” You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort when answering questions. All data will be kept for 7 years in a locked file in Jenna’s office and then destroyed.

The findings from this project will provide information on passion in teaching. If published, results will be presented in summary form only.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Jenna Crabb at (505) 277-2531. If you have questions regarding your legal rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129.

The link to the survey is:

By taking the online survey, you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenna Crabb

Doctoral Candidate

Counselor Education Program

College of Education

## **Appendix E**

### **The University of New Mexico Consent to Participate in Research**

#### **The Voices of Passion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in Teaching**

10/09/2012

#### **Introduction**

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jenna Crabb, doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program and the Principal Investigator and Dr. Deborah Rifenburg, Dissertation Chair, Associate Dean, College of Education. The focus of this research is Passion in Teaching.

This qualitative study will explore how undergraduate professors from a large research university in the southwest operationalize passion through their teaching as experienced and identified by students in their classrooms.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified by students as a passionate professor. 7-14 people will take part in this study at the University of New Mexico.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

#### **What will happen if I decide to participate?**

If you agree to participate, the following will happen:

I will be interviewing and observing the nominated passionate professors. Because this study is a qualitative research project, I will be looking for themes and patterns related to passion in teaching in the data I collect. The observation will be on a mutually decided classroom time. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Interview tapes will be destroyed upon completion of the project. Interviews are expected to last anywhere from 30-90 minutes and will be conducted on a mutually decided upon time and day.

#### **How long will I be in this study?**

Participation in this study will consist of a 1-2 hours interview and a classroom observation.

#### **What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?**

I do not anticipate any potential risks involved in participating in this study. You are free to decline to participate in this study. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized for your non-participation.



There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks and side effects, ask the investigator.

**What are the benefits to being in this study?**

Potential benefits could include an increased understanding of student learning and teacher passion in the classroom. This research may lead to retention of students and professors through effectively engaging students in passionate transformative learning experiences which may contribute to students and professors being more engaged and satisfied.

**What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?**

You do not have to participate in this study.

**How will my information be kept confidential?**

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Information contained in your study records is used by study staff and, in some cases it will be shared with the sponsor of the study. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

If you choose to participate in this study, your rights and identity will be protected to the fullest extent possible throughout this study and thereafter if the research is published. Prior to joining this study, you will also be asked to select a pseudonym to protect your anonymity during interviews, the focus group, data collection and analysis, and in future publications or presentation of findings.

**What are the costs of taking part in this study?**

There are no costs associated with this study.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this study?**

There is no compensation for this study.

**How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?**

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

**Can I stop being in the study once I begin?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting your future health care or other services to which you are entitled.

**Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Jenna Crabb, or his/her associates will be glad to answer them at (505) 277-2531.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129.

**Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research participant?**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129. The HRPO is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/irbhome.shtml>.

**CONSENT**

You are making a decision whether to participate (or to have your child participate) in this study. Your signature below indicates that you/your child read the information provided (or the information was read to you/your child). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your (your child's) legal rights as a research participant.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate (or let my child participate) in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Adult Subject (print)  
or for Child enrollment,  
Name of Parent/Child's Legal  
Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Subject  
or for Child enrollment,  
Signature of Parent/Child's Legal  
Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE**

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix F**

### **The University of New Mexico Consent to Participate in Research The Voices of Passion: A Phenomenological Analysis of Passion in Teaching 10/09/2012**

#### **Introduction**

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jenna Crabb, doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program and the Principal Investigator and Dr. Deborah Rifenburg, Dissertation Chair, Associate Dean, College of Education. The focus of this research is Passion in Teaching.

This qualitative study will explore how undergraduate professors from a large research university in the southwest operationalize passion through their teaching as experienced and identified by students in their classrooms.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified by students as a passionate professor. 5-10 people will take part in this study at the University of New Mexico.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

#### **What will happen if I decide to participate?**

If you agree to participate, the following will happen:

Because this study is a qualitative research project, I will be looking for themes and patterns related to passion in teaching in the data I collect. During the focus group, I will share emergent themes with you. The focus group will be audio taped and transcribed.

#### **How long will I be in this study?**

Participation in this study will take a total of 1-2 hours.

#### **What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?**

I do not anticipate any potential risks involved in participating in this study. You are free to decline to participate in this study. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized for your non-participation.

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks and side effects, ask the investigator.

**What are the benefits to being in this study?**

Potential benefits could include an increased understanding of student learning and teacher passion in the classroom. This research may lead to retention of students and professors through effectively engaging students in passionate transformative learning experiences which may contribute to students and professors being more engaged and satisfied.

**What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?**

You do not have to participate in this study.

**How will my information be kept confidential?**

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Information contained in your study records is used by study staff and, in some cases it will be shared with the sponsor of the study. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

If you choose to participate in this study, your rights and identity will be protected to the fullest extent possible throughout this study and thereafter if the research is published. Prior to joining this study, you will also be asked to select a pseudonym to protect your anonymity during interviews, the focus group, data collection and analysis, and in future publications or presentation of findings.

**What are the costs of taking part in this study?**

There are no costs associated with this study.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this study?**

There is no compensation for this study.

**How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?**

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

**Can I stop being in the study once I begin?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting your future health care or other services to which you are entitled.

If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop participation at any time with no penalty to you. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. If you volunteer to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

**Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Jenna Crabb, or his/her associates will be glad to answer them at 505-277-2531.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129.

**Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research participant?**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the UNMHSC HRPO at (505) 272-1129. The HRPO is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/irbhome.shtml>.

**CONSENT**

You are making a decision whether to participate (or to have your child participate) in this study. Your signature below indicates that you/your child read the information provided (or the information was read to you/your child). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your (your child's) legal rights as a research participant.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate (or let my child participate) in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Adult Subject (print)  
or for Child enrollment,  
Name of Parent/Child's Legal  
Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Adult Subject  
or for Child enrollment,  
Signature of Parent/Child's Legal  
Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE**

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix G

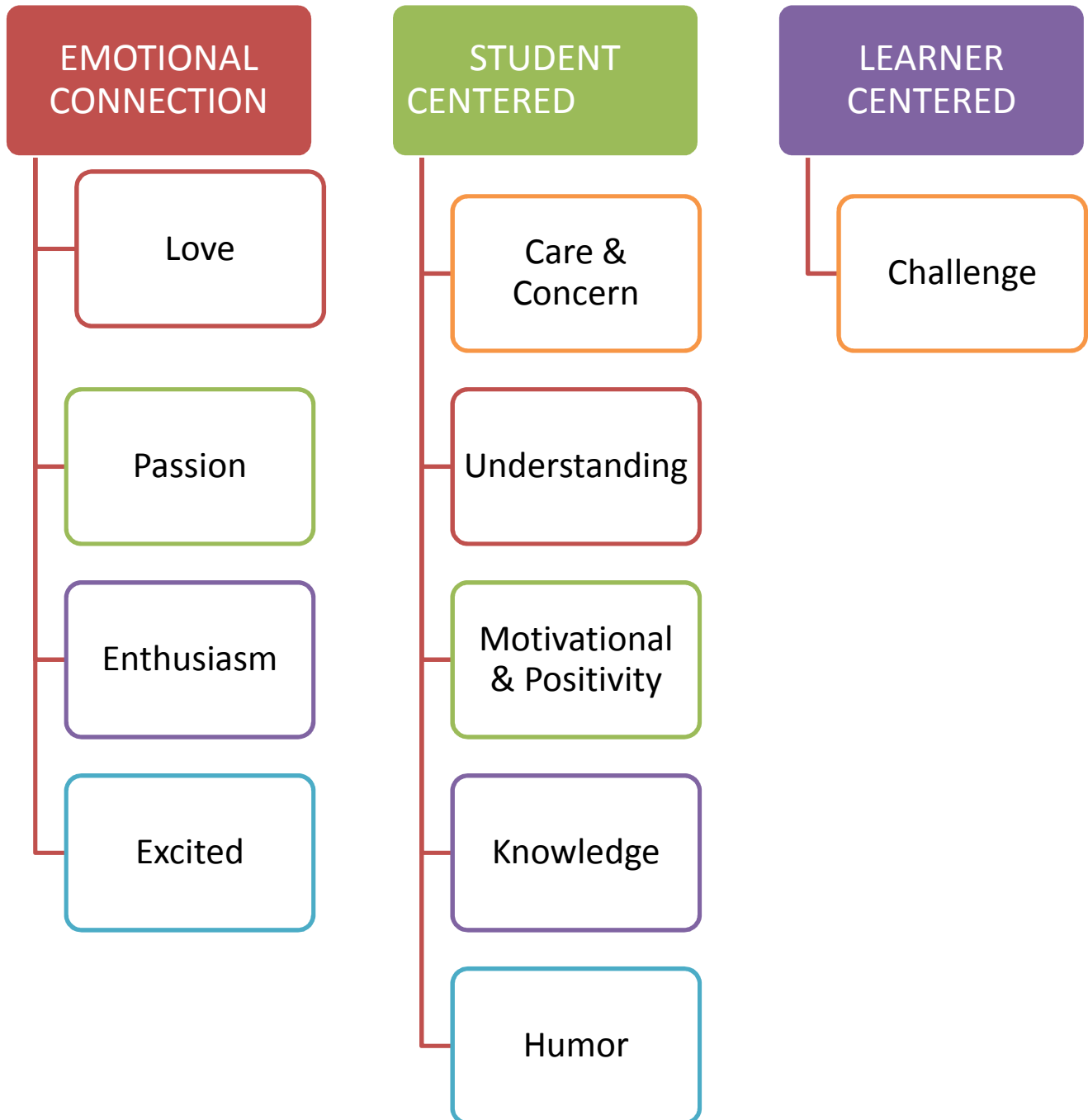
*The Voices of Passion: A Phenomenological Analysis  
of Passion in Teaching*

*Jenna Crabb*



## STUDENT SURVEY THEMES

**What Characteristics make them passionate?**



## STUDENT SURVEY THEMES

**Did professor passion in teaching help your learning experience as a student? How?**

Inspire

Help

Challenge

Increase Interest

Motivate

Increase Confidence as a Student

Teaching Style

Respect for the Professor



## **PROFESSOR INTERVIEW THEMES**

STUDENT CENTERED

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

TEACHING STYLE

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

## **PROFESSOR OBSERVATION THEMES**

STUDENT AS LEARNERS

OPENNESS & APPROACHABILITY

HUMOR

TEACHING STYLE