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Chapter Eight Embodied, Spiritual, and Narrative Learning

The whole person is made up of mind, body, and spirit. Rarely, however, are the body and spirit taken into account when we talk about learning. Our Western heritage has defined learning as a mental process that takes place in the mind—never mind that we cannot locate the “mind.” The brain, which we can locate, becomes the place of learning, severed from something as concrete as the body and as ephemeral as the spirit. This focus on the mind is partly due to Western science's investigation of learning as a mechanistic process—one designed to produce responses to stimuli, or to process information, or more recently, to construct knowledge largely through reflection on experience (see **Chapter Eleven** for a review of these traditional learning theories).

This emphasis on the mind goes back even before twentieth-century learning theory to Descartes, a seventeenth-century French philosopher who declared that “I [that is, my mind, by which I am what I am] is entirely and truly distinct from my body” and that “body, figure, extension, motion, and place are merely fictions of my mind” (Descartes, 1637/1960, pp. 165, 118, cited in **Michelson, 1998**, p. 218). This separation of the mind and body was reinforced by eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers who believed that knowledge could be obtained through reason alone; other sources of knowledge at that time, such as faith, tradition, and authority, were rejected by many.

As a result of Cartesian and Enlightenment thinking, learning has come to be equated with mental processes, with knowing through thinking or cognition. Not until the last few decades of the twentieth century has the role of the body and the spirit in

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adult learning theory been considered. Feminist theorists and multicultural theorists in particular have significantly shaped this discussion, along with a number of adult educators.

This chapter will first discuss the nature of what is being labeled *somatic* or *embodied* learning—that is, learning through the body. An even larger set of writing and some research is on spirituality and its role in learning. This will be reviewed in the second section of the chapter. Finally, whether our learning is located in the mind, the body, or the spirit, or some combination of these, we often make sense of this learning through storytelling. How we learn through narrative is explored in the last section of the chapter.

Embodied or Somatic Learning

Everyone can name times when the body communicates to us, whether it be a panic attack brought on by stress, a “gut” reaction to a racist comment, an upset stomach as we contemplate complaining to a teacher or boss, or being drained and exhausted from an intense encounter. So why have we tended to ignore the body as a site for learning? The main reason seems to be the Western privileging of mind over body. The focus of learning and education is “a change in a mental state, from one of ignorance, to one of knowledge. ... In Western education, the highest status is reserved for the most abstract and immaterial learning, irrespective of its utility, and the lowest status is accorded to concrete, material learning, much of which we learn in daily embodied action” (Beckett & Morris, 2001, p. 36). Michelson (1996) observes how absurd this separation can be when an institution of higher education engages in awarding credit for prior experiential learning: “To be accredited, knowledge must be detached from the site of its production. ... Knowledge is credited only to the degree that experience has been transcended, so that both the site of its production and the particularities of the self have been excised” (p. 190).

Rejection of the Body

But the rejection of the body may be even more basic than privileging cognitive knowledge. Goldenberg, Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon (2000) advance an interesting hypothesis that the body is problematic because it is a perpetual reminder of the

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inevitability of death. The dilemma is that, on the one hand, “we are animals with a deeply rooted instinct for self-preservation; on the other, we are intelligent beings with sophisticated cognitive abilities that are immensely adaptive but also render us aware of the inevitability of our own death” (p. 201). To deal with this dilemma, we engage in cognitive distancing, “strip[ping] the body of its creatureliness” and replacing it with cultural symbols and standards of beauty, sex, and so on. They conclude that “our flight from our physical nature causes us to lose a bit of what it means to be human” (p. 215).

Fleeing from the “creatureliness” of the body extends to ignoring, covering up, or satirizing our physical characteristics, bodily functions, and sexuality. But we live in our bodies, and we learn about ourselves, about who we are, through what our bodies can and cannot do and how we experience sexuality and other bodily functions. **Chapman (2002)** for example, analyzes the interrelationship of power and her identity through examination of bodily functions. In attending an English boarding school, eating constructed her identity: “We ate at school, every day, the food of Empire ... seated in the dining room under the gaze of John Smith, our famous ‘old boy,’ sternly subduing the female colonial body of waif-like Pocahontas. We learned/ate to be future wives of the Empire. In food and eating, we position bodies in relation to others in terms of class and ethnicity, as well as morally, as in good food and bad food” (pp. 75–76).

Popular culture reflects a growing interest in reconnecting the mind and body. Both *Time* (January 17, 2005) and *Newsweek* (September 27, 2004) devoted entire issues to this topic. As the lead story in the *Newsweek* issue titled “The New Science of Mind & Body” states:

So why is *Newsweek* devoting this Health for Life report to the mind-body connection? Because the relationship between emotion and health is turning out to be more interesting, and more important, than most of us could have imagined. Viewed through the lens of 21st-century science, anxiety, alienation and hopelessness are not just feelings. Neither are love, serenity and optimism. All are physiological states that affect our health just as clearly as obesity or physical fitness. And the brain, as the source of such states, offers a potential gateway to countless other tissues and organs—from the heart and blood vessels to the gut and the immune system. The challenge is to map the pathways linking mental states to medical ones, and learn how to travel them at will. [**Benson, Corliss, & Cowley, 2004**, p. 46]

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The mind-body connection is not only made in terms of health and medicine. Take, for example, the Academy Award-winning movie *Ray*, depicting the life and music of Ray Charles. Clearly, this blind musician navigated the world through his body just as the genius of his music flowed through his body.

But while we can find that attention is being paid to uniting the mind and the body in popular culture, and we can even come up with personal examples of times when we have learned through our bodies, embodied or somatic knowing and learning are only now being sporadically researched and theorized about in education and other social sciences (Kerka, 2002). We now turn to definitions, examples, and theorizing related to embodied learning.

Reclaiming the Body in Learning

Embodied learning is most often linked to experiential learning in the sense that we learn *in* an experience. Somatic knowing, as is also true of spiritual and narrative knowing, is connected to adult learning through meaning-making. Attending to these noncognitive dimensions of knowing can bring greater understanding to our lives; they enable us to make meaning of our everyday experiences.

Learning *in* the experience is immediate, physical, emotional. It is, as Siegesmund (2004, p. 80) writes, “a felt reaction of rightness within an experience.” This is not to deny that the body has a social and material location; as Michelson (1998) points out, “[L]earning is an active, world-creating process inscribed on the body and at the same time subject to particular material and discursive conditions that constrain the body within culture and in history” (p. 225). For example, a woman who physically registers a sexist comment may in the moment understand something about sexism or patriarchy. At the same time, however, this learning would be “a function of a gendered subjectivity, or a social existence lived within a woman's body in which the traces of past angers and hurt feelings, of personal and collective memories reside” (p. 226). The body, in fact, has long been a central point of analysis in feminist research and theory (Somerville, 2004).

Other examples of embodied learning are offered by Matthews (1998) and Crowdes (2000). Matthews recalls his early schooling days where by and large he had to sit still and endure, rather than be actively engaged in learning. One exception was a fifth-grade

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teacher who understood “the power of embodied action even at the level of ritual, [when] she provided white lab coats for us to wear, which we kept in the cloak room. She explained that when we put on these coats we would *become* scientists” (p. 238).

Crowdes (2000) noticed the irony of critical social analysis courses taught at her university in which students became quite sophisticated in analyzing issues of power and social inequity but were “detached from their bodies and agency in matters of conflict resolution and change” (p. 25). She redesigned the course and called it “Power, Conflict, and Change in Social Interaction: What’s a Body to Do?” Incorporated into the course are embodied exercises to convey what is really meant by these terms and how the body can be employed, along with the intellect, to negotiate change. In one exercise called *bowing*, partners in dyads are assigned roles, with one being superior and all-powerful to whom the other must bow. The roles are reversed in the second step. After each phase students are asked to reflect on how they *felt* in either role. The third step was for each partner to bow to the other in a mutually loving and respectful way. The three phases of the exercise allow students to experience the multifaceted nature of power and power relations. It is in the experience that power relations become *meaningful*.

It is, of course, easier to see how embodied learning takes place in a physical activity such as basketball or dance. But even in the realm of dance, “dance educators often seem embarrassed to speak too much about the body, thinking that to note the physical labor of dance demeans it in the eyes of intellectuals, and to call attention to the sensory, bodily pleasure of dancing makes us seem mere hedonists” (**Stinson, 1995**, p. 46). Stinson goes on to say that for her to really know something involves “thought as something that occurs throughout my body, not just above my neck” (p. 46). Dance choreography is that effort to convey lived experience through artistic form.

In the same way, conducting research is an embodied process beginning with a *passionate* connection to the topic one is going to research. Data gathering, **Stinson (1995)** points out, is very embodied, whether interviewing or observing. Sorting through the data gathered is also an embodied activity “in [an] effort to find the form and content of the work” being constructed (p. 49). So too, insights with regard to important theoretical considerations and

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the final form of the project “could not have arisen without attention to embodied knowledge. ... We can think only with what we know ‘in our bones,’ and ... attending to the sensory, followed by reflection, is essential in research” (p. 52).

In yet another example of embodied knowing, **Yoshida (2005)** describes how writing Japanese calligraphy, at first cognitive, became an embodied experience. He recounts writing the Japanese character for river (*Kawa*), which requires three strokes:

When I finished the third stroke, I recognized a strong feeling that remained in my body. I stopped and put the brush down, and went into that feeling. It was similar to a feeling in my palm which I remembered from canoeing in the wildness. ... The beautiful scene came back. I closed my eyes with this image. And again I wrote *Kawa* with a brush as if I was paddling with the flow of the river. In the left sidestroke the water flows with a paddle (brush). In the middle stroke, I hold the water and stop the brush. For the third, I sink the paddle deep down, holding the heavy water for the longest stroke. I push it all the way down.

I felt the *Kawa* character written in this way came alive, as if flowing in front of me. I encountered the vital life of the *Kawa* character in this way. ... The character is no longer an object outside myself, it is something living within. [p. 133]

Although the aforementioned examples of embodied learning involve the body in learning, there are also subtle differences. **Amann (2003)** teases out these differences in her four-part model of somatic knowing. She feels there are four dimensions to this type of knowing—kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual. Athletes, artists, dancers are all concerned with the movement of the body, or *kinesthetic learning*. This “movement and action ... often yields lessons about discipline, diligence, dealing with stress, or solving problems” (p. 28). *Sensory learning*, she maintains, is “inherently somatic” because by definition it is how we access information through our senses; we then “relate that information to our experience and extrapolate meanings significant to our lives” (p. 28).

Embodied learning has a strong emotional or feeling dimension, which Amman labels *affective learning*. **Dirkx (2001b)**, for example, speaks to the power of emotions wherein “meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in and is derived from the

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adult's emotional, imaginative connection with the self and with the broader social world” (p. 64). Actually, science has known for some time that nerve endings extend throughout the body through which we receive impulses from outside the body (see **Chapter Fifteen**). Further, “emotions are enmeshed in neural networks involving reason. ... Emotions increase the strength of memories and help to recall the context of an experience, rendering it meaningful” (**Hill, 2001**, p. 76). Mulvihill (2003, p. 322) is even more explicit about the neurological dimension of learning:

There is no such thing as a behaviour or thought, which is not impacted in some way by emotions. There are no neurotransmitters for “objectivity”; rather even the simplest responses to information signals are linked with possibly several “emotional neurotransmitters” (Haberlandt, 1998). Because the neurotransmitters, which carry messages of emotion, are integrally linked with the information, during both the initial processing and the linking with information from the different senses, it becomes clear that there is no thought, memory, or knowledge which is “objective,” or “detached” from the personal experience of knowing.

In making the case for including dance and the arts in education, **Ross (2000)** underscores the interconnectedness of emotions with somatic knowing: “The arts are firmly rooted in these exchanges between the psyche (mind) and soma (body), and the senses and emotions are the conduits of these experiences” (p. 31). Emotions are embodied and thus are an integral component of this type of learning.

The fourth component of Amann's somatic learning model is *spiritual*. The spiritual aspect of somatic learning is meaning-making through music, art, imagery, symbols, and rituals and overlaps or intersects with the other three dimensions (see **Chapter Nine**). Interestingly, Yoshida presents his example of somatic knowing in writing the Japanese word for river as relating to his “spiritual” roots: “As soon as the characters unfold their life, they unfold the soul, not only in me, but also in all the souls of the people who lived and wrote this character throughout Japanese history” (2005, p. 133). **Götz (2001)** links the embodied with the spiritual in a number of ways, citing, for example, numerous athletes who through intense physical activity have experienced spiritual moments.

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Other writers have conceptualized embodied or somatic learning as *embodied cognition* (Cheville, 2005), as *ontological performance* (Beckett & Morris, 2001), or as a *somatic epistemology for education* (Brockman, 2001). Cheville proposes “a theoretical frame that locates the human body at the intersection of culture and cognition”; that is, “the human body is at once an object of culture and a subject of cognition” (p. 86). To illustrate how the body is at the intersection of culture and cognition, Cheville conducted an ethnographic study of the athletic and academic learning of a women's basketball team. Cultural expectations manifested themselves in the players having to assert their femininity off the court to counter their physicality (associated with males) on the court. Further, the African-American players fought against being seen solely as athletes, which, along with entertainers, were among the common culturally prescribed roles for Blacks. Court learning was a matter of negotiating one's body both spatially and temporally; this learning was overlaid with asymmetrical power relations between coach and players and more experienced and less experienced players. Cheville summarizes: “Only by ‘being there’ together in body did players enter into reflexive consciousness. For Jenny [one of the players] and her teammates, the orchestration of bodily activity was the means to a collective mindset. Learning was necessarily a political process, demanding that coaches and players negotiate their understanding through social and bodily engagement” (p. 98).

The relationship between identity, learning, and the body is explored in Beckett and Morris's (2001) article. To illustrate their thesis that identity is constructed through embodied actions in context, they studied two work settings, one an aged-care facility (ACF) and the other an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. In the ACF, most of the staff were female with little formal training or education. However, their physical experience in the facility, reading each situation as it occurred and finding “what works,” created a community of practice where their identities as health practitioners were secure. The authors characterize this workplace as a “site of powerful adult learning for the staff,” a place where “practical logic, aimed at what will work by drawing laterally on embodied experiences, prevails” (p. 41).

Beckett and Morris (2001) go on to cite two examples from the ESL classroom of what they call ontological performance. The first

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had to do with a Muslim woman who at first wore the headscarf but later in the course came covered in a full veil and gloves. The teacher could not understand the change, which was explained by student as, "Well, I'm closer now to my religion. I'm more ... I'm a better person now because I do this" (p. 42). The authors point out that while the teacher saw the body as a cultural representation, "the learner presents a very different version of culture, one that is lived, where knowledge, beliefs, and experiences are located in the body, where the body is the medium for having a world" (p. 42). In the second example from the ESL classroom, learners were preparing for a two-week work experience placement. The teacher's version of the "good worker" was one who stays in his or her place, acts politely, and does not challenge the boss. The students, several of whom had many years of work experience in their home countries, continually questioned and resisted the teacher's construction of them as docile workers. These learners were "active bodies' constructing and reconstructing their sense of self and occasionally resisting others' construction of them" (p. 43).

Brockman's (2001) somatic epistemology for education is the final conception of somatic knowing. In today's world of diversity, postmodernism, and multicultural education, he asks the important question of how we are to assess and deal with cultural "evils." All cultures perpetuate certain beliefs, values, customs, practices, and ideologies that are oppressive and even physically abusive (sanctioned violence against women, for example). Yet cultural relativism mitigates against our making a moral judgment of these behaviors. As an example, he asks what a U.S. schoolteacher should do if the teacher observes a Turkish boy beating his sister who has flirted with boys at school. "In Turkish culture, a strong value is placed on a girl's honor, so her brother is merely putting into effect the norms of their culture" (p. 328). Relying on cultural- linguistic knowledge does not provide a satisfactory basis for dealing with this moral dilemma.

What is needed, **Brockman (2001)** maintains, is an epistemology based on somatic knowing. Knowing through the body is more fundamental than what we know through culture. "In short, neither culture nor language are the *source* of somatic knowledge. Somatic knowledge is received from *within* the human being; cultural knowledge is received from *without* the human being" (p. 331). With regard to the Turkish schoolgirl, while she may

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cognitively know that her brother's actions are culturally appropriate, she “knows somatically the abusive and harmful nature of her brother's behavior; it is a cultural evil” (p. 331). The teacher should “stop the beating, in the name of the body—her body” (p. 333). For those who worry that an outside standard of moral behavior is being placed on a particular cultural context, Brockman responds, “The body is a criterion of knowing inclusive within every cultural context, though not independent of context. Therefore, somatic knowing offers great promise in answering the problem of relativism, because it recognizes dimensions of knowing (and reality) common within all cultural contexts” (p. 332). A somatic epistemology also holds greater promise for “a broader theory of learning than would a strictly multicultural theory” (p. 332).

In summary, reclaiming the body in learning contributes to a broader theory of learning, one that recognizes the body as a source of knowledge. This recognition alone challenges the dominant culture's claims to knowledge based predominately on reason. Legitimizing somatic knowing can also lead to developing empathy, as **Crowdes (2000)** attempted to do with her course on critical social theory. It is also, as Matthews (1998, p. 237) points out, “a political argument for greater educational equity.” Finally, embodied knowing is linked to adult learning through its power to contribute to making sense of, or making meaning of, our lives.

Spirituality and Learning

One of us (Merriam) offers this insight:

As is true of most decade birthdays I was not looking forward to turning sixty. I basically ignored it and managed to schedule some workshops in South Korea at that time. On the exact date of my birth I and a Korean colleague were high in the mountains in the southeast part of the country engaging in an overnight Buddhist temple stay. We attended prayers, ate in silence with the monks, and spent an evening in seminar with a monk who explained the life of the monastery and basic Buddhist beliefs. During the visit I felt a sense of peace and of being “present” that I had not experienced before; the fact that I had just turned sixty seemed not to matter and my angst about it evaporated.

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For the author, this was a spiritual learning experience in that the “flow” or “life force” that she felt in that mountain retreat enabled her to make meaning of her own aging. Like somatic-embodied knowing, spiritual knowing or learning is also about meaning-making, though perhaps more difficult to accommodate than embodied learning, which does have a tie to physical sensations. While most would acknowledge that human beings are spiritual beings as well as corporal and thinking beings, our image of the adult learner has been bereft of anything remotely “spiritual.” Rather, the learner is “merely an animal to be socialized, a computer to be programmed, a unit of production to be harnessed and utilized, a consumer to be won” (Sloan, 2005, p. 27). Further, the sense of wonder and awe characteristic of a spiritual stance has been “trivialized” in “the contemporary market-driven world” to the point that “we have ended up attempting to reinvent it in Disneyland or through virtual reality (Mander, 1991)” (O’Sullivan, 2005, p. 70).

These gloomy images of learners in a virtual world are being countered by an outburst of writing and discussion on the place of spirituality in our lives generally, and in adult and higher education and human resource development specifically. Popular culture vehicles of movies, books, television shows, and magazine articles are reflecting this interest, perhaps, as some writers have speculated, because of the aging baby boom generation.

Developmental psychologists dating back to Carl Jung have asserted that as adults move into midlife and beyond, there is an inward turning to contemplate the meaning of life and spiritual aspects of oneself. Indeed, in a longitudinal study of spiritual development in adulthood, “all participants, irrespective of gender and cohort, increased significantly in spirituality between late middle (mid-50s/early 60s) and older adulthood” (Wink & Dillon, 2002, p. 79).

Interest in the topic is manifest in bookstore titles, continuing education courses, and solidly conservative agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the American Medical Association, both of which are investigating how spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga, and prayer can affect physical health. Spirituality has become a popular topic in even as unlikely a site as America's profit-driven corporate world. Dozens of articles and books

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such as Mitroff and Denton's *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* (1999), Bolman and Deal's *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* (1995), and Briskin's *The Stirring of Soul in the Workplace* (1996) are calling for management to integrate spirituality into workplace practices and allow for its expression in the workplace. Coming from another perspective, and perhaps influenced by **Goleman's (1995)** popular book on emotional intelligence (EQ), **Zohar and Marshall (2000)** are proposing a spiritual intelligence (SQ) to go along with EQ and IQ. This kind of intelligence helps us “solve problems of meaning and value” (p. 4).

It is a similar picture in higher and adult education. Books, conference presentations, journal articles, and student theses and dissertations are grappling with the topic and making visible what has long been ignored—that there is a spiritual side to our learning despite the domination of rationality in the classroom. Perhaps because of the nature of this topic, with only a few exceptions, the great majority of the writing has been philosophical in nature. Drawing from these many sources, we first grapple with defining spirituality and its place in adult and higher education. Next, we have distilled from the literature a number of practices and strategies that can cultivate the spiritual dimension of our learning.

Defining Spirituality

There are as many definitions of spirituality as there are people writing about it. Some use other words, such as grace, heart, flow, life force, and soul, perhaps partly to avoid the inevitable confusion of spirituality with religion. While for some people spirituality and religion might be related, writers on the topic of spirituality are emphatic about the difference between the two. As Tisdell (2003, p. 29) writes, “Religion is an organized community of faith that has written doctrine and codes of regulatory behavior. Spirituality, however, is more personal belief and experience of a divine spirit or higher purpose, about how we construct meaning, and what we individually and communally experience and attend to and honor as the sacred in our lives.”

Tisdell's (2003) definition of spirituality is derived from a study of thirty-one higher and adult educators specifically engaged in anti-oppression pedagogy. She presents seven assumptions about the nature of spirituality, especially as they relate to an educational

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setting. These assumptions are helpful in grasping what this dimension in learning is all about:

1. Spirituality and religion are not the same. ...
2. Spirituality is about an awareness and honoring of wholeness and the interconnectedness of all things. ...
3. Spirituality is fundamentally about meaning-making.
4. Spirituality is always present (though often unacknowledged) in the learning environment.
5. Spiritual development constitutes moving toward greater authenticity or to a more authentic self.
6. Spirituality is about how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes, often made more concrete in art forms such as music, art, image, symbol, and ritual which are manifested culturally.
7. Spiritual experiences most often happen by surprise. [pp. 28–29]

Unlike most who write about spirituality from the individual's perspective, Tisdell embeds spirituality and learning in a cultural context. That is, one's spirituality is informed by and manifested in culturally defined experiences, symbols, myths, and rituals. While significant spiritual experiences are found in all cultures, “the meaning of those experiences is not only valued differently by different cultural communities, it is also manifested and given further expression symbolically differently in different cultures—in art, music, or ritual” (p. 86).

Tisdell's participants were also selected for their social justice orientation to practice.

English (2005a) identifies this form of spirituality as “secular” or “public” in nature versus spirituality as purely private and individual in nature. English makes the case that this public form of spirituality goes hand in hand with adult education's social change agenda and that “accepting a strong twofold purpose—spirituality and social change—will move adult educators closer to reconciling the personal and collective divide in our field” (p. 1187).

In one of the few other empirical studies of spirituality, Courtenay and Milton's (2004) sample of adult educators and learners identified three components of spirituality: a sense of connectedness, a search for meaning, and an awareness of a transcendent force or energy beyond the self. And in an interesting angle on

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spirituality, **McDonald (2002)** looked at the role of spirituality in the life and work of committed environmentalists. Ten of the eighteen participants expressed a pantheist view in which everything is an expression of the “vital force” (p. 270). All eighteen were engaged in “the making of spirit”—that is, “the actions and experiences that bring spirit into being” (p. 269).

Although they are not empirically based, there are some helpful discussions in the literature about the nature of spirituality. Lemkow (2005, p. 24) cites David Bohm, a physicist-philosopher: “What is spirit? The word is derived from a Latin word meaning ‘breath’ or ‘wind’—like respiration or inspiration. It is suggested by the trees moving with the invisible force of the wind. We may thus think of spirit as an invisible force—a life-giving essence that moves us deeply, or as a source that moves everything from within.”

A number of writers capture this notion of wind, energy, or movement as characteristic of spirituality. **Foehr (1997)** speaks of “*spiritually empowering forces or energies ... having to do with creativity, imagination, inspiration, intuition, kinesthetic knowledge, felt sense, passion for knowing, the aha experience, archetypal energy, and the collective unconscious*” (pp. 46–47; italics in original).

Using the word *grace* instead of spirituality, and speaking of its place in pedagogy, **Graves (1997)** notes its transcendent nature as well as its more common understanding as “harmony of movement, coordination, poise under pressure” (p. 15). Graves's notion of grace is not tied to a religious perspective; rather, grace, he writes, “moves to its own rhythm, follows its own agenda, and it is always beyond our power to control or manipulate” (p. 16). Grace happens “in the ordinary experiences of daily life ... in everyday routines and habits ... in the small joys and disappointments of life. Moreover, it shows up in the most unlikely places. Grace lurks among the vegetables in the supermarket. Grace sits on a bar stool and smokes a cigarette. Grace roams the corridors of a big city hospital. Grace is always there, everywhere; we don't see it, but it changes our lives when we experience it” (p. 16).

He recounts several stories of how grace can transform human consciousness, such as one story of a teacher, widowed with small children, feeling depressed. Upon looking outside her classroom window she sees a rabbit on the lawn below: “Somehow I realized that if that rabbit, who seemed so full of peace and so much a part of nature, would be all right then I would be too” (p. 17). Graves

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goes on to say that we do not find grace; rather, “*to be found by grace*—we must live not only in the immediate moment but let go of ego involvement in that moment, for grace comes in by the back door. ... While the attention is elsewhere, grace is at work in the unconscious” (p. 16).

This notion of grace as serendipitous is echoed in **Dirkx's (2001b)** understanding of the soul being accessed through images. “Emotionally charged images,” he writes, “are not under the willful control of the ego.” Rather, they tend to appear spontaneously during the learning process. “They arrive as they so choose, as acts of grace” (p. 69). Drawing from Jungian psychology, these images reflect archetypes from the collective unconscious. “From an archetypal perspective, to teach in adult or higher education settings is to participate in a timeless story or myth” (**Dirkx, Pratt, & Taylor, 2002**, p. 95). Such conscious participation “can help us connect in a more profound manner with the animating forces of our lives” (p. 95).

In relating grace to pedagogy, **Graves (1997)** delineates several characteristics of grace. First, it is *transforming*, as in the preceding story of the teacher. Second, it is *healing*; stress and anger, grief, the most impoverished, can find healing in moments of grace. Third, grace *transcends the ego*. “Grace provides the perspective to see ourselves in the larger context, not just as students and teachers but as individuals connected with each other and with the world beyond ourselves” (p. 18). *Opening the possible* is the fourth characteristic. “Grace cuts through the boundaries of culture, language, race, social class, economic level, age, handicaps, intelligence level, geography, and birth. Grace interrupts the expected and creates its own channel” (p. 19). *Pointing toward what is right* is the fifth characteristic. The moral and ethical tone of grace echoes others’ writings. English, Fenwick, and Parsons (2003, p. 3) for example, write that “the most straightforward way to promote a spiritual dimension in teaching and learning is to make a deliberate attempt to think and act ethically,” simply because “ethical choices implicitly include a basic recognition of the person as spiritual” (p. 4). Grace is also about *enhancing creativity*, Graves’s sixth characteristic. Finally, grace is *surprising*, it—“shows up in unexpected places, in coincidences that prove to be extraordinary, and in synchronistic events” (p. 19). It might be recalled that surprise is one of **Tisdell's (2003)** seven assumptions.

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Given the nature of spirituality as delineated by these and other writers and researchers, it is not surprising that strategies for enhancing or fostering spirituality, soul, or grace during the teaching- learning transaction are about making space for it to happen.

Fostering Spirituality in Adult Learning

To the extent that spirituality is about meaning-making, it can be argued that it has a place in adult learning. Unfortunately, formal programs of adult education, like any other institutionalized form of learning, suffer from “order, hierarchies, grades, tests, a gloried past, control, deprivation, remoteness of various kinds, and weighty seriousness” (Moore, 2005, p. 13). For spirituality or moments of grace to happen, “weighty seriousness” must be replaced with playfulness, openness, creativity, and imagination. If, as hooks (1994) writes, “we believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students,” then we must “teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students ... [and] provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (p. 13).

One of the “necessary conditions” identified by several writers is that the instructor must examine her or his own biography, acknowledging and “perhaps reconcil[ing] the influence of our religious upbringing on our current spiritual preferences and resistances” (Fenwick, English, & Parsons, 2001, p. 6). That our own spiritual or religious biography has an impact is underscored in Tisdell’s study of thirty-one educators. She found that while only six practiced in their childhood religious traditions, all “continually spiraled back and reclaimed images, symbols, music that still had important meaning for them from their childhood religious traditions” and that these “often connected to their cultural backgrounds” (2005c, ¶ 12).

For moments of spiritual learning to occur there must be space in the learning environment. Such a space is safe, supportive, open, “sacred.” Vella (2000) outlines three aspects of a sacred space—dialogue, respect, and accountability. A sacred space allows for dialogue where one listens to others’ experiences without judgment. The teacher is accountable for designing a learning experience that both supports and challenges the learners. We are

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accountable “to make the best plans possible,” but at the same time we must “be ready to abandon them” (Graves, 1997, p. 20). As Graves observes, “If grace ever comes into pedagogy, it will be there not because it was planned but because the conditions were right and because some sensitive soul had the wisdom not to thwart it” (p. 20). The spontaneous and fluid nature of spirituality requires space where it can happen. An overly programmed, information dissemination–driven classroom leaves no space for significant, indeed, spiritual, learning to occur.

A number of writers underscore the importance of allowing for dialogue. English (2000) defines dialogue as “the interpersonal connections and interchanges among people that encourage and promote their spiritual development. ... Dialogue ... recognize[s] the other as an extension of one's self” (p. 34). It is also through dialogue that a sense of community can be effected. It might be recalled that “connection” is one of the components of spirituality. A community of learning is people-centered, and through dialogue, discussion, and sharing, learners have the opportunity to connect with others, with their inner, spiritual selves, and perhaps with a force or energy beyond the self. This is not to ignore the difficulties in creating community in the classroom, especially in one that is culturally diverse (Hart & Holton, 1993; Tisdell, 2003).

Mentoring is an activity that can promote spiritual development. Daloz's (1999) concept of the mentor as a guide to the holistic development of the mentee speaks of the process as a journey. The relationship is also reciprocal and nurturing of both the mentor and mentee. English, Fenwick, and Parsons (2003) position mentoring and coaching in adult education and human resource development settings. They are careful to point out that this activity “is not about increasing the bottom line. It is about relationship, support, and increasing the human spirit” (p. 93). That is not to say that the power dynamics of such a relationship be ignored; rather, it is a stance or reverence in which “the spirituality of the relationship is the reciprocity that constitutes the relationship” (p. 95).

In addition to examining one's own stance, creating space, and mentoring, one can foster spirituality through the use of creative and imaginative activities such as visualization, storytelling, and the use of literature, poetry, art, and music. These activities can assist us in looking for “connections in unlikely places,

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between apparently unconnected and disparate ideas and experiences” (MacKeracher, 1996, p. 179). Dirkx (2001b) speaks of these techniques as the *imaginal method*:

Journal writing, literature, poetry, art, movies, story-telling, dance, and ritual are specific methods that can be used to help foster the life of the image in our relationships with adult learners. By approaching emotionally charged experiences imaginatively rather than merely conceptually, learners locate and construct, through enduring mythological motifs, themes, and images, deep meaning, value, and quality in the relationship between the text and their own life experiences. [p. 70]

Imagination, and more specifically cultural imagination, is the focus of Tisdell's (2005c) work in linking spirituality with diversity and multicultural issues in today's higher education classroom. Imagination is a meaning-making activity in that we put together insights, images, symbols, and ideas in new ways so that new meaning is revealed. Tisdell maintains that this imaginative activity cannot be separated from the person's cultural context and history. When imagination, which “helps people to see from multiple perspectives, to visualize new possibilities, and potentially to create something new” involves “cultural stories, histories, and issues, it engages cultural imagination” (¶ 50). Using teaching strategies that cross cultural borders such as “service learning opportunities, engaged dialogue about current issues, and problem-posing techniques” along with the cultural imagination (such as sharing personal cultural symbols with others) can bring about transformation. “Image, symbol, music, ritual, art, poetry, often touch off memory in conscious and unconscious ways, which sometimes connects to spirituality. ... One can combine these ways of knowing that are part of cultural imagination, with the intellectual and critical analysis aspects of higher education to facilitate greater student learning and greater equity in society” (abstract).

Any summary of the role of spirituality in learning would be only a partial view given the array of understandings, definitions, and conceptualizations of the phenomenon. Spirituality is, by its very nature, difficult to capture in the rational prose of academia. However, given that this dimension of our experience deals with

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meaning-making, it is an appropriate topic to consider because most significant adult learning is about meaning-making. Whatever label one prefers, spirituality and the creative and imaginative techniques for eliciting its presence have a role to play in a more complete understanding of adult learning. However, what exactly that role is is open to question. While we have definitions of spirituality and conditions that might elicit it in an instructional setting, what we do not yet have is an understanding of or theoretical models of *spiritual learning* as we do, for example, with self-directed learning or transformational learning. Courtenay (personal communication, June 13, 2005) speculates that if we assume spiritual learning is about meaning-making, then:

What does that mean? Am I able to make meaning better because I use spirituality in some way? Yes, OK, then in what way? Notice I didn't ask "use spiritual learning" in some way, because I don't know what spiritual learning means, nor have I seen an acceptable definition in the literature. Staying with meaning-making further, would it be easier to explain the link between spirituality and meaning-making if we provided the opportunity for instructors and learners to ask and discuss the fundamental questions that all of us have about the meaning of life? Why are we here? What are we to do while we are here? Is this all there is and what are the implications of my answer to this question? What do I value and why? What is non-negotiable in my life and why? ... Further issues—when meaning making is facilitated by spirituality, how is it manifested? How might it occur in an adult education classroom?

These and other questions will, we hope, shape future research and theory building in this area.

Narrative Learning

At the close of 2004, while people were vacationing in Thailand, fishing in a coastal village of India, or just relaxing in that lull between Christmas and New Year's, an earthquake-caused tidal wave of death and destruction engulfed southeast Asia. What was impossible to grasp was made human through the *stories* of individuals—stories of how they faced then ran from the tsunami, of a village leveled, of family members being separated, some never

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found, of filming the wall of water from a hotel rooftop. Only through these stories could we make some sense of what had happened.

Narratives are stories, “the oldest and most natural form of sense making” (Jonassen & Hernandez-Serrano, 2002, p. 66), and they have a place in adult learning because stories enable us to make meaning of our lives. The vignette presented earlier in this chapter on turning sixty during a stay at a Buddhist temple was a story used to illustrate spiritual learning. And like embodied and spiritual learning, narrative learning is firmly lodged in what may be called the nonscientific. Drawing from Bruner (1986), Rossiter (2005) sums up the difference between scientific and narrative knowing: “Narrative knowing ... is concerned more with human meaning than with discrete facts, more with coherence than with logic, more with sequences than with categories, and more with understanding than with predictability and control” (p. 419).

We not only view our own lives as narratives but are surrounded by and embedded in narratives. We watch news stories on television, tell stories of our day at school or work, perhaps write the story of our day in our diary. Rossiter and Clark (in press) organize these surrounding narratives into four types—*cultural*, *familial*, *individual* (Keen & Valley-Fox, 1989), and *organizational* (Neuhauser, 1993).

Cultural narratives or myths are those that define the sociocultural milieu in which we live; they form the taken-for-granted assumptions on which we live our lives in the way that we do. The cultural narrative “is difficult to recognize—to notice and reflect upon—because we're immersed in it. It is as invisible to us as the air we breathe” (Rossiter & Clark, in press, p. 24 of ms.). In the United States, the individual being responsible for his or her own success, the right to material wealth, the United States as superpower, and so on, are parts of our cultural narrative but so embedded that we rarely recognize them as such. Sometimes it takes a catastrophic event to expose these narratives. For example, the authorities' lack of preparedness and Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the city of New Orleans challenged the cultural narrative of the United States being all-powerful and in control. Family narratives embrace certain values and beliefs, customs, roles, and rituals. “Who are the heroes of the family, whose stories are told with pride across the years? And who are the villains, the black sheep,

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whose crimes ... [are] only suggested or whispered?" (p. 26 of ms.). Individual narratives are how we story our own lives.

Finally, "just as cultures, families and individuals have narratives, so do organizations, and organizational narratives express and create the lore of the organization as in cultures and families" (Rossiter & Clark, *in press*, p. 30 of ms.). In adult education, these narratives can be examined, reflected upon, challenged, and even revised. Interestingly, the field of adult education itself is involved in constructing a narrative of its identity: "Are we heroes engaged in the emancipation of the oppressed? ... Are we tour guides in the business of actualizing the human potential of people who have leisure time? Are we entrepreneurs who sell job training in a competitive marketplace? Are we all of those characters?" (p. 33 of ms.).

Learning Through Narrative

The use of narratives is common in numerous disciplines, such as psychology and literature, and fields of practice, like medicine, law, social work, and more recently, education (Hopkins, 1994). Although it has only been since the 1990s that narrative learning has received some attention in adult education, the field's historical recognition of the importance of experience in learning, as well as learning as a meaning-making activity, have made for the ready acceptance of narrative as learning. Speaking of journals, a form of narrative, Kerka (2002, p. 1) writes that "a journal is a crucible for processing the raw material of experience in order to integrate it with existing knowledge and create new meaning."

Narratives can take a number of forms, each useful as a vehicle for learning. Rossiter (2005) and Rossiter and Clark (*in press*) identify three ways in which stories appear in practice: "storying" the curriculum, storytelling, and autobiography. In the first, the curriculum or the text of a course is treated as a story and students interact with these texts to come to some understanding or interpretation of the subject matter. For example, in a graduate research seminar on the development of the knowledge base of adult education, Merriam made use of research journals dating back to the 1930s, periodic reviews of research, and historical literature on the founding of professional associations and graduate programs in adult education. These materials were read and examined with the goal of telling a story (not necessarily *the* story) about

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how the knowledge base of adult education has come to be constructed as it has. Each student was asked to interpret these materials and to write a paper (a story) about the development of the knowledge base.

This storying of the curriculum is in itself a learning process. Clark (personal communication, July 30, 2005) explains this learning: "When we are learning something new, we're trying to make sense of it, to figure out its internal logic and how it's related to what we already know. We do this by narrating it, or trying to—that is, we work to story it, to make this new idea coherent to ourselves. ... The construction of that narrative is how we see our understanding come together and make sense. ... The narrativizing of our understanding is how we make our learning visible to ourselves, if only in our heads."

A second form of narrative, storytelling, in various forms—such as fiction (**Baumgartner & Merriam, 1999**), case studies, exemplars from practice, role-playing, or critical incidents—is a common means of engaging students in understanding concepts, principles, or theories. **Jonassen and Hernandez-Serrano (2002)** argue that stories in the form of cases are a good instructional technique to teach problem solving. They cite a number of studies with practitioners who understood their practice not from a technical or rational perspective but rather through stories and examples from experience. These stories of past experience were what guided future action. If practitioners in real-life situations solve ill-structured problems through narratives, stories, or cases, then "stories can function as a substitute for direct experience, which novice problem solvers do not possess. Supporting learning with stories can help students to gain experience vicariously" (p. 69).

Using stories to engage students in ideas that are part of course content may be the only way to allow understanding to occur. It is also a powerful means of making connections not only with ideas but with other learners, perhaps ultimately creating a learning community. Whether these stories are generated by students themselves, are case studies, or are fictional accounts, they draw us in, they allow us to see from another's perspective. In today's multicultural classrooms we cannot assume the rest of the world sees things the way we do. "The authenticity and immediacy of a story of lived experience takes us into the experience of another. In that

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way it deepens and expands our capacity for taking the perspective of another. In short, life story sharing reduces resistance to new or different points of view and serves to broaden the perspectives of all participants” (Rossiter & Clark, in press, p. 107 of ms.).

The third form of narrative, autobiographies, are by the self and about the self and can include journaling, dream logs, therapy, blogs, and what **Dominice (2000)** calls “educational biography.” Human beings have kept records of their lives for centuries. Some of these self-authored stories have become famous, such as St. Augustine's *Confessions*, or *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Others, though not by famous people, have proved enormously helpful to historians who want to tell the story of some past time or event. Slave narratives, immigrant journals, and memoirs of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps are examples of such historical narratives. Blogs are the most recent form. A blog is a Web site where “you write stuff on an ongoing basis.” A blog takes any number of forms; it can be “a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts” (<http://www.blogger.com/start>).

An early approach to one form of autobiographical methods—journaling—began in the well-known intensive workshops of the 1970s by **Progoff (1975)**. In these workshops, which are still held today, journaling is used to foster the participant's potential for growth and development. Indeed, research suggests there are a number of benefits in writing to the self and about the self. **Brady and Sky (2003)** studied fifteen older learners who kept a journal currently and had done so for at least three years. Interestingly, participants kept journals not as a lifelong activity but rather as a sporadic activity, which would be reignited by some critical life event, such as illness, death, family problems, and so on. These participants spoke of three benefits to journal writing. First, they described it as a means of coping with their day-to-day lives, including with decisions, with relationship issues, and “as an antidote to failing memory” (p. 159). A second benefit the researchers termed “the joy of discovery,” meaning that journals were “a sort of milestone for measuring one's own progress in the journey of human development” (p. 159). Finally, journaling allowed for the nurturing of one's voice and spirit; that is, journaling confirmed that they had “something meaningful to say” (p. 160), and it allowed for

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contemplation and sometimes the realization of a new level of spiritual consciousness.

Although the benefits of journaling for Brady and Sky's older adult learners might be partially explained by their life stage, their findings have similarities with those of other studies. **Wiener and Rosenwald (1993)** interviewed twelve people between eighteen and fifty years of age to identify the subjective utility of keeping a diary, a more structured form of journaling. One benefit was in establishing and maintaining boundaries among different senses of the self, and different emotions and experiences. Like Brady and Sky, the researchers in this study were surprised to learn that most participants kept multiple diaries. Participants kept separate journals for family matters, emotional writing, travel, daily events, and so on. While one benefit was maintaining boundaries of the self, another seemingly opposite benefit was dissolving boundaries. Participants reported using diaries "to allow repressed material to surface" (p. 42) and to bring to the fore varying aspects of the self.

Three other benefits uncovered by **Wiener and Rosenwald (1993)** are that diaries help manage emotions, manage time (a diarist can preserve the past, or condense past and present), and function as "the self in a mirror" (p. 43). By this last the authors mean that a diary can be like looking into a mirror—"defining the self by objectivating and then observing it" (p. 45).

Journal writing, whether it is about the self or about one's learning, has been advocated as a tool for adult learning, especially if the learner is asked to *reflect* on the day's (or class's) events and activities. Kerka (2000, p. 1) offers a set of assumptions about how this learning occurs:

- Articulating connections between new and existing knowledge improves learning.
- Writing about learning is a way of demonstrating what has been learned.
- Journal writing accentuates favorable learning conditions—it demands time and space for reflection, encourages independent thought and ownership, enables expression of feelings, and provides a place to work with ill-structured problems.
- Reflection encourages deep rather than surface learning.

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Connections and reflection are two aspects of learning that are also present in the construction of autobiographical stories and educational biographies. Autobiographical writing requires a bit more distance from the self than does journal writing. "Because autobiography involves not only recounting memories and expressions but also finding their larger meaning, and to the extent that the activity expands the individual's knowledge of self and the world, it constitutes learning" (Karpik, 2000, p. 34). It is in autobiography that we can identify "patterns and meaning in our life, perhaps even building a theory of our life, or of life in general. Having stepped back and reflected, we know something now that we did not know before" (p. 34). Karpik (2000) maintains that autobiographies are a particularly potent instructional activity, especially for courses in adult learning and adult development. As one student she interviewed said, "Autobiography helps an individual find how the course material fits into their life, as opposed to having the instructor do it for you" (p. 41). Another student said that in writing her autobiography, the concept of lifelong learning, which had previously been just a "buzz word," now had meaning. She could "see that in one's life each moment is a learning experience. ... That actual living was learning" (p. 42).

Focusing on one's educational history or how one has come to know what one knows is what Dominice (2000) calls *educational biography*. He has developed this technique into a two-semester student experience of oral and written narratives involving individual and collaborative learning. Through these biographies students see how family, schooling, and the sociocultural environment have helped them construct their identities as adult learners. "Looking at the past, checking roots, and giving names to experiential learning help adults clarify the future they want to build" (Dominice, 2000, p. 143).

Narrative Learning, Adult Development, and Transformational Learning

As is evident in the techniques already reviewed, narrative learning has very strong links to both adult development and transformational learning. As a means of understanding adult development, a narrative framework sees the life course as an unfolding story,

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one constructed and interpreted by the individual. While the sociocultural-historical context interacts with and to some extent shapes the life course, the meaning of our life experiences constitutes our particular developmental trajectory.

In contrast to stage and phase theories of adult development, most of which have an end state (such as **Erikson's [1963]** final stage of ego integrity versus despair, for example), life narratives are retrospective, always in process, unfolding. And as **Rossiter and Clark (in press)** point out, development from a narrative perspective can be “empowering. While we do not have control over many of the events or circumstances of our lives, we do have some choice as to how we interpret them. If something unpleasant happens it is not imperative that we will see it as the end of all happiness forever and ever. This realization of choice in meaning-making is one of the most valuable aspects of the narrative orientation” (pp. 38–39 of ms.)

Adult development and transformational learning are closely intertwined (see **Chapter Six**). The chief architect of transformational learning theory, Jack Mezirow, unequivocally states that the process of perspective transformation is “the central process of adult development” (1991, p. 155). The process that he delineates, however, is quite cognitive and depends on the critical examination of assumptions, reflection, and rational discourse. **Randall (1996)** makes a convincing case for how narrative can be seen as transformational learning. Both methods are primarily cognitive dealing with the learner's lived experience through interpretation, through creating new meaning. While Mezirow's process most often begins with a “disorienting dilemma” that causes us to examine our underlying assumptions and values, Randall suggests that when we encounter a life experience that cannot be accommodated by our old story of ourselves and the world, we seek to *restory* our lives: “We seek restorying when our current lifestory (inside, at least) no longer coheres within itself, when it becomes incoherent, when the many are at war with the one. We seek it when our central self-story has either too little conflict and so fails to go anywhere, or too much and so threatens to fly apart. ... We might seek restorying, for example, when a particular episode fails to fit with the dominant story we tell ourselves about who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going” (p. 238).

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In Mezirow's framework, transformational learning results in a “more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective,” one that better accommodates the meaning one makes of one's experience (1990b, p. 14). Restorying one's life is quite similar: “Specifically, it is the question as to how I can compose a story *big* enough, with a horizon *broad* enough, to account for as much as possible of my actual life and render it available to me as a coherent, re-membered whole” (Glover, cited in **Randall, 1996**, p. 240).

But adult development and transformational learning also involve embodied and spiritual learning. How we story our lives includes not just cognitive but emotional, bodily, and spiritual dimensions. In a study of a culturally diverse sample of midlife men and their transformative spiritual development, **Davis (2004)** found that the men “cited their experiences of spirit as a time of challenge and opportunity to express emotion, connect with people, relinquish control, and move beyond the rational” (p. 122).

Life transitions and crises that trigger development, whether social, psychological, or spiritual, are often highly charged, physical, and sometimes spiritual (see **Chapter Twelve**). The birth of a child, a major health problem, the loss of a job, and so on are experiences that are holistic in nature. In a discussion of the role of somatic learning in transformational learning, **Amann (2003)** explores how kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual aspects “centraliz[e] the body so that it is integral to the learning experience. Combined with opportunities for reflection, somatic learning contributes a new perspective to the scope of transformative learning” (p. 31). **Brooks and Clark (2001)** point out that narratives of transformative learning are compelling *because of* their affective, somatic, and spiritual dimensions.

To summarize this section on narrative learning, it is clear that adult educators have a means of facilitating learning that all adults can relate to—stories that surround us, that define us, that we can construct, analyze, reflect upon, and learn from. Stories can be used to understand content, ourselves, and the world in which we live. Narratives are also windows into development and transformational learning. They enable us to make sense of our experience, which is what adult learning is all about.

Chapter 8

Summary

Embodied, spiritual, and narrative learning all have in common meaning-making that is embodied, constructed, and interpreted. These are not modes of learning that adhere to a way of thinking that elevates reason, logic, and theory over the body, the spirit, or the “story” of our experience.

Embodied or somatic knowing is knowing through the body. It is directly related to our physical being, our senses, and the experiences of the body. Examples of embodied learning were presented and discussed; these examples reflect Amann's (2003) model of somatic knowing, which consists of the four overlapping dimensions of kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual. This section of the chapter concluded with a review of three conceptualizations of embodied learning: embodied cognition, ontological performance, and a somatic epistemology for education.

In the second section of the chapter on spirituality and learning, we first grappled with defining spirituality as something different from but perhaps related to religion. Most of the authors we reviewed link spirituality to meaning-making in our lives, and on that basis it is an appropriate topic for exploration in adult learning. A number of instructional techniques were reviewed that foster spirituality in adult learning, including self-examination by the instructor of her or his views and assumptions, creating a safe space for this kind of learning to occur, mentoring learners, and engaging in creative and imaginative instructional activities.

The final section of the chapter dealt with narrative learning. Narrative learning is the use of stories in the construction of meaning, whether the meaning-making has to do with the self, with the content of instruction, or with the world around us. Using Rossiter and Clark's (in press) model, three uses of narrative in practice were reviewed: narrative as storying the curriculum, narrative as storytelling, and narrative as autobiography. A final section focused on a narrative perspective of adult development and transformational learning.