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An Exploration of Generativity in Faculty Group Processes in Post-Secondary

Christine Slavik

Abstract

Like most organizations, a university needs to plan for its success. The environment in which universities operate continues to shift and change consequent to economic realities, changing demographics, changes in technology, and most recently a global pandemic. Planning in higher education must be creative and responsive to address multifaceted demands. To sustain post-secondary education, institutional leaders need to develop skill sets that promote effective dialogue, group work, and generativity within internal organizations. Concepts of leadership for the 21st century shift focus away from the previous approaches of making incremental improvements to already existing processes toward discovering possibilities, exploring potential innovations, and generating actions (Burgess & Newton, 2015; Webber, 2016). Building on existing frameworks for understanding generativity in group work and planning, this study sought to understand generative processes and conversations that compel people to act upon thoughts and feelings arising from social interactions. A descriptive study design was utilized to explore and summarize the experiences of faculty involved in three different group planning processes: brainstorming (Osborn 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an appreciative inquiry process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The development of a generative conversations survey tool focused on how the faculty participants perceived the qualities of their experiences. A key outcome of the research was the creation of a set of recommendations for thinking about the design of group sessions and meetings that can transmethodologically enhance chances for generative results.

Keywords: generativity, generative dialogue, generative outcomes, organization development, appreciative inquiry

Introduction

> "One good conversation can shift the direction of change forever" (Lambert, as cited in Good News Network, 2009, para. 1).

Universities are complex organizations experiencing a period of rapid change and facing many challenges (Beach et al., 2005; Bess & Dee, 2012; Charbonneau, 2013; Grant, 2016). There are expectations for universities to do more to reach out to students and their communities and respond to the market realities of decreased funding, increased costs, changing demographics, and changes in technology. Now they must also consider the impacts of the disruption caused by a global pandemic and determine the risks and opportunities that follow this period of instability. Higher education is changing. Universities are redefining and redesigning how they operate and are transforming their practices (Amrhein et al., 2013). In order to sustain higher education institutions during this period of change, post-secondary leaders need to develop new skills sets for new markets and a changing world (Bess & Dee, 2012). Leaders will have to develop and deploy the capacity to sense and enact upon emergent opportunities (Fullan, 2001; Scharmer, 2009).

This chapter explores insights from a study concerned with generativity (a generative state) and generative conversations (dialogic processes) that compel participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the interactions. To generate is to produce something, or cause something to come about ("Generate", n.d.). The term generative refers to having the power or function of generating, originating, producing or reproducing ("Generate", n.d.). For the purposes of this study, a generative conversation is defined as a dialogue that compels participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the interaction. These definitions have been inspired by the writings of several authors (Avital & van Osch, 2013; Bushe, 2013; Erikson, 1950; Gergen, 1978; Marshak, 2004; Zandee, 2004). The term dialogue may be defined as an interaction between two or more people or groups, especially one directed toward exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem, a description compatible with the focus of this study on generative conversations. Conversations have been identified as the building blocks of organizations (Bright et al., 2010; Cooren et al., 2006). Block (2010) claimed people who are interested in how new ideas are generated and how learning and change take place must observe conversations. Watching change in action, one does not see minds working but rather observes people meeting and conversing with each other. In this context, the way people experience coming

together becomes a major concern for how change happens (Block, 2010). In everyday experience, people do not see what precedes action and generativity. They do not see the full process of coming-into-being of action: they do not see its descending movement from thought and consciousness to language, behaviour, and action. People see what others actually do, how they act (Scharmer, 2009). In short, the ultimate evidence for generativity is productive action, action consistent with and appropriate to intents—not what is said, but what is done. However, all the same, it can be important and useful to seek to appreciate how the participants in planned and organized dialogues and conversations perceive and reflect on their experiences.

The Challenge of Change in Higher Education

Universities are often characterized as large and stable institutions and, as a result, are not seen to be particularly nimble or collaborative (Kezar, 2009). In my experience, post-secondary environments tend to be organized in departmental silos and are framed by bureaucratic or hierarchical administrative structures and policies. Steeped in tradition, the norms and values of this sort of complex administrative structure may limit communication, renewal, and innovation (Bess & Dee, 2012; Burgess & Newton, 2015; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). People in a hierarchical or bureaucratic structure are encouraged to share information along the line of command, reproducing certain patterns of communication and limiting others. Cross communication or horizontal patterns of interactions are more difficult in this formalized and traditional structure (Scharmer, 2009). Mintzberg (1979) found that there is a body of evidence that suggests the older the organization, the more formalized, routinized and standardized its behaviour. As organizations age, all other things being equal, they repeat their work, with the result that it becomes more predictable, and so more easily formalized (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 228).

Vertical organizations shaped by control-and-command leadership with well-developed standard policies and procedures that dictate behaviour and ensure uniformity fit well with previous approaches to leadership and planning, which often involved creating a fixed strategic plan and working toward incremental improvements of already existing processes (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Scharmer, 2009). Mintzberg (1979) proposed a relationship between external control of an organization and the extent to which it is centralized and/or bureaucratized (p. 288). The greater the external control of the organization, the more likely its structure is formalized.

Emergent opportunities, discovering possibilities, innovation, and generating action are stifled by bureaucratic process in which standardization or conformity rather than innovation are the cultural norms (Laloux, 2014).

In traditional and more stable environments, the way we do things governs people's actions (Deal & Kennedy, 2000). The unknowns are perceived as blind spots or threats to be managed rather than nurtured as undiscovered possibilities. In today's more organic and dynamic environments, the intangible dimension (i.e., the generative domain of human action and relationships) is moving from the periphery as something to be managed and into the center stage as something to be cultivated (Scharmer, 2009). For generative conversations to happen, a process must be in place whereby communication in an organization flows more freely and the emphasis on individualistic work and the reporting of such is consciously changed. Redesigning conversations to discover emergent ideas and compel actions is a process that universities can utilize to redefine and redesign how they operate and transform practice in meaningful ways (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013; Laloux, 2014).

Can Generativity be Fostered?

The purpose of this study was to investigate which processes are likely to lead to generative conversations in post-secondary organizations. The study explored three research questions.

1. What considerations are critical to the design and implementation of organized meetings and social interactions planned and structured to foster generative dialog?

2. Do the experiences reported by the participants in group meetings organized by processes claimed to foster generative outcomes indicate that the meetings supported generative capacity?

3. Do follow-up reports from the meeting participants and the results of an independent review of the meeting outcomes indicate that the sessions were generative?

This research project has both theoretical (deductive) and empirical (inductive) objectives. The theoretical objective was to build upon existing frameworks for understanding generativity in group work and planning through an exploration of existing work and theories (Bushe, 2007, 2013; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Elliot, 2002; Gergen, 1978; Marshak, 2004; Paranjpey, 2013; Topp, 2000). Attention was also directed toward previous writings in appreciative inquiry (Bushe, 2009, 2010, 2013; Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 1995; Cooperrider et al., 2009; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). In addition, writings in positive organizational psychology (Fredrickson, 2003; Linley et al., 2009; Lopez & Gallagher, 2009; Losada & Heaphy, 2004; Peterson, 2008) were reviewed and the concept of generativity was defined and clarified.

The empirical objective was to derive evidence and verify findings through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. The study included the development of a survey tool in which each item was derived from literature that described indicators of generativity. Having reviewed the literature and developed a conceptual understanding of generativity as a construct, the construct was then studied in practice. The survey focused on how the participants in meetings that were structured by processes that are claimed to foster generativity actually perceived the qualities of the experience.

Generativity

To be able to answer the research questions posed by this study, a definition of generativity needed to be developed and understood. How has generativity been defined and expressed? The concept of generativity as it relates to people, interactions, and behaviours can be found in the literature of the mid-20th century. Erikson (1950) described a stage of adult development in which in later life one feels compelled to give back or leave something of substance for the next generation. Since this early reference in social psychology the concept has been utilized in various other frameworks by authors interested how and why people relate to each other in specific ways. Table 1 notes some of the ways generativity has been characterized by various authors.

Table 1:
Generativity as Defined or Applied in the Works of Various Authors

Authors	Key concepts and definitions of generativity
Erikson (1950)	Stage of adult development – generativity vs stagnation.
Jung (1953)	Generative Archetypes.
Freire (1970)	Linguistic discourse, Generative words, Dialogic generative themes as part of pedagogy.
Gergen (1978)	Meaning making, relational dialogic.
Schön (1979)	Generative metaphor.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987)	Methodological aim of AI – generative theoretical springboard, Generative capacity, generative possibilities.
Topp (2000)	Generative conversations – creative linking of concepts, emergence of new themes.
Elliot (2002)	Importance of generative questions.
Zandee (2004)	Relational and open-ended nature of inquiry as a generative process.
Marshak (2004)	Generative conversation – dialogic versus diagnostic.
Kikoski and Kikoski (2004)	Inquiring organization – mutually generative – humanistic perspective of collaboration.
Chait (2005)	Sense-making, reframing the work.
Scharmer (2007)	Presencing – generative flow.
Bushe (2007)	Generative questions, generative conversations, generative action. Synergenisis.
Bright et al. (2010)	Generative state.
Bushe (1998)	Generative images.
Bushe (2013)	Generative process, generative capacity, generative outcomes.
Avital and van Osch (2013)	Black box of idea generation – fundamental mechanisms based on Jungian (1953) generation of process ideas – thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting.
Paranjpey (2013)	Generativity is created when people gather together and produce ideas that they believe in and that help in creating a collective action for the future.

The concept of generative theory (Gergen,1978) was first introduced into a community of scholars who viewed social science from a logical positivist stance (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). This was a bold shift in attention whereby theoretical accounts are no longer judged in terms of their predictive capacity, but instead are judged in terms of their generative capacity: their ability to foster dialogue about that which is taken for granted and their capacity for generating fresh alternatives for social action (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 69). Gergen (1978) proposed, "It is the generative theory that can provoke debate, transform social reality, and ultimately serve to reorder conduct" (p. 1346). It is through engaging in the act of challenging prevailing assumptions that the potential for generating new possibilities is created. New thoughts potentially lead to new actions, to the extent that actions are generated from beliefs, values, and thoughts.

In developing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) noted, "It has one and only one aim—to provide a generative theoretical springboard for normative dialogue that is conducive to self-directed experimentation in social innovation" (p. 97). AI "opens the status quo to possible transformations in collective action" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987, p. 97). By focusing on a paradigm that moved toward generating possibilities, AI transformed action research away from a continuous problem-solving model for organizations. These few quotes support the notion that the positive focus in AI is useful, but it is not its purpose. The one and only aim, the purpose of AI, is to generate new and better futures (Bushe, 2007). From its inception, the concepts of generative theory have clearly been core to AI.

Barrett and Cooperrider (1990) described the use of "generative metaphor" (p. 219) as an intervention with an organization experiencing conflict. The use of metaphor allowed the work group to refocus on another (metaphorical) organization that was free of the dysfunctional schemas of their own organization. Distanced from their issues and feeling a sense of safety with the process, the novel situation stimulated interest among the group members. They became active inquirers in another domain. Metaphor is generative to the extent that it serves to reorganize schemas and helps provide positive and compelling images (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990).

What is the relationship between hope and generativity? Positive, hopeful images can be generated through discourse. Does hope then generate action? In reviewing the literature across a range of fields, Ludema (2005) suggested there are four enduring qualities that give hope its power

in social and organizational transformation: it is (a) born in relationship, (b) inspired by the conviction that the future is open and can be influenced, (c) sustained by dialogue about high human ideals, and (d) generative of positive affect and action (p. 529). Ludema claimed that hoping is an essential ingredient in social and organizational transformation because it spawns generative action (p. 534).

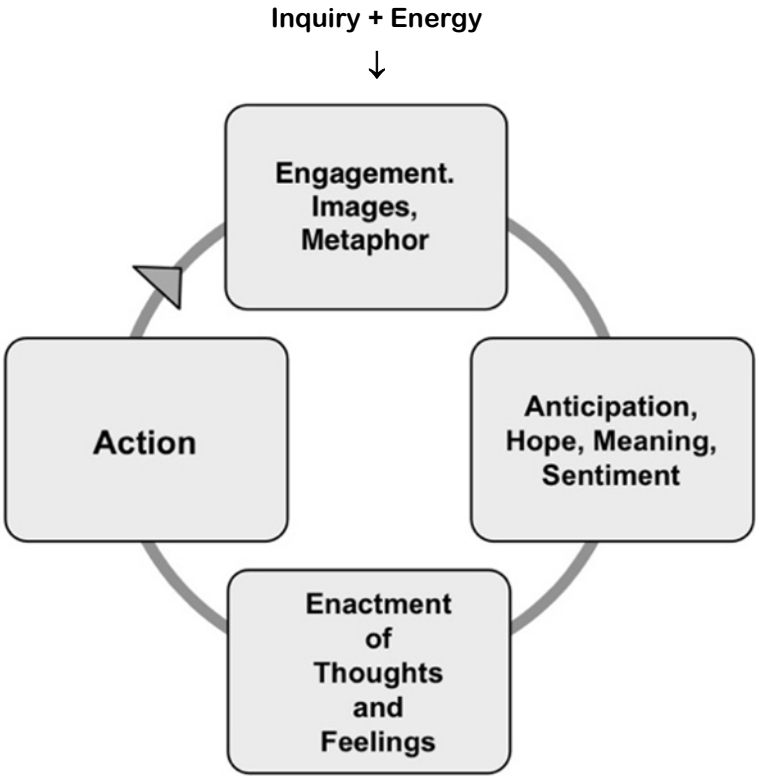
Bushe (2007) suggested generativity can and should be built into the design and facilitation of group ideation processes like AI through generative questions, conversations, and actions (p. 4). Generative questions have the following four qualities: (a) they are surprising, (b) they touch people's heart and spirit, (c) talking about and listening to these stories and answers will build relationships, and (d) the questions force people to look at reality a little differently, either because of how they ask individuals to think or because of who they are listening to (Bushe, 2007, p. 5).

Generative actions can be nurtured by ensuring that people believe they have permission to act. Leaders need to clarify what the boundaries of authority are and then get out of the way (Bushe, 2007). When everyone makes commitments to some kind of action, leadership should acknowledge any and all acts that move the organization in the collective desired direction, and those efforts should be elevated and supported. In this way leaders are supporting generativity. Generativity in application to organizational development occurs when a group of people discover and create new ideas that are compelling to them and others and provoke new actions (Bushe, 2009).

Through an exploration of cynical conversations, Bright et al. (2010) highlight the nature of negative and positive sentiments in relation to generativity. Sentiment refers to the lasting affective attachment people experience with the narratives they hear and share. Positive sentiment promotes engagement and commitment in people, while negative sentiment tends to erode trust and promote scepticism. Sentiments are "conversational markers" (Bright et al., 2010, p. 147), indicators of the degree to which people find their narratives and metaphors to be hopeful and motivating or discouraging and undesirable. Negative sentiment has been shown to have a greater impact on attentiveness than positive impact (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). The implications for this are that positive sentiments need to be nourished and built to dominate the ratio of positive to negative. Bright et al. (2010) characterized the cynical mode as dominated by negative sentiment

and the anticipatory mode as one full of positive sentiment. The anticipatory mode is foundational if generativity is to emerge in dialogue. A person is in a generative state (Bright et al., 2010) if they can consider new, future possibilities. Generativity emerges from the anticipatory mode when positive sentiment is directed towards the enactment of hopeful, organizing images and possibilities. Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of generativity.

Figure 1:
Representation of the Components of Generativity



After considering a range of work, an understanding of generativity emerges. A crucial element is the process of inquiry and discovery in which conversations and dialogue begin. It is there that narratives and dominant modes of conversation are shared. If people feel valued and heard, positive sentiment with its arousal state and energy are created. Generative questions can foster this process. The result of this is an anticipatory mode that is foundational to generativity. Through generative conversations, hopeful images of the future can be shared and co-constructed resulting in a generative state. Building on positive sentiments and energy, the possibilities and positive images can fuel generative actions. The creation of positive images on a collective basis opens up consideration of the future. As they emerge, these positive images can be captured and

developed, for example, through graphic facilitation or concept mapping. Generative actions can be nurtured through freedom to act and the belief that one has the authority and permission to do so. Hope, shared publicly, is stronger and can sustain actions. A guiding image of the future exists in the living dialogue that flows through every institution (Cooperrider, 1990).

Applying the concept of generativity to organizations means that people come up with new ideas, challenge the old ways of acting, and foster possibilities of a collective future, thereby transforming the social reality. Generativity can be thought of as driving change in organizations (Paranjpey, 2013). It is not like a personality trait within individuals; rather, it is a concept that links individuals with the society. It is a relational construct comprising multiple individual and social constructs (Paranjpey, 2013). Generativity is (or arises from) a social-psychological environment from which (or in which) the potential for actions is enhanced or potentiated. Group ideation processes directed toward change can also be viewed as learning processes that take place in communities of practice. By reassessing the way work is conducted in groups as learning opportunities, it is possible to redesign organization work to enhance generativity.

Generative Conversations

What has the literature reported about the factors that create generative conversations? Much like the representation of generativity described in Figure 1, there is a pattern of involvement in generative conversations. People come together, converse, and co-construct meaning. This form of experience expands thoughts, promotes learning, and is dynamic. People are continually generating a sense of what is real (Gergen, 2009). Through listening, learning is possible and new ideas and images are generated. Generative relational processes are catalytic; they inject relations with vitality. New and enriching potentials are opened through the flow of interchange (Gergen, 2009, p. 47). The first stage, then, of a generative conversation is engaged listening and learning.

Hope is an essential ingredient in social and organizational transformation because it spawns generative action (Ludema, 2005, p. 534). The next stage of a generative conversation relates to the experience of thoughts and feelings of hope and anticipation. Hope promotes the sort of listening or hearing that is not confined merely to having one’s own discourse somehow confirmed (Ludema, 2005, p. 534). Hope is most generative when it is inclusive; it inspires

collective action most powerfully when it is shared with other participants in a dialogue (Ludema, 2005, p. 536). Together, the first two stages of a generative conversation are about expansion.

With the pump primed for generativity, the next stage of a generative conversation involves the enactment of thoughts and feelings. The concept that the future is being constructed when people engage in meaningful conversation with others is at the heart of enacting ideals. Once people begin to talk to one another, co-construct new structures and systems of working together, they can make enormous progress toward ideals (Ludema et al., 2003, p. 23). Having socially constructed the vision of a future that is important to them, thoughts and feelings are now oriented toward a collective focus and action. Results are gained through connection, making meaning, and, ultimately, taking action, the final stage of a generative conversation. Generative conversations help groups learn and mobilize collective action.

A generative conversation can be defined as a dialogue that compels participants to act upon thoughts and feelings produced as a result of the conversational interaction. A conversation is generative if ultimately there is some productive or practical action that can be seen to have occurred. Having explored the literature on what sorts of thoughts and feelings create generativity, key concepts were utilized to develop a generative conversations survey tool for this study. The survey, which contains 17 items, was constructed to reflect general concepts of generativity in groups and was derived from the review of relevant studies on generativity and ideation, with an emphasis on the application of processes intended to foster these (see Table 2).

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Generative Conversations Survey Items Derived from Related Research.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	**Survey Item**
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	1. I heard new information when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) Bushe (2007, 2013)	2. I learned from a colleague when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2002) Bushe (2013) Schon (1979)	3. I was surprised by what I heard when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) Ludema et al. (2003) Bushe (2013)	4. As a result of participation in this group process I have developed an action plan related to the topic of an exceptional practicum experience.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987)	5. I experienced the group process as creative.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	6. I was fully engaged in the group process.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	7. I feel motivated to act as a result of the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	8. I felt emotionally engaged during participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	Survey Item
Barrett and Cooperrider (1990)	9. I was able to suspend self -interest during participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005)	10. As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience, I think there will be some change in what we do.
Gergen (1978) Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003)	11. During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt a sense of connectedness to my colleagues.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	12. During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt energized.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	13. I heard new ideas when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Gergen (1978) Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Topp (2000) Marshak (2004) Bushe (2007, 2013)	14. My thoughts were expanded when I participated in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	15. As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience, I feel a sense of hopefulness.
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2002) Bushe (2013) Schön (1979)	16. I saw old things in new ways as a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.

Research & Scholarship related to the Survey Item	Survey Item
Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) Ludema et al. (2003) Ludema (2005) Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) Bushe (2007, 2013)	17. Participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience compels me to act upon the points raised.

Note: This table refers to group exploration of a topical question, the nature of an exceptional practicum experience, that was relevant to the participants and their organizational units within the university where the draft survey was trialled.

It is worth pointing out that when it comes to group ideation processes, a number of terms are used to describe how people interact: conversations, discussion, dialogue, and debate. These terms are often utilized interchangeably so as to become conflated. Senge (1990), in his book *The Fifth Discipline*, described two primary forms of discourse, dialogue and discussion, and claimed both are important to a team capable of continual generative learning (p. 240). Senge made a distinction between the two, describing discussion as opposing perspectives being presented and defended and dialogue as people freely and creatively exploring ideas, listening deeply to others, and suspending their own views in search of a common understanding. A discussion can turn into a debate of one idea over another, and in an the extreme, a person can dominate a discussion to try and get support from others. In a dialogue people explore complex issues from many points of view (Senge, 1990, p. 241).

Methodology

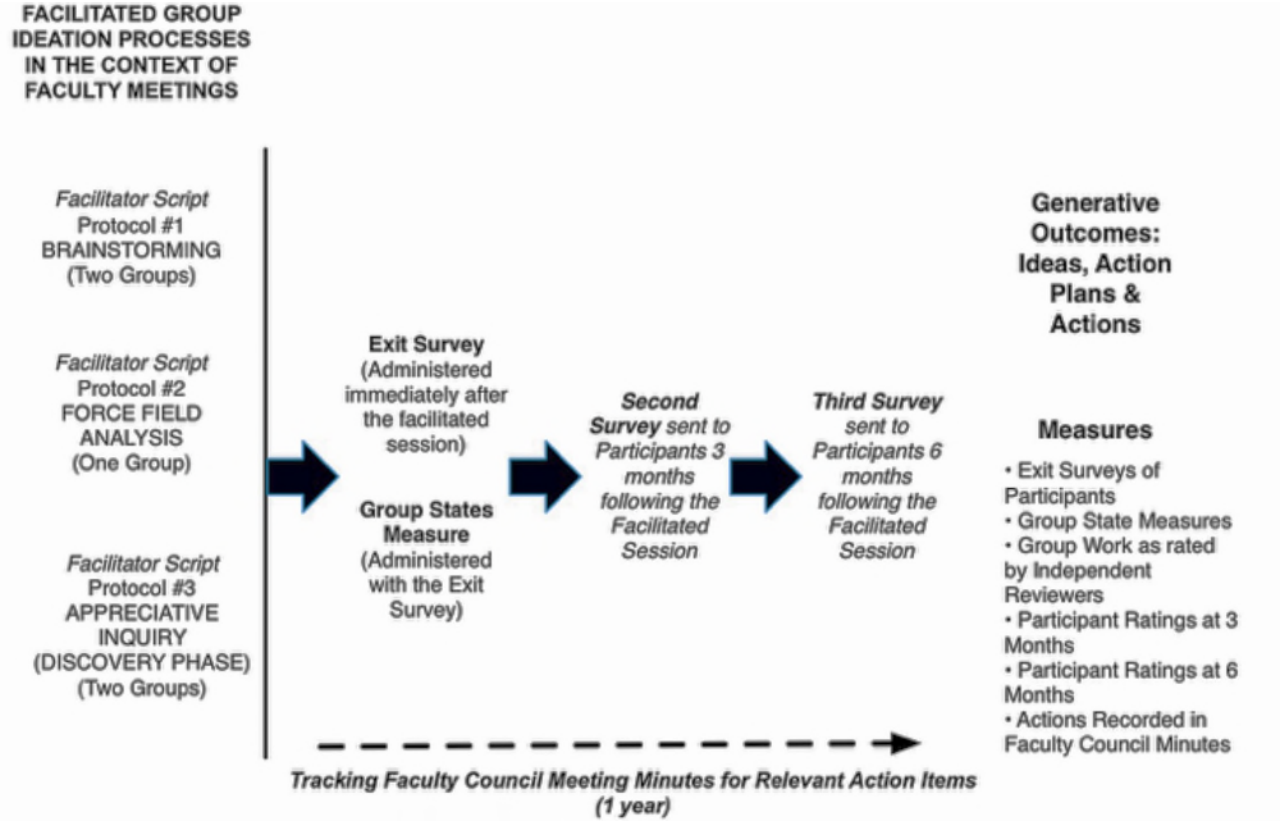
The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences described by participants who had been involved in meetings structured by processes that are widely claimed to support generative conversations. The focus of the study was on whether the participants in the studied processes perceived their conversations as having attributes of generativity. The participants were all members of faculty and staff in a post-secondary organization. This study was conducted in a mid-sized university within a selected geographical area, utilizing specific departments and schools within a single, larger faculty. The sample size was small (five groups, 27 individual respondents, and three independent reviewers). The research entailed the development of an original survey tool that was utilized for the first time in an attempt to explore and assess

participants' perceptions of generativity. Multiple strategies (i.e., mixed methods) were utilized to increase construct validity. The research entailed conducting meetings with university staff and faculty using three different group ideation processes: brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an AI process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The research goal was to identify the antecedent conditions, group properties, and ideation processes that lead to generative conversations as well as to determine participants' perceptions of generativity resulting from these sessions. In each case, the different sessions were facilitated and arranged using the protocols normally prescribed for each process. In order to control for bias, the selected group ideation processes were randomly assigned to the study groups.

Data was collected from the following sources. First, a Generative Conversations Survey as developed for the project was administered to solicit the participants' experiences of generativity. Semi-quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to analyze the data from the survey. Second, three independent reviewers were selected to review the ideas produced by the groups and complete a survey rating the total pool of ideas produced by the sessions in terms of their novelty, practicality, and whether or not they were compelling. An examination of the group processes utilized in the groups studied sought to discover the mediators and conditions that aid generativity. A visual model representing the sequential mixed methods design for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Sequential Mixed-Methods Design: An Exploration of Generativity in Faculty Group Processes in a University Setting



The setting and selected participants were chosen through convenience sampling (Creswell, 2008). The faculty groups represented six distinct departments and schools in the study. The question proposed as a focus for the group dialogues (i.e., What makes an exceptional practicum experience) was one that would have current or prospective future relevance to these working units. For the purposes of this study, meeting groups were randomly assigned to one of the three different group processes that have been claimed to foster generativity: brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963), a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), and a variation of an AI process (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The focus of the research was not on the mechanics of the different approaches, but rather on making a qualitative review of the perceptions of the participants as to whether they had personally experienced the session as having attributes associated with generativity. In total, five groups participated of which only one group participated in a force field analysis (Lewin, 1947), while both brainstorming (Osborn, 1953, 1957, 1963) and

the adapted AI (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) processes were facilitated in sessions with two faculty groups for each process. In total, 27 participants generated work from the facilitated dialogue sessions and completed the GCSs. One group was not able to participate due to organizational time constraints. Follow-Up surveys were sent (different from the original GCS) to all participants at 3 months and 6 months after the initial sessions. The Follow-Up survey had six items and focused on actions related to the initial respondent dialogues.

The statements were as follows:

1. Specific action plans emerged (either during or after) from the [*specific ideation process inserted here*] about what makes an exceptional practicum experience.
2. The school/department has taken actions related to those plans in the last 3 months?
3. I have personally taken action related to those plans in the last 3 months.
4. Others in your my school/department have taken action related to those plans in the last 3 months.
5. I have been involved in further conversations about practicums in the last 3 months.
6. I feel compelled to act upon some of the points raised during the *[Brainstorming, AI or Force Field Analysis inserted here*] 3 months ago.

Three independent faculty reviewers were chosen to look at the ideas produced by the groups and independently complete scales rating the generativity of the ideas. The independent reviewers were chosen from faculty at a variety of departments and schools that were not participants in the facilitated sessions. The reviewers were also experienced with the choice of the focal topic, the nature of student practicum experiences, that was offered as a focus for the session dialogues. The independent reviewers had between 3 and 13 years of experience at the university and were considered to have the knowledge necessary to understand the context of the participants' ideas that they were reviewing. The survey tool used by the reviewers for evaluating the work of the groups drew upon the same body of literature utilized to develop the GCS. In assessing generativity, the independent reviewers were asked to evaluate the degree to which the work generated by the groups was novel, compelling, and practical. These measures of generativity were decided upon as they have been utilized in previous studies (Bushe, 2013; Bushe & Paranjpey,

2014; Paranjpey, 2013) comparing the experiences of participants during different group ideation processes.

The final part of the data collection process was the review the minutes of Faculty Council meetings for a period of 1 year following the initial group-ideation processes to determine if any changes or motions were made to programs or curriculum that could be seen as related to the topics discussed with each group during the facilitation.

Conclusions

Given the small number of study participants and the manner of their recruitment, it was not possible to make statements that would quantitatively compare the effectiveness of the processes of brainstorming versus AI, versus force field analysis. However, it was possible to apply and assess the utility of the GCS as a tool to reveal whether the experiences of the session participants matched the elements of generative dialogue as proposed in relevant research and scholarship. Further, the reports of the independent raters provided another lens into the session outcomes.

Five different faculty groups participated in the facilitated sessions and each group composed ideas about what makes an exceptional practicum experience. Twenty-seven faculty completed the GCS. While differences in the formats of the five sessions and in the numbers of participants involved made statistical comparisons unreliable, a preliminary analysis of the variance in the post-ideation survey responses indicated that there was about the same amount of variance within groups who utilized the same group ideation process as there was among the sessions that used different group ideation processes. The results of a factor analysis utilizing a correlation matrix, found the GCS statements assess participant responses to their experience of the generativity of their sessions and the survey statements are different ways of describing various facets of generativity.

A question that framed the research for this project asked, “Do follow-up reports from the meeting participants and the results of an independent review of the meeting outcomes indicate that the sessions were generative?” If group sessions are conducted in ways that satisfy the conditions proposed as fostering generativity or generative capacity, then the session should

produce generative outcomes. The ultimate generative outcome might be considered to be action taken on identified projects or shared goals. Generative outcomes can be assessed according to whether proposals and ideas generated in a group are compelling, novel, and practical. A panel of three independent judges was convened to review the ideas produced by the five working groups. The reviewers were asked to rate the ideas as being compelling, novel, or practical using a 5-point scale.

The ratings of novelty and compelling, at the group level, were significantly and negatively related. If something was compelling, it wasn't novel, and vice versa. Further, all the items on the GCS had a negative relationship to novelty. If the conversation was generative, as defined by the GCS, it didn't produce novel ideas. The analysis of the panel review data also found that there was some inconsistency among the judges in the application of the ratings of the ideas in the three categories. This might suggest a need for better orientation about the task for the judges and perhaps closer communication among them and with me as researcher during the process.

A goal of the design for this study was to follow up the group sessions to see whether there had been any actions taken in regard to the focal topic of the meetings, namely the development of student practicum experiences. At the 3- and 6- month points after the group meetings, a short survey was distributed to the original participants. The survey included open-ended questions. The results were somewhat disappointing, as only 11 participants returned responses at 3 months, and at the 6-month point just nine responses were returned. It was, therefore, problematic to really evaluate the degree to which perceptions of generativity persisted among all the original participants with so few responding after time passed. It is also difficult to know why the follow-up responses were so limited.

At the time of the actual meetings, some written comments from participants on the open-ended section of the GCS indicated that the sessions had at least provoked some future-oriented thinking and action, as shown in the following examples of comments from Group 5 in the study.

- The process will inform the department’s program review and discussions about workload;

- As we embark on a program review this is likely to have incredible influence over how we define ourselves.

What is interesting here is that change in thinking occurs not about the core issue of the practicum as much as about the process and how the participants in the department define themselves. Changes in those factors might enable action in regard to the practicum but may be more likely to change how the department or organizational unit operates and as a secondary output that might lead to action on the practicum.

Further follow-up information was obtained from an examination of the archives of the Faculty Council agendas and minutes. This review showed that Group 2, who engaged with the AI process, put forward a new elective course that introduced a field experience component as integral to the content. The faculty member who spoke to the new course outline was part of the initial facilitation process with Group 2. In the case of Groups 3, and 5, the department head of each of the respective programs represented the departments in proposing changes to existing course outlines. The department heads were also part of the group ideation process in each instance. Both Groups 3 and 5 proposed to meetings of the Faculty Council changes to courses that were about practicum and field experience. The rationale given involved adjustments to the course description, learning objectives, and course outcomes to improve overall student learning opportunities.

Of the three faculty units that were associated with proposals to Faculty Council regarding the student practicum, and that had also participated in the facilitated dialogues, two sessions had utilized the adapted AI process and the third utilized brainstorming. However, it is not possible to make a claim that the proposals to Faculty Council were clearly direct outcomes of the sessions described in this research. Further, the data from the GCS shows that the majority of participants in the three groups that were associated with the proposals to Faculty Council in regard to student practica indicated that they “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with the following survey statements. That is, they agreed that they (a) heard new information, (b) learned from a colleague, (c) had expanded their thoughts, (d) heard new ideas, (e) experienced the process as creative, (f) were emotionally engaged, (g) felt connectedness to colleagues, (h) felt energized, (i) were fully engaged, and (j) saw old things in new ways.

Given that proposals for changes to student practica were moved forward to the Faculty Council by the departments whose faculty had been involved in the sessions described in this research, it is possible that the participants' experiences may have played a role in generating these actions. Further, since two of the three departments that initiated actions at Faculty Council had employed the AI approach in their sessions it might be tempting to suggest that AI could be viewed as being particularly effective as a generative approach. However, coincidence or concurrence is not necessarily causation, so caution is exercised in making these observations.

A second research question addressed in this study was, "What considerations are critical for the design and implementation of meetings and social interactions planned and structured to foster generative dialog?"

It would seem that under certain conditions thoughts and feelings are changed and can mobilize people to act. However, the changes as reported by the participants above were not directly related to the issue of the practicum as much as they concerned how the process affected the departmental review or how the session affected how the people in the department were defined. In designing the survey tool for this study, each statement represented an attribute or condition that has been described in various research and writings as providing a foundation for a generative social environment, largely in group settings. Building on this concept, it is possible that the GCS tool can be utilized as a checklist of general design criteria for the organization of sessions intended to foster transmethodological group generativity. In other words, no matter what group ideation process is used, if the intention is to develop a social setting in which people are encouraged to ideate and generate, the statements that framed the GCS in this research can be restated as potentially useful considerations for the planning of a group session in which generative outcomes are desired or expected. Group meetings, like learning experiences more generally, can be seen as meaning driven, identity forming, and socially situated (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

The design of the study allowed groups to come together to think about context-driven, creative alternatives to best practices in regard to student practicum experiences. Good questions (or provocative issues) can stimulate generative ways of thinking that may move towards outcomes. The issue of an exceptional practicum served as the basis for dialogue during the group ideation processes. The topic promoted a different focus, one that participants had not experienced

before. Bushe (2013) suggests that more attention be paid to the potency that a generative image, as the affirmative topic, can have (p. 8).

Generative capacity

Group session participants' responses to a series of statements and open-ended questions included in the GCS were important data sources for this research. A question always to be addressed in survey construction is whether or not the survey items validly reflect the constructs that they assess. A table showing the derivation of the 17 statements that comprise the GCS from relevant literature on the nature of generative dialogue and interactions was highlighted earlier in this chapter.

Gergen (2009) has described generative processes as those that stimulate the expansion and flow of meaning (p. 47). Gergen's description highlights the concept that when an interaction is generative, changes occur in thoughts and feelings and that potential for action unfolds as a result. Bushe (2013) described generative capacity as the ability of people, individually and collectively, to reconsider that which is taken for granted and to open up to new possibilities (p. 4). Generative capacity addresses that which drives a person or group to act on thoughts and feelings. I would propose that when head (thoughts) and heart (feelings) are touched and changed, space is created for new understandings and the capacity for action is enhanced. Scharmer (2009) asserted a dialogue that moves toward collective creativity is a social field that needs a container, that is the conditions that allow people to shift their attention toward a collective whole. Social fields are characterized by high degrees of trust, respect, and creative engagement among participants (Scharmer, 2009, p. 294). Social fields are founded on relationships. Higher level conversations like dialogue and collective creativity require higher quality containers and holding spaces. Transforming the quality of conversation in a system means altering the quality of relationships and thoughts, and subsequently the quality of future results or actions (Scharmer, 2009). A relational space is opened when participants listen and attune to each other, thereby increasing generative capacity.

A generative image (i.e., seeing something in a new way) is a component of generative capacity (Bushe, 2013). For some of the groups involved in this study, the dialogue that occurred during the group ideation processes created the possibility for the participants to engage, connect,

and learn with images of a desired future being generated. Generative capacity connected to generative imagery is reflected in the results of this project in the following (Group 3) participants' comments on the open-ended section of the GCS "The use of metaphor as a powerful organizer of thinking."

- "I liked that we changed chairs when we told our story, seemed to privilege our words."
- "Great process."
- "Each story drew out different pieces."
- "I could hear every individual voice."

Bushe (2013) further defined generativity as

> the creation of new images, metaphors, physical representations, and so on that have two qualities: they change how people think so that new options for decisions and/or actions become available to them, and they are compelling images that people want to act on. (p. 1)

Thoughts and feelings are the fuel for generative capacity in the form of future-oriented thinking and action, as shown in the following examples of comments from Group 5 in the study:

- "The process will inform the department's program review and discussions about workload."
- "As we embark on a program review this is likely to have incredible influence over how we define ourselves."

Paranjpey (2013) described generative capacity as being configured by five constructs that involve cognition or the capacity of individuals to challenge the guiding assumptions and question them and the psychosocial functions that relate the person with the social world. (p. 19). She defined the constructs of generative capacity as curiosity, hope, self-efficacy, group efficacy or group potency, and positive affect (Paranjpey, 2013). Curiosity is described as driving people to look around, discover, and question taken for granted assumptions, and is concerned with the cognitive ability of people to think in new ways with consequent results in action. Paranjpey (2013)

contended that hope and self-efficacy combine to promote action and stated that generativity entails a desire for engaging in purposeful activities that will be an extension to one's self, as well as to make a difference in the lives of others (Bradley, as cited in Paranjpey, 2013). The attribute of positive affect relates to generativity in that it requires an individual to have a belief in self in order to engage in action (Paranjpey, 2013, p. 21). As Luthans and Church (2002) noted, "Self-efficacy is a personal judgement or belief in how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 60). Group potency is described as entailing the belief that a group has the resources and competencies to accomplish a task.

Generative Dialogue

An important element of the psychosocial environment of group-based generative conversations is dialogue. Dialogue is a creative, open-ended activity of two or more people thinking together (Paranjpey, 2013). Gergen et al., (2004) state the following about dialogue: (a) dialogue originates in the public sphere; (b) dialogue is a form of coordinated action; (c) dialogue efficacy is bodily and contextually embedded; (d) dialogue efficacy is historically and culturally situated; and (e) dialogue may serve many different purposes, both positive and negative. Gergen et al. also proposed that dialogue is generative when it is (a) affirmative (i.e., it values the opinions of others) and (b) repetitive, which means it is discussed again and again in the group. Each discussion helps in learning and reflection and brings out productive differences, thus enabling the participants to reach a new level of shared meaning and a vision for the future. Effective dialogue can facilitate the social construction of knowledge (Perkins, 1992) and also inspire creativity.

Generative Questions

If dialogue is important to generative conversations, generative questions can be the spark that initiatives (or necessitates) generative dialogue. Generative questions can help change the ways people look at the world and escape unquestioning or unrecognized assumptions. Bushe (2007) proposed that generative questions have four qualities: they are surprising, they touch people's emotions, they build relationships, and they invite looking at reality differently. Research on brainstorming (Gregersen, 2018), for example, emphasizes the importance of good questions as much or more than ideas to address the questions.

The design of the study allowed groups to come together to think about context-driven, creative alternatives to best practices in regard to student practicum experiences. Good questions (or provocative issues) can stimulate generative ways of thinking that may move towards outcomes. The issue of an exceptional practicum, served as the basis for dialogue during the group ideation processes. The way the topic was framed promoted a different focus, one that participants had not experienced before. Bushe (2013) suggested that more attention be paid to the potency that a generative image, as the affirmative topic, can have (p. 8). For one of the groups in this study (Group 2) the word "practicum" was initially a barrier that implicitly challenged the relevance of the focal topic for them. This will be explored further in Section 5.9, which discusses the limitations of this study.

A process to empower generative change should elicit new images and ideas that provide people with new eyes to see old things, resulting in new options for decisions and actions that they find appealing (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p. 45). It is worth noting that the GCS statements that produced the most positive Likert responses were those that referred to "hearing new information," "hearing new ideas," and "having thoughts expanded." Then it would seem that being asked to look at reality differently can refocus people on a topic in ways that are more generative (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, 2016). Lang (2014) similarly suggested that innovators ask more and better questions. In industries in which fast-paced change is the norm, innovation has become the holy grail (Lang, 2014). Lang advocated for asking the right questions, opening to new possibilities, promoting divergent thinking, and focusing on questions not answers.

Group Size and Organization

A common factor emerged from examining the experience of the three generative group conversations that appeared to lead to specific actions, that is, the opportunity to work in dyads. Both Groups 2 and 3 engaged with the adapted AI process in which each participant had the opportunity to be an interviewer and interviewee, a dyad within a small group of four. In Group 5, there were only two participants who worked as a dyad during a brainstorming process. The literature on the brainstorming process suggested there are ways to improve the process through specific group discussion procedures that include beginning dialog in dyads (Diehl & Stroebe, 1987, 1991).

In examining what processes and social or physical environmental conditions can aid generativity, and what elements are critical in the design of organized meetings and social interactions planned to foster generative dialogue, consideration of pairing or dyad work seems to be important. Recent research and proposals on the characteristics of agile organizations (Barton et al., 2018) suggested that deploying people into tribes, squads, and chapters can resolve issues more quickly than many of the conventional department, work group, or project-based organizations. In this terminology the term squad refers to a cross-functional group of nine or fewer people charged with meeting a specific task. The term tribe refers to a collection of squads focused on the same overall issue. A chapter combines people who share common workplace or organizational disciplines and skills (Barton et al., 2018, p. 60). The point here is that new ideas are emerging in the field of OD around how to group people around issues, opportunities, or problems. Educational organizations may largely still be very conservative in their structures—departments, faculties, centres.

Institutional Context

In examining what processes and social or physical environmental conditions can aid generativity, and what elements are critical in the design of organized meetings and social interactions planned to foster generative dialogue, consideration of pairing or dyad work seems to be important. When conducting a research project in the field, there are often many variables that may influence the experiences of the participants and outcomes of the study. In the case of this project there are several such factors to consider. The institution in this study has a history of moving from a college to a university college and then to a new designation as a teaching intensive, regional university. Organizational change was very salient during the time the study was completed. Two of the faculty groups chosen for the study were in the process of institutional program reviews. As a result, they appeared to perceive the group ideation activity as an opportunity to contribute to the work of the ongoing review process and were motivated to explore the practicum topic. These two groups represented two of the three departments from which members subsequently took actions toward the practicum issue by bringing recommendations to the Faculty Council within the year of the study. At the very least the sessions described in this research may have contributed somewhat to the actions that were taken at the Council level.

Another factor to consider was the nature of the topic chosen for discussion during the group ideation processes. While the university as a whole is promoting innovation through scholarship on teaching and learning that includes the exploration of experiential and place-based learning, the faculty groups involved in this study were in very different stages with regard to the use of practica in their programs. The goals and norms related to high impact practices and experiential learning also varied across the disciplines represented in the study. This influenced the focusing task's relevance for some of the groups with some having strong familiarity with practica as integral parts of their programs (Groups 1 and 3) and others (Groups 2 and 4) not currently engaged in practica as instructional strategies. This may have affected the levels of participant engagement with the group ideation process.

The Generative Conversations Survey as a Design Tool

In addition to thoughtfully establishing an inquiry stance to promote generativity, Storch (2015) explored the way meaning influences actions suggesting that everything matters when it comes to considerations (plans for meetings and group dialogue) for scene-setting activities. Examples of these activities include considering what kind of conversations need to be pursued, where and when they will occur, how the room will be arranged, and how much time is needed (Storch, 2015). Time is often neglected as a factor in planning sessions, especially in organizations in which the timetable or schedule dominates (e.g., in schools) or when the time-is-money theme is stressed and there are always concerns about "time wasting".

How one choreographs group dialogue may aid or hamper what one hopes to realize. Zandee (2013) suggested that relational engagement is pivotal for change. Relational engagement refers to establishing opportunities for shared inquiry, understanding and values exploration. Building on the work of these authors who have previously explored what needs attention when it comes to group process and generativity, I suggest that the GCS tool as developed for this research can be used as a way of thinking about process design.

In designing the survey tool for this study, each statement represented an attribute or condition that has been described in various research and writings as providing a foundation for a generative social environment, largely in group settings. Building on this concept, it is possible that the GCS tool can be utilized as a checklist of general design criteria for the organization of

sessions intended to foster transmethodological group generativity. In other words, no matter what group ideation process is used, if the intention is to develop a social setting in which people are encouraged to ideate and generate, the statements that framed the GCS in this research can be restated as potentially useful considerations for the planning of a group session in which generative outcomes are desired or expected.

In a sense, the survey represents a descriptive theory about the planning and conduct of a generative group session. Table highlights each statement from the GCS and links the statement to its potential implications for designing and facilitating a generative learning environment.

Table 3.

Generative Conversations survey statements linked to their potential applications in the planning and implementation of sessions intended to foster ideation and generativity

GSC Survey Item	Implications for learning environment and facilitation/Session Design Goals
*(1) I heard **new information** when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*In order for people to hear new information the session should establish and sustain a climate that encourages and enables active listening. This means paying attention to how conversations are structured, and teaching active listening skills as needed. New information or data about the focal issue can also provoke or stimulate engagement and help participants see the relevance of the meeting.* *If there is important data/information about the focal issue, then it should be distributed prior to the meeting. The facilitator should be prepared to "frame" the situation, including the new data, in in a concise, clear presentation format that frames the information in a way participants have not likely considered before.*
*(2) I **learned** from a colleague when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*Breaking into dyads or small groups may give more chance for people to be heard and to explain their ideas to a colleague or small group and may promote inquiry-based dialogue.* *Paying attention to the composition of pairs or small groups can increase the likelihood of participants learning from colleagues. An example of this approach can be found in the work of Ludema, Whitney, Mohr and Griffin, (2003, pp. 82–83 regarding putting together "improbable pairs" that is, bringing people together who may have differing perspectives in a way that voices get heard and colleagues learn from and about each other.*
*(3) I was **surprised** by what I heard when I participated in the group process about the topic of the session.*	*When people are exposed to new information, they are more likely to be surprised and see thoughts or ideas in ways they have not applied before.* *A useful approach may be to structure the group ideation process utilizing questions that haven't been discussed or thought about before (Bushe, 2013). It may be helpful to consider utilizing provocative propositions.*

	Partnering participants in improbable pairs to increase the likelihood of hearing surprising stories and information may also be considered. *Encouraging storytelling and reflection as a method of sharing among group participants can help them to structure questions that are personally meaningful and have emotional attachment.*
*(4) As a result of participation in this group process I have **developed an action plan** related to the topic.*	*To close the session have participants complete a brief reflection exercise where they consider the ideas generated and record one thing they personally intend to do immediately, in one week, in one month. Record and share commitments to action from as many participants as possible.* *Where it makes sense to the organization, ensure participants know they have the authority to move their ideas into actions.*
*(5) I experienced the group process as **creative**.*	*Frame the session around questions and images that can spark feelings and motivations.* *In order to promote a climate that supports creative or lateral thinking set up guidelines as to openness to ideas, positivity, and exploration and acceptance of diverse perspectives.* *Utilize experiential activities that allow participants a forum to express ideas differently: art, media, performance.* *Engage in an opportunity mapping exercise participants create the future. Eg: you wake up after a long sleep (5 years) and you look around and everything is as you hoped. Describe what you see?* *Enlist the use of graphic facilitation in order the support different modes of expression and the* *use of a range of metaphors and images.*

(6) *I was **fully engaged** in the group process.*	*In order for people to engage they need to intend to be part of the process and to have the opportunity to engage personally. Open the session with a brief mindfulness-based activity that attunes participants to the present moment.* *Invite discussion of the personal relevance of the discussion topic for individuals, the group and the organization. Consider a potent generative image to begin the dialogue.* *Focus on what people think. Utilize dyads and small group activities that have every individual tell their story or share their experience.* *Ensure an open, safe environment where differing perspectives can emerge.* *Consider the organizational status of the group and build in specific group development activities as needed.*
*(7) I feel **motivated to act as a result** of the group process about the focal topic or issue.*	*In order to feel motivated to act participants need to believe their actions are accepted and can be supported. Motivation can be linked to having a sense of locus of control, and that one can actually influence results. Acknowledge new ideas as they emerge and are accepted. Encourage the development of many potential opportunities to transform rather than aiming to find just one solution.* *Feeling heard, understood and valued can contribute to a sense of motivation. Providing opportunities for participants to share their experiences promotes both engagement and motivation.* *Observe when participants feel motivated and support innovation where possible.* *Ensure authority to act upon ideas and innovations is defined and communicated to participants.*
*(8) I felt **emotionally engaged** during participation in the group process about the focal question.*	*For people to emotionally engage they need to feel relationally safe, and to have opportunities to share and make meaning of the group process.* *Consider the group state and stage of development. Build in opportunities to have participants spend time getting to know each other in dyads and smaller groups. Review active listening skills and ensure an understanding of group dynamics.*

	Establish climate goals for group behavior and discuss them with the participants to get their inputs and any concerns. *Observe and guide relational and task related behaviours of the group.*
(9) *I was able to **suspend self -interest** during participation in the group process about the focal question.*	*In order to suspend self-interest one needs to be able to focus on another or a larger picture.* *The more supportive, accepting and caring the social environment, the freer a person is to experiment with new behaviours, attitudes, and action (Johnson & Johnson, 2013, p. 52).* *Establish a common, shared understanding of the topic for discussion.* *Encourage active listening and reflection beginning in dyads. Structure a series of questions to invite one person at a time to share their story. The role of the listener is to capture the essence of the other's story and reflect on what they heard and learned, as well as making notes about values and beliefs they hear. Ensure every participant has a chance to be the one sharing and one being listened to. This might be done in small groups or pairs and people could be asked to introduce another member to the group.*
*(10) As a result of participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience **I think there will be some change** in what we do.*	*Close the meeting by having the participants write a short, 1 paragraph **personal** statement concerning their views about how to obtain or follow up action of the focal issue. Share those short **personal** Action Statements before adjournment or use a follow up online forum.* *Ensure that decisions are being recorded and specific action plans shared with timelines and person(s) accountable noted. Distribute to the participants following up on the meeting within a reasonable time.*
*(11) During participation in the group process about the focal topic, I felt **a sense of connectedness** to my colleagues.*	*Connectedness can be about joining together to find a way forward, it can also be about learning and understanding another's point of view.*

	Provide opportunities for participants to work together on tasks and experiential activities to find mutual goals. Cooperative experiences promote more positive, committed, and caring relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2013, p. 403).
(12) During participation in the group process about what makes an exceptional practicum experience I felt ***energized.***	*To be energized is to feel alive and experience a sense of enthusiasm. This can be physical in a kinetic sense, emotional as a drive state, and cognitive as believing something is going somewhere. Provide opportunities to be physically active and engaged in experiential learning together.* *Check with the participants concerning how they view the personal relevance of the topic. Help participants understand the boundaries and parameters of influence at the start. Empower participants with authority to act where possible. Recognize contributions and celebrate individual and group accomplishments frequently.* *Provide opportunities to be physically active and engaged in experiential learning together.*
(13) I heard ***new ideas*** *when I participated in the group process about the focal topic.*	*Focus on new knowing, rather than new knowledge (Whitney, Cooperrider, Trosten-Bloom and Kaplin, 2005). Utilize structured inquiry to explore what participants know, with each other.* *Breaking into pairs or small groups may give more chance for people to be heard and to explain their ideas to a colleague or small group.* *Structure dialogue around specific questions that focus on areas/topics not considered before.* *Clearly signal shifts from focus on data/information → idea generation.* *Ask participants to reflect on what they heard and learned.*
(14) My ***thoughts were expanded*** *when I participated in the group process about the focal topic.*	*If a graphic facilitator is available then they might be able to create a cartoon illustrating some of the "expansions".* *Engage the group in an opportunity mapping exercise that build upon the initial group ideation process.*

	Participants might be given a handout frame with two columns—where I started----where I am now (in my thinking).
(15) As a result of participation in the group process about the focus of the session I feel a sense of ***hopefulness****.*	*Encouragement and optimism are synonyms of hope. Hope can be experienced by an individual and as an organizational collective.* *Provide an opportunity for individuals to describe their hopes and aspirations as you begin the discussion. Start in dyads and then working out into small groups, participants can begin to form a collective concept of hope.* *Once a guiding image has been created by the group have them build out the social architecture (physical, relational) that would support the image. This can be in the form of a concept map or graphic illustration.*
(16) I ***saw old things in new ways*** *as a result of participation in the group process about the focal topic.*	*In order to see old things in new ways the group members should share their understandings of the current state of things. A starting point for understanding is the opportunity for each group member to share their experiences and perspectives.* *An instrument like the Group States measure could be useful here.* *Encourage the use of "why" questions. Engage a stance of inquiry, asking questions and critically evaluating practices in light of the diverse experiences among participants.* *Invite curiosity through structured interviews in dyads that explore and probe members' previous experiences with the topic of discussion.* *Focus on questions not answers. Question what seems obvious and unquestionable. Offer some examples of this sort of question. Think divergently, not trying to come up with one right solution. Seek context driven creative possibilities as an alternative to best practice. You might also invite people to explore their concepts of "best practice".*
(17) Participation in the group process about ***compels me to act*** *upon the points raised.*	*At the close of the group process have participants declare what service they personally will contribute. Have participants complete a brief reflection exercise where they consider the ideas generated and record one thing they intend to do immediately, in one week, in one month.*

	Before closing the session have participants anticipate what resources and supports are likely to be needed and are available, and where possible, communicate that people can move their new and innovative ideas forward as it makes sense to the group and the organization. *Ensure participants know they have authority to move ideas into actions. Record commitments to action from as many participants as possible. You could even formalize this by having people sign "contracts" which could be sealed with Wax or other sort of marker.*

Recommendations for Educational Leadership

Institutions of higher education are currently under considerable pressure to become more responsive, relevant, efficient, and effective (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 3). As a result, many have responded to these pressures by adopting methods and processes from the realm of ideas and theories of the organization development in the context of business systems. This thesis explored generativity in university faculty group processes. A key outcome of the research was the development of a survey tool that can be used transmethodologically to set help the stage for generative group work and assess the outcomes of group work. Table 3 provides a way of thinking about the design of faculty group processes to enhance generativity. It is not proposed that the identified attributes will cause generative responses, but rather that they may have implications for thinking about the design of group sessions and meetings that have enhanced chances to yield generative outcomes. The attributes and design elements listed have potential applicability across meeting types and processes (i.e., they are transmethodological).

The survey tool and the linked session design elements could be applied in the development of faculty groups and to enhancement of the work they do together. Perhaps, as a faculty member steps into leadership and assumes the role of chair or department head, this could be a useful tool to orient them to organizing faculty meetings and program planning and review. It is suggested that the survey could also be used in the development of student project teams and in university committees at large. The 17 survey items and their correlated design factors are interrelated and none stand alone. In group work, the whole may be more than the sum of its parts, but the parts are also significant and depending on particular contexts and mediating factors, some may be critical.

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Biography

Dr. Christine Slavik is an Associate Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley, is currently the Head of the Child, Youth and Family Studies Department, and is an elected faculty representative on the Board of Governors for the university. Prior to her appointment at the university, Christine worked as a Psychiatric Nurse, a Child and Youth Care Counselor, and a Child Life Specialist. In each of her roles over her 40+ years in human service and education, she engages with others in a relational and strength-based manner, open and curious, to lead is to learn and share meaning. Christine has held a variety of leadership roles in both health care and education. She is a past president of the Canadian Association of Child Life Leaders; past Chair of the Child and Youth Care Education Consortium of BC; Director of Child Life at BC Children's Hospital; past Board member of the Child Life Council (now Association of Child Life Professionals); and former Head of the Teacher Education Program. Her research focus is in wellness, mindfulness-based practices, planning, generative conversations, and Appreciative Inquiry as a model of transformational change process. In addition to holding various administrative and leadership roles in both the hospital and the academy, Christine has engaged in numerous strategic planning opportunities utilizing a strength-based approach to these processes. Christine has a personal commitment to meditation and mindfulness-based practices and incorporates this into her teaching and leadership.

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