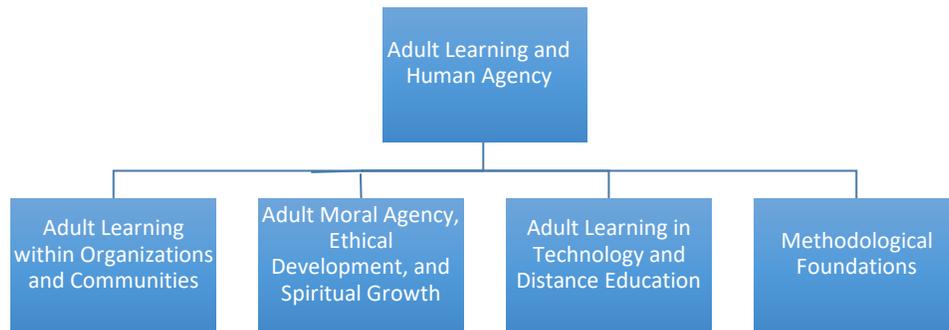


RESEARCH

Adult Learning and Human Agency is the focus of my ongoing research trajectory with more precise attention on meaning making among adults in the service of building human agency. This research focus follows the modern tradition of well-known scholars such as Malcolm Knowles, Cyril Houle, Paulo Freire, Myles Horton, and, especially, Albert Bandura, but, additionally, I find guidance in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, John Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, Vygotsky's *Mind in Society*, and later appropriations of these ideas in scholars such as Richard J. Bernstein, Hans Joas, and Thomas M. Alexander--these are my theoretical foundations. In education scholarship, human agency has been useful in framing and interpreting teacher efficacy and identity development. As an expression of the human condition and as caught in the interstices of external structural determination and internal cognitive-emotional free will, the concept of human agency provides a framework for interpreting activity as an avenue for social change and human growth. My scholarship seeks to understand, interpret, and explain the role of adult learning in the generation of agency. The nexus of adult learning and agency is often expressed as practices, conditions, mindsets, relationships, and structures that characterize a learning event as providing a sense of impact and traction, as if the learner had not simply generated meaning, but also that they changed and improved as a result, particularly in a way that impacts the world around them. The two combined – adult learning and human agency – provide a lens through which human experience can be interpreted and understood; learner meaning is made. In the interest of better understanding these experiences, I specialize in scholarship designed to understand adult learning and human agency. This scholarship can take place in many different contexts from churches to schools, from end-of-life caregivers to those who utilize technology. Methodologically, my work primarily centers in the interpretive tradition with a strong philosophical orientation (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000).



Adult Learning within organizations and communities: Understanding how learning happens within organizations and communities, as opposed to within formal classroom settings, is a matter of urgency for leaders, administrators, trainers, and coaches wanting to improve the performance of their members or employees. My research explores the interface of structure and agency as it influences learners' identity development and self-understanding. This interface is often crystalized in specific relationships, such as mentoring relationships or collegial relationships, through which specific outcomes are realized, such as transformation, resistance, or profound learning. Characterizing types of relationships that are effective in generating meaningful outcomes within organizations and communities has been a focus of much of my recent research. Depending on the organization, these meaningful outcomes might be called individual and community capacity building, human resource development, political activism, workplace training, professional development, or spiritual and ethical development.

Adult Moral Agency, Ethical Development, and Spiritual Growth: Professions often have formal codes of ethics that prescribe behavioral norms, but the culture and characteristics of organizations and communities that facilitate and encourage effective decision making, humane relationships, and growth-

oriented behavior are more difficult to formalize. My research explores the interface of structure and agency as it influences moral judgment, ethical development, and spiritual growth.

Adult Learning in Distance Education and Technology: Technology and distance education increasingly occupy overlapping territory in that technology facilitates learning at-a-distance, but more comprehensive technology does not ensure good learning. My research seeks to understand the structures and processes that facilitate strong adult learning in the distance education environment and in the context of more sophisticated and pervasive use of technology.

Methodological Foundations: As a qualitative methodologist, my research explores ways to make the research process and its results more accessible to more people, especially educational practitioners. In addition to using qualitative methods, I am a scholar of the philosophy of science and explore ways to improve qualitative research processes.

Future research. The future of my research includes scholarship on: instructional/curriculum design, program planning, and organizational management/design for human flourishing and profound learning; organic mentoring, structure and agency for human flourishing. Despite its ancient origins, there is very little empirical data on the nature of human flourishing and systematic approaches to facilitating it. I am particularly interested in building a theory of human flourishing to provide a framework for adult educators in their work with learners. The work I have completed to this point provides a solid foundation on which to build this theory and framework and consequent empirical data driven scholarship.