

Nature of Reflection after Organizational Experience by Managers
Across Developmental Levels:
A Study Using Excerpts from Subject-Object Interviews

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Abstract

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This research study breaks new ground in exploring differences in how managers' reflection patterns, do or do not differ across levels of adult development as delineated by Robert Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory

It was a basic qualitative study exploring upper-level managers' thought processes and patterns of reflection in revisiting and reinterpreting episodes of conflict and change that had emerged in past organizational experiences. The purpose was to discern in what ways, if at all, those processes vary with the manager's Stage in adult development in Robert Kegan's adult Constructive-Developmental Theory that stipulates generally what one can reflect upon impartially as object—or what one cannot.

Transcripts of fifteen Subject-Object Interviews (SOIs), that were previously conducted for the purpose of examining interviewee reasoning characteristics in relation their stage of adult development and had been professionally scored and certified for interviewee developmental level, provided the primary data for this study. These were sourced as a stratified, purposeful sample from an archival database of 148 interviews conducted by the Center of Creative Leadership between 2007-2009. Five each of the sample of 15 SOIs were selected to meet the criteria for one of three specific Stages or levels of complexity on Kegan's adult constructive-

developmental scale representing the Instrumental to Socializing transition, the fully Socializing equilibrium, and the fully Self Authorizing equilibrium.

Without The managers' individual developmental levels being revealed, the researcher blindly coded the individual SOI transcripts and inductively analyzed and synthesized the data of each to discern patterns in the interviewee's reflection. In a final step, the known, certified SOI scores were revealed to the researcher, who was then able to explore the relationship between patterns of reflection he had discerned and the individual interviewee's actual developmental level—in particular to see in what ways, if at all, those processes vary and are engaged in differently—or similarly—depending on the manager's Order of Mind or Stage of Adult development as delineated by Robert Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory.

Mediating consideration of findings, the 5-participants-per-development-level samples were small and results thus not generalizable, and the interviews were conducted for the purpose of investigating reasoning as correlated with adult developmental level. Within that context relatively consistent differences in patterns of reflection while either recollecting or currently reflecting upon past incidents that involved change and/or conflict were discerned in the following areas: granularity in description of emotion; recollection of inner dialogue; “stepping onto the balcony” for a changed perspective on issues; variations of “stance,” in terms of degree of self-focus rather than a relational or organizational one and demonstration of self-examination—mediated by what was at stake for the interviewee. Depending on developmental stage, current experience or, or recollection of past negative emotion could be either a prompt for self-reflection or a barrier to it.

Constructive-developmental theory posits different ways of knowing in adulthood; each denoting an internally consistent meaning-making system that shapes the ways one makes sense of and interprets experience.

An in-depth descriptive analysis of the managers' reflections within and across cases revealed different orientations toward the process of revisiting and interpreting experience with important variations across participants. To explain those individual variations, constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1984) appeared to be a valuable theoretical lens to shed light on some of the differences within and across the three different ways of knowing represented in the sample. This study overall supports the growing trend in the learning and development field toward paying more attention to supporting the development of leaders' inner meaning-making structures as those will influence how they engage in, and take perspective on, their experience—and ultimately help their organizations and their members to learn. The researcher, blinded to adult developmental levels of the managers until after analyzing data for patterns of reflection, found the clusters of personally discerned patterns to closely match those that would to their subsequently revealed, certified developmental levels. This congruence suggests that Subject-Object Interviews may prove an insight-full source for further research on the difficult-to-probe subject of reflection-on-action.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Acknowledgements	x
Dedication	xiii
Chapter 1. Research Problems. Purpose, and Questions	1
Overview	1
Context of Learning from Experience by Leaders and Managers	2
Reflection in Learning within Organizations	3
Conceptualization of Reflection.....	4
Learner Differences and Learning.....	6
Meaning-making and Adult Development.....	7
Kegan’s Constructive-Developmental Theory—Overview	7
Generic Stages of Meaning-making in Constructive-Developmental Theory	8
Problem	9
Purpose and Research Questions.....	11
Reflection: Preliminary Operational Definition	11
Research Approach	12
Assumptions.....	14
Rationale and Significance.....	15
The Researcher	16
Chapter 2. Literature Review	18
Core Premises.....	18
Reflection: Operational Definition	18
Literature Overview	19
Reflection in Learning from Experience.....	19
Summary of Learning from Experience.....	22
Deconstructing Reflection.....	23
Definitions of Reflection.....	24
A Unified Compositional Definition of Reflection.....	26
Five Essential Components and Two That Are Extrinsic.....	26
Trigger for Reflection.....	28
Summary of Trigger for Reflection.....	29
Process of Reflection.....	30
Summary of Process of Reflection.....	38
Types of Reflection	40

Summary of Types of Reflection	43
Aims and Outcomes of Reflection	45
Summary of Aims and Outcomes of Reflection.....	46
Enablers of and Barriers to Reflection	47
Constructive-Developmental Theory	49
Subject-Object Interview.....	52
Constructive-Developmental (CDT) Literature and Reflection.....	53
CDT and Limits of Reflection.....	53
Discussion of CDT	54
Indicators of Reflection in CDT	55
Immunity to Change (ITC), 4-Column Exercise, and Coaching.....	55
A Study based on the ITC Approach:	57
Discussion of Basing Study on the CDT Approach	58
Pillar Practices to Support Adult Development in Schools.....	59
Conceptual Framework for the Study	60
Revised Working Functional Definition of Reflection after Experience at Workplaces.....	61
Chapter 3. Methodology	63
Rationale for Qualitative Approach	63
Basic Exploratory Qualitative Study.....	64
Data Sources.....	65
Subject-Object-Interview (SOI) Data for Information on Developmental Levels.....	67
Subject-Object-Interview Process and Data Providing Information on Reflection Patterns.....	70
Description of Site.....	71
Sampling Methodology	72
Sampling Process.....	74
Initial Pilot Study	75
Data Analysis	76
Data Management Plan.....	77
Filing System:	78
Data Analysis.....	78
Step 1. Development of Preliminary Conceptual Framework and Research Questions.....	78
Step 2. Data Preparation.	79
Step 3. First Cycle Coding.....	79
Step 4: Second Cycle Coding:	81
Step 5: Analysis and Synthesis	83
Step 6: Answering Research Question 2.....	84
Identifying and Dealing with Validity Threats	85

Researcher Bias	85
Reactivity.....	85
Non-Developmental Reasons behind Differences in Patterns across Developmental Levels	85
Limitations of the Study	86
Chapter 4. Description of Context: Participants and Episodes	88
Demographic Background of the 15 Participants	88
Developmental Levels of the 15 Participants:.....	90
Landscape of All Experiences Represented in the Participants’ Subject-Object Interviews	91
Key Broad Types of Experiences Reported:	91
Description of Types of Experiences Entailing Conflict and/or Change	94
Descriptions of Specific Experiences with Underlying Conflict and/or Change.....	94
Conflict with Boss	94
Conflict with Peers	95
Conflict with Subordinates.....	95
Ethical Issues	95
Office Politics.....	95
Role Change	96
Driving Change	96
Summary	98
Chapter 5: Descriptive Findings	100
Considerations Related to Revisiting the Experiences.....	101
Revised Definition of Reflection Used for This Study	101
Framework Underlying Description of Interviewees in Portraits	102
Situation and Process	102
Revisiting the Experience	103
Interpreting the Experience.....	103
Stance	103
At Stake	104
Reflective Processes	104
Outcomes of Reflection	104
Definitions of Terms Used in Analysis	105
Recap of the Interview Sequence	106
Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Sparse Details.....	107

Al: Seething with Anger, Wanting Things His Way	107
Olivia: Grippd by the Mechanics of Her Organization’s Performance Management System	108
Hernan: When Affirmative Feedback Changed It All!	109
Mike: The Man with the Moral Compass.....	110
Eddy: If I Clear the Air, Others Get Cleared Too	111
Kate: Uncompromising “Dot-Connector” Who Seeks Acknowledgement.....	112
Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Sparse Detail.....	112
Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Medium Detail.....	113
Don: Preoccupied with a Colleague	113
Leona: Ms. Feedback.....	114
Gerard: Saddened by a Relationship No Longer Sweet	115
Ben: Story of a Transition That Went Wrong	116
Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Medium Detail	118
Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Rich Detail.....	118
Cindy: Shifting to Stand for the Person in the Mirror	118
Fiona: The Brave Whistleblower.....	119
Ian: Holding the Inner Mirror and yet Building Acceptance	121
James: Unprompted Reflector	122
Nick: Hope to Change Self and Fill Personality Gaps	123
Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Rich Detail	124
Summary	124
Chapter 6. Learning through Reflection.....	126
Themes Emerging from Analysis across Portraits	127
Themes Pertaining to Revisiting the Experience	129
Theme 1: Granularity of Recollection of Emotional Experiences Associated with the Selected Card.....	129
Sparse Recollection of Emotions	131
Rich Recollection of Emotion	132
Summary	133
Theme 2: Recollection of Inner Dialogue with Self.....	133
Contrast among Cindy, Al, and Don.....	135
Summary	137
Theme 3: Stepping onto the Balcony	137
Themes and Patterns Pertaining to Interpreting Experiences.....	140
Theme 4: Participants’ Content of Reasoning Revealed Differing Stances.....	140
Self-Focused Stance.....	142
Relational Stance	143
Organizational Stance	143
Multiple Stances.....	144
Summary	146

Theme 5: Process of Self-Examination	146
Labelling Limiting Behaviors and Attitudes.....	147
Examining Underlying Values, Beliefs, Assumptions, and Inner Commitments.....	149
Summary.....	154
Reflection Themes.....	154
Pattern 1: Rich Revisiting of Experience with Reflective Processes of Deep Self- Examination.....	156
Pattern 2: Sparse Revisiting with Shallow Reflective Processes	158
Pattern 3: The Curious Case of Big Shifts or Insights, Not Accompanied by Deep Reflective Processes	159
Pattern 4: The Middle Ground, Wide into Others, If Not Deep into Themselves.....	160
Discussion of Patterns Perceived in Relation to Reflection Literature	161
Chapter 7. Developmental Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.....	166
Three Different Ways of Knowing.....	167
Transitioning between the Instrumental and Socializing Ways of Knowing.....	170
Fully Socializing.....	171
Fully Self authoring.....	172
Patterns of Reflection and Ways of Knowing.....	173
Themes and Variations in Revisiting Experience	173
Themes and Variations for Interpreting Experience	173
Revisiting Experience and Ways of Knowing	176
Revisiting Experience: Transitioning between the Instrumental to the Socializing Way of Knowing.....	176
Revisiting Experience: Fully Socializing Way of Knowing	178
Revisiting Experience: Fully Self authoring	179
Interpreting Experience across Ways of Knowing.....	180
Interpreting Experience: Transitioning between the Instrumental and Socializing Ways of Knowing.....	180
Interpreting Experience: Fully Socializing.....	182
Interpreting Experience: Fully Self authoring.....	183
Developmental Dynamic of Reflective Patterns: Final Observations and Questions.....	184
Perplexing Observations Suggesting Further Study.....	185
Conclusions	186
Summary of the Findings	187
Implications for Practice	188
Implications for Research.....	192
Limitations	193
References	195

Appendix A. Process for Recruiting Research Participant.....	202
Appendix B. Test Coding Output (Pilot).....	203
Trigger for Reflection.....	203
Activities during Reflection	203
Role of Emotions.....	204
Outcomes of Reflection.....	204
Mindfulness	204
Polarities / Gray Zones	204
Implications for Practice.....	204
Implications for Research.....	205
Appendix C. Master Memo—Overview of Data Set.....	206
Appendix D. First Cycle Codes Generated in Analysis of Interview E.....	212
Appendix E: ORID Definitions (Stanfield, 2000).....	213
Appendix F. Second-Cycle Codebook	214
Appendix G. Analytical Memo, 24 April 2020.....	215
Appendix H. Work-in-Progress Memo, 25 October 2020_After Condensing Data.....	223

Table of Tables

Table 1. Carroll’s Levels of Reflection.....	42
Table 2. Levels of Action and Reflection in Organizations.....	43
Table 3. Types of Reflection Identified in Literature.....	44
Table 4. Outcomes of Reflection.....	46
Table 5. Person Specific Enablers and Barriers of Reflection.....	49
Table 6. Stages of Development in CDT.....	51
Table 7. Limits to Reflection Due to Perspective Taking Ability According to CDT.....	54
Table 8. Indicators of Reflection Emerging from “Pillar Practices”.....	60
Table 9. Sources of Data by Research Question.....	66
Table 10. Description of Stages and Sub-stages Coded after a Subject-Object Interview.....	69
Table 11. Summary Statistics of Archival Data Master Set.....	72
Table 12. Breakup of Sample Used for Data Analysis in the Current Study.....	74
Table 13. Demographics: Gender and Race.....	88
Table 14. Participant Developmental Level.....	91
Table 15. All Types of Experiences Reported in the 15 Interviews.....	93
Table 16. All Experiences of Each Participant Used for Analysis.....	97
Table 17. Definitions and Examples of Key Terms in the Analysis.....	106
Table 18. Themes and Variation Patterns Emerging from Analysis across Portraits.....	128
Table 19. Granularity of Emotions Evaluated.....	131
Table 20. Presence of Recollecting Inner Dialogue.....	135
Table 21. Stance for Each Participant.....	141
Table 22. Presence of Self-Examination and Its Type.....	147
Table 23. Overview of Participants Based on Reflection Themes.....	155
Table 24. Pattern 1: Rich Revisiting of Experience with Deep Reflective Processes.....	157
Table 25. Pattern 2: Sparse Revisiting with Shallow Reflective Processes.....	158
Table 26. Pattern 3: Big shifts or Insights, Not So Deep Reflective Processes.....	160
Table 27. Overview of Ways of Knowing.....	169
Table 28. Ways of Knowing across Participants.....	170

Table 29. Reflection Patterns by Developmental Level.....	175
Table 30. Aggregate Trend in Recollection across Ways of Knowing in the Process of Revisiting Experience	176
Table 31. Aggregate Trends in Width of Stance and Depth of Self-Examination across Ways of Knowing in the Process of Interpreting Experience	180
Table 32. Four Patterns of Reflection Seen across All Developmental Groups.	185

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Kolb Learning Cycle and Experiential Learning Styles	20
Figure 2. ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional) Questions	36
Figure 3. Process of Reflection after Experience	39
Figure 4. Working Conceptual Framework for Study.....	61
Figure 5. Evolving Conceptual Framework Created as a Simplified Diagram.....	82
Figure 6. Summary Information on Participant Employer Organizations	89
Figure 7. Summary Information on Participant Organizational Level.....	89
Figure 8. Participant Educational Background	90
Figure 9. Nonlinear Steps in Meaning-Making (Actual Sequence Usually Intertwined)	107
Figure 10. Boud & Walker Model of Reflection Process in Learning from Experience	161

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, Munni Joshi and Shekhara Nand Joshi, my wife, Ritu and son, Soham, who have made unthinkable sacrifices without which it would have been impossible for me to come to Teachers College and answer my calling.

Chapter 1. Research Problems, Purpose, and Questions

Overview

The study aimed to understand how managers reflect after experience on organizational experiences and in what ways, if any, does the nature of this reflection differ by managers' developmental levels. The study is positioned at the intersection of the study of reflection from a constructivist perspective (Boud & Walker, 1993; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990) and adult development as conceptualized by Kegan (1982, 1994). In order to answer the research questions, the study used episodes of reflection as observed in a sample of fifteen subject-object interviews (SOIs) sampled from an archival database of 148 interviews conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) between 2007 and 2009. These had been conducted in that period to determine the adult developmental levels of participants in a number of leadership development programs offered by the Center for Creative Leadership headquartered in North Carolina, United States. The fifteen interviewees came from middle–senior management in nine different industry sectors such as banking and financial services, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, energy, and utilities, among others. The reflective nature of the subject-object interviews and the concurrent availability of certified scores that indicated the developmental levels of the interviewees made SOIs a good choice for research data.

This chapter starts with an overview of the context of workplace learning in terms of the significance of learning from the experience of managers and the relevance of reflection in this context. This is followed by an introduction to *Constructive-Developmental Theory* (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and how it relates to the study of reflection. Subsequently, the focus of the study is delineated by the problem statements, the research purpose, and research questions presented below. Next, I provide a brief overview of the research design and conclude by noting my

perspectives as a researcher, the assumptions underlying the study and its rationale and significance.

Context of Learning from Experience by Leaders and Managers

The first two decades of 21st century have seen visible manifestation of Volatile-Uncertain-Complex-Ambiguous or VUCA (Stiehm, 2010) environments fostered by the two mega-trends of advancing globalization and technology (Petrie, 2011; IBM Institute for Business Value, 2016). A VUCA world has at least two important implications for human capital development. One is the need for learning that is ongoing rather than episodic (Cressey et al., 2006; Deloitte Consulting & Bersin, 2016). The second is a need to develop leadership capabilities effectively dealing with greater complexity (Drago-Severson, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Petrie, 2011; Ruderman et al., 2014; Schein & Schein, 2017). According to Heifetz (1994) challenges of the 21st century require learning and a leadership approach that is adaptive rather than technical and managerial. In fostering such leadership capacities, experience plays an important role. Learners must seek out learning experiences, make sense of them, and then internalize and apply what they have learned (Hallenbeck & Santana, 2019). Petrie (2018) notes that, Silicon Valley organizations heavily leverage out-of-comfort-zone experiences to foster learning and accelerate leadership development of their talent in the rapidly and unpredictably changing technology environment.

Learning from experience has been an increasingly popular method for developing talent in organizations (McCall et al., 1988). Experience is known to play a central role in meaning-making in the process of learning (Boud et al, 2006)

To name a few, some of the ways that appropriately variegated learning experiences are provided to high-level employees at work comprise, training programs using crafted experiences

and simulations, “strategic corporate assignments to develop emerging leaders, strategic projects for high potential leaders, rotation programs, and stretch assignments to develop first-time supervisors” (McCauley et al., 2014, p. vi). Other experience-related development activities include Action Learning Conversations (Marsick & Maltbia, 2009) and After-Event Reviews (DeRue & Ashford, 2014). Increased interest from practitioners has gone hand in hand with scholarly conceptualizations of learning from experience, notably Kolb’s Learning Cycle that has been adopted in both schools and workplaces in designing productive experiences for learning.

In large, experience-based learning has become increasingly relevant in times of rapid change—both as a tool to promote new skills and behaviors as well as widened perspective to develop enhanced leadership.

Reflection in Learning within Organizations

Various studies (Di Stefano et al., 2016; Entwistle & Ramsden, 2015; Ginns et al., 1982; Salio, 1981; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999) have shown that reflection is the differentiator between deep and surface approaches to learning. It has been found that reflection plays an important role in the meaning transformation necessary for employees to gain significant business insights (Mezirow, 1991). In workplace learning, managers, coaches, and other facilitators of learning play an important role in meaning-making by facilitating the process of reflection on work experiences (Cressey et al., 2017).

In times of change, the shelf life of previous learning is shortened, and employees need to competently learn, un-learn, and relearn. Hence there is a need to go beyond episodic classroom learning and to shift focus toward developing learning capacities on an ongoing basis. According to Cressey et al., (2006), the concept of informal learning (Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Nyhan et al., 2004) has moved to the forefront of organizational learning as it helps embed critical

reflection inside organizations. The importance of reflection-based learning approaches for managers is evidenced in the increased importance of coaching, mentoring relationships, managers serving as coaches, learning from challenging experiences (that the Center for Creative Leadership calls “heat experiences”), and Action Learning (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Petrie, 2015)—all of which have reflection embedded in their process. One indicator of the increased importance of reflection-based approaches in the workplace is the well documented rapid growth of the executive coaching industry. In another realm, reflective practice and learning from experience have achieved great emphasis today in curricula for progressive pedagogy in academic schools, as well as in business organizations and schools of social work (Boud et al., 2013; Gould & Taylor, 2017; Marsick, & Watkins, 2015; Schön 1987, 2017).

Conceptualization of Reflection

Reflection has been identified as a central concept in the literature on learning, especially in learning from experience (Boud & Walker, 1993; 1983; Kolb, 1984; Lundgren et al., 2017; McCauley et al., 2014; Schön, 1983). The concept of reflection was first outlined by John Dewey starting with his seminal work “How We Think” (Dewey, 1933), where he defined “reflective thought” as, “Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Kindle Locations 137-139; Page 4).

He outlined a conceptual framework for reflective thinking and differentiated reflective thinking from other forms of thinking such as imagination. To him, the end goal of reflection was meaning-making.

Various scholars (Boud & Walker, 1993; Brookfield; 1995; Kolb, 1984; Lundgren et al, 2017; Mezirow, 1991; Nguyen et al., 2014; Schön, 1983; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999) have looked

at conceptualizations of reflection in the process of learning and variously defined it in terms of its process, aims and outcomes, barriers, and enablers, and focus and goals. Schön (1983) differentiated between “reflection- in-action” and reflection after action—using the term, “reflection-on-action,” instead.

Boud and Walker (1993) conceptualized learning from experience incorporating the ideas of Schön (1983) and detailed the processes happening within reflection both during and after experience. They conceptualized reflection after experience—the focus of this study—as “return to experience . . . attending to feelings and reappraisal of experience” (p. 73) and assigned a central role to reflection in this process.

Literature also differentiates between simple and critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995; Mezirow, 1991). The latter is concerned with deeper meaning-making structures rather than just the content of reflection. (Mezirow, 1990). Critical reflection focuses on assumptions, beliefs, and values that may limit us (Brookfield, 1995; Marsick & Maltbia, 2009). This form of reflection closely aligns with Argyris and Schön’s idea of double-loop or triple-loop learning. Carroll (2010) used the term “levels of reflection” to classify six types of reflection and mentioned that these levels are linked to capacities of learning and wisdom.

Scholars such as Dewey (1933); Boud and Fales (1984); Argyris (1991); Seibert and Daudelin (1999); Kreber, (2004); and DeRue and Ashford (2014), have also identified various barriers and enablers to the process of reflection that influence the process, itself. A key enabler of reflection is the process of inquiry, or asking probing questions (Boud & Fales, 1984; Dewey, 1933; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). Inquiry is *internal* when the learner asks questions of herself, and *external* when a facilitator asks questions of others to support meaning-making. The other

barriers and enablers pertain to person-specific qualities, among them, mindful presence, or patience; or external factors such as availability or lack of time to reflect.

Based on my review of literature, I found the following definition of reflection by Moon, (2004) as cited in Roessger (2014), captures most of the ideas above and chose to take it as an operational definition of reflection for this research:

Reflection is a form of mental processing—like a form of thinking—that we may use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome or we may simply ‘be reflective’ and then an outcome can be unexpected. Reflection is applied to relatively complicated, ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess. (Moon, 2004, p. 82, as cited in Roessger, 2014, p. 22)

Learner Differences and Learning

Scholars have noted that adult learners differ in the ways they learn and have argued for the need to design and deliver learning in a way where we meet the learner where s/he is. Kolb (1976) developed the Learning Style Inventory to help educators understand learner preferences and provide style-appropriate learning. Cohen (2008) found that the Extravert and Introvert dichotomy in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI®) correlated with active and reflective dichotomy in Felder and Silverman's (1998) Index of Learning Styles (ILS). Cranton (2014) argued that personality influences how a learner engages in transformative learning and developed the Personal Empowerment through Type (PET) check measure (Cranton, 1998, 2016; Kindle Location 2211, p. 102) to identify learning preference. General differences between adult learners, and the role that those differences play in how people learn, are well-evidenced in the adult learning literature. The more specific differences in adult learners that are related to

adult development, however, and how these differences impact reflection, have received only limited attention in it.

Meaning-making and Adult Development

Constructive-Development Theory (CDT) (Kegan, 1980; Kegan & Lahey, 2009), offers insights that might throw light on adult learner differences and the impact of development on how adults reflect. Meaning-making is recognized as an essential feature of reflection and its meaning-making process essentially transforms the meaning of experience (Boud & Walker, 1993; Dewey 1930; Mezirow 1991). According to Kegan (1982) adults construct meaning from their experiences, but to say the least, not everyone constructs the same meaning from an experience. He postulated that the Piagetian model of development does not stop at adolescence but rather continues through adulthood, albeit at different paces for individuals. Kegan and Lahey (2009) and other proponents of developmental theory, notably Loevinger (1976), and Rooke and Torbert (2009), identified distinct and progressive stages of adult development each represented by distinctly differing capacities for meaning-making.

Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory—Overview

Kegan's *constructive-developmental theory* (CDT) has identified 4 main stages of adult development differentiated from each other by their Ways of Knowing, or complexity of meaning-making (Drago-Severson, 2008). As described by Kegan and others, in order of increasingly complex meaning-making, these are called: Stage 2, either Instrumental, or Second-Order mind; Stage 3, either Socializing, or Third-Order Mind; Stage 4, either Self Authoring or Fourth-Order Mind; and Stage 5, either Self Transforming or Fifth-Order Mind (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Lahey et al., 2011). (The latter thought pattern is relatively rare and was not studied in this

research; hence, it will not be specifically discussed further.) At any one time, the meaning-making of the large majority of people is in transition *between* main developmental stages.

Generic Stages of Meaning-making in Constructive-Developmental Theory

Generically, any of the main stages can be represented by the letters X and Y with X representing the stage of less-complex meaning-making and Y representing the next stage of more complex meaning-making. The presence of the different sub-stages between the two main stages is indicated generically by paired combinations of X and Y where X represents the less-complex-meaning-making main stage that is being grown out of and Y represents the more-complex-meaning-making main stage that is being grown into.

The inter- or sub-stages are represented by 4 different paired combinations of X and Y with a back slash or parenthesis between them signifying mixed thought patterns of both X and Y—with the alphabetic order in which the two letters are placed signifying which of the two main stage patterns of thinking is dominating in the combination. In any XY combination, the letter that comes *first* represents the stage of complexity of thought that is more dominant in the thought of the subject. X/Y signifies that main stage X thinking is more dominant, and Y/X signifying that main stage Y thinking is more dominant.

Beyond X/Y or Y/X alphabetic order, even finer distinctions in complexity of thought are made; the *degree* of domination of thought by main stage X or Y is also signified by the presence of a parenthesis—rather than a slash—between the two letters, (X)Y or Y(X), in which the letter with the parenthesis around it signifies only a weak presence of that letter's main stage pattern of thinking is present.

Hence, there are the 6 generic main stages and sub-stages represented by X, Y, and any XY combination:

- X: Main Stage X completely ruling (or dominating)
- X(Y): Stage X thinking is ruling, but traces of stage Y thinking are emerging
- X/Y: Stages X and Y thinking are in conflict, with Stage X thinking more dominant
- Y/X: Stages Y and X thinking are in conflict, with Stage Y thinking more dominant
- Y(X): Stage Y thinking is ruling, but vestiges of stage Y thinking still remaining
- Y: Main Stage Y completely ruling (or dominating)

According to Drago-Severson (2009), adults at different stages of development have, because of the varying and powerful influence that a particular stage or transition between stages has on the construction of meaning, a differing capacity for what they can ‘reflect upon’ or take perspective upon. Berger and Fitzgerald (2002) made recommendations on how learner differences accompanying different developmental levels need to inform coaching practices. Similarly, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2017) identified implications of developmental differences on using feedback—another tool to foster learning and reflection at workplaces. Due to the difference in the way adults differ in meaning-making at different developmental levels, and differences in capacities for perspective taking, it is conceivable that they will also differ in ways they reflect at these levels. At the same time, we don’t yet know enough about what reflection actually looks like at these different stages of development to describe the impact of meaning-making on the reflective process of individuals with different ways of knowing.

Problem

As described in the sections of this chapter above, the importance and increasing relevance of reflection in learning is well-researched and reported. Research on the practice of reflection-based learning applications, too, continues to grow, and there is rich literature on fostering reflection in workplaces. However, as noted, there is limited literature on how learner

differences, including those related to adult development and to ways of knowing, show up in how people reflect. The resulting lack of available information could limit outcomes of providing support for reflection in the workplace because of resulting inability to do so optimally in response to the developmental diversity that will naturally exist in any population.

The potential impact of developmental differences has been studied regarding its implications for applications that foster learning such as coaching and feedback. In my view, the model of constructive-developmental theory described above, might help us understand observed learner differences in reflection as analyzed through the lens of their developmental levels—their ways of knowing. To this date, while there are *hypothesized* patterns of difference in reflection-based work due to differences in perspective taking abilities (Drago-Severson, 2009), and in learning applications like coaching that could likely be better informed in response to developmental differences (Berger & Fitzgerald, 2002; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017), there is a dearth of studies that specifically explore how reflection differs across a range of people at different stages of development.

Beyond perspective taking or object of reflection, there are other aspects of reflection in terms of processes and outcomes that could be important to explore. For example, Seibert, and Daudelin (1999) talk about differences in patterns of reflection regarding kind of meaning (simple or complex), the nature of problems considered (simple or abstract), the extent of being aware of interference, or the tendency to suspend judgement by different adults. I was, however, unable to find any literature that studies how reflection differs across developmental levels, taking these dimensions into account.

Beyond the focus on differences in reflection by developmental levels, there is the added opportunity to enrich literature on conceptualizing reflection in workplace settings. I perceive

there exists an opportunity to supplement such work using field studies, or, as Lundgren et al., (2017) also suggest, empirical studies to explore reflection observed through various theoretic lenses.

By looking at reflection more closely, such studies could help expand our understanding of reflection, which is seen as important in theories of learning and cognition. Insights gained would seem likely to enable workplace learning educators to better provide developmentally appropriate learning and leadership development support as well as contribute to strengthening the current practices of coaching and mentoring in providing developmentally positive facilitation.

Purpose and Research Questions

This research is being primarily undertaken in order to shed light on whether and how differences in patterns of reflective thinking are linked to differences in developmental levels. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?
2. In what ways, if any, do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory?

Reflection: Preliminary Operational Definition

In this study in which I would be examining reflections of participants who are at different levels of adult development, subjects were not in an organic situation in which they would normally be reflecting spontaneously as described in Dewey's (1933) widely accepted description of reflection as it occurs in learning from experience.

Rather, I would be searching for patterns of reflection in subjects' recounts of events experienced in their past in recorded reflections that would have been elicited by structured sequential interview questions. In that context, for my preliminary formulation of the research, I chose to use the following operational definition of reflection identified by Roessger (2014):

Reflection is a form of mental processing—like a form of thinking—that we may use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome or we may simply 'be reflective' and then an outcome can be unexpected. Reflection is applied to relatively complicated, ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess. Source: (Moon, 2004, p. 82, as cited in Roessger, 2014, p. 22)

Research Approach

I conducted a basic exploratory qualitative study using a constructivist paradigm to answer the research questions posed. A qualitative study is best suited to answer research questions in the constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Further, the purpose of the study is exploration and description as can be seen in the framing of the research questions. In research where, “exploration is needed . . . variables cannot be easily measured . . . complex detailed understanding of the issue is needed . . . when we want to understand the context or settings” qualitative research is an appropriate research method. My study is a basic exploratory study rather than a study falling under a particular tradition. In such a generic study, the focus is on identifying relevant themes or patterns (Per Mihás, 2019).

To carry out the required analysis, I needed data containing described episodes of reflection that I could analyze to discern patterns of reflection while, at the same time, containing

information that would enable an expert evaluator to ascertain and classify the developmental level of the person providing the descriptions. In sum, answering my research questions required *authoritative* developmental level evaluations that I could subsequently correlate with my earlier identified subject patterns of reflection.

I was fortunate in being able to locate and then utilize for this study sources that fulfilled *both* requirements optimally. These were archived *Subject-Object Interviews* (SOIs) originally conducted by a certified professional evaluator for the purpose of determining the level of adult development represented by the person being interviewed, as defined by Harvard education psychologist, Robert Kegan (1980), creator—and with others, developer—of *Constructive-Developmental Theory*. The interviews I used were conducted with managers participating in leadership development programs delivered by the Center for Creative Leadership.

In large, SOI interviews comprise interviewees' recall of rich life experiences, which are probed to understand how interviewees construct and interpret the meaning of experience. This enables skilled researchers to assess interviewees' level of adult development. Among the various types of information solicited for analysis of developmental level by the SOI, an important percentage of the responses sought comprise multiple subject recollections of their reflections about critical incidents that had occurred in their past.

In view of the purposes of my study and in line with the strategies listed by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 28), I requested that Cynthia McCauley, PhD, the lead researcher for the developmental study referenced above from which my sample was drawn, identify a sample of 15 of the SOI interviews archived using stratified, purposeful sampling.

I have analyzed my data using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive data analysis model. In order to ensure that my biases did not enter in, I did not access the developmental

scores until after I had shared my findings pertaining to my second research question with my advisors.

The validity of developmental scores is assured as I have used transcripts whose coding has been certified by Nancy Popp, EdD, a master-trainer who, herself, was trained by Dr. Robert Kegan. Finally, I have assured the reliability of my coding scheme by seeking feedback and input from two doctoral researchers.

Assumptions

A key assumption of the study is that transcripts of SOI's can be used as sites of reflection. Subject-object interviews are semi-structured; the interviewer asks questions to elicit content that helps determine how meaning is construed (Lahey et al., 2011). To elicit the content, the respondents are asked to talk about some situations in the past that they recall when prompted by selecting one, or occasionally more, cards from within a group on which the following words are printed: "angry, anxious, or nervous, success, strong stand, conviction, sad, torn, moved or touched, lost something, change, and important to me" (p. 330). Subsequently, the interviewer practices empathetic listening and uses a core probe in line with, "why is it important to you" with the aim of getting at the person's meaning-making structure (p. 330). Even though SOIs are conducted as an assessment tool, the experience of the participant is similar to the process of guided reflection with questions being posed to the interviewee. In light of the above, I consider it a valid assumption that, even though the SOI is designed to assess developmental levels, the participant is simultaneously engaging in a process of individual reflection facilitated by probes from the assessor.

I assume that the interviewers who conducted the SOIs followed the designated protocols and created a safe environment as requirement for conduct of SOIs (Lahey et al., 2011). Both valid

SOIs and critical reflection require creation of a safe holding environment. The interviewers were trained and certified by Nancy Popp, EdD, a practitioner master, herself trained and certified by Robert Kegan, developer of the Constructive-Developmental Theory in which different “orders of consciousness” are referred to as “Stages,” or “meaning-making systems.” (For terminological completeness, I add that on occasions, Kegan has alternatively labeled these *orders of consciousness, orders of mental complexity or forms of mind*. Lastly, I assume that other differences such as those of personality, demographics, gender, age, nature of the organization and participant level in it will not color patterns of reflection sufficiently to prevent my deciphering the impact of development differences in the nature of their reflection. Data pertaining to some demographic categories for the subjects whose reflections are studied is reported, and I have reviewed my findings in light of this data in the discussion section at the end of this study.

Rationale and Significance

According to Kelly (1955), objects, events or concepts are only meaningful to anyone when seen from the perspective of the person construing their meaning. This suggests that techniques to assist reflection by educators need to be applied to the constructions of the learner, rather than those of the teacher. If indeed, there are differences in the nature of reflection between learners due to developmental differences, these differences need be considered by educators to support reflection that is congruent with the constructions of the learner. This study is also intended to help incorporate indicators relevant to reflection from constructive-developmental theory into the general theory and practice of reflection. CDT literature has already identified some indicators of perspective taking ability.

The study will add to the growing body of literature on conceptualization of reflection in workplaces. Coaches and professionals engaged in using reflective practice for workplace development will benefit from insights that will help them provide differentiated experiences to their clients and learners by providing adequate challenges and supports. For example, if some form of reflection such as critical reflection is less frequent for learners at a certain developmental level, the study could help identify support and challenges to foster it.

From a methodological perspective, the study is using a sample of SOIs as sources of data on reflection. It will help illustrate a new approach that other researchers could consider and hence use SOI data for wider purposes beyond assessment.

The Researcher

I have been engaged as a practitioner in fostering executive education using experiential learning including reflective practice in India and the US. In doing so, I heavily leveraged Kolb's (Kolb et al., 2000; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) work as a framework to support such learning. This included simulating non-work experiences, using workplace experiences and projects and tools such as Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory in my work.

I have undergone training in the Immunity to Change approach (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) as well training to conduct and score subject-object interviews (Lahey et al., 2011) in 2016. After the training, I volunteered to be interviewed as a subject for adult developmental research using the subject-object interview methodology. I found that the process led to a sense of clarity on the issues I experienced in the said incidents as well as generated insights that I could consider for the future. It is through this experience, I started to believe that the SOI process has other possible applications beyond assessment.

As a coach and facilitator of executive education, I frequently encounter situations where my learners challenge the conventional approach to coaching and learning which suggests a singular way to coach or engage in reflective practice. My educational experience in adult development at Teachers College exposed me to how feedback giving could be differentiated by developmental levels. My own experience convinced me that a study on differences in reflection could make a positive impact on supporting developmental growth within an increasingly diverse managerial workforce. A workforce that, for example, may hold similar managerial responsibility, yet demographically can represent a range in age and orientation—as well as developmental differences—from millennials to seasoned, near-retirement aged executives.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Core Premises

In this chapter I have reviewed the relevant theoretical and empirical literature that informs my two research questions (RQ1 and RQ2):

1. As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?
2. In what ways, if any, do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory

Reflection: Operational Definition

In chapter one, I noted that, because of the atypical nature of the reflection I would be probing for patterns emerging in immediate subject recounts of their reactions to problematic situations in their past elicited by structured interview questions. For this study, then, I have found and chosen a more time-bound functional definition than Dewey's (1933), one that describes recollection as occurring across time in the continuing process of learning from experience. As identified by Roessger:

Reflection is a form of mental processing—like a form of thinking—that we may use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome or we may simply 'be reflective' and then an outcome can be unexpected. Reflection is applied to relatively complicated, ill-structured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding that we already possess. (Moon, 2004, p. 82, as cited in Roessger, 2014, p. 22)

Literature Overview

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I have summarized some of the ways that reflection has been conceptualized in prior research studies and literature on learning from experience—the process by which it happens, the value it offers, and its different forms. Even though my study is embedded in a constructivist paradigm addressing learning from experience, I have incorporated ideas pertaining to the role of emotions and subconscious processes in reflection to address criticism that highlights the overtly rational focus of the constructivist perspective and ignoring of the role of emotions that results from it.

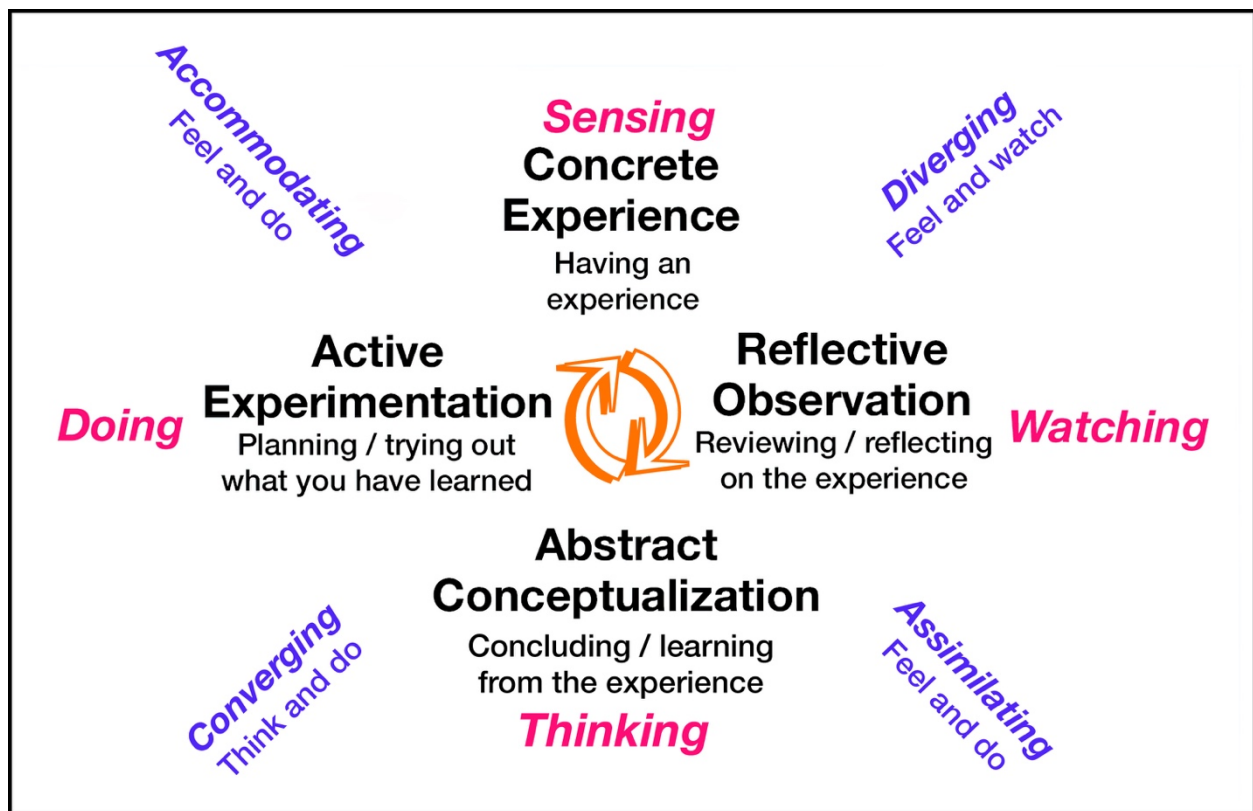
After conceptualizing reflection, I have reviewed how reflection has been treated in the constructive-developmental theory (CDT) literature with an aim to better understand emerging indicators of reflection. I have also outlined key aspects of the subject-object interview including its definition, process, and how it qualifies as a specific context and a site for reflection supported by inquiry. I close the chapter outlining a conceptual framework that I planned to use in the study.

Reflection in Learning from Experience

Prior to examining literature on reflection, I consider it pertinent to describe learning from experience, itself, as reflection is typically embedded in its process of doing so (Dewey, 1933).

Kolb (1976) developed a model of learning from experience which was built by integrating ideas from Lewin, Piaget, and Dewey. The model assigns a central role to experience in the process of learning. According to Kolb (1984), “Learning [is] a process of human adaptation . . . [It] is a process where knowledge is created through transformation of experience” (pp. 20-38).

Figure 1. Kolb Learning Cycle and Experiential Learning Styles



Source: Adapted from Kolb, 1984; Learning styles are displayed in purple diagonal type.

Mezirow (1994) defined learning as a process of, “construing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action” (pp. 222-223). According to him, this meaning-making process is shaped and limited by our meaning structures. He differentiated “instrumental learning,” which focuses on gathering information or skills to execute tasks from “transformative learning,” which “frees one from habitual ways of thinking and acting . . . [and] involves perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1978, 1981). *Perspective transformation* means the process of becoming critically aware of our assumptions and the ways in which they might limit us. According to Reed (1981, cited in Cunningham, 1983), “lessons are drawn from ‘empowering learning experiences’ in order to improve learners’ own practice . . .

[and] to not fall into mindlessness, the routine process of doing the same things over and over again” (p. 23).

Ellström (2006) identified two types of learning in organizational contexts. The first is “adaptive or reproductive learning,” which focuses on improving task performance through refinement of action. In some ways this is similar to Mezirow’s idea of instrumental learning. The second is “developmental or creative learning.” This focuses on “exploring and questioning existing conditions, solving ambiguous problems and developing new solutions” (p. 44). To Ellström, learning is an interplay of action or intentional behavior and reflection.

Boud et al., (2006), too, identify the centrality of experience and meaning-making in the process of learning—“the main influence on learning and change is our experience of the world and how we construe it” (p. 3).

Argyris (1957, p. 218) defined two types of learning—single- and double-loop learning. In single-loop learning, corrective actions are taken if goals are not being met. But the goals and current operating procedures, are not questioned. In double-loop learning, underlying assumptions and beliefs are surfaced and challenged to help achieve the desired goals. Sometimes, even the goals can be questioned.

Senge (1990) uses the terms adaptive and generative learning in a vein similar to that of single- and double-loop learning. Adaptive learning is about coping, and generative learning is about expanding capabilities (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999).

Learning in the workplace can be supported by naturally occurring experiences as part of organizational life or intentionally applied experiences crafted to support learning. Intentionally applied experience-based learning has extensive application in the field of leadership development. Some of the ways it is applied at work are, training programs using crafted

experiences and simulations, for example, strategic corporate assignments to develop emerging leaders, as well as strategic projects for high potential leaders. For developing first-time supervisor's rotation programs and stretch-assignments are being used (McCauley et al., 2014).

DeRue and Ashford (2013) developed the mindful engagement model to plan executive learning. It comprises of three phases—Approach, Action, and Reflection. The approach phase is about “setting learning goals, the action phase pertains to undertaking active experimentation and seeking feedback and the Reflection process is about meaning-making using after event reviews” (pp. 145-150). IBM's Prepare, Act, Review, and Reflect (PAAR) is designed as a learning model for managers and that provides “managers guidelines on how to support employee development through questioning, encouraging reflection, and supporting the transfer of knowledge back to the job.” Like mindful engagement, this, too, starts with identifying the developmental goal arrived at through questioning. The act phase is about executing developmental tasks that could support the goals. In the reflect phase employees think about the performance of the activity and identify lessons and insights for future application. The first three steps are taken with the manager and questioning plays an important role. In the final step, review is done with other colleagues and focuses on teaching others (Preston-Daybe, 2013). It is evident, that, beyond the intentional nature of such learning experiences and deliberate inquiry, the process is quite similar to learning from experience as conceptualized by Kolb (1976) or Boud et al. (1985).

Summary of Learning from Experience.

To summarize, whether we are involved in learning that is instrumental, communicative, or transformative, experience plays an important role. It helps us draw lessons from the past to inform future action. Our experiences also condition us and so, at times, learning involves examining, questioning, and challenging these lessons from experiences to consider alternative

ways of doing things and not mindlessly repeating past lessons. Workplace learning by managers has a few unique nuances. First, given its intentional nature, learning goals inform the structure and design of learning from experience. Hence, experiences could be intentionally created as in training programs or learning projects. Second, the learning facilitators not only include trainers and facilitators, but also managers who are also responsible for holding learners accountable for work goals. Irrespective of the context, the transformation of meaning is where reflection plays an important role. In workplace learning, inquiry by managers, coaches or other facilitators of learning plays an important role in the meaning-making process.

Deconstructing Reflection

The term reflection finds mention along with related terms such as reflective thinking, reflective activity, and reflective practice. While some such as Kolb (1976) see it as one of the many steps in the process of learning, others such as Boud and Walker (1993) and Schön (1986) consider it central to the process of learning. It is not surprising that it is impossible to find one, commonly accepted definition or conceptualization of reflection. Hence, I reviewed the work of scholars and practitioners on reflection and related terms in education and management to find out significant elements that can contribute to conceptualization of reflection. In that regard, I found that their literature talks about definitions and conceptualizations of reflection, the importance of reflection, the prompts for reflection, the components or process of reflection, types of reflection and outcomes of reflection. The literature also talks about the factors that influence reflection—both enablers and barriers. I will start by sharing a few definitions of reflection in general, and then share literature relevant to each aspect of reflection in the literature—ending up by reassembling from all of these a definition of reflection for my study.

Definitions of Reflection

John Dewey (1933) included reflection under the general umbrella of thinking processes and differentiated “reflective thinking” as different from other forms of thinking such as imagination. He defined reflective thought as, “Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought” (p. 9). He identified other words—“weight, ponder, deliberate, scrutiny, examination, consideration and inspection” (Dewey, 1933, Kindle Locations 829-832)—as closely associated with reflection.

Boud, et al., (1985) identify reflection as the enabler of learning from experience. According to them, it is “a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations . . . [It] turns experience into learning . . . helping the learner process information, relate this to previous knowledge and test understanding” (pp. 7-11). It can take place in isolation or in association with others. To Dewey’s largely cognitive and rational process heavy conceptualization of reflection, they added the role of affect in its process.

Mezirow and Taylor (2009) define reflection as a process that takes place in the context of problem solving and can transform meaning structures. It involves the critique of assumptions—examining their origins, nature, and consequences. We may, for example, reflect on the “content” of the problem, the “process” of problem-solving, or the “premise” of the problem. Content and process reflection provide us a way to change our minds and transform meaning schemes which is more “here and now.” Reflecting on the premise of our problem brings out a different quality to problem-solving, as it may cause us to ask, instead, why we

posed the problem in the first place. Premise reflection transforms meaning perspectives, a less common but more significant learning experience.

According to Schön (1983), reflection serves professionals as a “corrective to overlearning . . . [It] helps [a professional to] surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown up around repetitive experiences of specialized practice . . . and [to] make new sense of situations of uncertainty or uniqueness when he may allow himself to experience (p. 61).” In his view, “reflection in action” happens when practitioners reflect on their knowing while in practice, and “reflection on action” happens when they think back on the knowing they brought to the practice. The latter may happen in people in a mood of idle speculation, or in a deliberate effort to prepare themselves for future cases. Brookfield (1995) says,

The most effective way to become aware of these assumptions is to view our practice from different perspectives. Seeing how we think and work through different lenses is the core process of reflective practice (p. xii).

Seibert and Daudelin (1999) defined reflection as,

. . . the process of stepping back from an experience to carefully and persistently ponder its meaning to the self through the development of inferences. It is a mechanism that results in the product of learning (pp. 20-21).

Carroll (2010) calls reflection a process that “turns information and knowledge into wisdom” (p. 24).

Hilden and Tikkamäki (2013) consider reflection a fuel for organizational learning and make case for institutionalizing it. They define reflection as,

a complex, active and purposeful mental process of becoming aware of old meanings, exploring alternative interpretations, engaging in dialogue, and shifting modes of

thinking, feeling, and acting. It is triggered by meaningful experience and leads often to unexpected outcomes (p. 82).

A Unified Compositional Definition of Reflection

Nguyen et al., (2014, pp. 1180-1184) conducted a systematic review of the papers of the 15 most-cited authors in the literature on reflection that were published in English between 2008 and 2012. The search was conducted in medical literature databases and was oriented toward articles on reflection and learning in medical education and practice.

In deriving a definition that identifies its substituent elements by summarizing from the work of the fifteen authors studied, they first follow the lead of Dewey—often called the “father of reflection”—who characterizes it as a thinking, hence cognitive, process of the type occurring when the mind is engaged in the scientific method. Beyond “thinking,” the studied authors also used cognitive terms like “‘questioning,’ . . . ‘examining,’ ‘scrutinizing,’ ‘mental processing,’ or ‘analysis.’”

However, the authors note that the process is never confined to the cognitive. “All definitions of reflection in the work of the authors studied include further elements that delineate how reflection, as a specific form of thinking, differs from other thinking processes.” They identified 5 as “essential” to reflective thinking, and two that are “extrinsic.”

Five Essential Components and Two That Are Extrinsic

In analyzing reflection as a unique form of thinking, they first consider the components in it that constitute its uniqueness. They divide them into two broad types: *content*, (*what* one thinks about when reflecting), and *process*, (*how* one thinks when reflecting). Not surprisingly, some components involve both.

One of two major elements comprising reflection would have to be on the *content* side, “Thoughts and Actions” (what to think about). This would encompass the full range of cognitive content, e.g., “knowledge, ideas, problem solving, as well as non-cognitive content (e.g., actions, experience), and potential affective content. In Mezirow’s words, it encompasses all that one can ‘perceive, think, feel or act.’” Thus, the first component of reflection is thinking about one’s thoughts and actions.

But this component, alone is insufficient to circumscribe the uniqueness of reflection as a mode of thought. The other major necessary component is on the *process* side, specifically a type of thought that is best summarized as: *attentive, critical, exploratory, and iterative* (ACEI). They particularized that, for Dewey (1933), one’s thinking should be “active, persistent and careful”; for Schön (1983), Mezirow (1990), and Mann et al., (2009), “critical”; For Boyd and Fales (1983) and Boud et al., (1985), “exploratory.” In a summative comment on reflective thinking as articulated by all the authors they studied, Nguyen, et al., (2014) hold “that reflective thinking entails a certain analytical and ameliorative way of processing one’s thoughts and actions” that cannot be crystalized into just a word or two. They propose that, because each author has his or her preference, instead of something truly brief, the process would best be approximated by the lengthier initialism cited above, ACEI. In light of their recognizing that reflection is often directed at thinking about problematic issues, they specifically cite Mezirow’s (1991) “premise reflection.”

The authors subsequently identify three essential mediators of the two-essential-component content-process amalgamation described above. They diagram these (Nguyen et al., 2014, Figure 3) as acting on, or filtering it, sequentially; The third essential component, then, of the whole is one’s conceptual frame (CF), that they characterize as being equivalent to Dewey’s

(1933) “grounds that support one’s TA [thoughts and actions],” Schön’s (1930) and Brookfield’s (1990) “assumptional structures” and “assumptions,” or Atkins and Murphy’s (1993) talk about “perspectives.” They note that the CF that underlies our thoughts and actions can be either conscious or unconscious.

Nguyen et al., (2014, p. 1182) summarized the view of most authors studied, “the aims of reflection are often “(i) to process one’s TA and CF with a view to change . . . and (ii) to reprocess the envisioned change as the content of further [iterative] reflective thinking,” The fourth essential and mediating component of reflective thinking, then, is one’s view toward change—in that initially envisioned change can be changed again via further reflection . . . *ad infinitum*.

The final essential component, or filter, of the reflective thought process is the self (S). They pointed out that the very Latin root of reflection, “*reflexio*, refers to the act of ‘bending back.’ The idea of reflection as a thinking process concerned with the self appears in most definitions in implicit or explicit form.”

In addition to the five ‘constitutive,’ or essential components of reflexive thinking discussed above, the two extrinsic ones—that are situational—are trigger and context.

I now elaborate key aspects of reflection that emerge from the work of scholars whose definitions are presented above. These will help in reassembling a working definition of reflection and identifying a preliminary conceptual framework.

Trigger for Reflection

Dewey (1933) identified that the trigger, or the “guiding factor” for reflection as “demand for the solution of a perplexity” or a problem as, “something which challenges the mind and makes belief all uncertain” (Kindle Locations 205-206),

(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief. (Dewey, 1933, KL 182-183).

According to Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985), reflection could be triggered by a single event or multiple external or internal ones including inner discomfort or positive emotions.

According to Mezirow (1994), the trigger is a *disorienting dilemma*, the discomfort when a new experience happens that doesn't fit within a current meaning-making structure, and resolution necessarily involves revisiting and changing a meaning-making structure.

Like John Dewey, Boud et al., (1985) also consider reflection to be an “intentional activity even if the final goal is vague” (p. 11) while, for Schön (1986), reflection could be automatically or subconsciously triggered and may not be an intentional activity. In the context of experiences designed for fostering learning at workplaces, for example, a trigger for reflection could lie outside the person and be triggered by external questions posed by a manager, coach, or fellow learners. Reflection could happen before the experience (Raelin, 2001), during the experience, or after the experience (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999; Schön, 1986). Seibert and Daudelin (1999) use the term “proactive reflection” for reflection after experience, seeing reflection as an episodic, structured, and defined event conducted with the purpose of extracting learning.

Summary of Trigger for Reflection

Quite often, the experience of discomfort or perplexity is associated with the trigger of reflection. This happens when we are actively looking to solve a problem or when our experience does not fit in with what we expect. In workplace learning, the trigger for reflection could come

from external catalysts or agents such as managers who create a dilemma or provide prompts to further the process of reflection.

Process of Reflection

Scholars differ as to the degree of overlap between reflection and the overall process of learning.

Dewey (1931) uses reflection and reflective thinking interchangeably and it seems that he sees reflection as the entire process following experience. He elaborates on the process of reflective thinking or reflection in terms of, “double movement of reflection (KL 1147-1148),” i.e., movement between facts and meaning or abstraction (inductive reasoning) and movement between meaning and facts (deductive reasoning).

Dewey (1931) described five steps of reflection as, “(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief” (Dewey, 1931, KL 1032-1036).

For Boud et al., (1985) also, reflection or reflective activity spans the entire process of learning:

Reflection is needed at various points: at the start in anticipation of the experience, during the experience as a way of dealing with the vast array of inputs and coping with the feelings that are generated and following the experience during the phase of writing and consolidation (p. 10).

Their revised model incorporated insights from Schön (1986) and described various elements of the reflective process—those elements that occur when the person is involved in the

experience and those that happen after the experience (Boud & Walker, 1993). The reflective processes they outline that follow experience are:

- Returning to Experience: Recollecting what has taken place, without judgement with all the details.
- Attending to feelings: This involves acknowledging feelings, removing negative feelings, and using positive feelings. This further supports reflection.
- Reevaluating the experience: This is where new meaning gets ascribed to the experience. That includes one or more of the following processes:
 - Association: Involves suspending judgement and letting ideas, thoughts, feelings, images associate in an almost automatic manner. These associations help integrate different data to integrate and generate new meanings.
 - Integration: Once associations are formed, newer relationships are formed among data. When we integrate, we draw conclusions and generate insights.
 - Validation: At times we might further go ahead and subject our feelings or generated ideas to “reality tests” to verify their authenticity.
 - Appropriation: In the last step, the knowledge becomes one’s own and the learner integrates it into her life.

(Summarized from Boud and Walker (1993, pp 74-83))

Schön (1986), differentiated “reflection in action” and “reflection on action” as two types of reflection on experiences facilitated by professionals. The latter is reflection in the sense that is the focus of this study. His work further details the idea of naming and labelling when revisiting experience. He defined problem setting as “the process in which, interactively, we name the things to which we will attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them”

(p. 40). He identified possible objects that a profession engaging in reflection in or on action might reflect upon,

. . . tacit norms and appreciations which underlie a judgement, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behavior. He may reflect on the feeling for a situation which has led him to adopt a particular course of action, on the way in which he has framed the problem he is trying to solve, or on the role he has constructed for himself within a larger institutional context. (p. 62)

Mezirow (1991) defines two terms that relate to reflection—introspection and thoughtful action. Introspection is about becoming aware of what we are perceiving, feeling, thinking, or doing. Thoughtful action is about making judgements based upon evidence of prior learning. In his view, action may not necessarily be the physical act of taking action. Rather, even a decision to act constitutes action. Reflection could happen on content, process, or premise. If we compare this to Boud and Walker's (1993) conceptualization, when we are introspecting, we are revisiting the experience and attending to feelings, and when we are engaging in thoughtful action, we are reevaluating the experience.

Just as Schön (1986) talked of naming and framing, whereby he identified things one could reflect upon, Mezirow (1991) identified content, process, or premise reflection as being the focus of reflection.

Content reflection is “reflection on *what* we perceive, think, feel or act upon” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 107). Thoughtful action requires content reflection.

“Process Reflection is an examination of *how* we perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting and an assessment of our efficacy in performing them” (Mezirow,

1991, pp. 107-108). This includes asking ourselves whether we could have misinterpreted some incident.

“Premise reflection involves our becoming aware of *why* we perceive, feel or act as we do and of the reasons for and consequences of our possible habits of hasty judgement, conceptual inadequacy, or error in process of judging” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 108). This brings forth new awareness about the very meaning we ascribe to and have used to frame the incident.

Dewey’s (1931) idea of empirical testing or Boud and Walker’s (1993) idea of validation seem to come together in how Mezirow explained validation and empirical testing. In his view, we can engage in empirical testing in a scientific sense in instrumental contexts. However, in communicative and transformative learning contexts this could involve “turning to authority figures, politics of force, or rational discourse” (Mezirow, 1994, p. 225).

A discussion on reflection and learning from experience is incomplete without looking at the work of David Kolb. Unlike Boud and Walker (1993) and others, Kolb does not make reflection or reflective activity central to the learning process. He considers “observations and reflection” as one of the four “equipotent” steps among the four steps in the process of learning - concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Learners . . . must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (Concrete Experience). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (Reflective Observation). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories, (Abstract Conceptualization), and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems, (Active Experimentation) (Kolb, 1984, pp. 20-38).

I used to think that the term reflective observation is the equivalent of reflection. However, that may not be completely accurate. Kolb (1984) describes reflection as “intention.” that holds the meaning of “goal” or “purpose,” which, in turn, Kolb sees as a rough equivalent of Piaget’s (1971, p. 67) “intellectual operations.” Seibert and Daudelin (1999, p. 7) reviewed Kolb’s conceptualization of learning and reflection and reframed the idea of reflection as it appears in Kolb’s work to include both Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization. They see Reflective Observation as perceptual dimensions of learning from experience, and Abstract Conceptualization as thinking to gain understanding. Together they help individuals to make sense of experiences, put them in the context of theory, and use the two together as a guide for future action.

It may not be inaccurate to say that reflection in the sense used in the literature means more than “reflective observation” as described by Kolb (1984). It does intersect with a wider part of the process of learning and includes the process whereby the learner is also making meaning and drawing conclusions about the experience. It is in this sense that I will conceptualize reflection for my study.

Dewey (1933) emphasized the role of inquiry in reflection. Seibert and Daudelin (1999) made this idea concrete for reflection by managers by identifying the “proactive dimension” of reflection where questions are intentionally designed and posed to extract learning in contrast to the “reactive dimension” where the questioning is triggered more from the internal rather than external. In both dimensions, and modes, they asserted that,

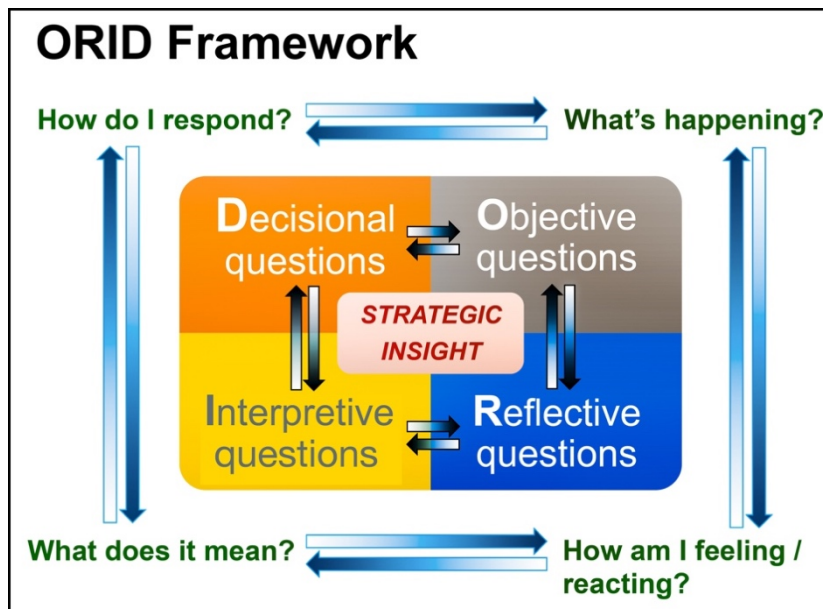
questions are at the core of reflection . . . it is through considering important questions that managers attempt to discover the meaning of challenging work experiences . . .

grappling with significant questions is what ultimately unites the two modes of reflection in the manager's quest to know (p. 185).

On similar lines, Tsang (2007), sees reflection as a process of internal and external dialogues. "When carrying out an internal dialogue, one examines one's own articulations and listens to one's own voice, aiming at understanding one's values, assumptions and blind spots" (Tsang (2007, as cited in Hilden and Tikkamäki (2013, p. 83).

The ideas of inquiry at the heart of reflection (Dewey, 1933; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999) and reflection as a process encompassing revisiting the experience, attending to feelings, and reevaluating the experience (Boud, & Walker, 1993) come together in the ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional data) framework developed by Spencer (1989). Use of this model is exemplified by Marsick and Maltbia (2009) in the implementation of Action Learning Conversations (ALCs), a reflective practice. In ALCs used in a coach development program they describe how reflection is supported by external inquiry where four types of questions are posed of learners, and coaches look for associated data to support reflection. These are Objective questions that elicit data pertaining to "what is happening," Reflective ones that elicit "How am I feeling/reacting?", Interpretive ones, "What does it mean?", "What are we Learning?" (164). Decisional questions focus on "What do I do?" Together, these questions comprise the ORID Framework. According to Marsick and Maltbia (2009), this cycle is closely aligned to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle and prompts content, process, and premise reflection by asking reflective and interpretive questions.

Figure 2. ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional) Questions



Source: Spencer, 1989 and Stanfield, 2000.

DeRue and Ashford (2014) describe the After-Event-Reviews (AERs) that they use for executive development. Here, too, external inquiry plays a role in triggering reflection and their process consists of asking learners to describe what happened in as much detail as possible in order to separate out biases, “developing counterfactual thinking” which involves imagining “what-if” scenarios about actions not taken in the situation and some speculation on what results might have been had . . . identifying new insights, feedback and processual details as to how the lessons of this experience can be applied to improve performance in future experience.

Nowak (2013, p. 269, Figure 26.1) of Agilent Technologies identifies asking questions using the “3X3 Tool” of the nature, “What are the variances from the original objectives?” “What specifically did you learn?” “What would you have done differently or will you do differently in the future?” as important aspects of process of reflection.

The last two models highlight the role of inquiry and identifying lessons to inform future actions. The focus on actions and how they deviate from goals seems to indicate that in workplace contexts, reflection can also support working to solve problems with instrumental goals.

Reliance on constructivist perspective—the paradigm on which most of the literature examined above is reviewed—imposes certain limitations. One of these is overemphasis on rational and conscious processes (Fenwick, 2000; Lundgren et.al (2017)). In a discussion on their perspectives on Transformative learning, Mezirow and Dirkx (Dirkx et al., 2006) agree that apart from conscious aspects on which we reflect, there is also unconscious content that might emerge or be expressed in imaginal ways such as emotion laden memories and metaphors. Once these are brought to conscious awareness, they become more fodder for critical reflection. However, Mezirow and Dirkx differ on the process beyond this. For Mezirow, the role of the unconscious is limited to surfacing unconscious content, which should be further reflected on rationally. For Dirkx, there could be times when what gets surfaced might have nothing to do with a particular frame of reference that gave rise to the unconscious content. Instead, it could surface another frame of reference associated with it for historical reasons. He gives the example of references of time getting associated with power as they were experienced together by an individual. Regarding such situations, Dirkx talks of a form of reflection—imaginal dialogue—that attends to the feeling attached clusters that can help one understand the meaning. What emerges from this is that unconscious content could play a role in reflection—sometimes in a rational way and sometimes through non-rational associations.

Referencing the psychoanalytic perspective, Fenwick (2000) and Lundgren, et al (2017) talk about the role of symbols and metaphors as examples of how unconscious content gets

symbolized. Marshak and Katz (1999) identify five covert processes of unconscious content at work within an individual, a work group, or the organization as a whole: a) mindsets that are out of our awareness, b) negative emotions or politics that are considered too risky to express and hence are denied, c) unexpressed inspirations, d) untapped higher selves or the super conscious, and e) deep fears and anxieties buried in the subconscious (p. 26-30).

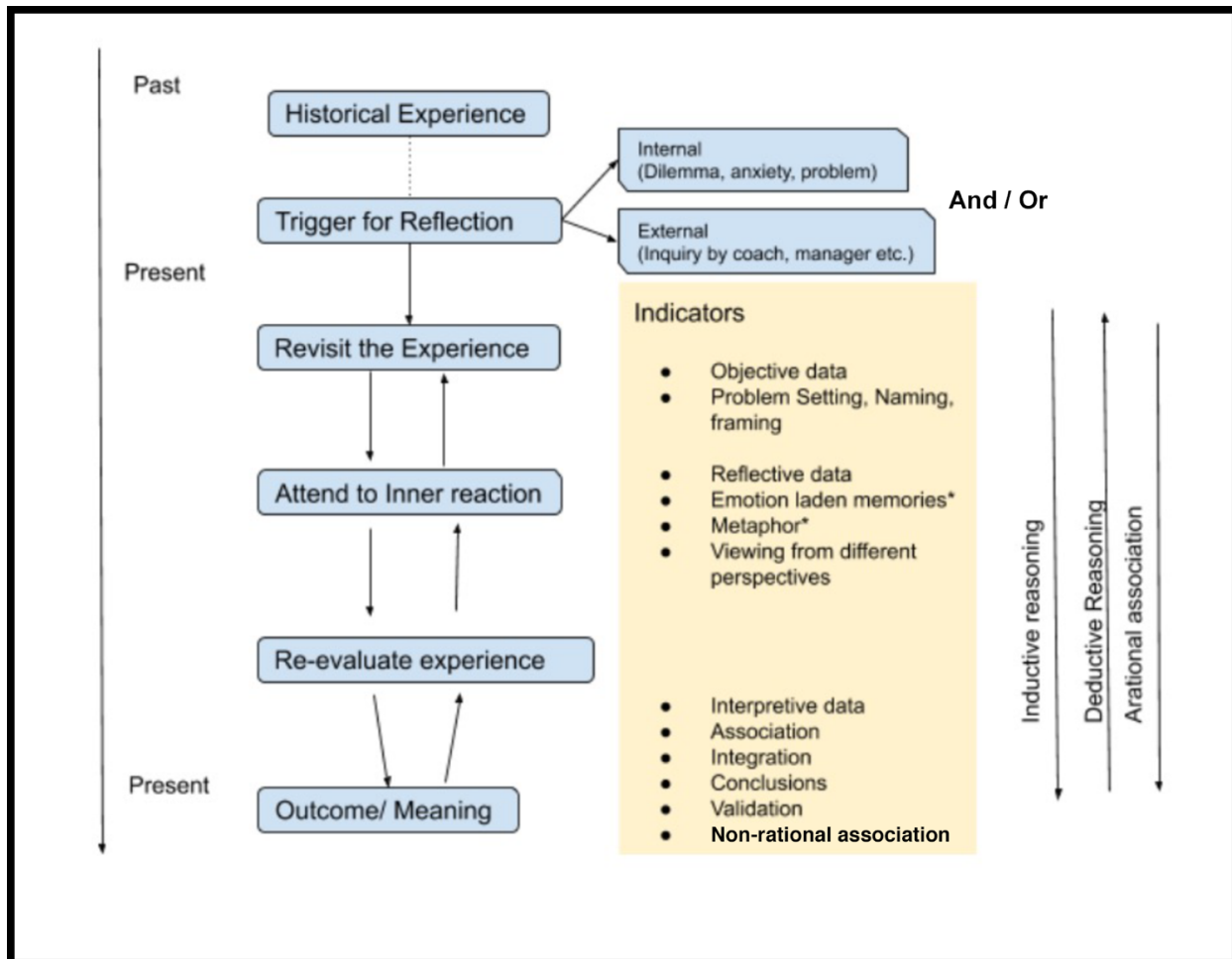
Marshak (2006) suggests the use of symbolic communication to explore manifestations of all these covert processes irrespective of their source or categorization (mindsets or the subconscious). He calls these symbolic methods 4 m's—**metaphors** (speech, similes, stories, parables, myths and imagery, e.g., using symbols to describe change), **music** (e.g., tone in the meeting), **movement** (posture, where people sit) and **media** (pictures, paintings, drawings)—as language of the unconscious.

All the above suggest that in addition to a very conscious and rational process of reflection as defined in the constructivist frame, unconscious processes of expression of symbolism, imagery, emotion laden memories and their processing through irrational processes such as associations might well also be considered as elements of reflection.

Summary of Process of Reflection.

Figure 1 is a visual depiction of my understanding of the process of reflection after experience based on consideration of the aforementioned literature. I have used a combination of Boud, and Walker's (1993) and Marsick and Maltbia's (2009) descriptions of Spencer's (1989) ORID framework to provide supporting indicators at each step of the process. Other literature has been incorporated around these two core pillars as well.

Figure 3. Process of Reflection after Experience



Source: Author’s synthesis based on Boud and Walker (1993) and Marsick and Maltbia (2009).

The Trigger for reflection, whether internal or external, initiates the revisiting of experience. The revisiting of experience comprises the entire problem setting, one where the problem and objects of reflection are named. One where the learner attends to their inner reaction which comprises thoughts, feelings, ideas, images, and metaphors. In this step, the experience is viewable from different perspectives. The reevaluation of experience consists largely of cognitive activities employed in forming interpretations of data. Sometimes the forming of associations could also be non-cognitive, e.g., when dealing with subconscious content. The end goal of the process is arriving at revisions of meaning. These steps may not be linear. Learners

can move from meaning to experience and vice-versa with some back-and-forth involved. Additionally, Kolb (1984) identified learning styles which, too, indicates that learners have a certain preferences and preferred zones where they like to “hang out” that may influence the process.

Types of Reflection

Literature has also looked at classifying reflection into various categories depending on the complexity of what is being reflected upon and the context in which it is taking place

Dewey (1933) paints reflective thinking as a continuum, describing different types of reflection in order of increasing complexity ranging from a “simple case of practical deliberation” (Kindle Location 988) to more “complicated case(s) of reflection” (Kindle Location 1024). The simple case of reflection, or practical deliberation, is something that happens in the daily course where “neither the data, nor the ways of dealing with them, take one outside the limits of everyday experience.” While in the complicated version, the problem or the mode of solution occur outside one’s daily limits. For Dewey (1933), the context of reflection could be simple or complex. The former could be resolved by better definition of the problem while the latter might require testing of it.

The most common classification of reflection that I found was threefold, that between simple reflection, i.e., reflection only; critical reflection; and critical self-reflection. Among these three, according to Mezirow (1994), deliberate focusing on beliefs of others is critical reflection; a deliberate focusing on beliefs of oneself is critical self-reflection. For Brookfield (1995), critical reflection pertains to assumptions that “. . . mask the ways in which the variable of power affects and often distorts educational interactions [and] . . . those that seem congenial but

actually work against our best interests” (p. xii). For Marsick and Maltbia (2009), critical reflection is reflection that helps identify underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions.

Another way to look at critical reflection is the extent to which it goes beyond the individual. For Boud et al., (2006), reflection could be individualized with the practitioner reflecting in a social context such as problem solving. The same becomes critical reflection when the individual also reflects on the social and political premises involved. According to Reynolds (1998, p. 183), “critical reflection refers to questioning taken-for granted social (rather than individual), cultural and political assumptions and power relations.

According to Kreber (2004), when Argyris and Schön (1974) talk about double-loop reflection—i.e., when they refer to critical reflection, they explain it as questioning why one should even consider the problem relevant.

Carroll (2010) shared that people may have a narrow perspective, i.e., reflect, but not reflect widely or have a wider perspective. Accordingly, he suggested six levels or modes of reflection in which coachees and supervisees can be supported in making meaning. He also suggested that these six modes are connected to the ability to perceive, an idea concerning reflection that is explained more fully in the constructive-developmental theory section of this review. Below, Carroll further identified how these levels of reflection connect with Mezirow’s content and process reflection. Table 1 identifies Carroll’s levels of reflection, the associated, stance and Mezirow’s type of reflection.

Table 1. Carroll's Levels of Reflection

Level	Ability for Reflection	Stance	Mezirow's type
1	Zero	Me	Content
2	Empathic	Observer	Content
3	Relational	You and Me = Us	Process
4	Systemic	You and Me + Others	Process
5	Self	Me (internalized)	Not identified. Possibly critical self-reflection
6	Transcendental	Other (universal)	Not identified.

Source: Adapted from Carroll (2010).

Building upon his idea of adaptive and developmental learning in organizations, Ellström (2006) identified different kinds of action (Intentional behavior) required in organizations and associated them with required levels of reflection. His conceptualization of action and reflection levels is summarized below in table 2:

Table 2. Levels of Action and Reflection in Organizations

Action	Level of Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill based or routinized • Adjustments in response to minor variations in contextual conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflexive monitoring of action. Knowing in action (Schön, 1983)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule based • Solve familiar problems based on defined or verbalizable rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and interpretation of problems. • Empirical correlation of successful acts and outcomes, no analytical diagnosis required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge based • Solutions generated based on analysis of tasks and goals, previous experience and contextual conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical diagnosis, critical analysis of content and process of activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective action • Actions based on evaluation and reflection encompassing not just performance, consequences of actions but also reflections concerning tasks and goals themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mezirow’s critical reflection with focus on logical inconsistencies, self-reflection (self-awareness, strengths, and weaknesses) and making assumptions made explicit. Reflection concerning tasks and goals itself.

Source: Adapted from Ellström (2006), pp 45-49.

The four types of action and associated levels of reflection are presented in Table 2. As one moves from skill-based or routinized action towards reflective action, the quality of reflection become deeper and moves towards critical reflection.

Summary of Types of Reflection

I have summarized the literature on types of reflection in Table 3.

Table 3. Types of Reflection Identified in Literature

Simple				Complicated	
Practical deliberation: “data and ways of dealing with limits of everyday experience.” Simple context; resolved by problem definition				“data and ways of dealing outside limits of everyday experience.” Complex context; often requiring empirical testing	
Ellström	Skill based	Rule based		Knowledge based	Reflective action
	Monitoring action	Identification and interpretation of problem: correlation of action and outcome		Critical analysis of content and process; tasks, goals, previous experience	
Carroll	Narrow			Wide	
	Zero Me stance	Empathetic Observer stance	Relational	Systematic You and me and others	Self Me internalized Transcendental Other (Universal)
	Simple			Critical	Critical self
	<i>Content</i>			<i>Process</i>	<i>Premise</i>
Marsick Brookfield Marsick, Maltbia	Problem in a given context			Identify values beliefs and assumptions (VBA)	VBA about self
				Social, cultural, political <i>context</i> of a problem	
				Social, cultural, political <i>premise</i> of a problem	

The table captures the idea that reflection can be viewed as a continuum that ranges from simplicity to complexity. When we move towards complexity, we start taking a wider perspective. We go deeper into examining underlying assumptions. A stance could expand beyond ourselves to other aspects of context. More complex reflection is associated with depth of thought where the focus of reflection includes tactical problem-solving.

Aims and Outcomes of Reflection

The end goal of reflection according to Dewey (1931) is meaning-making—“(Meaning is) the central function of all reflection . . . when an inference reaches a satisfactory conclusion, we attain a goal of meaning (KL 1645-1649).” The meaning that we make can be abstract or concrete.

According to Boud and Walker (1993), outcomes of reflection include newer ways of doing, issue clarification, skill development, resolution of a problem, and affective outcomes such as changes in our attitudes, values, or emotions.

The outcomes of reflection in the constructivist perspective may include meaning-making or perspective transformation: “reflection is a perceptive process by which we change our minds, literally and figuratively” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 9).

According to Carroll (2010), reflection leads to new perspectives or new meanings for things that may otherwise seem bad. He gives the example of counselling as a process that uses reflection to help people change the meaning of events they have experienced.

Schön (1986), sees that, for practitioners, reflection can help correct “patterns of error” resulting from “overlearning” certain behaviors—overlearning that leads to repeating them mindlessly. It may also lead to “find[ing] a way of integrating, or choosing among, the values at stake in the situation” (p. 63).

Seibert and Daudelin (1999) conducted an empirical study where managers were provided three reflective tasks. They found that the outcomes of reflection include taking explicit lessons from experience and providing meaning for future action. This learning could be task-related, goal-related, interpersonal, intrapersonal (self-insights), or cultural (learnings about for

whom the society or organization works and/or whom it benefits). In an organization, this learning could be about the implications at individual, departmental or organizational levels.

Marsick and Maltbia (2009) elaborated on outcomes of reflection through the reflective practice of Action Learning Conversations and identified them as unearthing assumptions and modifying meaning perspectives toward those that are potentially more inclusive, discriminating, and open. The process could also lead to reframing of the problem.

From the review of Nguyen et al., (2014), reflection leads to some form of change ranging from “creates and clarifies meaning” to “results in a changed conceptual perspective.”

Summary of Aims and Outcomes of Reflection

Table 4 below summarizes the above cited outcomes of reflection.

Table 4. Outcomes of Reflection

Functional	Perspective Shifts/ Changed Points of View	Perspective Transformation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovering error patterns • New way of doing something in future • task performance/problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights • Changed conceptual perspective, attitude, or emotion • Clarification of issue • Uncover assumptions • Intrapersonal learning • Interpersonal learning • Cultural learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New meaning/attitude for things that seem bad • Uncovering biases • Reframing problems • New goals

Source: Author’s Synthesis of References on Outcomes of Reflection Reviewed Above.

The outcomes have been grouped into three groups of ascending degree in shift: functional, perspective shifts and those of perspective transformation.

Enablers of and Barriers to Reflection

Reflection requires detachment from the experience (Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). It requires an ability to suspend judgement (Dewey, 1933) and avoid the need for immediate closure (Boud & Fales, 1984), so as to be able to inquire into the nature of the problem. Inability to suspend judgement can become a barrier to reflective thinking.

Reflection requires the ability to observe, a quality that helps one be present and sensitive to experience enables reflection (Dewey, 1933). Reflection is enabled by being receptive to whatever “pops up” (Boud & Fales, 1984) and by the quality of being present to the nature of the experience and an openness to its potential meanings (Kreber, 2004).

Skills in methods to attack and find a solution or a trained mind also enable reflection (Dewey, 1933).

Emotions play an important role in reflection as well. Boud et al., (1985) criticized Dewey for overlooking the affective aspects. They identified negative emotions as potential barriers to reflection as they can distort perception. On the other hand, they hold that, positive feelings and emotions can provide motivation and stimulus to reflect and learn.

Argyris (1991) did not explicitly use the term critical reflection, however he identified barriers to double-loop learning. For him, defensive reasoning, avoiding embarrassment, threat, vulnerability, and feelings of incompetence become barriers to double-loop learning in work that would require or benefit from critical reflection. Along similar lines, Seibert and Daudelin (1999) found that managers’ tendency to play “ain’t it awful” (p. 163) or complain about general corporate decisions or management philosophies became a barrier to learning and reflection.

A conversation with someone else in an enabling environment can support reflection (Boud & Fales, 1984). This is supported in two ways. First it is supported by questions asked by the other person. Inquiry is central to the process of reflection (Dewey, 1933; Marsick & Maltbia, 2009; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999), and the nature of questions asked can have a significant impact on the outcomes of reflection. Secondly, conversational exchange is supported by Seibert, and Daudelin's (1999) finding that reflection was enhanced when one reflected with a facilitator who offered good listening, asked questions, and shared insights. Marsick and Maltbia (2009) contend that the depth of reflection is impacted by the "trust in the group, willingness to disclose, time to challenge one's thinking and many other factors" (p. 169).

In the view of Boud et al., (1985), the process of reflection is influenced by "Characteristics of learners" (p. 21) past experiences, cultural aspects, and intent of the learner. Other factors are "received dogmas and social conditioning" (Dewey, 1933, KL 423-426). In learning from experience at work, "deep embedding of skill to the point where performance is nearly reflexive can impair the ability to notice situations where one needs to respond differently" (Ellström, 2008). While he did not elaborate on difference in patterns of reflection by stages of development, Dewey (1933) did indicate the possibility of differences in nature of reflection due to the maturity of the mind when he said, "In truth, the mind at every stage of development has its own logic" (Kindle Location 903).

Yanow and Willmott (1999) as cited in Hilden and Tikkamäki (2013) articulate the role of passionate humility as an enabler of reflection. When this happens, the person allows oneself to be surprised and view a situation from diverse perspectives.

DeRue and Ashford (2014), identify shortage of time as a disabler of reflection. They identify mindful engagement as an enabler of reflection and any other step of learning. According to them, extreme emotions come in the way of learning.

The impulse to reflect is generated by an encounter with, and the conscious perception of, the potential significance inherent in an experience. Thus, an additional quality is necessary in the person—a quality of being present to the nature of the experience and an openness to its potential meanings (Kreber, 2004).

Summary of Barriers and Enablers of Reflection. Table 5 below summarizes the person-specific enablers and barriers to reflection. Since the research questions pertain to reflection patterns of managers, non-person factors are not being considered.

Table 5. Person Specific Enablers and Barriers of Reflection

Enablers	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspending judgment. • Open or Receptive to whatever pops up • Maturity of mind • Mindful engagement or being present- perceptive to one’s thoughts, feelings, actions, and environment • Willingness to disclose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement and closure focus; • Defensive reasoning • Complaining about external situation (e.g., management) • Extreme emotion or not managing emotions

Constructive-Developmental Theory

Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) built upon Piaget’s theory within the context of adulthood and developed constructive-developmental theory (CDT). The core idea of the theory is that our psychological development does not stop at the end of childhood. Rather, we have the potential to psychologically develop and evolve throughout our adult life. The word potential is key here as, unlike some theories, this theory does not link age groups with developmental stages or premise that all adults go through all of them. Development or growth according to this theory means developing greater complexity of our meaning-making systems and the resulting ability to deal with complexity (Kegan 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). The three central principles of

the theory are, Constructivism, Developmentalism, and subject-object balance (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 59). *Constructivism* means that meaning (associated with an experience) is not fixed; rather, we construct our own meaning. *Developmentalism* means that the way we make meaning continues to evolve and change in response to the more complex demands we face. Finally, *subject-object balance* is what determines how we make meaning. *Object*, according to this theory, refers to “aspects of ourselves that . . . we can hold out and see, . . . take perspective on, control, and reflect on . . . while *Subject* refers to those aspects of ourselves that “run us” and we can’t reflect upon. . . . A particular balance between subject and object determines the position of our meaning-making system on the continuum of stages of adult development. That particular subject-object balance determines what Drago-Severson (2009) calls our *Way of Knowing* through which all of life experience is filtered . . . [and] as we evolve, the subject-object balance shifts” (Drago-Severson, 2008, p. 58).

Kegan identified and defined distinct stages of development associated with these shifting patterns in subject-object balance. He classified the distinct stages or epistemological frames as “*orders of mind*” while, as noted above, Drago-Severson called the stages “Ways of Knowing.” Developing a higher, more complex ways of knowing is enabled by a mix of supports and challenges. We may encounter these supports and challenges as part of our life experiences. But educators can also try proactively to provide supports and challenges to facilitate further development in ways of knowing.

Table 6, below, lists the different terms used for stages of development in accordance with constructive-developmental theory of adulthood:

Table 6. Stages of Development in CDT

Source	Identical Stages in Adulthood	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kegan (1982); Kegan and Lahey (2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of Mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drago-Severson (2004 b, 2009); Terms (Ways of Knowing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of Knowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socializing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Authoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Transforming

Source: Reproduced and adapted from (Drago-Severson, 2008, pp. 60-61).

The instrumental, socializing, and self authoring ways of knowing are the most common in adulthood (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012).

Transitioning into a higher, more complex stage is associated with “increases in an individual’s cognitive, affective, intrapersonal, and interpersonal internal capacities.” Movement to a higher, more complex stage does not mean that the earlier ways of knowing is lost. A higher stage incorporates the previous stage and there could be times in which we might make meaning that is associated with a lower stage (Drago-Severson, 2009).

The more up-to-date preference is to use the term, *more complex*, rather than higher, to characterize stages trending toward more autonomous, object-dominant meaning, and *less complex*, rather than lower to characterize stages that are more subject-dominant, i.e., concretely self-focused. Beyond the obvious hierarchic denotations and connotations of higher and lower,

the relative *utility* of a particular stage may rise or fall in relation to the complexity of challenges faced by the thinker. In this thesis, the terms will be used more or less interchangeably.

For my study, I refer to the stages by their numbers, i.e., Stage 2, Stage 3 and so on. Since my study focuses on Stages 2-4, subsequent review will not focus on stage 5.

Subject-Object Interview

Lahey et al., (2011) developed an assessment technique called the *Subject-Object Interview* which can be used to classify a person's stage of development. They describe it as, "an approximately hour-long interview procedure used to assess an individual's unselfconscious epistemology" or "principle of meaning-coherence" (p. 328). It is a semi-clinical, semi-structured interview conducted with the goal of identifying "from where in the evolution of subject-object relations are the person's meanings generated?" (p. 7). The subject-object interview (SOI) lasts between sixty to ninety minutes during which the audio is recorded.

The SOI starts when the interviewer offers ten cards to the interviewee, with different terms printed on them meant to trigger episodes of meaning-making that can be reflected upon. The ten cards as defined in Lahey et al. (2011) display the words: ANGRY; ANXIOUS; NERVOUS; SUCCESS; STRONG STAND, CONVICTION; SAD; TORN; MOVED, TOUCHED; LOST SOMETHING; CHANGE; IMPORTANT TO ME (p. 327).

These serve as prompts to generate interview data that can later be analyzed to identify developmental levels. After the interviewee chooses one (occasionally more) of the cards, the interviewer then conducts a semi-structured interview using verbal probes that are aimed to elicit the "whys" behind the responses in order to access and understand the meaning-making structures that are operating. The interviewer simultaneously "wears two hats . . . that of an empathic, receptive listener and that of an active inquirer" (p. 333). In other words, in addition to

inquiring into the meaning-making structures, the interviewer also creates a safe environment for the interviewee to share responses that can provide clues to meaning-making. After the SOI has been conducted, the audio recording is transcribed, and the interview transcript is then analyzed for how meaning is being made. Finally, an assessor assigns scores to indicate the developmental stage being evidenced. The assessor, an individual who has been trained and certified for reliability in the methodology of the subject-object interview, analyzes the interview data and assigns scores to the recollection and reflection that was triggered to indicate the developmental stage represented by the meaning-making of that individual. (Conduct of the SOI and the meaning of findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.)

Constructive-Developmental (CDT) Literature and Reflection

In my review of the literature on constructive-developmental theory, while I did not come across explicit definitions of what reflection is and isn't, I found that scholars and practitioners of the theory highly emphasize "reflective practice" and have developed learning practices that incorporate reflection. My first finding was that perspective taking ability is related to the subject-object balance in how it describes the limits in a subject's current capacity to reflect on parts of themselves. My second set of findings pertain to indicators of reflection emerging from reflective practices described in CDT literature. As has been explained later, these mostly pertain to reflection of the critical kind and learning in the transformative domain. Both these sets of findings are described below.

CDT and Limits of Reflection

Faller (2015) reviewed the constructive-developmental theory literature and concluded that as subject-object balance moves toward the more complex stages in adulthood, we develop greater capacities with regards to our authority, responsibility, and perspective taking. Since we

can only take perspective on what we can hold as object of our attention, this also means that we can only reflect upon what is object to us (Drago-Severson, 2009; Lahey et al., 2011). Thus, the theory describes aspects of ourselves that we can and cannot reflect upon within our current capacity. Further, the theory states that these subject-object balances have nothing to do with specific themes, motives, issues, or preferences (Lahey et al., 2011). In other words, the theory does not talk about preferences for *how* we reflect; rather, it sets limits to *what* we can reflect upon. Table 7, below, has been adapted from Drago-Severson (2009, pp. 60-61) and summarizes information regarding differences in perspective taking abilities, that are likely to influence abilities and/or patterns of reflection on experiences for adults at Stages 2, 3 and 4.

Table 7. Limits to Reflection Due to Perspective Taking Ability According to CDT

Stages	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Orientation to experiences	Rule-based self	Other-focused self	Reflective self
Subject to experience: What interviewee cannot see about self and hence can't reflect upon	Needs, interests, and wishes	The interpersonal mutuality	Authorship, identity, psychic administration, ideology
Object: What about self the interviewee can reflect upon/take perspective on/manage, be responsible for	Impulses, perceptions	Needs, interests, and wishes	The interpersonal, mutuality

Source: Adapted from Drago-Severson (2009; pp. 60-61).

Discussion of CDT

For my study, the capacity for perspective taking—or the breadth of a person’s perspective on their experience” (Faller, 2015, p. 43)—seems to be especially relevant as it sets

limits on what one can or cannot reflect upon. This essentially implies that, based on the manager's subject-object balance, their ability to reflect upon aspects of workplace experiences has limits as there are certain aspects that they will not currently be able to take perspective upon. Within that context, it is important to understand that a limit—in concept, a barrier—is different from the idea of a preference, implying a choice.

Indicators of Reflection in CDT

Constructive-developmental theorists provide several examples of reflective practice. I identify indicators tied to reflection in the review of studies based on reflective practices developed by Kegan and Lahey (2010); Helsing et al., (2008), and Drago-Severson (2008, 2013) in the following section.

Immunity to Change (ITC), 4-Column Exercise, and Coaching

Kegan and Lahey (2010) describe “diagnostic reflections” and “liberating reflections” as part of the ITC process, which they call the “*Subject-Object Approach to reflective practice.*” The ITC journey comprises completing the “4-Column” exercise and a coaching journey that follows it.

From the theoretical perspective, Kegan and Lahey (2010) describe the *4-Column exercise* as “diagnostic reflections.” The exercise is conducted with a trained facilitator who engages in inquiry while also providing a holding environment and structure for the exercise. The steps involved in the exercise are framing the goal; identifying behaviors that go against the goal; identifying underlying fears and hidden commitments; and identifying and clarifying assumptions and beliefs that give rise to these commitments. While the goal and behaviors are usually conscious and the process explicitly supports the reframing of goal and labeling of behaviors, very often the fears, hidden commitments, and assumptions have been unconscious

and are surfaced through the exercise. Together, these steps produce outcomes from diagnostic reflections, and in doing so, clarify the “visible representation of . . . a usually invisible . . . mindset, [one] that creates the behaviors and the commitments that one is subject to, as well as the assumptions and underlying mindsets that are impeding the change efforts and [one’s ability] to see more deeply into the problem” (p. 443). Kegan and Lahey (2010) describe this process as a “temporary assist to greater mental complexity” that helps surface the limitations of current meaning-making systems but does not change them. As noted earlier, Kegan and Lahey (2010) describe this process as a “temporary assist to greater mental complexity” that helps surface the limitations of current meaning-making systems but does not change them.

Kegan and Lahey (2010) have designed a coaching journey that follows the Immunity to Change exercise. This comprises a facilitative process of liberating reflections along with active exploration and experimentation, designed to get meaning-making first consciously, and later unconsciously, released from the limitations of one’s assumptions. *Conscious release* means that the person still holds the beliefs and assumptions but can take perspective on them and check themselves in action. On the other hand, unconscious release means that the assumptions have been changed or modified and do not continue to guide the individual’s thoughts and actions.

Unconscious release could be considered akin to Mezirow’s Transformative Learning. Key elements of the reflective process relevant to the Immunity to Change consist of:

- Tests of big assumption that turn the assumption into an object of attention, that can be reflected upon and altered
- Self-observations to see the big assumptions in action, and naturally occurring counter examples. The outcome of these reflections is to build awareness of the limits and validity of assumptions and their prompts

- Biographical exercises that include looking back in history (experience) and reflecting upon biographical data to identify a source of big assumptions, its validity in the present, and conditions under which it gets triggered
- Reflection on Intentional tests or behavior changes. The learner reflects on the emotional and behavioral data (internal and external) with the purpose of again testing the validity of assumptions, and their prompts.

A Study based on the ITC Approach:

Helsing et al., (2008), describe an example of reflective practice based on the ITC approach. Sixteen participants undertook the diagnostic reflection and fourteen of them undertook the follow-up coaching process of liberating reflections-related activities similar to those described above but facilitated in pairs by a coach. Before the commencement of the learning journey, participants underwent the Subject-Object Interview to assess their developmental levels. The output of the reflective exercises and transcripts of their telephonic and email communication with the coach were studied to look for indicators of change in developmental levels. They describe the case of Semla Meredith who was a school-change coach. Prior to the journey, she was assessed as being at Stage 3, the socializing mind. She identified a goal to do the “best work possible” (p. 451) and, through the diagnostic reflections, identified behaviors such as working on non-goal-relevant tasks, fears of being perceived as less competent, and on associated hidden commitments—“ I am committed to appear to know” (p. 451) and four assumptions that were giving rise to these commitments. In the next step, she worked to “overturn the immunities.” As part of this effort, she observed the big assumption in action, i.e., becoming aware in real time about situations when the big assumption was influencing thoughts; feelings and actions; and getting insights into situations when the big

assumption was triggered. This exercise helped her question the validity of these assumptions. Another exercise was writing biographies of big assumptions that were about going back to earlier experiences in life and then trying to see potential sources. This “enabled her to understand her own tendencies better, and reflect on her big assumptions and on the ways they had influenced her.” Then she ran tests that required making deliberate behavior changes, collecting data on the validity of big assumptions and inner experience to identify prompts and conditions in which the big assumption gets triggered. After reflecting on these and other experiences, Selma concluded, “I think I understand that people don’t expect me to know everything; and, that I don’t need to expect myself to know everything” (p. 454).

A key outcome of this process was several realizations and a) change in behaviors to get better results, b) getting deeper insights about “assumptions she made about her work,” and, c) to “reflect on the bigger question of what this learning could tell her about how she related to other’s expectations and evaluations of her” (pp. 454-455). By the end of the coaching, “She was not simply altering her beliefs about how someone else would assess her performance, she was making a change to the very metrics by which she measured performance . . . she started seeing herself as a legitimate source of authority for determining the value of her own opinions, the way in which she expressed herself, and the overall quality of her work.” In other words, she, *herself*, was an example of developmental evolution.

Discussion of Basing Study on the CDT Approach

The process of diagnostic reflections involves reflecting on a goal and on its underlying limiting behaviors. Doing so leads to helping identify or generate awareness of hidden fears; hidden commitments and assumptions; and beliefs that give rise to these commitments and fears. As we become consciously aware of the assumptions it is possible to start questioning their

validity. The process of liberating reflections involves cycles of action and reflection. The focus of reflection or the object of reflection is inner experience, and the outcome is insights into the biographical roots, prompts, and understanding of validity that ultimately lead to overturning those assumptions. The liberating reflections also provide insight into one's meaning-making system (e.g., how one relates to work) and might, either lead to conscious release (modification of assumptions) or unconscious release (modification of epistemology—generating more complex perspective taking ability) (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

Pillar Practices to Support Adult Development in Schools

Drago-Severson (2008) and Drago-Severson et al., (2013) describe the use of developmentally informed reflective practices—teaming, to provide leadership roles, mentoring, and collegial inquiry to support development of educators and to support the improvement of their practice in schools. Such practices support the learners by meeting them where they are and by providing stage-appropriate challenges, helping teachers to develop and improve their practice. For example, in mentoring, “While those who are challenged by assuming their own authority—instrumental and socializing knowers—will initially require considerable support as they take on new leadership roles, self authoring knowers will appreciate the opportunity to put their ideas into action and to offer their ideas for improving school initiatives” (Drago-Severson, 2008, pp. 62-63).

These practices all position reflection as an important component they share. Teaming helped learners surface assumptions about evaluating curricular and student work and challenging each other's thinking. Providing leadership roles, too, helped in uncovering assumptions and testing out new ways of working. Mentoring and coaching helped learners in broadening perspectives, examining assumptions, and sharing expertise. Collegial inquiry is not

an individual reflective practice unlike the focus of this study. However, it, too, helps address complex challenges and has outcomes similar to those of the other practices. The scope of reflection could be goals, practice and instruction, and lead to developing individual and organizational capacity and developing better understanding of organizational issues. The embedded reflection process comprises activities such as asking questions, writing, and discussion with others.

Table 8 summarizes indicators of reflection from the CDT as emerging from Pillar Reflective Practices (Drago-Severson, 2008, 2013).

Table 8. Indicators of Reflection Emerging from “Pillar Practices”

Aspects of Reflection	Indicators
Trigger for Reflection	Inquiry
Revisiting the experience(s)	Reflection could be on goals, practices, or instruction
Attend to the inner experience	N/A
Reevaluating the Experience	Clarify thinking, better understanding of organizational issues, influence of assumptions
Outcome of Reflection	Increased individual or organizational capacity, broadened perspectives, testing out new ways of working.

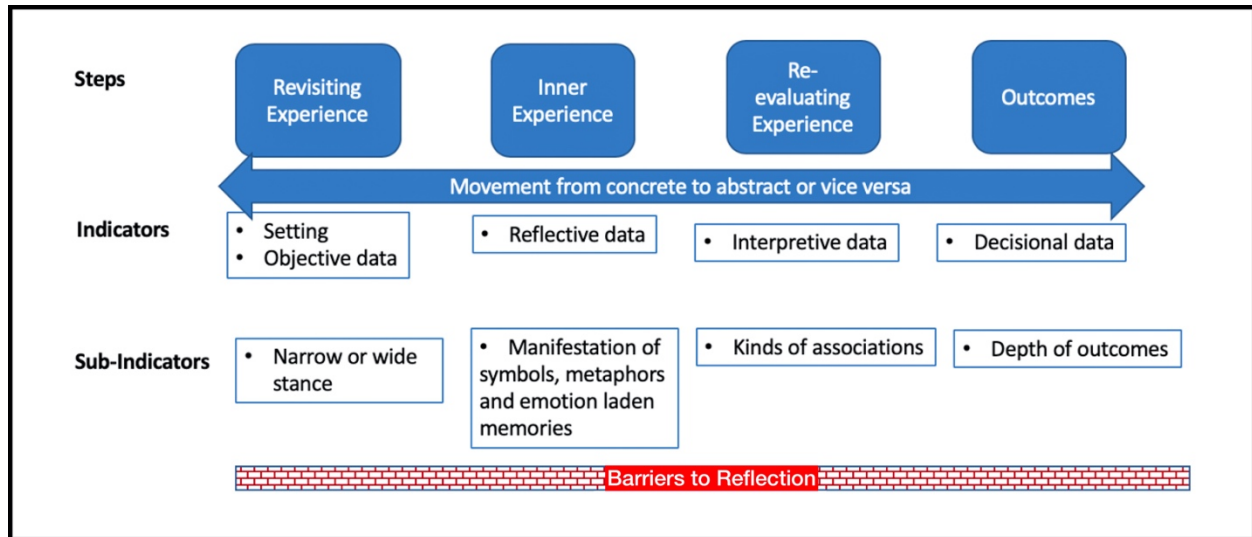
Source: Drago-Severson, 2008, 2013.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The following chart represents the working conceptual framework that has guided my analysis of data. As discussed earlier, the steps of reflection are guided by Boud and Walker’s (1993) model and the indicators are guided by Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional

(ORID) data. The sub-indicators specify the kind of patterns to look for. These sub-indicators have been derived from literature on types of reflection and the process of reflection from the constructivist perspective, constructive-developmental theory, and some elements of the psychoanalytic perspective.

Figure 4. Working Conceptual Framework for Study



Source: Author’s Synthesis.

Revised Working Functional Definition of Reflection after Experience at Workplaces

Reflection after experience at work is triggered by internal or external inquiry to solve a problem or dilemma. The process involves revisiting the experience, attending to the inner experience including feelings and reevaluating the experience. The end result of this process could be a range of outcomes on a continuum from simple or tactical to more complex an. Error identification, course correction, insights, and clarifications are examples of the former, and reframing problems, identification or changing of assumptions, as well as beliefs and values are examples of the latter. As people reflect, they may move from concrete to abstract or vice versa until the end goal of meaning is achieved. The process is influenced by internal and external

barriers and, also by developmental capacities, the ways of knowing being triggered by perspective taking.

Chapter 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I start by explaining the rationale behind adopting a qualitative approach and also for conducting secondary analysis on subject-object interviews conducted for a prior research study. Then I describe the site and the sampling procedures used to identify the subject-object interview data that I used for secondary analysis. I next describe my data analysis procedures to answer research questions recapped below. Finally, I close this chapter with a discussion on reliability, validity, and limitations of my study.

To recap, this study seeks to answer the following research questions, RQ1 and RQ2:

1. As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?
2. In what ways if any do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory?

Rationale for Qualitative Approach

Creswell and Creswell (2017) identify the philosophical worldview of the researcher and research questions as important determinants of the chosen methodology. They hold that the qualitative research approach aligns with the constructivist paradigm. This worldview also lends itself to the study of reflection, which essentially is a meaning-making process (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993; Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 1994). The constructivist worldview also completely aligns with constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) the tenets of which I used to answer research question two. Finally, I also personally identify with the constructivist worldview which recognizes human beings as constructors of meanings.

My research questions have open-ended, exploratory stems of the nature of “what”, “how” and “in what ways.” Such stems seek to answer open-ended questions with “constructive

knowledge claims” where the researcher “collects participant meanings . . . to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants”—a process that Creswell and Creswell (2017, p. 19) argue is suited to qualitative research methodology. Further, I, myself, was the meaning-making instrument rather than using an instrument or scale to identify patterns of reflection—also a valid feature of qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The choice of qualitative research when the researcher is interested in participants’ constructed meanings of situations, experiences and impact of context is also supported by Merriam (1998) and Maxwell (2013). Hence, given my own constructivist philosophical worldview and the open-ended nature of my research questions, I have chosen a qualitative research approach.

Basic Exploratory Qualitative Study

The *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (Per Mihas, 2019) describes qualitative research as generic or basic when the focus is identifying relevant themes rather than focusing the study in a particular tradition such as grounded theory, narrative analysis, phenomenology, etc. Within the orientation of that lens, I position my study as a basic qualitative study, as I am using archival interview data for the basic purpose cited above of identifying patterns and themes of reflection.

Qualitative studies can cover a spectrum of answers to questions ranging from confirmation to exploration (Per Mihas, 2019; Stebbins, 2001). While confirmatory research is focused on enhancing precision of a theory through prediction, quantification, or deductive processes, exploratory research is focused on generating new knowledge or understanding about a process or activity (Stebbins, 2001). Even though reflection is a fairly well understood process, there is no commonly agreed upon definition. I am exploring nuances and questions that are less

well understood, such as patterns of reflection on workplace experiences and their variance by developmental levels. Hence, again, I positioned my study also as a basic exploratory study.

In terms of methodologic theory, McGrath (1981), talks of the “three horned dilemma” in social science research. In his view all social science research can be seen as an effort to maximize three desiderata of “generalizability with respect to populations, precision in control and measurement of variables related to behavior(s) of interest; and existential realism, for the participants, of the context within which those behaviors are observed” (p.184). Only one of these can be maximized to inform choice of research methods. In my study, I seek to understand reflection on naturally occurring, real-life experiences of managers.

By contrast, I seek to understand patterns of reflection on workplace experiences and their variance by developmental levels *only* in the specific context of upper-middle managers engaged in workplace experiences along with their reflection after experience, understanding that is generalizable to all people in any contexts This aligns with procedures laid down by McGrath (1981) and Runkel and McGrath (1982) for studies based on real-life experiences. The strength of such studies is maximization of realism with respect to context—while precision and generalizability are only minima (McGrath, 1981). Given the exploratory nature of my study, precision and generalizability wouldn’t even be relevant.

Data Sources

My study involves secondary analysis of subject-object interviews (SOIs) that had been conducted in order to assess the developmental levels of managers participating in leadership development programs. Table 9 shows the way these data were used to answer my research questions. Note that I initially sought to identify barriers and enablers of reflection as part of this study. As the data analysis proceeded, I realized that the interview questions were not designed

in a way that enabled me to code for this information pertinent to the experiences revisited and described by interviewees, so I dropped a research question I had originally considered on barriers and enablers.

Table 9. Sources of Data by Research Question

Research Question	Information Needed	Sources of Information and Methods
1 As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on dimensions of revisiting experience, feelings, and inner experience, interpreting the experience and outcomes of reflection?	Indicators of each of the dimensions of reflection mentioned in the research question. Data pertaining to indicators of each dimension of reflection	The initial set of indicators was identified based on literature review and are present in the conceptual framework. Subsequently more indicators were identified from data at the coding stage. Subject-object Interview data coded for indicators
2 In what ways if any do the above patterns of reflection vary by developmental level as identified in constructive-developmental theory?	3. Subject-Object Scores corresponding to each archival interview Patterns in data identified in RQ 1 and 2 as they differ by developmental level	3. Scores of developmental levels pertaining to each subject-object Subject-Object data clustered for people at the same level of development.

I have therefore used archival transcribed subject-object interview (SOI) data as a source of both episodes of reflection and information on developmental levels of the respondents. SOIs are based on interviewees' recall of rich life experiences or episodes, which are probed to understand how they construct and interpret the meaning of experience. This enables skilled, certified researchers to assess interviewees' level of adult development, as further discussed in the next section. While using subject-object (S-O) data for developmental levels is in line with their defined purpose of assessing development, using the data as a site of reflection is a unique feature of this study. I have chosen to use the S-O data for dual purposes: 1) to get access to a

rich source on workplace reflection in which to look for patterns of reflection; and 2) to examine whether and how patterns discovered are illustrative of what is known about reflection for people based on their developmental levels. I thus leveraged archival data collected for purposes of research on leadership by a team of experienced researchers to not only optimize my resources, but also to derive valuable learnings from a high value resource and offer it to the scholar-practitioner community interested in reflective practice and adult development. I elaborate the technical feasibility of using subject-object data for answering my research questions below.

Subject-Object-Interview (SOI) Data for Information on Developmental Levels.

Lahey et al., (1988, 2011) developed the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) to assess adult developmental levels described by constructive-developmental theory. As they describe it: “The SOI is an approximately hour-long interview procedure used to assess an individual’s unselfconscious “epistemology” or “principle of meaning-coherence” (Lahey et al., 2011). It is a semi-clinical, semi-structured interview conducted to answer “the fundamental question: from where in the evolution of subject-object relations does the person seem to be constructing his or her reality?” (Lahey et al., 2011, p. 11). The subject-object interview lasts between sixty to ninety minutes. The interviewer offers ten cards printed with the following terms to the interviewee:

1. Angry
2. Anxious, Nervous
3. Success
4. Strong Stand, Conviction
5. Sad
6. Torn
7. Moved, Touched
8. Lost Something
9. Change
10. Important to me

(Lahey et al., 2011, p. 327)

These serve as prompts to generate experiences that can be analyzed to identify developmental levels. The interviewer then conducts a semi-structured interview using the cards as probes to identify episodes of meaning-making and to elicit the “whys” behind what is said in order to understand the meaning-making structure underlying the content. In describing the specifics, nature and core-object of the interview, the authors note:

The subject will give you the “whats” (what is important, what felt successful; You must learn the “whys” (why is it important? why does that constitute success?) The answer to the whys helps you to understand how the person’s subject-object construction is shaping real life, the goal of the interview (Lahey et al., 2011, p. 330).

The interviewer must create a safe environment by, wearing “two hats”—that of an active inquirer but also that of an empathic, receptive listener” (Lahey et al., 2011, p. 330).

Regarding the latter, “[s]ince you are probing real-life experience, often deeply felt, care must be

taken to frame the ‘whys’ in such a way that [you don’t] seem to suggest the person is somehow wrong to be caring so deeply” (Lahey et al., 2011, p. 330) about their underlying concerns.

The interview is then analyzed for how meaning is being made and an assessor (sometimes the interviewer also, if qualified) ultimately assigns a score to indicate the developmental stage. (If certified, the interviewer can also conduct the assessment.)

Most of the time people make meaning not from one particular stage, but from a combination of stages. This is because most of the time people are in a transition between stages. Hence, apart from the main stages, Lahey et al., (2011) have also identified four sub-stages between any two main stages. The sub-stages form an inter-stage continuum that indicates the relative influence of each of the two main stages involved. In a transition from stage “x” to stage “y”, the sub-stages are indicated by x(y), x/y, y/x, y(x). Table 10, below, summarizes the relative meanings of the main and sub-stages in the continuum:

Table 10. Description of Stages and Sub-stages Coded after a Subject-Object Interview

Stage Type	Main	Sub	Sub	Sub	Sub	Main
Stage code	x	x(y)	x/y	y/x	y(x)	y
Meaning	Meaning being made from Stage a	Meaning being made primarily from Stage a. Beginning to see elements of b appear	Meaning being made from both stages a and b, with a dominating	Meaning being made from both stages b and a, with b dominating	Meaning being made primarily from Stage b. Rudiments of stage a appear sometimes	Meaning being made from Stage b

Source: Adapted from Lahey et al., (2011, p. 27).

For my research, I accessed transcribed SOI data for which developmental scores were already available, having previously been collected from different batches of participant

interviews conducted in series of five-day programs on leadership development designed for middle and senior level managers in open enrollment programs at the Center for Creative Leadership

Subject-Object-Interview Process and Data Providing Information on Reflection Patterns.

As mentioned above, subject-object interviews are not explicitly designed to elicit data on reflection even though subjects do recall and describe prior experiences. However, there are remarkable similarities in the process of reflection after experience as conceptualized by Boud et al., (1993) and the process followed according to the SOI protocol described above. The guiding process of reflection I used was based on Boud and Walker (1985, Figure 10); and is comprised of “return[ing] to experience, attend[ing] to feelings” and reevaluating of the experience.” Boud and Walker described this process of reflection as being facilitated by inquiry where internally or externally posed questions help make meaning.

The SOI follows a similar process (Lahey et al., 2011). An external interviewer asks the participant to identify episodes at work that involved intense experiences and associated emotions. The cards act as prompts to help participants think of such experiences. At the beginning, respondents are given a few minutes to think about the cards. This is akin to revisiting the experience. Then there is a semi-structured dialogue that starts with an inquiry around the episode, a continuation of revisiting the experience, followed by the interviewer posing questions to elicit answers as to how the person made meaning of experiences through stems, e.g., “So what about that is important to you?” Since the connection with feelings is embedded in the words on the cue cards used to elicit and identify the events, and because the interviewer conducts a semi-structured inquiry within a psychologically safe space, one can assume that the

interview data will also contain elicited data pertaining to inner experience (regarding feelings, etc.) in addition to guiding interpretations or elucidating meanings of the experience.

The SOI requirement of the interview being conducted in a safe holding environment (Lahey et al., 1988, 2011) is congruent with Mezirow's (1978, 1981, 1994) requirement of a safe space for conduct of rational discourse.

Lastly, I have personally undergone SOI as a volunteer and have trained in the process. In my limited experience as an interviewee and interviewer, I found the interview process leading to new insights and the kind of clarity one experiences after undergoing reflection. Because of similarities in the approach and process of reflection after returning to experience (Boud et al., 1993) and SOI experience, I assumed it to be an acceptable source of data for all analyses pertaining to my study.

Description of Site

The SOIs used for the study were conducted in 2007-2009 by a team of three researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership led by Cynthia McCauley, PhD, who is widely recognized and published in the field of leadership development and learning from experience.

Participants at the Center for Creative Leadership's (CCL) Looking Glass Experience (LGE) program, designed for senior leaders (heads of functions and divisions) were offered an opportunity to undergo S-O interviewing in return for a free publication by the Center for Creative Leadership and a copy of the summary findings. The detailed recruitment and consent form used by CCL for recruiting the participants in 2007-2009 is presented in Appendix A. Overall, 148 managers volunteered and were interviewed over two years. The interviews were transcribed for various research purposes connected to leadership development and adult development. The CCL team of three interviewers were trained by Nancy Popp, EdD, a

renowned expert in the area of subject-object interviewing and scoring who was trained by Robert Kegan. She also validated ~ 40% of all 148 interviews from which the sample of 15 used for this study was drawn. Table 11, below, summarizes the master archival data set.

Table 11. Summary Statistics of Archival Data Master Set

Total Number	Seniority	Ethnicities	Gender	Subject-Object Stages Represented
148 ~40% were validated and/or scored by Nancy Popp, EdD	Top (3.4%) Executive (26.4%) Upper Middle (36.5%) Middle (27%) First Level (3.4%)	Caucasian (80%) African-American 4.7% Asian 4.1 % Hispanic 2% Others (<1%)	Men 92 Women 55	2/3 to 4

Note: One participant did not classify gender in either of the available categories and two participants did not classify seniority in either of the available categories. The sampling procedures to pick the archival interviews from the above master-set are described below.

Sampling Methodology

Maxwell (2013) defined sampling as “a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices (p. 97).” Creswell and Creswell (2017) make a case for purposeful sampling in qualitative studies based on the purpose of study and note that this is in contrast to quantitative studies which emphasize random selection and size of sample.

. . . the idea behind qualitative research is to “purposefully select” participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the research problem and the research question.” Unlike quantitative research, this does not

necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a large number of participants and sites (p.189).

In view of the purposes of my study and as viewed within the strategies listed by Miles and Huberman (1994, p.28), I describe my sampling strategy (elaborated below) as stratified, purposeful sampling that uses criteria including “intensity” as an embedded criterion.

Stratified sampling was adopted as it “illustrates subgroups and facilitates comparisons” (Creswell, 1994). Criterion sampling ensures that “all cases meet some criteria, and some quality can be assured.” Finally, intensity sampling refers to choosing “information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely but not extremely.” Hence, I decided to use the following criteria:

1. Intensity: Interviews where there is rich data on organizational experiences
2. Occurrence: Interviews where the experiences discussed pertain to organizational experiences
3. Equal representation of different developmental levels order (Kegan, 1982, 1994)
4. To the extent possible, interviews whose scores are validated by Nancy Popp, EdD.

I did not make any deliberate effort to look at gender or ethnic diversity in my sample. With only five per stage, I wanted to first ensure that the data fulfilled the above criteria. Table 12 below summarizes my sample.

Table 12. Breakup of Sample Used for Data Analysis in the Current Study

Stage Order	SOI Score, Coded Stage Position	Total Number of Scored SOI Transcripts	SOI Transcripts Scored by Nancy Popp (EdD)
In Transition: from Stage 2 (Instrumental) to Stage 3 (Socializing)	2/3	1	5
	3/2	4	
Stage 3: Full Socializing	3	5	4
Stage 4: Full Self-Authoring	4	5	2
Total (% of Total)		15 (100)	11 (73)

There were no respondents at Stage 1 (Impulsive level—babies) (Kegan, 1982); hence I chose interviews in transition between Stage 2 and Stage 3 for the first stratum. There were no respondents at Stage 5 (Inter-Individual/Self Transforming) nor any approaching it. (See Table 6.) Hence, I limited my study to the above strata of inter-stage and main-stage ways of knowing.

Sampling Process

To effectively answer research question two, I needed to first analyze the data for reflection patterns without being aware of subjects' developmental levels. Hence, I requested that Cynthia McCauley, PhD, the custodian of the data, provide me with interviews in order of the following process in steps:

1. I defined the criteria for the study and shared them with Dr. McCauley.
2. Dr. McCauley selected a sample of 15 interviews, distributed as displayed in table 12, above, and provided code-names for transcripts so that my analysis was “blinded”, i.e., I could not identify the stages associated with each interviewee. She shared the data with me as a secure digital packet that I transferred to my advisors.

3. If needed, we agreed that I could seek additional interviews in groups of three interviews, one in each stratum, if initial analysis did not provide adequate insights pertaining to research questions one and two.
4. I planned to—and did—ask Dr. McCauley to disclose the scores once I had completed the analysis for research questions one and two.

After a first cycle of data analysis, I decided to focus on reported experiences that had to do with *conflict* or *change* because these examples had a storyline and turning point that made it easier to identify patterns of reflection in revisiting the experience. One of the interviewees in the original selection of 15 did not report conflict or change examples, so in March 2020, I asked Dr. McCauley for a replacement interview, which she was able to provide. This replacement (not the one replaced) is represented in the 15 cases reported for this study. In addition, when moving back to India because of the Covid-19 pandemic in Fall of 2020, Dr. McCauley also emailed the developmental scores for the final list of 15 interviewees to my thesis sponsor and second reader. She did so in case it might be difficult to contact her at the time that the scores needed disclosing. The sponsor and second reader, in fact, did reveal the scores only when the designated time came to do so.

Initial Pilot Study

Before carrying out the actual study, I conducted a pilot exercise in November 2018 to assess study feasibility. In the study, I initially picked two interviews at ends of the developmental spectrum—stage 2/3 and stage 4—and studied differences in patterns of reflection. (These two interviews used in the pilot were *excluded* from the final dissertation study). The test coding exercise for the pilot phase was not based on a comprehensive review of literature as noted in Appendix B. Detailed knowledge of the coding process, as well as of the

relationships between developmental stage and reflection was acquired *after* the pilot phase. Further, in the pilot phase—unlike the conditions obtaining during the actual study, I was also aware of the interviewees’ developmental levels prior to the coding exercise. Despite these limitations, this prefatory study provided clues to the kind of findings I might expect and need to recognize in actual study.

I anticipated that there would be differences in the process and outcomes of reflection, with people at more complex stages engaging in deeper reflection, and that negative emotions would play a significant role in spontaneously prompting reflection on workplace experiences even though the content of reflections might differ. I also anticipated that I would uncover internal or external factors that enabled or became barriers to reflection.

Data Analysis

My data analysis approach drew from Miles and Huberman’s (1994) interactive data analysis model. In it, analysis is a process with an ongoing movement among data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verifying. Miles and Huberman (1994) identified some common analytic practices across qualitative research methods that I leveraged, such as creating and using codes, as well as margin notes, with a view to identifying patterns, and looking for commonalities and differences. Over the course of the data analysis, I made frequent use of analytic tables to make patterns easier to look for and identify; and wrote memos to keep track of my evolving thinking.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, my research is exploratory. Hence, I relied first on an inductive process with regard to how I approached my coding and data reduction activities. However, I also used structural codes based on my conceptual framework. I relied on

Stebbins (2001) regarding the interplay between inductive and deductive methods in exploratory research to choose my codes and other analytic procedures:

“[E]xploration is primarily inductive and confirmation is primarily deductive. In other words, during an exploratory study, researchers do think deductively at times, although they do so largely within their emerging theoretical framework rather than within established theory and a set of hypotheses deduced from it. Moreover, they engage in confirmation, but what they confirm are their emergent generalizations rather than an ensemble of a priori predictions. (p. 6)

Miles and Huberman (1994) also described the above-cited interplay with respect to the evolution of computer software:

[As a study evolves] . . . the conceptual frameworks get refined . . . some things get emphasized, some interrelationships become more significant . . . the conceptual framework evolves on a . . . continuum from exploratory to confirmatory . . . [whereby] researchers replace empirically feeble bins with more meaningful ones and reconstrue relationships. Conceptual frameworks are simply the current version of the research map of the territory being investigated . . . the map becomes increasingly more differentiated and integrated (p. 20).

Data Management Plan

Miles and Huberman (1994) identified the importance of a data management plan for successful accomplishment of qualitative research. Key aspects of my data management plan are:

I used Dedoose—a “cross-platform internet-based application for analyzing qualitative and mixed-methods research” (www.dedoose.com) to manage coding and analysis. Since it is web-based, it offered accessibility, no matter the location, and also provided greater security for

my data as compared to applications that rely on local hard drives for storage. I had used Dedoose successfully for my earlier coursework in research methods and for analyzing my Master of Education Comprehensive Project. As a consequence, using Dedoose gave me confidence and comfort.

Filing System:

I identified the following set of folders to manage my data:

- Raw Data
- Data Analysis
- Code book
- Memos
- Displays
- Researcher Log cum Journal
- Findings

I evolved this scheme as my analysis progressed.

Data Analysis

The following list outlines the specific steps in my data analysis developed based on the data collections above and specific steps outlined in Creswell and Creswell (2017) and Saldaña (2015):

Step 1. Development of Preliminary Conceptual Framework and Research Questions.

I developed a preliminary conceptual framework based on my pilot study, as suggested by Maxwell (2013) and literature review. As noted, the pilot study data was excluded from the set of data used for analysis in the final study.

Step 2. Data Preparation.

Dr. McCauley selected 15 interviews according to the criteria identified in the sampling plan as described above, gave code names to each interview, and ensured that no S-O score identifying information was present. I referred to these as “de-identified interviews.” She created a separate key which contained the subject-object-developmental-level score for each of the interviewees. I agreed to and did conduct my analysis of reflection patterns without prior knowledge of the scores identified with these interviews to control for unconscious bias.

My first step was to read all the interviews and categorize the focus of each episode in each interview. I discussed various iterations of a table I created to track these data with my sponsor and second reader. (See Overview of Data Set table in my “Master Memo” in Appendix C.) Discussion of the nature of the total set of 44 episodes in the interviews led to a decision to focus on the 26 that had to do with conflict and change because these kinds of episodes offered richer, somewhat comparable data for secondary analysis. As noted above, I then contacted Dr. McCauley seeking one replacement interview, for an interview that did not meet the conflict/change criteria, which she kindly provided. I was then ready to engage in first cycle systematic coding of episodes in all 15 interviews.

Step 3. First Cycle Coding.

I uploaded the transcripts into Dedoose qualitative data analysis software described above and below. Given the exploratory nature of my research, I started with open coding using procedures identified by Saldaña (2015) with two interviews. Email correspondence on this and other correspondence with sponsor and second reader from December 2019 through February 2020 illustrate the challenges experienced in coding inductively, and also considering various structural codes identified with reflection on experiences and developmental theory—all of

which created tensions that had to be worked through conceptually in defining and assigning codes. A turning point came when I asked a CCL colleague to code an interview in early February, 2020 to cross-check coding for reliability. Many of my codes and those of the CCL researcher were aligned, but, via email exchange, the CCL researcher's larger message was to follow a coding scheme that would help me analyze at a later stage (personal communication).

For example, one of the patterns I wanted to compare is how much objective data (high/medium/low amounts) do participants share when they revisit their experience. Some people hardly share any context and jump to their opinions and judgments, while others spend time describing details . . . sometimes that's all they want to do! So, I made this a weighted code and assigned high, medium, and low categories to it. My CCL colleague suggested assigning weights according to the number of lines of objective data to reduce subjectivity in judging and assigning reflection to one or another of these categories. His second suggestion was more in regard to the nature of the coding scheme itself. Noting that he detected in the codes I had assigned in scoring the test interview, my natural orientation appeared to be a preference for using codes conveying high levels of abstraction based on theory. He suggested the need for a balance: *starting* my reflection examination by using relatively concrete "what's-literally-going-on low-inference codes, and only later, in the analytic phase of interview reviewing, moving toward the high-abstraction/high inference terms (Personal communication).

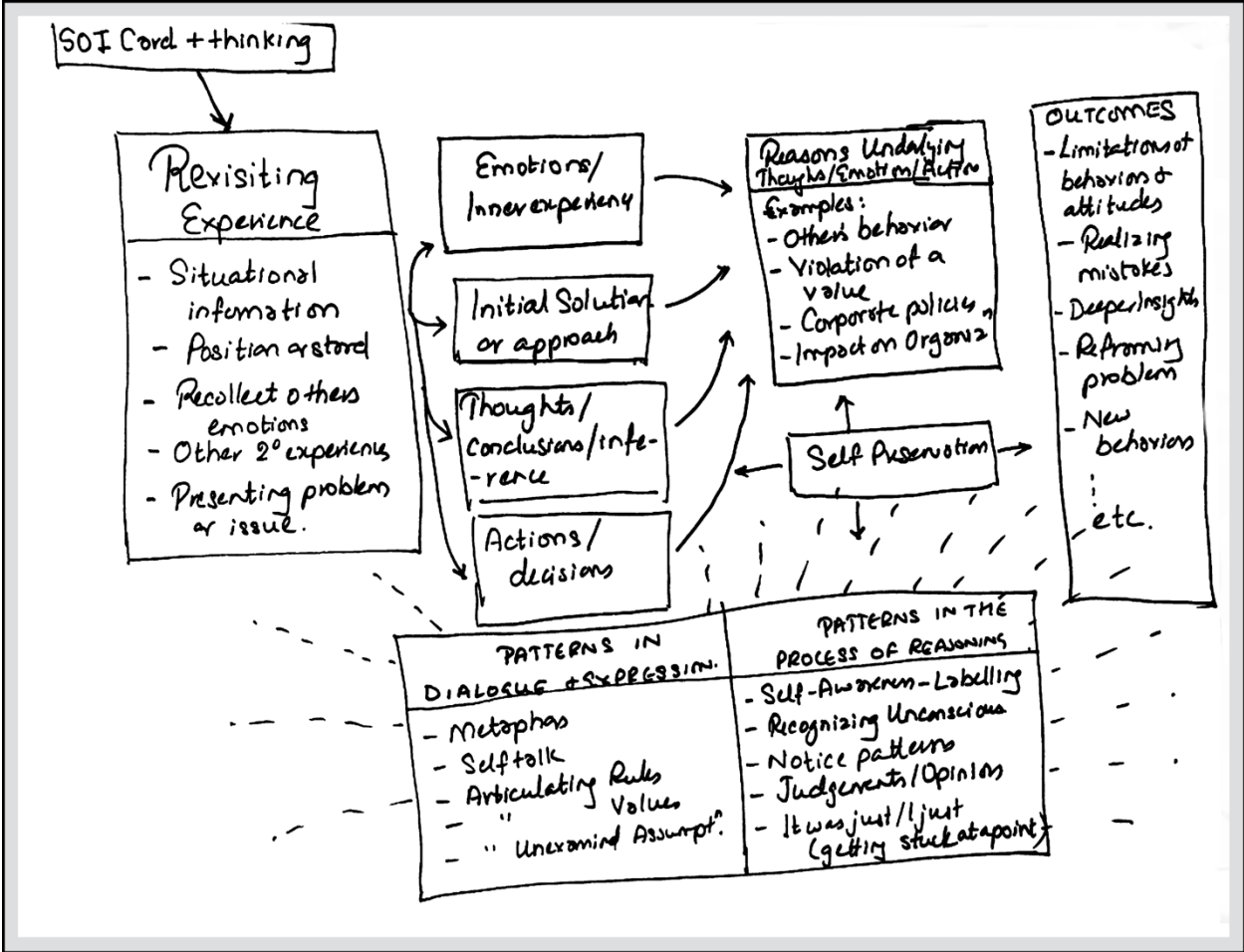
This excellent advice helped to create a preliminary coding scheme and enabled me to try it out on one of the interviews (Interview E). (See Appendix D for a snapshot of First Cycle Codes. Analysis of Interview E generated in early coding cycle). A decision made at this point was to analyze and report my interpretation of what I was finding using the steps of the ORID framework that elicits Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional data. ORID coding

tracks very closely to the steps of the Boud and Walker (1985) cycle “return[ing] to experience, attend [ing] to feelings and reevaluation of the experience” as discussed earlier in this chapter. Definitions for ORID were taken from their use in the Columbia Coach Certification program materials which, in turn, are ultimately traced back to Spencer (1989) and Stanfield (2000) (See Figure 1, earlier below and ORID definitions in Appendix E)

Step 4: Second Cycle Coding:

Creation of the preliminary coding scheme cleared the way for coding all data in Dedoose. A memo dated 3 May 2020, includes a code book (containing 7 categories and 67 codes) based on a subset of seven interviews during second cycle coding. See Second-Cycle Codebook in Appendix F for the final coding scheme. This coding scheme guided next steps in data analysis. A note in an early draft of Chapters 4 and 5 (“Dirty Draft” dated 09,27,20) described the Evolving Conceptual Framework as “a simplified diagram” (Figure 5, below) and stated that “the actual process has two-directional arrows and is not time-sequential.”

Figure 5. Evolving Conceptual Framework Created as a Simplified Diagram



Source: Author’s preliminary framework concept.

As coding and analysis progressed, I aimed to identify categories and evolve/finalize my coding scheme based on the Evolving Conceptual Framework and oriented my work toward identifying and presenting reflection patterns that could then be viewed through the lens of constructive-developmental theory in regard to participants’ assessed developmental levels once these would be revealed. I tried to see relationships among codes, and cluster them into larger conceptual categories using “pattern coding” and “focused coding” (Saldaña, 2015). I also created tables and matrices to compare and contrast the 15 interviews based on coding- and pattern-identification with a view to answering research questions one and two. Examples of

ways I sought to understand patterns and relationships in the data can be found in Analytical Memo Memos dated 24 April 2020, (See Appendix G).

I initially analyzed data in aggregates by code, but my sponsor and second reader suggested I also present findings by individual case given that each person demonstrated certain patterns, and it would be those individual patterns that would eventually be examined based on developmental level. My first round of findings tracked closely with the details of the interview and were reported using ORID. However, they were very long and did not advance the storyline about patterns of reflection. I then revised these descriptions. I created portraits that communicated simultaneously a distinctive characteristic of the person's reflections, while at the same time conveying how deeply they remembered and reported on their return to these experiences. This aligned with a key step in Boud and Walker (1993), that is, what occurs when revisiting experience. I then presented findings for each participant by way of portraits—snapshots of key moments or salient features from the episodes that advanced the narrative about reflection patterns. I followed this with a cross-person analysis and discussion of reflection patterns to answer research questions one and two.

Step 5: Analysis and Synthesis

Covid-19 disrupted this step of second cycle coding and analysis, memoing, and writing. CCL, where I been working, had to downsize; I left the home office in Greensboro, NC and relocated with my family back to India over the summer to work in the CCL India office.

Once settled in India, in an effort to synthesize the various insights, I had generated for research questions one and two, I wrote what I considered a “dirty draft” that brought together my thinking through a rough outline of arguments and findings that formed the guiding framework for my next stage of writing and thinking. I continued to use matrixes and other data

displays to analyze the data (see, for example, Appendix H, Work in Progress Memo, 25 October 2020 After Condensing Data_25 October 2020).

At that point, you can see that I was still considering a third research question, RQ3, concerning barriers to and enablers of reflection: “In what ways if any do the above patterns of reflection and the barriers to and enablers of it as varying by identified developmental level?” I eliminated this question from my research when the data collected from the SOI interviews didn’t provide sufficient evidence to come to any conclusion.

The “Dirty Draft” incorporated various analytic tables and helped me to focus my analysis on reflection patterns central to revisiting the experience. I set aside patterns, analyses, and insights that were less well supported or that seemed less central to understanding reflection as it related to key reflection patterns and to possible analysis by developmental level.

Step 6: Answering Research Question 2

As I finalized and wrote up the reflection patterns, I had conversations with my sponsor and second reader about looking at these patterns in light of what they suggested to me *might* be individual participant developmental levels—the certified ones not yet having been revealed to me. Specifically, they asked me if I could make my best estimate of what the development level would be of each participant.

I prepared a table with my estimates, and when I was finished with my reflection-pattern analysis, my sponsor and second reader revealed the professionally assessed, S-O scores that Dr. McCauley had emailed to them. There was a close match between the certified scores and my estimates. Using the new newly acquired information, I then clustered the data according to the known development scores and performed within-cluster and cross-cluster comparisons.

Identifying and Dealing with Validity Threats

Maxwell (2013) noted that, unlike quantitative research, where use of the term validity implies an objective truth, in qualitative research validity involves identifying and dealing with validity threats. He further mentions two broad categories of validity threats: Researcher bias and Reactivity (influence of researcher on the setting). In the following sections, I share the key validity threats, their implications and mechanisms used to address them when possible.

Researcher Bias

Realizing that if I, the researcher, had advance knowledge of developmental levels associated with each subject-object interview, I might be tempted to force-fit known commonly occurring patterns in interviews of participants at certain developmental levels into the data, even if they didn't really exist in it. For example, I am biased to believe that people at more complex levels of development may practice more critical reflection than those at lower levels. I addressed this validity threat in the research design by delaying access to the known developmental scores until the data had been coded. The process of journaling also helped me to become aware of any tendencies to guess developmental levels of transcripts and try and force-fit patterns.

Reactivity

Since the study depends on archival data, there was no possible threat of my having any influence on the participant or the interview environment.

Non-Developmental Reasons behind Differences in Patterns across Developmental Levels

It is possible that the findings on research question two—i.e., differences in patterns of reflection by developmental levels could arise from non-developmental factors, such as

personality traits that accidentally co-relate with developmental data. While unlikely to simultaneously occur on all patterns of reflection, this still remains a risk.

Limitations of the Study

Based on my reflections, I have identified the following limitations of my study:

1. Dated data: I am using archival data that was collected between 2007 and 2009.

While my research questions do not pertain to reflection and its patterns at a certain point of time, it would have been much better if the organizational experiences in my data were more recent, reflecting the challenges of workplaces in the current decade.

2. Limitation of archival data: Researchers, notably Miles & Huberman (1994) and Creswell & Creswell (2017) describe qualitative research processes where the researcher is an instrument of meaning-making; and propose methods such as memoing after each round of data collection to capture insights from the interview experiences involving non-verbal communication by the subject to complement what is not reflected in the text. Since I am using archived interview data, I will not have access to non-verbal richness that I could have accessed had I interviewed the subjects myself. Additionally, I could not probe for additional information I might have thought pertinent, such as barriers or enablers to reflection or to developmental growth.

3. Using the subject-object interview as an instrument to capture reflection: While, I have explained how the process of subject-object interviewing is aligned to reflection, I am limited by not using a process specifically designed to capture reflection—rather than, in this case, one designed to capture information about leadership capabilities in relation to developmental levels. Moreover, I ultimately focused more on the

reflection that occurred by revisiting experiences through prompts in the interview; I was thus unable to discern if naturally arising reflection had occurred in the moments when the episode itself was experienced.

4. Triangulation and validation limitations: According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), “qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information rather than rely on a single data source” (p.186). Since I had no access to participants, I had no way of going back to respondents and “member checking,” i.e. checking my interpretations with them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) or validating the patterns that I was uncovering for each of them. I am also relying only on the subject-object data as sites for reflection and am not using any other sources for triangulation.

Chapter 4. Description of Context: Participants and Episodes

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the context for presentation of findings in subsequent chapters by providing contextual understanding of participants and episodes capturing their experiences. I first present a summary of key demographic information about participants. Next, I present a landscape of the experiences used for the analysis. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I have used experiences pertaining to change and conflict. After an overview of experiences, I provide description of the categories of experiences in which change, and conflict are underlying themes. The chapter closes with presentation of a summary table (See Table 15) that includes participant aliases and categories of experiences used for the analysis.

Demographic Background of the 15 Participants

The archival data used for the study included demographic information pertaining to gender, race, educational background, employer organization type and participants' seniority level in their organizations. All the participants were Americans by country of origin and nationality. Table 13 depicts the summary of gender and race-related demographics.

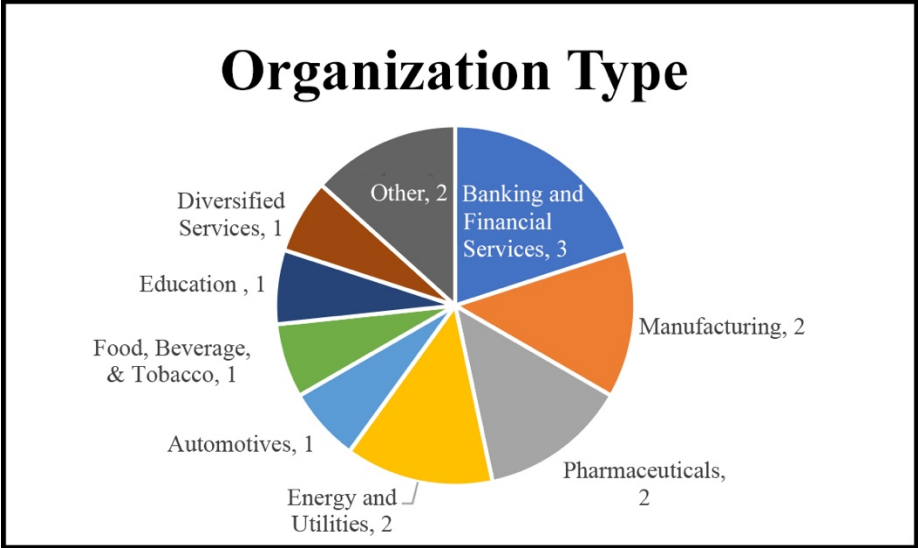
Table 13. Demographics: Gender and Race

Demographics: Gender and Race		
Gender	Male: 11	Female: 4
Race	Caucasian (white): 11	Caucasian (white): 4

Data in Table 13 indicates that the sample is skewed towards Caucasian (white) males. Part of this can be explained by the fact that the sampling did not aim to achieve a balanced mix of gender and race. Rather it focused on getting the desired mix of developmental level and richness of experiences from the subject-object interviews. In part, the skew—in relation to the

general US population—can be explained by the reality that the majority of managerial positions in American workplaces are occupied by white males.

Figure 6. Summary Information on Participant Employer Organizations



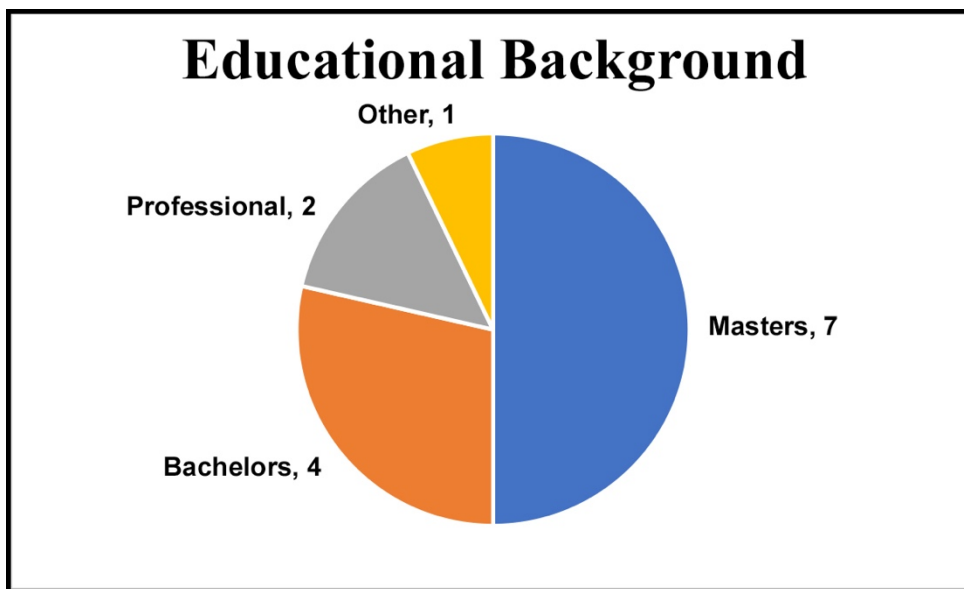
The sample of fifteen had respondents from nine different organization types and industries. It can be concluded that the sample is relatively diverse from this perspective.

Figure 7. Summary Information on Participant Organizational Level



All participants except one occupy full time managerial positions. The highest number of them—almost half—are upper-middle managers. Next in order of frequency are executives and middle managers. There is only one first-level manager. Thus, this sample is skewed towards more senior levels of management. This is to be expected as the sample is drawn from participants of leadership development programs designed for senior managers.

Figure 8. Participant Educational Background



Most of the participants had a bachelor’s degree and above. This can be expected given the higher levels of organizational seniority the group represents.

Developmental Levels of the 15 Participants:

Table 14, below, shows the interviewees’ certified developmental levels. As noted in the methodology, this study uses Kegan’s (1982) and Kegan and Lahey’s (Lahey et al., 2011) taxonomy.

Table 14. Participant Developmental Level

Participant Developmental Level of Meaning-making	Developmental Stage as identified Numerically by a Certified Scorer	Number of Participants within Category
Transition: Instrumental-to-Socializing	2/3, 3/2	5
Socializing	3	5
Self Authoring	4	5
Total Participants		15

It is evident that the developmental-level mix of participants in terms of meaning-making is in line with the sampling plan of the study.

Landscape of All Experiences Represented in the Participants’ Subject-Object Interviews

Table 15 below summarizes the types of experiences identified as present in all episodes reported by each of the 15 participants in this study. Across fifteen interviews, there were 44 experiences recounted. As can be seen in the table, 42 of the 44 (95%) of the experiences represent the following seven types.

Key Broad Types of Experiences Reported:

1. Workplace Conflicts: These ranged from interpersonal differences (style) with boss, peer, or junior colleague, or difference of opinion regarding addressing a work issue or problem that went beyond interpersonal issues. These also encompassed ethical issues and office politics in a few cases. About half—20-25 (45-56%)—among the total of 44 reported experiences include some element of workplace conflict.
2. Change (often also involving conflict): These experiences pertained to change of some kind, such as a reorganization and one’s consequent role change (two

experiences), or joining a new organization and experiencing change, or trying to drive change in one's own organization. There were seven (16% of the 44) reported experiences pertaining to change.

3. Training Program: These pertained to recent experience in attending the training program prior to the Subject-Object Interview. In some cases, people also connected the training program experiences with other experiences at work. For example, subject N connected it to her workplace conflict with her boss. Five (11%) experiences pertained to the training program, alone or in combination with others.
4. Work-life Balance: Similarly, five (11%) experiences pertained to work-life balance. In some cases, the issue was discussed as a general theme, loosely touching multiple experiences; and in other cases, the theme was discussed in the context of a single concrete experience.
5. Performance Feedback: Three experiences (7%) pertained to processing feedback received from a boss or a superior. While some of these were standalone reflections; some people connected it to the experience in the training program
6. Achievements and Setbacks in the Workplace: Three experiences (7%) pertained to achievements and two to setbacks.
7. Public Speaking Challenges: Two participants (only 5%) spoke about challenges in speaking in public.

Table 15. All Types of Experiences Reported in the 15 Interviews

Types of Experience Reported → Interview ↓	Experience 1	Experience 2	Experience 3	Experience 4	Experience 5
A	Role change in reorganization	Workplace conflict: driving change	Training program experiences	Work-life balance -1	Work-life balance - 2
B	Role change in reorganization	Workplace conflict			
C	Workplace conflict: ethical issue	Workplace conflict			
D	Workplace conflict: ethical issue	Achievement at work: business deal	Workplace conflict		
E	Work-life balance/ office politics	Workplace conflict	Driving change and workplace conflict		
F	Workplace conflict: Ethical issue/	Public speaking challenges	Setback: when I was proven wrong	Achievement at work: winning a law case	
G	Workplace conflict	Setback: lost a promotion	Workplace conflict, office politics		
H-alt	Training program experiences	Change/conflict	Work-life balance		
I	Workplace conflict: reorganization	Reorganization: letting go of people	Reorganization/ workplace conflict/work-life balance		
J	Workplace conflict	Public speaking challenges	Workplace conflict		
K	Performance feedback	Office politics			
L	Workplace conflict	Performance feedback			
M	Adapting to new organization	Workplace conflict: ethical issues	Workplace conflict		
N	Workplace conflict: performance feedback and training-program				
O	Workplace conflict: differences with boss on rating of team -1	Workplace conflict: differences with boss on rating of team -2	Training program		
Total Reported Workplace Experiences			44		

Note: H-alt is a replacement for original transcript that contained no appropriate incidents of change or conflict.

Description of Types of Experiences Entailing Conflict and/or Change

As noted in Chapter 3, the study drew upon workplace experiences pertaining to Change and Conflict from SOI data to answer the research questions.

Of the 44 personal experiences reported, 26 pertained to change and/or conflict. Within these broad categories, a variety of specific experiences were reported. Table 15, above, summarizes the context of each incident reported by every participant. It also provides an alphabetical pseudonym for each participant.

Descriptions of Specific Experiences with Underlying Conflict and/or Change

The following summaries dive more deeply into types of experiences reported regarding conflict and change, which at times, co-occurred. In some interviews, one can see distinct, discrete experiences; while in others, the same experience is talked about in multiple places in the interview in different ways. It was not surprising that conflict and change shared a common thread of organizational change as the backdrop. The other backdrop was survival—ranging from retaining one’s job to obtaining growth opportunities in the organization.

Conflict with Boss

These differences pertained to opposing views on whether a person in the organization should be fired or not. In a few cases, the issue in conflict concerned stylistic differences and approaches to work, for example, when and how to announce a reduction in workforce. In some situations, the experiences were colored with politics and the underpinning involved the respondent struggling against the boss in some ways. Sometimes the conflict was with a new boss triggered by reorganization. In two cases, the person also talked about the role of conversation and dialogue in changing their perception of the relationship. Sometimes the interviewees were thinking about an exit strategy. Sometimes the relationships were reinvented,

and the reflection was about resulting new perspectives and insights. At other times, the tactics were short term or there was no movement in the stance: “Having a frank conversation” resolved things. Some discovered new connections and greater empathy. In some situations, there were differences of opinion on performance ratings of others.

Conflict with Peers

These experiences ranged from differences in approach to solving an organizational problem (e.g., should we hire more preventive maintenance staff or project managers) or office relationships that turned sour due to the nature of certain incidents, such as who is placed in priority, or handling of one’s team members (subordinates) by the other with whom you were in conflict.

Conflict with Subordinates

This experience concerned, for example, a subordinate or nemesis whom the participant was unable to restrain.

Ethical Issues

Here the participants shared experiences of another actor being involved in some ethical malpractice. The respondent shared their experiences of navigating the related internal and/or external conflict. For example, one person transitioned away from a difficult client account, while another ignored it; another participant took action when a colleague in a law firm engaged in unethical behavior. In still another case, the person was internally conflicted (as the “Torn” card suggested) about what steps to take, so that the person decided to not act.

Office Politics

An example was the dynamic involved in consistently being invited to important meetings when it was known to the invitor that the person could not attend at that date/time.

Role Change

Participant role change was sometimes triggered by reorganization or by movement into a new organization or taking up a new role assigned by their managers. Such experiences involved coming to terms with the new role and its challenges. Sometimes the change could be about new ways of working or being. At other times, the change was not welcome. Sometimes their span of control was reduced, or the nature of the work structure was changed (e.g., from a hierarchical structure to project-based management). This often involved vying for a role and having to settle for less than what was desired.

Driving Change

These experiences involved the participant who, when implementing a new idea in the organization, experienced resistance and/or support from others. For the current sample, in many cases, the outcome of the change was less than desired; and the respondents then experienced a phase of disengagement.

Table 16, below, displays all the types of experiences recalled by each participant that were actually used for analysis:

Table 16. All Experiences of Each Participant Used for Analysis

Participant	Gender	Age	Years in School	Degree	Org. Type	Org. Level	Experiences Used for Analysis
A	Male	52	19	Professional	Business sector: banking	Upper middle	Role change in reorganization. Conflict with boss regarding reorganization. Conflict with boss regarding control and ways of working
B	Male	44	18	Other	Business sector: manufacture	Executive	Role change in reorganization Conflict with boss regarding dealing with a team member
C	Female	44	20	Master's	Business sector: pharma	Middle	Conflict with boss: ethical issue: (he expected me to cover up a lie) Conflict with boss: contd.
D	Male	38	13	Bachelor's	Business sector: insurance	Executive	Conflict with peer: ethical issue Conflict with peer: solving a problem (same peer as above)
E	Male	37	16	Bachelor's	Business sector: automotive and transport equipment	Middle	Workplace conflict: work and personal commitments Conflict with peer: felt attacked Driving change unsuccessfully
F	Female	46	19	Professional	Business sector: other	Top	Conflict with peer: ethical issue
G	Male	37	24	Bachelor's	Business sector: manufacture	Upper middle	Conflict with peer: relationship gone sour; Conflict with boss: one-upmanship
H	Male	52	17	Bachelor's	Business sector: food, beverage, and tobacco	Hourly	Conflict with boss

Participant	Gender	Age	Years in School	Degree	Org. Type	Org. Level	Experiences Used for Analysis
I	Male	42	21	Master's	Business sector: pharma	Upper middle	Reorganization/ conflict with new boss Reorganization/ conflict with new boss (cont'd.)
J	Male	37	19	Master's	Business sector: other	Executive	Conflict with peer: dealing with team-member Conflict with subordinate: ineffective work relationship
K	Female	46	19	Professional	Business sector: diversified services	Upper middle	Conflict with boss and seniors: unsupported Conflict with a senior: office politics
L	Female	48	18	Master's	Business sector: energy	Upper middle	Conflict with peers: relationships gone sour; conflict with boss: unsupported
M	Male	40	16	Master's	Business sector: financial services	First level	Conflict with cross functional peers: ethical issues Conflict with boss: ways of working "litigator boss"
N	Male	49	16	Master's	Business sector: utilities	First level	Conflict with boss: performance feedback
O	Male	44	19	Master's	Public sector: education	Upper middle	Conflict with boss: (differences with boss on rating of team -1) Workplace conflict (differences with boss on rating of team -2)

Summary

This chapter provided contextual information regarding background of participants and the nature of workplace experiences related to change or conflict that formed the content for the

reflection when revisiting the experience. In addition to describing the broader landscape, relevant individual information is summarized in Table 16, above. This table can serve as a reference point which can be referred to when the spotlight is thrown on deeper aspects of each interview in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5: Descriptive Findings

The purpose of the study was to understand the nature of patterns in reflection by managers on workplace experiences using Subject-Object Interview (SOI) excerpts and to identify if and how these patterns differ by the developmental-level of the manager. In the previous chapter, I described the sample of fifteen managers who participated in the SOIs. I described the themes of conflict and change that I had chosen to be the focus of the study and gave an overview of the underlying themes and basic information pertaining to the episodes.

In this chapter, I share fifteen portraits by way of introducing descriptive findings that illustrate selected reflection patterns that I perceived while doing the analysis. Before doing so, I first highlight considerations related to revisiting the experience, the first step in reflection in the Boud and Walker (1993) model that guided my analysis. I start by recapping the context in which reflection occurred as a site for this study. I then describe the framework I used to describe the way participants revisited their experiences. Finally, I define and illustrate frequently used key terms I used in interpreting actions taken by interviewees as they reflected on their experiences described in these portraits.

The portraits are then introduced in order of the richness of the recollections that participants shared when revisiting the experience. Richness was identified by the amount and nature of detail provided in these revisitations. The portraits are presented in the order of sparse, medium, and rich detail present in these accounts. A brief commentary after each grouping expands on the theme of richness of revisiting the experience. The remaining themes emerging from cross-portrait analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

Considerations Related to Revisiting the Experiences

As noted earlier, SOI excerpts are used in this study as sites of studying reflection. Even though SOIs are not explicitly designed to support reflection, they aim at understanding an individual's meaning-making process by getting them to undergo a reflection-evoking interview with a dialogue. Reflection can be of different types—individual reflection conducted by a person on his/her own, reflection in a dialogue with a coach or facilitator, or reflection in a group as in after-action-reviews or action learning conversations. The kind of reflection that this study focuses on is the second kind—in a dialogic relationship with an interviewer.

Revised Definition of Reflection Used for This Study

As noted in my discussion of the conceptual framework for this study at the end of Chapter 2, there are different definitions and conceptualization of reflection. I personally revised my earlier chosen definition of reflection used for this study based on the following:

1. An exhaustive review of literature in adult learning and constructive-developmental theory
2. Consideration of the particular characteristics of the participants from whom the archival SOI data was acquired
3. The nature of the circumstances in which the SOI interviews took place
4. Use of data in which I would be searching for patterns of reflection that, because it was archival did not permit further inquiry of participants

My redefinition follows below:

Reflection after experience at work is triggered by internal or external inquiry to solve a problem or dilemma. The process involves revisiting the experience, attending to the inner experience including feelings and reevaluating the experience. The end result of

this process could lead to outcomes on a continuum from simple or tactical to more complex and transformational. Error identification; course correction; and insights and clarifications are examples of the former, while reframing problems; identification or changing of assumptions; and surfacing of beliefs and values are examples of the latter. As people reflect, they may move from concrete to abstract or vice versa until the end goal of meaning construction is achieved. The process is influenced by internal and external barriers as well as capacities to take perspective. (Source: Author)

Framework Underlying Description of Interviewees in Portraits

In this section I present individual portraits of the 15 participants. The portraits are based on my conceptual framework that is closely aligned with Boud and Walker's (1993) framework and the Stanfield (2000) ORID framework sequenced around Objective, Reflective, Interpretative, and Decisional questions, or data—both discussed in Chapter 2. My analysis of the shared experiences started by capturing a brief narrative of the situation or experience(s) and how the revisiting happened, e.g., in terms of the interviewee's thoughts and feelings. After that, I examine key outcomes of reflection, as well as key common threads of content and process.

The underlying structure behind each portrait is shared next, followed by definitions of key terms frequently used in the analysis.

Situation and Process

As described in Chapter 2, participants picked up a card displaying an emotionally charged word and then the interviewer asked questions pertaining to the experience recalled in response. In an interview, lasting 60-90 minutes, the interview might touch on multiple cards. The situation provided contextual information concerning the recalled experiences analyzed for

the study. For some of the 15 participants, more than one experience had been recalled and was studied.

Revisiting the Experience

I examined how the interviewee revisited the experience that the card evoked. In order to understand what the interviewee felt or thought at that time, I examined external events that took place in recollections, as well as inner thoughts, feelings, emotions, or self-dialogue that accompanied the external events. I also paid attention to cues I picked up on current emotional states of the interviewee—sometimes in exchanges between the interviewer and the participant during the interview—as the revisiting happened.

Interpreting the Experience

The interviewee's interpretation of experiences was analyzed by capturing and coding underlying reasoning and meaning-making in dialogue with the interviewer, who asked questions inquiring into the reasons behind feelings, thoughts, or actions that had taken place during the past and were described in the revisiting. After condensing codes associated with interpreting the experience, three key categories emerged—the *stance* the interviewee took during the interview; the *stakes* for the interviewee in terms of values, beliefs, and inner commitments; and, in some cases, the *reflective processes* with which the underlying dialogue was approached. A brief description of each of the three follows:

Stance

A “Stance” taken during the interview pertains to patterns in the content of reasoning.

Four different types or patterns were identified:

- Self-centered stance
- I vs. You stance

- Relational stance
- Organizational stance

When interviewees operated from multiple stances, all found were recognized and recorded. Detailed descriptions of stances are provided when they first occur.

At Stake

With respect to what was at stake, self-protection emerged as a key area of content behind the reasoning shared by participants. In situations of conflict and change, interviewees talked about something they were trying to protect—e.g., their roles, growth opportunities, work-life balance and/or relationships. Deeper inquiry into these stances surfaced the dimensions of what they were trying to protect in terms of their values, beliefs, or inner commitments. The “what’s at stake” analysis captured not only what surfaced for each individual, but also if and how it was reflected upon.

Reflective Processes

Third, participants engaged in a range of reflective processes as they engaged in dialogue with the interviewer. For example, some interviewees explored a situation from multiple vantage points, or stepped back and looked at the bigger picture. Reflective processes are identified when they occur in the portraits.

Outcomes of Reflection

As described in Chapter 2, scholars have described different types of outcomes that can take place as a result of reflection on experiences, ranging from no outcomes to deeper ones, such as the kind that Mezirow (1991) describes as Critical Reflection. The outcomes section in the analysis sought to identify what outcomes of reflection, if any, were observed. While some

interviews included recounts of recollection occurring during past experiences, others resulted from the reflective process taking place during the interview—or both.

Definitions of Terms Used in Analysis

I tried to capture the findings in these recollected experiences descriptively in presenting the findings; but as the analysis progressed, I began to see patterns in the data that were explained by concepts expressed in the literature by scholars when describing reflective practice. Analytic codes provided links to the conceptual framework and supported interpretation of the descriptive findings. Key terms are defined and illustrated with quotations in Table 17.

Table 17. Definitions and Examples of Key Terms in the Analysis

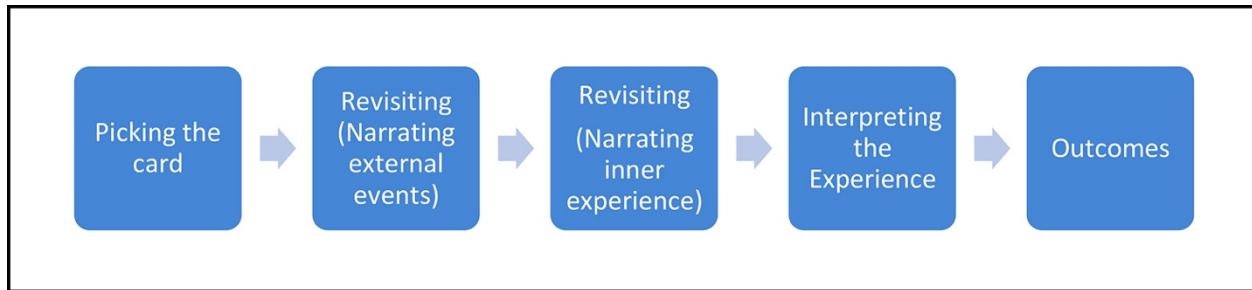
Term/Code	Definition	Interview Examples
Noticing	A sub-process under revisiting experiences. Pertains to paying attention to one’s thought process thinking, emotional experience or others’ reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was just so kind of upset with the fact that it was just pulled off from under me after all the time I invested that I didn’t want anything to do with it anymore. • I would look forward to it, because, to be honest, I think I’m starting to move that way. Um, even before this, I think I was recognizing some of this, and, uh,
Values	Value, in this study, is defined as something a person considers important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like to be transparent about things.
Beliefs and Assumptions	Refers to world views about self, others or the way the world works. Often first stated as facts or truths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uh, everyone wants to present themselves in their best light. When you’re not, you feel like you’re—you failed. • I am a collaborator at heart.
Inner Commitments	Refers to the active internal goals the person is pursuing to protect themselves from real or imagined negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al said, he acts in ways so that he is “not be seen as another’s fool.”
Connecting Dots	Seeing connections between different pieces of information in order to form conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Um, but, you know, now that I see some feedback and see that some of the things aren’t just what he said but some other people are feeling the same way, you know, makes me sort of wants to deal with kind of my character flaw.
Exploring from Multiple Angles	A reflective process where the person explores an issue from multiple vantage points and multiple angles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ah, well, either she knew she was wrong—I would think that was probably some of it— or, you know, she was thinking just like me. You know. She did not want to jeopardize the relationship we had, totally.
Intent to Learn and Grow	Participants sharing reasons that indicate their eagerness and motivation to address the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “• So, I took this focus group where I tried to broaden my career, actually something different. I have always been the technical guy.

Recap of the Interview Sequence

The general center of gravity of the interview proceeded in the sequence of meaning-making categories presented in Figure 9. However, the process was not as linear in practice as the figure might lead one to conclude. In the interview, steps were intertwined. A person could

narrate events, share some interpretation and then, in response to a query, go back to narrate additional events and subsequent reasoning. Hence, during my coding, the codes pertaining to each category were, as relevant, strewn across the interview. The consolidated analysis has been organized around the changing direction of the center of gravity of the interview.

Figure 9. Nonlinear Steps in Meaning-Making (Actual Sequence Usually Intertwined)



Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Sparse Details

Al: Seething with Anger, Wanting Things His Way

Al picked up the “Angry” card and shared information about his role in a home-loan financial services firm. He had come up with a reorganization idea, which his boss and superior liked, but his related role-change request wasn’t accepted. On the interviewer’s query about the source of his anger, Al shared that he was upset with his boss and superior for not recognizing his personal tradeoff and for devaluing his opinion. He saw this as “controlled management” on his boss’s part, something he disliked.

On deeper probing, Al saw a contradiction between his supervisor’s liking his idea and not letting him do it in his way. The interviewer then asked what was important about being able to try it your way, at which Al became irritated and blurted out, “to prove that I can do it . . . it’s all about me . . . and, I don’t know. You are looking for a word that maybe I don’t have.”

The interviewer asked Al to pick up another card, and Al continued to talk about his anger with his boss. He shared details of another idea he had come up with. He was angry that

his boss took the lead in presenting the idea to Human Resources. “Both of us are control freaks,” he added. On exploration, he shared an incident in which his boss made him urgently change his monthly travel plans to visit a regional office to make some important announcements of reorganization required in response to a confidentiality breach. Al was angry again, as this had put him in an awkward situation. Al reasoned, “I don’t mind being my own idiot, but I don’t want someone else to make me look stupid.”

At the time Al was narrating a third experience pertaining to the “Anxious” card, the interviewer played back what she had picked up across events, saying “so it’s the control theme again.” Al blurted out, “I am a control freak . . . you want me to get to the next card.” The interviewer suggested that they stay with the same card and asked him to speak more. Al then gave an example of when he gave a towel to a stranger in the gym to “control things for him.” He then played along with the interviewer, shared his reasoning behind the source of this behavior, and admitted it might sometimes catch people off guard.

Olivia: Grippd by the Mechanics of Her Organization’s Performance Management System

Olivia picked up the “Torn” card and said it also lined up to the card “Strong Stand, Conviction.” Olivia started off by sharing that the performance evaluation process in her organization starts in December, and that there were sixty-two agents who report to her and her boss. She provided information about the reporting structures in the organization, as well as the split between her and her boss related to the number of people for whom they managed the performance management system. She explained that it’s a chart-based system with a “0-4” scale. She shared that doing evaluations makes her “very, very tense” because, having spent 18 years in the field, she knew how it felt to not be appropriately evaluated. She then told the interviewer that she would have to go really deep to explain the situation in question and

continued to share information about the vertical reporting relationships under which people were organized. Finally, the interviewer drew her attention back and, as Olivia continued, she came to the situation of conflict and recollected how she had put a lot of effort behind the ratings and (laughing sarcastically) how her boss had “whacked” or lowered the scores of the male agents. As a result of this she was “Torn.” She responded briefly to the interviewer’s questions about why she felt torn. She then continued to move on to more details, for example, she mentioned “some pretty heated debate” and her plans to meet the director when the interviewer interrupted. Before Olivia went further into new details, the interviewer stopped her saying, “Well, let me stop you there . . . you’ve said a lot of interesting things that I want to go back to.” Olivia was drowning in details of the performance management system instead of following the interviewer’s prompts about her own reasoning behind feeling torn.

Hernan: When Affirmative Feedback Changed It All!

Hernan picked up the “Success” card and shared that he had just started his new career about two months back and that his first feedback from his boss and the Human Resources Director was “very, very positive.” When the interviewer asked him to share more about the new career, Hernan clarified that it was actually a new role of Total Productivity Manager (TPM) that was offered to him in his existing organization. He then went on to describe his background of working on the shop floor as a technical manager for several years involved in daily operations. His new boss had joined two months back and offered him the TPM role, moving him away from daily shop-floor activities. Hernan recalled that earlier he thought that his boss was “selling him a story,” and trying to demote him without a salary cut, but after receiving this positive feedback, he now saw his role in a new light, and saw his boss as a mentor. Hernan decided to take the initiative to ask for feedback because it was not as clear in his new role that he was hitting the

target. Contrary to his usual approach, he “asked to get the feedback.” To the interviewer’s query about how that felt, Hernan replied, laughing, that he was “very nervous” and was very unsure and “wavering” because the person he had replaced had been promoted and could not give him guidance. Hernan liked his former operations job but wanted to make this move into a job where he was not on call 24x7 as he was in Operations. The interviewer asked him about the reasons for his change of mind. Hernan said that, in a way, he always wanted a “day-job” that could help him enjoy life with his family.

Mike: The Man with the Moral Compass

Mike picked up the card “Strong Stand, Conviction” and shared a conflict he had with his colleagues from the marketing department. He explained his role—head of the legal department for an insurance company which was selling variable annuities. He described what a variable annuity meant—essentially a “mutual fund wrapped in insurance.” He then described an incident where the marketing team had developed an advertisement that downplayed the insurance angle and overplayed the return-on-investment angle which, according to Mike, was an ethical violation. Mike used the example of a metaphor—“it would be like if Frito-Lay said they were going to come out with tennis shoes”—to explain why it was a violation. He admitted that he admired the creativity of the marketing team, but, to him, the ethical implications were clear. He told his team that they were absolutely-right in challenging the marketing team and to reach out to him if needed. When things got noisier, he called a meeting and told the marketing team, “what you want to do is called bait and switch. The answer is no. 24x7, 365 and if you can’t accept, lets meet the CEO . . . you can’t sell a car based on radial [meaning radial tire].”

Mike mentioned that, as a result of standing up, he was criticized for not being innovative and flexible. This made him feel “disappointed” as he thought [sarcastically] that he was

interacting with higher-quality people! He closed off by saying that, to avoid misinterpretation, he should have emailed his objections in black and white in a neutral tone rather than trying to do this at a meeting. In the interview, he went on at great lengths to explain the difference between personal and professional ethics—“legal” and “compliance”—using examples that showed it was important that the values of the organization were aligned to his “moral compass.”

Eddy: If I Clear the Air, Others Get Cleared Too

Eddy picked up the “Strong Stand, Conviction” card to describe his conflict with a coworker about a certain component that goes into a car-manufacturing module they made. Eddy started the recollection with a laughter sound and a statement that he tended to get ticked off when people questioned him on things about which he was knowledgeable. He said that it was difficult for him to differentiate “merely professional interrogative from personal attack.” Eddy recollected that this colleague, Eric, “kept pestering” him about whether certain details of a component were correct. Eddy recollected that despite his assuring his colleague that “we’re covered,” the colleague kept asking: “are you sure? Are you sure, are you sure?” Eddy shared that “he kept doing it, kept doing it and I guess in the meeting I didn’t squelch it.” However, after the meeting Eddy called the colleague into his office, asked him to “shut the door” and had a heated argument where he blamed the colleague for “attacking him” by asking the question again and again. Eddy felt that this very direct feedback by him cleared the air between them, and that since then, they had a better relationship. When the interviewer asked him what was nagging him the most, Eddy tapped the table multiple times and mentioned that the person was attacking, and it was sending certain signals about his leadership. Eddy admitted that, as he later found out, the real reason was that his colleague had been burned in a previous position. When the interviewer asked him if he would have approached the situation differently, Eddy mentioned that he would

have preferred that the person had figured it out for himself and said (in a mocking way) that he didn't like the way the colleague "kept at it, he's saying I'm either lying or stupid; and that's not true." So, the effect felt like being attacked.

Kate: Uncompromising "Dot-Connector" Who Seeks Acknowledgement

Kate picked up the "Angry" card and described her experience of being assigned to a project with a Senior Vice President (SVP) who kept scheduling meetings on days she was not available. She recollected examples of incidents with dates that she had blocked out—at times, over two months in advance. Many of these were personal engagements including an All-American-Quarter-Horse Congress where her daughter was competing. She recollected how she "did get nasty" with his secretary when the SVP complained that Kate would have to be more available. While sharing her reasons for feeling angry, and her hypotheses regarding her boss's behavior, she recollected her golden rule, advice from a "a very wise [former] boss" to prioritize personal life over work. The interview was strewn with expressions that indicated her anger at the superior and how she felt "as if she was a pawn in their little chess game," and that she was not being listened to. She reiterated a couple of times that, "I'll not compromise as well . . . He really doesn't want me involved and so my attitude was [clapped hands] . . . go ahead and have the meeting without me!"

Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Sparse Detail

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the revisiting of experience was examined from the dimensions of the external events and recollection of objective data as well as information about the inner experience, e.g., the emotions experienced and inner reactions in terms of the thinking and feeling process. On that basis, I grouped the into three categories depending on the "richness" of detail in the description.

Many of the Sparse Revisitors shared the Objective data in ways that were not that different from that of the Medium- and Rich Revisitors. (In fact, Olivia was an outlier when it came to the amount of objective data she shared.) However, the revisiting of the inner experience and the granularity of their emotions were less fulsome than that of the Medium and Rich Revisitors. While all of the participants recollected their emotions—something that the SOI protocol facilitates—the granularity and diversity of the emotional experience was not recollected in much, if any, detail. In the cases of Al, Eddy, and Kate, I observed the intensity of their emotions. However, I did not classify this as richness of recollection because these emotions seemed to be raw ones such as anger. In the case of Mike, a lot of thinking was shared, but the revisiting was more about the *concepts* of ethics, another kind of objective data. It was also interesting to see the *blame-game* occur commonly—all, except for Mike and Hernan, were essentially blaming others for what ensued.

Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Medium Detail

Don: Preoccupied with a Colleague

Don picked up the “Torn” card and described an experience that pertained to the themes of both change and conflict. He recollected that he had transitioned some of his operational responsibilities to a colleague, and that it was a “very uncomfortable transition” with him. Don recalled his conversations with the colleague and his own reaction to the colleague’s responses. For example, when Don asked him about the progress, [the colleague] mentioned that “all is OK.” Don recalled his “first reaction—‘Wow I’m surprised’” because his [Don’s] experience suggested he would not have agreed to those terms—and then he had a further thought that, since all was OK, “I need not worry.” Subsequently, as they talked, Don recollected, sensing that things were not going well— “it didn’t feel right”—and Don spoke to himself—“He’s in

[ethical] violation of the agreement.” Don recalled that he struggled with this in a big way. The interviewer asked him the reason for the struggle and the feeling of being “Torn.” Don described the dilemma he felt between reporting the ethical violation or keeping quiet; and he also spoke about fear of retribution as well as his own fear of “Things spinning out of control.” Don’s recollection was peppered with assumptions and judgements about the colleague, for example, “he was just looking to build his empire.” Don concluded by saying, “I can sympathize with the guy . . . where he’s just really busy, and . . . where things could get . . . missed . . . but ‘you made your bed. Lie in it!’”

Recounting a subsequent experience, Don picked up the “Strong Stand, Conviction” card. He recollected a conflict he had had with another colleague regarding how to use some additional resources. Don recollected that “I was fighting pretty strong, and I took a pretty strong stand.” Don then recalled a meeting with [this colleague] that ultimately ended in a deadlock—along with his inner reaction and self-talk, i.e., that “I’m not buying into that recommendation.” The interviewer then explored Don’s reasons for not buying into the recommendation and what was important to Don in that conflict.

Leona: Ms. Feedback

Leona picked up the “Angry” and “Sad” cards at the same time to describe a conflict with two of her peers with whom she was working on her project. Leona’s boss had given her feedback that she needed to be more organized in her presentations. Acting on the feedback, she put together a comprehensive discussion document for the project. Leona recollected that the immediate reaction of her peers was to attack her in public. She first thought that they were upset because she was proposing a final solution without discussion. She felt upset by the public, personal attack. She recollected her anger at her boss who “set her up to have all her ducks in a

row” and did not defend her. She repeated her feelings of anger, sadness and frustration a couple of times and then linked the event to the card “Lost Something,” saying she was still trying to recover from “losing those relationships.” The interviewer then explored with her the reasons for the “Sad” part and the “Angry” part and Leona generated multiple hypotheses for why things went that way. At the end of it, she concluded that it did not have anything to do with her communication, but about her being seen [by others] as the boss’s “blue-eyed person,” and how she had now started downplaying her achievements to avoid such situations in the future.

She recollected that she subsequently reached out to both the peers for feedback. She said things had improved with one person; the other is open to giving feedback but not to receiving it, That made her sad. Leona was quite emotional about the situations and her emotions spilled into the interview. She repeated a couple of times during the interview something to the effect that, “I felt like I lost those relationships.” She also broke down a couple of times during the interview and concluded the interview with, “*Well . . . Thank you for making me cry. Maybe I needed it.*”

Gerard: Saddened by a Relationship No Longer Sweet

Gerard picked up the “Sad” card for his first situation. He recollected that he was the last internal nominee, left in the race, to replace his boss who was moving on to a new role. Gerard really wanted the job as it would allow him to have more time with his family whom he had been missing because he had been on the road a lot. Gerard felt sad that one of his colleagues—and also a friend for 15 years—instead of “thinking that [Gerard’s getting the job] would be “as great as I did,” appeared to be touting anybody he could from outside the organization. Gerard then shared what he thought was the other person’s story—that, since he [the friend] was not on the promotion list, he did not want to lose face by seeing someone internal, i.e., Gerard, rather than himself, being promoted. Gerard felt “betrayed” and shared his continued sadness even though

things had moved forward. He shared how there was “more of a hard edge” to his and his friend’s relationship now even though they still joked around.

For the second experience, Gerard picked up the “Angry” card to characterize a situation where his boss initially kept ignoring his many-times-repeated suggestions for a new business line. Later on, that very project was initiated, and Gerard was able to work on it through the influence of a colleague. In fact, Gerard was appointed to a task force working in it. His boss was put on the steering committee for that same project.

Gerard recollected an incident where his boss, on a group telephone call with many members of the project, claimed (publicly) that he had never heard of the idea for the project before from anybody. This made Gerard very angry and, on the same call, Gerard related to everybody that he had told the boss about the idea earlier—numerous times.

He recollected his boss’s fury at this turn of events. He had said later, “I don’t think we should speak. I’m not going to speak to you right now, because I’ve never been more angry in my life.” Gerard recalled his internal amusement mixed with fear at his boss’s reaction. At places in the interview, he recollected his inner dialogue about the incident, though not in ways that were as rich as that of others (e.g., Cindy and Fiona): He shared that “part of me I thought—I supposed—went back in my mind, he [his boss] must have been wanting me to *take this* [accept his claim, i.e., go along with his lie]. [But,] I’ve told him this six or seven times. So, he can’t claim he didn’t know this, and, um, the other part of me just wanted to make everybody aware we’ve been knowing about this for a while.”

Ben: Story of a Transition That Went Wrong

Ben picked up the “Lost Something” card to describe his first experience relating to a reorganization where three major construction material plants that he managed were transferred

to another division. He started off by recollecting details of the transition—the three asphalt plants and 22 shingles plants that he managed and how much effort he had put behind enhancing one of those three plants.

With the plants gone, his scope of work and complexity of his job were reduced and that created a sense of loss for him. At this point in the interview, Ben wanted to switch for a bit to the “Sad” card to speak about a connected event that got triggered. However, the interviewer suggested they first explore a little more around what “ticked him off” in this transition. Ben shared his anger at his initiatives’ getting stopped in their tracks and recollecting his own emotional state at the time and its impact—“I was so ticked off that I didn’t put effort for the handover.”

Ben then narrated the sub-story connected to the “Sad” card—a safety accident in one of the transferred plants that led to the death of a young woman employee. Ben was watching a football match when he heard the news and was filled with regret and sadness. The interviewer asked him about the reasons for the regret and sadness and Ben explored that from the standpoint of his and others’ responsibilities—that her death was partly . . . [the fault of] the manager of the transitioned plant whom Ben felt he hadn’t adequately prepared for the handover.

In another card pertaining to “Strong Stand, Conviction,” Ben recollecting how he differed with his boss about dealing with a subordinate who had a problem of alcoholism. He related several incidents with his boss, such as one concerning a party at 8:30 pm when his boss arrived drunk. Ben did not want to punish his subordinate for several reasons—one of them being that his Boss, himself, had a drinking problem. He recollecting his frustration with his boss’s management style and what about it frustrated him.

Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Medium Detail

In the case of medium-detail revisiting, the inner experience was shared with greater granularity in terms of emotional experiences. These participants recollected more than one emotion, and that paved the way for a richer exploration with the interviewer. In some cases, they also shared their inner dialogue, and what their inner reaction was to external events with greater clarity. Finally, some of them, like Ben, also stepped back and took perspective on their attitude at the time of the experience. However, as will be seen later this level of insight was not as pronounced as found in the case of the Rich Revisitors portrayed in the next section.

Portraits of Revisiting with Recollection of Rich Detail

Cindy: Shifting to Stand for the Person in the Mirror

Saying, “the card does not matter,” Cindy picked up the “Anger” card as it was on top. She started by sharing her “point of clarity” in which she had to go along with her boss’s lies or speak the truth. She was angry that her boss put her in that situation. The interviewer asked her to cycle back around to share what was happening and Cindy slowed down to share that the situation pertained to her boss missing work and then lying about his whereabouts. She recollected that, ultimately, she did share her boss’s erratic behaviors with their superior. Following this, her boss got back at her and took away her key accounts.

Cindy decided to call a “Time out” three-way meeting where the boss then lied about his reasons for taking away Cindy’s accounts before his superior. As her boss lied, Cindy had a moment of clarity: “time just stood still, and I was looking directly in his eyes, and I had the clarity that he’s asking me to lie for him like I’ve covered up for him for five years.” Cindy recollected the verbatims of their arguments, described what she was thinking about this exchange, and finally took a stand: “I thought, he wants me to say, ‘You’re right. I made a

mistake.” And I just thought . . . “OK, this is it I have to continue lying for him or just say, ‘No,’ and I have to look at myself in the mirror”; and I said, “Mike, that is just not true.” After some exploration by the interviewer, Cindy shared that her emotional state at the end of the meeting was similar to her state right then during the current interview: “I was very nervous, practically in tears, like I am now . . . because I was ‘right in the grip,’ as I’ve learned to call it.” Cindy went on to add how events unfolded after the meeting. She recollected how her superior (a woman) reassured her and what she thought of her superior’s actions: “And I thought, ‘OK, so, maybe she’s trying to line him up to go into the corner office and resolve this once and for all.’” She recollected that a cold war ensued, resulting in her poor performance rating by her manager, her position being undermined, and her deteriorating relations with a colleague. Cindy recollected that she finally stepped back to see what was happening and took a more agentic approach: “This is my opportunity to really ensure that I work with my counterparts as best I can, given these circumstances, to make this team great so they get him the heck out of here . . . If he wants to take credit for everything I do here, he can take it . . .” She concluded the recollection of the experience by stepping back and wondering about how her emotional expressiveness shows up as “she wears her heart on her sleeve,” just like she did during the interview.

Fiona: The Brave Whistleblower

Fiona picked up the “Strong Stand, Conviction” card to describe a conflict where a colleague had engaged in behavior that she thought was in violation of the ethics of her [Cindy’s] profession (lawyer). Fiona recollected her inner dilemma: “should I fight it alone or get help? Should I report the case or avoid?” She finally decided to report it to her managing partner, who in turn, asked her to continue the investigation. Realizing she was the whistleblower, the concerned individual turned his vengeance against Fiona and filed cases against her with the

North Carolina and Georgia bar associations. Despite the managing director's suggesting that Fiona stand down to avoid harassment, Fiona stood firm even as she recollected that the events "really tested my character," and how her inner voice told her, "you didn't do anything wrong . . . even if the person is more senior and [has] more credibility, his saying [things] does not make you unethical." These thoughts helped her to stay strong.

When the interviewer asked, Fiona recollected the moment when a client first brought this violation to her attention and her inner reaction that she needed to do something about the violation—along with an accompanying sense of fear that she would not be able to do this alone. She also recollected her feeling of being surprised and shocked, and her inner thought, of "not wanting to acknowledge this person's behavior."

She used the metaphor of watching a movie on TV to describe her inner experience when she discovered that this person had prepared a secret dossier with negative information about her to use against her. She recollected her inner urge to take action despite the attacks and linked it to her personality. She stepped back to describe her mental and emotional turmoil at that time: "I cried. I cried; I was very sad. I remember having a conscious discussion in my head about the difference between [being] ashamed and embarrassed, and I decided I had nothing to be ashamed of, because I hadn't done anything wrong; and the accusations he was making were just ridiculous. But at the same time, I had to admit that I was embarrassed because all eyes were on me." As the probing progressed, she wandered down memory lane to talk about her childhood experiences—having to assume the head-of-household role due to her father's early death, and her mother's and brother's bipolar problem—that formed the core of her strength. She spoke fondly of her grandmother from whom she got both her curly hair and her courage.

Ian: Holding the Inner Mirror and yet Building Acceptance

Ian picked up the “Angry” card to describe a situation that pertained to both change and conflict with his new boss when his employer’s organization was restructured. He recollected that he was initially very open to the change and was also aspiring for a new role. However, his quest for a new role did not bear fruit and this, coupled with his feeling that his new boss was not pulling his weight, made him angry. When the interviewer asked him why, he cited the opinion of his former boss regarding the new incumbent, and also his observation that the organization was giving the new person a long leash—letting him work a 30-hour week at double the salary Ian earned. Ian shared this inner dialogue and thinking, almost like an internal movie:

“Yeah, well, the first week or so was fine because we had several meetings; but it was pretty conversational. It was kind of touching base, and it was relationship-building on that level, which was fine. The 30 days are up. You should be here fully . . . did my best for him up-to-speed in terms of process, technology, the people . . . The things that I saw . . . concerned me.”

He recollected that he was “worried about what that meant for me.” He reflected that it was “very hard to just put my emotions aside,” and “I didn’t have control over my emotions,” and it had an impact. He then added that, “since I have more (subject-object interview) cards, this story will unravel.” Ian then turned his attention to how his approach to the change evolved, starting with him “recognizing” that his emotional state would not help him and that he needed to “have some conversations.” He recollected the subsequent conversations with his new boss and how they landed on him and helped him build greater appreciation and acceptance for his new boss.

James: Unprompted Reflector

James picked up the “Angry” card and narrated an experience where a senior partner in his firm came down very sarcastically on one of his team members. In response, he found himself “taking a stand” and “standing up for his team member.” James started by sharing the context of his consulting firm and how people get staffed into the projects, and then zoomed into this situation where he asked his team member-mentee to reach out to a senior partner for some inputs on a proposal, a process that was the norm in his organization. James shared he was upset at the partner’s “non-collaborative, unfriendly” response and found this behavior “inappropriate, degrading to his mentee and disrespectful.” After sharing this information, James slipped into recollecting his inner reaction—“I chose to sit on it and not respond immediately . . . as a consequence I never really responded and let it blow off.” He then shared he regretted not having taken a stand about this. The interview then proceeded to a deep dive into the reasoning behind why James felt angry—reasons for his habitual pattern of not taking a stand.

James called his second story, “my nemesis,” to recollect an experience where a colleague, two levels his junior, quit the organization and cited issues with James in the exit interview. James started the story by mentioning that this was a “huge” experience for him. He recollected this person’s need for structure, and the person’s telling other people, he did not receive it from James. James then slipped into examining, without any prompting from the interviewer, his own structure-averse style, and his blind-sightedness in the past about identifying this issue. James recollected his feeling of relief when he learned that he was not the only one with whom the “nemesis” had had an issue, but still regretted and wished for a chance so he could address the issue. The interviewer then asked James about what was important for

him about getting another chance. What stood out in the interview was that James did not require a lot of probing. He went on revisiting and interpreting in the flow of probes by the interviewer.

Nick: Hope to Change Self and Fill Personality Gaps

Nick picked up the “Sad” Card and described the rough times his mother and brother were going through health-wise, and that he was not seeing eye-to-eye with his boss. Nick recollected a recent meeting with his boss to discuss his leave plans. Nick recalled that he broke down in that meeting and was surprised at his own behavior because it was rare for him to show emotion. While exploring the reasoning, Nick stepped back to describe the week, enmeshing what was happening outside and how that was landing in his inner world: “it was a tough week, a good week, but a tough week. So, I was, uh, um, maybe a little bit drained from that experience, and, uh, and then, my boss and I are, um, not exactly seeing eye-to-eye.” He shared his inner dialogue: “there was some inner part of me that said, ‘uh, maybe showing her emotion would somehow let her think about me differently—see that I’m not a machine, that I’m a real person with feelings and everything else.’” And then Nick went on to add that this thought about showing emotion came to him later and not before breaking down; and mused about how the human mind worked.

Nick described the context of his conflict with his boss in terms of her newness to her role and his own inner reaction to her negative feedback earlier, which, at the time, had been: “This lady is a bitch.” He went on to describe his own act of thinking about her feedback: “I’m thinking about it and reflecting on it here [during the CCL program]” and how he now thinks positively of her.

It was not clear if Nick was recollecting or reflecting during the interview, but he described that he was now 90% sure that he’d like to stay back and make things work (up from

50% for leaving earlier). Nick shared his hope that making some changes will bring a new dimension to his character, abilities and closing his personality gaps. He also described things he had tried to do to overcome his limitations. For example, he recollected how he had accidentally (physically) run into a woman colleague; and she, or someone else at work, took offense and wondered if that encounter was accidental or intentional. Later, Nick joked with the woman colleague about this accident: “I hadn’t had such a good hug in a long time,”—which again made the colleague uncomfortable. Since then, Nick had put up an “Act Professional at work” reminder for himself on his desk!

Discussion: Revisiting with Recollection of Rich Detail

In those revisiting and recollecting rich detail, I saw a high level of integration among these interviewees between what was happening externally, and how it landed in their inner world. Compared to the Medium Revisitors, the richness of emotional experiences and inner dialogues were more prominent. The dimension that stood out the most was the act of noticing, or stepping back to recollect one’s emotional state during the time of the interview. For me as a researcher, I found myself wondering if they were recollecting their emotional experience at the time or were actually experiencing that in the moment.

Summary

This chapter introduced portraits of the managers who were included in this study, beginning with Sparse Revisitors who did not recollect the incident in much detail; followed by various portraits where more detail, and still more detail was recollecting in various ways as managers revisited their experience. This progressive buildup of detail culminated in portraits of those I call Rich Revisitors. The accounts by Rich Revisitors best enabled me to identify various patterns in ways that they interpreted their experiences. In the next chapter, additional details

from the portraits are used to illustrate patterns of reflection that I identified through cross-portrait analysis, as well as variations within those patterns of reflection discerned in this study.

Chapter 6. Learning through Reflection

The purpose of the study was to understand the patterns in reflection by managers on workplace experiences using subject-object interviews (SOIs) (Lahey et al., 2011) as sites for reflection and to identify whether and how these differ by the developmental level of the manager. Towards this purpose, the study seeks to answer the following two research questions:

1. As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?
2. In what ways, if any, do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory?

In the previous chapter I had shared individual portraits of the fifteen individuals interviewed with the objective of providing a first-hand understanding of how the participants revisited the experiences. In this chapter, I present the key themes emerging from a cross-participant analysis to answer the first of the two research questions: As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on dimensions of revisiting experience and interpreting the experience.

This chapter starts with identification of themes that resulted from second-cycle coding and analysis, as presented in Table 18. Each theme is accompanied by examination of its occurrence and illustrative examples. Then, looking across portraits, themes are summarized to articulate patterns of reflection in order to answer the first research question. The chapter closes with a discussion of these patterns in light of literature on reflection. This closing discussion also sets the stage for developmental analysis in Chapter Seven that answers the second of the two research questions: In what ways do the above patterns of reflection vary by developmental level as identified in constructive-developmental theory. As mentioned in the methodology (Chapter

3), the analysis directed toward the first question, presented in this chapter, was not influenced by knowledge of developmental levels of the fifteen participants. I was purposefully unaware of their developmental levels while developing the findings in order to limit a potential source of bias in the study.

Themes Emerging from Analysis across Portraits

The themes presented in this chapter, listed in Table 18, were identified by comparing and contrasting findings across the fifteen participants. The patterns in each theme pertain to the variation among participants in terms of how the theme shows up in recollection. As each theme is presented in the table, the variation patterns are also described.

Table 18. Themes and Variation Patterns Emerging from Analysis across Portraits

Themes and Variations Pertaining to Revisiting Experiences	
Theme	Variation Patterns
<p>Recollection of emotional experiences associated with the selected card provided data for subsequent probing and interpreting the experience.</p>	<p>Participants varied by the granularity with which they recollected the emotional experiences. Some recollected their emotional experiences as general labels (angry, sad etc.), while others vividly described the emotional experiences with granularity.</p>
<p>Recollection of inner dialogue with self, when present and taking place beyond dialogue with others, enhanced the data for subsequent probing and interpreting of the experience.</p>	<p>Recollection of arguments and discussions with others on issues of conflict was common for everyone. Some participants also vividly described their dialogue within the self as they engaged with others on issues of change and conflict.</p>
<p>Some participants stepped onto the balcony, so to speak, from which somewhat removed point of view they described their process of thinking and feeling about the experience.</p>	<p>While all participants recollected what they felt and what they thought on probing by the interviewer, few stepped back to describe how they were thinking and feeling.</p>
<p>Participants’ reasoning revealed differing stances based on what was at stake for them</p>	<p>Participants took one or more of four stances: Self-Focused, “I vs. You”, Relational, or Organizational, on a continuum from Narrow to Wide.</p>
<p>The process of self-examination helped participants develop self-awareness, uncover blind spots and devise changed approaches to presenting issues</p>	<p>Variation showed up in one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not engaging in self-examination (often associated with strong negative emotions or blame-game) • Self-examination limited to identifying and labelling their own limiting behaviors or mistakes without examining the underlying assumptions and inner commitments • Self-examination of one’s underlying assumptions and inner commitments behind the behaviors

In the following sections, each of the above themes are described in detail with their variation patterns. Tables are used to indicate occurrence (presence or absence) across participants and variations where they occur. Presence of the theme, or of an underlying code, is indicated by placement of an X (or an XX—either vertical or horizontal—for very strong presence) in the column(s) labeled with the name(s) of interviewees demonstrating that theme. A

full explanation of the coding system for the SOI is given under the heading, “Three Different ways of knowing” in Chapter 7. Examples illustrate the theme; and interviewees who share that theme are identified and clustered. The first three themes describe patterns linked to revisiting experiences; the two themes in the second set describe patterns linked to interpreting experience.

Themes Pertaining to Revisiting the Experience

Theme 1: Granularity of Recollection of Emotional Experiences Associated with the Selected Card

Subject-object interviews use cards with emotionally charged words printed on them that help the person think about and recollect emotionally significant events to provide data for subsequent probing and interpreting the experience during the interview process. Typically, the interviewer starts by asking a question such as, “Tell me which card you picked and what event it reminded you of?” In response, participants share how they felt, what actions they took or what choices they made, in addition to contextual information about the situation and other players in the situation of conflict or change.

For example, in his portrait in chapter 5, Al picked up the “Angry” card, and, as we can see in the portrait, shared information about the reorganization and that he was angry at his boss because he was made to give up something he wanted. The interviewer subsequently followed up with a probe such as, “And what was it about giving up things that you didn’t want to let go of that made you so angry?” Such emotional data became the key pathway to elicit the participants’ reasoning and understanding of their meaning-making process. Emotions played a key role in initiating the exploration, even though subsequent rounds of reasoning could explore reasons behind emotions, actions, or thoughts. Irrespective of the type of emotions generated—positive

or negative—participants engaged in a reflective dialogue with the interviewer, and in several cases, deepened their self-awareness and generated insights.

Participants varied in how they recollected the emotional data. In addition to differences in the kinds of emotions experienced, participants varied in the granularity with which they recollected and described their emotional experiences. For some, the recollection was limited to general labels such as “Angry” as in Al’s portrait. Others were more vivid and granular in describing the details of their experience. For example, James also picked up the “Angry” card; but James then went on to describe that he experienced the partner’s email in response to a request as sarcastic and disrespectful to his mentee; so, he just ended up sitting on that email rather than responding.

Table 19 summarizes variations in granularity of emotions described by participants. Participants differed in granularity or richness of detail with which revisiting was described. The study identified three dimensions of richness:

- Recollection of emotions with granularity
- Recollection of inner dialogue
- Noticing interpersonal or intrapersonal dynamics operating in the past

Blank columns (absence of X) indicate that emotions were recollected only when interviewers probed participants for feelings they had. Columns marked with an X indicate some granularity of detail in emotions expressed spontaneously. Columns marked with a double X (or XX) indicate a high or very high level of spontaneous granularity in emotional description.

Table 19. Granularity of Emotions Evaluated

Respondent → Theme ↓	Al	Ben	Cindy	Don	Eddy	Fiona	Gerard	Hernan	Ian	James	Kate	Leona	Mike	Nick	Olivia
Differentiation and Granularity of Emotions		X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X	X		X X	X

A myriad of emotional data and reactions were observable in the interviews. They ranged from simple emotions (i.e., statements of anger, joy, or other feelings) to strong, complicated emotional experiences often comprised of multiple emotions. In some experiences, multiple emotions showed up, while in others, one dominated. Given the design of SOIs, the first emotion explored was in line with the word printed on the card the interviewee selected. However, some participants shared other emotions as they revisited the experience and dialogued with the interviewer. The extremes of this continuum of granularity are here illustrated by contrasting the simple statements of emotion at the sparse level of recollecting emotions in contrast with examples of Rich-Recollectors of emotion at the high end of emotional granularity.

Sparse Recollection of Emotions

For some participants, the recollection of emotions was limited to calling out a single emotion associated with the card, or to recollection based on the interviewer’s expert questioning. Subsequent recollections did not expand the window into the participant’s inner emotional world. Emotional data recollected throughout the interview seemed very sparse.

For instance, Al shared an example where he was angry at his boss for taking over a meeting with him. The interviewer asked him to think about that meeting and share what was happening. Al recollected each party’s arguments and actions but did not talk about how he personally felt about his boss’s actions except that they made him angry. Al displayed emotions

during the interview, including angry remarks directed at the interviewer when she kept probing him. But, while he was emotionally affected, there was not much granularity or vividness in his emotional recollections.

Another interviewee, Olivia, recollected her conflict with her boss regarding performance ratings of field agents. Olivia did not provide a granular description of her emotional experience at all. She had picked up the “Torn” and “Strong Stand/Conviction” cards. However, when the interviewer probed her, she only shared objective and reflective information about the organization’s performance management system and its mechanics. Her only insight into emotions was her statement that doing evaluations made her “very, very tense” because, having spent 18 years in the field, she knew how it felt to be inappropriately evaluated. In the absence of emotional content, the interviewer asked many probing questions to get Olivia to move away from the objective data to her inner-feelings or interpretations—but to no avail.

Rich Recollection of Emotion

At the other end of the spectrum were participants who included a full range of emotions, with great granularity and specificity, in their recollections. These participants recounted both the emotion associated with the card, as well as other emotions they experienced. Their description went beyond the labels.

As an example, Fiona picked up the “Strong Stand/Conviction” card. She not only recalled her dilemma around “whistleblowing”; other emotions were triggered as she revisited the experience. For example, she shared confusion over whether she felt shame or guilt. She also used the metaphor of watching a movie on TV to describe the nature of her fear when she discovered that the person on whom she had “blown the whistle” had prepared a secret dossier with negative information to use against her. The interviewer was then able to probe into the

multiple windows created by these emotional data points. Exploration opened up space for a reflective dialogue through probes, e.g., what about the experience was embarrassing, and what about it created guilt?

Cindy's example of being torn over a lengthy struggle with an erratic boss who expected her to lie to cover up for his drug/alcohol problem was anguishing. Her dialogue with the interviewer was filled with many moments of clarity about emotions, dilemmas, and repercussions. Cindy loved her work, but constantly weighed whether or not to quit. She agreed with the interviewer who observed that Cindy, instead, found ways to turn things around by supporting her team because "you wanted affection, and you want inclusion." Cindy broke down and cried during the interview. She also expressed positivity and hope and was feeling pleased that she had been able to build a better relationship with a colleague that was also beneficial for the team instead of focusing on her struggle with her erratic boss.

Summary

Rich recollection of emotional data gave the interviewer the opportunity to probe deeply, which, in turn, enabled the interviewee to get more fully in touch with emotions leading to self-insight. Asking for reasoning behind emotions surfaced thought processes and ultimately touched on core values and beliefs that motivated action. With recollection of multiple emotions, probing helped surface the complexity of the thinking process and inner dilemmas. This detail enabled further self-insight. Sparser recollection of details of experiences, by contrast, left emotions stated, but not mined for self-insight or deep learning from the experience.

Theme 2: Recollection of Inner Dialogue with Self

As participants revisited situations, some of them also recollected their inner self-dialogue as they engaged with others in situations of change and conflict. Inner dialogue differs

from external dialogue in that it happens internally with oneself as opposed to externally with another person. Inner dialogue, then, typically involved *reflective* data that led to probing and reflective dialogue between the interviewee and interviewer. Table 20 summarizes the incidence of this theme across participants who recollected inner dialogue and those who did not.

Table 20. Presence of Recollecting Inner Dialogue

Respondent →	Al	Ben	Cindy	Don	Eddy	Fiona	Gerard	Hernan	Ian	James	Kate	Leona	Mike	Nick	Olivia
Theme ↓															
Recollection of Inner Dialogue		X	XX	XX		XX	XX							XX	

Two examples are provided below, as contrasts between people who did, and who did not, recollect inner dialogue.

Contrast among Cindy, Al, and Don

As one example, Cindy picked up the “Angry” card to describe a conflict with her boss who was lying and expecting her to cover for his lies. When the interviewer asked her to cycle back to share what was happening, she recollected more than the verbatims of her arguments with him. Cindy also recollected what she was thinking about this exchange all the way to her finally taking a stand. She thought: “he wants me to say, ‘You’re right. I made a mistake.’” And I just thought . . . “OK, this is it! I have to continue lying for him or just say, ‘No,’ and I have to look at myself in the mirror. And I said, ‘Mike, that is just not true.’” Later, as the conflict evolved, her supervisor intervened and promised support to Cindy. However, instead of Mike being fired, as Cindy expected, he was actually promoted and moved to a corner office. Cindy also recollected her inner dialogue around this development:

And I thought, “OK, that’s what she’s setting up is to move him to that corner office because . . . if he’s doing [drug or alcohol abuse, and] is out on medical leave, and they try to do something to him . . . that’s a legal risk as well.” So, I can see this in my risk-

averse company. I thought, “OK, so, maybe she’s [her superior’s] trying to line him up to go into the corner office and resolve this once and for all.”

In contrast with Cindy’s rich self-dialogue, when the interviewer asked Al to describe what happened when he was in a meeting with his boss, he just recollected that he shared his stance that he wanted the role; he handed his boss a memo; and the boss refused his request. As a result, he felt betrayed and angry. Al’s recollection lacked the vividness and richness seen in Cindy’s recollection of her inner dialogue.

In a second example, Don picked up the “Torn” card to describe an experience in transitioning operational responsibilities to a colleague. After doing so, Don stayed in touch with the colleague. He became uncomfortable when hearing about his colleague’s actions. He felt that what his colleague was doing in the job “didn’t feel right.” Don’s level of granularity in revisiting the experience was medium. However, he was vivid in describing his inner dialogue as he observed what his colleague was doing in the job that had been his earlier:

So, he’s under a tremendous pressure, and he inherited a lot of crap; and so, I’m sensitive to that, but at the same token, he’s pulling this stuff from me, and I’m, “Here, take it!” At first, I’m like, “You can’t take that. That’s mine!” I’m sitting saying, “What am I doing? I hate this part of my job. Give it to him. Here, you can have it! I’ll give you the guidebook to get everything done. I’ll do everything as quickly as we can.” You know, so he’s pulling stuff, and then he has too much, and it’s like, yeah, I can kind of sympathize with the guy but, “You made your bed. Lie in it!”

Summary

The inner dialogue is a form of reflective data that formed a basis for further probing and reflective dialogue. It enhanced the richness of the reflective data. One could describe this inner dialogue as the thinking equivalent of rich revisiting of emotions.

Theme 3: Stepping onto the Balcony

“Stepping onto the balcony” (Heifetz, 2017) in this study was defined as mindfully engaging in thinking, reflecting, and perspective taking. It represents the ability to take perspective on the situation in new ways. Heifetz and Linsky (2017) introduced language to describe the act of stepping onto the balcony above the dance floor. This code was used for recollections involving revisiting thoughts and actions and noticing or taking perspective on the dance floor. below. Heifetz and Linsky (2017) describe its purpose:

Any military officer . . . knows the importance of maintaining the capacity for reflection, even in the “fog of war.” Great athletes can at once play the game and observe it as a whole—as Walt Whitman described it, “being both in and out of the game.” Jesuits call it “contemplation in action.” Hindus and Buddhists call it “karma yoga,” or mindfulness. We call this skill “getting off the dance floor and going to the balcony,” an image that captures the mental activity of stepping back in the midst of action and asking, “What’s really going on here?” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017, p. 71).

The SOI unfolds as an active dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. As was evident from the Research Questions, the interview elicits responses pertaining to revisiting the experience wherein the participant recollects objective and reflective data in terms of what happened, and how one thought, felt and acted. Sometimes, this recollection includes interpretations. The participant might reason about what they did in the past or engage in

reasoning about the present revisiting of the experience, at least in part because of the interviewer's probing.

“Stepping onto the balcony” became a pivotal transition process that moved toward interpretation as interviewees could get behind the details of the situation and take perspective based on their birds-eye or airplane view. Doing so within the SOI enabled the interviewee—from the vantage point of the present time, during the interview—to look at the past, or even what was happening during the interview, from an enlarged view. We see what this looks like in examples in interviews with Al, Nick, and Leona. These examples also illustrate the role of the interviewer in accompanying the interviewee onto the balcony and engaging in self-examination.

In a first example, in his Chapter-5 portrait, Al described his anger at what he perceived to be his boss's pre-empting of a lead role on a reorganization idea that Al had begun to speak to HR about. As he revisited this example, the interviewer asked him to “take yourself back to that moment” and then asked a series of probing questions that put Al on the balcony and pushed him toward self-examination. The interviewer probed:

what's the worst thing about being in that kind of awkward positions? . . . Can you put your finger on what's most uncomfortable about it? . . . What's most frustrating about . . . ? . . . this might sound strange. I keep pushing on this. What's the worst part about failing? . . . What's most unacceptable about that?

As he replied, Al did confront his vulnerabilities. For example, he was “put in that position of looking like you have a weakness when you don't really.” He said he could accept failure but added only “when it's your failure you created” and not something someone else does that made him look bad. He concluded: “I can accept my own flaws; I can't accept people making me look foolish.”

In the second example, in his Chapter-5 portrait, Nick discussed a conflict with his boss, which ultimately led him to examine the fit of the job with the skills he had. He even considered changing jobs: “I’m trying to exit and . . . I’m also working hard . . . if the exit strategy doesn’t work to . . . find ways to make it better.” The interviewer probed as to “what do you think it will take to make it better?” Nick could see he needed a new skill set, and so he conceded his boss was “on target” but he could not “change overnight or reprogram my brain overnight to achieve” the skills he needed. Getting on the balcony, he admitted, “the more I’m thinking about it and reflecting on it . . . and see how it aligns with other things, the more I think it’s the particular job I’m in that just requires skills that I don’t have and have not had to develop in my other positions.” As he reflected with the support of the interviewer he acknowledged, “I’m almost rethinking my flight . . . because it’s a weakness in me, and I can probably go somewhere in the company and hide it; but if it’s a weakness, it won’t go away if I just hide it and I am motivated to change because it is not unlike a weakness I have in relationships with my family.” The interviewer asked if Nick is then beginning to see this as a development opportunity rather than something to run from? And Nick agrees, “to be honest, I think I’m starting to move that way.” As we see in this example, Nick goes onto the balcony with greater ease, frequency, and self-motivation than did Al. The interviewer probes but does not push Nick to self-examination.

In the third example, Leona described in her Chapter-5 portrait the way she had felt attacked in a meeting by several colleagues for a detailed, well-developed proposal she had presented in response to her boss’s criticism that she was not well organized. While not sure about the root cause of the attack, she attributed it to jealousy at her successes. She had been journaling about the incident for a year, had tried to repair the relationships with little success, and had played down any success she had since for fear that “it would cause more harm than

good.” The interviewer used probes to help Leona get on the balcony and look at the experience from different angles. As she did this, Leona examined her values (transparency), her intentions, her boss’s role in the incident, her actions, and the actions of her colleagues who attacked her. At the conclusion of this probing the interviewer asked: “So what do you think was the most important aspect of this that caused you to set the whole thing aside now . . . that you lost your passion about it [the proposal she made at the meeting]?” Leona replied, “it was too much conflict,” not only for her but also for her boss who “didn’t have any passion to handle it either.” Leona’s ability to get onto the balcony helped her see the situation from different people’s viewpoints and to put it in perspective, even though Leona did not feel that it was well resolved.

Themes and Patterns Pertaining to Interpreting Experiences

Theme 4: Participants’ Content of Reasoning Revealed Differing Stances

As part of the SOI protocol, the interviewer asked the participants about their reasons behind their feelings, thoughts or choices associated with the selected cards—in order to understand their meaning-making structures. An analysis of these reasons revealed that participants were approaching the situations of conflict or change with one or more of four different stances:

- Self-Focused
- “• I vs. You
- Relational
- Organizational.

These stances revealed what interviewees saw as the key impact or threat due to the conflict or change in the incident recollected. At times, more than one stance showed up for a

participant. Table 21 depicts the stance or stances that showed up for each participant with a recap of the definition of each stance.

Table 21. Stance for Each Participant

Respondent →	Al	Ben	Cindy	Don	Eddy	Fiona	Gerard	Herman	Ian	James	Kate	Leona	Mike	Nick	Olivia
Stance ↓															
Self-Focused Stance (Preoccupied with impact on self and not looking at the impact on others and the larger organization)	X			X	X			X			X			X	X
I vs. You (Some empathy for impact on others but preoccupied with impact on self, and seeing that as a win-lose dynamic with another)				X							X				X
Relational Stance (Perspective taking dominated by how others are getting impacted and how they will respond to me)		X	X				X	X		XX		X		X	
Organizational Stance (Wearing the organizational hat while reasoning and looking at how different stakeholders, including self are impacted)		X	X			X			X	XX			X		
		X	X			X			X				X		

Self-Focused Stance

In this stance, the participant seemed to be preoccupied with impact on self and was not looking at the impact on others or the larger organization. The participants reported impact on job security, organizational survival, missing out on growth opportunities, personal reputation, or personal effectiveness as the underlying reasons, and did not report reasons pertaining to the relational or organizational stances detailed below.

For example, Don recollected a “very uncomfortable transition” where he suspected that his colleague, was in ethical violation of an agreement with the client firm. Don chose to not report the violation to the ombudsman. In his reasoning for this choice, Don shared his fear of a possible repercussion that threatened his own job security as the reason. On probing, Don went into depth as to the reason why the promise of “Your job will be protected” in the Ombudsman guidelines might still be ignored, and that people might find other reasons to get back at him. Don did not share reasoning around the impact of the ethical violation on the organization. This is an example of a Self-Focused stance—of being preoccupied with impact on self.

As another example, Eddy felt attacked when a colleague kept “pestering” him, during a team meeting, as to whether he was correctly sharing details of a certain defective auto component. Eddy ended up calling the colleague into his office for a showdown that, in his opinion, “cleared the air between them” because he gave the colleague, “the very direct feedback that I [Eddy] preferred not to be questioned.” The colleague thought their relationship had since improved. Eddy did not look at things from his colleague’s perspective—i.e., whether coming down heavily helped the colleague also clear the air at his end, and whether his colleague, too, felt this improved their relationship. Eddy shared that later he learned that the person had not intended to attack; rather, he was being over-cautious because of a bad prior experience. When

the interviewer asked him if, in light of this information, he would have approached the conflict differently, Eddy was negative and added that the colleague's questioning still had the effect of an attack on his "leadership."

Relational Stance

In this stance, the participant seemed to be preoccupied with how other significant relationships or those involved in the conflict were being affected and the impact on their relationship. The content of reasoning underlying this stance revealed that some of the participants saw relationships at stake and that guided their thoughts and choices.

For example, Leona, who picked up the "Lost Something" card, described that her conflict with her colleagues left her "still trying to recover from losing those relationships." She felt her colleagues "attacked her in public" and did not positively receive her "very structured and detailed presentation" that she created to please her boss. Yet she had "no support from my boss" either, and, "faced the attack all by myself." Her reasoning focused on her colleagues who abandoned her—possibly because they perceived such a detailed presentation to connote finality of recommendations without their input; or possibly, there was an element of jealousy as she had reputation of being the boss's "blue-eyed girl." Even though she felt abandoned, she sought reasons aimed at getting those relationships back on track through seeking feedback from the two colleagues whose relationships she felt she had lost.

Organizational Stance

Participants taking this stance wore an "organizational hat" while reasoning. Ben explored reasoning behind the reorganization of his company and the resulting fatal accident (at a plant he had transferred to another manager) from various perspectives such as stakeholder

expectations around profitability, need to avoid lawsuits, and poor handover procedures. This stance involved his own expectations as well as how he was embedded in the system.

For example, Fiona, like Don, above, faced a dilemma pertaining to acting on a colleague's behaviors that were in violation of ethics. While sharing reasoning behind her decision to take up the issue with higher authorities, she also mentioned her fears about possible repercussions—especially when she learned that the person she had blown the whistle on had prepared a dossier containing negative information about her and filed cases against her in two state bar associations. However, she also shared reasoning about how letting this person go scot free would damage the organization's reputation, violate ethics, and impact the firm negatively.

Ben shared the reasoning behind his stance in yet another example he had shared to “not ditch” his colleague whom his boss wanted to fire as it would impact the morale of other team members—particularly so when this person was well connected and very well known throughout the company, and people would start asking “OK, who's next?”

Multiple Stances

As Table 21, above, suggests, participants could also be seen taking multiple stances at different points in the interview. It was fairly common to see reasoning pertaining to impact on self in most of the interviews.; however, as the probing widened, other stances were revealed. For example, Fiona, who took the Organizational stance, also shared her fears about possible repercussions, especially when she learned that the person involved had prepared a dossier against her and filed cases against her in two state bar associations. Ben, in addition to taking the Organizational stance, also described his personal friendship with the person whom his Boss wanted to fire as a reason why he did not want to fire him. In sharing his reasoning about this

choice, he indicated he sought to minimize the impact on the friend-colleague, by means such as lining up the HR person, and exploring the legal angles.

Considering the coming together of multiple stances in one individual, the mental width of their stance could be said to increase as a person moved from Self-focused, to “I vs. You,” to Relational, to Organizational stances. At wider levels of stance, one person was taking into account multiple considerations beyond one’s own self in thinking and reasoning. For analytical purposes, participants might be grouped into those whose interview revealed a narrow stance and those whose interview revealed a wide stance. These two clusters are described below:

I described participants who demonstrated a self-focused stance, or an “I vs. You” stance, or both, as having a narrow stance. These participants included Al, Don, Eddy, Hernan, Kate, Nick, and Olivia.

I categorized participants who demonstrated a relational stance, or an organizational one, or both, as having a wide stance. They were Ben, Cindy, Fiona, Gerard, Fiona, Ian, James, Leona, and Mike. These were people who were able to look at situations from a comparatively wider perspective.

Building upon the examples shared above, the following examples illustrate the contrast between how narrow and wide stances influenced the reflective process, often in very similar situations.

The first example is a comparison between Don and Fiona who, as was shared in the portraits, both faced a dilemma pertaining to acting on behaviors that they thought were in violation of ethics. Due to a narrower stance, aimed at minimizing impact on self—possibly the only impact he perceived—Don chose not to go to the Ombudsman. By contrast, in addition to impact on self, Fiona also looked at the organizational impact and, after considering both, chose

to report the violation. This wider stance went beyond her fear of impact on self and enabled her to look beyond her own welfare toward that of the organization.

The second example is a comparison between Eddy and Leona who both described conflicts they had with peers. However, when the interviewer asked them for the reasons behind their subsequent actions after being attacked, they described different choices. Eddy organized a one-on-one showdown to protect “my leadership,” whereas Leona sought more feedback and downplayed her achievements to protect the relationship.

Summary

The reasoning that occurs while interpreting the experience during a reflective process varies with the stance the person takes towards situations—in this case, experiences of change and conflict. That, in turn, influences how these people perceive the experience, construct meaning, and make future choices. In sum, this variation in stance shifts the gravity of the reasoning process.

Theme 5: Process of Self-Examination

The process of self-examination helped participants develop self-awareness, uncover blind spots, and devise changed approaches to presenting issues. Participant reasoning was uncovered through probing questions asked by the interviewer. During that process, over half the participants undertook self-examination. Self-examination here refers to the process whereby participants looked at their own behaviors and attitudes and considered how they could have contributed to the conflict or challenges in dealing with change. This broader perspective was in contrast to those of some participants who either blamed others for the arising problematic situation, or others where a self-examination process was entirely absent. As a result of engaging in the self-examination process, participants developed greater self-awareness. In my analysis, it

showed up in two ways: self-examination limited to labelling and identifying limiting behaviors vs. self-examination that uncovered underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions. The two types of self-examination are listed below. Table 22 displays the participants who engaged in one type or the other:

Table 22. Presence of Self-Examination and Its Type

Respondent → Theme ↓	Al	Ben	Cindy	Don	Eddy	Fiona	Gerard	Hernan	Ian	James	Kate	Leona	Mike	Nick	Olivia
Labeling and examining behaviors								X					X	X	
Examining source of behaviors	X*	X	X			X			X	X					

Note: The asterisk* indicates that the self-examination in this case was aided by the interviewer sharing her own insights into what she was observing; these insights, in turn, helped the participants to dig deeper.

Labelling Limiting Behaviors and Attitudes

Labeling could limit behaviors and attitudes unless it was accompanied by critical examination of their source. As examples, Hernan, Nick, and Mike examined the limitations of their past behaviors created in situations of change or conflict by labelling or naming them and their impact, but they did not examine the source of these limiting behaviors and attitudes.

Hernan saw the limitations of his having a *directive*, “telling” (I tell you) communication style for success in the Total Productivity Management role. However, probing did not help him unpack this further. Instead, he just attributed it to his being “an old school manager.” He also shared how, after reluctantly accepting the TPM manager role from his new boss, he changed his approach to asking for feedback. He shared that not seeking feedback earlier in his career was his

biggest mistake and labelled that earlier approach as “cocky and defensive.” He now had a different approach and would continue to proactively seek feedback at work in the future. However, when the interviewer asked him for the reasons for coming to this realization, he attributed it to the external positive reinforcement that he received from his superior and HR managers, and that it helped him improve his relationship with his boss. He did not examine any internal source of this shift; and, as mentioned above, he did not truly change his view on the value of feedback; he sought it only to improve his relationship with his boss.

As another example, Nick identified limitations of the “directive” and “non-relating” approach both he and his boss followed. Nick was not seeing eye-to-eye with his boss and was divided 50:50 between trying to make things work with his boss or leave the organization. He looked at the 360 feedback data in the CCL program and the feedback his boss gave him that described his behaviors, such as a “directive and a telling approach,” as creating a negative impact on the boss and raters. Nick noted that these behaviors would negatively impact his career elsewhere as well. He decided to shift his approach towards making things work in the current organization, his opinion now representing a 90:10 ratio in favor of staying over leaving. He also enthusiastically identified several actions he would like to take to help him make these changes such as “putting a reminder on my desk,” and identifying people with whom he could practice new behaviors. However, on probing for reasons behind these behavior patterns, he could not go beyond attributing them to “the wiring of his brain.” He could not identify any underlying beliefs, values or assumptions feeding these behaviors.

Mike was upset that he was labelled as an un-creative and not a team player for standing up against the marketing team’s creative advertisement that positioned a product created primarily for insurance as an instrument primarily for investment. He realized in hindsight that

he should have shared his opinion in black-and-white and in writing with reasons. The interviewer did not inquire deeper into this, nor did Mike examine deeply where this realization came from.

Examining Underlying Values, Beliefs, Assumptions, and Inner Commitments

Ben, Cindy, Ian, Fiona, and James went beyond just labelling their limiting behaviors. They critically examined the sources of these behaviors. The window into understanding these sources lay in the underlying stakes—values, beliefs, assumptions, and inner commitments that surfaced through the process of probing. Al, too, went beyond just labelling of limiting behaviors. However, as explained at the end of this section, he was an example of a reluctant self-examiner pushed into realizations by the interviewer in some ways. These examples are elaborated below.

During the interview, Ben shared his sadness at the unfortunate accident where a woman lost her life at a plant he had handed over. He attributed the accident to the poor handover process. He then examined his own non-proactive and negative attitude towards the handover and how he could have done a better job of handing over his plants to the new incumbent. On further probing he identified his assumption that a senior colleague would take care of things as one of the sources of this attitude:

Well, a person . . . he had been the vice president of a large division, senior guy, . . . I assumed, you know, he's got it. He's got the ball. He's a smart guy. Just let him deal with it. If they want to make this organizational change, just let him deal with it. I don't know, I think I was just – just I didn't really think it through. I just assumed.

Fiona provided another example in her role as a Whistleblower. She had deep self-examination moments during the interview. She recollected that she was surprised when she

learned from the client that her colleague was engaging in unethical behavior. She labelled it as a big blind-spot on her side, as the colleague had been working alongside her for 20 years and some people had also hinted that this was happening. She examined what made her make this error. She acknowledged that a part of her did not want to acknowledge the truth of this revelation. “I think a part of me didn’t miss it, but it was just a quieter voice . . . and I chose to ignore it until the client brought me into the office and confronted me with it.” She attributed the source of this deliberate ignorance to her inner commitments: “I also didn’t want to invest the emotional energy and time into solving the problem. I was busy with my own [law] practice, my own clients; and, you know, I thought, ‘Maybe if I ignore it, it will go away.’” As one can see in this case, the participant went much deeper than just labelling the limiting behaviors.

Al’s case, marked with an asterisk*, was a little different from that of Ben, Cindy, Fiona, James, and Leona. While the latter responded to the probes of the interviewer, in Al’s case, the interviewer played a significant role in self-examination. As mentioned in Al’s portrait, the interviewer played back that she was seeing the control theme reappear in multiple interviews. Al became uncomfortable and wanted to move on to the next card, “I am a control freak . . . you want me to get to the next card.” However, the interviewer insisted that they explore further, and Al was able to identify that the source of his “control freak” behavior was a tendency to avoid anxiety by controlling the environment for himself and others. He realized that sometimes this tendency takes people by surprise as it did the stranger at the gym whom Al offered a towel.

Leona—in exploring a possible assumption about why her colleagues attacked her in a public meeting—realized she had assumed they would “‘pick up the phone, or they’d come down the hall, and say, what are you doing?’” And I think I underestimated that. I thought I really had a good understanding of . . . who I was working with, and where we all were” when, instead,

her colleagues attacked her and resisted her efforts to repair the relationships. She reevaluated the situation and—sadly—reframed the issue of her conflict and the resulting deteriorated relationships as not being an issue of improper communication, but rather, of their jealousy at the importance she had gained since her successful performance in the meeting:

Yeah, because like I don't [think] there was anything wrong with the way the information was presented. I think it was all relationship oriented. And there are other things that are happening that are making that relationship difficult in that I seem to be getting the plum assignment. I seem to get to do the cool stuff, whatever that may be perceived as, and so I'm getting the higher performance ratings. You know. Those kinds of things. The clients that I work with really like me. So, it makes me stand out more, unfortunately, and that makes me more suspect. And I need to be more aware of that and realize people's [her colleagues'] perceptions could really heavily color their response to me.

A kind of corollary to this theme is that those playing the blame-game and/or holding strong negative emotions about others, tended to stay away from the process of self-examination. This was evidenced by the strong negative opinions and views they expressed about others. Additionally, while these individuals did not engage in deep self-examination, they sometimes did identify and label habitual patterns. Eddy, for example, acknowledged: "I have a problem when people question me about things that I'm very knowledgeable about . . . My 360 and . . . all the other feedback we got . . . indicate it as such . . . the problem for me is sometimes I have difficulty [caused by my] translating it from merely professional interrogative to personal attack." This comment shows that while acknowledging the problem, Eddy was unwilling to probe deeply or change his response.

In a second example, not included in the portrait, Eddy described a change his team made on a molded plastic part that was poorly designed and would break. His team “totally eliminated it as a defect” and the customer was pleased; yet when he filed the engineering change paperwork, it was rejected: “They were all bent out of shape that we basically circumvented the system to implement this change . . . without first asking their permission,” even though his team was charged with continuous improvement. The organization required them to abandon the improvement and go back to making a part that was poorly designed. Eddy examined his strong feelings of anger: “part of it was that I was emotionally tied . . . to the change, because it was my idea and this other gentleman’s . . . and . . . you’re rejecting it because we didn’t ask you first? . . . You weren’t rejecting just the paperwork trail on the plastic. You were rejecting me!” The interviewer probed: “this sounds silly, but why do you not want to be thought of as stupid?” Eddy laughed and said, “because I’m not.” Asked then why that would be “the worst thing,” he replied, “it acts as a poison . . . if it spreads out across the ranks, then that can be used against you.” Rather than explore other solutions, Eddy essentially gave up: “I just don’t want to hear about it. So . . . I dismissed their reaction to the change.”

In Olivia’s portrait of being gripped by the mechanics of the performance management system, she blamed her boss for bringing down the performance ratings of people. She recognized that, possibly, her boss, coming from a minority group, had a role in creating this situation. She also demonstrated elements of relational stance—one where the reasoning and perspective taking that is happening is dominated by how others are being affected and how they will respond. She was worried about the impact of low ratings on others, in terms of their morale and bonus.

In these examples, Eddy and Olivia recollected their side of the story and skipped over, or seemed blind to, the story that might be told from the perspective of colleagues with whom they were in conflict. They engaged in blame-game and had strong negative emotions towards others. No significant outcomes were reported beyond gaining clarity into the source of negative emotions, which the SOI protocol tends to generate naturally. Probing did not enable them to engage in perspective taking or more deeply examining their own assumptions.

Nick evidenced questioning his own views on probing by the interviewer but might not have done so on his own initiative without this kind of help. He started his interview with the “Sad” card. His mother had a respiratory problem and he needed to take time off to visit her. In negotiating this leave time with his boss—a woman, with whom he was “not exactly seeing eye-to-eye”—he noted it was “unusual” to have “tears . . . in my eyes” and “show that sort of emotion.” On probing, he said he did not usually show emotion, and that doing so in this situation was not intentional. The interviewer’s probing then led him to consider if “maybe showing her emotion” would lead her “to see that I’m not a machine, that I’m a real person with feelings.”

The interviewer then asked if Nick was considering “ways to deal with your conflict or not seeing eye-to-eye with her.” In responding, he considered his boss’s perspective as well as his own: “she appreciates my work, but . . . it’s a new job. She’s a new director in this group . . . we just don’t see the same on some things . . . we are different people, and maybe we’re the same person, I’m not sure.” Further probing involved an exploration into alternative solutions for resolving this conflict. Nick admitted he was exploring exit strategies by seeking a different job. But, on further probing, he began to reflect on the opportunities his present job might offer for building a new skill set by “listening to people more instead of being so in control, or by

directing, and getting people’s opinions more.” Nick realized—but only in the course of the interview—that the lack of these capacities would hold him back from promotions and new roles to which he aspired.

Summary

These examples illustrate variations in whether or not, and how, interviewees moved beyond recognizing values, beliefs, assumptions, habits, and inner commitments to probing more deeply into the sources of their thinking, the perspectives of others in the situation, and alternative solutions or avenues of pursuit.

Reflection Themes

Table 23 provides a consolidated overview of salient features of each participant based on the different themes presented above—granularity of emotions, recollection of inner dialogue, stepping onto the balcony, stance, and process of self-examination. This table shows that, while there is diversity among participants with regard to how the themes showed up, there were certain patterns visible in terms of how some participants could be clustered together. In this section, four noticeable patterns are discerned—and briefly characterized below:

Table 23. Overview of Participants Based on Reflection Themes

Name	Granularity of Emotions	Recollect Inner dialogue	Stepping onto Balcony	Stance	Process of Self-Examination
Nick	Rich	Yes	Yes	Self-Focused + Relational	Not engaging
Al	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused	Examining behaviors and assumptions
Eddy	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused	Not engaging
Hernan	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused + Relational	Examining behaviors
Olivia	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused I vs. You	Not engaging
Ben	Medium	Yes	Yes	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
Don	Medium	Yes	N/A	I vs. You	Not engaging
Gerard	Medium	Yes	Yes	Relational	Not engaging
Kate	Medium	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused + I vs. You	Not engaging
Leona	Medium	N/A	Yes	Relational	Not engaging
Cindy	Rich	Yes	Yes	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
Fiona	Rich	Yes	Yes	Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
Ian	Rich	Yes	Yes	All	Examining behaviors + assumptions
James	Rich	Yes	N/A	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
Mike	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Organizational	Examining behaviors

Pattern 1: Rich Revisiting of Experience with Reflective Processes of Deep Self-Examination

This pattern was evidenced when participants richly revisited their experiences and when they engaged in deeper self-examination into the sources leading to limiting behaviors and attitudes. As they were revisiting, the act of noticing stood out more for them than was the case compared to other participants. Their stance-taking was wide, and when recollecting their experience or reasoning, they explored the situation from their own and others' perspectives. They also did not engage in the blame-game or developing strong negative emotions towards others. This pattern was seen in interviews of Cindy, Ian, James, and Fiona, as illustrated in the summaries in Table 24.

Table 24. Pattern 1: Rich Revisiting of Experience with Deep Reflective Processes

Participant	Summary
Cindy	Cindy richly revisited her emotional experience and inner dialogue as she recollected the moment she gained clarity into her boss’s intentions. She noticed the political dynamics playing out and her stance towards it. She also noticed her emotional state during the interview. She saw patterns in the behavior of her boss. She examined her dependence on a superior to discipline her boss, her fear of power-based repercussions. Examining these factors helped her pivot to a more proactive and responsible stance towards the issues and she shifted her approach to work and relationships.
Ian	Ian integrated external events and the inner experience of them, almost as if it were an internal movie. He recalled a range of negative-to-positive emotions as his resistance to his new boss evolved toward acceptance of him. He examined his inner emotional state and recognized it was unsustainable, leading to a decision to take responsibility to make the relationship with his boss work. He changed his approach to his work. His resistance to his boss moved toward acceptance, while he continued to acknowledge the difference in their value systems.
James	James revisited the contextual details of the conflict with his colleague, and his emotions and inner dialogue as a result. He revisited his approach and thought process internally rather than revisiting the experience itself. It resembled sitting in a balcony and watching himself and other actors engage in the conflict. He examined his behavior and attitude: “I chose at the time to sit on it, not respond immediately. The consequence of that for me, though, was that I never really responded,” and “maybe that ties into my stand or lack of stand in conviction.” James also identified the sources of these behaviors and habitual patterns, “I’m one that’s kind of against burning bridges. And so, trying to do that in a tactful way would have been the next step and something that I . . . should have done, but once the immediacy is gone for me . . . I justify it by saying, oh yeah, it was two days ago or three days ago, and then it becomes a week ago. And then, you know, it’s too late to go back with the feedback.”
Fiona	Fiona richly recollected her inner world in terms of her self-talk and emotions: “there was a time when I had to decide whether I was ashamed or embarrassed at myself.” She noticed the level of interplay between inner commitments “I think a part of me . . . didn’t miss it, but it was just a quieter voice . . . and I chose to ignore it until the client brought me into the office and confronted me with it. I also didn’t want to invest the emotional energy and time into solving the problem. I was busy with my own practice, my own clients; and, you know, I thought, “Maybe if I ignore it, it will go away.”

While the situations of change and conflict created negative emotions for them as in the case of several other participants, these negative emotions did not seem to get in the way of the reflective processes. For example, Cindy cried a couple of times during the interview, but was

able to notice that she was crying, laugh it off, and continue with the self-examination. The self-examination in this pattern went beyond labelling mistakes and blind spots into the underlying commitments and assumptions that contributed to these. The outcomes reported by them indicated deepened self-awareness and/or changed approaches supported by reflective processes. They “checked the boxes” on all steps that are involved in the process of reflection.

Pattern 2: Sparse Revisiting with Shallow Reflective Processes

This pattern was almost like a mirror image of the first pattern described just above, and was evidenced in accounts of Eddy, Olivia, and Kate, as illustrated in the summaries in Table 25.

Table 25. Pattern 2: Sparse Revisiting with Shallow Reflective Processes

Participant	Summary
Eddy	Eddy’s revisiting was focused on the external conflict and arguments with his colleague. His revisiting was peppered with words indicating residual negative emotions. For example, he kept tapping loudly when he recollected saying to his colleague, “you kept poking at me.” He labelled his pattern of getting ticked off when questioned. But he also laughed it off and concluded that the onus to not tick him off was on his colleague. The interviewer had to do the hard work of probing.
Olivia	Large parts of the interview recollected facts and data pertaining to her organization, description of her role and how it differed from her boss’s role, the description of tasks her team members performed and the rating scales and assessment process underlying the performance management system. In terms of emotions, she reflected her anxiety. She too kept using words indicating strong negative emotions for her boss and expressing sarcastic laughter. While she connected dots between others’ behaviors and politics, she did not examine any of her behaviors and how they might have contributed to the conflict. She just spoke of a negotiation and a resolution of the conflict.
Kate	Kate shared detailed recollection of various instances, sometimes involving dates, when she got a meeting invite, and her family commitments that stopped her from accepting the invite. She then kept repeating, citing her former boss, that she was committed to not compromising herself. She kept blaming the superior and others for not listening to her and did not examine whether or not she had been flexible enough in addressing the issues.

The pattern was characterized by revisiting devoid of inner dialogue, even though there was recollection of situational information. The stance was narrow and when participants

recollected the experience, they tended to focus on some aspects and miss others. For example, Kate and Eddy recollected their side of the story and tended to skip over, or seem blind to, the story from the perspective of colleagues with whom they were in conflict. Interestingly, all three of them also engaged in blame-game and had strong negative emotions towards others. No significant outcomes were reported by them beyond gaining clarity into the source of negative emotions, something that the Subject-Object interview protocol tends to generate naturally.

Pattern 3: The Curious Case of Big Shifts or Insights, Not Accompanied by Deep Reflective Processes

Al, Hernan, and Nick reported deep insights or changes in their approach to the situation of change or conflict. But, they did not share a pattern as to how they revisited the experience. While Al and Hernan were Sparse Revisitors. Nick was a Rich Revisitor and his revisiting felt like those in pattern 1. Their stance was narrow, particularly when they reasoned. This was not accompanied with deeper reflective processes; it was almost as if the outcomes and changes appeared abruptly. In the case of Al, it was the interviewer who helped to identify patterns; and in the case of Hernan, it was unquestioned assimilation of feedback by his boss. Nick decided to take a lot of actions—many tactical ones—but the thinking behind it tended to stay shallow or not discernable. For example, Nick attributed reasoning behind his approach to the “wiring of his brain, something that was difficult to change.” See Table 26.

Table 26. Pattern 3: Big shifts or Insights, Not So Deep Reflective Processes

Participant	Summary
Al	The interviewer played back to Al that she was noticing the theme of “control freak” show up across different stories. Al’s immediate response was to resist and deflect by asking if they should move to another card. However, the interviewer persisted and then helped Al to identify his tendency to anticipate as a possible source.
Hernan	Hernan shifted his view of his boss from someone who was trying to sideline him to someone who had his best interests in mind. He attributed the positive feedback from his boss as the reason for this shift.
Nick	Nick shifted his stance from an indecision between leaving or staying on. However, more than the reasons for this shift, he spent time talking about the tactics he adopted to succeed. He did engage in self-examination, but at a very tactical level in terms of behaviors he needed to change, but not concerning the source of these.

Pattern 4: The Middle Ground, Wide into Others, If Not Deep into Themselves

This pattern showed up in participants who took a wider stance and seemed preoccupied with exploring the other’s story. They did engage in a medium level of revisiting the experience, and took a wider stance, but did not engage in deeper self-examination. This pattern was observed in the cases of Gerard, Leona and to some extent, Ben, and James. These participants connected the dots, generated hypotheses, and engaged in reasoning, but at times seemed preoccupied with examining the situation from others’ angles.

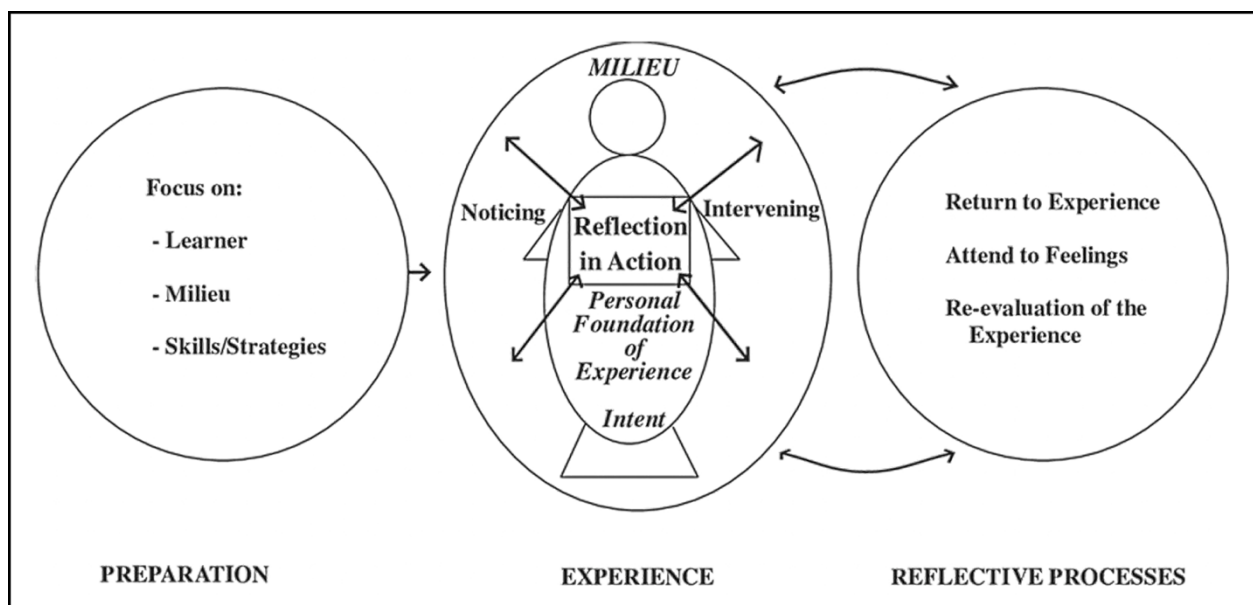
In looking at the patterns, I recognize that even though the process used in the SOI was greatly standardized, and even though I identified comparable experiences, the way that participants engaged in the different aspects of the reflective process was very different. In the following section, the above patterns are discussed in light of literature on reflection and an attempt is made to understand reasons underlying the above. In the following final chapter, I will explore these differences from the point of view of the developmental lens.

Discussion of Patterns Perceived in Relation to Reflection Literature

In the concluding section of this chapter, the above patterns are discussed in light of literature on reflection. First, a summary of relevant literature on reflection, already reviewed in Chapter 2, is presented and then the above patterns are discussed in the context of this literature.

The Boud and Walker (1993) framework formed the core reference to define the categories around which the portraits were laid out.

Figure 10. Boud & Walker Model of Reflection Process in Learning from Experience



Source: Adapted from Boud and Walker (1995, p.77)

The above model of reflection processes in learning from experience has been adapted from Boud and Walker (1995). The model was developed based on their experiences in higher education settings and was designed to both promote understanding of reflection and to plan learning experiences. The model captures both reflection that occurs during experience and reflection happening after experience. The focus of the current study was on the right-hand part of the model, reflection *after* experience.

In addition, the ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional data) framework developed by Spencer (1989) and implemented by Marsick and Maltbia (2009) through the practice of Action Learning Conversations (ALCs), was referenced to explain nuances to the reflective processes in the interviews. Two key ideas were referenced: First, the ORID framework identifies different kinds of data on which people reflect, along with a process of movement in reflection that starts with paying attention to external objective data, then noticing how that lands in the inner world of self as reflective data, before moving to interpretative lenses used in reflection and how interpretation leads to decisions about taking informed action. The outcomes of reflection that informed my thinking about the portraits presented here are drawn from the realm of decisional data. ORID also provides a framework for coaching. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ORID framework and the Boud and Walker framework are closely aligned conceptually to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle (See Figure 1) but represent application of these concepts to situated reflection on experience.

The first pattern of rich revisiting of experience with deep reflective processes appears to exemplify the full cycle of reflection as described in Boud and Walker (1993) and all elements of the ORID as implemented by Marsick and Maltbia (2009). Boud (1994, p. 2), mentions, "The basic assumption of the model is that learning is always rooted in prior experience and that any attempt to promote new learning must, in some way, take account of experience. . . . links must be made between what is new and what already exists . . ." We saw richness of revisiting experiences co-occurring with self-examination of the source of limiting behaviors and attitudes in some of the portraits. This suggests that richness of revisiting experiences might be helpful in improving the quality of reflection undertaken. One of the key criteria for rich revisiting of experience was whether participants engaged in inner dialogue. Using the lens of the ORID

framework, inner dialogue generates reflective data. We can conclude that key to understanding rich revisiting of experience is more about focusing on the reflective data than the objective data. Olivia is an example of an interviewee who recollected overwhelming amounts of objective data, without a corresponding depth of reflective processes.

The second pattern not only provides a corollary to the importance of revisiting the reflective data, but it also provides a window to further examining the role of feelings and emotions in the reflective process. Boud and Walker (1993) mention that it is important to attend to feelings. They surmise that positive feelings support reflection and negative feelings become barriers. Eddy, Kate, Olivia, and Don in pattern two, engaged in blame-game and strong negative emotions towards people with whom they were in conflict. This exemplifies negative emotions not dealt with that may become barriers to reflection. As Ben and Ian revisited and explored their negative emotions occurring in the past, their emotional states may have become a barrier to working in more agentic ways. Ian was able to work through those and make needed shifts. Eddy, on the other hand, remained disengaged after the change experience. Hence the study supported the need to work with negative emotions. However, Ben also demonstrated negative emotions during the interview, but was still able to engage in reflective processes and was an exception to this observation. Could this have to do with other factors, such as his developmental level?

In the realm of revisiting, Boud and Walker (1994, p. 4) described the process of “Noticing as an act of becoming aware of what is happening in and around oneself . . . directed towards both the interior and exterior worlds and involv[ing] attending to thoughts and feelings . . . noticing affects the extent to which the learner is involved in the process . . .” While they mentioned noticing in the context of reflection in action, this study found a similar process

playing an important role in reflection *after* action for participants in pattern 1. As we saw in the portraits, James, Ben, Nick and Ian actively engaged in the process of noticing what was going on when they were dealing with conflict- or change-related issues. In the next chapter I will examine if what is noticed, or whether the ability to notice, is associated with developmental levels in any way.

This study, pertaining to workplace settings, found that negative emotions were preponderant. All experiences recalled except Hernan's were dominated by negative experiences. It is possible that these choices were influenced by the emotional cues printed on the SOI cards for the purpose of prompting recollection of experiences. These negative emotional experiences, themselves, also became prompts for reflection. As anxiety and other negative emotions created discomfort, that discomfort helped to surface the unconscious dynamics and supported reflection. The probing behind the source of negative emotions helped surface stakes that participants held in terms of values, beliefs, and inner commitments. Hence, the study highlights the important role that negative emotions can play in the process of reflection. In the Immunity to Change process (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), and in the process of critical reflection reported in Maltbia & Marsick (2009), the examination of values, beliefs, or commitments supports the process of critical reflection. In sum, the study strengthens the case for the potential of exploring negative emotions as windows into self-reflection.

Self-examination emerged as a key reflective process associated with outcomes pertaining to self-awareness and changed views. The Boud and Walker model (1993) does not explicitly identify the importance of self-examination, especially in the context of emotions. In the next chapter, I will explore whether and how self-examination is associated with developmental levels.

As mentioned above, Chapter 7 will explore whether or not, and how, these differences can be explained using the adult-developmental lens. However, as a caveat, it is important to acknowledge that these differences could be a result of—or influenced by—many other factors, such as personality differences and preferences, and the significance or perceived impact of the individual experience that the participant brought to the table. These two elements fall into what Boud and Walker (1993) call the learner's milieu and the personal foundations of experience respectively. Additionally, as has been noted elsewhere, it is important to note that reflection is not studied in this research as a naturally occurring event, but rather as a facilitated process driven by the SOI protocol and facilitators.

Chapter 7. Developmental Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

As a reminder, this study aimed to understand how managers reflect after experience on organizational experiences and in what ways, if any, does the nature of this reflection differ by managers' developmental levels. The study is positioned at the intersection of reflection from a constructivist perspective (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990; Boud & Walker, 1993) and adult development as conceptualized by Kegan (1982, 1994). In order to answer the research questions, the study used episodes of reflection as observed in a sample of fifteen subject-object interviews (SOIs) sampled from an archival database of 148 such interviews conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership between 2007-2009. In the preceding chapter, I have answered research question 1: As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on dimension of revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?

In this chapter, I answer the second question—in what ways if any do these patterns of reflection vary by the developmental levels or Ways of Knowing (WOK) of the study participants? As a reminder the research questions that guided this study were:

1. As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on revisiting experience and interpreting the experience?
2. In what ways if any do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory?

This chapter intends to answer my second research question, which is exploratory in nature. It aims to investigate possible connections between the managers' patterns of reflection as described in Chapters 5 and 6, and their associated ways of knowing (Drago-Severson, 2004a, 2010, 2012; Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2000).

In Chapter 6, several different patterns of recalling and making sense of experience have been described, and, across participants, different orientations emerged. Could constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) provide a valuable framework for better understanding those variations? If at all, might the ways in which these managers reflected and made sense of their experience relate to their meaning-making system, or ways of knowing?

To answer those questions, this chapter is structured in the following way. First, I present in more detail the results of the developmental assessment that was conducted using the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) methodology which allowed me to identify three different ways of knowing along Kegan's developmental continuum (Lahey et al., 1998, 2011): transitioning between instrumental and socializing, fully socializing, and fully self authoring. Then, I look at the themes and patterns of reflection across those three developmental groups—examined via revisiting and sometimes interpreting—and refer to constructive-developmental theory to draw possible connections between the participants' ways of knowing and their orientations to reflection.

Three Different Ways of Knowing

As a reminder 73% of the subject-object interviews of the 15 participants used for this secondary analysis of research on the SOI data were conducted by Nancy Popp, EdD, an SOI certified interviewer and scorer.

Dr. Popp is a developmental psychologist with more than 20 years of experience in SOI interviewing and scoring, who was trained by Robert Kegan. She has also authored several articles on constructive-developmental theory (McGuigan & Popp, 2007; Popp & Portnow, 2001).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the SOI interview and assessment is based on Kegan's constructive-developmental theory (1982, 1994) which posits four major qualitatively different meaning-making systems or ways of knowing in adults. Those are the Instrumental, Socializing, Self Authoring, and Self Transforming ways of knowing, each of which reflects a different subject-object balance, where *subject* refers to what the self is identified with ("subject to") in contrast to *object* which refers to what the self can organize, reflect about, and take perspective on ("can take as object") (Drago-Severson, 2004; 2009). Each way of knowing denotes a renegotiation of the subject-object balance in relating to experience toward a greater part of taking-as-object and a lesser part of being-subject (Kegan, 1982, 1994).

In Table 27, I present an overview of some of the differences among the Instrumental, Socializing, and Self authoring ways of knowing which are the three developmental levels in studied in this research.

Table 27. Overview of Ways of Knowing

Ways of Knowing	Instrumental Stage 2	Socializing Stage 3	Self authoring Stage 4
Subject/Object Balance	S: Needs, interests, wishes O: Impulses, perceptions	S: Interpersonal, relationships, mutuality O: Needs, interests, wishes	S: Authorship, identity, ideology O: Interpersonal, relationships, mutuality
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self is defined by self-interests, concrete needs, concrete orientation to the world - Dualistic thinking (right/wrong; good/bad; arbitrary distinctions) - Relationship as “give and take” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self is defined by external authority, others’ opinions, or expectations (people, institutions) - Capable of abstract thinking - Need clear sense of expectations from others, feels challenged by ambiguity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self is defined by own internal authority and ideology - Capable of holding contradictory feelings - Evaluates others’ opinions according to own internally generated standards - Concerned with maintaining personal integrity and competence

Source: Drago-Severson, 2004a, 2009; Kegan, 1994; Popp and Portnow (2001)

In this research, participants’ ways of knowing were assessed using the Subject-Object Interview protocol developed by Kegan and his colleagues (Kegan et al. 2011). Because transitions between one way of knowing to another includes different sub-phases, the SOI scoring process uses a sophisticated scoring system. The different phases from one way of knowing to another are symbolized as follows:

A given subject-object balance in complete equilibrium is designated with the single number that names it (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5). Disequilibrium developmental position evincing two subject-object structures in relation to each other—the older structure being transformed and newer structure just emerging—are designated X/Y or Y/X depending upon which structure seems to be dominating or ruling (3/2 means that 3 is ruling). On

either side of these disequilibriumal positions we are able to discern positions in which one structure is organizing experience, but either signs of the new structure's emergence are present X(Y), or vestiges of the old structure remain Y(X). Taken in sequence, then, the six qualitative transformations from one subject-object equilibrium, balance, or Stage to another are designated thus: X, X(Y), X/Y, Y/X, Y(X), Y (Lahey., et al, 2011, p. 29).

In this research, participants comprised subjects with three distinctive ways of knowing: either transitioning between, instrumental and socializing, or at fully socializing, and fully self authoring. In Table 28, I share how the 15 participants spread across those three developmental levels and go back to constructive-developmental theory to discuss what those scores mean in terms of developmental capacities.

Table 28. Ways of Knowing across Participants

Ways of Knowing	Participants and scores
Transitioning between Instrumental to Socializing (scores: 2/3 and 3/2)	Nick (2/3) Al, Eddy, Hernan, and Olivia (3/2)
Fully Socializing (score: 3)	Ben, Don, Gerard, Kate, and Leona (3)
Fully Self authoring (score: 4)	Cindy, Fiona, Ian, James, and Mike (4)

Transitioning between the Instrumental and Socializing Ways of Knowing

Al, Eddy, Hernan, Olivia, and Nick were the participants in my sample who made meaning in transition between the instrumental and socializing ways of knowing. Four participants out of 5 scored as 3/2 and one scored as 2/3. 2/3 and 3/2 scores, although similar in terms of the structures operating (instrumental and socializing) differ in terms of what structure is leading the other. At 2/3, it is the instrumental structure that still has the edge over the socializing structure, while at 3/2, the socializing structure has stepped beyond the instrumental

structure and is now the leading meaning-making system. In the Subject-Object Interview Guide (1988, p. 86), Lahey and her colleagues refer to X/Y and Y/X structures as very close except that in a Y/X structure, the meaning maker has stepped forward a little bit.

The journey from the instrumental to the socializing way of knowing is one of progressively increasing awareness of a different ways to think that there is something of value in knowing another person. They begin to realize there is something of value in knowing another person besides the concrete help, facts and information that are the cornerstone of the instrumental way of knowing (Popp & Portnow, 2001). In a 2/3 phase (where Nick is making meaning), the context of the concrete elements of the interaction and relationship still provide the foundation for the self in relation to others; however, the concern for feeling comfortable with others, feeling a sense of belonging, and the beginning sense of identification with others becomes more important (Popp & Portnow, 2001). In the next phase 3/2, when the socializing way of knowing is becoming more dominant, the concern for others begins to dominate other concerns, the sense of similarity with others begins to create a bond that is more about the relationships themselves than the usefulness of them (Popp & Portnow, 2001).

Fully Socializing

Ben, Don, Gerard, Kate, Leona were the participants who made meaning with a fully socializing way of knowing. Unlike instrumental knowers, socializing knowers have the capacity to think abstractly and to consider other people's opinions and expectations of them (Drago-Severson, 2004a, 2009). Socializing knowers are most concerned with understanding other people's feelings and judgments about them and their work. The orientation in the socializing meaning-making system is toward a sense of belonging, of connecting around similarities with each other, and feeling a common sense of identity and purpose. An individual with this

meaning-making system is driven by the need to be understood by, connected to, and identified with a person, group, philosophical, or religious stance (Drago-Severson, 2009). However, socializing knowers are not yet able to have a perspective on their relationships and therefore their relationships tend to define their sense of self (Drago-Severson, 2004a, 2009). Therefore, interpersonal conflict is almost always experienced as a threat to the self. Kegan and Lahey (2010, p. 439) refer to interpersonal conflicts as the “ultimate anxiety” of socializing knowers.

Fully Self authoring

Cindy, Fiona, Ian, James, and Mike were the participants who made meaning this way. The self authoring way of knowing is characterized by its capacity to take responsibility for and ownership of its own internal authority (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012). It has the capacity to internally hold, manage, and prioritize internal and external demands, contradictions, conflicts, and expectations of oneself and one’s life. A person with the self authoring meaning-making system orients to his or her own internal authority and sets goals according to his or her own values, standards, and agenda (Kegan, 1994). Self authoring knowers can assess other people’s expectations and demands and compare them to their own internal standards and judgment (Drago-Severson, 2012). Kegan (1994) sees the Self authoring ways of knowing as well adapted to respond to today’s organizational demands, which require capacities such as being self-directed and self-evaluating. Drago-Severson (2009) also refers to the Self authoring way of knowing as “the reflective self” in that self authoring knowers have the capacity to “reflect on their multiple roles as parents, leaders, partners, and citizens”—and develop their own perspective and ideology on those roles.

Patterns of Reflection and Ways of Knowing

As a reminder, I identified in Chapter 4 the following themes and variations around those themes when participants revisited and interpreted their experiences:

Themes and Variations in Revisiting Experience

1. Recollection of emotional experiences associated with the selected card in the SOI provided data for subsequent probing and interpreting the experience: participants varied by the granularity with which they recollected the emotional experiences. Some recollected their emotional experiences as general labels (angry, sad, etc.), while others vividly described the emotional experiences with granularity.
2. Recollection of inner dialogue with self, where present, and beyond dialogue with others, enhanced the data for subsequent probing and interpreting of the experience: while recollection of arguments and discussions with others on issues of conflict were common for everyone, some participants also vividly described their dialogue within the “self” as they engaged with others on issues of change and conflict.
3. Some participants stepped onto the balcony (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017) from which point they described their process of thinking and feeling about the experience. All participants recollected what they felt and what they thought on probing by the interviewer, and a few stepped back to describe *how* they were thinking and feeling.

Themes and Variations for Interpreting Experience

4. Participants’ content of reasoning revealed differing stances based on what was at stake for them; participants took one or more of the four stances: Self-Focused, “I vs. You”, Relational and Organizational, on a continuum from Narrow to Wide.

5. The process of self-examination helped participants develop self-awareness, uncover blind-spots and devise changed approaches to presenting issues. Variation showed up in one of the following ways, a) not engaging in self-examination (often associated with strong negative emotions or blame-game), b) self-examination limited to labelling one's own limiting behaviors or mistakes without examining the underlying assumptions and inner commitments, and c) self-examination of one's underlying assumptions and inner commitments behind the behaviors.

Table 29 looks at how those themes and patterns for revisiting and interpreting experience emerged across developmental clusters.

Table 29. Reflection Patterns by Developmental Level

2/3	Nick	Rich	Yes	Yes	Self-Focused + Relational	Examining behaviors
3/2	Al	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused	Examining behaviors + assumptions
3/2	Eddy	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused	N/A
3/2	Hernan	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused + Relational	Examining behaviors
3/2	Olivia	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused; I vs. You	N/A
3	Ben	Medium	Yes	Yes	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
3	Don	Medium	Yes	N/A	I vs. You	N/A
3	Gerard	Medium	Yes	Yes	Relational	N/A
3	Kate	Medium	N/A	N/A	Self-Focused; I vs. You	N/A
3	Leona	Medium	N/A	Yes	Relational	N/A
4	Cindy	Rich	Yes	Yes	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
4	Fiona	Rich	Yes	Yes	Organizational + Relational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
4	Ian	Rich	Yes	Yes	All	Examining behaviors + assumptions
4	James	Rich	Yes	N/A	Relational + Organizational	Examining behaviors + assumptions
4	Mike	Sparse	N/A	N/A	Organizational	Examining behaviors

Can constructive-developmental theory explain those variations? In the next sections, I summarize noticeable variations in revisiting and interpreting experience and go back to the theory to look at how those variations can, if at all, be developmental.

Revisiting Experience and Ways of Knowing

Table 30 presents some aggregate trends based on the data informing table 29 for the three developmental groups.

Table 30. Aggregate Trend in Recollection across Ways of Knowing in the Process of Revisiting Experience

	Transitioning between Instrumental and Socializing	Fully Socializing	Fully Self Authoring
Recollection of Emotional Experiences	Sparse recollection	Medium recollection	Rich recollection
Recollection of Inner Dialogue	Less recollection	More recollection	Rich recollection
Stepping onto the Balcony	Less likely	More likely	More likely

Revisiting Experience: Transitioning between the Instrumental to the Socializing Way of Knowing

Participants with this way of knowing tended to depict their experiences with less emotion than the other groups. A good example for this group was A1, who as discussed in Chapter 6, offered a very factual and concrete description of a situation that made him angry without expanding much on how the situation landed on him. From a constructive-developmental perspective, the instrumental way of knowing, which is still operating in the participants of this group, might have influenced his way of recollecting experience, as

instrumental knowers tend to be mostly concerned with rules and concrete consequences in their experiences (Drago-Severson, 2009). Popp and Portnow (2001). Also note that instrumental knowers tend to describe themselves “in concrete, external, or behavioral terms such as one’s physical characteristics, one’s concrete likes and dislikes, the kind of job one has, the kind of car one drives” (p. 55). Olivia, another 3/2 knower who spent most of the time-sharing information pertaining to her company’s performance management system and its mechanics, seemed to demonstrate this orientation. However, it is important to note that Nick was an exception in this group of knowers in that he exhibited vivid recollection of his experience.

In Chapter 6, I referred to Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle and the ORID framework. The relative absence of inner dialogue in this group suggests that participants preferred to focus on the first stage of the learning cycle, interestingly named “Concrete Experience” by David Kolb and expressed as “Objective Data” in the ORID framework (Appendix E). Again, the concrete orientation of those knowers seemed to have confined them to this level of the reflective process.

Finally, participants in this group were less likely to step onto the balcony. Stepping onto the balcony implies stepping above the “dance floor” and gaining the ability to notice and observe one’s thoughts and actions from a somewhat-removed-from-the-action perspective when recollecting and revisiting experience. Again, it seemed that the concrete orientation present in the instrumental structure might have oriented this group of knowers toward a more “just-the-facts” understanding of their experience. However, I was puzzled by Nick who in this group was, in fact, the only participant who made meaning with a dominant instrumental way of knowing (2/3 vs. 3/2) and yet showed a certain amount of self-insight and, as a Rich Revisitor, was able to reflect in some detail when prompted by the interviewer. Nonetheless, his reasoning concerning his understanding of others remained essentially in the “what’s in it for me” category.

Revisiting Experience: Fully Socializing Way of Knowing

Drago-Severson (2009) noted that socializing knowers have an “enhanced capacity for reflection because, unlike instrumental knowers, they have a capacity to think abstractly, make generalizations, and reflect on their actions and the actions of others” (p. 45). When revisiting their experience, this group overall provided more granularity regarding their emotions; but it is in their ability to share their inner dialogue and, for some, to step onto the balcony that this group differentiated itself from the previous one. Participants with a socializing way of knowing recollected more than one emotion, and that paved the way for richer self-exploration. In many cases, they also shared their inner dialogue and their inner reaction to external events with greater clarity.

Popp and Portnow (2001) note that “the socializing meaning system is characterized primarily by its orientation to the world of the interior, internalizable, and interactive” (p. 56). This is because, at this stage of development, the self tends to identify with and internalize other people’s feelings and expectations. The disposition toward being oriented to inner states surfaced in many descriptions. For instance, when revisiting his experience with a colleague he disagreed with, Don was vivid in describing his inner dialogue and recollected an inner sense that “it didn’t feel right” in thinking about his colleague who was “in violation of the agreement.”

Socializing knowers also have the capacity to “think about their thinking” (Popp & Portnow, 2001). This way of stepping onto the balcony was found, for example, when Leona shared that she was using a journal to process her experience of conflicts with two colleagues. Gerard also was a good example of a socializer being able to see his own thinking (and reactions) when he shared that he felt chagrined in front of his co-workers when, instead of his

being given the position to replace his boss when he left to take on a new role—as he had wanted, and many had expected—a person from outside the company was appointed.

Revisiting Experience: Fully Self authoring

Most participants in this group were Rich Revisitors and were able to recollect their experience with rich granularity of emotions, rich inner dialogue, and the ability to see their experience from the balcony. However, one participant, (Mike) in this group, showed a different pattern—one that Drago-Severson (2009) has called the self authoring way of knowing, the “reflective self,”—as someone at this level of development can “hold, prioritize, reflect on different perspectives and relationships” (p. 47). Drago-Severson also added that self authoring knowers have the capacity to “reflect on multiple roles as leaders, parents, partners, and citizens” (p. 47). In other words, they can take on multiple other perspectives while maintaining their own. Kegan and Lahey (2009) also note that, at this stage, taking other views into account becomes a tool and also that self authoring knowers can choose how much, and in what way, they want other views to influence them.

Cindy in this group exemplified the ability to richly revisit her emotional experience and inner dialogue as exemplified in her recollection of the moment when she gained clarity about her boss’s intentions. In her revisiting she noticed the political dynamics playing out and her stance towards them. She also noticed in the present (reflection-in-action) her emotional state during the interview. She saw patterns in the behavior of her boss. She examined her dependence on a superior to discipline her boss stemming from her fear of power-based repercussions. Examining all these factors helped her pivot to a more proactive and responsible stance towards the issues in play and to shift her approach to work and relationships.

Interpreting Experience across Ways of Knowing

Table 31 presents some aggregate trends based on the summary data for the three developmental groups displayed in tables 29 and 30.

Table 31. Aggregate Trends in Width of Stance and Depth of Self-Examination across Ways of Knowing in the Process of Interpreting Experience

	Transitioning between Instrumental and Socializing	Fully Socializing	Fully Self authoring
Width of Stance	Mostly Self-Focused (including I vs. You) Some Relational	Mostly Relational Some I vs. You	Mostly Organizational Some relational
Depth in Process of Self-Examination	Mostly self-examination of behavior	Mostly self-examination of behaviors (note: only one participant showed evidence of self-examination)	Self-examination of behaviors and underlying assumptions

Interpreting Experience: Transitioning between the Instrumental and Socializing Ways of Knowing

Most participants in this group tended to be preoccupied with the impact on self of the experiences they recounted such as job security, organizational survival, missing out on growth opportunities, personal reputation, or personal effectiveness. However, there was also evidence of concern for the consequences of their decisions or actions on their relationships and the external environment.

Don was a good example in this group of a participant who still seemed under the influence of the instrumental way of knowing when he recollected feeling concerned about a possible repercussion for his own job security as the reason for not reporting an ethical violation,

although the Ombudsman guidelines guaranteed his job would be protected. In this stressful moment, Don's operating instrumental way of knowing seems to have oriented him toward prioritizing his self-interests and concrete needs rather than the interests of the collective. As Popp and Portnow (2001) note, focus on concrete consequences of actions and impact on wants, needs, and interests are signs of an instrumental ways of knowing operating, and these considerations seemed to have been what most preoccupied Don. Instrumental knowers also tend to have a dualistic way of thinking. Don demonstrated this kind of thinking when he shared another situation where he would not approve a colleague's recommendation because "he's going to win out."

However, some members in this group also seemed concerned about the relational consequences of their experience, a clear sign of the socializing way of knowing in their meaning-making structure. Eddy was a good example where he felt attacked when a colleague kept "pestering" him, during a team meeting. Eddy explained in the interview that he felt attacked on his "leadership" abilities. As Drago-Severson (2009) remarked, interpersonal conflicts are often experienced by socializing knowers as a threat to the self because the interpersonal is that with which the self identifies.

It was interesting to see this group of three participants engaging in a process of self-examination during the interview. As a reminder, self-examination refers to the process whereby participants looked at their own behaviors and attitudes and how they could have contributed to the conflict or challenges in dealing with change. In this group, Al, Hernan, and Nick engaged in such self-examination. Their process mostly focused on examining some of their behaviors, yet they did not examine the assumptions behind them. From a developmental perspective, the subject-object balance defines the contours of what one can take perspective on. The more we

develop, the more we can take perspective on. People who are transitioning between the instrumental and socializing ways of knowing could be expected to take some perspective particularly on their needs and wants—as socializers do—and generate a certain level of abstract thinking about their experience (Popp & Portnow, 2001). A good example was when Hernan saw the limitations of his “telling” communication style. However, probing did not help him unpack this further. This could be due to the influence of the instrumental structure keeping Hernan grounded in a very concrete understanding of his experience.

Interpreting Experience: Fully Socializing

Most participants in this group seemed to be preoccupied with how significant relationships with others, or with the people involved in the conflict were being affected, and what the overall impact would be. The content of reasoning underlying this stance revealed that the participants saw relationships at stake and that consideration guided their thoughts and choices. Leona was a good example in this group when she described that her conflict with her colleagues left her “still trying to recover from losing those relationships.” As discussed in the previous section, socializing knowers often experience interpersonal conflicts as a threat to the self because the interpersonal (our mutuality, your acceptance or opinion of me) is that with which the self identifies (Drago-Severson, 2009; Popp & Portnow, 2001).

Leona perfectly embodied this orienting concern for socializing knowers. There was an interesting exception though, with Ben who explored his situation from various perspectives such as stakeholder expectations around profitability, and the need to avoid lawsuits, as well as poor handover procedures. Seeing situations from different perspectives was, in general, a prominent feature of the self authoring group.

Interestingly, Ben, in this group, was the only participant who showed evidence of the process of self-examination. Ben demonstrated a deep capacity for it when he realized during the interview that he could have done a better job of handing over some plants and, on further probing, identified and reflected on the assumptions that got in the way of his doing anything about it when he sensed things were not going well there. This type of self-examination was most frequent in the self authoring group as the next section will discuss.

Interpreting Experience: Fully Self authoring

What was interesting in this group was a strong stance towards looking at the different perspectives or stakeholders which I called the “organizational stance.” Considering the differences between the multiple stances, as noted in Chapter 6, the mental width of stance can be seen to increase as a person moves from Self-focused to “I vs. You” to Relational to Organizational stances. At wider levels of stance, participants in this group more often accounted for multiple considerations beyond one’s own self while thinking and reasoning. The wider and more organizational stance demonstrated by the participants in this group reflects the orientation of self authoring knowers toward looking at their experience not only from multiple perspectives but also examining how those multiple perspectives could enhance their understanding.

Fiona embodied this orientation when she shared her concern about violation of ethics and the impact it would have on the organization’s reputation. In addition to impact on self, then, Fiona also looked at the organizational impact and, after considering both, chose to report the violation. This wider stance carried her beyond her fear for impact on self and enabled her to consider the issues from a community perspective. This stood in contrast to Don, who focused on his own job security as the reason for not reporting an ethical violation, although the Ombudsman guidelines guaranteed his job would be protected. Popp and Portnow (2001) note

that self authoring knowers are mostly concerned with consequences for personal integrity and meeting one's own standards. Fiona also demonstrated she had developed a clear set of standards and values when she shared her concerns for the organization as the reason to report the violation.

In the process of self-examination, Cindy, Ian, Fiona, and James went beyond just labelling their limiting behaviors and critically examined the sources of their behaviors. They looked at underlying stakes—values, beliefs, assumptions, and inner commitments—that surfaced through the process of probing. Kegan and Lahey (2009) note that, in organizational contexts, leaders will consciously or unconsciously try to further their agenda by seeking any relevant information. When those knowers examined underlying stakes, they showed a concern for looking at and considering any information—including limitations and criticisms—that could get in the way of their goals and mission. Because at this stage of development, their ultimate concern is no longer a function of being excluded; self authoring knowers are very comfortable looking at criticism and diverging perspectives (Popp & Portnow, 2001).

Developmental Dynamic of Reflective Patterns: Final Observations and Questions

At the end of Chapter 6, I proposed four patterns of reflection based on the different themes identified. To end this final Chapter I am sharing, in Table 32, how I saw those patterns being exhibited across the three developmental groups.

Table 32. Four Patterns of Reflection Seen across All Developmental Groups.

Patterns Observed	Ways of Knowing Exhibiting Those Patterns
<p>Pattern 1: Rich revisiting of experience with reflective processes of deep self-examination</p>	<p>This pattern was observed with Cindy, Ian, Fiona, James, all self authoring knowers.</p>
<p>Pattern 2: Sparse revisiting of experience with shallow reflective processes</p>	<p>This pattern was observed with two knowers transitioning between instrumental and socializing (Eddy and Olivia) and one fully socializing knower, (Kate).</p>
<p>Pattern 3: The curious case of <i>big</i> shifts or insights, not accompanied by deep reflective processes</p>	<p>This pattern was observed with Al, Hernan, and Nick, all transitioning between instrumental and socializing.</p>
<p>Pattern 4: The middle ground, wide into others, if not deep into themselves</p>	<p>This pattern was observed with three fully socializing knowers (Ben, Gerard, and Leona) .</p>

Perplexing Observations Suggesting Further Study

The first pattern based on reflection was Rich revisiting of experience with reflective processes of deep self-examination. Cindy, Fiona, Ian, and James showed this pattern as is usually the case with all self authoring knowers. Yet Mike, who was at a self authoring WOK did not demonstrate this pattern. This puzzled me. I did not think this lack of correlation with typical ways of knowing was a complete coincidence but would have liked to explore and analyze it to be able to draw some conclusions. I was curious about why Mike was an exception to the rule.

The third pattern—The curious case of big shifts or insights, not accompanied by deep reflective processes was seen in Al, Hernan and Nick. All three of them were at the transition between instrumental and socializing WOK. Olivia and Eddy, also in the lowest developmental cluster, did not engage in deep reflection or consider next steps. Big shifts without reflective processes, however, were not observed in those with more complex WOK. I became curious to explore how this could be explained when viewed through a developmental lens and what conclusions could be drawn.

The second pattern, sparse revisiting and shallow reflective processes, had respondents from the first two clusters, i.e., participants in transition between Instrumental and Socializing (Eddy and Olivia) as well as participants who had reached the fully Socializing WOK (Kate and Don). As noted earlier, I was puzzled that Nick, who was at the least complex WOK in the continuum, was not in this group. I could see that Eddy, Olivia and Kate demonstrated strong, unmediated emotions, while no one at the Self authoring level did. I was not surprised but still curious to know why no self authoring participants were seen in this group. Might there be something other than, or entangled with, developmental level operating here? Could recalled strong emotion cramp the usual tendency in self authoring knowers to look for and at underlying factors? In fact, I became curious in a broader context about the role of emotions in reflection and the ways in which that might differ by developmental levels.

The fourth, middle-ground pattern, wide into others, if not deep into themselves, was spread across all three developmental clusters.

Conclusions

This study, overall, supports the growing trend in the learning and development field toward paying more attention to supporting the development of leaders' inner meaning-making structures as those will powerfully influence how they engage in, and take perspective on, their experience—and ultimately likely temper the way organizations and their members learn.

My observations as to adult developmental levels of the managers based on patterns discerned in their reflections—when I was blinded to participants' subsequently revealed developmental levels—were found quite coincident with their certified professionally scored values. This congruence suggests that subject-object interviews may prove an insight-full source

for further research on the difficult-to-probe subject of reflection on action with respect to revisiting and interpreting experience.

Summary of the Findings

This chapter aimed to answer my second research question: in what ways, if any, do the above patterns vary by developmental levels as identified in constructive-developmental theory? Overall, I found that constructive-developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) provided a valuable framework for understanding how the five themes of revisiting and interpreting experience were described in the previous chapter. The managers' orientations, toward reflecting and the internal structures of their reflection were found differently affected by the three versions of ways of knowing present in this limited sample.

Participants transitioning between the instrumental and socializing ways of knowing tended to revisit their experiences with less granularity than the other groups. Participants in this group were also less likely to step onto the balcony and notice and examine their thoughts and actions when recollecting and revisiting experience; they also tended to be preoccupied with the impact on self of the experiences they recollected. Although other factors might explain orientations to reflection in this group, there was overall alignment with constructive-developmental theory that finds a concrete orientation present in people who incorporate an instrumental way of knowing in their meaning-making system. For many knowers in this group, experience was reflected upon through a more concrete, self-interested lens and directed toward possible implications on the knowers' own concrete needs and wants.

Participants making meaning with a fully socializing way of knowing provided more granularity regarding their emotions, but it was in their ability to share their inner dialogue and, for some, to step onto the balcony that this group differentiated itself from the previous one.

When revisiting their experience, most participants in this group seemed to be preoccupied with how other significant relationships or relationships with those involved in the conflict were being impacted. The content of reasoning underlying this stance revealed that the participants saw relationships at stake, and it was that consideration that guided their thoughts and choices. This also aligned with constructive-developmental theory describing socializing knowers as more abstract thinkers than “concrete” instrumental ones—who are dominantly concerned with aligning themselves with the expectations they perceive as benefitting them from their important relationships.

Finally, most participants in the self authoring group were Rich Revisitors who were able to recollect their experience with rich granularity of emotions, rich inner dialogue, and the ability to see their experience from the balcony. What was noticeable in this group was a strong stance towards looking at different perspectives or stakeholders (taking on what I called “the organizational stance”). Participants in this group more often considered several factors beyond their own selves while thinking and reasoning. The wider and more organizational stance demonstrated by the participants in this group reflected the orientation of self authoring knowers toward looking at their experience from multiple perspectives and exploring how those multiple perspectives can enhance their understanding of theoretic or situational factors in play.

Implications for Practice

I decided to conduct this study thanks to the generous offer of Dr. Cynthia McCauley to share a sample of developmentally coded SOIs with scores professionally certified by Dr. Nancy Popp that were conducted as part of a Center for Creative Leadership study. Dr. McCauley had oriented her research toward examining how leadership effectiveness differs by developmental

levels. I needed to decide what I could focus on if I were to do secondary analysis on a subset of these data.

In an email exchange (dated 10 December 2018) with my study sponsors, I explained “that I couldn’t find myself so passionate” about potential topics of focus such as, e.g., the situational drivers of workplace conflict and change—the substantive focus of the incidents shared in the SOIs. But,

. . . that’s when the topic of the nature of reflection emerged and I got excited as it’s a topic I love. It also emerged that exploring the nature of reflection from the lens of developmental differences might be a very novel contribution to both theory on, and practice of, reflection as well (personal communication, 10 December 2018).

I was pleased to examine reflection using the lens of developmental theory as a secondary focus thinking that SOIs would be an excellent vehicle to understand managers’ patterns of reflection because the SOI begins by asking interviewees to select a card that evokes strong feelings and use it as a prompt for their recollection of experiences that called forth that emotion. Interviewees revisit these experiences with the help of probing by an interviewer to unpack and explore meaning-making throughout the recounting of the experience. I could see that these prompts enabled managers to identify “something of importance to me [that] is the most preferred hook for reflection” (personal communication, 10 December 2018).

Even at the early stage of thinking about my study, based on the results of my pilot study that analyzed incidents in two SOIs that were included in the CCL archive—and not included in this report of my research study—I reflected in this same email exchange with my sponsors about implications for practice that might emerge. I wrote:

Educators in workplaces and coaches can encourage reflection on a topic by helping people identify something of importance to themselves. Getting perspective shifts might be challenging for people who have not at least reached the Socializing mind as they stay in the tactical (single-loop) reflection. How to facilitate double-loop learning [for people with this WOK] is an unanswered question; however, offering hypotheses seems to help them. People at lower orders [of mind] can reflect on assumptions. They benefit by activities that help verbalize their reflective data. Interview questions/coaching questions that help them concretize their experience support reflection. The role of providing empathic support during educational exercises is reinforced. In the interviews this was achieved through acknowledging emotions, summarizing, and paraphrasing and sometimes engaging in small talk, using humor (personal communication, 10 December 2018).

These early speculations seem to have been validated in this study and lead to several possible implications for practice:

First, the SOI, in the hands of a trained facilitator, not only provided an effective way of assessing developmental level. It was also a means to facilitate sense-making of the experience being revisited in new ways, using different perspectives and points of view. The facilitator—in this case the interviewer—acted as a mirror, and also as a coach, prompting manager interviewees to reflect back on what their superior or colleague said or did; to ask questions guiding them to revisit the experience in greater depth; to probe the interviewee's interpretations, and when possible, to support the interviewee's self-examination and further thinking about implications, consequences, and alternative views or actions. Self-examination did not happen easily on one's own in participants within this study—except sometimes for those who were Self

authorizing. Self-examination was not easy, even when interviewers sought to help the managers confront the way they framed the problem and/or their own role in it. Even when they could do so on their own or through the interview process, managers then had a difficult time in taking the next step to search below the surface and confront, evaluate, or reframe the situation and what they might thus need to do next. Likewise, it was not easy to step onto the balcony and take perspective on situations in which one was enmeshed—even after having identified the nature of the block one faced. The implications seem to be that managers would benefit from facilitated reflection. Coaches trained to help managers reflect and probe their learning might similarly help instrumental/socializing knowers engage in such perspective shifts.

A second implication derives from the nature of the Boud and Walker (1993) model because it acknowledges and addresses the role of feelings, especially negative emotions, in creating barriers to learning from experience that need to be confronted and resolved to enable productive learning to move forward. Negative emotions seemed to dominate in many of the interviews. I noted in Chapter 6 that this study validated the need to work with negative emotions, and the possible ways that engaging in reflective processes can help managers come to terms with these experiences so they can move on to further opportunities and growth. In this regard the Boud and Walker model (1994) commentary noted the following:

Feelings which are experienced as negative may need to be discharged or sublimated otherwise they may continually color all other perceptions and block understanding; those experienced as positive can be celebrated as it is these which will enhance motivation and desire to pursue learning further. (Boud, 1994, p. 5)

Drawing on insights based in neuroscience, Taylor and Marienau (2016) suggested it is best to emphasize curiosity in facilitating learning from experience because it taps into the

“curious side of the brain” and opens the learner to new thinking which energizes and motivates. Boyatzis, known for his work on resonant leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005), among other things, draws on neuroscience research in which he is engaged (Boyatzis et al., 2010) that reinforces this focus on the positive to counteract negative emotions that are demotivating. Developmental coaches may work with emotions differently than do adult learning facilitators. In any case, an implication is that negative emotions are not to be ignored, but rather surfaced and worked with in ways consistent with the context and the facilitator’s skill set to help the people they work with to process emotion-laden experiences so they can grow beyond them.

Implications for Research

The Boud and Walker (1993) model is designed to support practice. However, one implication is that it is useful to support research that is descriptive of processes in learning from experience. Boud (1994) explained: “The model is an indicative rather than a normative one, aimed at prompting learners and facilitators to address processes of learning as well as the ostensible content of learning activities” (p. 2). The Boud and Walker (1993) framework helped me to examine the way that interviewees revisited and learned from experience, using reflection, in the SOIs that were the data analyzed in this study. Even though the interviews were not designed primarily for learning, Boud (1994, p. 3) indicated “elements of it [the Boud & Walker Model] can just as well be applied in situations in which learning is not the initial impetus for engaging in a particular event.” Its incorporation of Schön (1983, 1987) enabled me to identify whether and how managers “noticed” what was happening around them and within themselves, as noted in the discussion at the end of Chapter 6. I would recommend this model for further research on practices that embody reflection.

The limitations of the sample suggest that research is needed of this nature with a sample that is more diverse by race, gender, geographic origin, age, and positionality. This might be difficult to accomplish given the bias that has made it so challenging for non-white males and females to reach the higher levels of many organizations, but it is much needed.

Finally, as suggested in the conclusions, given that it was possible to study reflection in the SOIs with respect to revisiting and interpreting experience, secondary analysis of additional SOI's would seem likely valuable to extend the findings of this study.

Limitations

As mentioned above, I relied on existing SOI interviews for examining the process of reflecting. Although this strategy and context allowed me to have access to a developmentally diverse sample (three distinctive ways of knowing), I also recognize that it had some limitations. First, SOI interviews are first and foremost designed to assess someone's developmental order. Although the SOI interview invites the participant to reflect on experience, the interview protocol is not designed to investigate particular aspects of the process of reflection (for example the interviewer does not use the ORID model to structure the questioning). Although my in-depth analysis allowed me to find interesting themes and patterns of reflection, an interview protocol specifically designed to explore processes for revisiting and interpreting experience and more directly based on something like my conceptual framework (See Figure 4) that encompasses Boud & Walker's (1993) and Kolb's (1984) would have been useful. Another related limitation—and frustration—was my inability to dialogue directly with the participants. As I read the SOI's, so many clarifying questions came to mind about the participants' organizational context, situations, and challenges that I could not ask. Nonetheless, of course, I

am intensely grateful to CCL for the opportunity to use those interviews which in the end helped me answer my two research questions.

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Appendix A. Process for Recruiting Research Participant

During the opening session of each LGE program, one of the researchers solicits volunteers to participate in the study from among the 20-25 program attendees through a short in-person presentation in the LGE classroom. During this presentation, program attendees are told the general purpose of the interview (i.e., to understand how leaders make sense of their experiences), that the interview will provide an opportunity for further self-reflection (beyond what is already offered by the program), and that in return for their participation, they will receive a free publication and a summary of the research findings. Participants are also told that the interviews are confidential (i.e., not shared with anyone beyond the research team) and for research purposes only. In addition, all participants receive a letter from CCL upon registration for the program which provides CCL's policy on confidentiality that covers all data, including research data, collected during a program.

After the classroom presentation, a form is left in the classroom for program participants to voluntarily sign up for one of the available interview times. The number of available times varies across runs of the program (from two to ten) because of limited free time during the program and variability in number of researchers available to conduct interviews. The form is left in the classroom until the close of day 1 of the program, or until all available interview slots are filled. This sign up form also contains a summary of the points made during the classroom presentation so as to serve as agreement to informed consent policy.

Source: Verbatim communication by Dr. Cynthia McCauley, Center for Creative Leadership.

Appendix B. Test Coding Output (Pilot)

As a result of the pilot coding exercise based on two interviews, I learned the following about reflection and how it differs across developmental levels.

Trigger for Reflection

I learnt that discussing “something of importance to me” is the most preferred hook for reflection. For the person between instrumental and socializing mind, this translated to focusing on one’s own tangible goals and priorities while for the fourth order, it was the theme of getting challenged and experiencing new situations. The emotion of sadness arising out of denied opportunity was a trigger in both cases and in each case related to workplace situations.

Activities during Reflection

If we were to look at Kolb’s experiential cycle as the framework for activities in reflection, the preferred activities change. The lower instrumental- socializing mind spends more time verbalizing the concrete experience. So much so that the interviewer has to use probes to move towards the subsequent steps. In case of the 4th order respondent, there is a preference for abstract conceptualization. The person does share concrete experience. However, it is often verbalized in form of metaphors and symbols. Across the two interviews studied, respondents deconstructed the issues, rationalized (if then analysis, logical reasoning). The conceptualization in the instrumental-socializing was more in the context of the trigger (stayed in the zone of priority around daughters and their activities), whereas the fourth order generalized a generalized meaning (loss of role in a merger lead to reflection on what you can/cannot control and decision making process).

Only the person at 4th order was able to engage in meta-cognition.

Role of Emotions

Since subject-object interviews use emotion cards as prompts for the dialogue, the importance of emotions is implicit. Based on the two interviews, negative emotions seem to play a bigger role in triggering reflection and finding new meaning.

Outcomes of Reflection

These range from self-awareness (both), articulating strategy (2/3) and rationale (both), resolving intra-personal conflict (sadness at not being getting a good raise to “reconceptualizing” reward and recognition beyond just salary), becoming clear of ones priorities and values (both) and getting new meaning.

Mindfulness

The person at the 4th order seemed to be more mindful of his/ her thought process. S/he was able to discriminate the meaning-making process across time dimensions (“ . . . I can’t comment on that now, because the process is still happening”)

Polarities / Gray Zones

While the 4th order person was comfortable acknowledging situations where there are no right or wrong answers and a balance was needed, the 2/3 order person seemed to get stuck (I don’t know) at such places.

Implications for Practice

Educators in workplaces and coaches can encourage reflection on a topic by helping people identify something of importance to themselves. Getting perspective shifts might be challenging for people who have not at least reached the socializing mind as they stay in the tactical (single loop) reflection. How to facilitate double-loop learning is an unanswered question

however offering hypotheses seems to help them. People at higher orders can reflect on assumptions. They benefit by activities that help verbalize their reflective data. Interview questions/ coaching questions that help them concretize their experience support reflection. The role of providing empathetic support during educational exercises is reinforced. In the interviews this was achieved through acknowledging emotions, summarizing and paraphrasing and sometimes engaging in small talk, using humor (“...given them the broom and ”)

Implications for Research

How to promote double/ triple-loop learning for people at 2/3 or below.

Appendix C. Master Memo—Overview of Data Set

Interview	Experience 1	Experience 2	Experience 3	Experience 4	Experience 5
A	Role change in Reorganization	Workplace Conflict/ Driving Change	Training Program	Work-Life Balance -1	Work-Life Balance 2
B	Role change in Reorganization	Workplace Conflict			
C	Workplace Conflict/ Ethical issue	Workplace Conflict			
D	Workplace Conflict/ Ethical issue	Achievement at work (business deal)	Workplace Conflict		
E	Work-life Balance/ Office politics	Driving Change/ Workplace conflict	Workplace Conflict		
F	Ethical Issue	Public Speaking Challenges	Setback (When I was proven wrong)	Achievement at work (winning a case)	
G	Workplace Conflict	Setback (Lost a promotion)	Office Politics (Workplace conflict?)		
H	Training Program -1	Achievement at work (successfully replacing a piece of equipment)	Workplace Accident	Training Program -2	Work-life Balance
I	Reorganization/ Workplace conflict	Reorganization/ Letting go of people	Reorganization/ Workplace conflict/ Work-life balance		
J	Workplace Conflict	Public Speaking Challenges	Workplace Conflict		
K	Performance Feedback	Office Politics			
L	Workplace Conflict	Performance Feedback			
M	Adapting to new Organization	Workplace Conflict/ Ethical issues	Workplace Conflict		
N	Performance feedback & Training program/ Workplace conflict				
O	Workplace conflict (differences with boss on rating of team -1	Workplace conflict (differences with boss on rating of team -2	Training program		

Key Themes of Experiences

- a) **Workplace Conflict:** These range from interpersonal differences (style) with boss, peer or junior colleague or about difference of opinion regarding addressing a work issue or problem, beyond interpersonal issues. These also encompass ethical issues and office politics in a few cases. About 20-25 of the experiences have some element of workplace conflict.
- b) **Change:** These experiences pertain to change of some kind. Either a reorganization and one's role change in that (2 experiences) or joining a new organization and experiencing change or trying to drive change in your organization. There are 7 experiences pertaining to change.
- c) **Training Program:** These experiences pertain to the recent experience of attending the training program prior to the Subject-Object Interview. In some cases, people also connect the training program experiences with other experiences at work. For example, N connects it with her workplace conflict with her boss. 5 of the experiences pertain to training program, alone or in combination with others.
- d) **Work-life Balance:** 5 experiences pertain to work-life balance. In some cases, the issue is discussed as a general theme, loosely touching multiple experiences and in other cases, the theme is discussed in context of a single concrete experience.
- e) **Performance Feedback:** 3 Experiences pertain to processing feedback received from boss or a superior. Some of these are standalone reflections and in some the people connect it to the experience in training program under theme c.
- f) **Achievements & Setbacks at Workplace:** 3 experiences pertain to achievements and 2 to setback.

- g) **Public Speaking Challenges:** Two participants speak about challenges in speaking in public.

Patterns of Reflection

- a) **Within Interview patterns:** In some cases, one can see that the first experience surfaces a theme (need for control as a driver) and this theme also gets surfaced in one or more subsequent experiences. This facilitates a deep dive into deeper beliefs etc. *(An implication of this for practice could be creating opportunities to surface same set of core values, beliefs and assumptions from multiple experiences and enhance receptivity to reflect and learn.)*
- b) **Across Interview Themes on Similar Themes:** It is obvious that the context of each interviewee is different. Despite this, it appears that the perspective with which people approach an issue in a theme differs. For example, for some people a reflective dialogue about workplace conflict gets explored from “whether I get what I want”, for others, “relationships” and for others it also takes into account deeper values, principles or organizational needs. The common thing across several interviews is some form of “self-preservation.”
- c) **Patterns in Revisiting the Experience and Sharing Objective Data:** Some respondents end up getting too much into details and narrating details that seem unnecessary. Others end up starting with the abstract and share very sketchy details. Some recollect the experience (and the objective data) with greater objectivity, which others jump into conclusions in the middle often with emotional baggage.
- d) **Patterns in Revisiting the experience and sharing Reflective Data:** A myriad of emotional data and reactions is visible. In some experiences, multiple emotions show up

while in some it's just one dominant. Sometimes, the process of dialogue leads to clarification of what exactly was the emotion. It was also interesting to see that certain emotions were usually associated with certain experience. For example, almost all experiences pertaining to attending the training program, where they had to take part in a simulation and get feedback, were associated with anxiety. The most common emotion was anger/upset, followed by torn, nervousness and anxiety.

e) **Patterns in Interpretive Data & Decisional data:** I tend to get mixed up between the two. So for now, I am sharing patterns at the same place:

a. **The Interpretive and Decisional Data (Evaluating the Experience) Surfaced:**

- i. Reasons for the underlying emotions. In some interviews, with multiple emotions, one case see reasons associated with different emotions.
- ii. Surfacing of deeper stuff: What's important to people, the core of their meaning-making gets surfaced – beliefs about self, what they value. In most cases, these just get labelled. In some cases, these get reflected upon. For example, in one interview- K, the respondent used the word acknowledged several times. For another person B surfaces things making a logical sense of core importance. He is able to reflect and recognize that it comes from his engineering background. . Its almost as if there is a well whose bottom gets hit through the interviews- some it hits early and for some it is deeper.
- iii. Self-Awareness, labelling of personal tendencies or insights about self can be called as a outcome for the kind of reflection that we see happen in S-O interviews (Unsure if its interpretive or decisional data). In very few cases,

I got to see people also identify actions or implications (what would I do differently). Part of this can also be attributed to the nature of inquiry stems used in Subject –Object Interviews.

- iv. Connecting dots: Some respondents can be seen connecting dots between different experiences, even though the S-O card was about discussing one.
 - v. (Change in opinions) In some cases, we see that people change their opinion or initial view about the problem or issue. In some cases, you see an entire round of reasoning and then validation of the initial view. In some cases, the decisional data is more tactical – e.g., need to prioritize things and listing a priority.
 - vi. Reframe. For example, person A started the experience discussion with looking at change as negative and later reframed it to also include positive aspects. IN another situation, A reframes his issue of controlling as an issue of anticipating.
- b. The S-O interviews were conducted after a training program. A lot of times, people also refer to their personality traits to interpret their behavior during the dialogue. *(Implication: Using self-awareness experiences/ assessments can possibly support the process of reflection)*

Barriers and Enablers:

- a) Some respondents seem very articulate. Since the sites of reflection in S-O settings involve dialogue, facility with language and articulation and self-expression enables richer discussion.

- b)** Emotional connection with the topic/ experience as an enabler: I conclude this basis one experience. A participant was touched by a facilitator during a training program and got so much meaning (interpretive and decisional data) while on other experiences, the person was just talking in yeses and no's or short statements and not taking invitations to go deeper.
- c)** Emotional connection with the topic/ experience as a disabler: The emotions show up in two ways – Emotions in the past, and emotions in the present (possibly not resolved). The latter are also cases where we don't get to see self-reflection. More often these are associated with a person choosing to disengage from the problem or issue.
- d)** Open minded-ness or not taking things personally: In interviews, some interviewees were self-reflexive, examining their own behaviors and assumptions. These were people who were exploring issues (e.g., negative feedback or a conflict) from the other person's perspective or from the organizational perspective.
- e)** Safe space: It felt to me (reflective data) that the interviewers were able to create a safe space in the interviews that helped participants open up about these experiences and in some cases also take away precious insights. (*Implication: Importance of psychological safety for facilitating reflection*)

Appendix D. First Cycle Codes Generated in Analysis of Interview E

Exhibit 1: Snapshot of First Cycle Codes: Interview E; Alias Enam

- ▼ **Revisiting the Experience**
 - Description of Experience
 - Problem for the Organization
 - Problem for Me
 - Initial Point of View or belief
- ▼ **Attending to Feelings/ Emotions/ Inner Reaction**
 - Emotion in the present
 - ▶ Emotions in the past
- ▼ **Re-Evaluation of Experience**
 - Activity: Rationalising that helps manage negative emotions
 - Activity: Associating with past experiences
 - Activity: Rational Analysis: Impact on Organizational Success
 - Activity: Rational Analysis: How people are different
 - ▶ Activity: Stating reason for emotional Reaction in the past
 - Activity: Rational Analysis: Impact on Own Success
 - Activity: Rational Analysis: Sharing decision criteria
 - Activity: Stating reason for Initial point of view or belief
 - Activity: Taking perspective - others perceptions
 - Activity: Classifying people/ Stereotyping people (?)
 - Activity: Rational Analysis: Stating arguments counter to Initial point of view
 - Activity or Outcome: Identifying Organizational Barriers to Change
 - What If Analysis/ Behavior in a different context
 - Outcome: Puzzling conclusion regarding the experience
 - Outcome: Changed Approach
 - ▶ Outcome: Insight
 - Outcome: Insight regarding Impact on career/ work
 - Outcome: Unchanged Point of View
- ▼ **Important to Me**
 - Reason for Important to me: Honoring commitment for better relationships with kids
 - Importance of honoring Commitment
 - Belief about self
 - Belief about a good engineer
- ▼ **Un-classifiable under Revisiting-Attending to feeling- Re-evaluating**
 - I dont want to hear about It
 - Verballizing using symbols and metaphors
- ▼ **Possible Barriers?**
 - In the meeting It was an attack
 - Blame Game
- ▼ **SO Interview Prompt**

Appendix E: ORID Definitions (Stanfield, 2000)

Objective Data:

“what is/was happening.”

It includes facts and draws on our senses in terms of what we see, hear, say, and do, that is, what is relatively observable. (Concrete experience)

Reflective Data:

“How am/was I feeling/reacting?”

It includes domains, such as how I connect a current experience with prior situations and on images that the situation triggers for us, or the highs and lows (that is, reflective observation)

Interpretive Data:

“What does it mean, what am I learning?”

Critical thinking related to the external and internal data that make up the context by probing patterns, themes, values, and implications. It is largely meaning focused, geared toward answering, “So what?” (That is, abstract conceptualization).

Decisional Data:

“What do/did I do?”

“Focuses on outcomes and determines future intentions or actions; it is largely ‘doing’ focused” (that is, active experimentation)

Appendix F. Second-Cycle Codebook

Title	Description
CONNECTING AND UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATIONS	
Emotion or Inner Experience	
2.1 Emotional Experiences in the Past	
2.1.1 Negative Emotional Experiences	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Angry/ upset	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Attacked	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Sadness	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Surprise/ shocked/ disbelief	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Torn	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Worry/ Anxiety	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Frustration	
Other Negative Emotions/ Inner Experiences	
2.1.2 Neutral Emotional Experiences	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Sense of Clarity/ revelation	
Emotion: Amusement	
Emotion: Confusion	
Emotion: Curiosity	
2.1.3 Positive Emotional Experiences	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Conviction	
Emotion/ Inner Experience: Felt Good	
Touched and Grateful	
DISCOMFORT	
2.2 Emotions during the interview	
2.3 Express using metaphors	
FEEDBACK	
INTERVIEWER ROLE	
Examples of Paraphrasing by Interviewer	
Examples of Questions by the interviewer	
Outcomes post the reflective/meaning making process	
? Realizing own mistakes/ Limitations Oversights/ Inner Commitments and Beliefs (simple and deep)	
5.1 Gaining Deeper Insights and Developing Understanding	
?Outcome: Getting insight into issues underlying conflict/ problem	
Better Understanding of Others' behavior	
Outcome: Gaining clarity on source of negative emotion	
Outcome: Gaining Insights into the source of beliefs and values	
Outcome: Realizing limitations of current behaviors and attitudes	
Outcome: Realizing my mistake/ error/ oversight/ blindness	
5.2 New/ Revised Approaches to Solve Problems	
Outcome: New Behaviors, experiments and ways of doing things	
Outcome: New/ Revised Approaches to solve problem(s)	
Outcome: Reframing Problem or Issue	
Framing Problem as an Opportunity	
Outcome: Revising judgement/ opinion about others	
Outcome: Strategy, plan or tactics to navigate challenges or circumstances	
5.3 Unchanged Stance or approach	
Patterns in process of reasoning	
1. Noticing patterns/ connecting dots	
2. Exploring Issue from different angles	
Multiple Reasons for a stand or opinion	
Part of Me...	
Pros and Cons; Considering opposing views	
3. Generating hypotheses	
4. Stepping into the Balcony (Mindfully engaging in thinking, reflection and perspective taking)	
5. Turning Compass Inwards	
Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Questioning my ability or capacity	
Recognizing Sub-conscious or Inner Barriers or Commitments	
Self-Awareness: Articulating Patterns and attitudes with the source of those patterns and implications for self	
Self-Awareness: Labelling Habitual Patterns and Attitudes	
Unsorted Turning Compass Inward	
6. Forming Strong Judgements or Opinions	
Patterns in the Content of Reasoning	
1. Impact on Self	
Concern for own advancement	
Identifying Benefit to self of behavior change	
Rejecting Me	
Self-Preservation	
2. Impact on Others	
Concern for impact on team or organization	
Identifying/ Recognizing Impact on Others	
Pay attention to how others think/ perceive	
3. Impact on Organization	
4. Touchstones	
4.1 Something I value	
Mutual Respect	
Opinion/ views of authority figures	
Organizational Values or Professional Ethics	
Reasoning behind Stand or Opinion: personal value of Fairness	
Value of Fairness	
Value of preserving/ maintaining Relationships	
Wanting to Prove Myself	
4.2 Inner Commitment	
4.3 Beliefs	
Example to support judgement or argument or assumption about others	
Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Others' personality or behavior	
Revisiting Experience	
I decided/ I chose to/ My actions in the past...	
I thought/ concluded/ inferred....	
Initial Solution or conflict resolution approach	
Position or Stand I took	
Presenting Problem or Issue	
Recollecting Secondary Experiences	
Recollecting Self Talk	
Recollecting Situational Information	
Seeking Solutions	
Rich stuff	
SOI Prompt	
Moved or Touched	
SOI Prompt: Angry	
SOI Prompt: Lost Something	
SOI Prompt: Sad	
SOI Prompt: Take Strong Stand/ Conviction	
SOI Prompt: Torn	

Appendix G. Analytical Memo, 24 April 2020

Tasks: Analytical Framework and next steps towards coding

Total Number of Codes: 170

After Collapsing:

Total Codes

Master codes; Sub Codes

Major Codes:

Just looking at the codes,

Recollecting situational information includes recollecting facts and data and also the problem.

I can see that in addition to recollecting situational information, there is a lot of data around emotions and Inner Experience. This ranges all the way from simple emotions (anger, joy) to Complex (difficulty standing up).

The second and closely related group is Reason behind Emotions and Inner Experience, i.e. there is some reasoning that happens to make meaning. There seems to be a difference between emotions like surprise, amused etc. as one cluster and anger, sad etc. The former are associated with codes such as (possibly reframing, going deeper etc.) and the later often connect with Judging others etc.

Reasoning/ Rationalizing seems to be a big part. This has sub-codes.

In the process people articulate or label what's important to them, their rules, values.

Sometimes secondary experiences get triggered during the meaning-making process.

The Reasoning /rationalizing is also connected with the process of reasoning and thinking. At the base level – people are stuck and unable to move beyond “I just . . .” At the other end, people are examining the process of thinking with mindfulness.

Closely associated is the perspective taking ability.

Master/Sub Codes:

Recollecting Situational Information	Recollecting Facts and Data 12 Presenting Problem or Issue 10 Recollecting Facts and Data with Emotions and Interpretations 2
Presenting Problem or Issue 10	
Emotion/ Inner Experience	Angry/upset Attacked Conviction

	<p>Denial/ rejection Sadness Self Doubt Surprise/ shocked/ disbelief Torn Embarrassed Worry/ Anxiety Frustration Amusement Confusion Felt Tested Position got entrenched Difficulty in standing up Unlabelled strong emotion in the past Strength of Emotions – Recurring Words</p>
I thought/ I concluded/ I Inferred	
Sharing Reason behind Emotion/ Inner Experience	<p>I was caught Blindsighted My Perception vs Others Perception Inner Commitment to not compromise self : Other's Impact on me : Others' personality or behavior : Questioned my belief about others : Questioning my ability or capacity : Violation of "whats important to me" : Violation of Value of mutual respect : Assumption about others' thinking/ Distortion in reasoning :Opinion/ Strong Judgement about others</p>
Sharing Reason Behind Conclusion/ Inference/ Opinion	<p>Either Or Thinking Professional Competence Personal value of Fairness Value of Relationships Corporate value of Collaboration It's the Only Way/ I Just disagreed</p>
Patterns in process of thinking	<p>Part of Me (5) Exploring from different Angles "I'm not sure, maybe" Noticing Patterns and Connecting Dots Connecting Feedback from Different Sources Thinking in the Past vs Thinking during the interview (?) Stumped: A question I didn't think about? Systemic Perspective Taking Perspective: Impact on others Labeling that "Its my perspective" Mindful Awareness of One's thought Process / Thinking about how I was thinking</p>

	<p>Thinking through the lens of ones job requirements</p> <p>Perspective taking: Impact on the system</p> <p>Perspective taking: My opinion of others</p> <p>Perspective taking: Others perception of me</p> <p>What I need is what they need 😊</p> <p>I vs you Stance</p> <p>Judging Others(Strengths and Weaknesses)/ In a negative Light</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating Rules • Articulating Values/ Whats Important to me 	
Digging Deeper into the Presenting Problem or Issue	<p>Source of CONflict: I just think it was inappropriate</p> <p>Source of Conflict: It disables me</p> <p>Source of conflict: My and my boss's behavior</p>
Self- Awareness	<p>Becoming aware of one's own unusual behavior (1)</p> <p>Labelling Habitual Patterns (7)</p> <p>Source of Habitual Patterns</p> <p>Precarious position</p>
Competing Commitment/ Inner Commitment	<p>Emotional Energy</p> <p>My belief about others</p> <p>Preserving closeness in work relationships</p> <p>Self Preservation</p> <p>Value of Relationships</p> <p>Value or Trust</p> <p>Inner commitment to feel comfortable at work</p> <p>Internal Commitment to be valued/ above reproach</p>
Outcome: Reconsidering or Questioning	<p>Realizing my mistake/ error/ oversight/ blindsight</p> <p>Questioning Ulility of Habitual Patterns</p> <p>Questioning utility of Habitual Patterns in a certain context</p> <p>Action I should Have taken/ My Limiting Behavior</p> <p>Questioning my perception about Someone</p>
Outcome:	<p>Revised Conflict Resolution Approach/ Revised Approach to Problem Solving</p> <p>Revising Opinion/ Judgement about others</p> <p>Outcome: Gaining deeper insight into one's own intentions</p> <p>Outcome: Gaining deeper insight on source of emotion</p>
Outcome: Plan of Action	<p>Overcoming my weakness</p> <p>Experimenting/ New Behaviors to Try</p> <p>Using the System</p> <p>Tactics to Manage my boss</p> <p>Managing personal Limitations</p>

Enablers	Framing Problem as an Opportunity Enabler: Asking clarifying questions Enabler: Benefit of Change to solving other problems at home Enabler: Desire to growth Enabler: Seeing benefit of Change Seeking Feedback
Barriers	Self Preservation as a barrier to desired change

Other insights: In the discussion Section:

- Connect to Victoria and Pierre’s WIP paper on reflection. Reflection is the meaning processes. People do it in different ways. Some of it happens during the interview (Situating) and some of it is the constructivist framework (recollecting experiences and making meaning from it). So, there is no one way. Reflection is happening in SO interviews in two ways- as a situated sense-making process and as a constructive-developmental process.
- The analytical framework maps to the ORID model. People are Exploring Objective Data, then exploring Subjective data. There are interpretive practices (connecting dots etc.) as part of the meaning process. This is followed by decisional stuff – actions, self-awareness or internal outcomes.

S. No	Code Name	Frequency
1	Articulating Belief System: Source of Values	1
2	Articulating Benefit to self of behavior change	2
3	Articulating Causal Assumption	1
4	Articulating Rules	2
5	Articulating Source of Rules: Wise boss	2
6	Articulating Values	3
7	Articulating Values: Collaboration and Trust	1
8	Assumptions about others’ intentions presented as Truth	1
9	Barrier: Expecting others to "push"	1
10	Being Forced/Guided to think	1
11	Borrowing from GE Workout Process to rethink solution	1
12	Childhood experience: Source of courage to overcome Competing commitment	2
13	Competing Commitment	2
14	Competing Commitment: Emotional Energy	1
15	Competing Commitment: My belief about others	1
16	Competing Commitment: Preserving closeness in work relationships	1
17	Competing Commitment: Self-Preservation	3

18	Competing Commitment: Value of Relationships	1
19	Competing Commitment: Value or Trust	1
20	Critical Self Reflection	1
21	Curiosity about others' intentions	3
22	Decisional Self Awareness	1
23	Decisional Self-Awareness/ Learning/ Conclusion	2
24	Decisional Self-Awareness: I need to become better at	2
25	Desired Refined Action I should have taken	2
26	Emotion/ Inner Experience	3
27	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Angry/ upset	3
28	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Attacked	1
29	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Conviction	3
30	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Denial/ rejection	1
31	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Difficulty in standing up	1
32	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Embarrassed	1
33	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Felt Tested	1
34	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Position got entrenched	1
35	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Position got entrenched	1
36	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Sadness	2
37	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Self Doubt	1
38	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Surprise/ shocked/ disbelief	2
39	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Torn	1
40	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Violation of trust	1
41	Emotion/ Inner Experience: Worry/ Anxiety	2
42	Emotion/Inner Experience: Frustration	2
43	Emotion: Amusement	1
44	Emotion: Confusion	2
45	Emotion: Unlabeled strong emotion in the past	2
46	Enabler: Asking clarifying questions	1
47	Enabler: Benefit of Change to solving other problems at home	1
48	Enabler: Desire to growth	1
49	Enabler: Seeing benefit of Change	4
50	Enabler: Seeking Feedback	1
51	Engaging in thinking about it and reflecting	0
52	Example to support judgement or argument or assumption about others	2
53	Experimenting with new behavior	2
54	Exploring Issue from different angles	1
55	Expressing through metaphors	5
56	External Source of Emotion	4
57	Growth Mindset: Framing Problem as an Opportunity	2
58	Hypothesis regarding others' behavior	1
59	I began to wonder...	0
60	I decided/ I chose to/ My actions in the past...	4

61	I inferred	2
62	I thought/ concluded/ inferred....	7
63	I vs You/them Stance	4
64	I wish I had . . .	1
65	I'm going to be/ I'm not going to . . .	1
66	I'm not sure/ Maybe	3
67	Identifying Origins of beliefs or assumptions	1
68	Inability to take perspective on source of values	2
69	Initial response to feedback	2
70	Inner Conflict	1
71	Inner commitment to feel comfortable at work	1
72	Internal Commitment to be valued/ above reproach	4
73	Interpretive Self-Awareness	7
74	Judging Others	3
75	Judging Others: Strength and Weakness	2
76	Judging others in a negative light	2
77	Mindfully thinking about thinking	1
78	My Limiting Behavior	1
79	My perception about myself	0
80	Others' perspective	1
81	Outcome: Gaining deeper insight into one's own intentions	1
82	Outcome: Gaining deeper insight on source of emotion	2
83	Part of Me...	5
84	Perspective taking: Impact on the system	0
85	Perspective taking: My opinion of others	2
86	Perspective taking: Others' perception of me	1
87	Perspective taking: Lens of job requirements	1
88	Plan of Action: Changing my tactics	1
89	Plan of Action: Managing personal Limitations	1
90	Plan of Action: New Behaviors to try	1
91	Plan of Action: Tactics to manage boss and protect self	1
92	Plan of Action: Using the system	1
93	Position or Stand I took	2
94	Possible conflict resolution approach	2
95	Presenting Problem or Issue	6
96	Presenting Problem or Issue: Can't trust Boss	1
97	Presenting Problem or Issue: Not seeing eye-to-eye with boss	3
98	Questioning Utility of Habitual Patterns	2
99	Questioning my perception about someone	2
100	Rationalizing in the past: Noticing patterns/ connecting dots	2
101	Rationalizing in the present: Connecting Dots	3
102	Rationalizing in the present: Connecting Feedback from different sources	1
103	Rationalizing in the present: Impact on me: It disables me	1

104	Rationalizing in the present: Impact on me: It makes me inefficient	1
105	Rationalizing in the present: Impact on me: It makes me look bad	1
106	Rationalizing in the present: Systemic Impact	2
107	Rationalizing in the present: Value of Family	1
108	Realizing my mistake/ error/ oversight/ blindsight	3
109	Reason Behind Conclusion or Inference: Organizational Dynamics	2
110	Reason Behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Assumption about others' thinking/ Distortion in reasoning	3
111	Reason Behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: I was caught blind sighted	2
112	Reason Behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: my perception vs others' perception	1
113	Reason behind Conclusion or Inference: It's the only way	1
114	Reason behind Conclusion or Inference: Team Dynamics	1
115	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Inner Commitment to not compromise self	3
116	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Other's Impact on me	1
117	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Others' personality or behavior	5
118	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Questioned my belief about others	1
119	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Questioning my ability or capacity	2
120	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Violation of "whats important to me"	2
121	Reason behind Inner Experience/ Emotion: Violation of Value of mutual respect	1
122	Reasoning Behind Conclusion or Inference: Violation of ethics	1
123	Reasoning behind Action: Awareness of Personal Limitations	1
124	Reasoning behind Action: Generating hypotheses in "Action"	1
125	Reasoning behind Stand or Opinion: Either Or Thinking	1
126	Reasoning behind Stand or Opinion: Professional Competence	1
127	Reasoning behind Stand or Opinion: personal value of Fairness	2
128	Reasoning behind Stand or Position: I just Disagreed	1
129	Reasoning behind Stand or opinion: Value of Relationships	5
130	Reasoning behind stand or Opinion: Corporate value of Collaboration	1
131	Reasoning: Reconsidering way of thinking	1
132	Recollecting My Arguments	3
133	Recollecting Other's Arguments/ Perspective	1
134	Recollecting Secondary Experiences	1
135	Recollecting Self Talk: to overcome self-doubt	2
136	Recollecting Situational Information	16
137	Recollecting Situational information + Opinions + Emotional experience	2
138	Recollecting feedback	1
139	Recollecting others emotions	1
140	Reframing Problem or Issue	1
141	Response to Emotion: Crying	1

142	Revised Conflict Resolution Approach	1
143	Revising Approach to Problem Solving	2
144	Revising judgement/ opinion about others	1
145	Rich stuff	3
146	SOI Prompt	1
147	SOI Prompt: Angry	2
148	SOI Prompt: Take Strong Stand/ Conviction	3
149	SOI Prompt: Torn	1
150	Seeking Solutions	2
151	Self-Awareness: Becoming aware of one's own unusual behavior	1
152	Self-Awareness: Labelling Habitual Patterns	7
153	Self Awareness: Source of Habitual Patterns	2
154	Self Protection: Precarious position	0
155	Self Talk (past)	4
156	Self- Preservation as a barrier to desired change	1
157	Self-Preservation	2
158	Source Conflict	2
159	Source of Conflict: I just think it was inappropriate	1
160	Source of Conflict: It disables me	1
161	Source of conflict: My and my boss's behavior	1
162	Strength of Emotion or Opinion: Recurring words	5
163	Stumped: A question I didn't think about?	1
164	Systemic Perspective	3
165	Taking perspective: Impact on Others	3
166	Thats my perception....	5
167	Thinking about How I was thinking	0
168	What I need is what they need :-)	1
169	mindful awareness of ones thought process	1
170	mindfully engaging in thinking, reflection and perspective taking	2
171	plan of action: overcoming my weakness	2
172	questioning utility of Habitual Patterns in a certain context	1

Appendix H. Work-in-Progress Memo, 25 October 2020_After Condensing Data

Emerging Narrative on the Patterns of Reflection and Plan for Answering Research Questions

The Research questions that guide this study are:

Research Question	Where/ How will it be answered
RQ1: As managers reflect after action on organizational experiences, what are the patterns in reflection on dimensions of revisiting experience, feelings and inner experience, interpreting the experience and outcomes of reflection?	Answered in Chapter 5 based on categorization of the codes, prior to knowledge about developmental scores of participants. The WIP Narrative below this chart is an attempt to answer this RQ.
RQ2: What inner barriers and enablers of reflection are visible when managers reflect on organizational experiences?	This will be answered in Chapter 6 after cross-tabulating Outcomes of Reflection with Other codes. If presence of certain codes (e.g., unresolved emotions) is associated with absence of one or all outcomes of reflection, it will be considered a barrier. If presence of certain codes (e.g., positive emotions) is associated with presence of certain outcomes of reflection (one of the 3 outcomes), it will be considered an enabler
RQ3: In what ways if any do the above patterns of reflection and the barriers and enablers vary by developmental levels as identified in Constructive-developmental theory?	This will be answered in Chapter 6 after analyzing data for the Narrative for RQ1 presented in this document after considering developmental scores.

Work in Progress Narrative:

As the excerpts of subject-object interviews pertaining to conflict and change were analyzed from the lens of reflection after experience, there were distinct parallels with the process of reflection, almost an amalgam of Boud and ORID framework. Aligned to the RQ1, the following patterns were noticed:

1. Patterns in Revisiting Experience

- 1.1. Recollecting outside events and influences vs recollecting internal dialogue about the event in terms of recollecting self-talk, dilemmas, thoughts, and conclusions.

- 1.2. Recollecting secondary events or experiences rather than just the event triggered by the Subject-Object Interview card. In addition to revisiting the trigger event, several respondents recollected secondary experiences such as childhood or formative experiences or recent training program they attended prior to the Subject-Object Interview.
- 1.3. Articulating worldviews/ boundary conditions: Alongside the above, they shared their worldviews in terms of rules, unexamined assumptions, their values or what's important to them.

2. Patterns in Feelings and Inner Experience

- 2.1. Exploring a range of emotions: Given the nature of Subject-Object interview, the first emotion explored was in line with the card picked up for Subject-Object Interview. However, some participants shared other emotions as they revisited the experience and dialogued with the interviewer. This range of emotions was wider for some than others. In some cases, the range extended from negative to positive. However, most of the emotions were negative with Anger and Torn being the dominant. The emotions also seemed to evolve in some cases as participants has the conversation with the interviewer. As mentioned in *Patterns in the Outcome of Reflection* below, the subject-object interview helped participants gain clarity on the source of the emotions and in some cases, relabeling the emotion experienced.
- 2.2. Recollecting emotions vs Feeling unresolved emotions during the interview: While some participants recollected and discussed emotions in the past with a sense of distance, for others, unresolved emotions showed up in some interviews through participants breaking down or use of certain strong words.
- 2.3. Metaphors: Some participants used metaphors to communicate aspects of the experience.

3. Patterns in Interpreting the Experience

3.1. Patterns in the Content of Reasoning

- 3.1.1. Impact on Self vs Impact on Others vs Impact on Organization. While almost all shared impact on self (career, security, well-being) as part of reasoning, some also talked about impact on others (stakeholder they were in conflict with) or the system (other stakeholders and/or the organization).
- 3.1.2. Violation of Values or something of importance: One of the reasons was violation of values. Some spoke of personal values while others spoke of organizational values.
- 3.1.3. Judgements or Assumptions about others' Intentions: Participant's judgement about others or their unexamined assumptions about others' intentions influenced their reasoning.
- 3.1.4. Critiquing self: Some participants also critiqued own behaviors or oversights in a sense of self-reflection.

3.2. Patterns in the Process of Reasoning

- 3.2.1. Connecting Dots: Participants connected data between different incidents in the same interview (e.g., the theme of *control* showing up in different excerpts of the same interview) or between different experiences being recollected in the same excerpt (what my boss said and what showed up in feedback during the training program yesterday).
- 3.2.2. Exploring an issue from multiple angles: Some participants explored an issue from a narrower perspective (self-centered or one-way of thinking) while others explored it from multiple perspectives. The multiple perspectives could be different aspects of a problem or issue (e.g., what's needed in a role vs what I wanted) or from others' perspectives (e.g., what my boss must have felt)
- 3.2.3. Generating Hypotheses: Some participants generated possible hypotheses as the process of reasoning progressed.
- 3.2.4. Noticing/ Stepping onto the balcony: Some participants were able to pay attention or take a perspective on their thought process, either during the interview or during the time the interview happened, almost as if they were stepping onto the balcony.
- 3.2.5. Self-Awareness: This showed up in two ways. One was Labelling habitual behavioral patterns another was a deeper labelling of subconscious or competing commitments.
- 3.2.6. **Source of Problem:**
 - 3.2.6.1. Gaining clarity on the source of Emotions: In almost all interviews participants gained clarity on the source of emotions. This could be as simple as identifying the reason for the emotion or a deep digging into clarity around the emotion itself with all its complexity.
 - 3.2.6.2. Insight into others' behavior: Some participants were able to develop an appreciation or understanding of reasons for others' behaviors.
 - 3.2.6.3. Learning about own mistakes or oversights
- 3.2.7. **New approaches to solve problem:**
 - 3.2.7.1. Reframe the problem the issue. In 2-3 cases, the participants reframed the problem.
 - 3.2.7.2. Revising opinion or judgement of others: In some cases, they softened their judgement about others or were more accepting of others' shortcomings.
 - 3.2.7.3. New tactics or strategies to solve problems: They identified new ways to approach a problem from the one they entered the interview with.