Once Upon A Spiral:

The Story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action/Reflection Model

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Glossary with Abbreviations

AC
Abstract Conceptualisation on the Action/Reflection model.

AE
Active Experimentation on the Action/Reflection model.

Aha
A noun referring to an insight similar to the experience of "eureka!" which describes a sudden discovery or solution to a problem.

Alterity
Refers to "otherness, specifically the quality of state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation" (Merriam-Webster 2011 np).

CCS
Centre for Christian Studies

CCS community
People who are in some way connected with CCS, having studied or worked there.

CE
Concrete Experience on the Action/Reflection model.

Centre for Christian Studies
A theological college of the United and Anglican churches offering theological education for diaconal ministry and lay leadership, in the church.

DNA
Deoxyribonucleic acid. A gene is made up of DNA.

DUCC
Diakonia of the United Church of Canada

Deacon
Deacons in the Anglican Church are ordained. Their calling is to "interpret the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the church" and to serve the most vulnerable members of society (ACC 2011 np).

Diaconal Ministry
One of two parallel orders of ministry within the United Church of Canada. Diaconal ministers are commissioned to ministries of education, pastoral care, and service within that church.

Diakonia of the United Church of Canada
A professional association of diaconal ministers, and those who consider themselves to be in diaconal ministries, within the United Church of Canada.

Dialectic
"The tension between conflicting or interacting forces, elements or ideas […] each of those separate entities act on the other and there is something of a resolution -- each strengthens the other but each also makes the other difficult" (Griffith 2010 np).

FG1
Focus Group 1

FG2
Focus Group 2

Kin-dom of God
A vision of a world where justice and peace abound and where all of humanity lives as kin, in contrast to the "Kingdom of God" which connotes a hierarchical arrangement.

LDM
Leadership Development Module

LSI
Learning Style Inventory

Lay Ministry
People who live out their faith and calling as people of God in their daily lives, outside the formally recognized leadership structure of the church.

Leadership Development Module
An introductory learning circle that provides a foundation in leadership within a transformational learning model. It may be taken as a single module or as a prerequisite for entering the fulltime program at CCS.

Learning in Community
Learning together as a group and in a group. "You bring into that process your commitment to your own learning but also your commitment to the learning of others in the community" (Naylor 2009 p 13).

Learning Style Inventory
Kolb and Fry developed this inventory to help people figure out what their learning style is in relationship to the Experiential Learning model.

OISE
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

PO
Participant Observation

Practice
Acting in practical ways to make use of a method or idea rather than theorising about it.

Practicum
Practical work in the field as part of a university course (similar to a field placement)

Program staff
Faculty members at the Centre for Christian Studies.

Praxis
"Purposeful, intentional, and reflectively chosen ethical action" (Groome 1980 p 152).

Psychologise
To interpret experience only in individual, psychological terms rather than systemic, ideological ones (Moussa 2010 np).

R
Reflection written by staff done prior to the interview.

RO
Reflective Observation on the Action/Reflection model.

Reflection
A process of teasing apart an experience into its component parts (or peeling off layers like in an onion) and then critically considering them in light of the ideas of others using theory and theology, bringing the pieces together to interact with each other, and integrating them to imagine a meaningful response.

Social Ministry
Focuses on ministry that contributes to God's vision of justice and peace, as found in the Bible, and based on theologies of liberation, social analysis, a commitment to advocacy and accompaniment, and seeking to become an agent of transformation in the world.

Thealogy
Comes from the Greek words thea or Goddess and logos or meaning. It is a term coined by Canadian Jewish feminist Naomi Goldenberg that means reflection on the divine in terms of female experience and feminism.

Theme years
The program at CCS includes three theme years that are offered on a three-year rotation: educational ministry, pastoral care, and social ministry

Toronto
A city in southern Ontario, the most populated part of Canada, with a reputation as a cosmopolitan hub and business centre with an ethnically diverse population of 2.48 million people (2010).

UCC
United Church of Canada

Winnipeg
The largest city in the prairies of central Canada, which is a major cultural, social, medical, and educational center, despite its rather small size of 684,100 people (2010).

Acknowledgements

When asked how things are going, a common Jamaican response is "I am blessed". I can't help but think of that now, for I too have been blessed throughout this project by:

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I am blessed.

Abstract

The Action/Reflection model used at the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS), a theological college of the United Church of Canada for diaconal preparation, is the subject of this research. This tool for carrying out transformative theological education is taught to students and used by them to reflect on and integrate their learning into practice with a view to "living a theology of justice". It helps them analyse their experience of the world with a critical lens, considering their active response in light of theology, social analysis, Scripture, and other theory.

This research documents the lived experience of the CCS Action/Reflection model: the originating theories; staff and student input into its formation; how it has evolved; how it has been taught and learned; and what it has come to mean to graduates and staff who have used it. The study is structured as a narrative weaving together multiple strands from staff and student perspectives. The tale begins with a chronological telling of creating, learning, and using the model. It then moves into naming patterns in the story: contradictions, insights, and overlapping conversations.

Presenting an account that encapsulates the community memory, two themes emerge: the historical and contextual details of the model's development, alongside its flexibility and capacity for adaptation to different needs and situations. The story of the CCS Action/Reflection model is recorded as a narrative of theory development and pedagogy, which addresses how theological students can learn to reflect in a way that is well defined, beneficial to learning, and integrated into practice.

Chapter One
Introduction

I have a memory of ending my first year as a student at The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) with a spirallling dance around the room. As a group we started out holding hands while following the leader. When we were nearly in a circle, our guide abruptly changed direction so she was now moving inside and past the rest of the circle in the opposite direction, the line of people following behind. We continued to spiral into the centre passing one another face to face. There the leader doubled back and led us out into a circle once again. The whorling movement of the dance points to the topic of this thesis, *Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action/Reflection model,* by naming a central metaphor for the Action/Reflection model I am studying. A naturally occurring formation in DNA, unfurling fern fronds, and some forms of galaxies, the spiral describes the visual shape of a process for reflecting on learning used extensively at CCS.

The dance also alludes to some of the values the Action/Reflection model, also known as "the spiral", holds for me including the importance of the community for authentic reflection and action, the need to attend to what is going on deep within oneself while at the same time looking outward into the world, and the way that learning something new means you are never in quite the same place as you began once you spiral around. Reflection is an activity that, at its best, can be done by everyone, and is a powerful resource for groups involved in justice seeking, liberating theology, and learning in community. The Action/Reflection model, which I have carried into ministry, was formative in my own learning when I was a student preparing to become a diaconal minister. This model has become an integral part of CCS, contributing to a unique pedagogical approach to theological education. In this study I am exploring how this model came to have a central role in this theological college and in the people within its influence, by telling some of those stories.

I begin by recounting my interest in research on the CCS Action/Reflection model, after which I outline the scope of the project through the questions, purpose, and goals for the work. I will introduce The Centre for Christian Studies as the context for the research and explain the CCS Action/Reflection model that is used there. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with an outline of the contents of the chapters that follow.

1.1 Research Interest

The first assignment for my Doctorate in Education (EdD) studies was an introductory reflection on a piece of published research. This exercise had as its stated purpose "to reflect on, and write about research, with particular reference to your involvement with it" (Anon 2006a p1). As a mature student starting a daunting doctoral program, I was immediately drawn to the familiar word "reflect" in the assignment. Reflection was something I knew about from my previous studies at CCS and my work as a diaconal minister. As a student I had learned to regularly use an Action/Reflection model to reflect, to analyze, to theologize, and to learn. This new invitation to reflect gave me the confidence to begin my assignment as I could refer back to a model I was familiar with (Appendix A.5). When I finished the paper and prepared to cite the CCS resource I'd used on reflection, the only reference to where it came from was this sentence typed at the bottom of the diagram of the CCS Action/Reflection model: "based on Kolb and Solberg and Experience in Centre for Christian Studies Core Learning Group." That piqued my interest in finding out more about the origination and sources of this model.

Over the course of writing several papers on research in education for the EdD program I investigated topics that interested me, such as popular education and insider research, with the idea at the back of my mind that one of these might prove fruitful for further investigation or at least lead to something of interest for my research project. A paper on different pedagogical approaches to theological education opened up ideas that intrigued me. I pondered the notion that pedagogy encompasses not only "what a teacher does (instruction) [but] it also includes that person's understanding of the learner, philosophy of education (what it is and what it's for), choices about what is taught and how, the style of the teacher-learner interaction and participation, and the politics of education (who has power and how it is exercised)" (Stewart 2007 p 2). In thinking and writing about what pedagogy "as space for social transformation" (Anon 2006b p 2) might be like in a theological college, I became convinced that CCS offered a remarkable example.

I had that thought in the back of my mind when my initial questions about the Action/Reflection model eventually led me into conversation with Gwyn Griffith, a former Principal of CCS. With great animation she told me how the Action/Reflection model emerged in the 1970s out of the experience of the CCS staff teaching in a new program design based on Freire's ideas of transformative pedagogy. After this exchange, she also sent me some notes telling more of what she knew of how the model came to be and how it was shaped at that theological school. When I asked why nothing had ever been published about it, she pointed out that the members of the teaching staff were

busy educational practitioners without a mandate or time for writing, but she suggested others could take on the project. I was fascinated. So I talked it over with a good friend, also a graduate, who was encouraging. I reflected. Since I was excited by Gwyn's suggestion and seeking a topic, all things seemed to point towards exploring the CCS Action/Reflection model as my research subject. The focus of this project is not only a personal quest. It is also relevant for the CCS community since it documents in narrative form the lived experience and common memory of how the Action/Reflection model was created and became significant to people engaging in the theological education offered there.

The story begins in the 1970s in Canada, at a tumultuous period socially and politically. There was a growing feminist movement, peace groups emerged to respond to nuclear proliferation, global liberation movements generated Canadian solidarity groups, and churches began to work ecumenically in response to many of these issues (Griffith 2009 pp 85-6). A number of trends in society were also being felt by the church: there was a "deep suspicion and dissent with 'structures'", a call for the involvement of churches in "issues of justice in our society and in the global perspective of the planet, with all the critique of systems and institutions and the clash of political and social views this generates", and the feminist movement introducing new perspectives on ministry (McLean 1977 p 3). The United Church of Canada received reports from a Taskforce on Ministry in 1974 and 1977. Project Ministry, a follow up study, called for greater recognition of diaconal ministry since "the church in its wider manifestations beyond the congregation senses a mandate to address itself to the corporate issues of society, not only in Canada, but on a global scale, in the name of the disadvantaged and oppressed and defenseless" (McLean 1979 p 40).

At the same time change was afoot for the Anglican Women's Training College and The United Church's Covenant College, schools that historically trained women as deaconesses. As institutions in a changing societal context, a decision was made to amalgamate in 1969, leading to reevaluation of the programs for the newly formed college, named The Centre for Christian Studies. Griffith notes,

> Trends in society, in education and in the church were carefully
> examined and implications for CCS analyzed… There was agreement
> that CCS's role should be to break down barriers between clergy,
> professional church workers and laity, moving to an emphasis on shared
> ministry. Some argued that CCS should be a countercultural institution,
> in tension with society. Its role would be to ask difficult questions, to
> provide alternatives, and to produce graduates who could be change
> agents, able to open new visions. (2009 p 89)

In response to these influences, a new curriculum for training diaconal ministers was launched in September of 1974 with an innovative philosophy of education, incorporating three components: academic studies, field education, and a Core Group. It was primarily in the latter context that new educational ideas were pioneered and the Action/Reflection model developed. Students applied and integrated what they were learning from the Core group experience by writing reflections. The Action/Reflection model was developed to give guidance to students in their reflecting, and tested in practice, gradually becoming a standard part of the program that is still used today.

Apart from various diagrams of the model (Appendix A), this is a part of CCS history that there is very little written about and almost nothing exists in the archival documents except some references to the curriculum design in Central Council minutes. The research provides an opportunity to hear and record in narrative form remembered experiences and collective reflections of the model throughout its history in order to acknowledge the significant place it has held in the pedagogy of the CCS community. In their studies of reflection in theological education, Pattison, Thompson & Green (2003) and Stoddart (2004) indicate that while reflection models have been introduced for student learning, concerns exist about whether students appropriate and use them once they graduate. This thesis offers an opportunity to assess how this model stands up to that challenge. It documents the theoretical groundwork of the model, thus providing the long memory and base of knowledge for CCS when changes to the model are considered in future. More importantly it shows the innovative thinking by staff and students who brought these original theories together at CCS, tested them, and created new theory to meet the learning needs of the students in the context. As it is an evolving theory, the research points the direction for some potential future development of this work. For the wider community of theological educators it provides a look at the foundations of this model as a tool for transformative theological education, which might be shared more broadly.

Moving from my interest in this research, I will next outline my questions, purpose and goals.

1.2 Research Project

Preparations for this research began with a series of questions about the Action/Reflection model:

1. What is the CCS Action/Reflection model?

2. Where did the CCS Action/Reflection model originate and what are its sources?
3. How does it differ from or go beyond the earlier models on which it is based?
4. How has the Action/Reflection model been used in theological education at CCS?
5. What is the experience of those who have used it either as staff in the role of facilitators of learning, or as students who have learned it?
6. How does reflection in general, and this model of reflection in particular, contribute to learning and to theological insight for CCS students?
7. In what ways is the CCS Action/Reflection model used as a tool for theological education, both formal (at theological college) and informal (in the church and society where CCS graduates carry out ministry?). (Stewart 2008 p3)

These questions that interested me, together with my learning from the review of the literature, which follows in Chapter 3, were distilled into the following purpose and goals for the project:

The purpose of the study is **to gather stories, from past and present program staff as well as past and present students, about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action/Reflection model within this theological college since 1974.**

My goals were:

1. **To hear and record the stories of several members of staff and a selection of students, about how they conceived of, developed, and used the CCS Action/Reflection model in their time at CCS.**
2. **To compile and narrate a community story that provides a common memory and written record for CCS of the Action/Reflection model's lived experience.**
3. **To contribute to existing scholarship documenting the origins and use of a model of reflection as part of a transformative pedagogy in theological education.**

The title, *Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action/Reflection model,* expresses the fact that I listened carefully to accounts of many individual stories, each relating "When I was at CCS and used the spiral (Action/Reflection model)…". I assembled the individual accounts in order to tell a collective narrative. Moore points out that "The effort is not to find an objective truth behind a collection of subjective stories [but] rather to view every situation and person as a subject with a story to tell. Every account offers meaningful perspectives on a community's life" (2006 p 421). Telling and listening to these stories allowed many

perspectives on the model's creation and use to be discovered. It also pointed out that while it is a useful model for group and individual reflection, it is not the only way to reflect.

The next section outlines the community in which the research was undertaken.

1.3 Research Context

Because I am interested in studying a model used in the theological education offered at CCS, the participants have been drawn from within that community. By "community" I mean those people who are in some way connected with CCS by way of having studied or worked there.   Study participants from this population included fourteen students, three present program staff, four former staff, and nine graduates, from between 1974 and 2009. Three of the staff members were also graduates.

CCS itself is a small theological college[*] of the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, with historical roots in the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican deaconess and missionary training homes offering theological education for women in Canada as early as the 1890s (CCS 2010a np). Its early graduates were deaconesses, missionaries, or trained lay workers with vocations in religious education, congregational ministry, social work, or nursing. The Institution's present expression is a product of many changes over the years as the individual schools merged, men were admitted as students, the designation of "deaconess" was replaced by "diaconal minister", the program was redesigned more than once, and the school was relocated from Toronto to Winnipeg.

The college's present purpose is to prepare women and men for ministries of education, pastoral care and social justice "that will transform the church and world toward wholeness, justice and compassion" (CCS 2010b np). CCS provides a program of preparation for entering diaconal ministry authorized by the United Church of Canada, as a four-year diploma in *Diaconal Ministries: Studies in Transformation and Action*. Other students are lay people wanting to increase their ability to live out justice and compassion within their everyday context and professional lives. Finally, there are shorter certificate programs in Leadership Development, Education, Pastoral Care, and Social Ministry for those seeking continuing education opportunities (CCS 2010b np).

The CCS programs are "community-based" which means students remain living in their own communities all over Canada while coming to study in intensive two-week learning

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[*] With fifty students and two fulltime academic staff/faculty in 2010

circles twice a year in Winnipeg. They return home to carry out their assignments, field placements, and academic work. Current academic faculty members are based in Winnipeg but former staff and graduates are scattered throughout the country. In order to connect with people in this dispersed community for the purpose of data collection I was able to take advantage of times when people assembled for various purposes during 2009: a national gathering of Diakonia of the United Church of Canada (DUCC) where I had a focus group with graduates; a regional gathering of DUCC which provided an opportunity for a focus group in Manitoba; and participant observation at a CCS learning circle attended by new students in Winnipeg. I did two interviews in Ontario. I interviewed three people in Winnipeg, and I did three over the telephone. The methods for data collection will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

CCS speaks of itself as a learning community where staff and students are both co-leaders and co-learners. Everyone is asked, "to take responsibility for engagement, reflection, self-direction, and goal setting" (2010c np). The CCS Educational Stance statement acknowledges that learners are diverse with specific needs and that they are also interdependent collaborators. Transformative learning is promoted while recognizing that it may involve struggle and change that is difficult. A climate of support is cultivated in order to provide a safe context for the challenges of learning.

Experience, reflection, and action are all named as sources of rich wisdom within an institution that aims to integrate learning from academic studies with intensive learning circles and field placements; body, mind, and spirit; and contemporary issues with Biblical insights. CCS strives to be what it calls "transparent" with regard to being inclusive of diversity, attentive to power sharing, and modelling consultative decision-making (2010d np). It operates out of a feminist/liberation theoretical framework, which is embedded in a theological stance that says, "We believe that God's activity in the world advances and supports love and right relationship, justice and compassion for all of creation. Through history, prophets, priests, servants, healers and leaders have been called to action. God continues to call us to this beautiful and demanding life of faith" (CCS 2010e np).

1.4 The Action/Reflection Model

Since it is pervasive throughout this research, I will introduce the reader to the Action/Reflection model used at CCS. I will begin by describing the version with which I am most familiar (Appendix A.5); the one I had in mind when I undertook this research and the one I use. I will then talk about the version students at CCS now learn, which is

somewhat different (Appendix A.11). The changes that have occurred will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The earlier Action/Reflection model is depicted as an open circle, or spiral, which moves through four imaginary quadrants, which are labelled, starting from the top as Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation. There are questions associated with each that guide the person in reflection on an experience moving through all four sections. The first and second quadrants on the right are about reflection, while the third and fourth on the left side relate to action (Figure 6). The quadrants at the top, Active Experimentation and Concrete Experience are concrete ways of knowing while Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization constitute abstract ways of knowing (Figure 6).   The more recent version of the model shows a picture of a small spiral with many turns in the centre. The labels are shifted so that Concrete Experience is at the top of the diagram, Reflective Observation is on the right, Abstract Conceptualization is on the bottom, and Active Experimentation appears on the left.

The model is a tool for reflecting on experience using various lenses: emotional, relational, analytical, theoretical, and theological, to examine and integrate new understandings while also motivating new ways of acting, with the ultimate goal of changing the world for the better. It both describes and guides the learner through a process of thinking about an experience that may be puzzling, unsettling, or insightful in order to learn from it. It is a tool for individual contemplation and a resource where groups can work together to analyze an issue that they care about and discern action. I have heard CCS staff and graduates say that it is possible to begin reflection in any quadrant, and I have found that to be true personally, but it is most usual to begin in the Concrete Experience (CE) section with an experience. Here the reflector is asked to name and recount the incident in as much detail as possible.

Moving to Reflective Observation (RO), the learner is asked a number of questions to encourage thinking about the personal emotions involved in the situation and to describe perceptions about what was happening for others in the initial experience. The invitation is to consider what was observed in others and to notice personal feelings, thoughts, assumptions, and impressions. In the earlier model, once these are explored, the reflector is asked to search for creative metaphors that link to this experience, for example, Scripture, art, story, or movement.

The Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) section deepens reflection as it moves into thinking about the theoretical and theological underpinnings of the experience with a view to expanding knowledge of what was going on. Again a number of questions invite analysis about assumptions, unexamined beliefs and opinions, power relations, underlying premises, and more. This is a place where reading, consultation, and dialogue can help bring in other voices to inform and enlighten.

The last section, Active Experimentation (AE), moves back into the Action half of the model where it encourages testing out the new insights, and experimentation with new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving, or taking action to seek social change. If the model were a circle, it would come back to the starting point, but the idea behind designating it as a spiral is that the reflection process leads to change in thinking and acting. Having followed around the spiral one is led into another experience in a new place. Instead of being circular, this spiral is like a spring, as reflection turns and brings the reflector to a new plane where new experiences might prompt new reflections and thus new spirals. I give an example of the use of this spiral in Chapter 2.

1.5 Thesis Structure

I conclude this chapter with an outline of each of the chapters that contribute to this work.

Chapter 2, **A Reflection to Begin,** constitutes a personal reflection on my own relationship to the CCS Action/Reflection model as I began the research. This piece constitutes a piece of autoethnography that helped me to reflect on my own association with this model. It also sketches out my position going into the research, and serves as an example of the theory in practice.

Chapter 3 presents the **Literature Review** where I give an overview of the literature pertaining to the subject of the research. Each of the theoretical threads that made up the CCS Action/Reflection model was followed to its origins. I explore Freire's theories about learning in community and praxis model (1970), the Kolb-Fry Experiential Learning model (1975), and Solberg's design for theological reflection (1974). Other research on the use of reflection in education and theological education is examined, including a brief exploration of the meaning of various terminology related to "reflection".

Chapter 4 contains the **Research Design**. In this chapter I describe and justify the framework of the research methodology based on my theoretical approach and

positionality. The methodology that was used to carry out the research is outlined and the rationale given for why it constitutes the best way to get the necessary data. These methods embrace a mixed method approach drawing on developmental ethnography and community biography, with insights from ethology, and using a narrative methodology. This research seeks to answer a developmental question about how the CCS Action/Reflection model came to be the way it is and what it has come to mean to those who have used it within the context of a college devoted to theological education.

In Chapter 5 I describe the **Research Practices.** These include reflections by, and interviews with, key staff people and one graduate, focus groups with graduates, and participant observation of new students as they learned and used the model. Here I introduce the methods of data analysis. A research imagination suggested drawing on tools for analysis from narrative research. I use key narrative elements, such as time, order, and plot to organize the first part of the data analysis. Moore suggested the following model for analysis, "Seek and interpret patterns in the collected stories" (2006 p 423). I use patterns of contradictions, insights, and overlap in comments to analyze the narrative material.

Chapter 6 comprises a **Presentation of the Story.** The research is presented in the format of a two-part narrative designed to represent a community story bringing together the individual narratives about the creation and use of the CCS Action/Reflection model into one collective account. I follow that chronological and collective telling by naming patterns emerging from the multiple individual accounts.

In Chapter 7 I offer the **Interpretation and Discussion**. A summary of the research is presented, followed by a review of the research process**.** Difficulties encountered during the research are outlined and discussed in relationship to the solutions that were used to overcome them. I review the findings in relationship to my original purpose and goals to determine how the results are relevant to my original interests. I also make recommendations for further work emerging from the data.

Chapter 8 provides a **Conclusion** summing up the work.

Chapter Two
A Reflection to Begin

2.1 Concrete Experience

When I started this project I thought I knew what I wanted to research about the Action/Reflection model in the life of the Centre for Christian Studies' (CCS) learning community: where it came from, how it was used, how it has evolved, and how it is still influencing those who learned it and now use it. A new perspective on my research became apparent during the data gathering stage when I was interviewing a member of the program staff at CCS. We were talking about how students engage with the model as a tool for their own learning, and we had the following exchange:

> Lori: "Some [students] use it in their field placements, some people don't. And so it's available. It's taught. It's encouraged and some people will choose to use it or not."
> Sherri: "Or they'll just do what they have to do."
> Lori: "And that may well have been the case when you were a student as well."
> Sherri: "Probably. I was so busy having a good time with it, I never noticed anybody else."
> Lori: "I really hated those reflections. I could have easily not done them."
> Sherri: "That's very funny." (Stewart 2009 np).

Those last three words caught my attention but I did not check what she meant by them at the time. I think it was because the interview was not supposed to be about me, or so I assumed. We moved on in the interview to other things, but I began to ponder her words, to reflect. I discussed this comment with the critical friends I meet with. They helped me realize that this research begins with the CCS Action/Reflection model in *my life*, not just the broader life of the learning community. In fact, I am one of the people who learned it and now use it.

2.2 Reflective Observation

I was caught off guard by Sherri's words. This experience prompted many questions for me. Why is it so funny? Is it because I say I hated it, yet I am now doing research on it? I imagine she was amused because there's an obvious interest demonstrated by my choice of topic. Does my curiosity about the CCS Action/Reflection model belie my stated earlier position about hating reflection?

Her words also got me thinking about all the times I have turned to this model for planning in my work; when designing and then leading an evaluation and planning process for a social ministry; when teaching in a university setting; when supervising

theology students who needed to integrate practical work with their studies; when designing an event to help people reflect on an experience and turn it into subsequent action; and when beginning this EdD. This assignment not only spurred my thinking about research but it also invited me to revisit the reflection method I knew. If I indeed "hated" those early reflection exercises at CCS, why was I now turning to that very process as a familiar guide for doing this assignment? Which led me to ask, "Whose story is it I am really telling?" as I began to write about the CCS Action/Reflection model.

It puzzled me to note my apparent interest in the face of my earlier ambivalence. I really had disliked doing those weekly written reflections back in 1985. Now I began to wonder why. I decided that partly it was because writing a reflection was a weekly assignment, constant and unrelenting. It felt like a duty rather than a pleasure or choice. Another thing I recalled was that back then I found the process itself to be frustrating. I often got to the Abstract Conceptualization part and wondered where to go with it. How was I going to quickly come up with relevant theology or theory? In those early days I often expressed an aversion to theory, which compounded the problem. Once I'd ploughed through that theorizing and arrived at the Active Experimentation part it pushed me to do something, but I never felt like I had time in an already packed academic schedule to add more. It didn't seem at that time that incorporating this insight into a new way of thinking was adequate as action. Something more concrete seemed to be required but the things I could think of to do seemed limited. All in all, reflection in this form felt like a burden rather than a natural, helpful process.

It appears that something has changed in my perceptions of reflection over the years since I was a student. I no longer have the same feelings as I remember about reflection. I've discovered that I enjoy discussing, reading, and thinking about theology and theory when these concepts can be applied in practical ways. Reflective self-examination leads me to conclude that not only have I changed since those student days, but possibly I benefitted more than I had ever acknowledged or been conscious of, from my earlier immersion in reflection at CCS.

The incident reminds me of a parable written by Jerome Berryman (2002 pp127-131) in which a traveller comes across a well in the desert. When she leans over the well she can feel the coolness on her face but she can't see the water far below. She notices that there are bits of gold cord strewn all around the well on the sand. Once the short pieces are gathered up and tied together they provide a rope with which to lower an abandoned bucket to access the water in that deep well.

2.3 Abstract Conceptualization

The practice of carrying out this research has been like noticing, gathering, and joining the scattered strands of insight, truth, knowledge, and experience into a functional rope for reaching a deeper, previously inaccessible understanding of reflection, both in my life and the life of the wider CCS community. It's been a process of self-discovery, which requires effort. When I first considered doing an advanced degree, the obstacles seemed too great: the cost, no accessible location, my own fears and sense of inadequacy. Then I read a quotation by Hugh Nibley on a brochure for a Master's program offered at the university where I worked. It said, "Only if you reach the boundary will the boundary recede before you. And if you don't, if you confine your efforts, the boundary will shrink to accommodate itself to your efforts. And you can only expand your capacities by working to the very limit" (nd np). Recently I read something similar, "Going outside our comfort zone is not about going to a place but rather embarking on a journey that involves continually challenging our assumptions and expanding the boundaries of what feels comfortable to us" (Scott 2010 np). Entering this program, much like taking time for reflection, has been a process of challenging my previous comfort zones and shallow assumptions in order to grow as a person.

I am not sure how, but the struggle to learn something that is difficult or disliked or uncomfortable often leads me to change that brings benefit. It may not be immediately obvious either. A wealth of experience in my life and worldview over a number of years has brought me to this place of acknowledging a new relationship with the Action/Reflection model. How I arrived here is not immediately obvious to me.

I think of the story of the unnamed Samaritan woman told in John 4: 1-42. She comes to the village well as part of her ordinary, everyday life and is there invited by Jesus to think about her deeper, spiritual life. It begins when Jesus asks for a drink. Right away this request pushes one of many boundaries in this story, in this case, the boundary of enmity between their two tribes. The Jews and the Samaritans would not normally share a cup, so the woman is puzzled, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan---so how can you ask me for a drink?" (Today's English Version p 128). Jesus says,

> "If you only knew what God gives and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him, and he would give you life-giving water [other translations say 'living water']. "Sir," the woman said, "you don't have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where would you get that life-giving water? [...] Jesus answered, "Those who drink this water will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them

eternal life." "Sir," the woman said, "give me that water!" (Today's English Version p 128-9).

There is something about his invitation and her decision to accept the water that Jesus offers that is transformative. Taking a closer look at the passage, I notice that Jesus invites the woman's deeper reflection on everyday ways of thinking about racial segregation, religious differences, marital relations, and even ordinary well water. I can't discern all of the steps of the Action/Reflection model but I do see aspects of it. For example, the woman describes her experience (CE); she identifies her perceptions of what is going on, Jesus challenges her assumptions, and she connects what he shares to other experiences she's had (RO); she associates what he says to theological understandings and Jesus points to new theology that prompts the woman's new awareness of what is truly important in her life (AC); she acts decisively, leaving her water jar and going to tell others from her village so that they can meet Jesus too (AE). She finds it is the decision to take up a life of following Jesus that quenches her thirst for something more, something spiritually satisfying in a profound way—it is so important and fills this woman with such joy that she can't keep it to herself. It is not only a personal transformation but it is lived out in community, initially in the discourse with Jesus, and later as she shares her experience with others in her village. She comes seeking ordinary water and finds something beyond what she could have imagined for her life. It transforms all aspects of her living.

Similarly, in the Berryman parable, the water in the well is hidden, possibly forgotten, and untapped, but when discovered, the water is refreshing and thirst quenching in much the same way that learning something life-changing is transformative. For me it is like coming to the realization that it seems to be a myth to say that I hate reflection. I now know it to be life giving and a profoundly insightful process when engaged in diligently. The reflection using the Action/Reflection model, then, is like the rope and bucket—it represents the potential for reaching deeper meaning (living water). This gift was offered to me as a student at CCS, and I learned to use it to drink the water. Looking back on my student days, I realize that there was a great deal going on in terms of struggle to come to new understandings, the loss that comes with change, the challenges of new learning, and the crazy workload. Transformation that touches all aspects of one's life is not easy, so it's not a surprise that there's an ambivalence associated with everything about this time, including reflection. Somehow, though, reflection, like the taste of living water, has prompted me to turn to it over the years. I realize that it really does lead to life-giving insight and new action. It taps into deeper, spiritual resources to prompt new ways of living in the muddle of the everyday.

Everyday assumptions about marriage, worship, and women's roles, are pushed in the Samaritan story. Reflection too is a process that pushes boundaries. It pushes me to consider the implications, examine the assumptions, contest the received truth and societal norms, unpack power relationships, and think beyond individual considerations to community ones. Dewey says reflection is "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (1933 quoted in Cranton 2006 p 33). Reflection can lead to transformative learning which Mezirow defines as "a process whereby previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better validated" (2000 in Cranton 2006 p 2). These theorists suggest that reflection impels an examination of well-established patterns of thought and behaviour in an effort to find out where they impose constraints (boundaries) and where space can be made for new, deeper insight.

2.4 Active Experimentation

I am writing this "Reflection to Begin" with the intention of examining my own relationship to reflection. The main action is to proceed in writing my thesis, realizing that I am able now to embrace reflection as an important tool both personally and professionally. This new understanding means it assumes a position of valued practice rather than a mundane weekly duty. (The reality is I had to write those early reflections as an assignment rather than from choice.)

In the research process there are unlimited opportunities for reflection on all aspects of my work. It begins by paying attention to my own process of writing as much as to the topic I am writing about. I will use my learning journal in a disciplined way to note experiences and feelings, especially when there are obstacles that keep me from my work or stall it. These reflections do not need to be long to be valuable, but they do need to be regular. Patterns may emerge from several entries that prove valuable in sorting out a problem I am experiencing. Bolker (1998) suggests that it is important to carry on an ongoing dialogue with your writing. She suggests daily writing with regular review and reflection on what you've written in order to discern overlapping thinking. Of course this is also part of being a reflexive researcher.

As I said earlier, reflection is work and must be engaged in regularly to become part of practice. I find I am becoming more aware of when I reflect intentionally, as a mental process. An example occurred recently when I was working on a sermon for a

congregation in a difficult period of transition. I wanted to encourage folks but also invite them to push boundaries and go where it is uncomfortable to be as a congregation. I was unsure how to put it together until I stumbled upon a key idea while reading congregational life theorist Dianna Butler-Bass's foreword in *Leadership in Congregations* (2007 pp ix-xv). She said every congregation has one or more stories that they tell themselves. It is the leader's job to help them find the stories that will lead to growth rather than stagnation. This insight helped me put my experience in leadership with this congregation (CE) together with the feelings I sensed the congregation members had and those I had (RO) by providing some theory and pointed me to an appropriate Scripture, which provided a jumping off point for further theologizing (AC). This reflection provided the groundwork and the sermon wrote itself with only 15 minutes of concentrated effort. The action (AE) was the preaching of the sermon, which provided an opportunity to test these ideas with the congregation. Many people said they found the sermon to be what they needed to hear. The lesson for me, as I contemplate helping CCS find one of its foundational stories, is to pay attention to, even trust, my own reflections as I research and write.

I had an experience in the last few months where I was stuck in negative emotions, blaming someone else for how I was feeling. I was going around and around thinking about the experience and how it felt as a result. When I stopped and intentionally moved into the AC part of reflection I was able to shift from concentrating on my own feelings and broaden my perspective on what was going on. I notice that reflection, rightly done, is not a personal or individual activity. In order to move beyond one's standard way of thinking, it is important to find ways to expand the dialogue with the insights of others. This can be done through reading, prayer, and discussion. I was able to bring other voices into this reflection through the theory I had been reading, theologizing, input from a group of critical friends I gather with to discuss this research, and commentary from three readers.

I think I find the AC part difficult because it asks me to expose and examine the beliefs underpinning my feelings; to identify what assumptions may be leading me to wish for a different outcome; to examine perceptions; and to ask "Where or what do I need to change in order to come to a new understanding?" These are hard questions to entertain and sometimes hard to answer. They can provoke avoidance, but when engaged fully can lead to new ways of acting. In this particular case it led me to forgive the other person and move on, although I am aware that the process is not over yet.

For me, reflection seems most necessary and urgent when it arises out of experiences where difficult things like discomfort, resistance, and dilemma surface. I am discovering that rather than becoming stressful problems, they can be resources for growth and transformation. They are also powerful motivators for my own self and societal examination. Engaging in reflection is taking on new meaning as a way for "choosing to learn", "making connections", "empowering and creating energy", and "living out the learning" (CCS 1984 p 1). Sometimes it still feels like a burden or duty, and it's still frustrating trying to come up with relevant theology or theory, but now that it's not an assignment needing to be handed in each week, I can take my time to contemplate and ponder what is going on and why, leaving it for awhile and returning to ponder further. I can collaborate with others on my reflections in order to "reflect in community" when I get stuck. This will mean keeping closer contact with critical friends, supervisor, and talking with others as the opportunity arises.

I realize sometimes reflection requires greater effort, depending on the complexity of the situation (and my own resistance to examining it); other times it's easier to do and then it seems like a natural, helpful process.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

In keeping with this project on the CCS Action/Reflection model, the literature review takes a reflective rather than an argumentative turn. Josselson and Lieblich suggest that this is a place to bring ideas together in an exploratory dialogue:

> To hold the tension between personal and theoretical knowledge, to straddle the line between a necessary openness to phenomena that are as-yet-unknown and theoretical sophistication that, loosely held but firmly integrated intellectually, stands in the wings to illuminate the interviewees words, readings of the texts, and understandings of the narrative that will emerge. (2003 p 263)

As an overview of the field preceding the presentation of data, the review of literature outlines ideas, prompts broader thought, sharpens awareness of the critical issues relating to reflection, and provides a chronicle of the importance of the research (Yates 2004 p 72). At the same time it does not say everything there is to be said about the topic in order to leave room for curiosity about that data and to allow for new theory to be encountered along the way. Thus, reading the literature becomes part of an ongoing process of researching.

This chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical elements that were brought together to form the texture of the Action/Reflection model. It shows this theory, which is part of the heritage and history of CCS, as it was at the time the model was first being shaped. The purpose of this section is to reveal the hidden threads that have been laid down to support the tapestry that is the model. The next part of the chapter shows reflection as an established methodology woven into the fields of education and theology, and demonstrates the ways in which it has contributed to learning there, especially as a critical activity for challenging social assumptions. Finally, I look at some empirical studies of the use of reflection in theological schools, and discuss the successes, dilemmas, and the emerging questions educators have encountered in using reflection in theological education. The research points to a need for further research on reflection, to which this project on the CCS Action/Reflection model can make a contribution.

3.1 Action-Reflection at the Centre for Christian Studies

The CCS model has a number of theoretical influences and contributing concepts, starting with Freire's (1970) thought in which praxis keeps action and reflection in dialectical relationship, adding Solberg's (1974) work on theological reflection, and Kolb

and Fry's (1975) Experiential Learning model. The insights of staff and students at CCS have woven these ideas, together with new theory they developed, into the fabric that has become the Action/Reflection model. I will explore these theories, each with theoretical strands within them, as they relate to the importance of action and reflection.

When I began to ask questions about the CCS Action/-Reflection model I knew very little about its origins. I learned more in conversation with Gwyn Griffith and from a letter in which Helene Moussa (1983) laid out some of the history of its formation.   The story began in 1974 when a new, more socially conscious, curriculum for theological education was introduced at CCS (MacFarlane, Crombie, and Campos 1991 p 121), influenced by emerging adult education methodologies, feminism, and other global liberation movements (Griffith 2009 p 185). The new program of study was, "(1) Experiential—especially in Core [a participatory learning group], and (2) one which applied the problem-solving theory/method, otherwise known at the time as the "Paulo Freire method" (Moussa 1983 p 1). In the fall of 1974 students beginning this new program at CCS were asked to read a chapter from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to learn about the concept of praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970 p 33).

The word praxis has its origin in the classical world of Aristotle, for whom praxis (πρᾶξις) referred to one of the three human activities engaged in by free citizens. Each of the three disciplines, classified as theoretical (theoria), productive (poiesis) or practical (praxis), offered a way for a reflective person to relate to the world and a different way of knowing. Praxis knowledge emerged from thoughtful, engagement in a social situation where the outcome was action. In the present concept of praxis, action and reflection are united dialectically so that knowing arises from reflection on or in social engagement, which leads to new action (Freire 1970 p 68; Groome 1980 p 152, 154). But it is more than action based on reflection but rather action that demonstrates certain attributes: respect for everyone, dedication to well-being for all, and seeking truth (Smith 1999 np). In this more focused meaning, praxis involves the total commitment of the whole person, head, heart, and lifestyle in living "an ethical life within a political context" (Groome 1980 p 154-5). In Freire, Marx's influence is felt in the idea that philosophy that only describes the world is irrelevant. It is only legitimate when it is integrated with action for change (Marx 1845 np).

3.1.1 Paulo Freire's contribution

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher, lawyer, and educator, developed an educational theory that emerged from his experiences in adult literacy training for poor workers in Brazil, and in later courses where he experimented with education for liberation (Freire 1970 p 17). Freire observed pressures towards "un-freedom" that dehumanize and deny people their ability to be free agents who are able to create their own futures. He believed it was possible to intervene through education, which he called "the practice of freedom", to overcome the limitations to full human existence caused by the structures of oppression embedded in society (Freire 1970 p 62). The practice of freedom depended on praxis, a key idea for the purpose of this study, with its movement between reflection and action, and goal of transforming the world (Freire 1970 p 33). In the reflective motion, people identify themselves within their social situation, which is named, questioned, and critically analyzed. The move to action takes place collectively as part of the struggle for a better reality or for changing the situation and the self in it. Subsequent evaluation of the effectiveness of the action takes the cycle back around to reflection. Praxis involves both reflection and action, together (figure 3.1). Each without the other is insufficient. Action without reflection leads to acting without thought for activity's sake; reflection without action leaves out active commitment to transform the world (Freire 1970 p 68-9).

Figure 3.1   Freire's idea of praxis
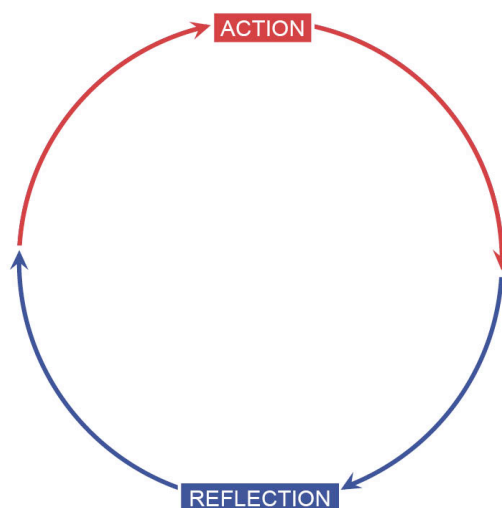
Freire believed that education can never be ideologically neutral; it either indoctrinates students to conform to the dominant system or it invites learners to bring a critical, creative perspective in order to transform the way things are (Shaull quoted in Freire 1970 p 16; Freire 1995 p 77)). Praxis leads to "conscientization", which is not simply

social consciousness but a process of becoming free by recognizing contradictions within society, and breaking out of the established values that privilege some over others in order "to be, to feel, to know, and to speak for themselves" (Glass 2001 p 19). Freire's education for freedom involves a process where the participants collectively choose a situation of oppression they experience so that it can be questioned, discussed, and reflected on together critically. In this kind of problem-posing dialogue the teacher functions as a facilitator who honours the participant's knowledge and sets aside expertise. As learners are invited into a community where the teacher learns and learners teach they are no longer isolated individuals (Freire 1970 p 53, 63). From that communal reflection will come their plans for engagement in the struggle to change the situation (Freire 1973 p 30).

Within the North American context Freire's theories were widely embraced in a depoliticized form as a pedagogy for the non-poor thus denying them their critical edge; however, they have also been used to question dominant ideologies in education (Giroux 1983), to empower the working poor (Arnold & Burke 1983), in conjunction with emancipatory feminist educational theory (hooks 1994), and within liberative theological movements (e.g., Methodist Church Center for the United Nations Women's Project). At the Centre for Christian Studies, Freire's praxis model formed the pedagogical methodology of Core using problem-posing, dialogue, conscientization, reflection, and action to seek social transformation in the Canadian context. It was also the starting place for the formation of the Action/Reflection model, which rooted reflection in critique of hegemony, social analysis, and the collective experience of the oppressed.

3.1.2 Solberg's "Model for Experiencing Theology"

While Freire's idea of praxis was integral to reflection on learning at CCS, the contributions of Ken Solberg's (1974 p 4) four-stage reflection model provided additional detail that helped "to enable [students] to experience theological meaning in ordinary events" (Solberg 1974 p 2). It became another resource employed at CCS for individual and group reflection with a specific theological focus. It was reported that people at CCS first encountered Solberg's material through continuing education workshops on experiential theology led by Ken Mitchell (Griffith 2008). The participant's guide outlining the process originally came in a kit with a leader's manual and cassette tape, both no longer available (Solberg 1974 p 1).

Solberg, a minister and the director of a house church in Waco, Texas, designed his "Model for Experiencing Theology" as a theological reflection process to help people let

go of the doctrine and belief systems that stifled Christian action. It was based on right brain learning and was intended to help the members "begin to trust what showed up in the heart" (Solberg 2011 np). Once people were internally motivated to be compassionate, to love, and to take action, he felt it was possible to tap into intellectual strategizing to "carry out the heart's desires" (Solberg 2011 np). While his model emerged from the experience of a house church community, it took a far more individualistic and internalized approach to reflection than Freire did. But both started with human experience and had the goal of action.

This model is depicted in a diagram (Figure 3.2) showing four points, each corresponding to four of the steps for "experiencing theology" in the booklet. These sessions, with the goal, "to enable you to experience theological meaning in ordinary events" (Solberg 1974 p 2), helps guide people through a theological reflection process beginning with reflection on the ordinary experiences of life in order to derive theological meaning.

Figure 3.2   Solberg's Model for Experiencing Theology (Solberg 1974 p 4)
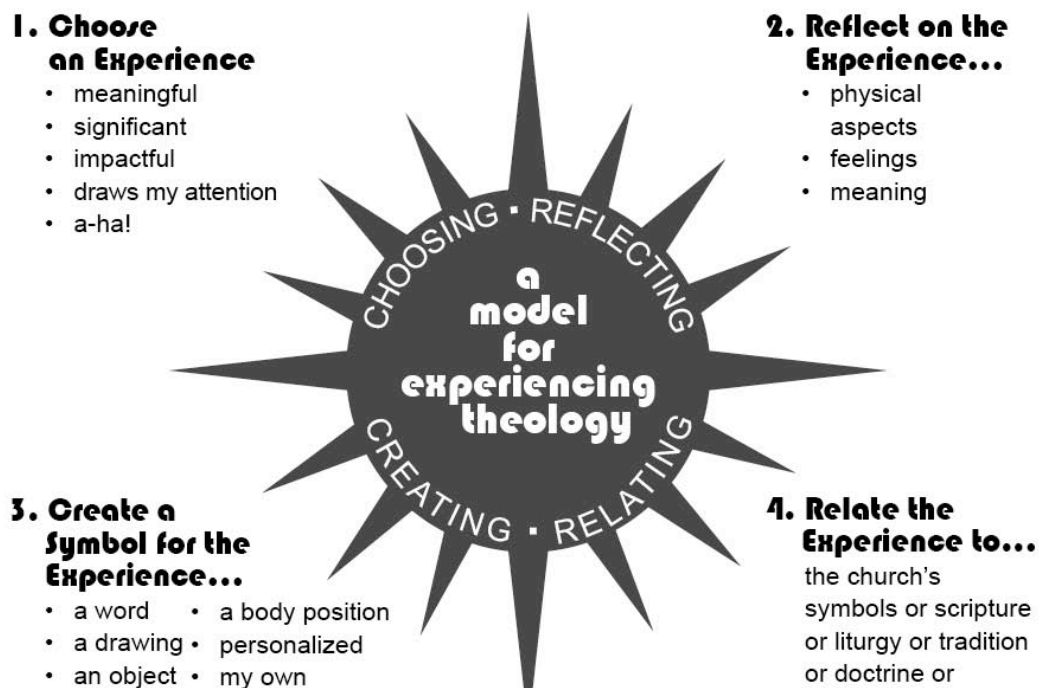
Solberg names Bonhoeffer, Van Peursen (1969), and existential theology as theoretical influences; however, the diagram also bears some resemblance to Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning Model (Solberg 2011 np). The following table shows the two in parallel (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1   Solberg's Model for Experiencing Theology Model with Kolb & Fry's Experiential Learning Model

The steps in Solberg's Model	The steps in Kolb and Fry's Model
Choose an experience	Choose experience
Reflect on the experience	Observations and reflections
Create a symbol for the experience	Formation of abstract concepts and generalisations
Relate the experience to the church's symbols or Scripture or liturgy or tradition or doctrine or history of my faith. Choose a new experience and repeat the process	Testing implications of concepts in new situations

In comparing them, it appears that there are overlaps and similarities. In step four they diverge, with Solberg emphasising theology and Kolb and Fry experimentation. However, both point to new situations. Solberg's guidebook asks participants to choose a new experience and repeat the process, which could provide an opportunity to apply new learning from the first experience.

Solberg added a theological element to the Action/Reflection model and gave shape to the reflective activity of each quadrant. At CCS, the lack of a direct action step was a perceived weakness in the model and was addressed by adding a fifth Action point influenced by Freire's praxis theory and to some degree Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning model (Moussa 1983 p 2). Solberg has indicated that even though it doesn't say so explicitly his original intention with this model was to help people move to action (2011 np). When it was initially added to the CCS Action/Reflection model, the invitation to bring resources of faith to reflection on experience (from step 4) included Solberg's broad categories e.g. the church's symbols, Scripture, or tradition. Later it was decided that the reflection on theology needed more detailed and specific questions.

3.1.3 Kolb-Fry's Experiential Learning Model

David Kolb, a professor of organizational behaviour working in the contexts of academia and business, made contributions to understanding adult learning from within that milieu. Together with a university colleague, Ronald Fry, he developed a theory of experiential learning which included a model of the learning process and an inventory for recognizing different learning styles (1975). Important building blocks of this theory came from the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget, whose contributions will be explored briefly.

From **Dewey**, an American academic, psychologist, philosopher of education, and social commentator, comes an emphasis on experience in education. In response to rapid social changes, he encouraged a shift from the tradition of knowledge-driven education in which a teacher drilled students on the right collection of facts, to a more progressive model where education focused on the learners and arose from their experiences and motivations. His ideas flattened out hierarchies of knowledge. Learning happened when experience was approached with reflective thought, which he defined 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' (Dewey 1910 p 6).

Dewey's process of reflecting had five steps, which he identified in the following way:
1. A felt difficulty concerning incongruity, incompatibility, and anomaly in our experiences
2. Observation to determine the character of the problem: its location and definition
3. Suggestion of a tentative preliminary solution after cultivating a variety of alternatives from what is known (knowledge)
4. Applying reasoning to develop the implications or consequences of suggested solutions (judgment)
5. Experiment and further observation leading to a solution's acceptance or rejection (purpose) (after Dewey 1910 p 72-78, 1933 p 69)

Kolb illustrates Dewey's model of reflection as a series of cycles that lead eventually to a final action (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3   Dewey's Model of Experiential Learning (after Kolb 1984 p 23)
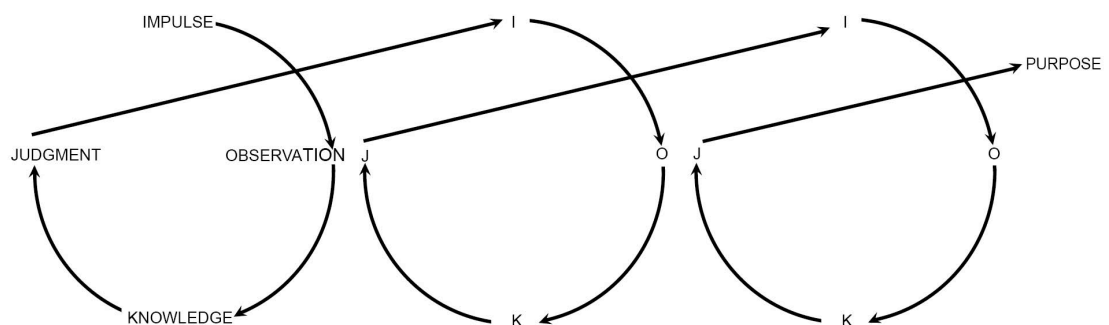
Lewin's background was as a social activist and professor of social psychology with influences from critical theory through the Frankfurt School. After his move from Germany to the United States, he worked on group dynamics, experiential learning, and Action Research methodology. In a 1946 study (Lippitt 1949 quoted in Kolb & Fry 1975 p 35), he coordinated a two-week training course in leadership and group process with

a research component. The researchers were part of the daytime group sessions, but they met separately in the evening to discuss their observations of group process. When group members asked to be part of the evening discussions, the researchers discovered that the group members' perceptions of what was going on were different from their own and in fact deepened their understanding of the group dynamics. This experience led to the insight that optimal learning needs the tension between concrete experience and theoretical analysis (Kolb 1984 p 10), as well as feedback and perception checks to assess assumptions (Smith 2001a np, Yalom 1995 quoted in Smith 2001a np).

Lewin's research method, called Action Research, was designed so that practitioners could engage in research on the real activities of their work in order to discover "the value of their own actions and how they could be improved, as well as developing theories for solving social problems" (Dickens & Watkins 1999 p 128). The model follows a spiral of repeating cycles moving "back and forth between ever deepening surveillance of the problem situation (within people, the organization, the system) and a series of research-informed action experiments" (Dickens & Watkins 1999 p 128). The successive loops of action research bears some resemblances to Dewey's work. Lewin's model of action research (Figure 3.4) influenced the design of Kolb's model.

Figure 3.4   Lewin's Action Research Model (after Kolb 1984 p 21)
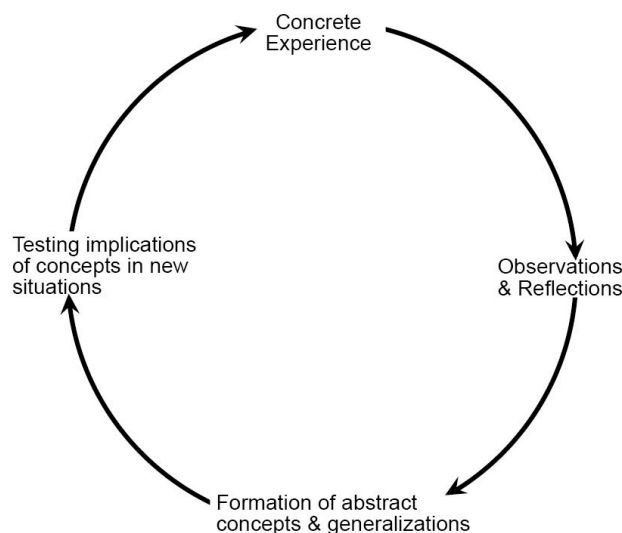
Piaget was a Swiss psychologist with a background in biology and philosophy who studied cognitive development in children in order to learn how knowledge increases as they grow. He noticed that the experiential interaction between the children and their environments was essential to their intellectual growth (Piaget 1988 p 4). He

determined that their "system of knowing" could be identified at successive phases in their growth process. Kolb identified Piaget's central contribution to experiential learning theory as "his description of the learning process as a dialectic between assimilating experience into concepts and accommodating concepts to experience…The process of cognitive growth from concrete to abstract and from active to reflective is based on this continual transaction between assimilation and accommodation" (1984 p 18, 23) which is depicted in Figure 3.5. It is from Piaget that Kolb and Fry borrowed much of the language they used in their model for experiential learning.

Figure 3.5   Piaget's Model of Learning and Cognitive Development (after Kolb 1984 p 25)
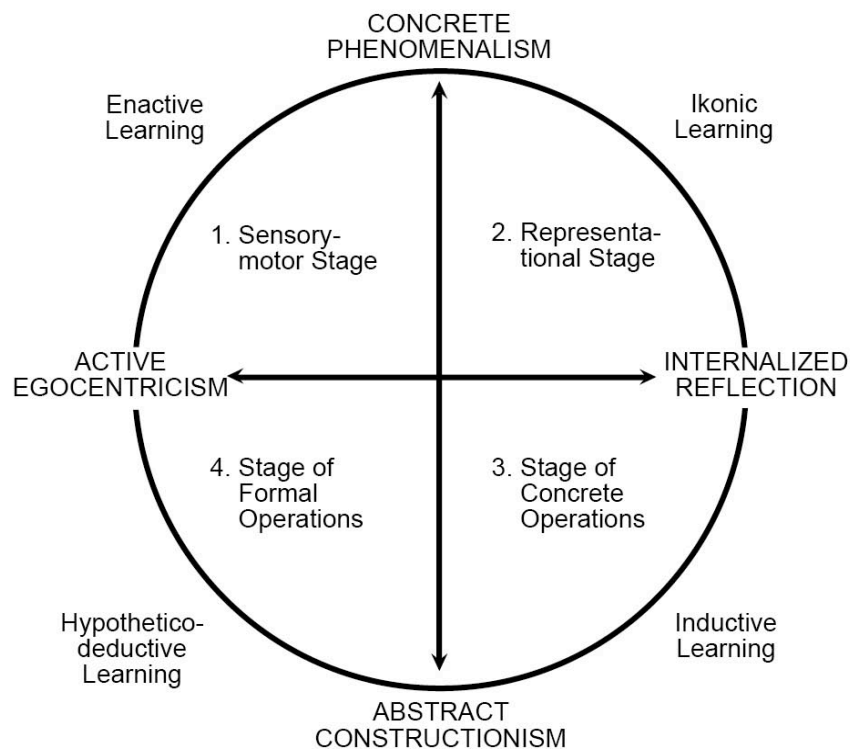
Kolb brought ideas together from each of these theorists to come up with the following statements about experiential learning:

- Learning is a process, which is continuous, rather than an outcome.
- Learning originates from experience.
- Learning requires the learner to resolve tensions between dialectical ways of adapting.
- Learning is holistic and integrative.
- Learning involves the interaction of the person with their environment, which constitutes "experience".
- Learning is about the creation of knowledge. (Kolb 1984 pp 25-38).

Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning model integrates Dewey's theories of experiential learning, Lewin's ideas about Action Research, and the four adaptive modes in Piaget in such a way as to pay attention to the interaction between different aspects of learning (concrete experience, abstract thought, reflection, and action) and the challenges they place upon the learner (Kaves 2002 p 7).

Kolb's model of experiential learning has the following components:

a) The axes or crossed arms describe the dialectical tensions learners must wrestle with and resolve between two ways of understanding or processing information. These involve action or reflection on the West-East arm. The North-South arm features two ways of knowing or thinking about things: concrete experience or abstract conceptualization (Figure 3.6) (Atherton 2011 np, Chapman 2006 np).

Figure 3.6   A diagram of the Axes of Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning Model (after Kolb & Fry 1975)
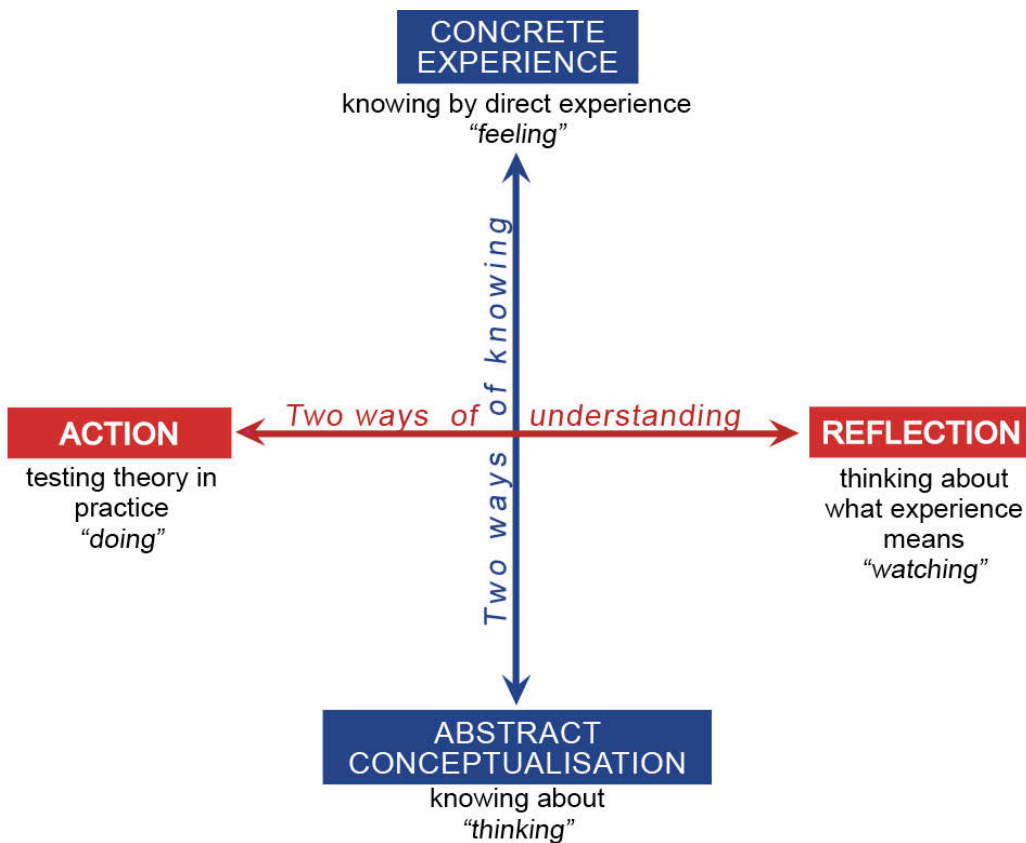
b) The cycle of experiential learning is depicted as a circle (overlaid on the previously described crossed arms), describing the four steps of learning (Figure 3.7). Learning can be said to be integrated when the learner moves around the cycle to engage all four parts of the model:

1. Concrete Experience (CE)—an individual has a direct practical experience or takes an action
2. Reflective Observation (RO)—the learner engages in data collection, observation, and reflection about the experience
3. Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)—the learner analyses, and looks at general rules or principles about the experience, or applies known theories to it
4. Active Experimentation (AE)—application of the analysis through taking action in a new situation or modification of the next occurrence of the experience. (Kolb & Fry 1975 pp 33-4, Atherton 2011 np, Smith 2001a np)

Figure 3.7   A diagram of the cycle of Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning Model (after Kolb & Fry 1975 p 33)
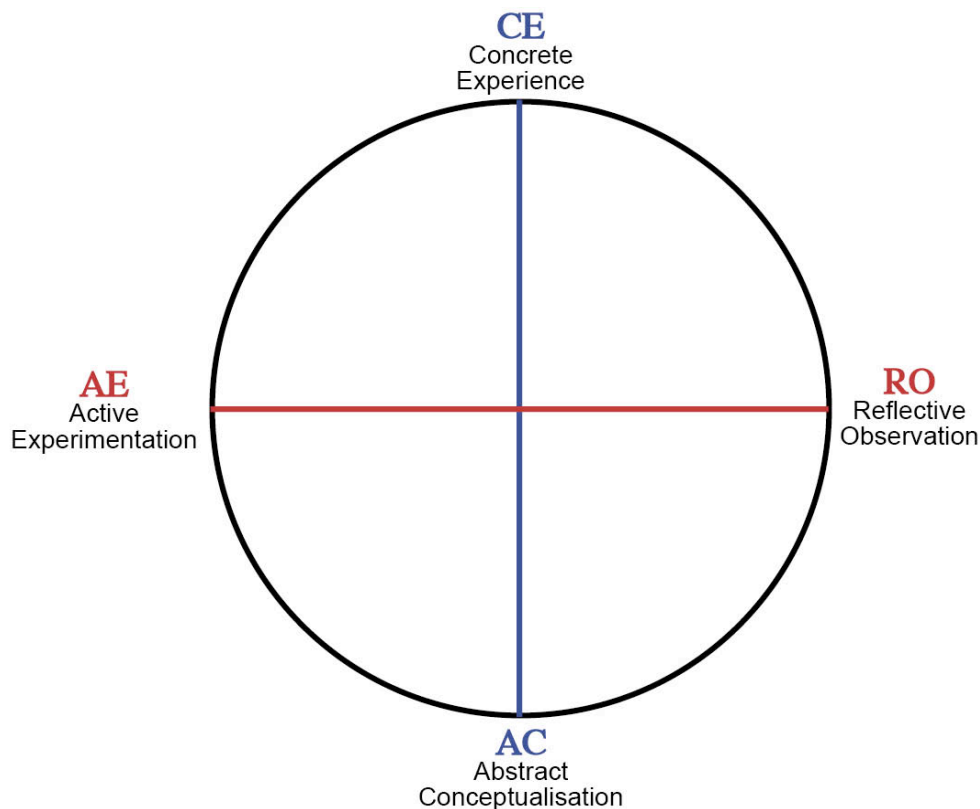
c) An individual's learning style is determined by their preference for resolving the conflicts between the two ways of knowing (CE or AC) and the two ways of understanding (AE or RO) depicted on the axes. Each person has developed what Kolb and Fry call adaptive modes (1975 p 37) determined by their characteristic way of addressing these dialectical tensions. A person's preferred learning style normally locates them in one of the four quadrants formed by the cycle and axes (Figure 3.8) (Eickmann, Kolb & Kolb 2004 p 4).

Figure 3.8   A diagram of Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning Model indicating Learning Styles
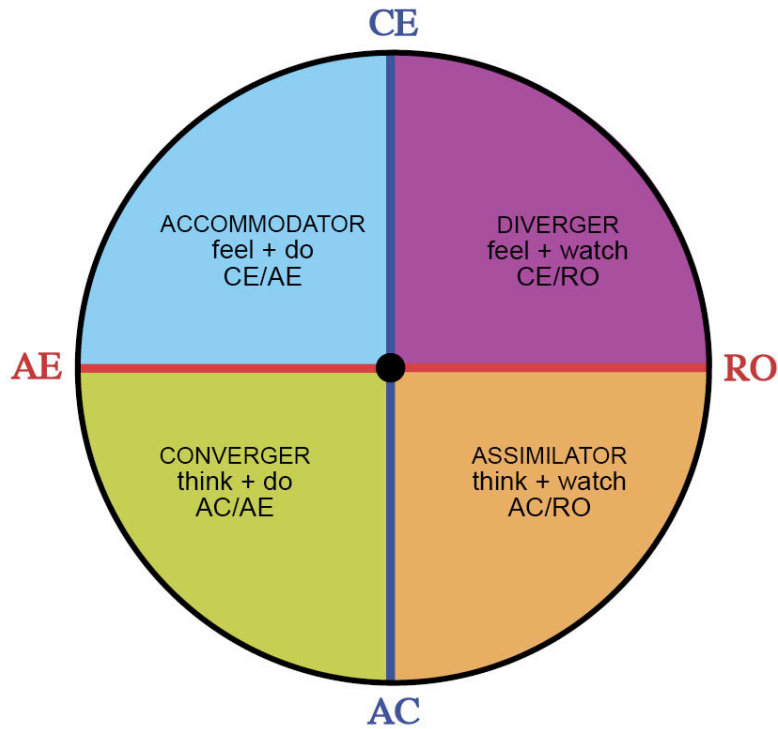
In the North East section the learning style is known as the Diverger, in the South East is the Assimilator, in the South West is the Converger, and North West is the Accommodator.   Each is characterized by particular strengths in the ways they learn.

Diverger   Strengths in CE and RO (feel and watch) expressed as imagination, generating ideas, expanding possibilities

Assimilator   Strengths in AC and RO (think and watch) expressed in creation of theoretical models, integrating ideas, practical use of theories

Converger   Strengths in AC and AE (think and do) expressed as practical application of ideas, focusing and specializing

Accommodator   Strengths in CE and AE (feel and do) expressed as carrying out activity, adapts to circumstances, seeks solutions intuitively (Adapted from Kolb and Fry 1975 pp 38-9, Chapman 2006)

Kolb and Fry note that the likelihood of someone having strengths in AE and RO, or CE and AC is less frequent because, being on the same axis, they are negatively correlated. It sometimes happens that people do have these combinations but the researchers do not address that eventuality in their early work (Kolb & Fry 1975 p 38).

While learning styles are not directly related to reflection, they are integrated into work with the Action/Reflection model at CCS. Students are urged to know where their own

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style preferences lie and to take into account other people's styles in planning learning sessions. It is suggested that knowing how they learn best can help students optimize their preferred way of learning and build skills for learning in quadrants where there is less comfort. It also helps those planning for the learning of others to move out of their comfort zones to teach and give feedback in different ways that best meet the needs of all of the participants (Eickmann et al 2004 pp 7,8). Beyond formal education, the learning styles can indicate how people adapt to daily life, and the ways they prefer to solve problems or make decisions (Kolb and Fry 1975 p 40).

There have been a number of critiques of the Experiential Learning model and learning styles. One of the most relevant for this study is that this model does not pay enough attention to reflection (Boud et al 1985). In fact the theory development at CCS sought to address this gap. The CCS model relies on the structure of Kolb and Fry's model for its shape, overlaid with other theory to "conceptualize how we [came] to understand how one learns from experience" (Moussa 1983 p 2) and adding the emphasis on reflection. All of these theories have been contributors to the Action/Reflection model; however, as it has been used in the CCS context and reflected upon, it has been added to and changed in such a way that the new model is not the same as any of the originals.

3.2 Action/Reflection in the literature

The literature concerning education in different disciplines uses a diversity of terms for "reflection" such as reflexivity, reflectivity, reflection, critical reflection, and praxis (Hatton & Smith 1995, D'Cruz Gillingham & Melendez 2006, Freire 1970). For the purposes of this paper, these are defined in the following ways:

Praxis: Groome calls praxis "'reflective action', that is, a practice that is informed by theoretical reflection, or conversely, a theoretical reflection that is informed by practice…The term praxis attempts to keep theory and practice together as dual and mutually enriching moments of the same intentional human activity" (1980 p xvii). Sometimes praxis is used as a synonym for either practice or action. In this document reflection is understood to be an integral part of praxis, in keeping with Dewey and Freire's usage, where action and reflection are kept in tension.

Reflection: Reflection is often used in place of the concept of praxis and will be

used here in this way. It is the process by which a person intentionally explores the emotional and cognitive complexity of a significant experience using a variety of sources and theory to engage and test responses, assumptions, and new interpretations, together with the resulting modified or new action (based on Boud Keough & Walker 1985, Hatton & Smith 1995, Brookfield 1995).

Critical Reflection: Critical reflection adds the deliberate scrutiny of power & hegemonic assumptions to the reflective process (Brookfield 2000) and commonly moves beyond individual to social aspirations. This is an important aspect of the way in which reflection is practiced at CCS.

Reflexivity: Reflexivity, reflection, and critical reflection are sometimes used interchangeably. D'Cruz et al discuss three variations on the word reflexivity in the literature to explain this confusion: 1) "an individual's considered response to an immediate context and making choices for further direction", 2) "an individual's self-critical approach that questions how knowledge is generated and, further, how relations of power operate in this process" and 3) insight gained from appreciating "the dynamic relationship between thoughts and emotions" (2006 pp 74, 80). These definitions point out a confusing range of meanings, therefore, this term will not be used.

Reflectivity: Reflectivity refers to the ways in which researchers engage in reflection within their work in order to discern their personal involvement in knowledge construction (D'Cruz et al 2006 p 85).

The lack of clarity about the meaning of concepts relating to "reflection" demonstrates that it is theory still in development. Meanings, therefore, cannot be assumed but must be spelled out with as much clarity as possible, which is what I have attempted to do here.

3.2.1 Reflection in education

The literature shows that reflection is promoted widely and is assumed to be essential to student learning in the educational programs of a wide array of disciplines including teaching (Moon 2004), theology (Stoddart 2004), social work (D'Cruz, Gillingham, Melendez 2006), architecture (Schön 1983), business (Jordan, Messner, Becker 2009), computer science (Perschbach 2006), and nursing (Williams 2002). The theory that

follows assumes that reflection contributes to student learning; however, it is a contested question. Moon says that reflection is involved in some forms of learning but not all learning (2004 p 84). For example, there is continuum between surface learning where the abilities involved relate to superficial noticing, and deep learning where the reflective process is engaged in making meaning that leads to "modifying cognitive structures" or transformation (Moon 2004 p 77).

However, reflection is firmly ensconced psyche of educators as a significant contributor to learning and once students begin their professional lives they are encouraged to be reflective in order to be successful as practitioners. Similarly, qualitative researchers are urged to engage in reflectivity in order to be aware of how they are present in the unfolding research. Because of the scope of uses, approaches to the practice, theoretical underpinnings, and purposes reflection can have, there is a wealth of material on the subject in the literature. This part of the review will seek to distil the range of the field into a brief overview of the theory pertaining to reflection as a tool in education.

To help with this task, I refer to Lyons (2010) who has developed a conceptual template showing three historical threads that have influenced theory, practice, and research about reflection: 1) reflection as a kind of thinking (Dewey 1910, 1933); 2) reflection as a way of knowing in action (Schön 1983), and 3) critical reflection as "the conscious interrogation of the social, cultural and political environments of learning" (Lyons 2010 p 4) leading to transformation (Freire 1970, Mezirow 1991, Brookfield 2005). I am using Lyon's template (2010 pp 3-24) as a framework for understanding reflection in the contexts of education and professional practice. While it is a helpful way of discussing some key theorists' work, it is limited in scope, omitting feminist discussions of reflection. These have been picked up in the section on theological reflection.

- **Reflection as a kind of thinking**

As we have seen in the earlier discussion of Dewey, he understood "reflective thought" to be a cognitive process for problem solving (Dewey 1933 p 118). In his theory the affective part of a human being was engaged when a discordant emotion signalled a problem and reflective thought was initiated in order to restore a feeling of harmony (Dewey 1933 p 15). Such reflection was a combination of intellectual reasoning and action in the world (Schön 1992 p 121). Education had a role in helping people learn "how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habits of reflecting" (1933 p

35). While Dewey acknowledged that reflection involved action and rational thought processes he didn't take into account emotional or spiritual ways of knowing.

- **Reflection as knowing in action**

Schön contributed to theory about reflection by looking at the kind of knowledge professional people need in order to do their jobs effectively. He studied a small number of skilled professionals in various fields, observing what they did in their practice; what they knew tacitly but could not say. He identified two concepts, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action, that contributed to their success (Schön 1983 p viii). Reflection-in-action was the ability to reflect in the midst of the spontaneous demands of work life, by "engaging in a reflective conversation with the situation" to manage a developing problem competently (Schön 1992 p 21). Following that experience, reflection-on-action was useful to ponder what happened, assess the solutions used, and work out what might be done another time. Practitioners framed problems specifically, used reflection that was immediate and intuitive in the midst of action, applied and tested theories in an ad hoc way, and reflected on experience afterwards. One critique of Schön's theory is that it is not clear if reflection-in-action carries the same intentionality that is associated with reflection-on-action, or whether reflection on action can advance knowing-in-practice. Schön showed a kind of reflection that is responsive to emerging circumstances and that is more than having the right technical knowledge.

- **Reflection as a means of transformation**

Freire (1970) was interested in the pairing of reflection and action in a dynamic way that was responsive to complex situations. But as with later theorists, Mezirow and Brookfield, he wanted to move beyond Dewey's concept of reflection as cognitive activity leading to internal restoration and Schön's ideas about reflection for addressing problems, to name reflection as a critical means of transformation.   He believed that all of society needed to be transformed and that could only happen through the critical reflection of the oppressed, which would raise consciousness and lead to action that would free people to become fully human:

> Apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly
> human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention,
> through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human
> beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.
>   (Freire 1970 p 53)

Rather than emphasising problem solving for internal restoration (as Dewey did) or problem framing as a means of seeking solutions (as Schön did), Freire focused on problem posing as a means of helping learners move from uncritical immersion in everyday reality to critically analysing their experiences of systemic oppression. Freire believed education could not pretend to be neutral but needed to empower learners to challenge oppressive power dynamics by engaging in critical reflection for the transformation of the world. Critical theory, social analysis, dialogue in community, and collective action all are significant in Freire's concept of reflection.

A brief look at Brookfield's work shows that he tackled the dilemma of how to transfer Freire's philosophy of critical reflection to a North American context. It is Brookfield's contention that reflection itself is not by definition critical and only becomes so when it seeks a political agenda by intentional examination of power relationships, ideology, and hegemonic assumptions (2000 p 125,128). The process of critical reflection thus entails 1) identifying assumptions, 2) checking accuracy and validity by exploring as many different perspectives, viewpoints, and sources as possible, 3) taking alternative perspectives, 4) taking informed actions (Brookfield 2006). Transformation happens when there is "a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts" (2000 pp 139-40). It is quite different from reflection leading to new insight or a deepening understanding because it is about a change in the fundamental premises on which one's thoughts or actions are based. It "focuses the process of thinking on power, justice, empowerment, agency, self-realization, and community renewal" and promotes engagement in places where these values are being undermined, including in educational settings (Preskill & Brookfield 2009 p 46). Brookfield has gone in a different direction than his mentor, Mezirow.

Mezirow has been critiqued for maintaining a more individual focus to reflection because the transformation he talks about involves an internal change of perspective and not social action; however, he says his theory is concerned with addressing the social constraints on learning (Tennant 2006 p 127). We all have habits of the mind, which act as filters through which we make meaning of the events in our lives (2000 quoted in Cranton 2006 p 23; Mezirow 1990 p 1). Reflection most often begins with a disorienting dilemma that disrupts our habits in such a way that they no longer fit (Mezirow 1990 p 13). There are two possible responses when faced with an experience that doesn't conform to previous expectations: "to reject the unexpected or to question the expectations" (Cranton 2006 p 19). When the second option is chosen, reflection can be useful to puzzle out new ways of being in response to these disruptions. As with Brookfield, Mezirow also distinguishes between reflection and

critical reflection, but without the political point of view (1998 p 185-6). Reflection involves reviewing or being attentive to an event, emotion, viewpoint, assumption, or way of doing something. The object of critical reflection adds an examination and assessment of underlying premises for decision-making within one's frame of reference. The focus turns to testing what was learned in the past to see what remains valid in the current circumstances. This kind of reflection can prompt a perspective transformation, which is:

> The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow 1990 p 14).

The role of the educator is to be that of a "provocateur" who helps learners confront dilemmas, challenge contradictions in their own belief and action, and move beyond their expressed needs to the underlying motivations behind them (Mezirow 1990 p 365, 366).

At CCS there are elements of both a personal and political approach to transformative learning that impact the discussion of reflection and support the inclusion of Mezirow with Freire and Brookfield. However, there is a strong allegiance to Freire's more critical approach to reflection linking it with social analysis.

- **Reflection as non-cognitive knowing**

A reflective thread that is not part of Lyon's typology must be mentioned here. Several studies have found that theory on reflection leading to transformative learning has tended to grant too much weight to rationality and critical thought strategies (Scott 1991, Brooks 1989). Taylor reports that a review of studies on transformative learning has shown the necessity of recognizing other ways of knowing which include intuition (touched on by Schön), emotion, empathy, connected knowing through relationships, and whole person learning (1997 p 48-9). For example, feminist pedagogy changes the focus from "rationality, to one that emphasizes learning through relationships and affective ways of knowing" (Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley 2000 np). The latter refers to the "awareness and use of all functions we have available for knowing, including our cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual dimensions" (p 171 in Taylor p 48). Dirkx's (2001) study of the importance of soul work, spirituality, and creative imagination in transformative education confirms that reflection can help learners make

meaning through "a complex and dynamic interaction between the learners' unconscious inner selves and their conscious selves" (Dirkx 2001 p 16).

From these theoretical threads come several ideas that are relevant to the use and design of the CCS Action/Reflection model. Reflection involves 1) thinking reflectively; 2) tapping into knowing-in-practice; 3) critiquing and analysing hegemonic assumptions, ideologies, and power relationships; 4) moving beyond reflection to a politicized expression of critical reflection; and 5) the dialectic between personal and social transformation; and 6) acknowledging a diversity of ways of knowing in reflection, including spiritual ones. These insights lead naturally into a consideration of theological reflection in the next section.

3.2.2 Theological Reflection

Theological reflection is not merely an appropriation of a secular discipline but has its roots in the way Jesus taught (Maughan 2004 p 128). Jesus engaged the disciples and his community in a critical conversation between the faith tradition, their own values and beliefs, and the contemporary situation (Pattison 2000, Maughan 2004). His manner of doing theology was an action/reflection process that turned to contextual life experiences first, rather than relying on the religious law, for opening up creative encounters with God and finding appropriate compassionate responses. He demonstrated the value of reflection in ministry.

Theological reflection bears some similarities to reflection in education but also has some important distinctions relevant to the task of theology. Theology can be defined in various ways, from Anselm's "faith seeking understanding" to Nolan's "nourishing faith and strengthening hope by reflecting upon the presence of God in our context" (1991 p 18) or to Dickey Young's "the fully reflective and fully critical task of helping individuals, […], to understand and articulate the Christian witness of faith adequately for their own time and place" (1990 p 58). All of these definitions implicitly link theology with reflection as a way of analysing experiences arising from everyday life, perceiving the world and oneself in it more clearly, and responding from some kind of faith perspective. Within the Christian tradition all of those who live their lives as followers of Christ are invited to live reflectively in relationship to a community of faith; to thoughtfully, even prayerfully, join with others to bring together what they believe with what they do so that God's love and justice may be brought to bear in every situation. Reflection is also invited of those in leadership within the church as a critical activity to provide thoughtful guidance to the practice of ministry. That is where the primary focus in the next section will be.

In 1966 Fielding's *Education for Ministry,* pointed to a gap between what students in theology were learning and the ministry that was needed in local churches, thus provoking theological schools to look for ways to prepare students to more effectively respond contextually (quoted in Smith M 2001b pp 29, 31). One strategy was to turn to practical theology, which had an emphasis on theological reflection. Reflection began to be embraced as an essential part of theological education (Wong et al 2009, Whitehead & Whitehead 1995, Pattison Thompson & Green 2003, Stoddart 2004). The North American accrediting body for seminaries, now lists "the capacity for critical and constructive theological reflection regarding the content and processes of […] ministry" as a primary goal for the education of students in Masters programs in Religious Education or Specialized Ministries (ATS 2010 pp 114, 117, 120). Not only as an aid student learning, it's also seen as an important resource once people become ministers so they can develop reflective practice (McAlpin 2009, Swinton & Mowat 2006, Patton 1990, ATS 2010) and for the religious education of lay members of churches as they strive to be disciples (Stone & Duke 2006, Groome 1980, Killen & DeBeer 1994). In this part of the literature review I concentrate on reflection as it is used in theological education.

Theologians, theological educators, and religious leaders in the Christian tradition do not always agree on the character or process of theological reflection (Pattison et al 2003) and a range of approaches, methods, and purposes have been proposed. This may be because it has multiple manifestations: as a perspective, a skill, and a process (Croft & Walton 2005 np). Since it begins with the experiences of life and moves to concrete action, it "works out of specific contexts rather than working with generic truths…it aims at practical action not theoretical ideas" (Kinast 2000 p1). With an infinite number of contexts, and a multiplicity of people reflecting there are also numerous approaches to doing theological reflection that have different priorities and overlapping similarities. In the next section, rather than looking at all the methods for reflecting, I attempt to examine the nature of theological reflection: its priorities, values, and goals as it is found in feminist and liberation theologies, practical theology, spiritual wisdom traditions, and ministerial formation. Following that I discuss empirical research in which the effectiveness of reflection for student learning and ministerial formation has been studied. These studies provide critique and direction for the work of this study.

- **Feminist and Liberation Theologies**

The new wave of feminism that emerged in North American in the 60's and 70's touched every aspect of life including theology, where women sought to name their place within their faith traditions. The body of work that encompasses feminist theology is characterized by the value it places on experience, particularly the experience of women; an awareness of how power is used and misused; an encouragement to ordinary women to "do" theology; and a hermeneutic of suspicion. The underlying premise of this work is an understanding that traditional theology has not taken account of women and women's perspectives.

Feminist theology gives priority to women's voices in naming their experience within the Christian witness, long dominated by men's perspectives. Within feminist theology, reflection has become a critical tool for the examination of assumptions of privilege and analysis of who has power, who benefits, whose voice is heard, how privilege is maintained systemically, and how those who have no power are oppressed. Reflection in this tradition is not a solitary, contemplative activity but rather a collaborative effort to "do" theology. It starts with naming the experiences of women, analyses sources of subjugation, designs strategizes, and takes action. This kind of reflection implies getting involved directly and active engagement in social change (Dickey Young 1990 p 31). Questioning and suspicion are important tools feminist theology offers reflection. Because feminist theologians agree that sexism has skewed the Christian tradition, they bring a "hermeneutic of suspicion" that probes behind the meaning of expressions of faith to determine the political interests they serve (Grenz Guretzki & Nordling1999 p 60).

Like feminist theology, liberation theologies use critical reflection as a means of seeking social transformation. Within oppressive contexts, theology involves confronting and resisting forces of evil, including personal complicity in them, based on the social justice imperative in the Bible (Potter 1985 pp 11, 13). In this tradition theological reflection attends to the plight of the poor, the consequent benefits to the rich, and asserts that God has a special concern for those who are powerless. In the 1970's, Base Christian Communities in Latin America encouraged ordinary people living in poverty to gather to do theological reflection themselves. These circles featured a dialogue between their named experiences and the Bible through "seeing-thinking-acting" (Kater 2001 np). They related "the biblical story to their own cultural stories, legends, myths, songs, and theatre that have arisen from their lived history of struggling for justice. As they did so, it affirmed for group members, who were mostly women, the value of their viewpoints and ways of reflecting, "It seems that our feminine

process of seeing-thinking about Life and the Bible is very original. It is much more contemplative and intuitive than mediating and rational. It is closer to a hop than to two steps" (Méndez-Peñate 1992 quoted in Kater 2001 np).

Theological reflection in these traditions begins with the collective experience of marginal groups, brings a critical lens that questions assumed notions of power and privilege, invites theological engagement, gives voice and empowers action for change.

- **Practical Theology**

Practical theology was introduced to theological schools as a move away from traditional theology where practice is derived from theory (e.g., religious tradition, Scripture, doctrine, and philosophy) and towards a theology of practice that arises within human experience in the Christian community. It is not a unified field but all practical theology focuses on experience, uses theological reflection as a tool (Lynch & Pattison 2005 p 151), and approaches situations with a hermeneutic of suspicion (Swinton & Mowat 2006 p v) analogous to "questioning assumptions" (Brookfield 1995 p 2). Unlike systematic theology, which presents an organized, finished product, practical theology is much messier and is never complete; it neither says everything that is there to be said, nor does it stop.

Reflection in this tradition seeks to uncover new insights in two ways: first, by making people aware of their embedded theologies which constitute those unquestioned convictions assimilated from the church and society, and second, by helping them move to more deliberative theologies based on the examination of a range of perspectives (Stone & Duke 2006 pp 13-17). The idea is to delve below surface thinking to find the hidden truths that emerge from deconstructing tradition, critiquing ideology, and examining assumptions. Reflection seeks to create a "multi-dimensional picture" of a situation which is "thick, nuanced, complex" and deep (Groome 1980 p 185, Todd 2000 p 36, Farley 1979 p 70). Theological reflection in practical theology is attentive to questioning the meaning of experience in light of Christian faith; bringing those interpretations into dialogue with diverse wisdom from sociology, psychology, or education; and seeking critical awareness of the adequacy of the new perspectives (Stone & Duke 2006 p 27, Todd 2000 p 44, Tracy 1975, Pattison 2000).

- **Spiritual Wisdom**

Countering an Enlightenment view of theology as a rational exercise, spiritual wisdom offers a counterbalancing tradition, which says it is faith knowledge that connects human existence to God (Groome 1980). Theological reflection in this tradition is

a self-conscious, intentional act in which one seeks to know God and be known by God so that one can love God and others as God loves […] Because of the possibility (and even the hope) for […] transformation, the person engaged in theological reflection seeks not only to grasp truth more deeply but to be more deeply grasped by truth. (Warren et al 2002 p 324).

As such, reflection becomes a form of contemplation where God is the focus and listening for God is as important as paying attention to theory (Swinton 2004 np).

The nature of reflection can be described as a "critical conversation" in which various sources of God's revelation are engaged, including the community faith tradition, the world context, the contemporary situation, and the spirituality of the person reflecting (McAlpin 2009 p 7, Pattison 2000 p 136). For some, this reflective conversation is akin to prayer (Killen & de Beer 2002, Whitehead & Whitehead 1980). Looking at the similarities and differences between prayer and theological reflection in pastoral care and counselling settings. O'Connor and Meakes found that theological students, community clergy, chaplains, and pastoral counsellors all indicate that they pray and do theological reflection, but the lines between them are "blurry" (2008 p 500). These practitioners merge the two as they seek integration and transformation for the people they work with.

McAlpin also found that a prayerful approach aids in integration of new learning (2009 p 22). In her study of a group who engaged in regular theological reflection, she reports that the participants found the experience not only deepened their faith, it helped them work for justice, and became a profound experience of ongoing conversion, a spiritual version of what Mezirow calls transformation (2009 p 102).

The tradition of spiritual wisdom invites people to reflection that will engage their belief in God in an interactive way, to bring deep imagination, prayer, and faith understandings, and to make meaning from their experiences.

- **Ministerial Formation**

Formation has to do with "learning a way of life carried by a tradition, embodied in a faith community, cultivated through practices over time" (Wolfteich 2007 p 7). Theological schools and field placements provide formation, which consists of handing on the vocational and cultural means by which people are prepared for a life as ministers. Fostering theological reflection in students preparing for ministry is a common goal of theological colleges (Wong et al 2009) but beyond the goal of encouraging learners to approach their studies reflectively, there is an additional goal

of fostering reflection as a resource for them once they become ministers in pastoral charges so that they may respond contextually to situations as they arise (Lynch & Pattison 2005 p 151).

Theological reflection is esteemed in ministerial formation for the following reasons:

a) It bridges the gap between theory, theology, experience and practice.
b) It ensures the application and critical interrogation of theological ideas.
c) It allows practitioners to acquire and retain a proper critical perspective on their practice.
d) It offers the possibility of helping to transform situations, persons and understandings and enhances interest in ordinary practice.
e) It offers ways of systematically and routinely assessing ideas, situations and experiences so that practitioners work in a self-conscious, self-critical way.
f) It might be held to be the distinctive activity that enables practitioners to become and remain professionally competent.

<div align="right">(After Pattison et al. 2003 p 121)</div>

Others suggest that theological reflection can contribute to a healthy sense of pastoral and personal identity, becoming an aid to self-development, Christian growth, and even transformation (Collins 1984 p 95, Le Cornu 2005 np). However, the reality is that when people are busy, they rarely reflect because it takes time, structure, and an expectation to do so (Killion and Todnem 1991 p 14). Nonetheless, the aspiration persists because it is thought that "to the extent that one reflects critically on one's theology in the context of a faith commitment, one's theological vision will permeate more thoroughly one's life and its activities" (Collins 1984 p 94).

Stoddart's investigation of different approaches to reflection names these essential features of a "robust" model of theological reflection (2004 p 196): it must be publicly oriented; result in transformative action; be anchored to the Christian narrative; affirm difference in terms of positionality, provisionality, reflexivity, and alterity; draw on a range of perspectives; and engage with current social patterns (Stoddart 2004 p 196, 206). For Heywood theological reflection is "the key to learning from experience" and is placed in the curriculum for the education of ministers as a feature of "learning how to learn" (2009 p 166).

Theological reflection at CCS is integrated into reflection on learning in general, so that the Action/Reflection model is not usually named as a model specifically for theological reflection; however, the task of meaning making which happens in the educational process is often considered a theological task. The model encompasses a specifically

theological component, with questions that have been strengthened over the years. It also invites a social consciousness, values reflection in community, listens to diverse voices and sources of wisdom, and seeks transformative action. The nature of reflection at CCS is to hold in tension holistically many of the previously discussed reflective priorities so that it is feminist and practical and prayerful and educational. As such, my assessment would be that it possesses the qualities Stoddart (2004) identifies as being part of a robust model of theological education. But it is more than theory—reflection at CCS is used actively in the education and formation of students. The next section will look at studies of reflection in theological schools to see whether reflection has been found to do what it is purported to do in forming theological students.

3.2.3 Research on reflection in theological schools

Faculty members in theological schools are eager to encourage students who will become ministers to reflect theologically and think critically (Lynch & Pattison 2005 p 151) but it's not always easy to do. Researchers have found that students, while generally valuing theological reflection have difficulty understanding what it is (Smith 2008 p 25, Lynch and Pattison 2005, Pattison et al 2003) and struggle to reflect on their practice (Wong et al 2009 p 305). In one study, students were asked to describe their learning but they could not express the method or framework they used for reflection, or precisely identify their learning in terms of Kolb's experiential learning model (Lynch & Pattison 2005 p 152). Once they became ministers, Pattison et al (2003) found that graduates were unlikely to use the theological reflection method they had learned to support their pastoral work. They were generally adverse to it, given that the methods they had learned as students seemed irrelevant and caused them anxiety. On the other hand, they were positive about seeking the activity of God in everyday life, which could be deemed a reflective task.

In an effort to make connections between teaching a way of reflecting that students would be able to use and encouraging students to reflect, Wong worked together with colleagues in the Faculty of Theology of Ambrose University College to learn and use Groome's shared praxis model in all aspects of the theology curriculum (Wong et al 2009). They wanted to address the fact that, while reflection was expected, it had not been defined or modelled by faculty members in a way that students were able to understand. The task they set themselves was to not only introduce a model of reflection but to foster its effective use.

The faculty decided to do the work collaboratively as action research, meeting regularly

to reflect on the project (Wong et al 2009 p 306). The professors, within the context of their own particular teaching style, found ways to encourage students in their groups to dialogue about "their critical reflections on present action in light of the Christian Story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith" (Groome 1980 p 184). Integrating one method of doing theological reflection throughout the faculty and working collegially provided overlapping opportunities for students and faculty to work together on improving their use of this tool. In the process, the faculty members adjusted their pedagogy and achieved clarity about theological reflection—what it is and how to do it (Wong 2009 p 305).

Smith (2008) was not so successful when he taught theological reflection in a one-week course on practical theology at St. Michael's College Cardiff. The students began by reading a book on theological reflection but they found it confusing and were not able to identify what theological reflection entailed (Smith 2008 p 25). Smith and his students found that a methodology of theological reflection was less useful than coming to grips with what theology meant in the reflective process. They worked out that,

> Theological reflection was the identification of the doctrinal topic that can be used to make sense of, or enlighten, a specific context. The selection of the doctrinal topic is the key skill […] There is no attempt to find the one correct topic, but rather the one which will help deepen our understanding of the context" (Smith 2008 p 26).

Once theology was defined, it could be brought together with a methodology in order to reflect theologically. Smith also found that the quality of the verbal reflection in the classroom had more depth than the final individual written reflections submitted for assessment. He wondered if the assignment was not constructed in a way that enabled students to demonstrate their new skills. I would offer two alternate explanations: The students may have relied on faculty guidance in the classroom to be able to reflect, which was not available to them in their written work (Lynch and Pattison 2005). Alternatively, perhaps Smith's students learned more and reflected more deeply when they had the stimulation of collective reflection in the classroom with their classmates and instructor present.

Lynch and Pattison found in a study looking at what students identify as positive in their theological education that they valued learning that related to their personal and professional experience, context, and concerns; opportunities to reflect on experience; and that this was most likely when staff fostered such learning; however, they found that these students often lacked "a framework for understanding how critical reflection happens" (2005 p 148). Heywood (2009) established that, contrary to this kind of

difficulty reported in the literature, at Ripon College Cuddeson they had good success in both teaching theological reflection to students and in students being able to reflect on their practice. The approach they used was founded on the premise that "[Theological reflection] is the key to learning from experience" (Heywood 2009 p 166) and is necessary for the integration of new learning. Theological reflection was introduced intensively beginning in orientation week when students were asked to think about their own learning, and continued with a series of classes in which they learned Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning cycle, investigated learning styles with the LSI, and began to examine challenging incidents using relevant Scripture. A variety of methods of reflection were introduced beginning with a simple method and proceeding to more complex ones. Finally, students moved into weekly seminar groups where one student brought an incident and another led the group through a collective reflection process. At the end of each seminar they "reflected on reflection" evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the process that they used that day. Written reflections emerging from these seminars revealed that students had a good grasp of the reflective process and were able to wrestle deeply with the situations of ministry they are encountering in field placements. These theological students learned, successfully used, and remained committed to theological reflection throughout their studies and beyond.

Heywood's assessment was that they had positive results when students reflected regularly and consistently using a model that is similar Kolb's experiential learning cycle. He suggested that any method of theological reflection will echo Kolb's learning cycle (which may explain why Solberg's model is so similar to Kolb) moving from experience to action, even though it may emphasize different quadrants.   Pattison noticed that though reflection is a common theme in theological education many find it "has a mystic flavour to it, for the teachers who demand theological reflection, for the most part, find it very difficult to say what it is they are looking for" (2000 p136). Heywood pointed out, "The reason for the frequent finding that academic learning mystifies [theological reflection] is that the academic style of learning majors on just two elements of the learning cycle, reflection and concept formation" (2009 p 170). Pattison confirmed this observation when he wrote, "My own experience of working with students suggests that a traditional theological education may indeed inoculate students against being able to analyse experience and to explore creatively the gaps and connections between contemporary reality and the Christian tradition" (1989 p 7). The artificial separation of theory and practice in the academy may mitigate an integrated/holistic approach to formation for ministry.

Le Cornu suggested one reason educators in theological schools have trouble teaching and assessing theological reflection is that the outcomes of reflection are not well documented (2006 p 11) so that it is hard to know what difference it makes to their theory and practice when students are able to reflect. One change that may be able to be assessed is that as people move from conscious awareness of an experience through reflection, external knowledge can be transformed into internal knowing and meaning making which births existential change or transformation (Le Cornu 2006 p 14).   Two studies of student learning at CCS show the transformative potential of that program, in which reflection plays a significant role. In an exploratory study, Griffith reported action-reflection was a significant influence on students' movement towards an interdependent authority mode (1982 p 112). Her research showed that, "In individual written reflection, as one moves towards interdependence, there appears to be less concern about expectations from the outside and more willingness to dialogue" (Griffith 1982 p 120). Dodd's study of students entering the Leadership Development Module (LDM) examined the nature of transformative learning in the CCS context, where transformative learning was defined as "the development of revised or new understanding and critical reflection leading to a revitalized and integrated identity". Student responses gave evidence of, "A gain in considerable insight, both at the personal and political levels. The movement in critical thinking, and widening of awareness" that indicates transformative learning had happened (Dodd 2008 p 150). Critical reflection played a decisive role in transformed behaviour.

While transformed behaviour may be the goal of reflection, the research on implementing theological reflection in theological schools demonstrated that even teaching students to reflect was sometimes successful and at other times less so. They pointed to a number of critical issues for my research on the CCS action reflection model. Smith's (2008) experience showed that students had difficulty when reflection was not clearly defined. Even when the class decided that what made reflection theological involved drawing on doctrine, it seemed to be a rather limited and limiting definition. Reflection could have been easier if Scripture and other aspects of the Christian tradition were added. The fact that the course, though intensive, lasted for only a week perhaps did not allow the opportunity for immersion in the method or for sustained practice. In the end, the class was able to work out some of the difficulties in order to reflect together in class, however, this success did not translate into assignments that showed a depth of reflection. A number of explanations might account for these results.

Wong et al (2009) and Heywood's (2009) research demonstrate that reflection can be

successfully taught and learned. Both reported that students were able to reflect theologically in their respective colleges and Heywood found that students continued to do so after they graduated. Wong and his colleagues changed their pedagogy over the course of their project, suggesting that the faculty members were also learners. What are the factors that supported that learning? Wong and his colleagues integrated theological reflection into the whole program of the Faculty of Theology and all of his colleagues collaborated and reflected together on their practice. They used a common, clearly defined process of theological reflection, one Stoddart (2004) claims has all of the qualities of a robust method. Heywood's approach was different but he also found an effective way to introduce theological reflection to students. He was interested in encouraging students to reflect on their practice of ministry so that they could learn from the experience. Heywood linked reflection to learning and proceeded on that basis. As in Wong's setting, here too students were immersed in an environment where theological reflection was frequent and seems to have been valued by the faculty, although Heywood does not say others participated in teaching it or that it was used in other parts of the program. Heywood used Kolb as his basic method, adding various others that followed the same cycle. Students found it to be clear and easy to follow.

MacIntosh (1998) questioned whether it was possible or even valuable to teach students how to reflect as part of their learning. She claimed that "empirical evidence that the development of reflection in academic contexts has long-term and definite benefit to the majority of learners" is missing from the literature (MacIntosh 1998 quoted in Moon p 81). Although there is not much evidence, there is some. Todd found that to successfully teach students how to reflect theologically what is needed is:

> Confidence on the part of the facilitator(s) that leads in turn to
> confidence on the part of participants that theological reflection can be
> done by them; and a pattern or model of theological reflection that is
> workable, that can be grasped as a whole quickly, and which can be
> broken down into doable next steps. (2004 np)

The studies that are examined here seem to support this statement and point to questions that will be addressed in this research

3.3 Summary
There is a rich body of scholarship on the use of reflection in education and a few examples in theological education, which is the interest of the present research. I have been able to trace the theory on reflection in Freire, Solberg, Kolb and Fry, Dewey,

Lewin, and Piaget that have contributed to the Action/Reflection model, in order to uncover the threads that were initially taken up to begin weaving a new context-specific tool for reflection at CCS. Because words relating to reflection have variable meanings within the literature, I have identified those that will be used in this work. Using Lyons conceptual template I looked at some of the ways of thinking about reflection that have influenced theory, practice, and research in the field of education, namely reflection as a way of thinking represented by Dewey's work; reflection as a way of knowing as found in Schön; and reflection as systemic critique represented by Freire and Brookfield, adding Mezirow's more individualised approach to seeking transformation through reflection. Finally, I examined research that shows reflection as a way of knowing non-cognitively. Each of the theoretical strands helps to answer questions about how reflection has contributed to the field of education. Within these threads there run several strands relating to criticality in reflection including Freire's learning for freedom, Dewey's educational innovations, Lewin's influence from critical theory and interest in action research on social issues, Brookfield's approach to critical reflection, all inviting analysis and critical questioning of the status quo. Within the strands of theological reflection there is a persistent call to social justice as envisioned by the kindom of God.

When I scrutinized reflection in theological education I found that there have been many theological paths where reflection is featured. Practical theology and feminist/liberation theologies have contributed to reflection the values starting from experience, the examination of power dynamics, the concept of "doing" theology, and a hermeneutic of suspicion. Spiritual wisdom offers a pervasive invitation within theological reflection to a "critical conversation" with various sources of revelation. The growing tradition of using reflection in ministerial formation brings the discussion back to education, where reflection is a way of forming ministers for subsequent practice.

The overview of the theory begins to answer, "Where did the CCS Action/Reflection model originate and what are its sources?" and lays the groundwork for answering "How does it differ from or go beyond the earlier models on which it is based?" It also begins to respond to "How does reflection in general, and this model of reflection in particular contribute to learning and to theological insight at CCS?" by pointing to research supporting theological reflection as a learning tool, and other work that shows teaching theological reflection is not always effective.

The purpose of my research is to tell the story of one model used for theological education in a specific context, with the hope that it will provide some answers about

how reflection has been designed and used there. Is it effective in helping students reflect? That is the critical question that remains to be examined.

Chapter 4
Research Design

In my earlier reflection (Chapter 2) I reveal my own investment in the topic of this research; the ways in which it has been a puzzle and gift in ministry; and why I want to study it. In this chapter, I describe my position as a way of making transparent the relationship between who I am as a researcher (with values, interests, perceptions, and influences on the outcomes) and the research (Burns & Walker 2005 p 66). Having a position means I come to this study with embedded patterns of thinking which lead to attendant assumptions, theories, distortions, and perceptions about how the world works, the kind of agency I have, and how I interact with other people in it. Deeply rooted within my belief system are understandings about how things can be known and what truth is. Ontological, axiological, and epistemological aspects of my ideology have affected how I've designed and carried out this project. Kirby and McKenna point out:

> The act of interpretation underlies the entire research process. The act of interpretation is not something which occurs only at one specific point in the research after the data has been gathered; rather interpretation exists at the beginning and continues throughout the entire process. What kind of data and facts you are able to gather will depend on the kinds of questions you think are important to ask and the way in which you go about asking them. (1989 p 23)

That means my position has influenced every research decision I have made beginning with the selection of the topic. Morgan says it another way, "What knowledge we are able to observe and reveal is directly related to our vantage point, to where we stand in the world" (1983 quoted in Kirby & McKenna 1989 p 25). In qualitative research, scrutiny of such pre-understandings is a way to acknowledge and make visible the presence of this stance. It is also a way of accounting for the presence of my personal experience, thoughts, feelings, and actions in the research and contextualizing them. My hope is that, when I enter into the research, it is on as equal a footing with other participants as possible.

In this chapter I will share thoughts on my position followed by a consideration of methodologies, which might be said to match my positionality and the kind of research, I want to do. Finally, I will discuss the methodology I have used and how my positionality has influenced that choice.

4.1 Position

As someone who is heterosexual, white, able-bodied, educated, and employed I am a person of privilege. I am a citizen of Canada with the attendant social benefits of universal health care and free education. As a woman I have experienced discrimination based on sex, so I am committed to equal rights for women and girls, and conscious of other forms of oppression. I have also lived in Jamaica, which taught me a great deal about the major disruptions in equilibrium that can occur when an established set of expectations run up against different ways of thinking and doing things. That experience provided a profound introduction to the need for examining the assumptions I have and the position from which I come in order to make visible the lenses through which I view the world.

The first lens is a social one defining who I am and how I have been shaped in relationship to others. Growing up in a family where the church was central to our lives meant that the values promoted by Christianity have been part of my whole life and have influenced my thinking. The designation "Christian" can stir up all kinds of assumptions; there are many expressions of Christianity and many values associated with it. In my interpretative framework, being a Christian means I am a follower or disciple of the way of Jesus, attempting to live my life based on Kin-dom values (based in values of relationship and community rather than "Kingdom" with its overtones of hierarchy and imperialism). I am part of a church that has its roots in tradition but which has also become one of the more progressive denominations in Canada in its view and expression of the Christian faith. The social gospel has a strong heritage in my church, and in the part of the country where I grew up, wherein social responsibility is valued as an active extension of the faithful life in Christ. This has shaped my social consciousness.

Themes of divine blessing, community, global concern, faithfulness, discipleship, love, and justice permeate my discernment about how to be and what I know. As a Christian I am invited to not only believe but to live into these concepts as though God's dream of the Kin-dom were already here which means showing respect for all, seeking the resources (physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual) each person needs to live in peace, encouraging human agency, building community, loving God and neighbour, and caring for creation. Evil is related to situations that create inequity and injustice where human life and spirit is crushed. In the United Church Creed we assert that we are called "to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil". I aspire to live fully out of a spiritual connection to a God of love expressed in just relationships. My life as a person of faith is inextricably linked to my vocation as a diaconal minister, and has

formed much of who I am as a person and researcher

Diaconal ministers are called to a ministry of education, pastoral care, and social justice within the order of ministry of the United Church of Canada. My formation began with the theological education I received at The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) which "espouses a pro-feminist stance, affirms gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons (GLBT) and carries a commitment to liberative perspectives" (Dodd 2008 p 2). Its mission "to educate women and men for ministry that will transform the church and the world toward wholeness, justice and compassion" is expressed through a transformative pedagogy. My education at CCS has informed my ideological stance with the influences of a progressive approach to theology, feminist theory, and social analysis but not simply as tools in the diaconal toolbox but in relationship to the radical teachings of the prophets and of Jesus. Biblical texts such as, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6: 8) inspired my participation in God's intention for a world of peace and justice as a specific part of the calling for every diaconal minister.

The Diakonia of the United Church of Canada Statement of Vision speaks of a calling in diaconal ministry, "to offer compassion and accompaniment, to work for liberation and justice, to act as advocates of creative transformation" (DUCC 2009 np). In the pastoral charge where now serve, I am engaged in a caring ministry that seeks to discern and respond to places of pain and brokenness in the community of faith and in the world. Much of the way in which I carry out this work is in accompanying, or walking beside, people in the circumstances of their everyday lives. While I strongly identify with the diaconal vocation there are some parts of that calling that I have not fully entered into, in large part because of the inertia of privilege that tends to discourage and constrain actions that will shift the status quo. Freire says:

> "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can only be done by means of praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it". (1970 p 33)

I have been immersed in this world and have benefitted from the way it works, its assumptions, and assignment of power. Freire points to the need for intentional reflection on experience with its attendant consideration of alternate ways of knowing, analysis, evaluation, and transformative action. Without this deeper or concentrated focus the influence of immersion in learned behaviour will continue to exert its pull.

Reflection in community is one of the ways in which I come to know and act in new ways. This happens in my vocation through sharing with colleagues, in my spiritual life through study, prayer, and worship with other Christians, in my daily living beginning with experiences. Reflection involves examination of a situation, the consideration of other perspectives, bringing in theological and theoretical wisdom, and a faithful response that seeks wholeness, justice, and compassion in the face of suffering, estrangement, and disempowerment.

It was the reflective process that drew me to this research in the first place, and it has kept my attention. I started thinking about methodology by exploring the link to my education as a diaconal minister. I initially thought there might be a "diaconal way" of doing research. When I asked diaconal colleagues who are researchers which research methodologies they used that might be most complementary to a diaconal perspective, I discovered that no single methodology surfaced. Instead, they named different methodologies but justified them with common diaconal values that influenced their research perspective, including: collaboration, reflection and action, learning from experience, relationship, transformative learning, and empowerment (Stewart 2007 p 6) all of which are reflected in my own thinking. The values attached to our identities as diaconal ministers have been influential on our ways of being, thinking, and acting as researchers. Thus we are part of a diaconal research community with shared interpretive frameworks or assumptions (Somekh & Lewin 2005 pp xiii,1), but the beliefs we hold in common do not restrict me to particular methodologies. Instead methodological and other choices are made based on the interplay between my unique philosophy about knowledge, values, and reality and the particular research problem I am interested in. Kemmis and McTaggart note:

> The differences among research perspectives are not due to questions
> of the machinery of research (research techniques) alone; they are also
> differences of standpoint that reveal something of the location of the
> researcher in the research act…Different kinds of research serve
> different kinds of knowledge-constitutive interests (the reasons that
> frame and justify the search for knowledge through research).
> (2000 p 583)

It is the personal significance and particular passions I brought to questions about the CCS Action/Reflection Model that determined what methodology would be most appropriate for this research.

4.2 Research Methodology

In discussing theology, Stiver points out that postmodernity has changed the emphasis from striving for correct methodology to the *doing* of theology (2003 p 171). In this view "the purpose of methodology […] is not so much a blueprint to be slavishly followed as a map to be consulted only periodically" (Stiver 2003 p 171). An openness to questioning and the flexibility to change direction is appealing to my reflective point of view. This section will set out the methodological map that has guided my research.

This is clearly a qualitative study since my exploration of the creation of the CCS Action/Reflection model involves "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world [...] study[ing] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005 p 3). Determining other aspects of the methodology has been an evolving process of exploring, excavating, and layering. It has meant experiencing, describing, analyzing, and testing out multiple methodologies to figure out which one(s) might work best. The search has led me to what Sikes and Gale (nd) call "mixed genre work":

> "Mixed genre work can be considered as a form of triangulation in which
> scholars take from literary, artistic and scientific genre in order to try to
> give as rich a picture of the situation they are concerned with as
> possible. Mixed genres can make it easier to re-present the multi-
> faceted nature and the multiple realities there are in any area of social
> life" (nd p 22).

There is a messiness to such research where "flexibility, creativity, resourcefulness— rather than *a priori* methodological elegance—are the hallmarks of good mixed-method design" (Greene, Kreider, & Mayer 2005 p 277). Given my stance as a pragmatist and experiential learner, I am less interested in a particular methodology and more concerned with what works to answer the questions I am investigating (Cresswell 2007 pp 22-3). There is a certain intuitiveness and creativity involved similar to Schön's (1983) ideas about knowledge derived from artistry, intuition, and action of the practitioner.

In keeping with my diaconal formation influenced by the Action/Reflection model, feminism, and Freire, I felt a push toward a methodology that recognized that knowledge isn't complete until it results in action, rather than simply seeking knowledge for knowledge's sake. This research looked for transformative action in the sense that reflection on practice always has that potential. Transformative learning at CCS has been described as "the development of revised or new understanding and critical

reflection leading to a revitalized and integrated identity" (Dodd 2008 p 5). Understanding the role of the Action/Reflection Model at CCS carried the promise that, by uncovering the underlying grounds of pedagogical decisions over the years and seeking out that which remains vital for the contemporary context, it would prompt "revised or new understanding[s]" and a "revitalized and integrated identity" for the institution. In addition, in revealing a pedagogy that departed from the academic norm for many theological colleges it could be seen to be challenging the status quo with another approach to theological education. I have taken these values into this research.

I began thinking I was embarking on a historical journey since I wanted to document where the A/R model came from and how it had been used and changed over time. Borg defines historical research as "the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events (1963 in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison p 158). However, this positivist approach did not work for me since I was more interested in documenting the collective memory and meaning that was attached to the model by the community. This type of research seemed to fit with a narrative methodology involved in chronicling events and people's understanding of them over time. A narrative is able "to organize a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relation to that whole" (Elliott 2005 p 3). Narratives have a chronological progression, carry meaning, and are social: every story needs a teller and a hearer and every story is told for a particular audience (Elliott 2005 p 4). They also support reflection on practice because viewpoints are presented that disrupt prevailing assumptions and expected frameworks.

I looked at various narrative genres including Davies et al (2004) work in collective biography, developmental ethnography (Moschella 2008, Mason 2002), and Moore's version of ethology (2006).   Collective biography (Davies et al 2004, Davies & Gannon 2006) brings theory together with experience.   Davies uses a process where memories are shared, deconstructed, revised, and reshaped through telling, dialoguing, and writing. The stories are not mere documentation of individual lives, but an attempt to extend the imagination and understanding through shared reflection on a particular experience within a group setting (Davies et al 2004). I rejected collective biography as the methodology for this research because of its focus on individual stories and the difficulties of gathering a group of relevant people for an intensive story-sharing workshop; however, I was intrigued by the idea of shared reflection.

Moschella's (2008) approach to ethnography in pastoral settings presented the elements of listening, conversing, co-authoring, re-authoring, interpreting, and writing as a means of revealing aspects of church community that are often hidden, puzzling, or expressed metaphorically, which can result in deep transformation for those involved as these things are made visible (2008 p vii). This sounded promising, as did Mason's (2002) concept of research to solve a developmental puzzle. The concept of studying "how something developed in a particular setting" (in Moschella 2008 pp 57-8) clarified my goal of finding a meaningful explanation of the process of development that led to the CCS Action/Reflection Model.

Moschella's emphasis on narrative presentation in pastoral ethnography is aligned with Moore's (2005, 2006) ethological work. While ethology originally referred to the study of animals in their natural habitats, Moore uses an adapted form for studying congregations, seeking to discover the practices by which these communities "construct, transmit, critique, recreate, and transform themselves and their members in relation to the larger world" (2006 p 415). Her interest is in the ways in which community life is made up of a vibrant interweaving of traditions, values, and beliefs. Ethology is used, not so much to document the life of a community, but rather to find out how social behaviour has originated, what influences it, and to understand the complexities of interactions it engenders. This work bears some resemblance to my study because it is about institutional culture rather than the individuals in it; it is also about the dynamic nature of processes in community life, how people shape it and are shaped by it (Moore 2006 p 420). It resonated with my experience of the Action/Reflection model in the life of CCS.

Moore points toward listening to individual stories about the Action/Reflection model and then consolidating them into a complex communal story encompassing the contradictions, differences, and unique features of each. Similarly Craig (2000) advocates constructing stories of institutions in much the same way that narratives are created for individuals. When it is used this way, the narrative becomes a point of convergence, or composite, where individuals' interpretations of an institution meet even though contributors may represent different times and positions. Institutional narratives are different in texture than individual stories since they are "collected stories of collective places" and are in many ways "anonymous and communal" while they draw on experiential narratives of educators and students (Craig 2000 p 14).

There has been a thought throughout my search about using an Action/Reflection methodology in keeping with the subject matter and my own diaconal allegiances but in the end I decided not to pursue that avenue. All of my reading has been pointing towards a narrative methodology which seems like an appropriate direction since narrative, like reflection, is also an inexact art, yielding a wealth of rich data with many interpretive options (Lieblich et al 1998 p 9). In this research I will be listening to a variety of people tell stories about one topic: the Action/Reflection model. The purpose is to gather and weave them together into a new story that, instead of being a life history or individual story, will become an institutional story (Craig 2000). In order to hear the story of the CCS model, I have to tap into knowledge that is rooted in the people who are or have been part of the CCS community. I will be drawing together stories of the creation of the model as an educational tool, stories of reflection on learning and practice, and stories of how this tool has affected staff and students as a way of knowing and making meaning.

The notion of an institutional story draws on Halbwachs' concept of collective memory or group memory. He suggests that memory is organized both individually and "distributed within a group for which each is a partial image" (1980 p 50). The memories of an individual are placed within the context of a personal life, while group memories are ones that are significant to people who have a common, collective experience. This kind of memory represents the past "in a condensed schematic way" which relies on "putting together remembrances [so that] several people (or even one) may be able to describe very accurately facts of things that we ourselves viewed also but are not able to recall" (Halbwachs 1980 p 52). In drawing together stories from many people, the complexity of the Action/Reflection model in the life of the CCS community is remembered in a collective way thus counteracting society's tendency towards individualistic thinking or the assumption of universal experiences of community (Moore 2006 p 416).

4.3 Position in Relationship to Methodology

Mixed method research, where collective reflection on reflection becomes the material for a narrative methodology has the following characteristics: it is experiential, it invites storytelling, it creates community, it honours multiple voices, participants are treated equally, and it seeks meaning.

This research is experiential in several ways. It was experiential for me. It drew on my own knowledge, curiosity, and questions in exploring the model. When I started, I reflected on my pre-understandings and assumptions and discovered that there were things I needed to set aside so that space could be made for new insights to emerge in the interviews and participant observation. While planning went into the research design before I started, as an experiential learner I was able to adjust or make changes as I went along in order to respond to new information. It was also experiential for the research participants who were invited to reflect on their own experience. The staff, graduates, and students who took part all had expertise that came from their involvement with the Action/Reflection model, and each person had particular encounters with it that added to the story.

Stories appeal to the imagination and invite participation in a process of coming to know something with more than one interpretative option. The story I am telling is a composite one that each of the participants holds a piece of. Drawing the individual stories together into a collective account is a way of making meaning of their collective experiences and of showing how this model has contributed to the life of CCS in a comprehensive way. Since CCS has been a formative place in my own life this story has personal meaning. Storytelling is also the starting point on the Action/Reflection model as the reflector shares an experience that disrupts or catches the attention in the context of daily life. Reflection begins with the telling of the story of what was going on in a particular situation. This collective story of the Action/Reflection model is a story told by many voices in the community.

I have experienced community many ways: as a neighbour, as a diaconal minister with supportive colleagues, as a member of the church, and as part of the CCS community, which I define as the people who are associated with CCS as graduates, staff, or friends in the past and present. These associations have formed and influenced me in my vocation and everyday actions. I value them as a way to counter the tendency towards individualism in the society around me. This research has a community focus as dispersed memories held by numerous individuals are brought together and fashioned into a composite story. An aspect of the CCS community is reconstructed by drawing on the experiences of a range of members from different years: present students, grads, and some past and present staff. Some of them came together physically for a time in the Leadership Development Module and the focus groups, but many others only came together through their stories but the resulting story is a community effort arising from common memory.

Working with common memory means each person that was interviewed brought diverse priorities and perspectives. These were not blended together or smoothed over but presented with their contradictions and unique standpoints. It was a way for me to acknowledge that this is not my story alone but that "an actual event is only accessible through multiple subjective accounts" (Moore 2006 p 421). It was also a way to honour diversity and make a place for everyone in a small attempt at seeking equality for all. That meant that the compilation and interpretation of the multiple stories involved ongoing reflection in order to make room for disparate views, include all voices, and treat each person's material fairly.

This research is about meaning. Finding meaning is part of the human journey that is related to the spiritual life, and the impulse behind my work in ministry. It is clearly related to the values I hold, my relationships and faith. This research is about seeking meaning through identifying particular experiences or actions and attaching significance to them. It is more than a chronicle of historical happenings, but rather a reflection on experience and events that carry meaning. Part of the task of this research was to not only hear stories but find out what importance people attached to the events and experiences. Munro Hendry says that narrative research is a spiritual endeavour "that honours the sacredness of our humanity" and I would add that it also honours the sacredness of our human experience (2007 p 496).

My human experience has led me to focus this research using a narrative methodology because it has a connection to reflection. Reflection has had an important influence on my position. I have been immersed in the reflective movements so that each part of the model: experience and story; paying attention to feelings, symbols, and multiple perspectives; making connections through analysis, theorizing, and theologizing; and strategizing for action, couldn't help but inform the methodology. I incorporated these priorities by beginning with hearing participants' stories in written reflection papers, focus groups, interviews, and participant observation. The narrative was structured as a collective one bringing together all of the stories I had heard, analyzing for chronology, plot, problem and solution, contradictions, and insights. The goal was to create a community story that could be offered to CCS and its community as part of an ongoing commitment to reflection on experience and action in the world in order to change it for the better. My personal priorities and assumptions have been present at all times when making research decisions and interpretations. In all things I have attempted to keep a flexible and creative engagement in reflection leading to meaningful actions.

Chapter 5
Research Practices

Since the study was concerned with understanding lived experience of the formation and use of the CCS Action/Reflection model from the participants' own perspectives I want to hear stories of those involved. Therefore, enquiry began with inviting past and present academic staff and graduates to tell about their own experiences of the model's creation and evolution, how it was learned and applied, and its meaning to the CCS community. In addition to interviews and focus groups, I also observed new students learning the model at the Leadership Development Module. My position assumed:

- That the past involvement of graduates and academic staff (past and present) with the Action/Reflection model at CCS would constitute experience that could be remembered and shared.

- That observing new CCS students learning the model with current academic staff would reveal the present form and use of the model.

- That all stories could contribute to a larger, collective reflection that would narrate a community story of the Action/Reflection model.

- That these stories would reflect the meaning the model has for people connected to CCS.

The research follows a series of successive phases: 1) preparation for the research, 2) data gathering using a mixture of methods 3) data analysis, and 4) storytelling, each of which will be described in detail in this chapter.

5.1 Preparation

The preparations occurred in two parts, each of which will be reviewed more fully in the following sections. The first involved making arrangements for the research with the University of Sheffield, Diakonia of the United Church of Canada (DUCC), the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS), and with interview and focus group participants. In these early contacts field notes were kept recording ongoing thinking, impressions, and insights. The second component, the preparation I did as researcher, included and followed from the research notes I was making. At the beginning there were many decisions to be made which required thoughtful attention. All through the research, I was reflecting-in-action on preconceptions, perceptions, biases, ethics, and emerging theory. I made regular reflection-on-action part of my research practice in order to sort through problems and dilemmas, consider areas of avoidance and resistance, and clarify my thinking.

5.1.1 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is not only about doing the right thing or making correct choices, according to some externally determined criteria from the Christian moral code or set out by the university. It also requires a more personal approach to caring for relationships within the study. Ultimately, the handling of this responsibility has an effect on community wellbeing, which is a greater good relating to the theological concept of the Kin-dom of God. Moschella suggests that that ethical handling of research relationships is a "constitutive feature of [...] goodness, hope, and justice" in research that needs to be handled pastorally (2008 p 86). Ethical considerations entail reaching informed consent with participants, concern for confidentiality, being able to name participant benefits over risks, handling personal information in storage and writing sensitively, identifying power issues relating to participant agency and researcher authority or decision-making, and providing for intellectual rigor and honesty, along with checking in with participants regarding accuracy of reporting and to provide them with the research results (Moschella 2008, Redestan & Newton 2007, Creswell 2007).

The ethics review process of the University of Sheffield was a starting place for thinking through some of these issues. It began with the completion of the School of Education's Research Ethics Application form (Appendix C.1), which summarized what the research was about. In addition to the form, information sheets and consent forms were designed and attached to the application. The information sheets (see Appendix C.3 for samples) provided background to the study, identified possible risks and benefits, and outlined available recourse should the participant wish to withdraw or complain. Consent forms (see Appendix C.4 for samples) were for participants to review and sign, thus indicating their willingness to take part in the research project. There were different documents for different kinds of participants: those being interviewed (both student and staff), participants in focus groups, the institution involved in participant observation, and students in the reflection sharing group at CCS. The paperwork was submitted to the university for ethics approval, which was received March 10, 2009 (see Appendix C.2).

In this preparatory stage I wrote to request permission from DUCC organizers (See Appendix D for sample letters) to do a focus group at the April 2009 DUCC Gathering during a free afternoon. Once authorization was received from them I provided an invitation and information sheet about the focus group to be sent to registrants with their preparatory meeting package. My focus group became one of the scheduled activities during the free afternoon. I held another focus group with graduates prior to

an afternoon gathering of diaconal ministers in Winnipeg. All of the people who were notified of the event were invited to participate in the focus group if they were CCS grads after 1974. I also followed up with phone calls telling people about the event and inviting them to the focus group. In each focus group I provided the participants with a paper copy of the information sheet, asking them to read it and sign the consent form. These were returned to me and I made copies of the consent form and gave each person a duplicate for their records. I filed my copies. All of the names of focus group participants were anonymised in the transcripts and dissertation.

Between March and October I contacted three current academic staff, four previous staff, and one graduate to invite them to participate in individual interviews (see sample letter in Appendix D), and to write reflection papers in preparation for those. Everyone I asked agreed to take part in the interviews. I followed up by arranging a date, time, and location for the interview with each person, as well as by mailing the participant information sheet, consent forms (one for the interview and one to have the recording of their interview placed in the United Church Archives), and a set of guiding questions that could be used as a starting place for the written reflection I had asked them to do (Appendix E.1). Since CCS is a very small college, with only a few well-known staff members involved during the years of the study, I made the decision not to attempt to keep any of the staff members' names anonymous. This was made clear to them through the consent process and all agreed. Moschella advises, "as long as the participants are fully informed and give their consent, it is perfectly acceptable to use their real names" (2008 p 94). All of the interview participants signed and returned consent forms. I made copies, mailed a duplicate back to each person, and filed the completed forms.

Initially, I approached the program staff at CCS informally about the possibility of doing participant observation at the June Leadership Development Module (LDM). When I determined their willingness to accommodate me, I applied through the Principal formally for permission to carry out the research. Along with the letter I enclosed an Institutional Information Sheet and Consent Form (See Appendix C.3 and C.4). Once I received the completed forms from CCS, I negotiated with the staff when it would be most appropriate for me to be present at the LDM. I wanted to observe those sessions when participants were learning about the Action/Reflection model and intentionally using it, which included all of the first day of the module and the morning of the fourth day. Participant Information Sheets concerning my presence in the learning circle as an observer were sent to the students with the reading package prior to the LDM so they would be informed about the project. Since CCS had given permission for me to

observe the whole group and it was a requirement of the program for them to be present in the circle, students couldn't opt out of being observed; however, they were offered the option of asking not to be part of my note taking or later writing up. I chose not to use a digital recorder in the learning circle in order to remain unobtrusive and to allow those who did not want to take part to be omitted from the data gathering. In the end, no one exercised this option.

Besides observing the learning circle with thirteen students, I sat in on a smaller group of six of them when they were doing verbal reflections. I provided consent forms which each of the students signed prior to the session. In addition to these times arranged for participant observation, I was present as a resource person for three other afternoons in a four person planning team and with the whole group for another half day when our group led the session. I made notes about what I observed during these sessions as well, keeping all student names anonymous.

Any information that I thought might prove embarrassing or identify an anonymous participant was omitted from the written research. Once it was completed, I sent Chapter 6, in which I brought together the data into narrative form, to all of the research participants. I asked them to check the way I had treated their comments, to ensure I had not misrepresented them. A couple of people asked me to change wording to clarify their intended meaning.

5.1.2 Participant Selection

Because of the exploratory nature of qualitative research, it is important to select participants who meet specific criteria using sampling which "aims to cover a range of potentially relevant social phenomena and perspectives from an appropriate array of data sources" (Guyatt & Rennie 2002 p 436). I used a mixture of convenience sampling and purposive sampling in order to speak to participants with relevant experience. The criteria I used for choosing participants are discussed below as well as the justification of the strategy used for selection of those participants and its limitations. The participants I chose to interview individually or in focus groups consisted of graduates, staff, and former staff. The participants are shown in Table 5.1 and a timeline with details of their association with CCS is outlined in Appendix F.

I selected students who were beginning the program who I assumed were not likely to have been exposed to the Centre's Action/Reflection model before. I hoped to observe how they were originally taught the model, and how they began using it in those first weeks in the program, to watch for indications that they were learning it. I did not think

to intentionally find out from the students in the LDM if they already knew this Action/Reflection model or a similar one before they came.

Table 5.1   Research Participants

Interviews	
Helene Moussa	Academic staff (1974 to 1988)
Gwyn Griffith	Practicum student from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1977 to 1978) Part-time Core facilitator at CCS (1979-1980) Academic staff (1980 to 1982) Principal (1982 to 1990)
Wendy Hunt	Student in first Core (1974 to 1976) Academic Staff (1985-1995) Coordinator (replacing principal) (1995 to 1998)
Kay Heuer	Student before the model was introduced (1966-1968) Academic staff (1982 to 1998)
Ted Dodd	Academic staff (1998 to present)
Ann Naylor	Student (1977 to 1979) Staff (1999 to present)
Sherri McConnell	Student (1988 to 1991) Academic staff (2007 to 2010)
Anne Bishop	Student (1974 to 1975) Promoter of model in her work at CUSO, in community development, & ally education
Focus Group 1	
Judith*	Student (graduated 1985) Diaconal minister, primarily in chaplaincy with low income people, retired
Sarah*	Student (graduated 2003) Diaconal minister in congregational solo ministry
Sophia*	Student (graduated 2007) Diaconal minister in congregational solo ministry
Krista*	Student (graduated 2008) Diaconal minister in congregational solo ministry
Focus Group 2	
Bonnie*	Student (graduated 1977) Diaconal minister in congregational solo ministry
Jude*	Student (graduated 1983) Diaconal minister, now in immigrant resettlement
Lilith*	Student (graduated 2004) Diaconal minister in congregational team ministry
Dawn*	Student, Western Field Based Program (graduated 1994) Diaconal minister, doing pastoral care half time in team ministry
Participant Observation	
Donna, Doris, Andrew, Charlotte, Cathy, Colleen, Anne, Naomi, Josh, Chris, Taylor, Hannah, Marg, Denny*	Students in the June 2009 Leadership Development Module (LDM) learning circle
Joy, Garth*	Academic Staff in the LDM
Participant Observation	
Marg, Hannah, Charlotte, Donna, Doris, Cathy*	Students in the June 2009 Leadership Development Module spiral reflection group

*   These names have been changed to keep the participants anonymous.

Two focus groups were initiated and in both the participants were self-selected. The members of the first group, participants at the biennial DUCC gathering for people in diaconal ministry were invited to participate if they had graduated from CCS between

1974 and 2009. The invitation and information about the project were e-mailed to everyone who had registered, and there was an opportunity to make an announcement and talk to people at the event. The focus group was scheduled during a free afternoon but because there were many options for the free time, several people who wanted to participate had other commitments. There were four people who chose to participate; graduates from 1985, 2003, 2007, and 2008.

A second focus group was held immediately before a gathering for diaconal ministers from the region where I live. After an initial e-mail, I made follow up phone calls to remind ten or twelve people of the diaconal gathering and invite them to the focus group. It is important to note that not all diaconal ministers are graduates of CCS, nor have they all graduated in the time specified. One of the participants who came to the focus group (at my invitation—I wanted to know if her group had used the spiral) graduated from a pilot regional program not offered by CCS, which was modelled after its program. With this one exception, the criteria for participation in this focus group were the same as for the first: to have graduated from CCS between 1974 and 2009. Six people agreed to come. Of those, four arrived. This group had CCS graduates from 1977, 1983, and 2004, and one 1994 graduate from the Western Field-Based Program (WFBP).

I felt could not carry out individual interviews of graduates due to time constraints, the large number of potential participants, and the fact that the amount of information interviews potentially generate was more than what was required for this project. I determined it was important to interview Anne Bishop individually because she was part of the first class in which the model began. Anne has used a form of the Action/Reflection model extensively in her work in social justice and community development ever since and I thought she could offer significant insights into its application in learning contexts other than CCS.

I invited all of the current academic staff to participate in interviews. These were the people most recently involved in teaching the Action/Reflection model in learning circles at CCS. All three agreed. Of the people who had worked at CCS as academic staff in the past, I wanted to interview those who had been there in that capacity the longest between 1974 and 1998 when CCS moved out of Toronto. There are many others who taught at CCS for shorter periods who could have been interviewed. I chose those with the most history with the organization during that critical time because I assumed they had the most experience with and knowledge about the Action/Reflection model. Those who agreed were Helene Moussa, Gwyn Griffith,

Wendy Hunt, Kay Heuer, Ted Dodd, Ann Naylor, and Sherri McConnell (see Appendix F for more information).

In total seven academic staff and one graduate were interviewed individually, seven graduates plus one graduate from a different program took part in two different focus groups, and thirteen students were part of participant observation in the LDM at CCS. Of the staff members that were interviewed, three were also graduates of CCS who had learned the model as students, thus adding another dimension to the student and staff voices.

I chose to do purposive sampling with staff and former staff because I wanted to speak to as many key players who had specific roles in the creation and use of the Action/Reflection model. An appropriate caution is that listening to "teacher" voices, may bias the research in favour of those who are more likely to advocate for the model. Having an equal number of staff and students could be said to overemphasise staff voices since they had equal say but are much fewer in proportion to the number of students and graduates. Three of the staff had also been students thus providing a greater graduate/student balance. All of the staff I asked agreed to be interviewed. I had anticipated the possibility that some might refuse due to the passage of time or estrangement from the organization but this did not happen. One possible explanation (speculative only) is that as a past student of all of the former staff I have some credibility in their eyes, or seemed safe to talk to.

Focus groups were scheduled to coincide with specific events where past students would likely be. I allowed students to self select to participate. This decision may have biased the results towards hearing only from those who liked using the Action/Reflection model; however, I did seem to hear from a variety of perspectives. I had spontaneous offers from past students who could not attend the focus groups but wanted to provide input in the form of written reflections, which I did not accommodate for this study because of the extra data there would have been to analyse. I would have liked to hear from more students in the focus groups but inviting them to come and allowing them to choose, while contributing to agency and autonomy, did not result in large numbers participating.

5.1.3 Researcher Preparation
Much of my preparation as a researcher has been on the job training as I took on a completely new role. Certainly my first two years in the EdD program provided an introduction to reading widely, reflecting on my learning, writing lengthy papers, and an

introduction to what doing research might be about. The groundwork of writing the research proposal allowed me to distil my ideas and begin thinking into the research. There has been much reading: reading about the theory related to reflection, reading about the use of reflection in theological education, reading about research methods, and more. Out of this reading I was able to put together three sets of questions, beginning with my research questions (see pages 22 and 23). The next group formed the "Questions for Reflection Paper" (Appendix E.1), which was sent to those who agreed to be interviewed for use in preparing the preliminary reflection prior to the interview Two flexible Interview Guides were prepared with an array of questions for the focus groups and for the interviews (see Appendix E.2 and E.3). In these guiding documents, questions were grouped according to the quadrants of the Action/Reflection model (see Appendix A.5). These questions were tested with my supervisor, critical friends, and in use.

Prior to the interviews I tested the digital voice recorder I used in various conditions and for recording on the phone. Each interview participant was asked to provide a written reflection prior to each interview, which I then used in my preparation for our meeting. In each case, I read over the reflection and adjusted or augmented the Interview Guide in order to avoid asking questions that had already been answered or to follow up on interesting leads in those reflections. Of the eight who were interviewed four provided reflection papers. The reality is that people have lives quite apart from my research and found that they already had more than enough without having to write. While the papers did provide an added dimension of reflection, I determined that they were not essential to having a good interview.

My supervisor, Dr. Tim Herrick, in the United Kingdom provided good support via e-mail and Skype. I also invited a group of three critical friends here in Winnipeg to provide more immediate interaction. Of those group members, one has a nursing background and could approach the Action/Reflection model with insights from her own discipline along with asking questions when I made assumptions that were not clear to her. One came from an education background and provided helpful experience in the initial stages of the work. Two others were graduates of CCS and could read with critical eyes for specific things. We met together a few times to talk over the research; I received lots of interesting suggestions and insights from their various perspectives at these gatherings. In addition, they acted as readers for my writing, giving useful feedback on various chapters by e-mail and phone. All of these people helped with the preparatory work of testing guides for interviews and focus groups.

All the way along I have made a point of doing my own written reflections using the Action/Reflection model, to examine my role, position, and assumptions as a researcher. I also pondered problems, puzzles, and insights as I went.

5.2 Data Gathering

The methods I chose to use for gathering the data included participant observation, interviews, focus groups, written reflections, assembling documents, and collaboration. The rationale for choosing each of them and how I used them in my project will be detailed here.

5.2.1 Participant Observation

Gathering data by observing "live" situations as they are happening brings a certain freshness, spontaneity, and unpredictability to the work (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2000 p 306). It offered me an opportunity for experiential engagement with students and staff in a Learning Circle. This experience provided access to nuanced and overt interactions in addition to providing a way to see how materials and pedagogical practice function in the learning circle. My approach to participant observation overlapped with direct observation in that it was structured towards looking for particular things concerning how the Action/ Reflection model was taught and used (Swinton & Mowat 2006 p 241). Consequently I was present for particular times in the agenda when these things were scheduled instead of being immersed in the whole LDM experience. Even so, there were opportunities during breaks, and in the planning team meetings where I was a resource person, when I was able to witness references to the Action/Reflection model outside of the scheduled times when the model was presented.

I was a complete participant in some ways, in that I am familiar with learning circles and with the content of the LDM so I could fit in easily (Somekh & Lewin 2005 p 132). As well, I took part in all of the activities on the first day, which allowed me to get to know the students and be known by them at the same time as they were meeting each other. On occasion the group facilitators invited me to contribute my insights.   It felt very comfortable being present as a participant; however, I was also an observer. I was introduced as a researcher, tried to observe what took place through new eyes (make the familiar strange), made notes about everything that was going on, and was not present all the time. This role was more unfamiliar and awkward, involving a certain personal distancing in order to remember to carry out the tasks I was there to do.

My observations were recorded in my field notebook with observations in one column and my own notes and insights jotted in the other column. I included notes about the set up of the room, ambiance, and seating arrangements as well as recording as much detail about what was going on. Sometimes I was part of small group work, at which times I participated fully and later reconstructed the conversations in my notebook. At the end of the day I typed up my field notes. To these I added reflective comments that brought to the fore my feelings, reactions, tensions, dilemmas, and points to clarify as well as making notes on my preliminary analysis. I also filed the agenda and handouts that were provided in the LDM that day.

Participant observation on its own can be critiqued for its subjectivity and imprecision. I sought to address these objections by ensuring that I observed myself at the same time I observed others, noting my own responses. Tedlock points out that besides observing what is going on around us (the gaze outward), participant observation also has a gaze inward or autobiographical impulse adding to the method's values of "closeness, subjectivity, and engagement" (2005 p 467). I realize that there are many different versions and interpretations of what was happening. If truth is made up of many parts, it is also important to use other data gathered in different ways from multiple sources to augment or triangulate the participant observation perspective, in order to ensure the results are representative of a complexity of truths (Angrosino 2005 p 731).

5.2.2 Interviews

Interviews are "one of the most common and powerful ways" researchers use to try to learn from the experience and insights of the participants in their studies (Fontana & Frey 2005 p 697). Often thought of as simply asking questions and hearing answers, interviews involve active engagement between at least two people leading to collaborative, socially located outcomes. Within narrative research where it is a custom for the relationship to shift from interviewer-interviewee to narrator-listener, interviews can take on a more storied form (Chase 2005 p 660). "To think of an interviewee as a narrator is to make a conceptual shift away from the idea that interviewees have answers to researchers' questions and toward the idea that interviewees are narrators with stories to tell and voices of their own" (Chase 2005 p 660). Similarly Caron (forthcoming) identified her listening role in hearing stories of loss as being a witness rather than an interviewer. This kind of listening involves not only attending to stories that arise spontaneously but also inviting stories from the participants; not only inviting stories but activating the production of a narrative by "indicating--even suggesting— narrative positions, resources, orientations, and precedents" (Holstein & Gubrum 1995

in Elliott 2005 p 22) in order to access the participant's meanings, interpretations, and perspectives on the topic (Swinton 2006 p 64).

Stories are significant because they help interviewees share the particularities of their experience, rather than speak in the generalities that it is often assumed interviewers want (Weiss 1994 & Czarniawska 1997 quoted in Chase 2005 p 661). Therefore, narrative interviews are best framed with a broad question about the narrative the participant-narrator has to tell (Chase 2005 p 662). I began by organizing my interviews around the layout of a reflection because I wanted to invite participants to reflect on their lived experience of the CCS Action/Reflection model from their own perspectives. I wanted to know what experiences people have had with it and what it meant to them. I adopted what Foley and Valenzuela call "a conversational or dialogic" way of interviewing which seemed to be a natural way to be with people as an insider familiar with them and the topic (2005 p 223). Such an informal style encourages those being interviewed to participate in free flowing conversation and story telling.

Interviews demand much of the interviewer. These demands relate to managing the interview process itself, tending to power issues, and forging a rapport with the participants. How the interviewer "listens, attends, encourages, interrupts, digresses, initiates topics and terminates responses--is integral to a respondent's account" (Mishler, 1986, p. 82). Instead of being the expert, the researcher has to be willing to be a learner again, open to hearing the unexpected yet prepared to deal sensitively with challenges in the interview process (Moschella 2008 p 142, Creswell 2007 p 140). A relaxed atmosphere with a few open-ended questions invites the sharing of personal stories without being too directive. At the same time, each participant controls how much and what they reveal.

I used a semi-structured interview process that began with a set of questions which were adapted for each interview based on the participant's reflection, the ways in which they had been involved at CCS, or as questions emerged in the interview. Of all the interviews I conducted, five were in person and three were over the telephone. Telephone interviews have the possibility of technical problems (which happened to me on one call when the line was not good) and they lack the visual cues that are helpful in an interview. On the other hand, the calls, using good recording equipment, allowed all of the people I contacted to participate, and at times of their own choosing.

5.2.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups may be a form of group interview having the advantages of limiting researcher control, providing the opportunity for everyone to participate collaboratively, and inviting collective reflection (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p 648-9) but it is less like an interview and more like a conversation:

> Participation in a conversation implies a willingness to listen and be attentive to other participants…Conversations allow participants to discover things about their interlocutors which they never knew before; all participants end up seeing themselves and others from new angles and in different light. (Pattison 1989 quoted in Swinton & Mowat 2006 p 64)

Schostak's (Barbour & Schostak 2005) understanding of the "inter-view" as the space between views, where perspectives are presented and critical reflective dialogue about them is shared, fits into such an understanding of conversation. Focus groups involve "a social process through which participants co-produce an account of themselves and their ideas which is specific to that time and place" (Barbour & Schostak 2005 p 43). As such they can be subject to artificial consensus and are not necessarily representative of individual opinions or even of general views, especially if convenience or purposive sampling is used to select the participants.

In a focus group, the interviewer is actively engaged, rather than an objective bystander, and functions as a facilitator of the process. It may be highly structured or have an open format where a prepared guide is only a departure point as the dialogue flows in an evolving pattern from one person to the next as it does in a conversation. This method works well for exploring experiences that are common to the members of the group, as the Action/Reflection model is to CCS graduates (Fontana & Frey 2005 p 704). The researcher's role is to pick up on allusions and hints that might lead to something more, "explore limitations [the participants] might place around their responses and how they would contextualize their views" (Barbour & Schostak p 45). It is also possible to invite the participants to theorize about overlapping or juxtaposing comments. The challenge is to avoid offering leading questions, which may be addressed by pretesting questions and probes. This would have been difficult to do in my situation as each of the groups went in completely different directions after the first question. In the first focus group I asked the participants to draw the action reflection model hoping it would help them talk about what the spiral is and their strengths in using it. It ended up being a muddle as people got caught up in trying to remember forgotten details on their drawings:

What was it called Active...Experimentation? Which one?
And I was an Accommodator. Does that sound right? Or is that over
here?
I don't remember that.
No I don't think we had that. I don't remember that either.
I've forgotten all the questions.
I'm going to have to dig it out when I get home. (Lots of affirmative
comments)

<div align="center">(Participants in Focus Group 1)</div>

The exercise served as a test. It took time without yielding much discussion of the Action/Reflection model, yet it did point to the need for further research on whether graduates from different eras, who have used the model with different frequencies as students, remember it differently. I also wondered if graduates have not internalized the spiral process and rely on having the diagram in front of them when they reflect (or talk about reflection). I decided not to repeat this drawing exercise with the next group since these purposes were not part of the current project.

There are a number of difficulties in setting up and using focus groups despite their apparent ease of access. As I discovered, receiving permission to hold a focus group during, or in advance of, another event does not mean that everyone who will be attending has agreed to take part. I had four volunteers for each group and would not have wanted any less. As a researcher there were other issues to be mindful of in using focus groups. For one, those who decide to participate may do so because they have a particular agenda. While their views may not be representative, that is less important than the fact that an extreme position could sidetrack the group. Group dynamics need to be managed in focus groups where there is the potential for some to dominate, others to be silent, and some to go along with what others say. Care needs to be taken with matters of confidentiality, use of power, building trust, and checking interpretations (Barbour & Shostak 2005 p 42). Skillful facilitation, in addition to interviewing ability, is needed in order to host a focus group where everyone has a chance to contribute to the rich detail of the topic.

5.2.4 Written Reflections

I asked each person I interviewed to complete a written reflection. I offered each person a set of prepared questions following a spiral outline, which could be used as a guideline for the reflection process. I had not originally planned such a guide but was asked for one and created it as a starting point, which was to be used only if it was helpful. Each of the people I asked to write a reflection was familiar with the form and would have been able to do.

<div align="center">91</div>

Of the eight people I interviewed four completed a reflection and four exercised their option not to take part. The reasons for not doing so were not always offered and never solicited. The time required, exhaustion after a busy schedule, and forgetting the request were all volunteered as reasons. I did have another piece of reflective writing from one of these people, and another suggested I read her profile in a thesis I had access to. I used both of these offerings in place of a written reflection for these participants to prepare for the interviews with them.

Asking interview participants to prepare written reflections prior to their interviews had at least two intended purposes. The first was to encourage them to begin thinking about the Action/Reflection model and their experience of it. For St. Pierre "writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled *method* of discovery" (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005 p 967). Rather than writing about what is known consciously, reflection can offer an opportunity to write about something before the writer knows what s/he wants to say. This kind of writing disrupts the neat outlines and steady linear progress towards a known conclusion with a creative, dynamic process of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005 p 960).   Reflection in its use as a research method provides a way to name experience and bring it into analytic dialogue with other voices and ways of knowing with the potential to move the reflector to new insights and responses. Reflective writing has also been promoted through learning journals as a thoughtful process, which encourages people to reflect on and integrate what they are learning with what they already know (Moon 1999 p 18). One person I interviewed professed surprise concerning the feelings that were revealed while writing her reflection that she didn't consciously know she had. The reflection paper was a way of "using writing as a way of knowing" (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005 p 973).

The second purpose of asking for a reflection from participants was to prime my own thinking, as I read each one and prepared for the interview to follow. Research diaries (Altrichter & Holly 2005) and journals (Creswell 2007) are mentioned in the literature as rich sources of data. The reflective pieces functioned in a similar way to help me begin to listen to each person's story. The early "overhearing" enabled me to custom design an interview guide that could help with seeking clarification, ask for deeper reflection, and follow new pathways in specific ways. For those without a written reflection or other writing I simply used a basic interview guide.

5.2.5 Assembling Documents

Various documents were collected as part of the data gathering process. These included CCS documents such as the Educational Stance (CCS 2010c) and program

brochure (CCS 1982); Guidelines for Completing the Program (CCS 2010g); various versions of the Action/Reflection model (Appendix A); letters (Moussa 1982, 1983); the LDM agenda, session outlines, Process for Sharing Reflections, and Guidelines for Writing a Reflection Paper (Appendix G); and the written reflections from staff participants, which are mentioned above. I followed up on material participants referred to in interviews or focus groups. For example, I looked for the spiral in *Basics and Tools*, a CUSO handbook (Bishop et al 1988) and sought a training video for congregational committees working with student ministers in which one of the participants talked about the Action/Reflection model. I noted places I found an action-reflection model or a spiral.

Moschella points out the value of this kind of data, "Printed material [found in minutes, handbooks, brochures, daily agenda outlines, handouts, statements, diagrams, and correspondence] harbor rich caches of information about particular social settings" (2008 p 135). It acts as material evidence of the things people are using and talking about in interviews and focus groups, and adds information about the things that may be observed. While these materials provide information that is no more accurate than that from other sources, they offer another window on people's worldviews, preoccupations and priorities. From the point of view of triangulation, documents offer another source from which to gather data.

5.2.6 Collaboration

Moore (2008) stresses the value of collaboration in research so that the biases of an individual researcher are minimized. Working with others also aids in the creation of a community of practice that can provide consultation, support, and critique for students who are researching at a distance, as I am (Wisker, Robinson & Shacham 2007 np). As a solo researcher, who values the participation of others, it has been important for me to bring in collaborative elements in different ways. One way was through setting up a group of critical friends to provide a professional learning community with whom to collaborate and reflect on practice (Handal 1999 p 59). I met with them early in the research process for help with identifying my design and later I shared work with them for their insight and helpful criticism which provided input that was "generally relevant, argumentative, well documented, and instructive" (Handal 1999 p 59). Their input was invaluable for identifying biases and preconceived ideas at the beginning of the research and to check perceptions, prejudices, and emerging theory throughout the project.

I also collaborated with the research participants. After the interviews were transcribed I sent each participant a clear copy of the transcription for their records as well as an annotated copy. The notes incorporated follow-up questions for clarification or information that occurred to me while listening to the interviews. Participants were given the opportunity to comment or suggest changes in the interview itself and invited to respond to the questions if they wanted to continue the conversation. Some sent responses, which constituted additional data.

Another way I worked in partnership with the participants was to send a draft of the story of the Action/Reflection model (Chapter 6) to all of those who participated in the interviews and focus groups. The story is a collective one belonging to all of us, so I wanted participants to bring their varying perspectives to the narrative to test it and my treatment of it. I asked them to look for:

a) Inaccurate information
b) Places where my words might be nuanced by additions the participants could make
c) Misrepresentation and/or needed changes in places where I used the participant's words directly or referred to that person's position.
d) Other comments and/or critiques.

Of the fifteen people I contacted, ten responded, some with helpful suggestions or useful changes that added to or clarified the story I had written.

5.3 Data Analysis

There are many ways of thinking about data analysis ranging from a more traditional scientific approach in which "the greater the use of strict patterning, according to well-developed and explicit criteria, the more valid the end findings" to a more interpretive form (Sanger 1996 p 92). I am attracted to a way of analyzing the data in which reliance on tools and procedures is superseded by "a willingness to explore possibilities as an artist does" (Stewart 2008) using what Sanger calls a "research imagination":

The difference between hack research and research which might make a difference to its field of understanding, or its immediate audiences of actors, often result[s] from the imagination of the researcher. Not from the painstaking reordering of indisputable facts but from the creative mind. (1996 p 90)

This is fitting because my thought processes are often intuitive or "gut feelings" which are internal and often unarticulated. Schön (1983) speaks of this as practical knowledge derived from artistry, intuition and action. It is a way I prefer to work.

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the research project involving making notes, reflecting, pondering, and recording insights. Analytical thinking was prompted in the data gathering process in at least three ways. The first was when I learned new things and had eureka moments (known as "aha's" at CCS). Another way was through the discovery of contradictions between what one person said and what another person said or within one person's story. Finally, many times I heard someone identify a problem or gap related to Action/Reflection and someone else provide a way they had addressed it or suggest a possible solution. In all of these cases, I made notes of what I was noticing in my research journal.

The process continued as I transcribed the interviews/focus groups. Writing up the participant observation notes provided a chance to hear everyone's voice afresh and allowed each participant to speak to the others in a kind of internal conversation where I was the conduit. I immersed myself in the data in order to experience what was there "up close and personal" (Moschella 2008 p 168, Josselson 2003). Immersion provided an opportunity to refresh my memory, deepen my understanding of the big picture, and review my original questions, as links and patterns within the data occurred to me.

I found important connections and new questions came up, which I immediately noted as comments in the margin of the document/transcript I was typing. Some of these were questions I followed up with the person I had interviewed when I sent the transcript. Most responded with new information that helped clarify my thinking. Some of these notes related to statements participants had made that raised questions for me to bring into conversation with the literature. Often people named problems or ponderings or dilemmas about how students used the spiral or how it could work better. If someone else I talked to had identified a way to address that issue I noted any links. Some of the stories prompted my own reflections, which I documented in my learning journal.

After reading through the transcripts, participant observations, and filed notes I considered options for further analysis suggested by Maxwell, "Memos, categorizing strategies, […], and contextualizing strategies", which are usually used in combination (1996 p 78). Memos are used to "capture", "facilitate" and "stimulate" analytic inspiration (Maxwell 1996 p 78). These constitute the notes I made on transcripts and

in my research journal, and even in the margins of text on the computer as thoughts occurred to me. I also wrote both brief and longer reflections, following the spiral, as I thought about the data.

I looked at a categorizing strategy. Maxwell (1996) and Cresswell (2007) speak of "codes" and "themes", also called "bags" and "slices" by Mason (2002 p 159). At first I tried cutting the data apart and sorting it by themes, some of which were: expectations for students doing reflections; learning in community; the model's many uses; resistance and blocks; etc. It was difficult to work with these divided pieces of the interviews. I returned to the intact transcripts and I tried organizing the data using the four quadrants of the Action/Reflection model as a framework, a process similar to Creswell's "prefigured codes", which are categories derived beforehand from a theoretical model or the literature (2007 p 152). Moschella says that the reasoning you use to come up with the organization of your groupings "should be as transparent and coherent to your readers as possible" (2008 p 171). This way of grouping the data made sense for at least two reasons. The first is that the interview and focus group guide questions were designed to follow the reflective movements of the spiral. Secondly, because the final product was intended to be a collective reflection, it made sense to structure the data in the form of a reflection. Using this arrangement, the codes or categories became Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE) and provided a practical, workable way of arranging the data.

Next, following Moore's approach of "seeking and interpreting patterns in collected stories" (2006 p 423), I identified themes that emerged from the data. These included: learning the spiral, teaching the spiral, expectations of doing reflections, feelings about reflecting, how it helped, difficulties reflecting, how it was used in practice, theory, theology, alignment with CCS priorities, reflection is…, Action/Reflection model is…, beginnings, learning in community, most important message, giving feedback, student response to the spiral, value of reflection, theology relating to reflection, theoretical influences, visual depiction, and used more widely? I played with these, changing and eliminating some as I read and reflected on the data. The resulting themes were grouped into each quadrant according to the pattern of reflection on the diagram of the Action/Reflection model (Appendix A.5).

I colour coded each of the transcripts and reflections, giving each person or focus group their own unique colour of font. I organized the data into documents on the computer, based on themes and quadrants. For example in the AE section I had a

theme "difficulties students had reflecting or taking action". I collected all the responses from the various participants together into one document under this title in order to work with the data. I used a different approach when I analyzed the staff reflections. I put all of the comments relating to a particular quadrant, for example Abstract Conceptualisation, into one document and looked for patterns there .

I proceeded to organize the data using the quadrants of the Action/Reflection model, but I was advised to abandon this strategy and consider another. I decided to move from trying to compile the data in the form of a spiral reflection to another form of narrative analysis. I carefully unraveled the old structure and turned to a new plan that used two strategies to organize the data in this study. The first was based on Connelly and Clandinin (2000) who suggest that where stories are collected, taken apart, and retold, analysis consists of looking at collected data for key narrative elements, such as time, order, and plot, and then rewriting a new story to create a historical progression. I first sorted the data, using Connelly and Clandinnin's (2000) plan, into parts that involved storytelling about the model. These were collected and arranged as chronological components of the story largely by date or the sequence of events in the model's development. I added to the new story other elements that advanced the narrative plot such as teaching the spiral, learning to reflect, feedback, the spiral beyond CCS, and the value of the spiral.

In her analysis of data exploring religious culture in faith communities, Moore recommends "seeking and interpreting patterns in collected stories" (2006 p 423). Following Moore (2006), I used a second strategy for data analysis, which involved paying attention to three patterns I had found in the data. These were used to group together significant insights, contradictions in the accounts, and places where I had noticed one person identified a problem and another proffered a solution, which I called overlapping conversations. Once I had these three collections of data, I proceeded to add them to the story of the Action/Reflection model.

5.4 Storytelling

The task that followed organizing the data involved "gathering the many stories and analytic discoveries into one collective story" (Moore 2006 p 423). I began weaving the stories and comments together working through the data to put together a chronology following elements of plot. Initially I had a rather awkward string of quotations, as I tried to determine how to represent the voices of the participants while also creating a narrative. I was afraid that eliminating any of their words would render them voiceless. Gradually I was

able to consolidate similar comments and describe common experiences as a narrator would, using brief quotations to illustrate the points as a way to give voice to the participants. In order not to lose longer, evocative stories I placed a few of in shaded text boxes to illuminate through the rich depth and detail of individual stories significant parts of the story.

A communal story of the CCS Action/Reflection model gradually emerged as I worked to consolidate the data. As I compiled the narrative there was a layering of stories as the many accounts began to be formed into one. I had originally kept track of the conversational layering using coloured text for the quotations, however in the new story the strategy of pointing to individual strands of the narrative was no longer relevant. The resulting text is an imperfect, complex, reflection pulling multiple perspectives into a whole within which contradictory, insightful, and overlapping viewpoints contribute to what Swinton and Mowat call thick, rich descriptions (2006 p 122).

5.5 Doing Good Research

In order to pay attention to validity and reliability in the findings I sought to hear from a number of different people using a mixture of methods, each contributing to my overall purpose for the research. I collected data using written reflections, focus groups, interviews, participant observation, collaboration, and collected documents. These methods were chosen in order to contribute answers to my research questions (see Table 5.2).

I sought to be aware of my own biases throughout the research. One of the ways I did that was by articulating my position (in Chapter 4) and how it influenced choices about my research methodology. With the goal of minimizing individual bias as a researcher who was working alone on this project, I formed a group of four critical friends (two of whom were part of the CCS community and two from outside it) with whom I shared various parts of the work. They offered their insight and helpful correctives. Two of these critical friends also acted as readers as I prepared chapters and tested the narrative and conclusions. Participants were invited to collaborate by clarifying data in their transcripts and responding concerning the accuracy of the narrative I prepared in Chapter 6. They brought clarity, affirmation, and depth to the work as I was able to cross-check my portrayal of the data and interpretation of its meaning with them. As a reflective practitioner, I reflected regularly in order to stay in touch with the ways the research was influencing me, and how I was influencing it.

Table 5.2   Matrix showing which methods contributed to which research questions

Research Questions	Participant Observation	Interviews	Focus Groups	Written Reflections	Documents	Collaboration
What is the CCS Action/Reflection model?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes - diagrams	No
Where did the CCS Action/Reflection model originate and what are its sources?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes – Letters, diagrams	No
How does it differ from or go beyond the earlier models on which it is based?	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
How has the Action/Reflection model been used in theological education at CCS?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
What is the experience of those who have used it either as staff, in the role facilitators of learning, or as students who have learned it?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
How does reflection in general, and this model of reflection in particular, contribute to learning, to theological insight, and to social action?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
In what ways has the CCS Action/Reflection model been used, formally and informally, as a tool for theological education?	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

According to Maxwell, validity is, "The correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (1996 p 87). The researcher must take care in designing the research practices to consider validity threats, "alternative explanations, or "ways in which you might be mistaken about what is going on" (Maxwell 1996 p 98). I tried to collect accurate, complete data by recording all interviews and focus groups, and by taking detailed notes when I was observing new students, and by typing complete transcriptions. Consulting with the participants after the story was written was an attempt to understand the participants' perspectives and make sure I had not imposed an interpretation with which they didn't agree. Where we differed, we collaborated on a more accurate representation of their words. I endeavoured to listen to what Maxwell calls "discrepant data" in order to seek theoretical validity. This meant that I included in my data theories that were named but not tested, for example, that more frequent reflection would help students internalize the model and be able to use it more easily. I also named tensions, such as the one between individual and communal approaches to using the spiral. I was careful to name contradictions in the data; in other words, I looked for evidence that challenged my conclusions.

The question of generalisability came up in the interviews when I asked if participants thought the model could be more widely shared. There was a general consensus that it was valuable and could be used in other contexts; the question was whether it could be used effectively in an academic setting that had a different pedagogy. Maxwell suggests, "the value of a qualitative study may depend on its *lack* of external generalisability […] it may provide an account of a setting or population that is illuminating as an extreme case or ideal type" (Maxwell 1996 p 97). Certainly the Action/Reflection model in its format, practice, and context has some unique characteristics, as will be seen in the following chapter where I present the data analysis in two parts: a narrative called "Once Upon a Spiral" and a thematic section interpreting insights, contradictions, and overlapping conversations.

CHAPTER 6
Narratives of Reflection

6.1 The Story: "Once Upon a Spiral"

Background

Once upon a time, the Action-Reflection model began its life as a circle. Its origins, long before it came to the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS), were rooted in the work of critical theorists, feminists, educators, sociologists, third world activists, theologians, and others. These theories, movements, and influences combined with longstanding practices of cutting edge theological education at CCS, and were shaped by its context to meet changing needs, which have evolved over time. The flexible Action-Reflection model, also known as "the spiral", touched many lives in an enduring way, but little has been recorded about its creation, evolution, and meaning. This is one telling of its story.

The Centre for Christian Studies has a history of doing theological education dating back to 1892 through its institutional forerunners in deaconess and women's training schools of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches (Griffith 2009 p 6). The 1970's brought a new name to the institution formed after the amalgamation of the Anglican Women's Training College and the United Church's Covenant College. With it came a new curriculum design, due in large part, to the agitation of students for more socially relevant studies (MacFarlane, Crombie, & Campos 1991 pp 121, 122). This story begins in 1974 with the implementation of that new program of preparation for diaconal and lay ministries.

It was a two-year program with three components. There were academic courses, which were taken both externally through other theological schools and at CCS (e.g. Denominational Studies, Integrating Theology). There were field placements in ministry settings, and there was the Core Group (Core), which was a distinctive part of the program design (Griffith 2009 pp 185-7). Core was a group made up of eight to twelve students meeting with a member of the academic staff for two three-hour sessions each week. At the beginning of the year, the sessions were facilitated by staff but gradually the students assumed this responsibility. They set individual and group learning goals, taking into account the requirements for preparation for ministry determined by the United Church[*] (Griffith 2009 p 187). These goals were combined into themes. Teams of three or four students, together with a resource person from outside the group, were formed to design and lead blocks of up to four educational

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[*] Anglican students were not studying for ordered ministry, so while there were Anglican influences at CCS, there were no specific academic requirements from that church (Griffith 2011 np).

sessions for the whole group. For every theme, readings were chosen and assigned by the planning team. Besides reading, planning, facilitating, and participating in Core sessions, regular written reflections were expected from students in order to sort out their movement towards goals and evaluate their learning (CCS 1982).

The heart of this story is the tool that grew up to facilitate the practice of reflection by students at CCS.   It is an analytical account of the Action/Reflection Model; how it came to be created, as well as narratives of what it means to the staff and students who have used it over the years. Their individual memories and reflections on lived experiences have been assembled, into a collective, many layered narrative. The tale begins by describing the experiences CCS staff and students had when they were engaged in designing, testing, learning, and teaching the Action/Reflection model from 1974 to 2009.

Beginnings (1974-1975)

Helene Moussa was invited to join the CCS staff team in the 1974-75 school year with a mandate to implement the new program from the design outlined by the Educational Affairs and Planning Committee (CCS 1973). They envisioned experiential learning, using Freire's problem-solving theory, to prepare students for effective ministry. Their vision kept three educational realities in tension, "(1) the personal growth focus coming out of the 60s (2) the more political view of the learning situation/learner/the world— also out of the 60s and (3) what had to be done in Core to prepare people to begin Ministry" (Moussa 1983 p 1).

Helene had recently come to Canada, with experience as a sociologist in Ethiopia, Egypt, and the United States, committed to attending to social relationships, power dynamics, class, norms, ideologies, and values. She was approached because she had familiarity with Freire's oeuvre as the groundwork for educational and social engagement in international development when she was at the United Nations Church Centre in New York. "I really understood what [Freire] was doing because that's what I was doing. That was part of my life, in my third world life. And we really unpacked a lot of his work…the whole ecumenical group in that building was totally engaged in testing his work, in the North American context, of course" (H p 2)[*]. She had not only worked with middle class Methodist women but with international participants, poor youth in Harlem, and women on welfare, across class and race. Murray McGinnis, who

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[*] For each direct quotation I have included a coded citation that relates to its location in the transcripts. The code indicates the person's first initial and the page the quotation is from. If the citation is from a focus group, I have used the letters FG instead of an initial. R indicates the quotation is from a reflection written by the participant.

was part of the CCS team that designed the new curriculum, was familiar with Helene's previous work. He invited her to implement the team's vision because he thought it was the kind of leadership they were looking for in this new educational program. However, it was not a simple transfer from one place to another. In this new context it was necessary for Helene to adapt her educational blueprint to what she calls a "more restrictive social class group and an academic setting where [students] would [pass or fail] at the end" (H p 2).

At CCS, society and academia's promotion of individual personal achievement were in tension with aspirations for a socially aware kind of theological education. Helene worked assiduously in those early years to bring a more critical socio-political viewpoint. The concept behind Core was "learning in community", in other words learning that was socially mediated through group dialogue. Besides exchanging ideas in sessions, one of the ways this kind of learning was promoted was through an invitation to reflect communally as part of the agenda of Core. Helene noted, "There was a reflection on the day, and [then] the individual reflection was to meet the academic thing, but also was shared either with your Core [learning] partner or with myself. And so there [were] different concepts of community" (H p 2). Wendy Hunt, a student in the first Core group observed, "[Helene] was really clear about the importance of reflection. It just sort of went hand in hand with learning" (W p 4). The concept of action-reflection was introduced right from the beginning using theory from Freire (1970) and Kolb and Fry (1975).

Freire's ideas of praxis in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) provided the theoretical underpinnings for the Core approach to education, and for reflection linked to action. While his philosophy did not provide a practical "how to" manual, Helene found it supplemented Kolb and Fry. "We were being challenged to go deeply into interpretation, testing of findings, rejecting passive positions, practice dialogue not polemics" (G p 14). It was to Freire's more radical approach that Helene gave her initial allegiance. His concept of "education for freedom" challenged not only traditional methods of teaching and learning, placing the learner at the centre of a critical dialogical process, but also questioned assumptions about how society was structured to benefit some and not others. Helene felt Kolb and Fry's work augmented Freire because she "needed to draw from theory out of the middle-class-liberal stream since that was the 'reality' of the society/church at the time and certainly who the students were" (Moussa 1983 p 1). It made positive contributions but a drawback was that their Experiential Learning cycle didn't seem to emphasize the importance of reflection for learning in the same way Freire's theory did; therefore, Helene did not credit it as the

major influence in the Action/Reflection model. "I think it's Freire that influenced me to bring a political dimension to the original Kolb thing...Kolb didn't make sense to me without Freire" (H p1).

There was no Action/Reflection "model" at first. Graduates recalling those earliest years did not separate reflection from the overall experience of Core. In the early sessions, Helene asked students to reflect on readings as a basis for their writing. In this way, "They would have a grasp of the theory of Core […] Out of them I tried to create—personally and in the group, some models for doing reflections for people who felt they needed a 'structure'" (Moussa 1983 p 2). The verbal reflections in Core helped those who had difficulty getting started figure out what to write, but there was no particular format for written reflection. Anne Bishop, a student in the first Core group, remembered, "You just reflected […] Part of the task of the leadership team for each segment was to assign reflection questions. After the segment was over, each student took the questions away and wrote about them" (AB p15). Helene also provided written comments or questions on the reflections she read as feedback intended to prompt further reflecting.

> *In our very last reflection session in Core there was a group of four of us. We were divided up into groups and given a sheet of flip chart paper and asked to create a symbol for our learning [...] We started talking about Kolb and Freire and we drew ourselves a circle and we were kind of working with it. And then somebody in the group said, "But going around and around in a circle seems like you're in a rut." And that was when there was one of those moments when the group just clicks and we threw away that piece of paper and we drew a spiral and started to fill in details of how our experience fit into the model of the spiral. So that's what we presented to the group when we went back into the plenary session. It got picked up from that point on as a symbol. (Anne p 2)*

In this story, Anne recalled that when the students were put in groups to do a closing reflection at the end of that first year, her group opened up the circle to form a spiral as the symbol for their learning for the year. Drawing the theories of Freire and Kolb and Fry together, and the movement from a closed circle to an open one, was significant for the students and proved a turning point in the formation of the model. However, Helene cautioned about becoming too attached to this or any representation, "Learning weaves into many different directions. Any image is a problem, I would say, because of its limitations. It is not that it's carved in stone. You have to have a sense of movement" (H p7). The spiral imagery worked because it added a necessary dynamic flexibility to reflection. It also provided a name—instead of calling it a "model", language to which there was resistance, it became simply "the spiral".

The next years

As a student in the first two years of the new curriculum, Wendy remembers, "We were testing everything in the world, it felt, because in the beginning, new program, you try a lot of different things to see what works" (W p 2). Helene confirmed that it was an experimental time, "[The students] thought I knew, but I didn't know. I was exploring with them […] because I had never done it in an academic setting" (H p 2). She was learning from the Core process, from reflecting on what was happening, and from the students. Wendy recalls, "She had a very high regard for students and students were integral to the program and they were to be consulted […] We were all trying to figure out how to make this program work" (W p 5). As the staff became aware of relevant theories they were tested in Core and integrated into the growing theory of reflection based on a flexible, yet constant spiral where there was room to add and adjust as ideas emerged. When Helene came across Solberg's (1974) body of work on theological reflection in 1975-76 she tried it out and it was adopted as a model that was often used for group and individual reflection to bring a theological perspective (Moussa 1983 p 2). It matched with the growing theory of the spiral because it was also praxis oriented.

> It was "doing" theology, not "thinking" theology; it recognized that reflection is a process of linking our own experience with theological concepts etc. and moving from that to new actions and understandings. The questions on the AC part of the spiral also link Scripture, hymns and other ways of expressing faith to one's own experience. In the spiral, both educational and theological methods are grounded in our understanding of the world and the spirit and they inform each other. (G R p 2)

Solberg's process included right brain learning, which is more symbolic or imaginative and quite different from Kolb and Fry's left-brain, sensory, observing (K p 4). Solberg encouraged participants to use creative means as more lively methods of doing theology.

Several of the students who came to CCS in 1976 were eager to focus their studies on social ministry, justice education, and outreach (H p 1, W pp 3, 4). They made a proposal to use social justice as the heart of Core for one of their two years. The idea was presented to staff and the CCS Central Council, and implemented. Core and Field were combined and a "plunge" was incorporated into the program where students would spend twelve hours in an eye-opening experience of life on the street. The field placement focus changed from a concentration on congregational ministry contexts to community based settings carrying out social service and advocacy. After the first

successful offering, students were given the option to choose to do a social ministry or Christian education focus in second year. Eventually, the latter was integrated elsewhere and social ministry became the standard for second year in which a greater emphasis was placed on critical social analysis in the reflective process.

When Ann Naylor came to CCS as a first-year student in 1977, the spiral was presented as a more fully formed tool than Anne and Wendy had experienced in previous years. Ann remembers receiving a visual representation of the model (possibly the one in Appendix A.1):

> I think it was pretty much the Kolb-Fry model without a whole lot of adaptation at that point. […] Every session was based on the spiral and it was clear in the session, 'Now we are doing CE, now we're doing RO, now we're doing AC, and what are you going to do as a result [AE]?' so it was pretty firmly ingrained. (A p 2)

Gwyn Griffith joined this Core group as a practicum student from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Although she participated with other CCS students, she also met with Helene as her supervisor outside of Core to reflect on her experience learning the methodology (G p 1). The expectations for reflection were clearly stated, "While we didn't have to use the spiral, that was certainly encouraged and we did also use it at the end of the sessions as part of our reflection and evaluation" (A p 2). Students were paired with learning partners as a way of enhancing their learning experience and to provide a one-on-one place for reflection. Gwyn describes a three-way arrangement she and Ann, who were learning partners, had for sharing of reflections, "I would give my reflection to Helene and she would scribble all sorts of questions, right? That would then go to Ann and Ann not only would add her own questions but she would learn from Helene's questions how to ask questions" (G p 13). Questioning was a significant part of doing reflections, and the feedback supplied new questions with other perspectives and insights. Shared reflections offered the benefit of learning how to ask different questions or to ask questions differently. It also allowed the critical perspectives of others to point out blind spots and unacknowledged assumptions.

It was around this time that Kolb and Fry's (1975) Learning Style Inventory (LSI) was introduced in Core. Helene noticed:

> That captured a lot of people's interests and […] was a real help in giving us a common language of how people learn, their strengths, weak points, how and where to stretch and challenge; also a common

> language on how one designs a session is influenced by how we learn
> […] I'm not sure Kolb makes this last analysis—we did. (H 1983 p 2)

The LSI, while practical was not used without critique. For one thing, the initial study was based primarily on men in professions that were very different from CCS where there were primarily women studying theology. In addition, CCS Staff had to negotiate the student perception that certain learning styles were more prestigious than others or that the inventory determined or compartmentalized one's style forever. Helene found it was helpful to stress that every quadrant on the spiral was necessary for integrated learning; none were inferior, though society might value them differently. Furthermore, she encouraged the students to set learning goals in areas where they were not as strong in order to expand their ways of learning. The LSI was often used not only for initial assessment but also later in the program as a tool to check growth. "What was fun is when they did [the LSI again in] the second year or at the end of the first year [after having done it at the beginning of their year] and they saw that they had shifted" (H p 8). The LSI was added to the developing model of the Spiral.

Visual Depiction

Gwyn recalls that Kolb's Learning Style theory (1975), Freire's Action-Reflection theory (1970), and Solberg's model of theological reflection (1974) were all in use in 1980 when Helene suggested putting them together into the first conceptual diagram of the model. "I remember our excitement as we identified what questions fit with each quadrant – but what emerged was something new from any of the contributing theories" (G r p 1). As they drafted it, the diagram synthesized the ideas they were working with into new theory. It provided a visual guide to follow and a format on which to place one's learning (Moussa 1983 p 3, G p 5). They felt that it might help students who needed more guidance to become disciplined in reflection (G p 5).

Helene and Gwyn began with a blank sheet of newsprint and drew the spiral that had come from Anne's group in 1975 (G p 6). Kolb's model provided the four quadrants, Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualisation (AC), Active Experimentation (AE), which were overlaid onto Freire's idea of "action/reflection". To these were added Solberg's tasks for each quadrant, such as for CE "choose an experience: meaningful, significant, impactful, draws my attention, a-ha" (Appendix A.2). Solberg also brought a focus on theology and right brain learning, which Gwyn says, was significant in their drawing:

'What does this experience remind me of? Metaphor, image, song, Scripture' […] came out of Solberg. […] This is the piece we took relating it to the church's symbols, Scripture, liturgy so on, and then the doctrine is down into the AC […] 'What does it remind me of? Create a symbol' see we moved over into [RO]. (G p 3)

Solberg's material encouraged participants to use both the senses (observation) and the imagination to engage RO (K p 4). Incorporating the phrase "one concept" into the CE section was an original idea that acknowledged a relevant occasion for reflection beyond an experience (G p 5).

Gwyn and Helene were juxtaposing theories and experiences by "playing with ideas, playing with insights, and letting them come together in different ways" (G p 5). Instead of staying with Kolb's statements they added questions to the four parts of the drawing, an approach they felt was more in line with Freire's problem-posing methodology (H p 10). Many of the questions recorded on the illustration of the Action/Reflection model emerged out of the student and leader experience in Core. "We brainstormed them [and] batted them back and forth and said OK that's something that belongs in there" (G p 5). Helene noticed that the questions in one quadrant often related to different areas of the spiral. For example, the question in AC "'How can I ground this understanding and awareness' is an action in itself. Action doesn't mean going out with a banner, and that's what we tried very hard to unpack because of the social context at the time. It was a very activist period in the '70s" (H p 6). As a result, the AC section ended up with a number of questions inviting consideration of many options for action.

Gwyn hand drew the first diagram (Appendix A.3), which was then tested. Helene was surprised, "It caught on far more than we (certainly I) had anticipated. I think because it was concrete, clear and not to say anything about our own excitement […] I don't see it as a 'theory' but a picture summary of a theory learned from our Core experiences" (Moussa 1983 p 3). However, this tool could not do everything nor was it the only way of approaching reflection. Gwyn realized, "There are other ways of doing things […] What it did was it gave us a language, as well, to talk about learning and to validate the various aspects of learning: the theory, the experience, the reflection, and the action" (G p 7). As they designed this model, and worked with it in Core, new theory emerged that was different from the original theories they started with (G p 6).   It was flexible and responsive to emerging needs, tested and grounded in the educational and theological experience of CCS.

How the model evolved

Reflection on practice was something the staff did regularly, so it was inevitable that the program together with the Action/Reflection model was continually evaluated, adjusted, and changed in response to new learning and insights, in keeping with a pedagogy where "evaluation and reflection were central to its function" (Moussa 2010 np). Wendy pointed out that change happened when, "we just realized the program was too this or too that and we should try something else" in response to student feedback, or when staff discerned a gap (W p 3). In the fall of 1982 Helene identified some dilemmas she had about how students were using the spiral and pondered where their strengths and weaknesses occurred in reflections. After consulting with staff she again "played" with it all and came up with some proposed changes to the spiral that would be tested in her Core groups over that academic year.

The adaptations involved three of the four quadrants. Helene noticed the subject matter students were writing about in AC often seemed disconnected from what she knew about those individuals (Moussa 1982 p 1). "One of the patterns I found was that at the RO level they either had blocked feelings or used the word NOTICE (see Appendix A.3) to look "outside" of themselves and therefore [were] not connecting self with 'other'" (Moussa 1982 p 1). The question "what did I notice" was removed from RO and students were instead asked to "describe" various aspects of their experience. Another observation was, "the RO process needs to more directly draw out tension; conflict, as well as affirmation of past beliefs" (Moussa 1982 p 1). A new set of questions was added to augment the RO section. All references to "learning" were deleted based on Helene's rationale that, "the whole process of CE-RO-AC-AE is learning and I found it jarred people to use the word. It felt conclusive when they had not yet owned or integrated what they were reflecting on" (Moussa 1982 p1).

Significant additions were made to AC because people needed more of a process there, but Helene was not satisfied the changes would make the difference she hoped "because a major breakthrough with people who are blocked here is also when they have been able to demythologize theory and theology" (Moussa 1982 p1). She decided to pay greater attention in Core to what she did to enable students and what they did to enable themselves in this part of the reflection. She invited other staff to offer input from their own experience. More work was done in the AE too. The Core group in 1981 had wrestled with the difficulty of students moving to authentic action on social issues. Helene acknowledged:

> It's OK if people don't move from the reflective AE to the action part of
> the AE…there are limits and limitations to education and political action.
> It's only when education is 'in' the living experience that the AE can
> happen much more 'naturally'. Limits and potentials of class and
> churches are crucial to name in moving AE to action. (Moussa 1982 p 1)

The blocks in any given situation had to be acknowledged and overcome in moving to authentic action. New questions were added and the original version of the model was amended to reflect all of these suggestions for use that year (Appendix A.4). After testing these ideas, a new detailed version of the Action/Reflection Model diagram was produced in 1983 and used without reported changes until 1998 (See Appendix A.5 and Model Comparisons Table in Appendix B*).*

It was a common practice for the CCS community to puzzle over how new theory might fit into the spiral or be compatible with it, for example, the Myer's Briggs Type Indicator (K p 13). Students and staff asked questions about how theory might add to or sharpen the ideas about reflection and were involved in synthesizing theory as the spiral developed. Adaptations of the model began to be designed by other staff to meet specific needs; many of these diagrams are undated and anonymous. Kay Heuer revealed that after she came on staff in 1982 she put together *A Simple Spiral Way of Reflecting* (Appendix A-9) for students who found all the words on the other diagram overwhelming: "We just kept the page really pretty clean, whereas the other was pretty full with questions and possibilities […] I began to use the simple spiral at first and then move people on to the more lengthy questions" (K p 5). Shelley Finson coordinated field education from 1978 to1985 and Gwyn indicated that it was Shelley who designed the reflection process for students to use in field placements and seminars that appears in Appendix A.7. There was also a social justice version developed at CCS (Appendix A.8), and Don Thompson, who was on academic staff from 1982 to 1991, tested a variation with students in his Integrating Theology class (Appendix A.10). These other formats serve to show that the model itself was flexible enough to accommodate questions specific to a variety of learning and ministry experiences. More importantly, the fact that other staff members were designing adaptations of the spiral also illustrates how the model had moved beyond Helene and Core to be embraced by the whole learning community.

Prior to 1998 there were some changes at CCS that affected the program and how it was carried out. After a pilot study of a non-residential (regional) program of preparation for diaconal ministry hosted by St. Stephen's College, CCS began its own regional program in 1993, in addition to the existing residential one. In 1997 the

residential course of studies was phased out in favour of the more cost-effective regionally offered program. Since students came together for centrally located learning circles a few times a year, the program could draw from a larger pool of people while allowing them to live and study in their own communities. When a decision was made to move CCS from Toronto to Winnipeg in 1998, a time of upheaval ensued for the institution and staff. Only one of the academic staff continued after the move to Winnipeg where she worked with a group of students who had started in the residential program (1995) combined with students in the regional program.

Changes after 1998

Joining CCS staff in 1998, Ted Dodd brought an enthusiasm for the Action/Reflection model from his past experience as a field placement supervisor of CCS students. His zeal was not always shared, "I was very keen on it. I still am. And one of the staff I was working with said, 'Well not everybody knows how to use this or needs to know how to use this.' And I was kind of resistant to that" (T p 3). Although there were efforts to maintain some continuity with what had gone before, a new staff complement brought new ideas and influences to the program. It was a time of possibility. With a new location and new people in leadership there was a readiness to re-examine everything. In much the same way that the new curriculum was launched back in 1974, this new staff team brought a willingness to innovate and learn from experience with less concern about carefully doing everything the same way it had been done in the past (Douglas 2011 np).

Among the new ideas was the introduction of other theological reflection tools, among them the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and Beverly Harrison's Feminist Hermeneutical method[*]. The students were given an assignment to choose one of these theological reflection tools and assess it in comparison to the spiral. Ted found this exercise contributed important learning about the Action/Reflection model.

> The critique of those students who did use Wesley's quadrilateral […] was that there was no AE […] no intentional, strategic imagining 'what next?' […] They were also critical of the spiral because it didn't necessarily intentionally lead them to look at tradition or Scripture…So that may have been the genesis of me adding these [questions in the AC section] (T p 4).

Their analysis suggested worthwhile changes to the A/R model. An "Explore" piece was added to AC asking students to think about their experience in relationship to

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[*] The Wesleyan Quadrilateral reflects on Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. Harrison's method moves around a praxis cycle.

literature, Scriptural connections, and to examine a broader range of theological topics than had been the case up to that time (Appendix A.11) (T p 4). Written guidelines were created for writing major reflection papers that encouraged students to draw on the theory they were encountering in their readings. There were other modifications as well. One change involved shifting "image" and "Scripture" to the AC section. At the same time "use a metaphor, song, create a symbol" which had picked up the right brain activity in Solberg's model, was left out. Ted recalls that when Gwyn visited CCS they disagreed about whether image belongs in Reflective Observation (RO) or Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) (T p 12). However, Helene had written in her notes to staff in 1982, "It's important to suggest that imagery can be used in different places in the reflective process both because it is in effect a dynamic force as well as to create a creative tension" thus paving the way for varying the location of "image" much later in the life of the spiral (Moussa 1982 p1).

Both Ann Naylor and Sherri McConnell joined the staff team after having also been CCS students, which meant they came with previous experiences and expectations of using the model. The most significant change for Ann when she returned in 1999 was that group reflection on learning was no longer done at the end of each session. She missed that final go around where each person talked about "What did I learn? What can I conclude? How does it relate?" (A p 4). Group reflection had been replaced by private journaling at the beginning and end of sessions using guided questions. However, other opportunities existed for intentional group reflection. One example was at the end of the Leadership Development Module (LDM) (see "Process for sharing the Spiral Reflection" Appendix G.2) when students present a prepared reflection on a flipchart sheet to a small group and the members offer feedback to the presenter. Field placement orientations and study tours (called Global Perspective Experiences) were other places group reflection was initiated.

> *I was introduced as a staff person to the way CCS uses the Action-Reflection model through co-teaching the Leadership Development Module and watching how it is introduced now, and by reading the assignment outlines, and responding to student's spiral reflection assignments. I found myself surprised when reading student spiral reflections – and hearing how the spiral reflection process was described. As a student I found the Action-Reflection spiral to be essential to process my learnings and identify my next steps. It doesn't feel like it is so much any more – it doesn't feel like it is a recognizable CCS educational tool in the way it was when was a student. (Sherri R p 1)*

Sherri McConnell related this story of how she received orientation to the way the Action/Reflection model was being used when she came on staff in 2007. As a student she had been accustomed to frequent reflections, and her written reflections used a

journalling style that was rarely edited or changed once it was on paper. In the intervening years, with the move to a field-based program, adaptations had been made. Reflections had been reduced in frequency from once a week to two after each learning circle, or four per year. The first was similar to the earlier form where the spiral was used to reflect on new learning or events in ministry. The other assignment was a structured research paper following the spiral format but with a printed sheet of detailed guidelines (Appendix H.3) which placed increased emphasis on theory and theology in Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) (A p 7, T p 7). These well-organized papers were quite different from the more free-flowing ones students had done in previous years, necessitating more research and a polished style of writing.

Teaching the Spiral

Throughout its history the spiral was introduced to students using creative and participatory methods. In 2009, the students in the Leadership Development Module (LDM) were invited to choose to play with Lego, rhythm instruments, or modeling clay at different play centres. This activity constituted a Concrete Experience (CE). Next, they wrote about their experiences using a series of reflective questions designed to help them explore what they felt themselves and to notice what they observed in others during that playtime. These questions helped the participants enter into a Reflective Observation (RO) activity. Then the students were drawn into an exercise of Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) as a staff member[*] unfolded the learning theory behind Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) which was then applied to a drawing of the Action/Reflection model (Figure 6.1). The four learning styles were named on the drawing and the spiral was presented as a tool for reflection where each quadrant represented a different entry point for learning in different ways. Finally, as the students completed the LSI and identified their own learning styles, they became involved in the Active Experimentation (AE) part of the spiral. They were able to move beyond the theory to celebrate the many ways of learning in the members of the group. Some found confirmation of what they already knew about how they liked to find things out. Others were intrigued or puzzled by a new way of thinking about their learning. They discussed the gifts and challenges in each style and recognized areas for personal growth. In conclusion, staff pointed out the multi-layered nature of the of the Action/Reflection model and how it can be used. It offers a means of understanding who they are as learners (learning styles); a way of understanding the learning process; a method of doing reflection; a process for reflecting theologically; and a planning model.

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[*] All names were kept anonymous in the Participant Observation of the LDM, even those of staff.

Figure 6.1   The Action/Reflection Model as drawn at the 2009 LDM
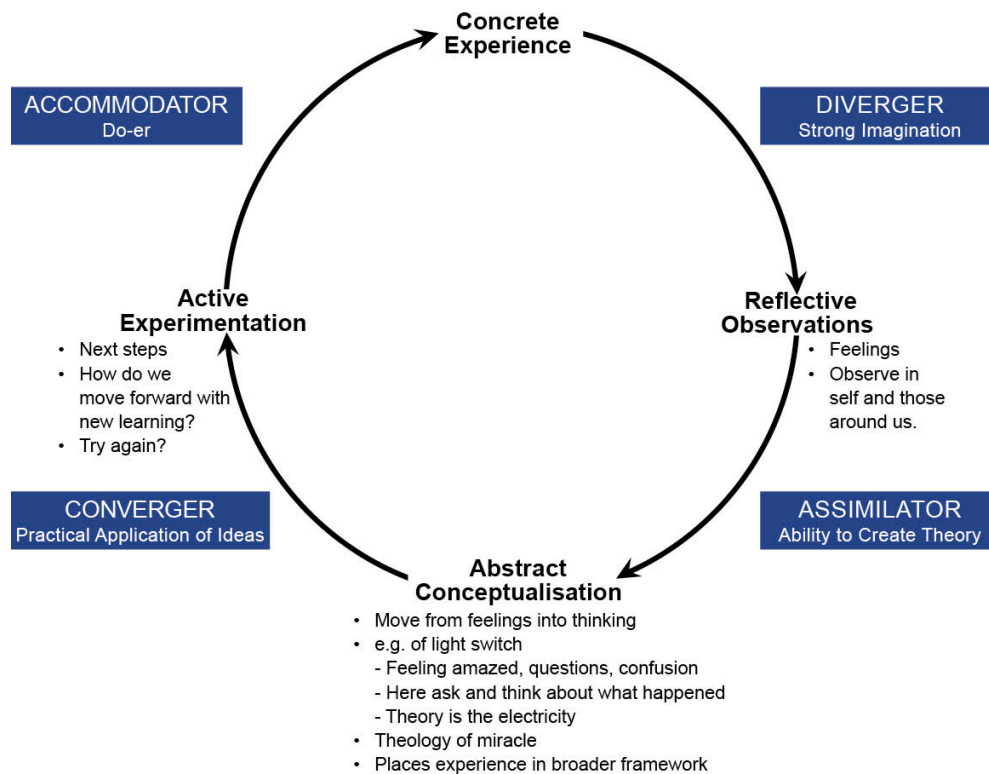
The experience in the LDM revealed one way in which the spiral was being passed on by staff; however, it was not the only method.   Ann told a story about another way she was introduced to the spiral when she was a student in 1977.

> *When I was a student, the first year students met with the second year students for […] the Orientation Weekend. And part of that weekend was introducing the spiral model. And so the second year students divided into 4 groups and each group taught one quadrant of the model. So they each taught the cha-cha-cha and they used it according to the dominant mode of that quadrant.   So I remember the group using the theory, so the AC end of it. One person stood up and said, "Take notes. 'C' 'H' 'A', 'C' 'H' 'A', 'C' 'H' 'A'. Everybody got that? […] And one of the groups sat in a circle and talked about how they felt about the cha-cha-cha, when they'd tried it, how they responded to it, what happened in their bodies, what their emotions were [RO].   One group did a demonstration and they all lined up and tried to do the cha-cha-cha in different ways [AE].   And I don't remember the fourth group, but it was probably a good hour of the students showing "This is how the spiral works".   (Ann p 1, 2)*

Ted taught his family members how the spiral works using a chicken dinner to illustrate it.

> *I had a quilt on my wall that was stolen that my sister-in-law had made, so she was asking what I wanted in a new quilt. I said I wanted a spiral and so they wondered what that was all about […] We had just had a chicken dinner so I was explaining to them that's the Concrete Experience […] "So now we'll do some Reflective Observation. What did you think of the chicken? Is it moist? Was it tender? Did you like the spices that were on it etc." Then we got out The Joy of Cooking for the Abstract Conceptualisation. "So next time if you make the chicken dinner, or your mom does, what would you do differently? Would you cook it as long? Would you cook it longer? Would you act a different way?" So I think what I'm saying is that I would tell a story […] picking any experience in ministry will have more nuances to it, more meaning more depth than a chicken dinner. (Ted p 9)*

While their stories are different, Ann and Ted's descriptions were reminiscent of the methods used in the 2009 LDM. They all began with a concrete experience that incorporated walking through the Action/Reflection model so learners could discover for themselves how each quadrant was used. Ted used the steps for making and eating a chicken dinner; for Ann's group, it was learning to dance the Cha-cha; and for the LDM, learning styles were examined after beginning with play. Different people each brought a unique approach and style to teaching the Action/Reflection model.

Learning to reflect

Students reported a mixture of experiences learning the spiral. Learning how to reflect wasn't about simply being able to follow the steps in the Action/Reflection model, answering the questions in each quadrant, or understanding and using the method correctly. It had more to do with what they were feeling and learning as they reflected. Some went through the motions of doing reflections because they were required assignments but they were not changed by the process. Jude recalled that her learning partner didn't ever figure out what the spiral was about and at the end of year assessment couldn't say much about what she had learned (FG2 p 2). There was a spectrum of experiences and feelings students had from, "Students in their third year saying, 'I still don't get it. It's like I'm going through the process but it's not doing it for me' […to] students who say, 'It's just so integrated now that I don't even think about the different steps […] It's something I do voluntarily.'" (A p 6). Reflection for some was a lifesaver and for others difficult or puzzling. Many reported starting out confused but eventually found that reflection would help them, "Connect the dots. Then they began to understand how it […] also enabled learning" about self, society, the church, God, and more (W p 6). There were students who embraced its potential for helping them learn from any given situation.

Reflection was a practical instrument for these students. Sarah remembers the diagram as a tool she kept handy on her wall in order to be able to take a situation and work through it at any time (FG p 1). Several graduates spoke of the healing benefits of doing reflections. Wendy recalls that when she was a student, "It became something that was in place for me to sort out all kinds of stuff […Reflection] could also be therapeutic depending on what you were working on" (W p 5). Ann mentioned, "I was so shy, I didn't talk a lot in the group itself, so most of my learning was processed afterwards. And so doing the writing gave me a real outlet to think about the many things that were blowing my brain at that point" (A p 2). Sherri liked having the written reflections as a way to keep track of how she was working on her learning goals throughout the year.

Some students found it personally empowering to use their experiences as opportunities for learning and to be able to work out a new way to act (S p 1, 7). Others discovered the value of reflection in the midst of turmoil, crisis, or a personal challenge (FG2 p 10). Ann found, "My practice has also been to write when I'm most emotionally raw, either angry or upset […] Lots of what was happening at CCS at that point also made me mad, and confused" (A p 3). Reflecting was a way to pay attention to what was going on internally as a healthy coping response. When students avoided doing that interior work, Ted observed, "[They] get stuck re-living the experience over and over" (T R p 1). Sometimes they were confronted with obstacles to growth in the form of deeply buried pain from unhealed emotional wounds. Krista learned that it was vital to sort out these dilemmas, "You keep going back unless you force yourself to get to another spot and you mostly got to the other spots if you went through it. Otherwise, I found I was [saying], 'Here I am again'" (FG1 p 2). When students were able to spend the necessary time in RO, they were able to move beyond their personal feelings to consider the bigger perspective.

[The facilitators] said, 'Now we're going to make a symbol with all these crafty things, make a symbol of what you're feeling'. So I made a pumpkin and I hung it on there. So everybody talked about feeling this, there was cotton and fluffy stuff, and it came round to me and Gwyn said, "Which one is yours Jude?" I said, 'Mine's the pumpkin. Do you know what they do to pumpkins at Halloween?' She looked at me, and I could see the look on her face was like, 'Oh, God, here we go.' 'They cut a hole in the top of its head and rip all its guts out. That's how I'm feeling'. The whole group sat there and stared at me like 'What?' 'So I'll get over it, let's go on'. I thought, it's important to identify the feelings that are there. What's not important is to spend all your time looking at the feelings. You've got to move on, you've got to say, 'Where do they fit in context? What does the way I'm feeling, how does that relate to the way Bonnie is feeling? How does that relate to what else is happening in the room and how do we deal with that? […] And I was frustrated that we spent far too much time doing that feeling piece of it. (Jude FG2 p 5).

Jude told this story to acknowledge that it's important to identify the feelings and then move into figuring out how they relate contextually. Anne had a profound experience of putting her emotions into the context of her learning after the death of a favourite aunt:

> I went to Helene's office and said I was going to quit. And she wasn't going to accept that for a moment and so pushed me on […] the emotional reasons I was going to quit […] I had not understood the emotional level as being part of academic learning. I had been fiercely keeping all of those things separate. So at that point there was kind of a breakthrough. First, the fact that I was grieving was actually subject for learning […] And then all of a sudden like just within 20 minutes I understood how all of it was part of the program. How the way we were tied together in the Core, and struggling along in a messy collective way, and suddenly realized […] this is the heart of it. (AB p 4,5)

It was a turning point in being able to value the learning that comes through emotional channels and use reflection to integrate it with other ways of knowing. It also revealed the significance of the collective learning experience.

Some people experienced in reflection a refreshing way to engage their creative side. Others found it stretched them to do something unfamiliar. Kay encouraged students to explore imagination as a different way to learn and always asked people to do one creative reflection each semester, using art such as collage, poetry, music, or dance (K p 6). Ted tried to persuade students to see the AE section as an opportunity to write or sew or paint something, and some students still didn't feel there was enough scope for their creativity (T p 12). While there was room made for creative expression, Ann indicated that for her the usual assumption was that reflections would be written or that a creative piece would have a written component. She offered a rationale, "If you do something that isn't word-based [e.g. a quilt, drawing, sound recording] then the challenge is how you help folks who are word-based understand what you are trying to say" (A p 8). The challenge of interpretation made offering appropriate feedback a dilemma where there was nothing in written form accompanying a creative reflection.

Both staff and students said that reflection required concentrated effort, which they called "discipline". Discipline involved regular practice, over time in order to build skill and habit, but it also meant trying new things and responding to feedback. Gwyn discovered a love of reflection when she was in Core but at first her approach involved writing whatever came to mind. She had to learn to push herself to do the conceptualisation and continue to action because these were not areas of strength for her. Several people spoke of having to develop in particular spheres that they were not used to or that weren't their preferences. They started out jumping over the quadrants

they didn't like and spending all of their time on the ones they were strongest in. While it was sometimes a chore to do all the parts, doing so became a way to develop personally and deepen reflection. Although some students preferred to avoid acknowledging their emotions they found the spiral helped manage them in the context of a bigger process. Lilith admitted, "Just because I didn't like it doesn't mean I didn't derive great benefit. So yeah, I did do the feeling stuff in that RO section" (FG2 p 7). She found she could handle the feelings when she knew she could move on from them into AC.

Reflection was an ability that Judith found grew slowly over time, "The older I got the more useful I thought the tool was. I mean probably I was just a little better at it (FG1 p 2). Helene said she was "amazed at how people changed five, ten years after they left the Centre" (H p 8). Other students began to acknowledge reflection as something important to their learning, when they were able to work through a situation in a way that made a difference to them (H p 6). That happened at different times for different people. Sometimes it took a while to catch on to reflection before everything fell into place. Jude remembers:

> Toward the end of the first year…all of a sudden everything [started] clicking. It was like, 'Oh yeah, this all actually makes sense and is helpful'. And it wasn't that I didn't get it [before], but all of a sudden, it was like this boom went off in my head, and I went, 'Oh, OK, now I get it. Now I really get it' (FG2 p 2)

There were a number of factors that enabled students to embrace the Action/Reflection model as a process for learning, or that prevented them from understanding it. Education at CCS depended on a willingness to learn in community and, at the same time, take responsibility for one's own learning. Students who were used to being told what to learn and weren't familiar with setting their own goals had to be coaxed to try something completely new (K p 3). There were students who found they wanted a different style of education than CCS had to offer. For them reflection didn't work because "part of this model is being pushed, […] into facing oneself, which is not in a traditional academic model […] And there were some who didn't want that" (G p 8). Resistance and avoidance were common reactions. Resistance meant students who were not ready to embrace the program, held back from participating fully. Some put up obstacles, which resulted in complete non-cooperation. Not everyone embraced the philosophy of education or the spiral as a learning resource.

Often students came with assumptions that learning would be competitive, or painful, or that they needed to please the teacher. When students realized that they weren't doing the assignment for the staff, or that it wasn't just something to get through, but that they were doing it for themselves, their attitude towards it changed. Wendy noticed, "It became a way for people to get at questions that they didn't even realize they had. That's the thing about it. You start at 'a' and you end up at 'f' and you didn't know that 'f' was even on the table" (W p 6). Some students had chafed in learning situations where it was the professor's responsibility to provide information and the student's role to parrot it back. Jude appreciated taking her learning into her own hands and being able to say, "These are the things that I need to learn and this is how I'm going to go about learning them" (FG2 p 5). Others, like Sherri, found it refreshing to be able to recognize her own experience as a valid starting place for learning.

Sometimes different parts of the spiral proved problematic. Ann found students often had difficulty with the theory and theology in AC: "I'm not sure if it's an active resistance or just, 'It's hard for me to do that' […] There's a whole series of questions that people can ask but if you don't own those questions, if they feel like something external to you then the process of doing a spiral is going to be hard" (A p 10). Kay noticed, "There were other difficulties for people who were more experience-based—to relate their experience to the theories and to find theory that related" (K p 7). Building a wider knowledge base became part of the task. Ted gave examples of other difficulties he'd observed students having:

> If […] you're not prone to be critical or to think about your life […] Or if school has been really a nightmare, then the Abstract Conceptualisation is hard. If they're fixers, they come with the whole desire to help, help, help. Getting them to slow down if they are really busy [is hard]. (T p 7)

Gwyn found that doing the conceptual work of "naming" in Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) provided essential energy for students to move into action in Active Experimentation (AE) which was not accessed when students skipped the AC (2011 np). Students referred to the fact that it was in pushing themselves to move through the whole process that they were able to overcome the places where they tended to get stalled. Those with intentionality about maximizing their learning tended to make the most of the spiral as a resource for learning. The students who did what they needed to get reflection papers over with or who actively resisted learning from reflection found it was a hurdle (A p 6). When she was on staff Wendy noticed, "Some folks were determined not to be changed by their educational program and that made it very hard to work with them […] This reflection model is going to be a constant sore

point" (W R p 1). Students who valued reflection were more likely to follow through on the action part of it, and to integrate what they had learned (A p 7).

Reflection sometimes took everything apart as students confronted assumptions, questioned the status quo, and examined their most deeply felt reactions. Other times it led to integration and insight that helped "pull some pieces back together" (A p 3). Gwyn saw in students:

> The excitement of the 'aha's'. I mean that little word kind of expresses what happened for students when they got a new insight, or something finally came together, or they integrated […] It was something that they owned then and that had meaning for them that was beyond the head understanding. G p 10)

"Integration" was a word used often to describe the way in which students were able to put the various pieces of what they were struggling with together in new eye-opening ways. Those new understandings came from making sense of what was going on for them and helped students move beyond what they already knew, breaking open new possibilities for seeing their own situations or making connections with the bigger context.

Feedback

Feedback helped to enlarge reflection beyond the individual and provided another way of learning in community. While reflections have never been graded they were read closely by staff, learning partners, and sometimes supervisors/learning facilitators. Responses were offered, most often in the form of questions, or at times observations, comments, and suggestions to encourage students in their self-examination and help them make broader connections. Staff members had a depth of knowledge of reflection that made it possible to read student reflections on several different levels. Kay checked to see if students were able to follow the model all the way around without skipping quadrants; she identified ways the reflection related to the student's learning goals; sometimes she was counselling on paper as people reflected deeply on their feelings; and "Because the Action/Reflection model turns towards the world" Kay looked for how the reflection related to social or global issues (K p 6). Sherri tended to test assumptions with her feedback, providing, "Challenging curiosity […] based on my experience of when I was asked a challenging question to consider and found that that really helped open up places of defensiveness or resistance" (S p 8). Staff reading reflections on all of these levels needed to attend to their own learning styles and those

of students in order to be able to offer feedback that helped students deepen what they were learning, particularly in those areas they avoided or skimmed over.

Ann noticed that students didn't always know what going "deeper" meant but, "Then most students will at some point say, 'I get it. I feel like that's what I'm doing now and I'm able to help others do that as well.' So it's going beneath the surface" (A p 13). Sometimes going deeper meant taking into account the perceptions and feedback of others. Ted told about a student who brought a completed reflection to a field placement orientation for everyone to walk through. "When we got to the Reflective Observation piece, other people had been involved in this situation and were saying 'What about this dynamic?' and 'What about this aspect?' 'Have you looked at...?' 'Have you thought about...?' And he hadn't, right, and so his whole case started to fall apart" (T p 6). Other members of the community were able to bring insights that broadened his viewpoint. Feedback like this could encourage students to reflect more deeply and move into authentic action.

Comments brought a new perspective and encouraged further work, especially when students shared papers with learning partners who added another layer of feedback. Sometimes staff wanted students to take more time with their reflections or expected a response to their feedback, which was not always welcomed or easy with the busy schedules of academic life. Occasionally students had to do additional work on the longer research papers, especially when they had not delved into all of the parts of the spiral. The reality was that every reflection demanded more reflection because, as Kay observed, "Every time we follow it around to the Active Experimentation, it almost automatically sets up a new learning goal [...] Even as they are completing a learning they are discovering something more to learn" (K p 3). The reflective process was like that. When you thought you had done a good piece of work in choosing an experience and carefully worked around the spiral, the feedback indicated there was still more to be done.

The Spiral Beyond CCS
Tool, template, resource, method, instrument, model; these are all ways in which the spiral was named as useful, sometimes related to ministry, social action, or education and other times addressing the personal dilemmas or relationships of daily life. Once students knew that the Action/Reflection model worked, they were able to apply it and adapt it in all kinds of ways as graduates. Graduates identified a variety of ways they commonly used the spiral in congregational ministry: creative educational events, pastoral care, committee work, worship and preaching. They named a variety of ways

in which it aided their planning and preparations. Going around the spiral in putting together the worship service helped Bonnie write her sermons. For others their groundwork began not with CE but with AC as they worked through the exegesis of Scriptures and then followed the spiral around from there. Sophia used the spiral in her weekly Bible study preparation as a way to connect to other aspects of ministry (FG2 p 11). Lilith liked the questioning method from the spiral, "I asked a question last time I was preaching […] About four people at different points during the week had stopped in, […] they would say one word, and they would walk out. The last question was 'What is the word for you that saves'" (FG2 p 11).

Sarah found it could help address issues of change or potential conflict. A United congregation beginning to engage in talks about shared ministry with an Anglican church used the spiral for the design: "We are going to start with 'What is our experience right now? [CE]' 'Why are we going into these talks [CE]' 'How do we feel about it? [RO]' 'What are the losses, what are the gains? [AC]'" (FG1 p 11). Krista reported working with teenage boys in her church when they complained that their parents didn't want them playing poker (F1 p 4). Together they engaged in reflection on the issue with various groups, and then hosted an event where the boys taught people how to play poker followed by a speaker who unfolded some of the bigger social problems relating to poker and gambling. The process helped young and old investigate the issue and gain new appreciation of different positions.

Because of its facility for inspiring examination of all aspects of an issue, Sherri has introduced the spiral as a journaling technique in the context of a community counselling centre. Ted has also used it to invite people he's counselling in congregational ministry to open up their experience, "'Tell me your feelings. What was going on? […] What does your faith say about this?' […] I would ask some social analysis questions. 'What do you want to do?'" (T p 14). Many graduates said they always have it in the back of their minds, so they might find themselves instinctively asking questions that follow the spiral. It provides a way for them to function reflectively, culminating in asking of others and of themselves, "So what are you going to do about it?" The potential for personal transformation is a strength graduates value in their work because they have experienced its transformative power themselves. When Anne was able to reflect on the grief of losing her aunt in the context of learning, it was a turning point in her understanding of the significance of the action-reflection process:

> From then on, I was completely transformed […] I just threw myself in and became completely committed to it, and completely open to it, and completely vulnerable to it, and then of course my intellectual grasp of it began to evolve as well (AB pp 4,5).

Ted has seen this kind of transformative learning in his work on staff at CCS:

> I have witnessed students coming to resolution around issues. I've witnessed students do 180's on where they thought they were going to end up […] Often it's not untypical for them to feel a sense of 'Oh, this is what I can do' […] and some kind of peace. And there can also be a student kind of going 'Geez, I really need to change […] I've got work to do'. (T p 11)

These personal changes helped people understand themselves and those around them better, and gave them resources to address their social situations. Anne saw this happen. She introduced the spiral in a course for low-income community leaders and assigned the students to use it to work through a personal issue. That day, one of the students ended up at court with her son, a single parent who was being charged for drug trafficking. While she was waiting she decided:

> 'I might as well do this assignment […] What if he goes to jail?' and then worked through to, 'I have to go down to family court and apply for custody of these children' and that's exactly what happened […] But her description of how anxious and upset she'd been until she'd worked it through the spiral and how clear she became and she knew exactly what she needed to do next. That was just so powerful (AB p 6).

Jude found its most important application was as a tool to analyse and address social issues:

> It's a matter of reflection on political process, on systemic problems. […] to see where we connect politically and socially and systemically to other things that are happening in the world. So it's not just about what is happening in a congregation […] It is about the political process, not just about the theology involved […] That's the other reason that it remains powerful for me […] It's useful wherever you go. (FG2 p 12)

Anne saw it as an essential component for her social justice work, "There is nothing like the spiral for moving it on into action in my experience" (AB p 6). Once the groundwork was laid, the spiral provided a solid process for implementing change in the groups she worked with.

The Action/Reflection model has not only been dispersed by graduates but also shared through opportunities for interchange between CCS and other groups with shared values, such as the Cross Cultural Communication Centre, Project North, Anti-

Apartheid and Chilean groups in the 1970s and 1980s. Anne pointed out, "There were a lot of workshops at the Centre for all of those groups […] So I'm sure the spiral spread very quickly through that community" (AB p 3). Graduates Alyson Huntly and Anne Bishop used a version of the spiral in a book they put together for development education at CUSO (1988). Anne also used this spiral in her other books, changing the questions to suit the circumstances (2002, 2004, 2005) (Appendix A.12).

Some graduates have used the spiral as supervisors or learning facilitators with student ministers. Those carrying out this function saw it as an opportunity to share the Action/Reflection model with people in other streams of ministry who might not otherwise be exposed to it (FG1 p 2). Since it was helpful to students and graduates, the question of whether the Action/Reflection model could be shared as a helpful tool with other theological institutions arose. Most of the responses were mixed or cautious. Ann thought the basic theory of reflection could certainly be shared in other contexts with significant benefit, "As a resource for being in the world, for learning, for acting, the more the better" (A p 17). However, she was wary about using it in other theological colleges, "It's not tied to CCS in a way that makes it impossible for it to be used someplace else but I think the basic model of adult education and critical thinking needs to be part of any context that would make good use of it" (A p 17). She felt that it couldn't be an "add on" component of an educational system based on pedagogical values contrary to those of the spiral.

Anne had encountered those values when she received negative reactions from faculty members to her description of the active engagement students could expect in a course she was going to teach using the Action/Reflection model. Her assessment was that the spiral would not fit easily into a university context, theological or otherwise, because it focused on individual learning rather than learning in community. Ted observed, "Traditional study and scholarship have prized concepts and ideas and placed practice and application in secondary roles" (T r p 2). Helene also concurred with Anne 's analysis. The consensus seemed to be that the Action/Reflection model works at CCS because it was designed for that context where the pedagogy and values support its use. While champions of the spiral were discouraged about sharing the model more broadly with other institutions, the literature shows that there is a growing interest in practical theology in other theological schools. There is evidence that some theological colleges might welcome hearing about a reflection method that works at CCS.

Jude thought that the spiral had more potential for broader application with those involved in community development:

> The process needs to be taught more universally […] where we're teaching people to be street workers, community workers of various kinds, where we're teaching people to take responsibility for the world around them. That's where they need to be able to use it, […] impart it to community groups, who can then say "How do we band together to make change in our neighbourhoods, in our communities?" (FG2 p 12)

Gwyn pointed that this model has been successfully dispersed through the witness of the many Diaconal Ministers in the United Church and other graduates in ministry in other churches and in the community. They were immersed in this model as students and now strive to use it and teach it in their regular practice wherever they might be (G R p 3).

The Value of the Spiral

Students reported that reflection sometimes took everything apart as they confronted assumptions, questioned the status quo, and examined their most deeply felt reactions. Other times it led to integration and insight that helped "pull some pieces back together" (A p 3). It became part of their lives as they used it for reflection, to sort out personal problems, to confront injustices, acknowledge emotions, deepen wisdom, get to know oneself, plan effectively, repair relationships, find comfort in new situations, be prayerful, and take time. Wendy found, "It certainly helped me process the learning that was happening that I was experiencing at the Centre […] It gave me a way to make sense of the world" (W p 9). This spiral provided the CCS community with "common ground" and "structure" (K p 11, A 15). But more than growing roots, many people also found wings as they were transformed and set free by reflection. Ted observed, "There's something sacred about taking time [to reflect]" (T p 2). Kay spoke for many when she said, "It's a part of me" (K p 12), making the connection to praxis, which involves "the total commitment of the whole person" (Groome 1980 p 154-5). It became "a way of being"; an integral part of their thinking that went beyond mastering a skill for learning or having a particular tool for use in ministry (H p 11).

The value of the spiral could be summed up in Sherri's words, "The A/R model gives students the opportunity to fully engage in their own learning journey and to engage with others in their learning journey and be changed by the process and by others and by the experience of reflecting on all of it" (S p 14). This story is a story that belongs to all who have made the spiral journey.

6.2 Patterns within the narrative

6.2.1 Insights

Stories about the Action/Reflection model provided rich material that described its formation and use. These accounts also pointed to times that were turning points or consolidation from which the staff gained knowledge about how the model could be used more effectively to promote student reflection. As I drew the individual strands into a cohesive narrative these occasions seemed significant to the work done on and with the spiral. Table 6.2 shows key events in the life of the Action/Reflection model, their significance, and the insights that were drawn from them.

Table 6.2   Insights drawn from the narrative of the Action/Reflection model

Event	Significance	Insight
Freire combined with Kolb and Fry	• Drawing of circle changed to a spiral and added movement to reflection • Theory created by students	• Reflection is dynamic • Any image can be limiting
Freire, Kolb and Fry, combined with Solberg	• Added theological dimension to reflection • Solberg's steps invited left brain learning and drew on the resources of faith to deepen the reflective process	Reflection as a holistic process rather than simply a cognitive one
Put together a "picture summary" of theory	• Model emerged from experience and practice in Core • Tested and grounded in educational experience of CCS	The spiral is not set in stone—it can be changed
Other versions of the model developed for specific purposes	Broad acceptance by staff and institution	The spiral is not set in stone—other versions can be created
Proposing and testing modifications	Based on observations that changes would be helpful to enable students to reflect	Flexible and responsive to emerging needs
Other theory considered in relationship to model	The CCS culture encouraged reflection on reflection	Flexible and responsive to emerging needs
Creative methods of teaching the spiral	Creative people each brought unique ideas	Room for various approaches and styles of teaching
Learning the spiral	• Less about correct method and more about meaning • Students were enthusiasts if reflection helped them deal with a problem or if they experienced transformation	• Potential for significant learning when engaged • It could take time to learn
Struggles involved in reflection	• Stirrings, discomfort, suffering could be resisted or avoided • Reflection led to resolution, insight, and change which were positive	Difficulties and breakthroughs went together
Critical activity or neutral resource	• Reflection used questions to invite different types of reflection (e.g. social justice version asks more critical questions) • It can take on the values the practitioner brings to it, and questions can be resisted	Reflection becomes critical when a political agenda is brought to it e.g. questioning assumptions, etc.

6.2.2 Overlapping conversations

Though the participants were not physically present to each other, their comments were interrelated and often offered different perspectives on the issue. Sometimes the story one person told overlapped accounts offered by someone else, often responding with a solution to a dilemma, problem, or gap that had been identified in the use of the Action/Reflection model. The significance of this interweaving dialogue is more than coincidence. It represents the kind of synchronicity of meaning that sometimes occurs when people share a common curiosity about how to improve practice, in this case related to the most effective use of the Action/Reflection model.

Within the data, I identified the most significant overlapping conversations within discussions of learning in community, the ways in which reflection was integrated into the overall program, and relating to making necessary changes to the Action/Reflection model. The conversations in each of these themes will be reviewed here.

Learning in Community

"Learning in community" is a concept identified in an early CCS Educational Stance statement as a foundational principle of learning. The current CCS statement talks about "community models of education", which "are enabled when a climate of cooperation and collaboration, interdependence and mutuality is fostered and all see themselves as co-leaders and co-learners" (CCS 2010c). Those I interviewed often talked about the role of the community in education and in reflection. "Community" was understood to encompass not only the group of learners but also staff, facilitators, and resource people who came into the learning circles at CCS; those sources that provided theoretical input, perception checks, and feedback; as well as the theological and educational contexts that surrounded the students.

Learning in community was a recurring subject evident in the stories shared during the interviews. For example, Helene strongly valued Freire's ideas of learning in community with an emphasis on dialogue and social change, and modeled Core with this in mind (M p 1). It meant that students functioned both as learners and teachers with responsibility for their own and one another's learning in a group setting. She established a collective practice where reflection was done together within the Core group. Reflection also had a solitary dimension when students wrote individual reflections, though Ted pointed out that even within these expressions, students were asked to draw upon theory, theology, and social analysis from their context (immediate community) and readings (broader community) to bring other perspectives into the reflective dialogue (T R p 3). He viewed the interaction with these other voices as a

different way of moving beyond the individual. Sherri felt that the communal aspect of learning was watered down in distance education where students and staff were not physically present to one another for large periods of time (S p 7). Gwyn offered that when written reflections were shared with a staff member or a learning partner, the dialogue within community continued, so there were a number of ways in which reflection could take place within a communal exchange of ideas with others (G p 13).

Ann identified her experience of group reflection that was done verbally at the end of Core sessions as significant for her own experience of learning in community when she was a student (A p 4). When she later became part of the CCS staff team she noticed the absence of this particular practice, which represented for her a loss. Others argued that while verbal group reflection at the end of Core may have been replaced by private, individual journalling at the beginning and/or end of the sessions, there were still opportunities available to do intentional group reflection. Ann herself mentioned that within the learning circle,

> When we design experiences, we design them so that folks engage with one another both in the reflection piece and in the analysis piece and in the coming up with 'So what might we do differently?'   So that it becomes a resource for the whole community being transformed. (A p 13)

I observed another example of reflecting in community near the end of the Leadership Development Module (LDM). Students had prepared individual reflections and documented the main points on a sheet of newsprint, which they posted and shared verbally with a group. The process involved the group members listening, asking questions for clarification, and offering observations and feedback to each presenter (see "Process for sharing the Spiral Reflection" Appendix G.2).

Ann, Ted, and Sherri pointed out that group reflection took place in the field placement orientations as a way to introduce reflection to learning facilitators and committees in local contexts, while also providing an opportunity for the student to review the spiral. They described a process where students were asked to bring an experience from their field placements to work through with the group. Local committees were encouraged to engage the Action/Reflection model collectively in future meetings as a way for everyone to learn together from the field placement experience. Ann had seen this happen when, "The student is asked a whole bunch of questions and the student learns, but everybody in the process both asks questions and responds to the questions and so there's community learning as well" (A p 13). Students also engaged in group reflection during the Global Perspectives Experience (GPE), a study tour that

is a requirement of the program. Sarah found it allowed her to debrief with others while travelling in Guatemala: "Every evening we met together after our day's experience and reflected on it. We did the spiral; we did it as a group […] It also helped process things that we'd experienced that day so we could go on to the next day" (FG1 p 11). Reflecting in community added the wisdom of others who were able to see the situation from different perspectives and push toward new possibilities of understanding.

At the same time that many research participants espoused the value of learning in community, it became clear that this practice wasn't without its failings.   One graduate found herself in a situation where she did not trust the staff person reading her reflections enough to be able to reflect openly about a crisis she was experiencing involving another staff member (FG 2 p 2). She found herself feeling she was without a community that she could trust. She knew the power of the spiral to be able to examine the situation and discern action, but she felt it would make her too vulnerable in this situation. Honesty and commitment to the group appeared to be necessary factors in the effective use of the spiral as practiced at CCS. Unwillingness to take risks, lack of trust, or a conflict between students or students and staff, complicated or prevented straightforward communication. If participants did not have any commitment to each other or emotional connection, or where students didn't trust the others enough to do the self-examination the model demanded as part of learning, then the reflective process could be stifled (AB p 7).

The conversation about the difficulty in sharing the spiral with other theological schools touched on this point about readiness to take risks. Anne did not think many academic institutions would be willing to take the risks that would be necessary for the Action/Reflection model to be integrated into their programs authentically (AB p 14). Participants pointed out that it was a question of whether learning was about knowing the right theory (which they thought would be a value of other institutions) or about doing the necessary internal examination and external analysis that could lead to action to transform situations (which CCS promoted through the Action/Reflection model). Wendy summed up the discussion when she said, "I think that it was possible for learning in community to happen, to the extent that you were willing to risk that, and be vulnerable to that process (W p 8)".

The integration of reflection into the program
The conversation about reflection as a collective activity is partly about how reflection was intentionally integrated into the overall educational program at CCS. Even before there was a "model" Anne recalled that intentional reflection was woven into the Core experience. Often reflection questions were posed to help students write reflections on

what they were learning (AB p 15).   Kay talked about how the spiral was used to plan sessions so that students would move through CE, RO, AC, and AE during the Core session.   The purpose was to integrate reflection and structure learning as a spiral process.

Sherri expressed a concern that students' reflection skills would not be fully developed or integrated with a change from the frequent style of reflection she had experienced to fewer more structured reflection assignments. She wondered, "If the students will take with them thinking of the spiral as a way to constantly process what's going on for them, and identify their own agenda" which was something she had valued as a student (S p 5). While Sherri had to come to terms with the new way reflection was being done, she noted, "When you had to [write reflections] every week […] it lives in you really differently" (S p 4).

Anne learned to reflect in the first Core group where there was no model, and offered her wisdom from remembering that time. She suggested it isn't just the use of the model for reflections that forms students as reflectors, "It is in the context of also a course that is engaging you as a whole human being. In terms of your emotions, your spirit, your community, your past and future practice, your story. That is just one piece of it, grasping this theory. It's part of something much larger" (AB p 14). Her comment suggests that one way to view the changes that had been made to the spiral and how it was used was to view them as part of an all-encompassing commitment to a transformative pedagogy used throughout the CCS program. However, both Sherri and Ted voiced a concern that the model might be taken for granted, since it is such a part of the culture at CCS and staff could forget to be intentional and explicit about talking about and integrating it (S p 6, T p 5). They wrestled with finding ways to keep the remembered values alive in order to ensure the model remained rooted in its strong past but relevant for new times. Helene had an important reminder not to hold a particular version of the model or even the model itself too tightly: "Don't get stuck with the model. I think too many people got stuck with the model. It's just a springboard to give a few words to what's happening […] I said it was a tool for us" (H p 9). The intention was to use it to support reflective learning.

Adjustments to the Action/Reflection Model

Intertwined throughout the stories from the staff I interviewed were observations that the practice of reflection using the spiral sometimes revealed problems and a need for adjustment in the Action/Reflection model itself. They would notice gaps or patterns of difficulty students were having and that would lead to questions about what might be

done differently. An example of this occurred when Helene noticed the way students distanced themselves from their experience by looking outside themselves when working in RO, which in turn led to an unsatisfactory exploration of AC. Both RO and AC were changed to invite students to engage more personally in these sections. However, Helene was not sure these modifications would have the effect she hoped for because she knew some students were still apprehensive about examining theory and theology.

Years later, Ted responded to student feedback about gaps in this same AC section by augmenting the questions to help learners deepen their exploration of theological concepts in Scripture and tradition. Changing this section also addressed a problem Gwyn had noticed when she worked with students:

> It was the hardest piece […] when we were working with students to plan a design, to work out a process of incorporating the readings. I know I was resource in Core every year after I became Principal and I would say, 'Now we have to include a piece somehow on reflection on readings. What are the questions you want to ask of those readings?' […] And that was the piece there was usually resistance around. (G p 9)

Ted's revisions to the AC section of the model invited reflectors to draw in the theory from their readings in a way that hadn't happened before. These changes also reclaimed, and brought into this quadrant, theological and Biblical concepts that had been originally present in Solberg's step 4.

Ann mentioned that she was aware of difficulties students were having with the AC section of the Action/Reflection model, as well. She wondered if they actively resisted engaging theory and theology despite the opportunities offered in the model, or if the spiral needed attention in order to increase its theological effectiveness and to make it more helpful for the examination of theory. She observed:

> That bottom piece [AC] needs to be pulled apart more with some more specific focus on development of theory, naming of learnings, and some more specific work on the theology if we want to use it as a resource for theological reflection […] It doesn't lead to the kind of reflection that we want to happen. So I think part of it is new questions and part of it may be modifying the model. (A p 15)

Sherri felt from her perspective of a staff person, the model had more potential for use in student learning than was being realized. Alterations would have to begin by putting the conversation on the collective agenda at CCS, with the intention of getting the community involved in naming experiences and asking questions like, "Is what we're

doing the most effective learning process or are there things that we could change that would contribute more effectively to students learning" (A p 15,16; S p 15). The fact that the model had a tradition within CCS of being flexible and open to testing and integrating new theory lends support for doing this kind of work.

6.2.3 Contradictions

Within the stories that were told there were "diverse, sometimes conflicting experiences and perspectives" (Moore 2006 p 421) which is to be expected when interviewing different people from different eras over a period of 35 years. People experienced or interpreted the same events differently, had forgotten things, and offered diverse opinions emerging from their ideologies, philosophies, and even learning styles, which impacted their accounts. Ristock and Pennell suggest that naming contradictions in the story "foster 'inclusive communities' by distinguishing rather than subsuming people's positions, by remaining accountable rather than detached from those whose positions are being interpreted, by understanding rather than rejecting positions, and by inviting reflection rather than arriving at any one final position" (1996 p 96). This plurality of versions, all assumed to denote some part of the community story, were gathered into a communal narrative, which represents a snapshot of the CCS community's understanding of the Action/Reflection model, including its distortions. The story presents affirmation of the spiral model along with critiques of it or of the way it was used. The result is an imperfect, complex account revealing multiple overlapping viewpoints in what Geertz called thick, rich descriptions (1975 quoted in Swinton & Mowat 2006 p 122). Within the data there were different kinds of contradictions. There were variations between what one person remembered and what another person said happened. There were also places where participants' interpretations of the meanings attached to the spiral disagreed with the understandings of others.   Finally, values relating to critical reflection and theology were understood to be part of the program but where not always reflected in the responses people gave. These inconsistencies will be examined here.

Variations in Memories

In most cases the discrepancies in memories between participants were not significant. While it would have been nice to have more detail or clarity, these kinds of contradictions were minor and did not reflect major conflicts in understanding. One example where the details were not clear related to how Kolb and Fry's (1975) Learning Style Inventory was introduced to Core. Helene said she introduced it, while Gwyn related that she learned about it at OISE and brought it with her when she was doing her practicum at CCS. Each of them remembered that part of the story

differently. What was important was that when the students were introduced to the LSI, it was both helpful in providing language to talk about learning and to measure growth while also proving problematic when students felt pigeon-holed or devalued by their learning style. Another example of a minor contradiction was when the word "aha", referring to a moment of insight or revelation and which appears in the CE section of the spiral, was attributed to Freire. I could not find any indication of this concept in his work but was able to identify it clearly as part of Solberg's model. In the narrative I suggested both as possible sources since I could not be sure.

Disagreements in Interpretation

Some of the contradictions were based on the personality, passions, and values participants brought to the spiral. For example, Sherri loved its facility for personal reflection, for getting at the feelings, and valued it as a planning model. Ted was disposed towards it as a theological reflection tool but shared some of Helene's earlier ambivalence about the model's use with learning styles. Ann was interested in its potential for helping people name learning in groups. As a result, they each appreciated and emphasized specific aspects of the Action/Reflection model when they introduced it to students. Ted reported, "I have put my own spin on the spiral method and stressed elements of it that make most sense to me" (T r p 1). When he taught the spiral as a reflection tool he encouraged students to discipline themselves to systematically spend time in each of the quadrants, paying particular attention to the one that seemed most difficult which they may have been tempted to avoid. When Gwyn was teaching it she liked to emphasize the Concrete-Abstract axis and the Action-Reflection axis (see Figure 3.6). "We move along those two axes in learning. So it's not only that you start here [CE] and you move around here [AE] but you also move back and forth" (G p 3)

Conflicting understandings emerged about whether the task of Reflective Observation (RO) had an individual or social focus. As a student, Sherri had experienced RO as personal work. What she found as a staff person years later was that it was, "Equally about 'What do you notice about what's going on for yourself' and 'What do you notice about what's going on for others' and 'What did you notice in the feelings of others in that experience that you had'" (S p 3). She felt that if someone was not used to paying attention to their own emotions, a personal focus could be more helpful to them get in touch with that way of knowing. Conversely, others saw the RO question, "How do I perceive others see themselves" as a place to pay attention to alternate perspectives, to look beyond self. For example, Sarah had developed a strategy of checking in with people directly as part of her reflective process, rather than assume she could figure

out what they were feeling. She practiced the CCS value of learning in community by taking seriously other viewpoints in a situation. This kind of empathy for the other opened the door to understanding experiences that were not one's own and heightened interconnectedness.

Sherri acknowledged that doing RO collectively could be valuable in order to hear from everyone and create some understanding of different positions (S p 12). An effective example was when Judith used it in the social housing community, where she was a chaplain, to debrief a traumatic event such as a suicide or murder. She would bring people together to share how they were feeling about what had happened and to hear what others were feeling in order to openly acknowledge the pain, before moving towards healing. Anne recognized that the spiral could be used for personal reflection, but based on her experience of using the Action/Reflection model in facilitation and advocacy, she asserted that its real power was in social action:

> To be true to the education model and the social justice model of it, you know, it's meant to be […] a guide to collective learning and action […] To be truly authentic it should be a collective setting with a group that is a community in some sense. That has some kind of collective connection, collective purpose, and wants to move on a social justice issue. That would be what I would consider the pure form. (AB p 10, 11)

Helene insisted that reflection needed the social connection to be true to Freire's notion of praxis. She was concerned that when it was focused individually, it became "psychologised", meaning experience was interpreted only in individual, psychological terms rather than systemic, ideological ones (Moussa 2010 np).   This approach denied reflection its social power. She linked the fact that a number of students ended up needing counselling to the danger of an individualised focus (Moussa 2009 p 4). Helene's cautions about "psychologising" stemmed from her efforts to foster a social perspective in students already schooled in the liberal culture of individualism. She, therefore, valued a broad, community analysis, believing that reflection was about an outward transformation of society. She felt that a psychological approach meant that students took huge problems on their shoulders that became burdens that were too heavy to bear. She wanted students to see themselves as part of a social system where they could work with others collectively to question, critique, and seek change both in their own complicity and in the larger social questions. Thus reflection could lead to personal transformation in the sense that Brookfield speaks about, where transformation has to do with "a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts" (2000 pp 139-40).

At the same time as Helene voiced the need for rooting reflection in the larger social context, Wendy felt there were different internal factors at work stirring emotions and leading students to seek counselling. For one thing, "the program at the Centre was very demanding. It required understanding oneself in new and different ways. This was often a mixed blessing as folks discovered things about themselves and the world that made them uncomfortable and caused real struggle as folks worked to make sense of this new experience" (W R p 1). Students found themselves being asked to think differently about almost everything. "Often students felt they were being pressured to become someone else" (W R p 1). Reflection involved self-discovery, often uncovering or challenging embedded assumptions. It was unsettling to have the foundations of belief shaken. A song that was popular in the 80's at CCS started out, "sometimes I wish my eyes hadn't been opened". That was a common refrain for many students: once they'd engaged in reflection they were faced with a dilemma about whether to change or stay the same.

Theological and critical values

The spiral symbol is an easily recognised and "beloved icon" of the CCS community, and a symbol embraced by many diaconal ministers in the United Church of Canada (T r p 1). However, it was not always clear in the research if the spiral went beyond the symbol to become for graduates a significant tool for theological reflection or for critical social analysis. But because many of the students go on to vocations in diaconal and lay ministries, CCS takes seriously the role of preparing them for these tasks. Dickey Young says that theology is about "the fully reflective and fully critical task of helping individuals, […], to understand and articulate the Christian witness of faith adequately for their own time and place" (1990 p 58). Students who learn how to reflect on their practice as a theological and justice-seeking task are enabled to be faithful to their calling in ministry and to accompany those on the margins in seeking just relationships.

The academic staff I talked to took seriously the importance of bringing theology into the reflective process. Kay had done some work on understanding the theological concepts of spirituality, theology, and faith as they related to the Action/Reflection model:

> For me spirituality was related to the experience; and theology was
> related to that "how we make meaning out of it," that Abstract
> Conceptualisation; and faith was more related to how we live it out in the
> action and experience again. So I had those three kinds of spheres
> overlapping and placed onto a page in similar locations to where the

experience, the reflection, and the action appear on the spiral model. (K
p 10)

Kay's theory suggested that every experience has the potential to be a spiritual one.
What makes it theological is the critical conversation or dialogue between one's
experience and contemplation of the ways in which God might be revealed in the
situation, aided by reflection in community bringing perspectives both from
contemporary sources and tradition. In Kay's model, the process of reflection can
prompt an active faith response. Ted also found specific spiritual and theological
connections in each of the quadrants of the spiral, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2   Theological and spiritual connections to each of the quadrants of the
Action/Reflection model (Dodd 2009)

Active Experimentation emphasizes
the need to put into action our learning.
*Learning is not just a matter of
accumulating knowledge; it involves
putting into practice that which we learn.
[…] Like the author of James,
intentionally working on naming areas for
next steps or follow up in the AE section,
encourages us to be "doers of the Word
and not just hearers." (James 1:22)*

Concrete Experience upholds an
incarnational theology. *Embodied
spirituality and the practice of
discipleship do not ask us to be
removed and otherworldly. We are
asked to live in the world, loving God
and neighbour, in real and authentic
ways. By reflecting on our
experiences in the world, we can
deepen and improve our ministries to
and with others.*

Abstract Conceptualization provides
this kind of enriching and deepening
opportunity [that links study and prayer].
*By connecting to research, […] to
scripture and tradition and reason we
have the possibility of growing and
expanding our learning in ways that we
may not have imagined by ourselves. It
represents a communal commitment to
learning; others are welcome to
contribute to learning.*

Reflective Observation encourages a
prayerful attentiveness. *By slowly and
deliberately, recalling a situation, we can
contemplate its lessons. We can re-
enter the circumstances with openness
to discernment and wisdom-seeking. We
can interrupt this culture's patterns of
busy-ness and over-booked schedules in
order to notice, to attend, to listen.*

A 1980 version of the spiral (Appendix A.3) asks reflectors to consider how Abstract
Conceptualisation (AC) involves "creating new theology". Wendy understood this task
as a way in which students were able to, not so much engage in a lofty, scholarly
endeavour, but make theological discoveries for themselves:

> If [students] took the process seriously it would open their own
> understandings and their own belief systems so that it would allow them
> to go somewhere else and take them to a deeper theological
> understanding or a new theological understanding for them. I think it's
> how people got to places where feminist theology, for instance, was
> something that they could actually embrace and in that process then
> create for themselves new and different belief systems. (W p 9)

It provided an opportunity for students to make the important link between their own experience and the theological concepts of others that went beyond simply receiving unfamiliar ideas and being told what to believe (G p 14).

It seems that theology and education are brought together in the Action/Reflection model in a way that is multi-layered. It's prayerful and active, personal and done in community. At CCS these diverse activities are held together in dialectical tension because experience and learning are also multi-layered (S p 12). There are these disparate parts but at the same time reflection is about integration and embodiment, "Engaging our physical self (CE), our emotional self (RO), our intellectual self (AC) and our spiritual/practical self (AE) […] Learning happens when we fully engage and fully stretch all aspects of our selves" (S R p 2). Since ministry is not only knowing the right facts but involves accompanying people whatever their struggles, an embodied approach to reflective practice concentrates on relationships and responses based on the needs of the people one encounters. Reflection allows a person in ministry to take time to nurture "embodied, incarnational wisdom" which is not just a way of thinking but also a way of being (T p 8).

CCS espouses a theological imperative, "living a theology of justice" where seeking right relationship and justice for all is expressed in its theological values, commitment to feminist ideals, and practice of inclusion of GLBT persons (CCS 2010b np). Activating this theological imperative is an understanding of praxis—reflection and action within a social context. For Helene, Freire's idea of praxis laid the foundation for all her work in developing the CCS program. However, her observation was that the students were, with a few exceptions, from middle class, liberal backgrounds and inclined to psychologise or personalise what they were learning rather than taking a broad social perspective. Some students at CCS resisted her social justice agenda. Yet, Jude and Ann found through their work in the community that the spiral worked well with groups of people who had experienced some form of oppression and were already engaged in struggle. Those who were not the benefiting from privilege were much more able to see and challenge social injustices.

Some students had their eyes opened to the transforming power of the spiral at CCS. Anne was one graduate who graduated with a commitment to social justice, having been changed by her time in the program and the way in which the Action/Reflection model impacted her understanding of the world. The spiral was given a central place in her justice education work; however, she encountered a contradiction when she tried to use it in ally[*] education:

> "[How to be an ally] is not learned by reflection on your own experience […] because it's not just that you don't have the experience, it's that you've been taught a false way of looking at it; […] taught, even, not to see it, and to certainly deny its validity and legitimacy" (AB p 10).

When people's experiences were based on limited perceptions interpreted through a cultural lens designed to preserve the dominant group, Anne felt, "It's anti-justice to reflect on that, and move it into action" (AB p 10). An alternative argument could be made that if, in fact, the spiral is effective at initiating a critical process of questioning assumptions, then the model is designed to address these "limited perceptions" and offers the possibility of a changed viewpoint. "A spiral for learning in justice education and action" (Appendix A.8) includes suggestions for helping learners move beyond their own experience in the CE section and has focused questions designed to probe learned injustice. However blocks and resistance might be a challenge to students engaging in the process, thus confirming Anne's observations. Ann pointed out that reflection cannot be assumed to be a critical or justice seeking activity: "If you bring the value of justice into the spiral then the spiral can't help but contribute to the possibility of making justice. If that's not a value brought to it, the spiral isn't going to do that in and of itself (A p 13). Ann's comment confirms Brookfield's observation that reflection is only critical when a political agenda is brought to it. These observations seem to suggest that the spiral is a neutral resource that helps people reflect on experience in whatever way they desire, and to which they bring the theory and theology they choose to incorporate. It is in those choices that the model becomes liberating or not. Reflection at CCS was intended to be a critical activity which sought "a fundamental questioning and reordering of how one thinks or acts" (Brookfield 2000 pp 139-40), whether that ideal was achieved by every student or not.

As a theological college, CCS has a responsibility to address this contradiction by helping students lay the groundwork for making informed and just choices, by providing

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[*] This kind of training is intended to help people recognize "the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns" (Bishop nd np).

a holistic approach to learning where students are challenged to think critically and systemically about injustice and God's vision for a just world, question and analyze assumptions, and to learn in dialogue in community. Ann suggested that sharper questions in the AC part of the spiral might make it easier to bring a critical lens within a context where there is freedom to come to unconventional conclusions. The task is to ensure that students, "Look beyond the obvious in order to see what else there is to see/know" (W p 8).   The justice-seeking context at CCS supports that task.

Chapter 7
Interpretation and Discussion

Early in this writing I reflected on a parable of a traveller finding a well in the desert, but no bucket. Casting around she found an abandoned rusty pail and golden cords strewn over the sand. These, when gathered, were tied into a rope, attached to the bucket, and used to access the cold water drawn from the depths. This research has been a process of discovering the bits and pieces that can be crafted into a whole, and of plumbing the depths for hidden, yet life-giving refreshment. It has been a study that is personally significant, as was alluded to in my initial reflection. I begin this chapter by reviewing some of the assumptions I had at the start of this research and how they have been challenged. The newly constructed narrative of the Action/Reflection model, bringing together many stories that have until now been separate, has expanded not only my understanding of reflection in general, but of how reflection has been fostered and supported by the Action/Reflection model at CCS. I have gained new appreciation for the insights and hard work of participants who had a role in its creation and ongoing development.

In interpreting the findings of this research, part of the process involves revisiting the original research questions to discuss the ways in which the results relate to those interests and to discuss the answers I have come up with in the process of researching. I also talk about the contribution my research findings might have: for CCS and its community which is my primary purpose, and for other theological educators and institutions. I make an appraisal of the overall research process and explain how my focus expanded from simply documenting a history to unfolding a narrative on the meaning of this flexible tool that is the Action/Reflection model. I offer suggestions for changes I would make if I were to do this study again, and finally, I outline further areas for research and follow up prompted by this study.

In my opening reflection I pondered my relationship to the Action/Reflection model and my seeming ambivalence towards it. In the course of the research I fully embraced it and attempted to use it as a framework for the narrative I wanted to write. In the process I realized what a huge weight this model has in my psyche: it has become "sacred story" which unaware, has shaped and become embedded in my consciousness (Crites 1971 p 295). This revelation was evident in different ways. One of the most significant was, Helene's phrase "it's not set in stone" which rocked my world. It challenged my thinking because I realized I had assumed it was. I discovered within myself resentment about some of the more recent changes to the diagram and

the new expectations about reflecting because I didn't think they should be changed. It was transformational to realize that the spiral has constantly been changing. Its flexibility is one of its strengths.

Telling this story has been significant because it is also my story; my "sense of self and world is created through [it]" (Crites 1971 p 295). And while it is significant in my life and practice, telling this story has not answered all of my questions. I am convinced that the Action/Reflection model is a powerful tool but I have yet to figure out how to overcome some of the problems I have had teaching it to others. The literature review provided some insights into how much time it takes to learn to reflect properly. Introducing it at a short workshop is bound to fail. I found that when there is a pressing need, and reflection provides an opening to new action, people are often committed. But not everyone loves it, nor is it a universal solution. I have found in this research places of tension that seem to be part of the spiral e.g. between personal and social transformation or whether it is a neutral resource or a critical one. I learned that dialectics are part of the truth of the spiral rather than problems to resolve. Different perspectives keep reflectors asking questions of their assumptions and that is a good thing.

I suspect I am not the only one who has been formed so completely by my immersion in the experience of the spiral at CCS. Sacred stories "orient the life of a people through time, their lifetime, their individual and corporate experience, and their sense of style, to the great powers that establish the reality of their world […] which in their secondary, written expressions may carry the authority of scripture for the people who understand their own stories in relation to them" (Crites 1971 p 295). If indeed it is a sacred story, it too must be carried lightly. There is a danger in writing this narrative that it will become scripture for some. That is not my intention. This story does not provide final conclusions but rather invitations to further reflection and action.

 Ristock and Penell (1996) suggest that, "People can effect change by speaking with each other about their experiences, gaining a wider perspective, uncovering their assumptions, and opening the way for alternative ways of life" (1996 p 96). This story is offered as an action that has the potential for this kind of change.

7.1 What I was looking for
The purpose of the study was to gather stories about the lived experience of the creation, evolution, and use of the Action/Reflection model at CCS over the years since 1974. I wanted to weave the individual stories of staff and graduates into a community

story that provides a common memory and written narrative of this model known as "the spiral". I aspired to contribute to existing scholarship in two ways. The first was by documenting the origins, development, and use of this particular model for reflection. I also wanted to present how this model worked as a tool for reflection within theological education.

I began with a number of research questions that I sought to answer in the course of the study:

1. What is the CCS Action/Reflection model?
2. Where did the CCS Action/Reflection model originate and what are its sources?
3. How does it differ from or go beyond the earlier models on which it is based?
4. How has the Action/Reflection model been used in theological education at CCS?
5. What is the experience of those who have used it either as staff, in their role as facilitators of learning, or as students who have learned it?
6. How does reflection in general, and this model of reflection in particular, contribute to learning and to theological insight for CCS students?
7. In what ways is the CCS Action/Reflection model used as a tool for theological education, both formal (at theological college) and informal (in the church and society where CCS graduates carry out ministry?). (Stewart 2008 p 3)

My research questions were informed by the literature review where I examined the underlying theory on which the Action/Reflection model is based, beginning in the social critique of Freire. These concepts relating to praxis, reflection, theology, and learning reclaim part of the overall story of the model and bring to light some of the language and thinking that have been influential in it, particularly experiential learning, the "doing" of theology, connecting action with reflection, and the link between the personal and the political. Existing scholarship establishes reflection as standard methodology within the fields of education and theology for enhancing learning by integrating theory with practice, and shows how a political agenda can promote critical reflection for justice seeking. An examination of some studies where reflection has been introduced to students successfully in theological education point out that reflection is more likely to be taught effectively if it is part of the entire curriculum, if the academic staff all embrace it and reflect on its use together, if the process or method is clear, if students are introduced to it over time and are asked to practice it, and if they have opportunities for collective reflection. All of these factors are present in the practice of the Centre for Christian Studies in some way. These insights address some of the struggles other practitioners experience. For example, they have found a)

reflection is not clearly defined (Hatton & Smith 1995 np); b) they believe reflection will help students but there is little research to support it (Hatton & Smith 1995 np); c) they have difficulty saying what they are looking for in theological reflection (Pattison et al 2003 p 119); and d) once students graduate they have trouble reflecting using the model they learned (Pattison et al 2003 p 120). These discussions provide a theoretical backdrop against which the story of the spiral takes its place.

7.2 What I found

> At times it seems that one must consider nearly everything under the sun to write about theological reflection. It is about theology to be sure, but it is also about spirituality and ethics. It is about our relationship to God, but it is also about how we relate to one another, and so it involves psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Theological reflection encompasses how we view the world and our understanding of the cosmos, so it also involves cosmology and physics. It is a way of educating, so it is concerned with how we learn and develop. Finally, it is also about how to engage the practice of theological reflection, and so it is about methods. To set all these together is like trying to place a flexible rubber mat on a trampoline with one hand while standing in a large bowl of jelly. When one corner is adjusted, another moves out of place. Meanwhile one's footing shifts because the very ground is unstable. It is challenging, however, because the unexpected is an enduring presence. (de Bary 2003 p xv).

I began this research wondering, "What is the CCS Action/Reflection model?" The answer is a bit like de Bary's attempt to state what theological reflection is. There are many things that could and have been said but a succinct definition is elusive. Throughout this narrative, reflection has been understood to be an intentional, disciplined activity that begins with an individual experience which is then linked to the experiences and thinking of others, to God, and to the world. Reflection of the kind CCS promotes is a socially mediated experience that cannot happen in isolation; "the conversation has to be with more than yourself" (W p 10). The CCS Action/Reflection model is a resource that helps people engage purposely in the reflective conversation. It is most clearly laid out in the spiral diagram (Appendix A.11) and could be summed up by Wendy Hunt's simple observation, "The Action/Reflection model encourages one to look beyond the obvious in order to see what else there is to see/know" (W p 8).

The spiral is characterised by flexibility and expansiveness, which makes it and the way it's used inexact, more like an art than a science. Since its very beginning the spiral has been subject to revisions, adapted in response to the needs both at CCS, and in the lives of those who use it. The development of the spiral has followed a spiral pathway with similar concerns (like the interests in social action or a greater emphasis on theology) coming and going. Practitioners from different eras are able to draw a

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similar, recognizable spiral, but reflection itself is not closely defined, despite the fact that individuals might be tempted to try. Neither is the model prescriptive—it doesn't show the "true" way to reflect or even how to be successful. Instead reflection is a messy process with numerous questions inviting the exploration of multiple possibilities. The reflector decides the way to go: to follow through after weighing the risks; which action to choose; to evaluate what happened; and to figure out what to do next. It doesn't provide the answers but a process that helps illuminate a situation and learn as much as can be learned in preparation for doing something about it. It is a tool to which is brought both personal and external resources. Don's Theological Reflection model (Appendix A.10) provides an example. In Phase III the reflector is invited to examine social, political or ethical dimensions to check her/his earlier analysis and is reminded to "Use what resources you have at hand—nobody can have them all!" Unless they do a collective reflection, no two people using the Action/Reflection model on the same experience will end up in the same place, because of the differing resources each person has and multi-directional ways in which reflections can be taken.

When I asked Gwyn Griffith what reflection is she said, it's "bringing a lot of the pieces into interaction with each other" (G p 12). The same could be said in response to the question, "Where did the CCS Action/Reflection model originate and what are its sources?" It started from several founding theories: Freire's praxis for freedom, Kolb and Fry's Experiential Learning model, and Solberg's Model for Experiencing Theology, which were brought together, tested, and synthesized with the expertise of the staff at CCS and the participation of the students. This story is a celebration of their readiness to work with established theories, create new theory as teacher/learners and learner/teachers, and their belief in the emerging model. It witnesses to their contribution to the composite course of theory building.

In answer to the question, "How does it differ from or go beyond the earlier models on which it is based", it is clear that the model has evolved so that, while the theories that went into it are recognizable strands, they are no longer the same as they once were. Helene Moussa's words lend support this observation, "If you place the Kolb learning style 'picture' on top of the spiral you'll see that the spiral is not the Kolb model" (1983 p1). One example of this difference is that the task of Abstract Conceptualisation is not what Kolb and Fry imagined. It is less about application of theories and strategizing for action, and more about theorizing to make meaning of the original experience. Strategizing for action has instead been shifted to Active Experimentation. It is important to note that it wasn't only the model that evolved over time, but also some of

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the founding theory. For example, it was Kolb's early work (1975) that formed the basis of the spiral but subsequent research has meant that Kolb's theory has changed, and could possibly address some of the critiques CCS staff members have had of the old version.

The initial development of the Action/Reflection model began with Helene's commitment to implementing a new transformative pedagogy with reflection-on-learning taking a prominent place. That first Core group was a laboratory characterized by experimentation with learning theory and theology culminating in the formation of a spiral symbol/process at the end of that year. But the spiral moved beyond that group and was shared with others on staff. Gwyn talked about Helene's enthusiasm for it and there is evidence that she not only shared it but also consulted with colleagues about changes to it. Other versions of the model started to appear as staff members tailored it to particular reflective tasks, a fact that suggests they were familiar enough with the Action/Reflection model to take it and adapt it to field education or integrating theology or social justice themes. It gradually became an established part of the educational pedagogy at CCS that belonged to all of the community and not to Helene alone.

This trend to integrate it into the whole program addresses in part the questions, "How has the Action/Reflection model been used in theological education at CCS?" and "What is the experience of those who have used it either as staff, in the role of facilitators of learning, or as students who have used it?" It is important to note that during the course of this research I did not talk to anyone who was unhappy about the spiral. These voices were missing from the data. However, I did hear from staff that there were people who had less than positive experiences. Some did not remain at CCS because the pedagogy did not suit them. There were other students who struggled with the requirement to reflect for a variety of reasons e.g. because they felt too exposed, or they weren't able to do some part of it, or they preferred to reflect another way. I found those who learned it as students prior to coming to the staff team retained a devotion to the model. The graduates I talked to continued to use it.   There was among the research participants an established community loyalty. Most diaconal ministers now in active ministry in the United Church of Canada have received their education through CCS using this model. As a result it has become a powerful, defining methodology and the spiral is seen as a recognized symbol for diaconal ministry, whether all of those ministers fully embrace the Action/Reflection model as part of their practice or not.

The experimental and experiential genesis of the model has a built in flexibility to accommodate the changes that have improved it as a functional tool. Numerous examples of modifications in the model can be found in Appendix B where different versions of the spiral are compared. Because questions and questioning are a significant part of the methodology, different questions were developed to help reflectors focus their interior exploration on themes such as social justice, theology, or field placement experiences in order to then broaden their vision of exterior possibilities. One case in point occurs in Shelley Finson's reflection designed for field seminars (Appendix A.7) where students are asked to explore how God was present from different ministry perspectives. In the section that follows, "Doing theology in community […] telling the story of God in the world" the reflection moves beyond personal experience in ministry to being part of a company of witnesses in the global context.

The spiral has been shown to expand to accommodate a diversity of experiences, providing at CCS a resource for critical reflection and justice seeking. But the possibility that it could be used to support a non-transformative or unjust agenda is also a reality. Brookfield says that reflection is apolitical and only becomes critical when it seeks a political agenda by intentionally examining power relationships, ideology, and hegemonic assumptions (2000 p 125, 128). At CCS emphasizing a critical viewpoint and global perspective, teaching the model as a means of confronting assumptions and challenging contradictions, sharing reflections in community, and giving feedback are important to its practice. Additionally, keeping modifications in line with the CCS philosophy and testing any new versions in community, are important for keeping the Action/Reflection model contextual. At the same time this model holds contradictory concepts in dialectical tension such as those between the individual and the social, action and contemplation, and thought and feeling. Dialectics is "the method of reasoning which aims to understand things concretely in all their movement, change and interconnection, with their opposite and contradictory sides in unity" (Anon 2008 np). Part of the uniqueness of the Action/Reflection model is that instead of holding one or the other contradiction to be true, there is recognition that they are both part of any system.

I found that many people experienced reflection as significant for expanding their learning beyond the unquestioned familiarity of their own preoccupations into new vistas that had never been explored before, so , "How does reflection in general, and this model of reflection in particular, contribute to learning and to theological insight for CCS students?" The model was designed to broaden their ability to learn from

experience by inviting students to spend time in each quadrant in order to engage in praxis. Learning the model was not enough; until knowing *and* doing were integrated; learners were not able to grow beyond their individual concerns into a more a holistic perspective. Many people just went through the motions, doing the assigned reflections without any perceptible enthusiasm. It was when it became an empowering experience for students, when they started to have "aha's" or significant insights as a result of reflection, when they felt able to take action because they had done the work needed to support the next steps, that they became enthusiasts. Practitioners of reflection were able to embrace reflection when it became meaningful to them; it became integrated into their thinking so that it turned into a way of life.

Finally, as I looked at "what ways is the CCS Action/Reflection model used as a tool for theological education both formal (at theological college) and informal (in church and society where graduates carry out ministry?)", I noticed that the spiral has been shared in a number of ways and promoted in a variety of contexts. In keeping with Freire's (1970) and Brookfield's (2000, 2006, 2009) ideas about reflection as a means of transformation, one graduate, Jude, used the model "to see where we connect politically and socially and systemically to other things that are happening in the world […] It is about the political process" (FG2 p 12). Anne Bishop has used it with non-governmental organisations and in a leadership for community development course (AB pp 6, 7). Graduates working in congregations employed the model as an important tool for theological reflection in every aspect of ministry leadership: religious education, prayer, sermon preparation, counselling, workshops, and planning. It was mentioned by every graduate I interviewed as something they use and share with others either in overt or subtle ways.

When asked about whether the model could be shared more broadly with other theological schools, there was noticeable ambivalence. It was felt that it would not work as an addition to the program in more traditional theological schools where the pedagogy is based on transmission of knowledge and where program delivery, curriculum, and theory take a more prominent role. The thinking seemed to be that the Action/Reflection model is more suited to a transformative pedagogy that honours the experience of students and provides tools to help them to seek their own active responses. It works at CCS because it is an integrated part of the program and ethos. Haddad, in speaking about gender justice within theological colleges, says that for it to be possible, "There needs to be continual work towards a congruence between the content of programmes and the structural realities of theological institutions" (2003 p 67). When discussing the spiral, participants, in effect, pointed to this lack of

congruence between a program that might introduce the spiral and the structures that might be experienced elsewhere. This conviction was shared by Wheeler and Farley who said:

> Virtually every well-known problem of theological education […] is anchored in the overall pattern of studies. A school organized according to that pattern...can undergo minor, cosmetic curriculum changes but not true reform […] Unless the preexisting pattern and its presuppositions are aired and critically evaluated…real and lasting reform is not possible. (1991 quoted in Veiling 1999 p 411)

The consensus was that, while inertia may prevent change in some places, Kinast's (2000) typology demonstrates a growing trend toward the use of theological reflection in pastoral theology, ministerial formation, spiritual wisdom, and feminist/emancipatory theologies in theological schools. Reflection is increasingly a part of their vocabulary and practice; however, the literature review shows there are problems with using it effectively. Consequently, other theological schools might be willing to learn from the CCS Action /Reflection model if they knew about its successes.

7.3   What I did this time and what I'd do differently next time

I started out planning a sort of "teacher's stories" approach to this study in which I would interview only staff and former staff about the Action/Reflection model. Doing the research in this way would have concentrated the work on a limited number of interviews; however it would also have shown only staff perspectives on how the spiral did or didn't help them realize their pedagogical aims. Adding focus groups with graduates broadened the study to include their perspectives on how the spiral had worked in student learning and practice.

At first I thought I would write a history of the model but once I began writing I discovered that:

> The way in which the spiral has been learned by students, and by staff who were new to it, is less about passing on a method and more about the meaning they attached to it as they learned how to reflect. It is not about learning as transmission of knowledge but rather about the transformation people encountered on the journey, both personally and in the way they interacted with others and the world around them" (Stewart 2011 p 118).

This insight about the spiral's value added another dimension to what I was writing about. The stories of students' struggles and "aha's" [insights] in relationship to reflecting with the spiral gave added depth to the observations of staff. I started to find

that there was a kind of conversation going on between the various participants in the study even though they were not together, mediated through me. What I was hearing from one was brought to the interview of another. The conversation was particularly rich as I was typing the transcripts and making connections between the insights various speakers brought. Where it was most evident was when one person raised a concern or identified a gap in the spiral and its use and then another provided the solution or a new innovation that addressed the concern. This often happened between comments on different eras in the history of the model's use.

Because of the collective and conversational nature of the study, it seemed appropriate to create a many-layered narrative with multiple voices telling the story (Richardson 2005 p 973). In Chapter 6, I used the voices of the participants to convey the story where possible, adding my words to construct a cohesive account of the spiral and identify emerging insights. Because the participants were the storytellers, cutting out parts of the conversation was fraught with concern that voices would be silenced. Keeping some of the key stories that now appear in text boxes and other judicious editing helped achieve a balance between the needs of the study and the voices of the participants.

I learned much more about how to do narrative research while engaged in carrying out this study than I knew at the beginning. I struggled to find a methodology and explored many possibilities, many of which pointed in the narrative direction. Knowing now what I didn't know when I started, instead of making a false start using the spiral model to organize my data, I would structure Chapter 6 as a cohesive narrative using the rich data I explored. I ended up doing something of the kind, but it would have been easier to have a clearer notion of this genre of research and to move confidently into the work. The literature review would have been better included later in the writing, allowing the ideas about reflection from the theory to bring new insights, confirmations, and contradictions into conversation with the stories I was hearing from the research participants, in a fresh way. It seems clear now, but figuring out how to construct the writing as a narrative has developed gradually over the course of the work, and was not obvious earlier in the process. It is definitely a method that I would consider using for another study. I am interested in exploring the defining stories that are part of my church's past life that can shape how it views its future mission.

I discovered some other ideas along the way that I would try another time. One of the people I interviewed suggested doing the data collection with all or some of the contributors sharing in storytelling together in the same room. That dynamic was

achieved with the focus groups where there was a rich interchange of insights; however, all of the staff members were interviewed separately. I now see how some of the staff members could have been gathered but it didn't occur to me at the time. I discovered the hard way that it would have been a good idea to write the story right after I transcribed the interviews, when they were fresh in my mind. Instead, I went back to complete the literature review, where I lost momentum for the storytelling and the excitement of the connections I was seeing.

Some of my plans for data collection changed. Originally, I intended to host a focus group with current students in the program at CCS, particularly those who were in the LDM I had observed. I thought it would be valuable to get the perspective of those who are learning to apply the model as they continued their studies and hear how students who are more experienced may influence or teach those who are relatively new as they met together in mixed year groups for the learning circles. When I tried to set up a focus group with continuing students, their intensive schedule at the learning circle made it impossible to find a convenient time with sufficient numbers of students willing to participate. I could have sought permission to do participant observation in the circle but I decided to focus on the remembered student experiences that graduates provided rather than seeking the fresh experiences of those in the current program. Further research on new students learning the spiral would augment the work I have been able to do.

Another gap in the data revolved around not being able to talk to any participants who had been students in the program between 1991 and 1999. The people who self-selected to participate in the focus groups were not in these years. I would have liked to consult with this group about whether there were changes to the spiral or how it was used during that time. I had to settle for checking with Kay Heuer and Wendy Hunt, staff members employed at CCS during these years. I also contacted four graduates who had been at CCS during this period, who were not part of the focus groups and asked if they had Action/Reflection model diagrams from their years there that I could look at. One of them provided information about the model she used, which seemed to suggest it was the same as the earlier version. This is a detail that could not be established definitively.

Because I interviewed staff, I heard more of their stories than I heard from graduates who were part of focus groups, consequently their words tend to appear more often in the story. I initially considered the staff to be more authoritative narrators because they have been the most obvious users of the spiral over time, but I learned that graduates

have been implementing the spiral in many ways and places since their student days. Their work has provided them with valuable experience as practitioners. This being the case it may have been wise to ask the same questions of the staff and in the focus groups in order to be able to hold the replies alongside each other and give them equal status in the research. Since the interviews and focus group had only semi-structured questions, this might not have been entirely possible. One way in which the voices have been balanced out to a degree, is by having one graduate interviewed (Anne Bishop) and three staff people who were also graduates, familiar with the spiral, interviewed (Wendy Hunt, Ann Naylor, and Sherri McConnell). The latter participants were able to speak from two perspectives.

A number of ethical issues had to be considered in an ongoing way in this study. First of all, I trusted the people I interviewed and assumed that what they had to say was true—and in a way it was since they were reporting their experience and perceptions. I didn't deliberately set out to test their ideas. Occasionally, I checked something in the literature or consulted another participant but, for the most part, I accepted people's testimony as the truth. This is in keeping with the approach Moore (2006) uses in her ethogenic research on congregations, where, "researchers assume that all the accounts are true accounts, representing some part of the community's experience or interpretation. Rather than searching for the real story behind so-called distorted accounts, we search for a communal story that represents collective truth, including diverse, sometimes conflicting, experiences and perspectives" (Moore 2006 p 420). As a result the story I have told is a collective one reflecting the contradictions here and there that come from interviewing people with different vantage points.

When I was setting up my interviews I worried that some people who had been on staff before 1998 might not agree to participate. I wondered if they would agree to be interviewed since they had become estranged from CCS after its move from Toronto to Winnipeg. However, I decided to try my luck based on the fact that I had a pre-existing relationship as a former student. I went ahead and asked everyone I wanted to interview; leaving it up to them to make whatever decision they felt was right. In the end, all of those I asked agreed to be interviewed. I had no trouble negotiating with CCS to sit in on the LDM, and all of the students signed ethics forms. The focus groups ended up being smaller than I'd hoped as some people who'd agreed to come didn't show up, but that is a consequence of giving people the freedom to self-select. I worked with those who chose to be there and was able to accomplish my research goals.

In the interviews themselves, there existed a possibility that information might be revealed that was of a personal nature or that disclosed feelings or experiences that were private and should remain so. Informed consent was operative throughout the interviews, focus groups, and the writing. I didn't encounter any major ethical dilemmas but questions of ethics did come up. I did one interview where a personal story was told about a student, which I was later asked not to include in the data. Later when a graduate revealed a story of sexual harassment I decided to keep her completely anonymous, not even using her fictitious name in the text. I did include anomalous positions in the data in order to demonstrate respect for a diversity of perspectives, but it was also important from an ethical point of view to ensure that unorthodox voices were treated respectfully. I sent the story to all the participants to read and invited responses so that individuals could see how I had handled their comments and suggest an alternate way.

7.4   What next?

I have shared the research with current staff at CCS who have greeted it with excitement. As we talk they get new ideas about things to try so it is already influencing practice. The study celebrates the people who have been involved in the past, recognizes the theory that has been created, and gives voice to the students who have found the spiral to be part of their formation. I look forward to sharing this story more widely beyond the thesis, in two ways. The first is through a written community story in which the material from Chapter 3 will give the background to reflection in its various forms. To this will be added the narrative contained in Chapter 6 which provides an account of reflection as it has been practiced at CCS specifically. There is already talk of adding something to the website digesting this material and making it available by other means including through the CCS library. The second way I hope to share this research is through a workshop during the 120th Anniversary Homecoming at CCS when staff, graduates, students, and friends will be gathering. It will be a time to present the background of the spiral, tell some stories, and initiate further conversation about the place of reflection in transformative pedagogy wherever we might practice. CCS is planning a consultation on its program and there may also be opportunity for sharing the spiral research through that avenue.

This work also provides a starting place for further research at CCS. It could prompt staff to reflect together on their own practice with the Action/Reflection model. An area that was identified where more work could be undertaken was to follow up on suggestions for how the model might be improved. I would recommend that CCS take some time to formulate principles for how proposed changes might be tested and

implemented. In addition there were two questions that emerged from the data that would be valuable to pursue. Sherri wondered if writing more frequent reflections helps learners integrate reflection into their being more readily than the current practice of four per year. Action research on what helps learners to be able reflect would continue the tradition of testing theory in practice at CCS. A further question that emerged from the data and could be researched is what it means to learn individually, in community, and as community?

The Action/Reflection model is based on theory that was current in the 1970's but some of that theory has undergone further research and changes. I would recommend that CCS undertake updating what is known of Kolb with more recent data, particularly relating to the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). At the very least, I suggest using the most recent version of the inventory with students (4.0) and consulting more up to date work that could provide correctives to critiques levelled against Kolb's earlier theory in relationship to the Action/Reflection model. The research I have done could be considered in the organization's ongoing evaluation of its own pedagogy, offering a starting point for revisiting the model, and assessing how it is used in current practice.

I can see the potential benefits, to me personally, of gathering with interested colleagues to form a learning community that would do some intentional reflection on practice together using the Action/Reflection model. We have a rich legacy in the spiral but I have seldom found opportunities to use it to reflect collectively with others since graduation from CCS. "A Community of Reflective Practice" would provide a way to learn from each other through group reflection and to grow as reflective practitioners. I am discerning opportunities to share the Action/Reflection model more widely in my practice of ministry. While I have shared the spiral with others before, I have not been entirely successful, probably because I have never spent the time to encourage authentic practice in community. Ted suggests that the model is a device that fosters prayerfulness and helps people connect with the sacred. I would like to teach it to parishioners as a spiritual exercise and resource of faith in times of stress.

Finally, having carried out this work on the CCS Action/Reflection model, I will seek to publish a journal article as a way to fulfill my last goal of contributing to existing scholarship on reflection in theological education. There are not many published papers giving example of seminaries that have taught reflection to students. There is scope for presenting CCS's model and methodology for a wider audience of theological faculty to demonstrate one instance where reflection is woven into the fabric of theological study.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

Moschella says, "The connections you have woven together among personal stories, group stories, and divine stories, can help guide the life and purposeful work of the congregation or organization" (2008 p 216). One of the research participants who I consulted about the accuracy of my version of the story was already eager to share it with a CCS student she was supervising because she felt it provided important contextual reference points. My intention in carrying out this research was to put together a collective story that narrates the life of the Action/Reflection model in a way that is a useful resource for CCS. It seems I have already been successful in achieving that goal.

Part of my intention for writing the collective story was to document memories of the influences that went into the creation of the Action/Reflection model in order to not lose sight of the theoretical work of earlier staff members and students. Some of the original theories are well known, such as Kolb and Fry's early work on the Experiential Learning model, but others, like Solberg, have been largely forgotten despite the fact that Helene felt his model made more important contributions to the spiral. I offer this work to CCS as a way to reclaim this foundational theory. It is my hope that it will also in some way "help guide the life and purposeful work" of that organization (Moschella 2008 p 216).

I am aware that the perspective I have presented is uniquely my own and that I have brought to this work personal interests and priorities. I had an idea at the back of my mind when I began this research that there was one correct way to use the spiral based on how it was done when I was a student. I have come to see that as a limited and limiting view as I have learned more about the model as a flexible tool that has multiple applications. The narrative within this project benefits from the many perspectives of all of the participants and I anticipate that these collective reflections will provide a glimpse into the rich history of theological education at CCS and the place of the Action/Reflection model that is part of it.

Finally, when I asked each of the people I interviewed, "What is the most important message about the spiral?" I heard a range of responses, which sum up the meaning the spiral has come to have for them.

*How **empowering** it is/was to get in touch, to find voice, and to find agency […] to realize…that I could act, what I thought mattered […] what I questioned was real, what I felt was true (Sherri).*

*I would want to point to the opportunities to enhance its effectiveness by **making some changes** in it (Ann).*

*We've not only reflected on our experience but we've also **connected it** with the experience of others through theory and connected it to our faith basis through theology and then that we act on it. (Kay).*

*You don't know when you start, if you engage it with integrity and honesty and openness, you **don't know where you will end up** (Wendy).*

Sherri's thoughts illustrated the personal significance of the spiral way of reflection in empowering people and helping them feel a sense of agency in the world. Ann reiterated what others said about how the spiral is always being created and is not carved in stone with her suggestion of changes that could make it even better. Kay referred to the fact that we may start with a personal experience, but using this model for reflection connects and expands our thinking beyond the individual to the community of faith through theology, and to other peoples' experience through theory, all of which leads to action. Finally, Wendy pointed out that reflection is an imprecise process with uncertain and potentially surprising outcomes. The statements reveal the complexity of the story of the Action/Reflection model and its richness of meaning for the learning community.

Reflection at CCS was intended to provide students with a foundation for learning, theologizing, social analysis, and the practice of ministry, by engaging a contextually developed Action/Reflection model. The model itself, in many ways was the product of a reflective process that involved what Schön (1983) calls artistry and Sanger refers to as the creative mind (1996).   Staff and students engaged in a willingness to "play" with experiences as though they were creative materials in an unfolding work of art. While the outcome was not known, there was openness to discovery along the way.   The process for using the resulting model, as with learning any art form, could be learned and reflection practiced. Once it was integrated into one's being, using the spiral could be a contemplative, creative, or transformative process to bring to an experience, which helped figure out what is going on, how it fit into the big picture, and what to do about it.

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THE KOLB CYCLE OF ADULT LEARNING

ACTION

DIALOGUE

STUDY

REFLECTION

THE SPIRAL OF ADULT LEARNING

ACTION
Which becomes
the next concrete
experience

STRATEGY
What are the implications?
What can we do?
How can we begin?
Who are our allies?

EXPERIENCE
Shared in a participatory
environment. Using right
brain (film, role play, etc)
and left brain (information,
readings, etc) processes.
Inside or outside educational
setting.

REFLECTION
Feelings
Values
Assumptions
Ideology
Hopes
Fears
Challenges
Contradictions

ANALYSIS
Who's voice is heard?
What makes this unjust?   Who is silent?
Who makes the decisions?   Who has the power?
Who bears the cost of the decisions?

1. CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE...
- meaningful
- significant
- impactful
- draws my attention
- a-ha!

2. REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE...
- physical aspects - see, smell, touch, hear, taste
- feelings
- meaning

3. CREATE A SYMBOL FOR THE EXPERIENCE...
- a word
- a drawing • an object
- a body position
- personalized
- my own

4. RELATE THE EXPERIENCE TO YOUR FAITH...
- the church's symbols or scripture or liturgy/music or traditions or doctrine or history or beliefs

5. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE TO ME?
- what will I do about this?
- what changes do I want to make?

THE LIFE-LONG SPIRALS OF LEARNING:
ACTION/REFLECTION LEARNING MODEL IN
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION*

Created in 1990

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THE LIFE-LONG SPIRALS OF LEARNING:
Action/Reflection/Learning Model in Theological Education *

The Learning Journey Continues...

The Learning Journey C.E.

Choose an Experience
- meaningful
- impactful (+ or −)
- an "aha" (insight)
- one specific activity
- one concept
- essence of a whole session etc.

Choosing for Learning
C.E. Choosing for Learning
C.E.

R.O. — Describe
(a) my feelings/behaviour/leadership
(b) how I saw/see others in this experience?
(c) how do I perceive others see me?
(d) what touched me...

How does this experience in me/others/the situation?

How did the tensions in prior assumptions/ideas affirm my experience/knowledge?
How does this experience unsettle and challenge my belief/experience/skill/knowledge?
What does this experience remind me of?

Dialoguing and Sharing Act

Living out the Learning

ACTION

REFLECTION

R.O.

Making Connections
A.C.

Empowering/Creating Energy A.E.

** Learning is many interrelating spirals with smaller spirals within larger ones.

Naming
- What does it/this experience mean/say to me
  - personally/professionally?
  - about the situation...
    - " Race/topic
    - " church
    - society etc...
- How can I ground this understanding/insight/awareness by
  a) linking to existing theory/theology
  b) creating new theory/theology
- What difference does this understanding/insight/awareness make to me?

Commitment to Action —
Integration/Transformation Learning
- emotional
- intellectual
- body
- spiritual
- history
  - personal
  - collective

Preliminary testing out - tentative action to help clarify analysis
How Can I Act?
- In what situations can I test this understanding/insight/awareness?
- What would I have to adapt/modify?
- What blocks and supports are there to action?
- What alternative strategies are there for action?
- What are the implications (for me/others) in not taking action?
- What reading/research/resources can I discover for more depth understanding?
- What skills/knowledge/values do I need to acquire/develop?

Dialoguing and Sharing Reflections with Others

* Based on Kolb and Solberg and Experience in Centre for Christian Studies' Core Learning.

Created in 1992

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September 1983

THE LIFE-LONG SPIRALS OF LEARNING:
ACTION/REFLECTION LEARNING MODEL IN
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Commitment to Action
INTEGRATION / TRANSFORMATION
- emotional
- intellectual
- body
- spiritual
- history
- personal
- collective

CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE
- meaningful
- impactful (+ or -)
- an "aha" (insight)
- one specific activity
- one concept
- essence of a whole session etc.

Preliminary testing
out — tentative action
to help clarify analysis

C.E.

Living Out The Learning

Choosing For Learning

A.E.

R.O.

Empowering
/Creating Energy

Making Connections

A.C.

HOW CAN I ACT?
- In what situations can I test this understanding/insight/awareness?
- What would I have to adapt/modify?
- What blocks and supports are there to action?
- What alternative strategies are there for action?
- What are the implications (for me/others) in not taking action?
- What reading/research/resources can I discover for more depth understanding?
- What skills/knowledge/values do I need to aquire/develop?

NAMING
- What does this experience mean/say to me?
  -personally/professionally
  -about the situation
  -about the theme/topic
  -about the church
  -about society etc....
- How can I ground this understanding/insight/awareness by
  a) linking to existing theory/theology
  b) creating new theory/theology
- What difference does this understanding/insight/awareness make for me?

DESCRIBE
-(a) My feelings/behaviour/leadership
 (b) How I saw/see others in this experience?
 (c) How do I perceive others see themselves?
 (d) What are the tensions in me/others/the situation?
- How does this experience affirm my prior assumptions/ideas/skills/experiences/knowledge?
- How does this experience unsettle and challenge my prior assumptions/beliefs/experiences/skills/knowledge
- What does this experience remind me of?(use a metaphor, image, song, scripture, create a symbol)

DIALOGUING and SHARING REFLECTIONS with OTHERS

Based on Kolb and Solberg and experience in the Centre for Christian Studies' Core Learning Groups.

Process/Model

Method

1. Why do I care about this matter?

   - personal story telling

2. Defining the issues:

   - What is going on?
   - Viewing from the other side. A hermeneutic of suspicion that would allow history to be written from the loser's side.
   - Naming.

3. Analysis:

   - What makes this issue important?
   - How does this issue reflect/portray class (economics), geography/culture, gender, race?
   - What does this issue convey about men's power? about women's power?
   - What values/beliefs underlie this issue?

4. Alternatives for action:

   - What values do you want to associate with the issue?
   - What would you like to have happen?
   - What strategies are possible?
   - What are you going to do?

5. Theological reflection:

   - What might we term theological about this issue?
   - How might we convey this theological meaning in new ways?

September 1986

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Some Notes

Discovering the movement of God in human experience
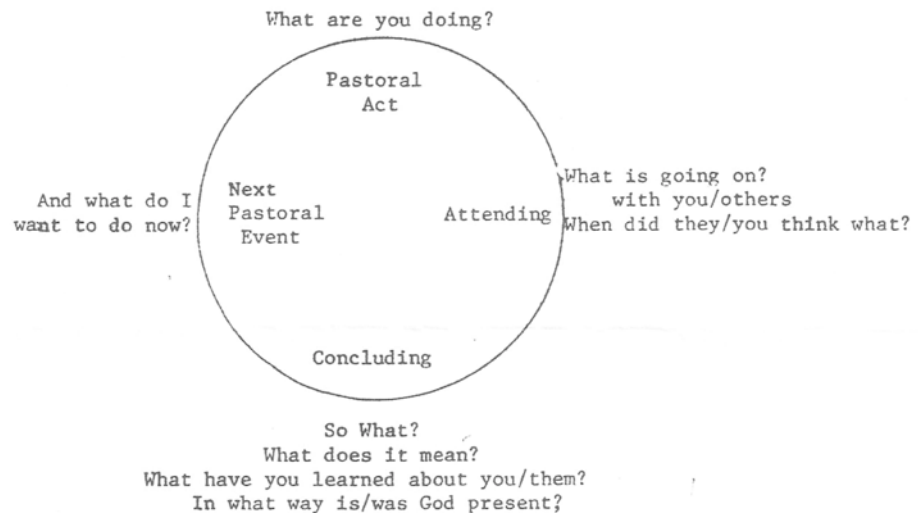
What are you doing?

Pastoral
Act

And what do I | Next Pastoral Event | Attending | What is going on?
want to do now? | | | with you/others
When did they/you think what?

Concluding

So What?
What does it mean?
What have you learned about you/them?
In what way is/was God present?

1. Seeing God in ordinary experiences
2. Tieing biblical verses to experiences...what does this incident/event remind me of in the bible, our tradition, culture?
3. Grounding the event in something I have learnt from experience.
4. Identifying the religious concepts--grace, sin, redemption, forgiveness, hope, resurrection, love, commitment in the situation.
5. Reflect on the presence of God--"God is....speaking here....moving here.."
6. Experience as a testimony to God in action....seen in scripture, but also in written theology--Bonhoeffer, Buber, Reuther, Harrison.
7. Doing theology in community--naming the witness to God and "telling the story of God in the world".

Attributed to Shelley Finson

A SPIRAL FOR LEARNING IN JUSTICE EDUCATION AND ACTION

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

- getting in touch with feelings, values, assumptions, ideology, hopes (ours and that of oppressed peoples)

- how does this experience affirm, confirm, challenge, unsettle me/us and what I/we have come to know believe, value etc...

- who has the power? who makes the decisions? who bears the cost of the decisions

- how are we connected/linked and not connected in our realities.

- what are the contradictions in what we see, hear, read, feel

- what does all the above mean to me now.

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

that is shared in a participatory environment. Using right brain (film, role plays, AVs, "plunges" etc...) and left brain (readings, data/information etc...) processes

ANALYSIS

- why and what makes this concrete experience an injustice.

MOVING TO ACTION

- what are the implications for me/us

- where can we begin to act

- how can we begin/what do we need to do

- who are our allies/support group

ACTION

becomes the "new" concrete experience which goes through the same process.

Developed at the Centre for Christian Studies

A SIMPLE SPIRAL WAY OF REFLECTING

New Experience

① Choose one experience .....
  something that has impact
  <u>or</u> - a significant insight
  <u>or</u> - an incident that leaves you
              with questions.

④ To learn from
  this experience
  what change (act-
  ion, new behaviour
  or attitude) is
  required of you?

② Identify your feelings
  and behaviour. Think
  about others' feelings
  and behaviour. Begin to
  interpret what was happening
  for you and others?

③ Does this experience generalize ...
  - does it relate to theories you
    know or are learning? or your
    understanding of theology (God,
    faith, meaning)

Created by Kay Heuer

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DON'S THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION MODEL

PHASE I - "Experience"

    1. Jot down feelings, thoughts, insights, images which immediately came/are coming to you from this experience.

PHASE II - "Understanding"

    1. Review each one of your jottings and ask yourself

      - what is going on there? in me, in the event?
      - why did it strike me or affect me that way?
      - what is really the issue(s) here?

    2. Are there connections between any of these thoughts/feelings/analysis?

    3. What is going on here?

PHASE II (continued)

    4. If you did not include in your jottings and analysis of the experience any thoughts or feelings about the experience as a Christian standing in the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, then note any feelings, thoughts or images which come to you now. Ask yourself: What is going on here?

PHASE III - "JUDGEMENT"

Review your analysis on the previous page(s).

Ask yourself of each and of the whole: "Is this really so?" Utilize some of the disciplines you know to use a different point to check out some of the analyses you made on the previous page(s). These might include:

    the personal dimension - pshychological or relational theory
    the social dimension - sociological and structural theory
    the economic dimension - economic theory
    the political dimension - political theory
    the ethical dimension - ethical theory and method
    the religious dimension - theological and biblical methods

(Use what resources you have at hand - nobody can have them all!) Try to see if you can satisfy yourself that your initial thoughts and analyses are probably so, or at least likely so.

PHASE IV - "DECISION"

Review the judgement(s) you concluded on the previous page. Ask yourself: "Does it really matter: If this is so, what should I/we do? "Does it really matter?" should indicate how important you think this conclusion must be to you. It will be affected by your other priorities and life commitments. What should I/we do?" is a strategy/action question, involving actual commitment to change/development in your/our lives.

Don Thompson

Spiral Model of Theological Reflection
Action/Reflection Learning Model in Theological Education

Concrete Experience
(C. E.)
DESCRIBE AN EXPERIENCE
- meaningful
- impactful (+ or -)
- an "aha" (insight)
- one specific activity
- one concept

Active Experimentation
(A.E.)
HOW CAN I ACT?
- In what situations can I
test this understanding/
insight /awareness?
- Are there follow-up actions I
need to take in terms of
relationships (e.g. addressing
conflict)?
- How would I adapt/modify
my behaviour or actions in the
future?
- What blocks and supports
are there to action?
- What alternative strategies
are there for action?
- What are the implications
(for me/others) in not taking
action?
- What reading/research/
resources can I discover for more
depth and understanding?
- What skills/knowledge/
values do I need to acquire?

Reflective Observation
(R. O.)
EXPLORE EMOTIONS AND
SENSES
- My feelings/behaviour/
leadership
- What did I see and hear
in the environment of the setting?
- How I saw/see others in
this experience?
- How do I perceive others
see themselves?
- What are the tensions
in me/others/the situation?
- How does this experience
affirm my prior assumptions
/ideas/skills/experience
/knowledge?
- How does this experience
unsettle and challenge my
prior assumptions/beliefs/
experiences/skills/
knowledge?

Abstract Conceptualization
(A. C.)
NAMING IDEAS, PATTERNS AND CONNECTIONS
- What does this experience mean/say to me?
- personally/professionally
- explore:
- theoretical readings, articles, scholarship/research
- biblical connections, stories, images, teachings
- theological reflections... sin, grace, presence of God,
hope & resurrection, incarnation, mission, ecclesiology, etc.
-social analysis questions: who is benefiting, who is missing, etc.
- ministry implications... boundaries, mutuality, role power

The version of the spiral used at CCS since 2001

Action/Reflection Model (The Spiral Model)

What happened as a result
of what we did?

Why did it happen?

What is happening? (Naming)
- feelings
- reactions
- hopes
- fears
- challenges
- surprises
- contradictions

Who are we?
(Placing Ourselves)
- class
- race
- sex
- age
- language
- sexual orientation
- religion
- ability/disability
- urban/rural
- national origin
- values
- assumptions
- ideology
- learning style
- insiders/outsiders in
  community

Why is it happening?
(Analysis)
- history
- power structures
- dynamics
- patterns
- trends
- context
- leverage points
- actors
- interests
- allies/enemies

Action!

What are we going to do about it?
(Strategy)
- vision
- alternatives
- goals/objectives
- planning for action

What are we going
to do next?

etc.

Adapted from: The "Core Model" of learning, Centre for Christian Studies, Toronto, Ontario
CUSO Education Department, *Basics and Tools: A Collection of Popular Education Resources
and Activities* (Ottawa: CUSO, 1988)
Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, Thomas, *Educating for a Change* (Toronto: Between the
Lines, 1991)

Used by permission of Anne Bishop

APPENDIX B   A comparison of different versions of the CCS Action-Reflection Model

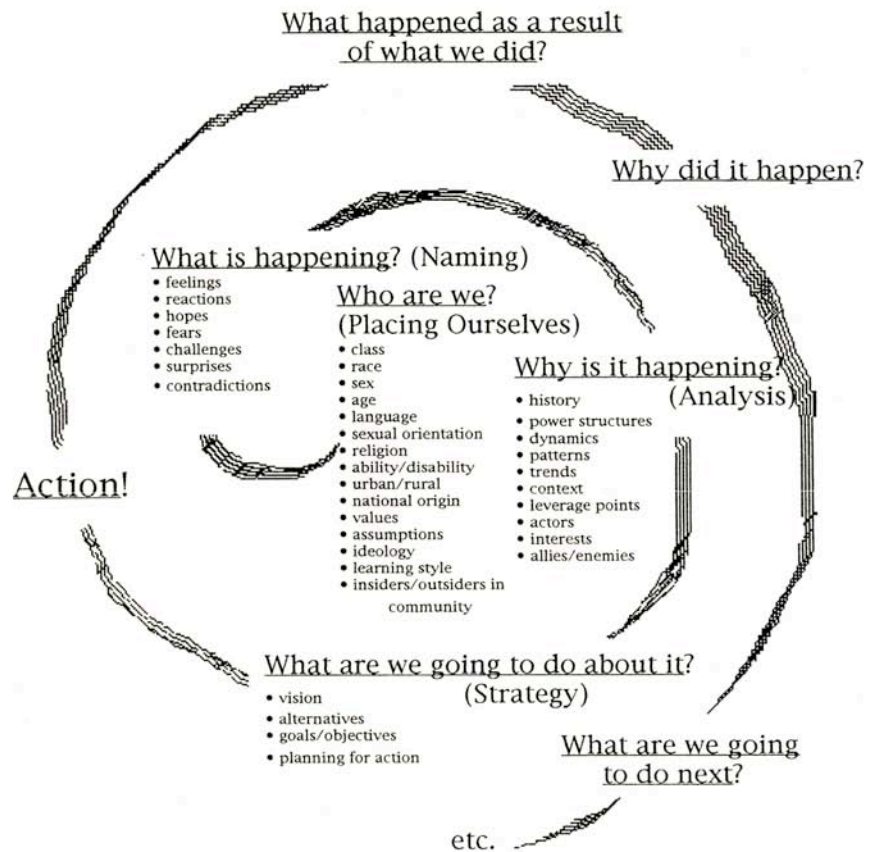|	Solberg 1974 (adapted for use at CCS) Appendix A.2	Sheet Helene gave me at her interview—Early version? Appendix A.1	Gwyn and Helene's Version 1980 Appendix A.3	September 1983/ also a similar one with no date, probably later/and a 1990 version A.5	September 1986 Appendix A.6	Shelley Finson Appendix A.7	Don Thompson's Version Appendix A.10	Developed at CCS Appendix A.8	Kay Heuer Appendix A.9	Ted Dodd (post 1998) Appendix A.11	Anne Bishop Appendix 12
Title	Model for Experiencing Theology	THE SPIRAL OF ADULT LEARNING	THE LIFE-LONG SPIRALS OF LEARNING: Action/Reflection Learning Model in Theological Education"	THE LIFE-LONG SPIRALS OF LEARNING: Action/Reflection Learning Model in Theological Education	Process/Model	Theological Reflection Discovering the Movement of God in Human Experience (used in field seminars?)	Don's Theological Reflection Model	A Spiral for Learning in Justice Education and Action	A SIMPLE SPIRAL WAY OF REFLECTING	Spiral Model of Theological Reflection: Action/Reflection Learning Model in Theological Education	Action/Reflection Model (The Spiral Model)
Concrete Experience (CE)	1. CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE • Meaningful • Significant • Impactful • Draws my attention • A-ha!	EXPERIENCE Shared in a participatory environment. Using right brain (film, role play, etc.) and left brain (information, readings, etc.) processes. Inside or outside educational setting.	CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE— *choosing for learning* - meaningful - impactful (+ or -) - an "aha" (insight) - one specific activity - one concept - essence of a whole session etc.	CHOOSE (**DESCRIBE**) AN EXPERIENCE—*choosing for learning* - meaningful - impactful (+ or -) - an "aha" (insight) - one specific activity - one concept - essence of a whole session etc.	1. Why do I care about this matter? - Personal story telling	Pastoral Act What are you doing?	PHASE I "Experience" Jot down feelings, thoughts, insights, images which immediately came/are coming to you from this experience.	CONCRETE EXPERIENCE that is shared in a participatory environment. Using right brain (film, role plays, AV's, "plunges" etc…) and left brain (readings, data/information etc…) processes	1. Choose an experience… something that has impact or a significant insight or an incident that leaves you with questions	DESCRIBE AN EXPERIENCE - meaningful - impactful (+ or -) - an "aha" (insight) - one concept	Who are we? (Placing Ourselves) • Class • Race • Sex • Age • Language • Sexual orientation • Religion • Ability/disability • Urban/rural • National origin • Values • Assumptions • Ideology • Learning style • Insiders/outsiders in community *Note: Questions for the Learning/Reflection Spiral (on next p) the first step is "Choose an Experience"*
Reflective Observation (RO)	2. REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE… • Physical aspects—see, smell, touch, hear, taste • Feelings • Meaning 3. CREATE A SYMBOL FOR THE EXPERIENCE… • A word • A drawing • An object • A body position • Personalized • My own	REFLECTION Feelings Values Assumptions Ideology Hopes Fears Challenges Contradictions	*Making Connections* - What did I notice about the experience? - Setting, feelings, behaviours, leadership - What does that remind me of? - metaphor, image, songs, scripture, create a symbol - What did I learn? a) Specifically o about myself o about the situation o about the theme content/process • group process • leadership • program planning • the church • society • counselling • etc. etc.	DESCRIBE (**EXPLORE**)—*making connections* a) My feelings/behaviour/leadership b) How I saw/see others in this experience? c) How do I perceive others see themselves? d) What are the tensions in me/others/the situation e) How does this experience affirm my prior assumptions/ideas/skills/ experiences/knowledge? f) How does this experience unsettle and challenge my prior assumptions/ beliefs/experiences/skills/kno wledge? g) What does this experience remind me of? (Use a metaphor, image, songs, scripture, create a symbol)	2. Defining the Issues: - What is going on? - Viewing from the other side. A hermeneutic of suspicion that would allow history to be written form the loser's side - naming	Attending What is going on with you/others When did they/you think what?	PHASE II "Understanding" 1. Review each one of your jottings and ask yourself - What is going on there? In me, in the event? - Why did it strike me or affect me that way? - What is really the issue(s) here? 2. Are there connections between any of these thoughts/feelings/analysis? 3. What is going on here? PHASE II (continued) 4. If you did not include in your jottings and analysis of the experience any thoughts or feelings about the experience as a Christian standing in the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, then note any feelings, thoughts or images which come to you now. Ask yourself: What is going on here?	REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION - Getting in touch with feelings, values, assumptions, ideology, hopes (ours and that of oppressed peoples) - How does this experience affirm, confirm, challenge, unsettle me/us and what I/we have come to know believe, value etc… - Who has the power? Who makes the decisions? Who bears the cost of the decisions? - How are we connected/linked and not connected in our realities? - What are the contradictions in what we see, hear, read, feel - What does all the above mean to me now?	2. Identify your feelings and behaviour. Think about others' feelings and behaviour. Begin to interpret what was happening for you and others.	EXPLORE EMOTIONS AND SENSES - My feelings/behaviour/ leadership - What did I see and hear in the environment of the setting? - How I saw/see others in this experience? - How do I perceive others see themselves? - What are the tensions in me/others the situation? - How does this experience affirm my prior assumptions/ideas/skills/ experiences/knowledge? - How does this experience unsettle and challenge my prior assumptions/beliefs/experie nces/ skills/knowledge?	What is happening? (Naming) - feelings - reactions - hopes - fears - challenges - surprises - contradictions
Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)	4. RELATE THE EXPERIENCE TO YOUR FAITH… • The church's symbols • Or scripture • Or liturgy/music • Or traditions • Or doctrine • Or history • Or my faith	ANALYSIS What makes this unjust? Who can we do? Who makes the decisions? Who bears the cost of the decisions? Whose voice is heard? Who is silent? Who has the power?	NAMING Grounding the concept i. Linking to existing theory/theology ii. Creating new theory/theology	NAMING - What does this experience mean/say to me? - personally/professionally - about the situation - about the theme/topic - about the church - about society, etc. - How can I ground this understanding/insight/awaren ess by a) linking to existing theory/theology b) creating new theory/theology - What difference does this understanding/insight/awaren ess make for me? *For others and the community*	3. Analysis: - What makes this issue important? - How does this issue reflect/portray class (economics), geography/ culture, gender, race? - What does this issue convey about men's power? About women's power? - What values/beliefs underlie this issue?	Concluding What does it mean? What have you learned about you/them? In what way is/was God present? 1. Seeing God in ordinary experiences 2. Tying biblical verses to experiences…what does this incident/event remind me of in the bible, our tradition, culture 3. Grounding the event in something I have learnt from experience. 4. Identifying the religious concepts—grace, sin, redemption, forgiveness, hope, resurrection, love, commitment in the situation. 5. Reflect on the presence of God—"God is…speaking here…moving here…" 6. Experience as a testimony to God in action—seen in scripture, but also in written theology—Bonhoeffer, Buber, Reuther, Harrison. 7. Doing theology in community—naming the witness to God and "telling the story of God in the world.	PHASE III "Judgement" Review your analysis on the previous page(s) Ask yourself of each and of the whole: "Is this really so?" Utilize some of the disciplines you know to use a different point to check out some of the analyses you made on the previous page(s). These might include: - The personal dimension—psychological or relational theory - The social dimension—sociological and structural theory - The economic dimension—economic theory - The political dimension—political theory - The ethical dimension—ethical theory and method - The religious dimension—theological and biblical methods (Use what resources you have at hand—nobody can have them all!) Try to see if you can satisfy yourself that your initial thoughts and analyses are probably so, or at least likely so.	ANALYSIS Why and what makes this concrete experience an injustice?	3. Does this experience generalize… Does it relate to theories you know or are learning? Or your understanding of theology (God, faith, meaning)?	NAMING IDEAS, PATTERNS AND CONNECTIONS - What does this experience mean/say to me? - personally/professional y Explore: - theoretical readings, articles, scholarship/research - biblical connections, stories, images, teachings - theological reflections…sin, grace, presence of God, hope & resurrection, incarnation, mission, ecclesiology, etc. - social analysis questions: who is benefitting, who is missing, etc. - ministry implications… boundaries, mutuality, role power	Why is it happening? (Analysis) • History • Power structures • Dynamics • Patterns • Trends • Context • Leverage points • Actors • Interests • Allies/enemies
Active Experimentation (AE)	5. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE TO ME? (ACTION added by Helene) • What will I do about this? • What changes do I want to make?	STRATEGY What are the implications? What can we do? How can we begin? Who are our allies? ... * ACTION Which becomes the next concrete experience	HOW CAN I ACT?— *empowering/creating energy* • What difference does this learning make for me? • What would other situations have to be like for this learning to be relevant? • How can I adapt and modify this learning to different situations? • What reading/research/resources can I discover for more depth learning? • What supports are there for action? What alternative strategies? • What skills/knowledge/values do I need to acquire/develop? • Preliminary testing out— tentative action to help clarify analysis ... Commitment to Action INTEGRATION/TRANSFORMAT ION—*Living out the learning* - Emotional - Intellectual - Body - Spiritual - History - Personal - collective	HOW CAN I ACT?— *empowering/creating energy* - In what situations can I test this understanding/insight/ awareness? - What would I have to adapt/modify? - What blocks supports are there to action? - What alternative strategies are there for action? - What reading/research/resources can I discover for more depth understanding? - What skills/knowledge/values do I need to acquire/develop? * Preliminary testing out—tentative action to help clarify analysis Commitment to Action INTEGRATION/TRANSFORMATI ON—*Living out the learning* - Emotional - Intellectual - Body - Spiritual - History - Personal - collective	4. Alternatives for action: - What values do you want to associate with the issue? - What would you like to have happen? - What strategies are possible? - What are you going to do? ... 5. Theological reflection: - What might we term theological about this issue? - How might we convey this theological meaning in new ways?	Next Pastoral Event And what do I want to do now?	PHASE IV "Decision" Review the judgment(s) you concluded on the pervious page. Ask yourself: "Does it really matter: If this is so, what should I/we do?" "Does it really matter?" should indicate how important you think this conclusion must be to you. It will be affected by your other priorities and life commitments. "What should I/we do?" is a strategy/action question, involving actual commitment to change/development in your/our lives.	MOVING TO ACTION - What are the implications for me/us - Where can we begin to act? - How can we begin/what do we need to do? - Who are our allies/support group? ... ACTION Becomes the "new" concrete experience which goes through the same process.	4. To learn from this experience what change (action, new behaviour or attitude) is required of you?	HOW CAN I ACT?— - In what situations can I test this understanding/insight/ awareness? - Are there follow-up actions I need to take in terms of relationships (e.g. addressing conflict) - How would I adapt/modify my behaviour or actions in the future? - What blocks and supports are there to action? - What alternative strategies are there for action? - What are the implications (for me/others) in not taking action? - What reading/research/resources can I discover for more depth and understanding? - What skills/knowledge/values do I need to acquire?	What are we going to do about it? (Strategy) • Vision • Alternatives • Goals/objectives • Planning for action ... Action! [Becomes the next experience for reflection. Go around cycle again by asking:] What happened as a result of what we did? Why did it happen? What are we going to do next?
Notes on page		This sheet has at the top "The Kolb Cycle of Adult Learning". Below it is a spiral	"Based on Kolb and Solberg and Experience in Centre for Christian Studies' Core Learning Groups	Based on Kolb and Solberg and Experience in Centre for Christian Studies' Core Learning Groups						Adapted from the work of David Kolb and Roger Fry, 1975	Adapted from: *The "Core Model" of learning* Toronto ON: Centre for Christian Studies; CUSO Education Dept. (1988) *Basics and Tools: A collection of popular education resources and activities* Ottawa ON: CUSO; Arnold R et al (1991) *Educating for change* Toronto: Between the Lines

• This section appears in a slightly different location than the others but refers to the same part of the model.

University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

Complete this form if you are planning to carry out research in the School of Education which will <u>not</u> involve the NHS but which will involve people participating in research either directly (e.g. interviews, questionnaires) and/or indirectly (e.g. people permitting access to data).

Documents to enclose with this form, where appropriate:
This form should be accompanied, where appropriate, by an Information Sheet/Covering Letter/Written Script which informs the prospective participants about the a proposed research, and/or by a Consent Form.

Guidance on how to complete this form is at:
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/content/1/c6/07/21/24/appguide.doc

Once you have completed this research ethics application form in full, and other documents where appropriate email it to the:

Either

Ethics Administrator if you are a member of staff.

Or

Secretary for your programme/course if you are a student.

NOTE
- Staff and Post Graduate Research (EdDII/PhD) requires 3 reviewers
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 1 reviewer – **low risk**
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 2 reviewers – **high risk**

I am a member of staff and consider this research to be (according to University definitions)   :   **low risk**   ☐
                                                                                   high risk   ☐

 am a student and consider this research to be (according to University definitions):
                                                                                   low risk   X
                                                                                   high risk   ☐

*Note: For the purposes of Ethical Review the University Research Ethics Committee considers all research with 'vulnerable people' to be 'high risk' (eg children under 18 years of age).

University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM
COVER SHEET

I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project's nature, the use of a method to inform prospective participants about the project (eg 'Information Sheet'/'Covering Letter'/'Pre-Written Script'?:	
Is relevant	**Is not relevant**
X (if relevant then this should be enclosed)	

I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project's nature, the use of a 'Consent Form':	
Is relevant	**Is not relevant**
X (if relevant then this should be enclosed)	

Is this a 'generic "en bloc" application (ie does it cover more than one project that is sufficiently similar)	
Yes	**No**
	X

I am a member of staff ☐

I am a PhD/EdD student ☒ X

I am a Master's student ☐

I am an Undergraduate student ☐

I am a PGCE student ☐

I have enclosed a signed copy of Part B ☒ X

University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

PART A

A1. **Title of Research Project**
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

A2. **Applicant (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised research projects):**

Title: *Ms.*   First Name/Initials: *Lori J.*   Last Name: *Stewart*
Post: *student*   Department: *Educational Studies*
Email: *edq05ls@sheffield.ac.uk*   Telephone: *204-832-5310*

A.2.1. Is this a student project?
If yes, please provide the Supervisor's contact details:
Dr. Tim Herrick
Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Strategy
The Institute for Lifelong Learning
University of Sheffield,
196-198 West Street, S1 4ET
Telephone (0114) 222 7004
E-mail t.herrick@sheffield.ac.uk

A2.2. Other key investigators/co-applicants (within/outside University), where applicable:

Please list all (add more rows if necessary)

Title	Full Name	Post	Responsibility in project	Organisation	Department

A3. **Proposed Project Duration:**
Start date: *February 2009*   End date: *July 2010*

A4. **Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:**

	Involves children or young people aged under 18 years
	Involves only identifiable personal data with no direct contact with participants
	Involves only anonymised or aggregated data
	Involves prisoners or others in custodial care (eg young offenders)
	Involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
X	Has the primary aim of being educational (eg student research, a project necessary for a postgraduate degree or diploma, MA, PhD or EdD)

A5. **Briefly summarise the project's aims, objectives and methodology?**
(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

The aim is to gather individual stories and compile them into a collective story of the creation, evolution, and use of a unique Action/Reflection model used in theological education at the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS), a college of the United Church of Canada.

The objectives are:
1. *To narrate a community story that provides a written record of the Action/Reflection model's formation and development from the 1970's to the present at the Centre for Christian Studies.*

2. *To contribute to existing scholarship on models of reflection used in the learning process of students, especially in the field of theological education.*

This will be a kind of developmental ethnography using various methods to gather data. Program staff at CCS who were key contributors to the formation of the model and those who have used it or who now use it in their teaching, will be asked to do a written reflection paper using the CCS Action/Reflection model. This process will be an invitation to reflect on how they have participated in the creation, modification, and/or use of the model in their time at CCS. The reflection be followed by an audio-recorded interview during which participants will be asked to share their experiences and story of using this model.

Two focus groups will be organized, one for graduates who learned the model as students and who may or may not now use it in their practice, and one for current students to share how they learned it and how they have or have not used it since.

I plan to carry out participant observation of new students in the first module of the CCS program while they are learning the model, and as they begin to engage with it in their studies.

A6. **What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?**

The risk is very low since participants will not be asked to share details of their personal lives or reveal information of a private nature; however, the potential for mental/emotional discomfort does exist for those who will be individually interviewed and take part in focus groups. In telling their stories, participants will possibly have cause to reflect on the meaning of particular life experiences and questions of identity, thus conjuring up unexpected feelings. If this should happen, participants would be free to ask to change the line of questioning, end an interview, or to withdraw from a focus group. In addition, these participants may be inconvenienced to some degree by giving up some of their time to participate in the interview/focus group or write a reflection

In the participant observation of the group there may be anxiety about being watched or concern about being judged. I would attempt to reassure participants ahead of time that the purpose of the observation is not to evaluate

them personally but to assess the process of teaching/learning of the model itself.

A7. **Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project and, if yes, explain how these issues will be managed?** (Especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises.)

Low or no risk. All of the people I will be interviewing are known to me and I am comfortable in their presence. Other interactions will be in group settings relatively in. educational centres or churches.

A8. **How will the potential participants in the project be (i) identified, (ii) approached and (iii) recruited?**

i)   *All potential participants will all have had some kind of association with the Centre for Christian Studies, either as program staff, students, or graduates.*

ii)   *I will get in touch with the Centre for Christian Studies directly to request permission to do participant observation of the 2009 Leadership Development Module. I will communicate with up to 6 program staff by e-mail or telephone. I will make contact with graduates who will be attending the Diakonia of the United Church of Canada biennial meeting in April 2009 and current students who will be in Winnipeg for one of their learning circles during 2009 to seek up to 8 people willing participate in each focus group.*

iii)   *I will explain my research and ask if each one would be willing to take part in the project. I will proceed with the informed consent protocol with those who agree.*

A9. **Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?**

Yes | X |
No | |

If informed consent is not to be obtained please explain why.

A.9.1 **How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):**

Participants doing reflections and interviews
   I will mail a letter with the Information Sheet explaining the research project with a Participant Consent form. I will follow up by phone a week later or meet with individuals in person to review the consent form and to answer any questions. I will ask that a completed Participant Consent form be mailed back or given to me prior to giving out the reflection activity.

Participants in focus groups
   Delegates at a conference of Diakonia of the United Church of Canada who are graduates of CCS and who were students between 1970 (approximately) and 2008 will be invited by e-mail to take part prior to the event and will be sent an attached Information sheet explaining the project and a Participant Consent form. Hard copies of these documents will be distributed at the event, and prior to the focus group, to those who have agreed to participate, at which time I will review the consent form, answer any questions, and secure a completed copy.

Continuing students in a 2009 CCS learning circle will be e-mailed and invited to take part in a focus group prior to the Learning Circle. An attached Information sheet explaining the project will be sent with a Participant Consent form. Hard copies of these documents will be distributed immediately prior to the focus group to those who have agreed to participate, at which time I will review the consent form, answer any questions, and secure a completed copy.

<u>*Participants being observed*</u>
I will write a letter to The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) with a written description of the project. I will seek permission to carry out participant observation during the Leadership Development Module (LDM), which will be held in Winnipeg in 2009. Having secured that in writing, I will meet with the program staff who will be learning facilitators at the LDM to negotiate appropriate observation time(s) and seek permission to communicate with the students. Once that is arranged, I will write to the participants in advance with an information sheet explaining the project and what the observation would entail. I would seek permission from the program staff to introduce myself to the circle when they first meet and arrange with them a time to explain the project to the group, how the participant observation will work and answer any questions. I would offer to discuss any concerns individual participants might have at a time outside the learning sessions but before I participate as an observer.

Participants will be informed that any of their exchanges with me as researcher may represent some form of data gathering and that they have the option to avoid such contacts.

If any individual does not wish to participate, attempts would be made to exclude interactions involving that individual from the notes made. If the majority of the group refuses to participate I would plan to do a focus group with a smaller number who do agree to contribute. A Participant Consent form would then be distributed to those people, reviewed, questions answered, and people would be asked to return a signed copy.

A.10   How will you ensure appropriate protection and well-being of participants?

Focus group participants and participant observation: all persons will remain anonymous, comments that could be linked with a particular person will be left out or changed, summary notes from the group would be provided for each participant to review and negotiate changes.

Those being interviewed represent a small number of people who were/are program staff at CCS between 1970 and now. They are well known within academic and church circles so anonymity would be difficult to assure. Participants will be asked first if they would be willing to be identified. If a participant prefers to remain anonymous, identifying data (e.g. specific years working at CCS, position there, age, current occupation) would not be mentioned. Summary notes from the individual interview will be provided to each participant to review and negotiate changes.

Once the collective CCS story is compiled from all of the data into a single narrative, selected participants will be asked to read and comment on the result. Their editorial observations and commentary would be used to adjust the narrative so that it reflects the community's collective experience.

A.11 **What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?**

Written reflections, notes and cassette tapes of interviews, notes and cassette tapes of focus groups, and notes from participant observation will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All notes will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis. Computer data will be stored on an external drive that can also be locked in a filing cabinet

A.12 **Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?** (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided.)

Yes [ ]

No [X]

A.13 **Will the research involve the production of recorded or photographic media such as audio and/or video recordings or photographs?**

Yes [X]

No [ ]

A.13.1 This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded or visual media:
How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media or photographs may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?

The Participant Consent Form will state clearly that cassette recordings will be made of interviews and of the focus groups.

It will also declare that tapes of the focus groups will be used only by me to prepare summary notes of the group discussion and that they will be destroyed upon completion of the research.

Tapes of interviews will be used by me to prepare summary notes. Individuals whose interviews are recorded will be asked if they are willing to give permission to have the cassette tapes deposited in the Archives of the United Church of Canada. Those people who agree will be asked to complete a consent form for the Archives. The tapes from their interviews, together with the consent forms will be forwarded to the Archives of the United Church of Canada upon completion of the research. Tape recordings of interviews with those who decline will be destroyed when the research is completed.

PART B - <u>THE SIGNED DECLARATION</u>

Title of Research Project:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Name of Applicant:
Lori Stewart

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's *'Financial Regulations', 'Good research Practice Standards'* and the *'Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue'* (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In signing this research ethics application I am confirming that:

1.   The above-named project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue':
        http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/07/21/15/Tissue.doc

2.   The above-named project will abide by the University's 'Good Research Practice Standards': www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/03/25/82/collatedGRP.pdf

3.   The research ethics application form for the above-named project is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

4.   There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.

5.   Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.

6.   I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my supervisor or the Ethics Administrator as appropriate.)

7.   I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CICS).

8.   I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.

9.   I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (eg the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers/supervisors) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.

10.   If this is an application for a 'generic'/'en block' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.

11.   I will inform the Chair of Ethics Review Panel if prospective participants make a complaint about the above-named project.

Name of the Principal Investigator (or the name of the Supervisor if this is a student project:

Tim Herrick

If this is a student project insert the student's name here:

Lori Stewart

Signature of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor):

Signature of student:

Lori Stewart

Date:

February 13, 2009

Email the completed application form and provide a signed, hard copy of 'Part B' to the course/programme secretary

For staff projects contact the Ethics Secretary, Colleen Woodward
Email: c.woodward@sheffield.ac.uk for details of how to submit

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Attached with this application are the following documents:

Participant Information Sheet for Past and Present Staff
Participant Information Sheet for Past and Present Students
Participant Information Sheet for New Students
Institutional Consent Form for Participant Observation with New Students
Participant Consent Form for Past and Present Staff being interviewed
Participant Consent Form for Past and Present Student taking part in focus groups
Consent and Release Form for the United Church Archives

APPENDIX C.2
Acceptances

ETHICS REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM

This form is for use when ethically reviewing a research ethics application form.

1. Name of Ethics Reviewer:	Pat Sikes

2. Research Project Title:	*"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"*
3. Principal Investigator (or Supervisor):	Lori Steward / Tim Herrick
4. Academic Department / School:	Education

5. I confirm that I do not have a conflict of interest with the project application

6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:

Be approved:	Be approved with *suggested* amendments in '7' below:	and/or	Be approved providing *requirements* specified in '8' below are met:	<u>NOT</u> be approved for the reason(s) given in '9' below:
x				

7. Approved with the following suggested, optional amendments (i.e. it is left to the discretion of the applicant whether or not to accept the amendments and, if accepted, the ethics reviewers do not need to see the amendments):

8. Approved providing the following, compulsory requirements are met (i.e. the ethics reviewers need to see the required changes):

9. Not approved for the following reason(s):

10. Date of Ethics Review: 20/2/09

ETHICS REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM

This form is for use by members of academic staff in the School of Education when reviewing a research ethics application.

Note to reviewers and applicants:

The ethical review process in the School of Education is designed to provide critical response on ethical issues identified in research proposals. For this reason, reviewers' comments are not anonymous*. The comments given here are intended to help applicants (and where appropriate their academic supervisors) to revise their research plans where necessary to ensure that their research is conducted to high ethical standards.

The contents of this form remain internal to the University, and should not be used for wider dissemination without written permission from the Ethics Reviewer named here and the Chair of the Ethics Review Panel.

1. Name of Ethics Reviewer*:	Tim Herrick

2. Research Project Title:	"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"
3.Principal Investigator (and name of Tutor/Supervisor in the case of student applications):	Lori Stewart supervised by Tim Herrick
4.Academic Department / School:	Department of Educational Studies, School of Education

5. The following details may be considered as a conflict of interest. (If a possible conflict of interest is declared, the Chair of the Ethical Review Panel will take this into account)

I am Lori's supervisor, and have worked with her over the last three months in developing this ethics application.

6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:

Be approved:	Be approved with *suggested* amendments in '7' below:	and/o	Be approved providing *requirements* specified in '8' below are met:	**NOT** be approved for the reason(s) given in '9' below:
X				

7. Approved with the following suggested, optional amendments (i.e. it is left to the discretion of the applicant whether or not to accept the amendments and, if accepted, the ethics reviewers do not need to see the amendments):
A tiny correction rather than an amendment – the participant consent forms refer to an information sheet dated 13th February 2008; the principal investigator may want to correct this before distributing the forms to participants.
8. Approved providing the following, compulsory requirements are met (i.e. the ethics reviewers need to see the required changes):
9. Not approved for the following reason(s):
10. Date of Ethics Review: 24-2-09

ETHICS REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM

This form is for use by members of academic staff in the School of Education when reviewing a research ethics application.

Note to reviewers and applicants:

The ethical review process in the School of Education is designed to provide critical response on ethical issues identified in research proposals. For this reason, reviewers' comments are not anonymous*. The comments given here are intended to help applicants (and where appropriate their academic supervisors) to revise their research plans where necessary to ensure that their research is conducted to high ethical standards.

The contents of this form remain internal to the University, and should not be used for wider dissemination without written permission from the Ethics Reviewer named here and the Chair of the Ethics Review Panel.

2. **Name of Ethics Reviewer*:** Reviewers who wish to make anonymous responses should contact the Chair of the Ethics Review Panel before completing the review.	J Wellington

2. **Research Project Title:**	*"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"* .
3.**Principal Investigator (and name of Tutor/Supervisor in the case of student applications):**	LORI STEWART
4.**Academic Department / School:**	Education Department

5.I confirm that I do not have a conflict of interest with the project application

6. I confirm that, in my judgment, the application should:			
Be approved:	**Be approved with** *suggested* and/o **amendments in '7' below:**	**Be approved providing** *requirements* specified in '8' below are met:	**NOT** be approved for the reason(s) given in '9' below:
YES			

7. Approved with the following suggested, optional amendments (i.e. it is left to the discretion of the applicant whether or not to accept the amendments and, if accepted, the ethics reviewers do not need to see the amendments):

8. Approved providing the following, compulsory requirements are met (i.e. the ethics reviewers need to see the required changes):

9. Not approved for the following reason(s):

10. Date of Ethics Review: FEB 23RD 2009

Participant Information Sheet – Past and Present Program Staff

Research Project Title:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Invitation
*You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. **Please take time to read the following information carefully** and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.*

What is the project's purpose?
I am doing a research project on the Action-Reflection Model developed and used at the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) for a Doctorate in Education with the University of Sheffield. The research focuses on gathering stories, from past and present program staff as well as past and present students, about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action-Reflection model within this theological college over the last 30 years.

My goals are:
> 3. *To narrate a community story that provides a written record of the Action/Reflection model's formation and development from the 1970's to the present at the Centre for Christian Studies.*
>
> 4. *To contribute to existing scholarship on models of reflection used in the learning process of students, especially in the field of theological education.*

The research will be taking place between February 2009 and July of 2010.

Why have I been chosen?
I would like to speak with 5 or 6 key members of the program staff, including
- *Those who were teaching at CCS when the model was created/introduced and in the early years of its development*
- *Those who have subsequently used it as part of the CCS program they inherited*

Do I have to take part and if I do, what will happen?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

If you decide to take part you will be asked to complete a written reflection paper using the CCS Action/Reflection model. Following that, an interview will be arranged, which will last up to two hours, at a mutually agreeable time and location. Mileage for any necessary travel for you to take part will be paid. There may be some follow up questions, which would be asked over the telephone or by e-mail.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
Audio recordings will be made of interviews. They will be used only by me, to prepare summary notes of the interviews. No other use will be made of them without your written permission. If you are willing to have the recorded interview and summary notes placed in the United Church Archives following completion of the research, please sign the separate consent and release form. There is no requirement that you do so and if you prefer, the recording(s) will be destroyed following completion of the research.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
The risk is very low since participants will not be asked to share details of their personal lives or reveal information of a private nature; however, the potential for mental/emotional discomfort does exist for those who will be individually interviewed. In telling your stories, you will possibly

have cause to reflect on the meaning of particular life experiences and questions of identity, thus conjuring up unexpected feelings. If this should happen, you would be free to ask to change the line of questioning or to end the interview. In addition, you may be inconvenienced to some degree by giving up some of your time to participate in the interview or to write a reflection.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
This work will contribute to scholarship about the impact of reflective learning and provide a documented record of an important development in theological education for the wider theological and academic community. The creation of a collective narrative will help the CCS community tell its own story and retain a communal memory of the significance of the Action/Reflection model to transformative theological education. The opportunity to reflect on and talk about your role, valuable contributions, and personal experiences may be of personal benefit to you.

What if something goes wrong?
You will be notified if the research project is being ended earlier than expected. Complaints about the conduct of this interview may be made to the Supervisor. If you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the "Registrar and Secretary" who is the designated official person at the University of Sheffield responsible for receiving complaints brought against the University.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that is assembled during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All notes will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis.

Due to the relatively small number of staff at CCS over the years and the recognition of the institution within the United and Anglican churches it may be difficult to preserve complete anonymity. If you are willing to have your name used, please indicate that on the consent form. There is no requirement that you do so and if you prefer, a pseudonym will be used and identifying data (e.g. specific years working at CCS, position there, age, current occupation) will not be mentioned in an effort to preserve anonymity.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
Summary notes will be provided for each participant to review and negotiate changes following the interviews. Finally, a collective story of the Action/Reflection model will be compiled from all of the data into a single narrative, which selected participants will be asked to read and offer editorial comments on.

It is expected that the research will be completed by July of 2010. The results will be submitted as partial requirements for the EdD program. It will be subsequently shared with the CCS community in some way and may also be published.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact for further information

Researcher:
Lori Stewart
118 Cavell Drive
Winnipeg, MB   *Telephone   (204) 832-5310 or 832-1000*
Canada   R3J 1P1   *E-mail   loristewart@hagerman.ca*

Supervisor:
Dr. Tim Herrick
Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Strategy
The Institute for Lifelong Learning

University of Sheffield,
196-198 West Street,   *Telephone*   *(0114) 222 7004*
Sheffield, UK   S1 4ET   *E-mail*   *t.herrick@sheffield.ac.uk*

Thank you for taking part in this research.

As a participant in this project you will be given a copy of this Participant information Sheet and a signed Participant Consent Form to keep.

Institutional Information Sheet

Research Project Title:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Request
I am requesting permission from the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) to sit in on the Leadership Development Module (LDM) learning circle in June 2009 in order to do participant observation for the research project identified above, the session times to be negotiated with the program staff.

Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. **Please take time to read the following information carefully** *and discuss it with those who will be part of the decision making. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.*

What is the project's purpose?
I am doing a research project on the Action-Reflection Model developed and used at the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) for a Doctorate in Education with the University of Sheffield. The research focuses on gathering stories, from past and present program staff as well as past and present students, about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action-Reflection model within this theological college over the last 30 years.

My goals are:

5. *To narrate a community story that provides a written record of the Action/Reflection model's formation and development from the 1970's to the present at the Centre for Christian Studies.*

6. *To contribute to existing scholarship on models of reflection used in the learning process of students, especially in the field of theological education.*

The research will be taking place between February 2009 and July of 2010.

Why have approached CCS?
I would like to observe new students as they are learning and engaging with the Action/Reflection Model for the first time in the learning circle. I would also like to see how the model is being introduced by current program staff.

Does CCS have to agree and if it does take part, what will happen?
It is up to the institution to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to give permission for participant observation to take place, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. CCS can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

I would participate in the learning circle during relevant sessions at the Leadership Development Module in June 2009. During those times I would observe the activities of the group and make written notes. I would negotiate, with the relevant program staff, which sessions it would be most appropriate to be present for. I would also like to send a participant information sheet to each student who will be part of the LDM in advance so they will have some information about what will be taking place.

It is important that you know that any exchanges with me as researcher during my participation in the module may represent some form of data gathering. Students and staff would be told that they have the option to avoid such contacts.

Will dialogue in the learning circle be recorded?
No, only hand written notes will be taken.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
The risk is relatively low since program staff will be present and monitoring what is going on when I am part of the learning circle. Participants will not be asked directly to share anything

other than those things that would normally be part of the learning circle; however, some people may have anxiety about being watched or concern about being judged. I would attempt to reassure participants that the purpose of the study is not to evaluate them personally but to observe the process of teaching/learning the model itself.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
This work will contribute to scholarship about the impact of reflective learning and provide a documented record of an important development in theological education for the wider theological and academic community. The creation of a collective narrative will help the CCS community tell its own story and retain a communal memory of the significance of the Action/Reflection model to transformative theological education

What if something goes wrong?
You will be notified if the research project is being ended earlier than expected. Complaints about the conduct of the participant observation may be made first to the researcher and then to the Supervisor. If you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the "Registrar and Secretary" who is the designated official person at the University of Sheffield responsible for receiving complaints brought against the University.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that is assembled during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All notes will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis.

All students and staff names will be kept anonymous and no one from the learning circle will be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Comments that could be linked with a particular person will be left out or changed in order to preserve anonymity.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
A collective story of the Action/Reflection model will be compiled from all of the data into a single narrative, on which selected participants will be asked to read and offer editorial comments.

It is expected that the research will be completed by July of 2010. The results will be submitted as partial requirements for the EdD program. It will be subsequently shared with the CCS community in some way and may also be published.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact for further information

Researcher:
Lori Stewart
118 Cavell Drive
Winnipeg, MB   *Telephone*   *(204) 832-5310 or 832-1000*
Canada   *R3J 1P1*   *E-mail*   *loristewart@hagerman.ca*

Supervisor:
Dr. Tim Herrick
Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Strategy
The Institute for Lifelong Learning
University of Sheffield,
196-198 West Street,   *Telephone*   *(0114) 222 7004*
Sheffield, UK   *S1 4ET*   *E-mail*   *t.herrick@sheffield.ac.uk*

Thank you for taking part in this research.
As an institutional participant in this project you will be given a copy of this Participant information Sheet and a signed Institutional Consent Form for Participant Observation to keep.

Participant Information Sheet – Past and Present Students

Research Project Title:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Invitation
*You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. **Please take time to read the following information carefully** and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.*

What is the project's purpose?
I am doing a research project on the Action-Reflection Model developed and used at the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) for a Doctorate in Education with the University of Sheffield. The research focuses on gathering stories, from past and present program staff as well as past and present students, about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action-Reflection model within this theological college over the last 30 years.

My goals are:
1. *To narrate a community story that provides a written record of the Action/Reflection model's formation and development from the 1970's to the present at the Centre for Christian Studies.*

    2. *To contribute to existing scholarship on models of reflection used in the learning process of students, especially in the field of theological education.*

The research will be taking place between February 2009 and July of 2010.

Why have I been chosen?
I will host two focus groups, each of up to 8 people, to hear the stories of graduates and of present students about how they learned the model and how they have or have not used it since. Participation will be invited from the members of two groups that will be gathered for other reasons.

Do I have to take part and if I do, what will happen?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

If you decide to take part, you will gather with others in a group setting for up to two hours. During this time you will be asked to answer questions and take part in a group discussion about your experiences learning and using the CCS Action/Reflection Model.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?
Audio recordings will be made of focus groups. They will be used only by me to prepare summary notes of the discussions. No other use will be made of them without your written permission. The recording(s) will be destroyed following completion of the research.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
The risk is very low since participants will not be asked to share details of their personal lives or reveal information of a private nature; however, the potential for mental/emotional discomfort does exist for those who will take part in focus groups. In telling your stories, you will possibly have cause to reflect on the meaning of particular life experiences and questions of identity, thus conjuring up unexpected feelings. If this should happen, you would be free to ask to change the line of questioning or to withdraw from a focus group. In addition, you may be inconvenienced to some degree by giving up some of your time to participate in the interview/focus group or to write a reflection.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This work will contribute to scholarship about the impact of reflective learning and provide a documented record of an important development in theological education for the wider theological and academic community. The creation of a collective narrative will help the CCS community tell its own story and retain a communal memory of the significance of the Action/Reflection model to transformative theological education. The opportunity to reflect on and talk about your experiences may be of personal benefit to you.

What if something goes wrong?
You will be notified if the research project is being ended earlier than expected. Complaints about the conduct of this interview may be made to the Supervisor. If you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the "Registrar and Secretary" who is the designated official person at the University of Sheffield responsible for receiving complaints brought against the University.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?
All the information that is assembled during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All notes will be destroyed after the completion of the thesis.

You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Comments that could be linked with a particular person will be left out or changed in order to preserve anonymity.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
Summary notes will be provided for each participant to review and negotiate changes following the interviews. Finally, a collective story of the Action/Reflection model will be compiled from all of the data into a single narrative, which selected participants will be asked to read and offer editorial comments on.

It is expected that the research will be completed by July of 2010. The results will be submitted as partial requirements for the EdD program. It will be subsequently shared with the CCS community in some way and may also be published.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?
This project has been ethically approved by the University of Sheffield School of Education's ethics review procedure. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact for further information

> *Researcher: Lori Stewart*
> *118 Cavell Drive*
> *Winnipeg, MB*   *Telephone   (204)   832-5310   or 832-1000*
> *Canada   R3J 1P1   E-mail*
> *loristewart@hagerman.ca*

> *Supervisor: Dr. Tim Herrick*
> *Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Strategy*
> *The Institute for Lifelong Learning*
> *University of Sheffield,*
> *196-198 West Street,*   *Telephone   (0114) 222 7004*
> *Sheffield, UK   S1 4ET   E-mail*
> *t.herrick@sheffield.ac.uk*

Thank you for taking part in this research.

As a participant in this project you will be given a copy of this Participant information Sheet and a signed Participant Consent Form to keep.

APPENDIX C.4

Participant Consent Form –
Past and Present Program Staff

Title of Project:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Name of Researcher:
Lori Stewart

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated February 13, 2009 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.   _____

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, in person or by calling Lori Stewart at (204) 832-5310 or e-mailing loristewart@hagerman.ca   _____

3. I give permission for my name to be identified and used with my responses.   _____

4. I would like to remain anonymous. I understand that my responses will be anonymised and may be quoted. I give permission for the above named researcher to have access to my responses.   _____

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.   _____

6. I give permission for audiotapes of the interview to be made.   _____

7. I give permission for the audio tape(s) of the interview with me to be placed in the Archives of the United Church of Canada upon completion of this research project. I have signed a separate consent form for the Archives.   _____

8. I prefer that the tapes of any interview with me be destroyed when the research is finished   _____

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this form has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the participant information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Institutional Consent Form for Participant Observation

Title of Project:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Name of Researcher:
Lori Stewart

Group to be Observed:
Leadership Development Module, June 2009

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated February 13, 2009 for the above project and have had the opportunity to discuss it with others and ask questions.

2. I understand that permission for participant observation to take place is voluntary and that the institution is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, in person or by calling Lori Stewart at (204) 832-5310 or e-mailing loristewart@hagerman.ca

3. I give permission to the above named researcher to sit in on the Leadership
   Development Module learning circle in order to do participant observation for the research project identified above, the sessions to be negotiated with the program staff.

4. I give permission for the researcher to send a participant information sheet to each student who will be attending the Leadership Development Module
   in June.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Institutional   Date   Signature
Representative

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the Institutional Representative

Copies:

Once this form has been signed by institutional parties should receive a copy of this signed and dated consent form, the institutional information sheet, the participant information sheet, and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Participant Consent Form – Past and Present Students

Title of Project:
"Once upon a spiral: the story of the Centre for Christian Studies Action-Reflection Model"

Name of Researcher:
Lori Stewart

Participant Identification Number for this project:

Please initial box

9. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated February 13, 2009 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, in person or by calling Lori Stewart at (204) 832-5310 or e-mailing loristewart@hagerman.ca

11. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for the above named researcher to have access to my responses.

12. I agree to take part in the above research project.

13. I give permission for audiotapes of the interview to be made.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature
To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this form has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the participant information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

APPENDIX D
Sample Letters to Participants

118 Cavell Dr.
Winnipeg, MB
R3J 1P1

March 2009

Dear Gwyn:

I am writing to invite you to consider being part of research I am doing on the Action-Reflection Model developed at the Centre for Christian Studies. I am carrying out this project as part of a Doctorate in Education with the University of Sheffield in the UK. The research focuses on hearing stories from various sources about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action-Reflection model within this particular theological college over the last 30 years.

In order to do this, I am seeking reflections from people such as you who taught there in the past. You have unique experience about how it emerged and changed to meet particular needs as you were using it in that educational context. In addition, I hope to learn how your beliefs, values, intuitions, and insights contributed to the shaping of the model. Each person's story will be deeply personal and distinctive, but taken together, the stories will contribute perspectives to the larger story that can be told about the model.

I have the following goals for the project:

7. *To narrate a community story that provides a written record of the Action/Reflection model's formation and development from the 1970's to the present at the Centre for Christian Studies.*

8. *To contribute to existing scholarship on models of reflection used in the learning process of students, especially in the field of theological education.*

While the methods of research will include observation of current students learning the model and focus groups with past and present students, the foundation of the work will be in hearing the stories of program staff who were instrumental in the formation and use of it. I envision a process that would include the completion of an initial written reflection paper about your own experiences with the model. Following that, I would arrange an interview of up to two hours in length to relate and reflect further on your story.

I believe taking part could have some personal benefit to you in that it would afford an opportunity to talk about your role, valuable contributions, and personal experiences in relation to this important model. In addition, it is my hope that this work will contribute to scholarship and provide a documented record of an important development in theological education for the wider theological and academic community.

Fulfilling this request would involve giving up some time in order to complete the reflection and to do the interview. While I will not be asking you anything about your personal life, the potential for mental/emotional discomfort does exist. In telling your story, you may have cause to reflect on the meaning of particular life experiences and questions of identity that may elicit unexpected feelings. If this should happen, you would be free to ask to change the line of questioning or end the interview.

I have enclosed an information sheet for you to read which covers a number of questions that you may have. If you agree to take part in the research there is also a consent form to be signed, with a copy for you to keep and one to be returned to me. I am expecting to complete this project by July of 2010, when it will be submitted to the University of Sheffield in partial fulfillment of the requirements of this degree. At that time there may also be other presentations of the work.

I earnestly hope you will consider saying "yes" to this request. I deeply value what I already know of your contributions. If you have any questions, I would be happy to discuss this proposal with you further.

Sincerely,

Lori Stewart

Enclosures:

Participant Information Sheet—Past and Present Program Staff
Participant Consent Form—Past and Present Program Staff
Consent and Release Form for The United Church Archives

MEMO

To: *DUCC National Gathering participants who were graduates of the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) between 1976 and 2009*
From: *Lori Stewart*
Re: *Focus Group at the National Gathering on the CCS Action/Reflection Model (Spiral)*
Date: *April 3, 2009*

I am writing to invite you to consider being part of research I am doing on the Action-Reflection Model developed at the Centre for Christian Studies. I am carrying out this project as part of a Doctorate in Education (EdD) with the University of Sheffield in the UK.

The research focuses on hearing stories from various sources about the creation, evolution, and use of the Action-Reflection model at CCS over the last thirty years. As part of the data gathering process, I am planning to host a focus group at the DUCC National Gathering later this month. We will get together on the afternoon of April 16 (which is a free afternoon) between 1:30 and 3:30 to have a conversation about your experiences of learning and using the model as students. I am also interested in hearing whether and how you have continued using it.

I want to meet with 6 to 8 people who graduated from CCS between 1976, when the model was starting to be developed, and up to the present. Each person's story will be deeply personal and distinctive but taken together, the stories will contribute perspectives to the larger story that can be told about the model. I am hoping the opportunity to talk about and reflect on your experiences will not only contribute to scholarship about theological reflection but also be of personal benefit to you.

I have an information sheet, which covers a number of questions that you may have. If you agree to take part in the research there will also be a consent form to be signed. These documents will be available for you to read at the DUCC Gathering in advance of the focus group.

I earnestly hope you will consider saying "yes" to this request. The perspectives of past and present students are essential to narrating the full story of this important model. If you have any questions, I would be happy to discuss this proposal with you further. Please let me know if you are interested in participating either by e-mail at loristewart@hagerman.ca or in person when we see each other at the event.

Thank you for considering this request.

This reflection paper is a way for you to begin thinking about your experience with the CCS Action/Reflection Model (spiral) and to perhaps provide some jumping off points for the interview/storytelling to follow. It is also a way to situate this research in the model itself. This paper will form part of the research data.

There is no set length for this reflection paper. It can be as long as it needs to be for you to reflect on your experience. 5 -8 handwritten pages would be ample to use the model effectively; however, you may want to write more or less. I would like you to do it and return it to me prior to the interview I do with you.

I have outlined suggested questions as starting points for reflection for each quadrant of the model. It isn't necessary to respond to all of the questions in each section, nor do you need to feel restricted to answering only these questions. Feel free to interpret the questions however seems best for you. I am interested in your perspective on what is most important to you about how the model works.

You need not restrict yourself to the conventional starting point (CE) either. Consider starting with whichever quadrant on the spiral that seems to make most sense to you. For example, you might want to explore the theory behind the model (AC) and then move to the ways in which you tested these understandings (AE) in the creation or use of the model, etc.

Concrete Experience (CE)
 • Identify your experience of developing or using the CCS Action-Reflection Model with students while on staff at CCS.
 • Describe how you were introduced to the model if you came to CCS after it was in use.

Reflective Observation (RO)
 • What happened for students when they learned and used the model?
 • What was helpful for them? What were their struggles? Why?
 • What were the feelings or emotions you experienced teaching/testing/learning this model?
 • What were the values/beliefs/assumptions/hopes that were affirmed, confirmed, challenged, or unsettled?

Abstract Conceptualization (AC)
 • What do you see as the theological and educational underpinnings of the CCS Action/Reflection Model?
 • What is your understanding of how the model merges education and theology?
 • What is the place of reflection in learning/theologizing?
 • What theory contributed to your understanding of the importance of this model? Did it convince you of the need for an Action/Reflection model in theological education?
 • What were the influences in education/theology/society at the time that persuaded/guided you to develop and/or use an Action/Reflection model?

Active Experimentation (AE)
 • In what ways did you test these understandings?
 • What were the implications for further action?
 • What did you have to adapt or modify to move ahead?
 • Name the blocks and supports for new action.

Interview Guide for "Once Upon a Spiral"

This represents a compilation of questions asked of staff and one student in interviews.

Interviewer: <u>Lori Stewart</u>   **Participant** _____

Date _____ **Track No.** _____ **Location** _____

Introduction
Purpose of the research: *To understand themes of lived experience of the CCS Action/Reflection model from the participant's own perspective.*

Could you start by telling me your name and physical location? What are you working on/at just now? How would you describe your life's work?
_____

Concrete Experience/Reflective Observation:
Tell about your first association with CCS. Did you come as a student? When? How long were you there? When did you graduate?

Did you work there? How long?

Were you ever a resource person for Core or a Learning Circle?
_____

For someone coming as staff after having been a student:
What about the program did you find substantially different from when you were a student?

Tell me about your first memories of learning the Action-Reflection model.

Tell about your experience of reflection during the first year.
_____

Did you engage in reflection? How did you feel about reflecting yourself?

What words, images, feelings emerge for you when you think about the process of reflection?

Describe what the model was like then. How did you experience the model changing?

Was there anything going on within yourself or with other students that might have pointed to a need for something concrete to aid their reflection?

How did you contribute to the development of this model?

You say in your reflection paper that _____. Tell me about that.

Staff relating to students
Can you tell me about your first memory of introducing this model to students?

What were some of the innovative methods you used or saw others using?

What kinds of responses did you get from students? What kind of feedback did you give students?

Were there particular requirements or assignments about reflecting in Core or field?

What did you observe happening in students when they were able to reflect on their experience and act on their reflections?

In what ways did you perceive the model contributing to student learning?

What about it was difficult for students?
_____

Abstract Conceptualization:
What does "reflection" mean to you?

Describe, in your own words, what the CCS Action-Reflection Model is.

How would you say the Action-Reflection model aligned with CCS priorities?

Your written reflection says something about the influence of _____.
Could you say more about that influence? Were there other influences that stand out?

How would you sum up the spiral's value to you? How would you say it has contributed to CCS and its students?

How was new theology created in the reflection process—by students or students and staff together?
_____

Active Experimentation:
Have you used the spiral outside of CCS?

Was it introduced intentionally or did it emerge intuitively?

How has it been received?

Do you think it would it be worth sharing more broadly?   Do you think it would it be worth sharing with other theological schools?

What, for you, is the most important message that the narrative about the spiral I'm constructing should present?

Is there anything else you'd like to add, or to ask me about my research?

<u>Thank you</u>

1. Do a drawing of the CCS Action-Reflection Model/Spiral as you would if you were explaining/teaching it to someone who has never heard of it.[*]

2. What are your memories of learning the Action/Reflection Model/spiral as a student?

3. What were the expectations about doing reflection when you were a student? How often? Did that involve the model?

4. What words/images/feelings do you associate with this model?

5. Did this model help you? In what ways?

6. Did you experience any difficulties using it? What were the problems?

7. Do you still use it? In what ways?

8. Tell about a time when it was introduced effectively in your practice and why
    a) you initiated it
    b) it was successful.

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[*] Question 1 was omitted from the second Focus Group

Timeline of participant involvement and events relating to the Action/Reflection Model at the Centre for Christian Studies

YEAR	Staff and Students	CCS and Action/Reflection model Events
1973		New program design approved
1974	Helene Moussa joins Academic Staff at CCS. She is a sociologist, originally from Ethiopia, worked at the UN Church Centre in New York before coming to Toronto Anne Bishop is a student for one yr (to 1975) Wendy Hunt comes as student (to 1976)	New program implemented by Helene Reflection on learning introduced Freire's praxis, Kolb & Fry Experiential Learning model introduced as theory At the end of the year a small group in Core come up with a spiral diagram using theory they learned Anne Bishop took the spiral created in the last session of Core in her own direction into CUSO and social justice work (see Appendix A.12)
1975	Bonnie is a student (to 1977). Later commissioned as a diaconal minister, served in team ministry, and now in solo congregational ministry. Wendy Hunt in her second year	Helene came across Solberg's work and tried it out in Core. (see Appendix A.2)
1976	Wendy Hunt is grad assistant co-leading Core with Helene Bonnie is in her second year	People came with a social justice interest and proposed a social ministry Core which was implemented
1977	Ann Naylor comes as student (to 1979) Gwyn Griffith comes to do her field placement from OISE with Helene (to 1978). Gwyn is a social worker who also worked in an administrative position with the YWCA.	
1978	Shelley Finson on staff as Coordinator of Field Education (to 1985) Gwyn Griffith on staff (PT Core to 1979) Ann Naylor in second year	
1980	Gwyn Griffith on Academic Staff (to 1982)	Diagram of Action/Reflection model created by Helene and Gwyn (Appendix A.3)
1981	Jude comes as a student (to 1983). Later commissioned as a diaconal minister, served in team ministry, and now in refugee resettlement.	
1982	Gwyn Griffith becomes Principal (to 1991) Kay Heuer (graduate 1968) on Academic Staff (to 1998) is a diaconal minister. Had been introduced to the model as a Core resource person. Jude in second year	Revisions proposed (Appendix A.4)

1983	Judith comes as student (to 1985). Became a diaconal minister whose work was primarily in chaplaincy with low-income people. Now retired.	Revisions made and a new diagram of the Action/Reflection model created (Appendix A.5)
1985	Wendy Hunt on Academic staff (to 1998) after being associated with CCS as a student and grad assistant. Lori Stewart comes as student (to 1987)	Other versions of the model are created (see Appendix A.5 to A.10)
1988	Sherri McConnell comes as student (to 1991)	
1993		Regional Program introduced
1995	Wendy Hunt becomes Coordinator (replacing Principal to 1998)	
1996	Betty Marlin joins Academic Staff in Toronto and continues after move (to 2000)	
1997		Residential program phased out
1998	(Kay Heuer and Wendy Hunt resign from Academic Staff) Ted Dodd joins Academic Staff (to present). Past CCS field education supervisor. Ordained minister, called to diaconal, commissioned 2003. Worked for Conference of UCC in Youth Ministry, and in pastoral charges.	CCS move to Winnipeg
1999	Ann Naylor (graduate 1979) comes on staff (to present). Learned model as a student. Worked for General Council of UCC in area of Education and Students. Has been a CCS resource person. Lilith comes as student (to 2004). Commissioned as a diaconal minister, has served in team ministry.	Changes made to the Action/Reflection model around this time (see Appendix A.11
2000	Sarah comes as student (to 2003). Commissioned as a diaconal minister and now in solo congregational ministry. Krista comes as student (to 2008). Commissioned as a diaconal minister and now in Presbytery Youth Ministry.	
2002	Sophia comes as student (to 2007). Commissioned as a diaconal minister and now in solo congregational ministry.	
2007	Sherri McConnell (graduate 1991) joins the Academic Staff (to 2010). Learned models as a student. Has been a diaconal mentor and resource to planning teams. A diaconal minister who has served in social ministry and counselling contexts.	

Centre for Christian Studies
Leadership Development Module

Week 1: Monday afternoon
Introduction to Learning Styles and LSI Inventory

Purpose:
* to increase our understanding about how people learn

Goals:
* to explore how we see our own style of learning in order
  to become more self-aware
* to recognize other individuals' preferred learning styles
* to explore some theory around different styles of learning and problem-solving

Handouts:
* Learning Style Profile Tool *(mailed)*
* Grasha-Riechmann Student Learning Style Scales *(for further reading)*

Agenda

2:00	5	**Gathering Song**
2:05	5	**Journalling**

* individually,
  * use this time for reflection and preparation for the session
  * a suggested focus that might inform your journalling could be:
    * what was an enjoyable experience of learning that I remember from my childhood?
    * as an adult, what has been a recent memorable occasion for learning?

2:10	5	**Introduction and Agenda Review**
2:15	15	**Play Piles**

* 3 sub-groups gathered around the play pile you feel drawn to:
  * use what you find in whatever ways you wish
    * Lego
    * modeling clay
    * rhythm instruments

2:30 **De-briefing from the experience**

10   • individually, in written reflection
* what were you feeling or thinking as the instructions were being given?
* what drew you to the pile you chose?
* what did you observe others doing? were you aware of other people's responses? how quickly they did or did not move in? whether they held back?
* what were you feeling during the process?
* were there tensions for you?
* what did you observe?
* what were you aware of in others?

10   • did your response in this experience feel typical for you?
    • whole group discussion
* what are the commonalities/differences?

2:50 **Learning Style Inventory**

25   • in whole group,
* share theory around LSI

3:15	15	**Break**
3:30	5	**Gathering Song**

3:35 **Learning Styles Inventory - continued**
    20   ▸   in whole group,
              ▸   review LSI inventories, complete the scoring
              ▸   plot people on graph on chalk board
              ▸   review "types" as *some* common approaches to learning

3:55   15   •   in triads,
              ▸   discuss:
                    ♦   any surprises?
                    ♦   do any of these descriptors fit for you?

4:10   10   •   in whole group,
              ▸   discuss:
                    ♦   what would your first response be if.....?
                    ♦   can you think of someone you know whose preferred style is....?

4:20   25   **Worship**
        •   Song: We are Marching (Siyahamba)
        •   Bible passed from hand to hand
            May your story be honoured, *N.*
            May the story of justice and compassion be heard.
            May there be faithful connections.
        •   Bread passed from hand to hand
            Bread for the journey, *N.*
        •   The cup passed from hand to hand
            May your cup always overflow, *N.*
        •   Bowl and towel
            You are called to service and called to love, *N.*
        •   Prayer

4:45   5   **Journalling**
        •   What did this afternoon reveal/confirm about my awareness of my approach to learning?
        •   Where might I push myself to grow?

4:50	5	**Evaluation**
4:55	5	**Announcements**
5:00		**Closing Song**

Page 2 Agenda

Centre for Christian Studies
Leadership Development Module

Process for Sharing the Spiral Reflection

Introduction
2 minutes

The presenter may request an opening time of prayer, centering, silence, etc.

Sharing of Spiral
5 minutes

The presenter highlights the situation used for the concrete experience of this reflection and reviews the comments they have made in each section of the reflection. The rest of the group makes a note of questions for clarification and records observations and comments, affirmations and challenges.

Clarification
2 - 3 minutes

The rest of the group has an opportunity to ask questions of clarification and the presenter responds briefly to provide additional information.

Response
10 - 13 minutes

Each person in the group offers observations and comments, affirmations and challenges, working around the spiral. These may include theological images, biblical stories, social analysis, and possibilities for action. The speaker holds the spiral rock or another symbolic object and the rest of the group remains silent. The presenter may want to take notes during this time.

Presenter Responds
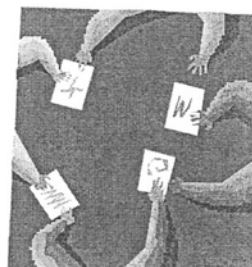2 minutes

The presenter holds the spiral rock/symbolic object and offers response to the observations and insights that have been shared.

Moving on
Check that everyone is ready to move on.

Total time 25 minutes per person.

3. MAJOR ASSIGNMENT (Total: 10 - 16 pages; due Aug. 20)

During the Leadership Development Module, we explore a number of topics related to ministry. You will be asked to choose one of the areas covered and identify a question, concern or issue that interests or intrigues you, and develop a paper using the following outline:

A. Concrete Experience (1-2 pages)
- Identify what sparks your interest in this topic and what makes it an important issue in ministry. Explore personal stories and experiences that relate to the topic.

B. Reflective Observation (1-2 pages)
- Reflect on the topic you have chosen. What are some of the feelings and emotions associated with this topic? What images come to mind when you think about this topic?

C. Abstract Conceptualization (6-9 pages, see below)
  a) Use outside sources to investigate the topic. (2-3 pages)
- A good place to start is with the Leadership Development Module readings related to your topic. Research at least two authors (at least one contemporary one) and analyze their approach:
  - What do you know about the social location of the authors?
  - What biases and world views do the authors hold?
  - Compare these to your own biases
  - From what perspective do each of the author's write (eg. liberative, conservative, liberal...)
  - Comment on the social analysis inherent in these readings (whose experience is used to develop the theory/theology? Whose voices are missing in these sources? What has power? Who is vulnerable?, etc.)
  - Summarize the key points made by these authors
  - With which key points do you agree and why? With which key points do you disagree and why?

  b) Investigate theological and doctrinal issues. (2-3 pages)
- Refer to:
  - the creeds
  - official doctrinal statements
  - theological stances related to policy statements of your denomination
  - ecumenical statements
- Compare and contrast the doctrinal writings and the operative theology of your denomination and your own theology related to this topic.

  c) Investigate biblical sources. (2-3 pages)
- What are some of the biblical connections with your topic (stories/themes/motifs, etc.)? Using resources like biblical dictionaries, commentaries and concordances explore one or two stories, images, or themes. What insights or resources do these sources offer?

D. Active Experimentation (2-3 pages)
- How will you integrate and share your learnings/convictions about this topic in a ministry context? Design something practical:
  - Examples:Develop an educational design for a workshop, a bible study or a committee meeting or design a liturgy such as a sermon or worship service that reflects your thesis and your learnings.
- Include a description of your constituency, purpose and goal statements, and an analysis of your choices.

The assignments are due Aug. 20

The assignments will be returned with comments and marked either complete or there will be a request for further work. What we are looking for in the assignments are:
- indication of a good grasp of the content
- an ability to research, investigate, comprehend and critically assess outside readings and scholarship
- an ability to discern the theological and doctrinal implications and of your topic
- an ability to do biblical exegetical investigation
- indication of ability to integrate theory with practice
- indication of openness to new learnings and personal risk
- legibility, cohesion and comprehension
- ability to synthesize

Credit for the course and continuing in the diploma program cannot be granted until the papers are satisfactorily completed.