Fostering Self-Authorship in the Student Conduct Environment
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ABSTRACT

The Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) is a framework for promoting self-authorship. Self-authorship is a holistic development theory that employs three dimensions (epistemological, intrapersonal, interpersonal). The LPM can be tailored to a variety of academic tasks, including course design and curriculum development. The model has also been used in co-curricular settings to design community-standards programs, internship programs, and to improve academic advising.

An exhaustive review of the literature on one particular co-curricular setting, the student conduct office, revealed studies about the conduct process and student outcomes achieved through that process but no research on student conduct and self-authorship. I explored how the principles of the LPM are evident in student conduct environments where learning is occurring. The sample consisted of student conduct environments at three institutions where students involved in the conduct process achieve learning outcomes that exceed the learning outcomes achieved by like students at other institutions based on a national quantitative assessment (NASCAP). I spent three days on each campus, observing office operations that included 21 conduct hearings. I interviewed every hearing officer in the three student conduct offices (n=8).

I found that the principles of the LPM were evident in these environments. Hearing officers created conditions for learning and development to occur. Specifically hearing officers’ engaged in four key behaviors that support the principles of the LPM. They created a connection with the student, sought to understand the conduct incident, provided encouragement, and promoted learning and autonomy. Hearing officers purposefully built a welcoming environment in order to solicit information that would enable them to understand students’ lived experiences and developmental capacities. They partnered with students to create expectations for future behavior that encouraged student autonomy and accountability. These actions by hearing officers created conditions intentionally to promote learning and development. The findings provide tangible strategies that can be used in the student conduct process to promote self-authorship.
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Chapter One
Introduction

A college degree has become as important to career success as the high-school diploma was 100 years ago (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012). The increased importance of a postsecondary degree has led 75% of high-school graduates to seek postsecondary education (AAC&U, 2012). This growing importance is evidenced by the fact that enrollment of undergraduates increased from 15.9 million to 21 million between 2001 and 2011 (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). During the next five years, the number of undergraduate students in the United States will continue to exceed 20,000,000 (Delbanco, 2012). These trends are integral to achieving the president’s goal for the U.S. to have the largest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020 (www.whitehouse.gov).

A postsecondary degree is not only a stepping-stone to the job market (AAC&U, 2002); it is also a requirement for the 30 fastest growing occupations in the U.S. (www.whitehouse.gov). A college education should provide graduates with the skills most sought by today’s employers. Yet while pursuing a college education to secure a well-paying job is important to the student (AAC&U, 2010), preparing students for meaningful work and life is equally as critical (Bok, 2006). Regardless of field of study, college graduates need skills to “adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources, and continue to learn throughout their lives” (AAC&U, 2002, p. xi).

A recent study of employers indicates that the most important skills for today’s graduates are not associated with job-specific skills, which can be taught on the job (AAC&U, 2013). Rather, employers want postsecondary institutions to produce competent people with strong cognitive and interpersonal skills (Bowen, 1997), including communication skills, the ability to manage multiple priorities, and the capacity to work with diverse others (Fischer, 2013). Public policy makers and employers, then, are calling on postsecondary institutions to prepare graduates for life as productive citizens (Bok, 2006).

Productive citizens are capable of critical thinking, possess a willingness to consider experiences from multiple perspectives, and have a sense of ethical responsibility (Delbanco, 2012). Educators on college and university campuses who are committed to producing productive citizens create high-quality curricular and co-curricular experiences (Kuh, Kinzie,
Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). For example, educators use classroom experiences to foster the development of students’ cognitive skills and ability to learn. To promote such skills, faculty members have started to create impactful experiences through intentional design that foregrounds student learning (Tagg, 2003); this shift in pedagogical practices promotes critical thinking in the classroom (Fink, 2013). In addition to the importance of developing critical thinking, student-faculty relationships also positively impact interpersonal skill development, particularly when faculty members discuss their own academic passions and develop more informal relationships with students (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Consequently, educators are paying more attention to the quantity and quality of interactions that they have with students.

The co-curricular environment also positively contributes to the development of skills that employers seek in graduates. To develop productive citizens beyond the classroom, professionals are implementing programs such as first-year seminars, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, exposure to diversity, service-learning opportunities, study abroad, and capstone experiences (AAC&U, 2007) that positively contribute to student engagement, persistence, and graduation (Kuh, 2009). Learning environments that integrate cognitive skills within a community where students can learn about themselves and others helps students develop the skills and competencies required to address modern challenges (Kuh, 2009).

All of these high-impact practices lead to skill development (Kuh et. al., 2010). For example, service-learning experiences provide students the opportunity to understand their influence on a community and to appreciate the importance of engaged citizenship (Einfield & Collins, 2008) and broader social issues (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Ireland, Niehaus, & Skendall, 2012). Participation in structured activities that allow students to build relationships with peers from varied backgrounds leads to increased intrapersonal awareness and the skills necessary to live and work in a diverse society (Bergerson & Huftalin, 2011). Living-learning communities that include a peer-leadership component increase cognitive skills, content knowledge in a discipline, and leadership skills that help students integrate their academic learning with interpersonal skills to prepare them for professional and civic lives after graduation (Micari, Gould, & Lainez, 2010). The most successful educators capitalize on curricular and co-curricular environments that promote the development of cognitive, interpersonal, and personal skills (Kuh et. al. 2010).
Self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; 2009) is a theory that integrates all these developmental considerations by connecting cognitive and learning skills; interpersonal skills; and the importance of developing values, ethics, and a strong sense of self. Cognitive and learning skills, called epistemological development, focus on how students learn and how their beliefs about the origin of knowledge and their understanding of their role in knowledge creation evolve over time (Baxter Magolda, 2001; 2009). Intrapersonal development describes how students understand their own identity, while interpersonal development deals with how students understand and identify themselves in relationship to and with others (Baxter Magolda, 2001; 2009). These three intersecting areas of development are the dimensions of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001 & 2009; Kegan, 1982).

The process of holistic development employs the three dimensions (epistemological, intrapersonal, interpersonal). The self-authorship process assumes that learning and development are contextual and continuously under revision (Boes, Baxter Magolda, & Buckley, 2010). The process consists of movement from reliance on external authorities (Following External Formulas) through a transition phase (the Crossroad) to self-authorship (Trusting the Internal Voice, Building an Internal Foundation, and Securing Internal Commitments). Each of the developmental stages of self-authorship (Following External Formulas, the Crossroads, and ultimately Self-Authorship) addresses development across the epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions (Baxter Magolda, 2001 & 2009).

In self-authorship, identity (intrapersonal) and epistemological beliefs are linked to the environment and relationships with others (interpersonal), and all influence the meaning-making process (Boes, Baxter Magolda, & Buckley, 2010). This model of self-authorship is flexible so that the theoretical concepts can be applied to a variety of contexts. That flexibility is reflected in The Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) that operationalizes self-authorship into strategies for educators (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

The LPM (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) can be used to design environments that address the conditions to promote self-authorship. The model consists of three assumptions that are part of a learning partnership in each developmental dimension of self-authorship (epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal) and three principles that educators enact in the learning partnership (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).
The first assumption, important for epistemological complexity, is that the learning environment conveys the notion that knowledge is complex and socially constructed (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). The second assumption, necessary for intrapersonal complexity, is that self is central to knowledge construction. The final assumption, that authority and expertise are shared in the mutual construction of knowledge, encourages interpersonal complexity by stressing the importance of interdependent relationships with others as equal partners (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). The assumptions describe the expectations for development across the three dimensions of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

Building on basic concepts of challenge and support, educators can intentionally use the three principles to create environments where self-authorship can flourish (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). The first principle, validating learners’ capacity to know, supports epistemological development by allowing students to feel free to share ideas and to feel respected in their beliefs. The second principle, situating learning in learners’ experiences, highlights the importance of allowing students to use their knowledge and experience as a platform for further learning. The third principle, mutually constructing meaning, addresses interpersonal complexity where the importance of connection and interdependency with others is evident (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Educators implement the principles to join students on their developmental journey by providing challenge and support to bridge the developmental gap (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004); therefore, these three principles form the crux of my study.

The LPM is a practical framework for promoting self-authorship that can be tailored to a variety of academic and co-curricular environments (Baxter Magolda, 2004). Indeed, administrators in an array of campus environments have measured conditions that promote self-authorship. There are several examples where the LPM has been applied to the classroom (Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Barber & King, 2014).

For instance, educators used the LPM to design a writing curriculum (Haynes, 2004). By engaging in writing as an intellectual, emotional, and social process, students not only write better but report development in dimensions of self-authorship (Haynes, 2004). Similarly, in a semester-long diversity course using the LPM, students were encouraged to develop a self-authored multicultural lens (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004). The LPM principles and assumptions led to a classroom culture that provided the emotional support students require to stretch their cognitive perspectives and self-image of diversity. The intrapersonal reflection and support from others
made the difficult and often emotional realizations about identity more readily achieved (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004).

A multi-institutional study using the LPM in classroom settings (the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education) was designed to investigate learning outcomes from a liberal education (King, Magolda, Barber, Brown, & Lindsay, 2009). Focused on students’ experiences that contribute to the development of self-authorship, the findings revealed four major categories that promote self-authorship across varied times, places, and environments. These developmentally transformative moments took place inside and outside of the classroom. One recommendation from this study advocates for a developmental curriculum that is course-based and is also linked to co-curricular experiences. Also important to note: conditions that promote cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal growth are not tied to specific activities as much as to characteristics of the environment that created conditions for development (King, Magolda, Barber, Brown, & Lindsay, 2009). That is, characteristics of the curricular and co-curricular environment can create conditions for self-authorship to flourish.

The LPM has also been successfully used in co-curricular settings (Cardone, Turton, Olson, & Baxter Magolda, 2013; Egert & Healy, 2004; Pizzolato, 2008). For example, the urban leadership intern program (ULIP) at one institution encouraged students to become active citizens and professionals through their internships in a variety of disciplines in urban cities (Egart & Healy, 2004). The ULIP uses relationships created with supervisors, reflection activities, and the challenges presented in internships to blend the principles of challenge and support while focusing on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and epistemological development (Egart & Healy, 2004). The LPM also has been used to transform new student orientation and a leadership living-learning community (Cardone et al., 2013). The key goal of both programs was to assist students in authoring their own lives and their individual student experience. Similarly, using the LPM to structure advising (Pizzolato, 2008) has helped students navigate the critical decisions that shape their academic plans of study.

Finally, the LPM has been used with peer groups to co-create a community-standards model (CSM) in a residence hall that emphasized civility, responsibility, and accountability (Piper & Buckley, 2004). The CSM was mutually created by residents and described acceptable community standards as well as accountability measures for those who did not adhere to the standards. This process of co-creation required students to grow interpersonally and
intrapersonally as they struggled to work with peers and navigate their internal beliefs about community and accountability (Piper & Buckley, 2004). Collectively, these studies suggest that the LPM is a practical framework for promoting self-authorship that can be tailored to a variety of academic and co-curricular environments (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

One important co-curricular environment that has not been explored using the LPM is the campus disciplinary system, referred to herein as the student conduct environment. The student conduct process provides student-affairs staff members opportunities to interact and reflect with students about their behavior and their relationships with others. As Bickel (2008) suggests, “The true value of any student-conduct [sic] process is to help create a reasonably safe and academically sound learning environment” (p. 218). The purpose of student conduct work is to facilitate growth and development while protecting the campus community (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). While the student conduct environment is often portrayed as one ripe to promote learning and development (Bickel, 2008; Waryold & Lancaster, 2008), the writing that has been published on student conduct is primarily descriptive.

For example, the literature addresses broad areas of student conduct, including administration, assessment, characteristics of offenders, the history of the profession, mediation, sanctioning, student development, and training (Chassey, 2009; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). These categories have been expanded to include topics like the role and functions of student-conduct officers (Bickel, 2008; Lancaster & Waryold, 2008), the implications of Title IX on the student conduct process (Stimpson, 2009), academic misconduct case management (Baker, 2008), and safety considerations for staff working in student conduct (Rush, White, Whitsel, Cooper, & Hight, 2010). In addition, some literature advocates for codes of conduct that de-emphasize legalisms and highlight the administrative function and educational purpose of the conduct system (Stoner, 2008). In contrast, other literature, (e.g., Bennett, 2009; Lowery, 2008,) reminds conduct officers of the important legal landscape surrounding student conduct work, both historically and currently.

While there is literature on the process associated with student conduct administration (Lancaster, 2012; Lancaster & Waryold, 2008; Stoner, 2008), there are few studies that inform conduct officers about how their work with students can promote learning. Conduct officers “should strive to create students who become empowered and capable of using constructive criticism, can know themselves better, and can perpetually revisit the path of their own
development” (Lake, 2009, p. 10). Essentially, scholars suggest that student learning and developmental needs should trump behavioral management in the conduct process. This philosophy has played out in the profession in several ways. For example, there is a growing approach to student conduct in which practitioners engage in alternate-dispute-resolution processes (Karp, 2013; Lancaster, 2006; Shrage & Giacomini, 2009). Alternative-dispute-resolution practices focus on how procedural needs and student learning and development needs can be integrated into the student conduct process. This integration ensures that student conduct professionals can capitalize on the disequilibrium and discomfort created when students violate policy. It also focuses on matters of social justice (Lopez-Phillips & Trageser, 2008) and student-development theory (Zdziarski & Wood, 2008) to ensure that student learning and development are central to the conduct process. From this perspective, the student-conduct environment is one where educators may profoundly influence student development (Taylor & Varner, 2009).

While alternate-dispute-resolution practices offer promise for promoting learning and developmental outcomes, the most dominant form of addressing student misconduct remains one-on-one conduct hearings (Zdziarski & Wood, 2008). Even in the dominant form of student misconduct resolution, however, student conduct educators have an opportunity to engage students in learning (Lake, 2009). So while “there will always be a need for rules, processes, and hearings (at least in a sense), and sanctions, … the paradigms of legalistic process should not drive an entire system of educational management” (Lake, 2009, p. 20). The policies and processes used by conduct professionals must emphasize learning and identify ways to measure the learning that is occurring through those processes.

Quantitative studies have shown that the ways in which student conduct policies and procedures are written and enacted are strongly connected to students’ reported learning and perceptions of the conduct office (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). For example, the National Assessment of Student Conduct Adjudication Processes project (NASCAP) (Jamosik & Stimpson, 2007) was designed to examine the outcomes associated with the student conduct process. One element of NASCAP, the Student Conduct Adjudication Processes Questionnaire (SCAPQ) provides a psychometrically sound quantitative measure of student self-reported learning as a result of conduct meetings. The SCAPQ has been
administered for five years at a variety of institutions. The instrument yields quantitative measures of learning associated with the student conduct process.

My study is a qualitative examination of how the student conduct environment can be viewed as a learning environment. My focus was to conduct an analysis of how learning happens in the disciplinary processes (Swinton, 2008) at institutions that seem to encourage learning as reflected in their scores on the SCAPQ over time. My study contributed to the literature on student conduct in two important ways. First, I studied the conduct environment through the LPM lens, specifically the three principles, seeking to identify how the conduct process can promote learning. Second, I employed qualitative techniques (observations and interviews) to collect and analyze data, methodological approaches that have not been employed extensively when exploring the student conduct environment.

Statement of the Problem

To recap, U.S. colleges and universities enroll more than 20,000,000 college students (Delbanco, 2012; U.S Department of Education, 2013) and the country’s leaders hope to produce more graduates than any other nation (www.whitehouse.gov). Employers indicate that those graduates require more than content knowledge to be successful in today’s economy; they need critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills (AAC&U, 2002; AAC&U, 2013; Fischer, 2013). Consequently, a central goal of higher education is to produce citizens with cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills (AAC&U, 2002; Bowen, 1997) so they are better equipped to evolve in a dynamic workplace (Fischer, 2013) and have a rich life as a productive citizen (AAC&U, 2012; AAC&U, 2013; Bok, 2006). Productive citizens are capable of critical thinking, willing to consider experiences from diverse perspectives, and have a sense of ethical responsibility (Delbanco, 2012).

One theory that integrates the importance of cognitive skills with interpersonal and intrapersonal skills is self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2004). Self-authorship is based on the assumption that development is highly contextualized, so it provides flexibility to educators to apply the theoretical concepts to a variety of environments. Additionally, it has been operationalized in the LPM, (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004), a model with three assumptions (knowledge is complex/social, self is central to knowledge, and shared authority/expertise) and three principles (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) for educators to use in creating learning environments that promote self-authorship.
The LPM has been used to design curricular environments in classes that address writing, diversity, and holistic liberal-education curriculums (Barber, Brown, & Lindsay, 2009; Haynes, 2004; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). It has also been used to design co-curricular programs in areas such as residence life, leadership development programs, internship experiences, and academic advising (Cardone, Turton, Olson, & Baxter Magolda, 2013; Egert & Healy, 2004; Pizzolato, 2008; Piper & Buckley, 2004). These studies suggest that the LPM is a practical framework for promoting self-authorship that can be tailored to a variety of campus environments (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

One co-curricular program that has the potential to impact learning in a powerful way is the student conduct environment. The literature on student learning in the context of student conduct is limited (Janosik & Stimpson 2009; King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015) and primarily descriptive. The SCAPQ (Janosik & Stimpson, 2007) provides quantitative measures of learning in the student conduct process (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). Absent in the body of literature, however, are qualitative studies that examine how the student conduct environment depicts the elements of a learning environment (Howell, 2005). The problem that I will explore in this study is how the principles of the LPM are evident in the student conduct environment.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine how the principles of the LPM conceptual framework are reflected in student conduct environments where, based on a national assessment of student conduct systems, student learning appears to be occurring. The LPM (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) consists of three assumptions (knowledge is social/complex, self is central to knowledge, and authority/expertise is shared) and three principles (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) that educators have used to create learning environments that promote self-authorship. For this study, I presumed that if educators enact the principles then the assumptions are likely present in the environment. The student conduct environment was defined as the policies, procedures, and hearing process used by an institution (Lowery, 2006; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015).

The sample consisted of student conduct staff at three institutions that, based on NASCAP data, have demonstrated that their students achieve learning outcomes that exceed the learning outcomes achieved by students at other NASCAP campuses. I collected data by
observing hearings and office operations and interviewing hearing officers in the student conduct environments.

**Research Question**

My study was designed to address the following overarching research question and related sub-questions:

1. How are the principles in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   a. How is the Validating Capacity principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   b. How is the Situating Learning principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   c. How is the Mutual Meaning principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?

**Significance of the Study**

The study was significant for practice, future research, and policy. To start, it was useful for administrators on campus who are responsible for campus discipline (i.e., student conduct administrators, residence-life administrators, and deans of students). My results provided information on how hearing officers and support staff incorporate the principles of the LPM in daily practice. Discipline officers might use the findings to review the elements of their own conduct environments.

Chief student-affairs officers who may serve as appellate officers or supervise chief conduct officers may also find my findings useful as they oversee campus disciplinary systems. The findings provided information on how the LPM principles were reflected in the student conduct environment. These data may be helpful in reviewing the extent to which institutional practices regarding the student conduct process are promoting learning and development.

The study also served as a springboard for future research. I focused on how the LPM’s principles were reflected in the student conduct environment by observing office procedures and hearings. A future study might entail an in-depth investigation of the student experience to
determine if students believe they learned from their student conduct meeting. Such a study would complement my study and provide deeper understanding into the impact of the student conduct process on student learning and self-authorship.

Additionally, I looked at institutions where student learning as a consequence of the conduct hearing process exceeded national norms. A follow-up study could focus on institutions that have consistently yielded low student-learning scores on the NASCAP. Such a study would provide an alternative perspective on the issue of learning in the conduct process. In a parallel vein, future research could focus on institutions that have significantly improved their NASCAP scores over time; such work might provide insight into how changing or adjusting particular practices may impact student learning.

Finally, additional research could explore what, if any, role those outside of the student-conduct environment (i.e., parents, other campus stakeholders, and non-offending students) play in the conduct process to determine if external influences have any impact on the learning that occurs for students in the conduct environment. Such work would yield data from players external to the student-conduct environment and would complement my study, which focused on an internal view of that environment.

The findings of my study also relate to policy. Policy makers at other institutions could use the findings to examine their own conduct policies with respect to promoting student learning. I also observed student conduct hearings and office operations at each institution to assess the extent that learning and development were incorporated into those procedures enacted by the staff and how that information was communicated to students. Student conduct policies and procedures serve as the first introduction to a campus student conduct process. Educators might use the information from this study to examine their own policies and procedures with respect to the LPM.

In addition to reviewing policies and procedures, I observed student conduct hearings and student conduct office operations. These observations provided information on how hearings and office practices reflected the LPM. The findings from this study may be used to shape policies and procedures related to training hearing officers and office support staff to address student learning.
Delimitations

The present study had a few delimitations that merit mention. The first two dealt with the sample. I selected three institutions as the sites for my research. There are other campuses where student-learning scores on the NASCAP were high but that were not included in my study. Additionally, many institutions in the U.S. do not participate in the NASCAP study, so there may be other institutions where learning occurs in the conduct process, but those campuses were excluded simply because they do not participate in NASCAP. Including any of these other institutions could have influenced my results in unknown ways.

The final delimitation was associated with the data-collection process. As part of my study, I conducted interviews with hearing officers. During those interviews I relied on participants being candid in their responses, and the results reflect the degree to which they were open and frank. Additionally, I spent 12 years working in a student conduct office at a large research institution; during that time I conducted hearings and supervised student conduct hearing officers. In Chapter Three I discuss my positionality in more detail; it is important to note here that my experience may have shaped the data collection and analysis processes in unforeseen ways. Despite these delimitations, my study was important because the findings revealed how the student conduct environment can be understood through the LPM. It offered a new context to examine learning and the development of self-authorship among students.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized around five chapters. The first chapter provided an introduction to the topic and the purpose of the study. The second chapter is a review of the literature relevant to the study. The third chapter details the methodological process I used to conduct my research. The fourth chapter reports the findings of the study and Chapter Five offers a discussion of these findings and their implications for future practice, research, and policy.
Chapter Two
Literature Review

I reviewed two bodies of literature that were relevant to my study. The first included studies on learning partnerships. I examined the research on the Learning Partnerships Model (LPM) by Baxter Magolda and King (2004). I also looked at studies that closely aligned with the three principles of the LPM model (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning). The LPM literature is grouped into two sub-categories: LPM principles in the curriculum and LPM principles in the co-curricular environment.

The second group of literature I reviewed involved studies that examined the student conduct environment. Much of the literature on student conduct is not relevant to my study, and many of the pieces are not research studies. I include some non-empirical pieces to demonstrate the type of literature that has been produced. I categorized the remaining student conduct literature into two groups: works on the student conduct process itself and those on outcomes associated with that process. I organized this chapter around these two bodies of literature and their respective categories.

The Learning Partnerships Model

The LPM (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) operationalizes the developmental theory of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001; 2009). It integrates important cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal development by outlining three principles (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) and three assumptions (knowledge is social/complex, self is central to knowledge, and shared authority/expertise) that educators can employ in learning environments (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). These principles and assumptions emerged from Baxter Magolda’s (2001; 2009) longitudinal research, which suggests that educators should use both challenge and support to encourage holistic development (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Educational environments are meant to transform students into productive citizens, and the LPM can help structure those environments to promote transformation and holistic development (Johnson, 2013). The LPM has been used to shape organizational structure (Mills & Strong, 2004) and faculty-development programs (Wildman, 2004); however I have focused on how the LPM has been used to shape environments for students in the curriculum and in the co-curricular environment.
LPM in the Curriculum

The LPM has been used in curricular development (Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Johnson, 2013; Olsen, Bekken, McConnell, & Walter, 2011; Rogers, Magolda, & Baxter Magolda, 2004; Swanson, 2010). It has informed the programmatic design of a teacher-preparation Master’s Program (Swanson, 2010), pharmaceutical education (Johnson, 2013), undergraduate core curriculum (Olsen et. al., 2011), a four-year writing curriculum (Haynes, 2004), an honors program (Taylor & Haynes, 2008), and a graduate education program (Rogers, Magolda, & Baxter Magolda, 2004). Specific courses around diversity education (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004) have also been crafted using the principles and assumptions of the LPM. Across multiple educational contexts and content areas, educators have used the LPM to structure curricular environments to promote student learning and development toward self-authorship (Magolda & King, 2004).

Regardless of whether educators use the LPM to create a whole curriculum or a specific course, the role of faculty members is to guide learners and to give responsibility and control of learning to the student (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Faculty members have integrated the principles and assumptions into course content (Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, 2004), into course structure (Olsen, et. al., 2011; Swanson, 2010), and into pedagogical approaches (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Haynes, 2004). In sequenced curricula, students are exposed to a variety of disciplinary content intentionally designed to move from simple to complex, requiring increasing levels of challenge and support from instructors (Olsen, et.al., 2011). Additionally, students share authority in the classroom (Swanson, 2010) and challenge their own worldviews as well as those of others (Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004).

The outcomes of these curricular environments for students include enhanced epistemological development (Olsen, et. al., 2011), greater exposure to interdisciplinary content (Haynes, 2004), and increased multicultural understanding (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004). Each curricular environment was built on the principles and assumptions of the LPM to ensure that faculty delivered a balance of challenging experiences in a supportive and reciprocal environment (Haynes, 2004; Olsen, et. al., 2011; Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, 2004). Furthermore, researchers noted these positive outcomes in two studies where there were also co-curricular components to the curriculum. These co-curricular elements were critical to the
overall success of the curriculum in promoting learning and development (Olsen, et. al., 2011; Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, 2004).

In addition to studies that used the LPM specifically to create and assess curricular efforts, other studies have supported the argument that the principles of the LPM (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) are important to student learning and development (Barber & King, 2014; Park & Millora, 2012; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Kuh, et. al., 2010; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Anger, 2010). While these studies do not directly use the LPM, they provide evidence of effective practices educators employ in curricular environments to positively impact student learning and development.

For example, validating capacity, as described in the LPM, requires educators to solicit perspectives from learners, trust their judgment, cultivate an interest in learners’ experiences, and respect their beliefs (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). The educator’s respect for the learner underlies all of these elements. In a study that examined student/faculty interactions, students who reported that their faculty members were approachable and respectful toward them had higher academic self-concepts and motivation, and they reported more enjoyable learning experiences (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010). Furthermore, inviting students to share previous experiences as a way to deepen their knowledge of current course content is a developmentally effective practice (Barber & King, 2014). This practice links closely with the LPM principle of situating learning where educators value and encourage students to use their experiences as the basis of deeper learning (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

In the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) project, Kuh et al. (2010) examined educational practices that positively influence student engagement. These researchers highlighted the importance of educators demonstrating respect for learners, and also offered significant evidence that working with and learning from peers in the classroom is an important pedagogical tool that promotes learning and development. Using reflection where students can build on their own experiences and work in partnership with peers is repeatedly mentioned as an important practice (Kuh et. al., 2010). Reflection, along with the space to process those reflections, has been linked to increased development of an ethic of care and leadership (Park & Millora, 2012). These practices align with the LPM principle of situating learning (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) because students can use reflection to deconstruct their beliefs and then use that deconstruction to create more complex belief systems (Park & Millora, 2012).
Beyond peer partnerships, student engaged with faculty members in collaborative work such as undergraduate research projects report higher levels of learning and engagement (Kuh et al., 2010). Undergraduate research projects with faculty and intentionally structured learning and feedback with peers rely on equal partnerships with other learners. These partnerships are hallmarks of the mutual meaning principle in the LPM (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). In general, studies using the LPM and those that closely align with the principles reveal that there are particular practices that educators can use in the curricular environment to positively influence student learning and development.

**LPM in the Co-Curricular Environment**

Educators have also used the LPM beyond the classroom. For example, student-affairs educators have used the LPM to craft a variety of co-curricular programs, including an urban leadership internship program (Egart & Healy, 2004), a study-abroad program (Yonkers-Talz, 2004), and a diversity-dialogue program (Quaye & Baxter Magolda, 2007). In addition to programmatic design, educators have used the LPM to structure academic advising (Pizzolato, 2006 & 2008; Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007), orientation, leadership, and residence life efforts (Cardone, et. al., 2013), as well as a community standards model (Piper & Buckley, 2004).

Student-affairs administrators interact with students in environments where those students have to navigate decisions about relationships, career choices, values, and community living; these are natural places to promote learning and development (Baxter Magolda, 2009). For example, during a semester-long internship program, educators used the LPM principles to challenge students to work, engage in service, and explore urban living (Egart & Healy, 2004). Given the innate challenge in the environment of the internship, the leaders of the program intentionally used supportive pedagogies and weekly reflection activities with students. After the program, participants reported a new way of thinking about the world, themselves, and others (Egart & Healy, 2004). This approach required student-affairs professionals to view themselves as learning partners with students (Baxter Magolda, 2009).

Similarly, in a semester-long study-abroad program, educators clearly stated that self-authorship was a goal for the immersion experience. Students reflected on their worldview and lived in community with other students and residents of El Salvador (Yonkers-Talz, 2004). During this trip and after, students reported that they were exposed to dissonance in their own views as well as the dissonant opinions of others. Students demonstrated more complex learning
and movement toward self-authorship from their experience (Yonkers-Talz, 2004). In both of these immersive experiences, the LPM helped shape the experience into a learning and developmental environment.

The LPM has also been used to create environments that foster intercultural maturity (Quaye & Baxter Magolda, 2007). Hearing others’ perspective allows for mutual meaning-making; when students can share a personal story with peers, it validates their capacity to know and situates learning in their experience (Quaye & Baxter Magolda, 2007). Other studies by Pizzolato (2006; 2008) support the importance of the principles of the LPM. In academic advising settings guided by LPM principles, students can approach their academic needs in their own context (situated in their experience) instead of learning generic skills (Pizzolato, 2006; 2008). In such instances, the outcomes include improved academic performance and demonstrated development toward self-authorship. In a variety of student-affairs environments (orientation, leadership education, residence life), students are allowed to create their own experiences and community expectations (Piper & Buckley, 2004), are exposed to multiple perspectives, and build authentic relationships (Cardone, et. al., 2013). Tailoring practice with appropriate developmental outcomes using the principles and assumptions of the LPM has resulted in student learning and development (Cardone, et. al., 2013).

Other studies have supported the notion that the principles of the LPM are important to student learning and development in the co-curricular environment (Gilbert, Banks, Houser, Rhodes, & Lees, 2014; Hall, Forrester, & Borsz, 2008; Kezar, 2010; Kuh et. al., 2005; Laughlin & Creamer, 2007; Mather, 2008). While these studies do not use the LPM principles per se, they highlight practices closely aligned with those principles that educators employ in co-curricular environments to positively impact student learning and development.

The principles of the LPM (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) are reflected in behaviors like soliciting perspectives from learners, showing interest in learner’s ideas, demonstrating respect, engaging in equal partnerships, and encouraging learners to build on existing knowledge to cultivate more complex ideas (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Educators in living-learning communities (Barber & King, 2014; Park & Millora, 2012), academic support and advising operations (Kuh et. al., 2005), student leadership programs (Hall, Forrester, & Borsz, 2008), and internship settings
(Gilbert et. al., 2014; Mather, 2008) engage in these types of educational practices that have an important impact on learning and development.

Professionals in co-curricular environments, such as living-learning communities and academic advising, engage in educationally meaningful practices (Kuh et. al., 2005). These environments are often marked by supportive faculty members who use reflection to elicit perspectives from students (Park & Millora, 2012), involve diverse peer groups to challenge and support ideas (Kuh et. al., 2005), and provide an opportunity for students to build upon experiences from one context and to achieve more complex learning and development (Barber & King, 2014). Other contexts allow for learning and development that is rooted in students’ experiences. For example, student activists who are connected with faculty members are able to learn, in a shared context, important ways to enrich their learning and development (Kezar, 2010). Similarly, student leadership roles that have reflection components and encourage developing equal partnerships with peers (Hall, Forrester, & Borsz, 2008) help ground the learning in the students’ experience.

Co-curricular environments also provide rich opportunities for educators to help students explore vocational passions (Laughlin & Creamer, 2007). Internships (Mather, 2008) and experiential-learning programs (Gilbert et. al., 2014) provide similar opportunities. In these cases, career advising is most effective when educators express confidence in students’ abilities to make career decisions relevant to their lives (Laughlin & Creamer, 2007). Educators who can guide students to build on existing expertise to explore more complex challenges validate students’ capacity to learn and enrich the meaning made from their experience (Mather, 2008). Furthermore, students report increased knowledge and skills and increased confidence in career choices when they can work collaboratively with faculty members on research projects in their areas of interest and engage in equal partnerships with those in their desired field of work (Gilbert et. al., 2014).

The Student Conduct Environment

Addressing student misconduct in educational settings is a long-standing topic for administrators in higher education (Lake, 2009; Lancaster & Waryold, 2008; Lowery, 2006). There is extensive literature in which researchers describe the evolution of student discipline in the modern university to illustrate how history informs current practice (e.g., Lake, 2009; Lancaster, 2006; Lancaster & Waryold, 2008; Schrage & Giacomini, 2009). Commentaries on
student conduct procedures (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2006; Lake, 2009; Lowery, 2006) and due process considerations are common (Bickel, 2008; Lake, 2009; Gehring, 2006; Lowery, 2006); however, while this work is important, much of it is not relevant to my study.

Other authors describe the characteristics of offenders (Cooper & Schwartz, 2007; Stimpson & Janosik, 2007; Olafson, Schraw, & Kehrwald, 2014), dispositional considerations for those working in the profession (Fischer & Maatman, 2008; Lancaster, 2006; Reif, 2010), and important legal issues (Bennett, 2009; Bickel & Lake, 1999; Gehring, 2006; Lowery, 2006; Lowery, 2008; Stimpson, 2009). Additionally, much of the empirical research is somewhat dated (e.g., Dannells, 1990; Frederickson, 1992; Janosik, 1995; Janosik, Davis, & Spencer, 1985; Janosik, Dunn, & Spencer, 1986; Kern & Rentz, 1991; Kompalla & McCarthy, 2001). The empirical research on student conduct processes and outcomes from participation in the student conduct system is limited (Swinton, 2008). Given that, I have included in this review relevant examples non-empirical literature on the student conduct process and outcomes of that process.

Process

There are empirical studies in which researchers examine various procedures in student conduct systems (Bacon & Pack, 2008; Baker, 2008; Mardis, Sullivan, & Gamm, 2013; Rush, White, Whitsel, Cooper, & Hight, 2010; Taylor, 2012; Tschepikow, Cooper, & Dean, 2010). Some studies focus on the use of varied processes (Baker; 2008; Rush, White, Whitsel, Cooper, & Hight, 2010; Taylor, 2012), while others explore the effectiveness of particular procedures (Bacon & Pack, 2008; Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007; Tschepikow, Cooper, & Dean, 2010). There are also edited books (e.g., Lancaster & Waryold, 2008; Schrage & Giacomini, 2009) that outline best practices that can be used in student conduct.

Additionally, there is a growing body of literature on the use of alternative dispute resolution practices, or restorative justice (Karp & Allena, 2004; Karp, 2012; Schrage & Giacomini, 2009). Restorative justice involves repairing harm, earning trust, and building community between those who have been harmed and those who have perpetrated the harm (Karp & Allena, 2004; Karp, 2012). A variety of practices are used in restorative justice, like mediation and conferencing circles; the practice, however, must be chosen to best achieve reparation of harm (Karp & Allena, 2004). Alternative dispute resolution processes are highlighted in the literature as best practice for resolving conflict (Karp & Allena, 2004; Karp,
This approach gives student conduct officers a spectrum of conflict resolution approaches to use that also includes traditional hearings and mediation (Shrage & Giacomini, 2009). While a promising practice, my study focused on campuses that were using traditional one-on-one meetings with students who have been accused of violating student conduct standards to resolve misconduct.

Researchers have also conducted studies that explored the extent of processes employed in student conduct systems and/or, they have described those processes. For example, researchers have examined how cases are investigated, what constitutes an investigation, and the training necessary to conduct investigations (Taylor, 2012) to ensure consistent investigatory practices. Given the idiosyncratic nature of student codes of conduct and conduct procedures, it is not surprising that there are not consistent investigatory processes. Similarly, campuses vary on the types of disciplinary matters they resolve (i.e., academic, non-academic misconduct) (Baker, 2008). While many authors tout a model code of conduct as a best practice, (Stoner, 2008; Schrage & Thompson, 2009), empirical studies (e.g., Baker, 2008; Taylor, 2012) indicate that processes vary widely across campuses.

Despite the array of approaches to their work, the majority of student conduct administrators regularly assess their processes (Tschepikow, Cooper, & Dean, 2010). Many practitioners use the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) to guide institutional student conduct assessment efforts, to identify learning and development outcomes, to improve administration, and to enhance daily practice (Tschepikow, Cooper, & Dean, 2010). While these quality assurance efforts are promising, an exhaustive review of the literature revealed only one study that detailed the processes and procedures that are most impactful on student learning and development (Bacon & Pack, 2008). In that study, a mentoring program paired student violators with a faculty/staff mentor in addition to assigning them community service. Participants built relationships that resulted in an increased sense of belonging on campus (Bacon & Pack, 2008).

Outcomes

There are several authors who argue that contemporary professional practice should be guided by student development theory (Lancaster, 2012; Taylor & Varner, 2009; Waryold & Lancaster, 2008) and increasingly, by social justice considerations (Karp, 2012; Schrage & Giacomini, 2009). All of the authors in the aforementioned literature suggest that focusing on
theory in the administration of the student conduct process results in positive developmental outcomes for students.

In 2007, Janosik and Stimpson created the NASCAP study to create instrumentation that could measure, across institutions and over time, the processes, procedures and learning outcomes of student conduct systems (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). Conduct officers could use the assessment results to make changes to processes and procedures to promote student learning and development. Further analysis of the institutions participating in the NASCAP (Stimpson & Janosik, 2015) reveals that the way in which the conduct system procedures are enacted (referred to as system efficacy) accounts for 47.2% of student learning.

NASCAP included two sources of data: the Student Conduct Administration Process Questionnaire (SCAPQ) and the Educational Sanction Outcomes Assessment Questionnaire (ESOAQ). The ESOAQ focuses on the outcomes associated with educational sanctions implemented on campus, while the SCAPQ focuses on “the assessment of the processes, procedures, and learning outcomes associated with the adjudication of a student’s conduct hearing,” (Janosik & Stimpson, 2012, pg. 1). My study used the SCAPQ scale to select the participating institutions.

Similar to the NASCAP, a study of 1,884 students conducted by King (2012) at three institutions affirmed that the most influential factor in the overall educational value gained from student conduct hearings was how favorably students rated their conduct hearing. This suggests that the process the student conduct officer employs establishes the environment for the hearing, and that environment has the greatest transformative power to promote learning and development (King, 2012). Both studies (King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015) confirm that student conduct officers have significant influence on positive student outcomes.

Results of studies on outcomes students achieve as a consequence of a conduct hearing are equivocal. In some instances, students report that when they make meaning of their conduct experiences, they increase their understanding of the process and their likelihood to refrain from future misconduct (Howell, 2005). They learn to consider consequences of their actions, how their actions impact others, and how the student conduct process works. In other cases, however, they indicate that they learn nothing from the process (Howell, 2005). Similarly, the way in which they are treated in the student conduct process is a key indicator of satisfaction with and learning from the experience (Lucas, 2009). While there is a consistent picture emerging of the
desired outcomes from the student conduct process, there is little research on the procedures that are most closely associated with achieving those outcomes (Swinton, 2008).

In summary, the LPM has been used in several higher education settings in the curriculum (e.g., Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Johnson, 2013; Olsen, et. al., 2011; Rogers, Magolda, & Baxter Magolda, 20004; Swanson, 2010). In these environments, students demonstrate greater epistemological development (Olsen, et. al., 2011) and increased understanding of cultural differences (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004). The studies using the LPM and those that closely aligned with the principles reveal that certain practices implemented in the curricular environment can positively influence student learning and development (Laughlin & Creamer, 2007; Gilbert et. al., 2014; Mather, 2008).

The LPM has also been used to structure intentional learning environments in the co-curriculum (e.g., Cardone et.al, 2013; Egart & Healy, 2004; Piper & Buckley, 2004; Pizzolato, 2006 & 2008; Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007; Quaye & Baxter Magolda, 2007; Yonkers-Talz, 2004). In these spaces, students are allowed to create their own expectations and experiences (Piper & Buckley, 2004) to deepen their understanding of how to use interactions with diverse others to enhance their development (Cardone, et. al., 2013). By tailoring practice in the co-curricular environment using the principles and assumptions of the LPM, educators can guide students to build on their expertise to explore more complex challenges (Mather, 2008). This can maximize the impact of the co-curricular environment on learning and development.

There is extensive literature on student conduct in which researchers describe how the profession’s history informs practice (e.g., Lake, 2009; Lancaster, 2006; Lancaster & Waryold, 2008; Schrage & Giacomini, 2009), reviews of appropriate student conduct procedures (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2006; Lake, 2009; Lowery, 2006), and due process considerations (Bickel, 2008; Lake, 2009; Gehring, 2006; Lowery, 2006). Also common are descriptions of offenders (Cooper & Schwartz, 2007; Stimpson & Janosik, 2007; Olafson, Schraw, & Kehrwald, 2014), guidance for professional practice (Fischer & Maatman, 2008; Lancaster, 2006; Reif, 2010), and important legal issues (Bennett, 2009; Bickel & Lake, 1999; Gehring, 2006; Lowery, 2006; Lowery, 2008; Stimpson, 2009). While helpful for practitioners, this literature does not provide insight into educational practices that have been validated as effective in promoting learning and development.
Only a few authors (Howell, 2005; Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; King, 2012; Lucas, 2009; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015) describe the outcomes the student conduct process promotes. Those outcomes include the learning students achieve from their involvement in the student conduct system. While literature describes the desired learning and development of students (Lancaster, 2012; Patton, Howard-Hamilton, & Hinton, 2006; Taylor & Varner, 2009; Waryold & Lancaster, 2008), there is little research on the procedures that most directly contribute to that learning (Swinton, 2008), and the research that has been conducted is quantitative in nature (King, 2012; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015).

An exhaustive search of the literature revealed most studies on the student conduct environment focus on the students who interact with the system (Howell, 2005; Lucas, 2009). My study expands the literature in two ways. First, I look at the role of staff in the conduct process rather than simply focusing on students. Second, I use the principles of the LPM to guide the study. The LPM is a model designed to promote student learning and development, but the ways in which that model is employed in student conduct environments have not been examined before.
Chapter Three
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine how the principles of the LPM conceptual framework are reflected in student conduct environments where, based on a national assessment of student conduct systems, student learning appears to be occurring. The LPM (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) consists of three assumptions (knowledge is social/complex, self is central to knowledge, and authority/expertise is shared) and three principles (validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning) that educators have used to create learning environments that promote self-authorship. For purposes of this study, I presumed that if educators enact the principles, then the assumptions are likely present in the environment. The student conduct environment was defined as the policies, procedures, and hearing process used by an institution (Lowery, 2006; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015).

The sample consisted of student conduct staff at three institutions that, based on NASCAP data, have demonstrated that their students achieve learning outcomes that exceed the learning outcomes achieved by students at other NASCAP campuses. Data were collected by observing hearings and office operations and conducting interviews with hearing officers in the student conduct environments.

My study was designed to address the following overarching research question and related sub-questions:

1. How are the principles in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   a. How is the Validating Capacity principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   b. How is the Situating Learning principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
   c. How is the Mutual Meaning principle of the learning partnerships model reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?
In this chapter, I review the study design, including my positionality, the sample selection process, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures. I conclude with steps taken to enhance the accuracy of the data.

**Study Design**

My study explored in depth and in person how the principles of the LPM are present in the student conduct environment. Student conduct systems are part of the campus environment and cannot be separated from the institutional context (Hammersley & Gomm, 2002). These systems employ a finite number of hearing officers and staff members who interact with students in the office setting and in conduct hearings. Since the student conduct environment is linked to the campus environment and is bound by time, place, and location (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2003), I purposefully selected three institutions (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2003) based on their success at promoting student learning as measured by the SCAPQ (Janosik & Stimpson, 2007). Students at all three institutions reported (over a three-year period of time) learning from the interaction that occurred in the student conduct process.

I collected data for my study by observing the interactions of students with staff members in the office and with conduct officers in hearings. Since my interest was to provide a rich, thick description (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2011) of how the educators in the student conduct environment promote learning partnerships, I supplemented the data I gathered from observations through follow-up interviews (Patton, 2014; Seidman, 2012) with hearing officers. I hoped that the three distinct forms of data (office observations, hearing observations, and interviews with hearing officers) might provide insight into how campuses create the context to promote learning despite their unique institutional characteristics.

**Positionality**

The integrity of qualitative inquiry requires a clear understanding of the researcher’s position with respect to the design of the study and the collection and interpretation of the data. This includes a statement of the biases, dispositions, and assumptions the researcher holds about the research undertaken (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014). It is important, therefore, that I share my experiences with student conduct and the biases and assumptions that may have influenced and/or informed my study design, data collection, and data analysis.

I hold a M.Ed. in Counselor Education and have been working full-time in student-affairs administration for 14 years. For the first 11 of those years, I worked directly in student conduct.
I held three different positions before spending the bulk of my career (8 of 11 years) as the director of the student conduct office at a large research university. I served as the chief conduct officer and was responsible for hearing cases, supervising staff, reviewing and revising policies and procedures, and training hearing officers and student members of the conduct board. I am very familiar with the student conduct environment as a result of my extensive professional experience.

My current institution participates in the NASCAP study; we were part of the group that piloted the SCAPQ and have had continuous involvement in the study since its inception. I believe that the NASCAP, over the years, shaped my understanding of student learning in the student conduct process. The data convinced me that hearing officers who focus on educational practices that promote student learning and development with students can positively impact learning. This led me to make changes in the conduct process on my campus that resulted in gains on student learning as measured by the NASCAP. My institution is not included in this study, but that experience informed my view of the student conduct process.

My extensive experience with the student conduct process may have influenced the design of the study or my analysis and interpretation of the data. I took a number of steps to track my own potential biases, including journaling, maintaining extensive field notes, and conferring with a critical friend. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the context in which I conducted the study.

**Sample Selection**

A hallmark of qualitative research methodology is purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2003). I needed two samples to conduct my study: an institutional sample and participants at each institution. I first identified the institutions that would serve as the sites for my data collection. The institutional sample was chosen based on long-term results in the NASCAP.

**The NASCAP—the SCAPQ**

To date, 51 different institutions have participated for at least one year in the assessment. In the last three years (2012-2014), 85 institutions have participated, with 17 participating for all three years. The SCAPQ has three scales (system efficacy, learning outcomes, and environmental press) and a high Chronbach alpha reliability estimate (.97) for the instrument overall (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009). The reliability of the scales is also high: system efficacy =
.89, learning outcomes = .96, and environmental press = .86 (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009). This 53-item assessment has four sections: system efficacy, learning outcomes, environmental press, and demographics of respondents. The SCAPQ’s first three sections use anchored Likert scales so that the data can produce mean scores for each item. The mean score allows administrators to compare results within the institution over time as well as to compare institutional data against a reference group (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009).

In reviewing the SCAPQ data, I focused on the learning-outcomes section, which has 15 items in four areas: (a) increased understanding, (b) future behavior, (c) consequences, and (d) skills (Janosik & Stimpson, 2007). These 15 items inquire about students’ learning on interpersonal, intrapersonal, and epistemological domains in the context of their misconduct. For example, students rank their agreement with the following statement, “I understand my responsibility to others,” which assesses their level of interpersonal awareness of how their behavior impacts others. Students also rank their agreement with “I understand expectations for student behavior,” which indicates their level of knowledge, or epistemological development related to their misconduct. Finally, students are asked a series of questions about the likelihood of future behavior and items like, “Future behavior is more likely to reflect on my own personal integrity,” links to intrapersonal development of internal values and beliefs.

**Institutional Sample Selection**

The SCAPQ included institutions that had measured student learning in a campus conduct system over time, so I used that dataset to select institutions that had consistently high student self-reports of learning in the conduct process to include in my institutional sample. I contacted the director of the NASCAP project, who provided a list of all institutions with at least three years of data in the dataset. From those 17 institutions, I identified three institutions that demonstrated that their students had achieved learning outcomes that exceed the learning outcomes achieved by students at other institutions over the past three years.

To secure participation, I relied on the director of the NASCAP project, who first made contact with the director of the student conduct office at each of these institutions to encourage their participation in my study (all recruitment emails and scripts are included in Appendix A). After the director of the NASCAP project gave me permission to communicate with the selected campuses, I contacted the director of the student conduct system at each institution, explained my study to them, and asked them if they would be willing to participate in my study. I assured
campus contacts that I would share my results with them and would use pseudonyms for their institutions, refer to their offices as the “student conduct office,” provide hearing officers with pseudonyms for their interviews, and not record the names of any students or support staff members when writing the results. If one of these first three institutions declined to participate, I selected another institution from the SCAPQ list with high scores on student learning and repeated this approach until three directors agreed that their offices would participate in the study. The key to qualitative research is to collect data until saturation is achieved (Rossman & Rallis, 2011). I assumed that I would need data from at least three institutions to achieve that saturation, but I was prepared to collect data from additional institutions if I did not achieve saturation after site visits to the first three institutions.

**Participating Institutions**

It is important to describe the three participating institutions to set the context for this study. I identify each campus with a pseudonym to preserve confidentiality.

**Small University.** Small University (SU) is a small public institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. It enrolls more than 4,000 undergraduate students and approximately 700 graduate students. SU’s student conduct office is staffed with a director and associate coordinator. The staff members in the student conduct office at SU are responsible for adjudicating violations of the institution’s code of conduct. The student conduct process allows for administrative review or review by conduct boards that include faculty members and students. The director reports to a vice president for student affairs.

**Comprehensive University.** Comprehensive University (CU) is a public comprehensive university located in the south. Total student enrollment is approximately 25,000. CU’s student conduct office is responsible for adjudicating the student code of conduct and the academic honor code, and also provides conflict mediation services for students experiencing harassment. A director leads the office and supervises an assistant director, a case manager, a case coordinator, and an administrative assistant. The director reports to a vice president for student affairs. Conduct incidents are resolved through both formal and informal avenues that can include meetings with an individual administrator or a conduct board of students, faculty, and staff.

**Research University.** Research University (RU) is a public, flagship, state research-intensive university located in the south with a total enrollment of approximately 65,000 students.
(50,000 undergraduate students, 15,000 graduate and professional students). The student conduct office is part of the dean of student life office, and conduct staff are responsible for adjudicating violations of the university code of conduct. The office is led by a program coordinator and is staffed by an associate coordinator, two assistant coordinators, an office associate, and a graduate assistant. The resolution of a violation can occur through administrative meetings or conduct board meetings based on the nature of the allegation. The program coordinator reports to an associate director of student life.

**Participant Sample Selection**

After selecting my institutions, I needed to identify participants at each institution. I used purposeful sampling to select those individuals who could best inform my research question (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2003). I was most interested in those responsible for adjudicating campus misconduct. Although student misconduct cases may be addressed by residence life or other student affairs professionals as part of their job responsibilities, I focused on those individuals whose primary job responsibility was adjudicating student misconduct; that is, those who are fully involved in conduct work (Dannells, 1997). I defined hearing officers as full-time professionals whose primary job responsibility was the adjudication of student misconduct. Therefore I excluded other professionals who either voluntarily heard cases or for whom adjudicating cases was not a primary job responsibility.

I set up a phone appointment with the individual responsible for overseeing the student conduct offices (hereafter referred to as the director) at each selected institution to review my design, to discuss access to participants, and to seek approval to observe conduct meetings and office operations. I used an initial call checklist (see Appendix B) to cover all of the points that were critical to review prior to my visit. During that call, I agreed to email a copy of the informed consent forms to the director and asked that person to share the forms with the staff members when soliciting staff members’ participation in my study. I asked the directors if they would share an email message (included in recruitment emails in Appendix A) with office staff members and hearing officer(s) in the office so I could determine if they would be willing to participate in the study. The appropriate informed consent form for office staff and hearing officers was attached (see Appendices C-E for informed consent forms). Finally, I asked for the policies and procedures that guide the hearing process so that I could review those prior to my visit to campus as well as the most recent annual report for the office so that I could gain a sense
of the annual caseload. If they were available online, I asked for the web links to the documents. I concluded the call by setting a date and time for a follow-up call a week later.

One week later, on the follow-up call to confirm participation in my study, I reviewed with the director those who were willing to participate in my study, and I set a date for my site visit. I then sent individual emails to the office staff and hearing officer(s) who agreed to participate and thanked them for participating in my study. In that email, I notified them of the date I would be on campus.

**Instrumentation**

I created a hearing/offic observation protocol as well as a hearing officer interview protocol to collect my data. A copy of the hearing/offic observation protocol appears in Appendix F and consists of a table in which I described the behaviors and comments that occurred during interactions I observed between students and conduct office staff members. I used the observation protocol and numbered each interaction I observed in office and hearing observations. In each interaction, I identified the behavior or comment, the speaker(s), the responder(s), the interaction type, and any notes relevant to the observation. Interaction types that I observed included: staff members and student interactions, staff-on-staff interactions, staff member and hearing officer interactions, interactions on the phone/computer, and student-student interactions within the office environment.

I assumed some interactions would consist of multiple comments or behaviors; therefore, on my table, I numbered the interaction with the same numeral until the interaction was concluded. For example, if a student spoke to a staff member at the front desk, I would note the comments and behaviors of each person with the same interaction number until the interaction was complete.

Finally, I developed an interview protocol for my interviews with hearing officers. A copy of the protocol is included in Appendix G. I designed a semi-structured format (Seidman, 2012) that used open-ended questions to allow participants to talk freely and to enable me to follow-up on specific items from my observations during my visit (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2012). I selected this structure so that every participant would be asked to describe and provide more detail on the most salient interactions I had observed between that person and a student. This allowed “people having different associations with the program” (Merriam, 2009, p. 83) to
share their unique insight and to provide depth to the information gathered during my conduct hearings observations.

The interview protocol began with an introductory section designed to build rapport with the participant. I asked participants to tell me what drew them to work in student conduct and what kept them in the profession. I also asked them to share with me their most memorable conduct case so that I could learn more about their experiences as a hearing officer as well as expand my understanding of the interactions I had observed in conduct hearings.

Prior to each interview, I selected several salient interactions hearing officers had in the student conduct hearings I observed. I used the interview to ask questions that fleshed out their behaviors in the hearing. For example, I would ask hearing officers to explain why they chose a particular question to ask a student or why they engaged in a particular behavior with a student during a hearing. I concluded the interview by reviewing the key points from the interview to ensure that I had captured the important elements of their responses. I also asked participants if they had any final comments they wanted to offer and discussed my plan to have them review a transcript of the interview to ensure that the interview accurately reflected their comments.

Prior to collecting data, I asked experts with experience in either student conduct or qualitative methodology to review both protocols. I used the feedback from that group to revise all the protocols. I also piloted my protocols at an institution not included in my study. I used feedback from the pilot participants about the observation process and clarity and relevance of the interview questions to revise the protocols.

**Data Collection**

Before collecting data, I received approval to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at my home institution. None of the participating institutions required approval by their IRB office. A copy of the IRB approval appears in Appendix H.

Data were collected through hearing observations, office operation observations, and interviews. Throughout the study, I kept a journal of my decisions and activities related to the study. Engaging in this process allowed me to memo my thoughts on my position as the researcher and to be reflexive throughout the data collection and analysis process (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2003).

Each campus visit followed the same data collection process. I scheduled a three-day visit to campus. On the first day of the site visit, I began by acclimating myself to the campus
and to the student conduct office. I introduced myself to the staff, asked questions about how the office operated, and explained what I would be doing during my site visit. Next, I disseminated informed consent forms to all those involved in the study at that campus. I requested that they sign one copy and keep the other copy for their records. The three informed consent forms for hearing officers, office staff, and students in hearing observations are included in Appendices C-E.

I then began office observations. During my office observations, I watched students arriving, checking in for meetings, and other office activities. All data collected through observations were guided by my hearing/office observation protocol. During office operation observations, I sat in the main office in a location that allowed me to see as much of the office as possible without being intrusive. I recorded behavior and comments in my protocol (Appendix F) using a laptop computer.

On the second day of my visit, I observed hearings. During the hearings, I sat in a location in the office where I did not interfere with the hearing but could fully observe the interactions between the hearing officer and the student. I used my hearing/office observation protocol to record the comments and behaviors between the students and hearing officers. I observed at least one hearing by each hearing officer but observed more than one per officer whenever possible. Like in the office operations observations, I recorded data in my protocol (Appendix F) using a laptop computer.

On the third day of the visit, I interviewed hearing officers using my interview protocol (Appendix G) to review the most salient interactions I had observed the day prior. The purpose of these interviews was to clarify and expand on what I had observed from hearing officers who met with students in conduct meetings. The interviews all took place in the hearing officer’s office and were approximately 60 minutes long. At the end of each interview, I recapped the conversation to allow the respondent to clarify, expand, or correct any information provided during the interview.

All of the site visits were conducted during the spring and fall 2015 semesters. After I returned from each visit, I had all interviews transcribed and sent the transcriptions to participants to review. To keep the data organized, I collected all data at one institution before beginning data collection at another institution. Additionally, after I concluded my first site visit, I reviewed and coded a sample of the data I had collected. I then asked an expert in qualitative
methods to look at the same sample and my coding scheme. Then, I met with the expert so that we could discuss any areas of disagreement so that I could be consistent when coding the remainder of the data.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was driven by the conceptual framework and research questions. Using qualitative methodology (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003), I engaged in two major data-collection methods: observations and interviews. During my visits, I used two settings to observe interactions: office interactions and interactions in hearings. Therefore, my unit of analysis (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2014) was the discrete interaction. I used the data from my interviews to provide clarification and depth to the data collected from my observations. The unit of analysis for the interviews was the comment. A comment consisted of a phrase or sentence, or series of phrases/sentences on the same topics. When the respondent moved to a new topic that marked the start of a new comment (Patton, 2014). Data analysis is the process of making meaning out of text (Creswell, 2012) and requires a system for classifying (Patton, 2014) to first organize the data. The principles of the LPM served as the theoretical propositions that shaped my data analysis (Yin, 2003).

**Preparing the Data**

To begin my analysis, I created an Excel spreadsheet with the following columns: institution code, interaction number, comment/behavior, speaker, responder, interaction type, principle observed, and notes. I then transferred data from my observations and field notes into the Excel file, so I could sort by any of the columns. This allowed me to quantify my observations as part of my overall analysis as well as see my data sorted in a variety of ways.

Each observation was labeled with an institutional code. My institutional codes were: SU for Small University, CU for Comprehensive University, and RU for Research University. When I observed people during office operations and during hearings, I gave the speaker and responder generic labels like “hearing officer” or “student” or “staff member” so no names were captured during observations. This enabled me to sort by the speaker or responder and look for patterns across the campuses.

To prepare my interviews for analysis, each interview was transcribed. I listened to each one of my interviews as I reviewed my transcripts. During this review process, I made notes about my initial impressions of the interview. I did this for each transcript prior to beginning the
coding process. This gave me a holistic impression of the data prior to analysis (Creswell, 2012). I assigned each completed transcript with the previously mentioned institution code and a number. For example, I labeled the third interview transcript from Small University SU-3. I also assigned a pseudonym to participants to preserve their confidentiality.

**Analyzing the Data**

My research question and conceptual framework guided my data analysis. I used the three LPM principles as the theoretical propositions (Yin, 2003) for my first review. From my office/hearing observation data, field notes, and my interview transcripts, I looked for words and phrases from the interactions that related to one of the principles of the LPM. To keep the data segregated, I maintained three individual documents (one for each of the three principles of the LPM), where I copied the comments relevant to that principle. I also had a document labeled miscellaneous, where I captured comments that repeatedly arose from my data but did not correspond to any of the LPM principles. This approach allowed me to look for evidence of the principles of the LPM; however, I remained open to other themes that emerged.

In qualitative research, coding allows the researcher to capture the words of participants and assign meaning to aid with analysis (Patton, 2014). For my second iteration of coding, I used the constant comparative method (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and reviewed my observation data, transcripts, and field notes that were grouped into the four documents described above (the three LPM principles and Miscellaneous) line by line and I compared comments to look for similarities. When I found three or more comments that had similar meanings, I grouped them together. For example, in the “validating capacity” principal document, I examined my groupings to see if any of them could be described as “soliciting perspectives.” If so, I made a note in the document. I did this for the documents associated with each principle.

I also used direct quotes from my interviews to explain further the emerging themes from my data. For example, if a hearing officer shared examples of how they encouraged students to explain what happened, I used the direct quotes to explain the “welcoming ideas” behavior associated with the “validating capacity” principle. This strategy helped me provide a thorough description (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012) of the phenomenon. I developed a narrative from my data analysis to explain how the LPM principles (my conceptual framework) were reflected in the student conduct environment.
The validity and reliability of the data collected are important, regardless of the method used to collect those data (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative studies use rich, thick descriptions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2014) and provide details so the reader can determine the clarity of the process and conclusions presented (Merriam, 2009). Throughout the study, I engaged in several steps to enhance the accuracy of the data. To start, I had a panel of experts review my protocols prior to use at my participating institutions. I also used my dissertation committee as a community of practice to help me explore and understand how my biases may be influencing my data collection and analysis. This approach was used to ensure that the protocols that I developed would clearly identify data that answer the proposed research questions (Merriam, 2009).

Second, I piloted my observation and interview protocols at an institution not included in my study. Piloting my protocols allowed me to determine if the structure of my protocols was appropriate for my study (Seidman, 2012) and provided conceptual clarification (Yin, 2003) for my research design. After my pilot study, I reviewed my protocols to ensure that I had a process in place that was tested in a student conduct environment. I modified my protocols based on participant feedback during my pilot study to further enhance the accuracy of the data collected for the study. For example, I revised my opening questions to provide hearing officers the opportunity to tell a story of a memorable conduct case. I believed that would help me build rapport with participants. I also added more questions about salient interactions I had observed to maximize the information I got from the interviews.

I also created an audit trail that included all of my research decisions and analytical memos to further enhance the accuracy of the data. Audit trails describe the details of the data collection process (Merriam, 2009); this allows for transparency in the research process so others can understand the design and analytical choices made throughout the study (Yin, 2003). This was particularly important given my former role as a director of a student conduct system.

After data collection at my first participating institution, I reviewed a sample of the data and coded some of the observation and interview data to determine the themes that emerged. I had an expert review the same sample, deliberated my coding with that expert, discussed differences of opinion, and agreed upon appropriate coding when conducting future analysis.
This form of expert review helped ensure the findings were plausible based on the data (Meriam, 2009).

Finally, I used methods triangulation (Patton, 2014) by using different data collection methods to explore the student conduct environment: office observations, observations of hearings, and interviews. I also used multiple data sources or triangulation of sources (Patton, 2014) by using three student conduct environment cases in my study. This allowed me to determine if findings in one case were similar or different from another. Both of these triangulation techniques ensured that I had consistent and dependable data (Merriam, 2009).

In conclusion, this study was designed to understand how the principles of the LPM were evident in the student conduct environment. Qualitative research methodology provided data that were appropriate to answer the research questions.
Chapter Four

Findings

The research sub-questions posed in my study focused on how the principles in the learning partnerships model (LPM) were reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be occurring. There are three principles in the LPM, so in this chapter, I present the findings related to each principle. I start by describing the sample. Then, I report the findings in three sections based on the LPM principles. First, I discuss the findings related to the validating capacity principle. Second, I discuss the situating learning principle findings. In the final section, I describe the data for the mutual meaning principle. For each principle I conducted three iterations of coding. I started by identifying common words and phrases in my interviews and observations. I collapsed these into initial codes. Next, I collapsed those codes into categories, and finally I grouped the categories into broader themes. In the final analysis, I identified four overall themes for each of the three principles.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of respondents at three campuses. I interviewed eight hearing officers and observed 21 student conduct meetings. I spent three days on each campus, observing office operations, and sitting in on student conduct meetings. The final day on each campus, I conducted individual interviews of the hearing officers. In total, I spent nine days on observations.

All of the hearing officers who participated in my study worked full-time in the student conduct office. Some of them were in their first job, while others had extensive professional experience in student conduct. Table 1 provides a brief description of each hearing officer’s experience and the number of hearings I was able to observe with each person.

Comprehensive University (CU) employed one full-time hearing officer. Fitzwilliam (his pseudonym) has worked full-time in student conduct at CU for five years. I was able to observe him conduct 6 student conduct meetings.

Research University (RU) employed 5 full-time hearing officers. At RU, King and Katie have each worked in student conduct for several years though I do not have an exact number for either. Maria, an alumnus of RU, has worked in Student Conduct for many years. John and Amara are both in their first year working full-time at RU. During my three-day visit, I observed
### Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants by Campus (N=8)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution/Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Number of Hearings Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive University (CU)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzwilliam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research University (RU)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small University (SU)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 hearings each with Amara, Katie, and Maria. I observed one hearing with John and one with King. Given the size of the staff and the schedule of hearings, this was the maximum number of cases I was able to see. Both John and King had a cancellation that limited my ability to observe them in more hearings.

Small University (SU) employed two full-time hearing officers. Jack has worked in student conduct for 12 years. Taylor is in her first year full-time in student conduct but has worked at SU for 4 years. While on campus for 3 days, I observed 7 hearings, four with Jack and 3 with Taylor.

**Summary of Findings**

The data came in two forms, observations and interview transcripts. I coded the observation data in one of two ways: I gave office observations an “O” designation and hearing observations an “H” designation. I marked interview comments with an “I.” Table 2 is a summary of the sources of data by principle with the number of observations by theme by type. For example, under the validating capacity principle, four themes emerged in the final analysis: soliciting perspectives, showing interest in the learners’ experiences, offering respect, and boosting confidence. I observed soliciting perspectives once in office observations, 106 times in hearings, and noted it 45 times in interview comments. The sources of data for the remaining themes by principle and type appear in Table 2. Each of the principles and their associated themes are discussed below.

**Principle 1 Validating Capacity**

I identified 14 initial codes that emerged from an analysis of common words/phrases and that related to the validating capacity principle. Those initial codes are outlined in Table 3, which should be read from the bottom up. In my second iteration, I grouped those 14 initial codes into 8 categories. As I continued my analysis, I grouped those 8 categories into 4 themes: (a) soliciting perspectives, (b) showing interest in the learner’s experiences, (c) offering respect, and (d) boosting confidence. Some of my evidence comes from observations, and some comes from interviews. I note the source of my data with the designations “H” for hearings, “O” for observations, and “I” for interview comments.

Among the 14 initial codes I identified, the first four were: asking about responsibility, tell me what happened, creating a timeline, and questions about the process. When I observed
Table 2

Sources of Data by Principle, Theme, and Observation Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle/ Theme</th>
<th>Office Observation (O)</th>
<th>Hearing Observation (H)</th>
<th>Interview Comment (I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Validating capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing interest in learners’ experiences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering respect</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosting confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situating learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building rapport</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing stories (first hand experiences are powerful)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with participants’ development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting experience to future learning/decision making</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping clarify perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting educator knowledge to participants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing students to experience consequences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing students to learn by doing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table is to show the distribution of data sources only.
Table 3
Code Mapping for Principle 1 Validating Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ 1a. How is the Validating Capacity principle in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Iteration: Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1. Soliciting perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC2. Showing interest in the learner’s experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC3. Offering respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC4. Boosting confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Iteration: Categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1. Seeking information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1a. Confirming facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC2. Non-academic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC2a. Academic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC3. Sharing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC3a. Welcoming ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC4. Affirming students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC4a. Moving on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Iteration: Codes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1a. Asking about responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1b. Tell me what happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1c. Creating a timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC1d. Questions about the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC2a. Campus involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC2b. How are academics going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC3c. What do you do for fun?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hearing officers say things such as, “Do you think you violated policy,” or “Do you feel responsible for the violation,” I noted those as asking about responsibility. Similarly, I identified the tell me what happened code when I heard language, “What should I know about the incident,” or “What happened that night.” Also, in interviews when hearing officers told me they wanted to “get the student’s perspective,” I noted it as tell me what happened. I used the code creating a timeline when hearing officers asked students to “walk me through the night,” or in interviews when hearing officers described wanting to understand “what went on during the incident.” Finally, I coded statements like, “What questions do you have for me,” or more specific things like, “What questions do you have about the appeals process,” as questions about the process.

Asking students questions about what happened during the incident and if they believed they violated policy were common components of student conduct hearings. The purpose of those meetings was for hearing officers to gather facts and determine responsibility for violations of the code of conduct. Similarly, asking if students had questions about the procedures of the conduct process also helped hearing officers check to see if the students understood the process.

As I continued my analysis, I grouped the four initial codes into two categories. The behaviors I observed centered on seeking information and confirming facts. During my interviews, I queried hearing officers about why they asked about what happened during the incident. For example, Josh told me, “It gives me more information to be able to assist them,” and “It helps me understand where they are coming from.” I noted that hearing officers were seeking information as a means to assist students and to see their perspective more clearly. Since determining whether a student violated policy is an important part of the student conduct process, confirming facts was clearly evident as hearing officers asked questions about the misconduct. Questions encouraged students to elaborate on their statements and to share their viewpoint on their responsibility. In her interview, Maria shared:

And some of them say, “Here’s my story.” And others will say, “Well, OK, here are the charges, this is why I am responsible and this is why I’m not.” And then we go back and I ask more specific questions. So it’s really just, again, to kind of give them a little bit of control in that space… And I think that helps reduce defensiveness. I think there’s just a lot of things that can be helpful and productive in that conversation.
Letting the student share what happened or respond to the potential violations of the code of conduct, coupled with questions to clarify the events in question, helped create a space for productive dialogue.

In the final analysis, I further merged those two categories into my first theme, *soliciting perspectives*, attributed to the *validating capacity* principle. Hearing officers engaged in behaviors to deepen their understanding of what happened. I observed this theme most frequently in student conduct hearings, usually through hearing officers’ questions to students.

Those questions solicited information from the students for four purposes. First, hearing officers wanted to understand if students felt responsible for their code of conduct violation. Understanding the level of responsibility the student felt for violating university policy was important to every hearing officer and occurred in every hearing I observed. For example, in a conduct hearing at RU, I observed Taylor explaining to a student that she wanted to understand if the student felt responsible for the policy violation (RU76, H59). Similarly, at SU, Jack asked the student directly if they believed they violated policy (SU122, H71). When asked why they wanted the students’ perspectives on responsibility, King at RU said:

> I think it’s important to know that I can empathize with their perspective, while I may not necessarily agree with it – I can understand where they are coming from (RU 582, I198).

Understanding whether the student accepted or denied responsibility was only part of what hearing officers hoped to understand. Even when students accepted responsibility, hearing officers continued to ask questions to understand the incident. When asked why, Maria at RU stated:

> Even if they accept responsibility, I still want to go through everything because I need to know for sure (RU411, I27).

However, clarifying level of responsibility was only part of the information sought by hearing officers. Taylor explained that for her, there is more than determining if a violation occurred and issuing a sanction:

> If you already pleaded responsible I could just give you sanctions and say “OK, have a great day” and we can do all this in 15 minutes…instead we are engaging them beyond the incident (SU367, I127).

Overall, understanding how the student felt about their responsibility was important to every hearing officer on all three campuses.
Second, when soliciting perspectives, hearing officers asked questions to gather more information about the incident. This was a central activity of hearing officers on all three campuses. Hearing officers asked questions to deepen their understanding of what was written in the incident report that led to the hearing and to allow students to provide more details from their point of view. For example, in a hearing at SU, I observed Jack ask a student to share if she was using marijuana on the night in question (SU147, H90). Also at SU, in a hearing I observed with Taylor, she asked a series of questions about the student’s experience with alcohol and with the type of alcohol consumed on the night of the incident (SU170, H113).

In both examples, the student and hearing officer engaged in a dialogue where the hearing officer gathered information about what had happened in more detail than what was provided in writing. Similar information gathering occurred in every hearing on all three campuses. When questioned about the importance of gathering information, Fitzwilliam at CU shared with me:

> When the students are in here talking to me, nothing else really matters to me other than talking to that student. It can take five minutes or it can take an hour. Let’s unpack what’s going on and go from there (CU306, I194).

Third, soliciting perspectives involved questions to construct a timeline of what happened on the night in question. At RU, Jack asked the student directly for a timeline of what occurred. At the end of a series of questions about where the student had been and his activities, Jack recapped the timeline, explaining he was trying to understand in more detail where the student had been that night (RU252-258, H217-223). This process was similar at CU, so when questioned about why he sought out a timeline of events, Fitzwilliam said:

> In my cases I want their side of the story. I need their side. Without them, I have an incident report and I generally have an arrest (CU187, I75).

This was an important process, particularly when more than one student was involved in a hearing. At RU, I observed a group hearing, and Katie spent time questioning each student about the timeline of events. When I asked her why she asked every student the same questions about the timeline, she said she sought:

> To get the broader picture of everything that’s going on, because again, one viewpoint when there’s so many people involved is not the reality (RU754, I370).
The timeline of events helped hearing officers understand what was happening during the incident in more detail from the student’s perspective. This understanding provided the hearing officer more information than was offered by the reporting party (i.e., police, residence hall staff).

Finally, soliciting perspectives involved hearing officers encouraging students to ask questions about the conduct hearing itself. Hearing officers wanted to ensure that students had a chance to verbalize any questions about their experiences in the conduct process. In every hearing, students were asked if they had questions about the process or if there was information that they had pertaining to the incident about which they had not yet been asked. Every hearing officer reiterated the importance of providing opportunities for the student to ask questions. Maria (RU) wanted to:

At least give them the opportunity to talk and ask anything that they need to ask. Or maybe to tell me something else (RU408, I24).

For Jack, allowing students to ask questions and share how they felt about their conduct hearing made the process less intimidating:

I don’t want to be the mean guy. I don’t want to be scary. One of the questions that I ask … [is] “is this what you expected.” It kind of amuses me when people say “Well I thought that I was going to come in and you were going to yell at me, or “I thought I’d have to go a room where there would be judges” (SU320, I80).

Soliciting perspectives was the most common theme under validating capacity (106 hearing observations). In each case, hearing officers asked students questions to elicit information that they believe increased their understanding of what happened. Also, hearing officers wanted to understand in more detail, directly from the students, the events of the incident and their feelings about their responsibility for their misconduct. In addition, asking students to share how they experienced the conduct process and to ask questions about the process showed students that their perspective was important to the hearing officer.

A second stream of coding related to how important it was to hearing officers to understand more about students outside of the conduct hearing. In my initial coding, when I heard hearing officers ask, “What are you involved in,” and “Do you have any leadership positions,” I noted these as campus involvement. Similarly, hearing officers would ask students, “How are your classes going,” and “How are your grades this semester.” I initially coded such language as how are academics going. Finally, hearing officers asked students “What do you do
in your free time,” or they would discuss hobbies, sports, movies, and/or music with students. I initially coded those comments as *what do you do for fun*. I collapsed these initial codes into two categories, *non-academic life* and *academic life*.

I observed each hearing officer ask students questions about their life outside of the incident. Those conversations would often begin with asking students about their courses and their academic performance. Oftentimes, those conversations would segue into asking what students did in their time outside of class. This was all information that hearing officers felt was valuable to them in their work. When I asked in an interview why they did that, Josh (RU) wanted students to know that:

> I’m not just processing students in and out, just assigning sanctions and sending them on their way. I want to get to know them and who they are and what they contribute to our community, what they’re involved in (RU541, I157).

Understanding the students’ academic and co-curricular experience was important to hearing officers.

Ultimately, I merged the *academic life* and *non-academic life* categories into the second theme associated with the *validating capacity* principle: *showing interest in the learner’s experiences*. Hearing officers used questions to learn about the students’ experiences outside of the specific misconduct that resulted in the hearing. Hearing officers on each campus wanted to dialogue with the student about their lives and campus experiences. Questions centered on topics of campus involvement and employment, academics, and leisure activities the student enjoyed. In this theme, questions were primarily driven by the hearing officer to understand the student’s experience outside of the incident.

For example, in terms of campus involvement, I observed a hearing with Taylor where she spent several minutes talking with a student about that student’s interests around campus (SU212, H155). Maria (RU) spent time listening as a student described his involvement in a game development club (RU196, H165). Similarly, conversations about academic performance were part of every hearing. For example, Maria asked a male student to describe how his first semester was going and they discussed his grades and favorite class (RU347, H295). After asking about current classes, Taylor asked all students about their plans for life after they graduate from SU. In one hearing, the student and Taylor spent several minutes contemplating internship opportunities that would help the student achieve their post-graduation goals (SU154, H97).
I asked the hearing officers on all three campuses to describe why they asked questions about the students’ lives outside of the misconduct that brought the student into the office. The first reason I heard from hearing officers was a desire to create a connection with the student. Jack said:

I want to show that I’m interested in them as a person, not just as a case or not just as an incident (SU258, I18).

John (RU) also valued making connections with students and their interests:

I like to help the student feel a little bit more comfortable, getting them talking about the good things in their lives. What activities they’re involved in, what their goals and career aspirations are, start off on a little bit more of a positive note. I think it also helps to understand a little bit of what their involvement is on campus. If I find the student who is really going to class and then going home and sitting by themselves, then I like to try and work in some type of engagement activity in their sanctions.

The second reason hearing officers asked about other interests was to create a space where students felt comfortable sharing information. For Fitzwilliam, learning more about students’ interests helped him serve as a touch point for students. He said:

I’m a university staff member and I have a touch point with you. I would be remiss if I didn’t take that opportunity in an attempt to help you resolve, solve or more forward with something (CU298, I186).

*Showing interest in the learners’ experiences* helped hearing officers create connections with students and provide a comfortable environment where students could share information about themselves that was positive as well as talk about what led to their misconduct. Hearing officers showed interest in understanding the broader experience of the students they encountered by asking questions about a variety of topics.

The manner in which students were treated in the conduct process was important to hearing officers and ultimately led to the third theme: *offering respect.* In my transcripts and observations, I made note of office staff and hearing officers greeting students as they arrived for meetings. These were noted as *greeting students.* Similarly, in phone calls, in person, and in meetings, I noted office staff saying, “Do you need an absence verification,” and “Here is your conduct file”; I noted these as *process assistance.* Also, hearing officers offered detailed explanations of the way the meeting was going to proceed. I noted these conversations as *hearing roadmap.* In interviews, hearing officers reported that providing students with a clear understanding of the process made students feel less anxious. Finally, I heard officers say things
like, “Thank you for sharing,” and “I appreciate you telling me what happened.” I assigned such language to an initial code of thanks for sharing.

As I continued my analysis, I was able to collapse those four initial codes into two categories. The first, sharing information, helped reduce students’ anxiety and preconceived notions of what the hearing would be like. Office staff answered questions prior to hearings, and hearing officers allowed students to review their paperwork and ask questions about the documentation, which helped to provide transparency to the process. The second category, welcoming ideas, emerged as I observed hearing officers telling students, “Thank you for sharing with me.” Statements like these let students know that the hearing officers wanted to hear what they had to say and that their ideas were important. Helping students understand that they were not going to be mistreated and that their ideas were welcomed was an important part of the conduct meetings and the overall office operations. As Maria (RU) stated:

I hope that students don’t come into the process or leave the process feeling as though the deck is stacked against them from the beginning (RU641, I257).

Although hearing officers all engaged in behaviors that demonstrated respect, it is also important to note that offering respect was the most dominant theme I observed in the office operations (42 office observations). It started with greeting students. In every student conduct office, I observed staff, including student staff, greet guests with courtesy, answer the telephones cordially, and treat all office guests and students arriving for hearings with kindness. At SU, students were greeted by student employees as they arrived for and departed from meetings (SU24, O24). At RU, the office staff assisted students with absence verifications if they missed class due to their hearing (RU114, O18), and at CU, when staff members were behind schedule, each student was notified of the delay and received an apology for the increased wait time (CU109, O31). The greetings and clear information provided by the office staff extended to the interactions students had with hearing officers. For example, every hearing officer escorted the student to their office for the conduct hearing and escorted the student back to the reception area once the hearing was complete.

Once the student and hearing officer were in the room where the hearing took place, hearing officers took significant time explaining the process of the hearing. At RU, every hearing officer began by providing a roadmap of the hearing. I observed Maria say to students that she:
…will first learn more about who you are, where you are from, what you are studying. Then we will review the process, have a conversation of the event and then discuss the outcome (RU132, H106).

When asked why the *roadmap of the hearing* was so important, John offered:

I go into—“Hey, this is not a scary process and I’m going to explain to you what’s going to happen.” It just gives them a roadmap so they know what to expect.

Finally, at the end of each hearing, students were thanked for their participation and in many cases, shook hands with their hearing officer. Hearing officers and office staff members all approached their work with students in a non-confrontational, welcoming way, from the time they arrived in the office until the hearing concluded.

The final theme, *boosting confidence*, was found on all three campuses. Hearing officers used affirming statements with students for a variety of reasons in hearings. As I began my analysis, I noted that toward the end of the hearings, hearing officers would assure students that *everyone makes mistakes*. For example, Taylor told a student that “people make mistakes and the most important thing is to learn from them” (SU188, H131). Hearing officers commonly used statements to let students know that they saw them as more than their misconduct and said things like, “This incident does not define you.” In my analysis, I noted statements like these as *not defined by mistakes*. Katie (RU) believed strongly in affirming that students are more than their misconduct:

So many times the students get caught up —this is my bad decision; this defines me. It’s important for us to be making sure that we’re giving those [students a] message that you can come back from this (RU765, I381).

She continued to stress the importance of affirming students’ ability to not feel defined by the incident. She explained that she does believe students need to be mindful of their actions and their ability to change their actions in the future, but her role does not stop there:

As much as I can help them understand—this is a decision that you can change in the future. Yes you need to evaluate it; yes, there are consequences to that choice; yes, you need to move forward from this. But that doesn’t mean that we don’t recognize the good aspects (RU 767, I383).

Finally, hearing officers urged students to “put this incident behind you,” which I noted as *move forward*. For example, Fitzwilliam (CU), encouraged a student as she was leaving by saying, “thank you for coming in and try to put it behind you” (CU104, H78). Every hearing
officer was *boosting confidence* in the students they encountered by taking time in their meetings to let students know that they were not defined by their misconduct and that the hearing officer did not see them as a bad person. They wanted students to know that they cared about them and wanted them to leave feeling confident. Hearing officers did not want students to be defeated but to believe that they were able to move forward after the hearing.

Overall, the *validating capacity* principle was evident in the student conduct environment. Hearing officers *solicited perspectives* from students to ensure they understood what occurred during the incident. This helped hearing officers to best understand what happened to ultimately assist them in discerning the most beneficial educational outcome for the student. By *showing interest in the learner’s experiences*, hearing officers were able to communicate to students that they cared about who they are and what their interests are outside the incident. *Offering respect*, from all staff members to students provided a welcoming and respectful environment that encouraged students to trust the student conduct process. Finally, hearing officers took care in *boosting confidence* to let students know that the incident did not define them and attempted to restore their confidence in their ability to learn from this experience and move on from it.

**Principle 2 Situating Learning**

I identified 15 initial codes that were behaviors related to the *situating learning* principle. That first iteration of codes is outlined in Table 4, which should be read from the bottom up. The second iteration emerged from those 15 initial codes and consisted of 8 categories that I ultimately collapsed into four overarching themes: a) *building rapport*, b) *hearing stories* (*first hand experiences are powerful*), c) *connecting with participants’ development*, and d) *connecting experience to future learning/decision-making*. Evidence came from both observations and interviews.

I identified the 15 initial codes when I reviewed my observation data and interview transcripts. Some examples of those initial codes are: *small talk, allay fears, showing support*, and *see you later*. When I observed hearing officers ask students, “Do you like living on campus,” and “How has your day been so far,” I noted those as *small talk*. These conversations were most common as hearing officers were settling into the office or conference room to begin the meeting. I also coded statements from hearing officers with the designation *allay fears* when I heard things like this from Jack, “I’ll never bring a student in and just get right to business.”
Table 4
*Code Mapping for Principle 2 Situating Learning*

RQ 1b. How is the *Situating Learning* principle in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Iteration: Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL 1. Building rapport</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL 2. Hearing stories (first-hand experiences are powerful)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL 3. Connecting with participant’s development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL 4. Connecting experience to future learning/decision-making</td>
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<tr>
<th>Second Iteration: Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL1. Being open</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL1a. Calming presence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL2a. Getting missing information</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL2b. Considering potential sanctions</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL3a. Sharing expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL4b. Promoting change</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL4a. Exploring alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL4b. Showing impact</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>First Iteration: Codes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL1a. Small talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL1b. Allay fears</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL1c. Showing support</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL1d. See you later</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL2a. Hear your side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL2b. Missing perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL2c. Potential sanction impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL3a. Positive life change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL3b. Educate students</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL3c. Holistic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL3d. Positive impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL4a. Intent vs. impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL4b. Done differently</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL4c. Alternative options</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL4d. Avoid future misconduct</td>
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</table>
Similarly, Amara at RU noted how important it is to “take those moments to really make them feel comfortable.” Hearing officers noted that time building up to talking about what happened in the incident was a way to encourage an initial relationship with the student and help calm student’s nerves as the meetings began. I also heard hearing officers say that they wanted to “know students” and “to let them know I care,” and I coded those as showing support. Finally, as every hearing concluded, hearing officers said things like, “Goodbye, thanks,” and “Hope to see you again,” and I noted those as see you later.

I collapsed those four initial codes into two categories: being open and calming presence. Josh at RU described the importance of being open with students by sharing how important it is to him to:

Let students know that I actually care about them…we can talk about these things and you can feel like this is a safe space to be able to do it (RU629, I245).

Demonstrating to students that he is someone they can talk to helped students see hearing officers as kind and open to hearing what they wanted to share. Hearing officers also prioritized creating a calm and non-confrontational environment in hearings. For example, I noted calming presence when Jack (SU) shared,

It’s important to listen and to be compassionate and to be doing what you can to help the student help the community in which he or she is studying (SU318, I78).

Jack and others noted that students would arrive at hearings nervous and hesitant to talk. By creating a calm, non-confrontational atmosphere, I observed students open up to their hearing officers.

In my final analysis, I merged those two categories into the first theme associated with situating learning: building rapport. In every hearing I observed, hearing officers engaged in behaviors that were intended to build rapport with the student. While I was visiting RU, I was able to walk down the hallway behind John and a student on their way to his office. During that walk, they talked about what the student was interested in and how classes were going. When they reached his office, John let the student select his seat at the table and John sat next to him (RU239, H204). Greetings like this were common in every hearing.

Every hearing ended with the hearing officer thanking the student for sharing information. Fitzwilliam (CU) thanked every student as they left and said, “If you have any questions take my card,” while handing them a business card. He also told every student it was
nice to meet them and shook their hand as they left (CU93, H67). In addition to kind greetings and warm goodbyes, hearing officers always began conversations with something that could get the students talking. Jack (SU) asked a student about his t-shirt, which led to the student sharing more about his passion for cars (SU70, H30).

I asked hearing officers why they spent time talking about unrelated topics and why greeting students was so important to their practice. One common reason was to create a supportive space for students that demonstrated care. For Maria:

So for me that ethic of care is really important. I want them to understand that I care about them as a person (RU544, I160).

Fitzwilliam spent time building rapport because he believes some students are fearful of what to expect. He said:

I try to greet the student, allay their fears, be open, positive, and smiling. I say, “Come on in, I’m Fitzwilliam, nice to meet you.” And try to disarm them. I don’t know what they’re assuming when they come in here. I can only guess, but for most students they’ve never really talked to a staff member at all—let alone the Assistant Director of Student Conduct (CU144, I32).

Time spent building rapport encouraged students to talk openly and helped hearing officers allay fears that students may be experiencing coming to a student conduct hearing.

As I continued my analysis, I began to note that getting first-hand information from the students was a priority for hearing officers. I noted hearing officers say things like, “I want to hear your side,” and “Tell me what your side of the story is.” I noted those as hear your side. This was particularly important to hearing officers because the case file already included a narrative from the police or residence hall staff. Hearing officers had not yet heard what the student had to say about what happened; they only had half of the information. Maria told me that, “getting information from the student may impact the outcome,” and I noted this and similar statements as missing perspective. Getting more information was useful because it helped hearing officers make fully informed decisions. Hearing officers told me that what the students shared can “impact the sanctions,” or “maximize the educational moment,” and I noted those as potential sanction impact. Hearing officers all wanted to know what students had to say. This factored into how officers understood the incident and the sanctions they contemplated.
I further collapsed those three initial codes into two categories. First, I noted hearing officers getting missing information from students. Maria explained the importance of this to me in her interview:

I think a lot of times students come into the process, “well they have a police report, they’re going to believe the police; I have no say in this.” So I emphasize that fact that just because someone is a police officer does not mean their perspective holds any greater value to me than a student’s. Because there’s always two sides to a story. And it’s very difficult for an officer to convey all of the nuances that may have occurred in a one-page summary that they may have written three hours after the incident (RU471, I87).

For Maria, until students provided their statement, there was missing information and she had only a partial view of what happened. Similarly, in the second category, considering potential sanctions, hearing officers noted that every student was impacted differently by an incident and, therefore, the potential sanctions should be considered alongside the student’s first-hand perspective. Katie (RU) explained to me how important it was to consider the first-hand experiences of the individual when weighing sanctions. She said:

This is meant to be an educational moment with someone. And so I feel like in order to have that or maximize that educational moment, you really have to know that student because things are not a one-size-fits-all. Probation impacts every student differently and different students need different things. So even if I’ve got 5 students involved in the same incident, same behavior—they might have different [sanctions] because each one of those students needs something different (RU553, I169).

For Katie and others, the only way to begin discerning potential sanctions was to hear information directly from each student.

From those initial codes, the second theme that emerged under situating learning was hearing stories (first hand experiences are powerful). Hearing the story from the students in their own words was important to hearing officers. For example, Amara (RU) told every student that the purpose of the hearing process was to hear their side of the story (RU144, H118). Similarly, Fitzwilliam (CU) told students that he already had a report but he still wanted the student to tell him what happened (CU39, H21).

The purpose for hearing stories for hearing officers was three-fold. First, hearing officers wanted to understand how the student was processing the incident. John tries to:

Focus in on where each individual student is in their own process and development, and what they’re perceiving to be the truth versus what objectively may be a different truth (RU499, I115).
Second, that first-hand account provided a critical piece of information. For Maria:

I tell the student—what I’ve looked at in the file is one or maybe several different perspectives on the incident. But there’s a very important perspective that’s missing—and it’s theirs (RU559, I175).

Finally, hearing from the student helped hearing officers understand what sanctions may be most impactful. Katie shared:

It helps me get to know how some of the sanctions may impact them and that could potentially influence the decision (RU542, I158).

Hearing officers placed priority on the first-hand narrative of students and reported that it was critical to their ability to completely understand the incident.

My next stream of analysis related to how hearing officers hoped to connect their knowledge and expertise to students. I interviewed hearing officers and asked them questions about their practice and why they approached particular instances in hearings with students in the manner they did. Hearing officers wanted to help students “engage in positive behavior,” and I noted those as positive life change. Taking that beyond behavior, hearing officers also hoped to “educate students” and “connect with their learning process”; I coded such language as educate students. In addition to seeing students change behavior and to educate students, I also heard hearing officers say things like, “I hope to see a student grow,” and I noted that as holistic development. Finally, I coded statements from hearing officers like, “I hope to have an impact with a student who is struggling,” as positive impact.

I collapsed those initial codes into two categories: sharing expertise and promoting change. In sharing expertise, hearing officers tried to take their knowledge to help students. This required considering what hearing officers could do to assist students beyond addressing the misconduct. It required hearing officers to connect what they knew about the causes of misconduct to the needs presented by the student. King noted:

What can I do that’s going to help prevent this type of behavior from occurring again, because if the root cause is lack of connection to the university, that’s what I need to address—not necessarily just this specific incident (RU538, I154).

Helping students make changes in their behavior and in their lives was important to hearing officers. The goal of hearing officers was to encourage positive changes, even those that may seem small. Amara (RU) noted the importance of promoting change:
Student conduct is about little victories because there’s always going to be defeats—students who just don’t get it and keep going. But taking those very small steps forward, recognizing incremental growth, even if it’s not total transformation that we’re looking for (RU439, I55).

For Amara, there was a process to promoting change, and small incremental growth was important to recognize and support.

In my final analysis, I collapsed those two categories into the third theme associated with situating learning: connecting with participants’ development. Hearing officers viewed their roles as developmental and engaged in behaviors that helped them make developmentally relevant connections for students. Fitzwilliam hoped that he could help promote positive behavioral change:

I enjoy the challenge of trying to figure each student out and to get them to make some positive life and behavioral changes (CU118, I6).

Amara’s (RU) aim was to promote their holistic development. She believed that is the responsibility of all hearing officers:

It has to be that you care about the student’s holistic development because if you’re just so focused on the conduct, I don’t think that you would be able to do a good job in conduct if you’re only worried about the facts of the case (RU420, I36).

Ultimately, hearing officers hoped to have a positive impact on the students they met. Jack has had experiences where students described his impact on their learning and development:

I’ve had students come back for alumni events, they’ll say “Oh Dr. Jack, I graduated 10 years ago and I was a real jerk and I’m sorry, but I’ve grown up a lot,” (SU304, I64).

Hearing officers were connecting with participants’ development by using the student conduct meeting and the misconduct that brought students into the office as an educational opportunity. Each hearing officer described the conduct meeting as a rich opportunity for learning and growth and a place where positive change could be nurtured.

Part of ensuring that the student conduct process was an educational experience involved hearing officers helping students understand what they could learn from the incident and the hearing. For example, hearing officers asked students, “How does this impact you moving forward,” and “Who was impacted that night,” and I noted those as intent vs. impact. Hearing officers sought understanding about who students impacted, how they were personally impacted, and how well they understood that upon reflection. Similarly, I noted that hearing officers asked,
”What would you have done differently,” or “Looking back, what would you do now,” as done differently. Helping students see options they could have taken, other than the one that led to the conduct hearing occurred in every hearing. I noted statements like, “What can you do to avoid this situation in the future,” and “What can you do to not end up here [in student conduct] again,” as alternative options. Katie asked a student at RU, “How can you make sure you’re not in this position again for the rest of the year,” while others said things like, “Let’s not make the same mistake again,” I noted statements like those as avoid future misconduct.

I collapsed those four initial codes into two categories: exploring alternatives and showing impact. Hearing officers all described the conduct process as reflective, hoping that the hearing gave students the opportunity to see how the misconduct occurred and how they could approach situations in the future differently. This required exploring alternatives with the students in the hearing. For Maria (RU), this required helping the student look back on the incident:

I want to get to what the students’ comfort level is and what they were feeling and thinking at the time –what they had thought at that moment, and then what they think now….and how that growth may have occurred or not occurred (RU483, I99).

Hearing officers used reflective questions to help the student understand why they engaged in the misconduct and what pathways were there at the time that they did not see. Uncovering those alternatives for students helped them see different outcomes. Also important was showing impact. Although hearing officers wanted students to see that there were ways for the incident to have ended differently, the incident did occur, and the hearing was taking place to address that incident. King described the importance of helping students see the impact of their misconduct:

Because the other thing is sometimes students don’t have the ability to have that personal accountability or responsibility quite yet, or maybe just for that specific circumstance. And so helping them develop a little bit of that—OK, maybe I DO have some responsibility in this. Maybe it’s not solely their responsibility, but maybe they have some responsibility. And so that’s part of what they need to kind of internalize to take responsibility for the decisions they make before they can be like—OK, well now I need to do something different because it was MY decision that resulted in where I’m at right now (RU580, I196).

For King showing the impact of the behavior was the starting point for better decisions in the future.
After my analysis, I collapsed those two categories (exploring alternatives and showing impact) into a final theme under situating learning: connecting experience to future learning/decision-making. In hearings on all three campuses, hearing officers wanted to help students stop and examine what they had done and how that could serve as the basis for future actions that were more productive and positive. One way hearing officers helped students do that was by asking them to examine their intent versus the impact of their behavior. Maria (RU) met with a student about an incident where another student was hurt. The student was asserting that he did not intend for the injury to occur but Maria told him, “You need to be mindful of intent versus impact.” She said, “You did not intend for anyone to get hurt but that was the impact,” (RU370, H318).

Helping students explore alternative actions than those that led to their conduct hearing was also a common way hearing officers were connecting experiences to future learning/decision-making. I observed Maria (RU) say in a hearing, “Let’s talk about what could have been done differently.” After they discussed a few options she reminded him, “There is always at least one alternative option,” (RU371, H319). Her point was that there were alternative choices available to him, and she wanted to help him see what those were.

In addition to exploring alternatives to the choices they made, helping students recognize the specific conditions that may trigger them to engage in misconduct and how to avoid that in the future was a common part of conduct hearings. Fitzwilliam said:

For some of my students, I want them reflecting back on what happened at the moment in time that they made a conscious decision to cross the line and engage in that behavior. Some students have no idea what they were thinking or what they were doing. I hope I can get them to think about what was going on (CU271, I159).

Fitzwilliam hoped that this conversation would help students avoid future conduct hearings. Helping students fully explore why they engaged in misconduct, to see alternatives should similar situations arise again, and to encourage different choices in the future were all ways hearing officers were connecting experience to future learning/decision-making.

The situating learning principle was evident in the student conduct environment. Hearing officers prioritized welcoming students, affirming their willingness to share their experiences first-hand. This helped hearing officers allay fears, become relatable, and build trust. By hearing the incident firsthand, hearing officers discerned developmental needs of students and connected their incident to future decision-making.
Principle 3 Mutual Meaning

I identified 14 codes that were behaviors related to the *mutual meaning* principle. That first iteration of codes is outlined in Table 5, which should be read from the bottom up. In the second iteration, I grouped those 14 initial codes into 8 categories. In my final analysis, I collapsed those 8 categories into 4 themes: a) *helping clarify perspectives*, b) *connecting educator knowledge to participants*, c) *allowing students to experience consequences*, and d) *allowing students to learn by doing*. Evidence came from both observations and interviews.

Some examples of those 14 codes are: *help me understand*, *telling others about the incident*, *re-capping information*, and *discrepancies*. When hearing officers asked, “Do you understand why this is a violation,” or “Talk to me about your decision,” I coded that language as *help me understand*. In addition to seeking understanding, I observed hearing officers ask, “Who have you told about what happened,” or “Have you talked to your friends,” and I coded those comments as *telling others about the incident*. After asking questions like these, it was common for hearing officers to reflect back to the student what they had said. When I observed this, I noted it as *re-capping information*. For example, Katie (RU) said back to a student who had described his alcohol violation, “You blacked out twice,” as a way to re-cap what he had shared during his hearing. This was a common practice of all hearing officers. Finally, hearing officers confronted conflicting information directly with students. Amara (RU) met with a student who told her that he knew there should be no alcohol in a residence hall room, yet it was present. Amara asked, “You are under 21 and you saw alcohol, why didn’t you leave?” I coded exchanges like this as *discrepancies*.

I collapsed those initial codes into two categories: *broaden perspective* and *process the incident*. In conduct meetings, hearing officers hoped to help *broaden perspective* on what happened. The conversations evolved from focusing first on what students had to say about what happened to helping them see the incident from the lens of others. Fitzwilliam (CU) wanted students to “understand how your behavior is impacting your room or the floor you live on.” This was particularly important for violations that occurred in residence hall communities. Similarly, Maria (RU) wanted students to see that “your actions can have an impact on others.” In both examples, hearing officers were helping the student see beyond themselves in their misconduct. In the second initial theme, *process the incident*, hearing officers helped students
Table 5
*Code Mapping for Principle 3 Mutual Meaning*

RQ 1c. How is the *Mutual Meaning* principle in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Iteration: Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM1. Helping clarify perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2. Connecting educator knowledge to participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3. Allowing students to experience consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM4. Allowing students to learn by doing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Iteration: Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM1. Broaden perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM1a. Process the incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2. Sharing rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2a. Connecting to resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3. Discussing outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3a. Discussing sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM4. Learn from what happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM4a. Giving back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Iteration: Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM1a. Help me understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM1b. Telling others about incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM1c. Recapping information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM1d. Discrepancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2a. Explaining policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2b. Determining sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2c. Offering campus resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2d. Be a resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3a. Consequences for actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3b. Future consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM3c. What happens next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM4a. Continue the dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM4b. Learning moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM5c. Discussing requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
understand what happened in a new way. Hearing officers hoped that students left the hearing understanding why they engaged in the behavior. Fitzwilliam (CU) shared:

“It’s not always a question of “did you do it”? It’s “do you understand why it is a violation?” And try to engage in that conversation so at least there’s a takeaway of maybe I begin to understand why I’m here in the first place (CU148, I36).

The process of unpacking the incident, for Fitzwilliam, was oftentimes more important than the outcome of the hearing.

As part of my final analysis, I collapsed the two categories, broaden perspective and process the incident, into my first theme associated with mutual meaning, helping clarify perspectives. Hearing officers wanted to help students see their misconduct and its impact from the perspectives of others involved in the incident. Hearing officers did this to help broaden the students’ perspective to include how others may have been impacted by their misconduct. For example, in a hearing at SU, Jack asked a student to identify who was impacted by his misconduct. The student provided a list of those impacted, including the hearing officer (SU81, H41). In that hearing, Jack helped the student see beyond the personal impact to see the perspective of others involved. I asked Jack why he did this and he said:

This incident took time away from the community. And so I want students to take time processing that. Students that I feel like “get it” I don’t have to go into complete detail about it. The ones who don’t get it I’ll kind of talk about the time that other employees spent dealing with the incident (SU399, I159).

Another important component of helping clarify perspectives was seeking to understand why students had engaged in the behavior in the first place. One key strategy hearing officers used to do this was reflecting what students said back to them. King (RU) shared:

I reflect back what they’re saying because sometimes a student says things and they don’t realize what they’ve said. And then when I reflect it back they’re like – Oops, that sounds so bad when you say it. So it helps them process (RU565, I181).

Helping clarify perspectives also involved helping students reflect on why they engaged in the misconduct. Fitzwilliam (CU) took a very direct approach with every student he met with in hearings. He asked each student, “What do you have to say for yourself?” (CU21, H10). I asked him why he did that and he said:

I don’t think I ask it in a demeaning or condescending way: It’s more along the lines of understanding what they are feeling and thinking. If you give students the opportunity to actually reflect upon their misconduct by asking them to think about for a second what do
I actually have to say about this? What is my response? Not just am I responsible or not, but what do I have to say about it (CU162, I50-50).

Hearing officers spent time clarifying perspectives to help students see their incident from multiple angles. This helped students take a step back from the personal impact to see the community implications of their misconduct. It also created opportunities for personal reflection on decisions to illuminate strategies to avoid future misconduct.

At various stages in the student conduct hearings, officers had to convey information to students. I observed this in several ways. First, I observed hearing officers say things like, “Do you understand the appeals process,” or “Are you familiar with our policy on alcohol and drugs,” which I noted as explaining policies and procedures. These explanations were a way for hearing officers to share their knowledge with students during the hearing. Also, I observed hearing officers say things like, “Let’s talk sanctions,” which I noted as determining sanctions. In interviews when hearing officers said things like, “Sometimes I give students a choice in sanctions,” I noted that as determining sanctions as well. I also noted hearing officers say, “Is there a specific resource that would be helpful,” and I coded those as offering campus resources. Similarly, “How can this office keep you from violating policy,” and “How can I be helpful to you,” were noted as be a resource.

I collapsed these initial codes into two categories. They were sharing rationale and connecting to resources. For sharing rationale, hearing officers made sure that students understood the sanctions and the reasoning behind the decision they made in the case. Letting students know why they violated policy and why certain sanctions were assigned was an important part of the hearing. This was particularly important if there were sanctions that were non-negotiable based on the misconduct. At SU, Jack described how some cases require specific sanctions:

There will be certain violations for which I feel that they’re non-negotiable sanctions. If you violated the alcohol policy you need to take an educational course; if you violated the drug policy, if you’ve been in possession of marijuana, I feel that you need to get online education for that. But for the other things, the things that deal with reflection or giving something back to the community, I think there’s more room for flexibility there (SU285-286, I45-46).

Whether the sanctions or rationale were flexible or rigid, Jack still explained the decision fully.
The second category, connecting to resources, included connecting students to both campus resources and telling students that they were welcome to consider the hearing officer and the student conduct office as a resource in the future. I asked Taylor (SU) to describe why in one particular hearing she spent so much time talking with a student about resources. She said:

I want to figure out what are some other techniques that are some outlets and how do you see the [Counseling Center] as a resource. And if not the [Counseling Center], how do we connect you with off-campus resources as well. Because with the last [student] it seems like employment is something that she’s [in] need of. And then she’s considering two jobs at that. So I wanted to connect her with the employment office as well, just let her know what those resources are (SU379, I139).

For Taylor, this student needed to know that there were places on campus that could help her, and she wanted to do what she could to ensure that connection was made.

As part of my final analysis, I collapsed the sharing rationale and connecting to resources categories into the second theme under mutual meaning: connecting educator knowledge to participants. Hearing officers had important knowledge to share with students. Hearing officers first used their expertise in explaining policies and procedures. At SU, Jack explained in detail their illegal drug policy, their zero tolerance stance on offenses, the sanctions if found responsible, and their potential cumulative impact for future violations (SU77, H37).

Connecting educator knowledge to participants was also evident in hearing officers’ consideration of potential educational experiences/sanctions. Hearing officers used what they learned in the hearing, along with their expertise, to determine sanctions and educational experiences. In this way, hearing officers connected their expertise to students. Taylor (SU) met with several students for alcohol violations and asked extensive questions about their alcohol use. When I asked her why, she said:

I want to know how much education they have around alcohol, because then I want to know if what I assigned is a good education sanction for them, or if they would be better suited for something else (SU351, I111).

Finally, hearing officers offered themselves as a resource to students as a way of connecting educator knowledge to participants. At the end of one hearing I observed with Amara (RU), she told the students that she was a resource for them if they ever needed anything (RU343, H291). In my interview with Taylor at SU, she captured the sentiment of hearing officers’ desire to be a resource beyond the student conduct meeting:
I’m interested in more than just code of conduct and possible violations of upholding the code of conduct, that there’s more that I can offer. I’m interested in what students do because then I have a way to connect [them] with the university (SU 347, I107).

As I continued my analysis, I made note of hearing officers discussing consequences with students. When I heard hearing officers say, “Here’s what I am thinking,” or “These are the consequences,” I coded those as consequences for actions. In these exchanges, hearing officers were describing the requirements the students would have to complete. Additionally, I heard hearing officers say, “Next time the consequences are more serious,” or “If you get in trouble again you may have more serious consequences,” and I coded those as future consequences. When hearing officers would say, “Let me explain the sanctions,” or “Here are the next steps in the process,” I coded those as what happens next.

I condensed those initial codes into two categories: discussing outcomes and discussing sanctions. Discussing outcomes was part of the final moments of each student conduct hearing. Hearing officers shared with students why they were responsible for the violation in question. Discussing outcomes often included an explanation of why the decision was made. I asked Maria why that was important. She said:

What it boils down to is ensuring a fundamentally fair process. And making sure that they FEEL that it’s a fundamentally fair process. They might not like the outcome but at least they understand this is my approach—I’ve [been] very transparent about that—this is how I make my decisions; this is the information and this is how I filter it. It’s not a secret. My hope is that they feel comfortable with my decision-making. So again, even if they don’t agree with it, they can say: “At least she’s fair,” (RU644, I260).

Discussing sanctions with students was part of the conclusion of each student conduct hearing I observed. This included describing what would happen after the hearing. Also critical to this part of the hearing was letting students know how these sanctions were designed to help minimize the likelihood of a future offense. Katie (RU) shared:

So sometimes I’ll phrase the question: “What would help you be successful?” I don’t even use the word “sanction or consequence.” What would help you be successful? This situation it’s not good; it wasn’t healthy for you. So we want you to be able to be a successful student here. What can we do to help you get there? And students often will tell you what they need. So if you CAN work that into and be creative with the sanctioning, then I feel like it’s a win. I don’t want students to ever have a sanction where that’s not impactful. If I CAN make it—let’s do it (RU670, I286).
In my final analysis, I collapsed the *discussing outcomes* and *discussing sanctions* categories into one theme, *allowing students to experience consequences*, which is the third theme associated with *mutual meaning*. The student conduct system was an accountability system for behavior that conflicted with campus expectations; therefore, consequences were an integral part of the student conduct environment. On all three campuses, hearing officers shared outcomes that included loss of privileges and educational requirements. In assigning these consequences, hearing officers wanted students to understand two things. First, they wanted students to appreciate that their choices had consequences. King at RU said:

> I find that a lot of times students will just act and not think about what they’re doing or what the outcome could be. And it’s important to know that every decision that they make has some sort of outcome. Some sort of consequence or response. And a number of students haven’t gotten to the point where they realize that yet (RU572, I188).

Second, hearing officers wanted students to understand the potential consequences of future misconduct. I observed a hearing with Jack at SU where he reminded students that future violations would lead to more serious consequences. When asked what he hoped to accomplish by saying that, he said:

> I would hope that they appreciated and [understood] that if this behavior is repeated that there will be more serious consequences (SU293, I53).

Fitzwilliam also wanted students to be fully aware of what future misconduct could mean for them:

> I want them to know that if they get caught, they know what’s going to happen. I don’t want them to come in and think “Oh now what?” We’ve already talked about it. I’ve already put it out there. I want you to fully understand this is our process. If you get into trouble again you have no one to blame but yourself. Don’t come to me and think I’m being the bad person. I’ve already told you that this is the process (CU263, I151).

During my interviews with hearing officers and in hearing observations, I noticed that the process did not end with the conclusion of the hearing. Hearing officers often said things like “I want you to reflect on what happened after the hearing,” and I coded those as *continue the dialogue*. I also noted hearing officers telling students they wanted them to “learn from what happened,” and I coded those as *learning moment*. Hearing officers also went into detail about requirements. For example, when I heard hearing officers say, “Your paper is due in two weeks” and “I will email you the instructions for your assignment,” I coded those as *discussing requirements*. These initial codes were first collapsed into two categories: *learn from what
happened, and giving back. The first theme, learn from what happened, was a common hope among hearing officers. Each described hoping students would take the experience and learn something meaningful from it and continue on their educational journey. Jack (SU) summarized his hopes for that learning:

Well I don’t think it’s something that you’re going to see working right there in front of you, I think it’s something that people take away with them and think about. I think very little of what I do in student conduct results in an “ah-ha” moment, as people are sitting there where you’re sitting. I think it’s an ah-ha moment that occurs a day, a week…sometimes five years later (SU302, I62).

Even if the learning comes later, it was important to hearing officers that it continued after the hearing.

The second category, giving back, was a common rationale for assigning educational sanctions. For example, Taylor told a student in a hearing that she felt that the student had, “taken something from the community and that [the sanctions] are an opportunity to give back,” (SU189, H132). For Taylor, the hearing was the impetus for some community restitution since the misconduct had taken something away, the student could learn by giving back to her community.

I collapsed those two categories (learn from what happened, and giving back) into the final theme under mutual meaning: allowing students to learn by doing. Hearing officers at all three campuses provided opportunities for students to continue learning and reflecting after their hearing. Students were assigned a variety of educational sanctions that included attending workshops, writing reflection papers, and making community restitution.

I observed several hearings at SU where both Jack and Taylor asked students if they had experience with community service in other contexts (SU93, H53). In these cases, this led to a dialogue about their community restitution sanction where students complete service hours as part of their sanction. Jack explained community restitution:

The theory behind community restitution is that is that if you’ve done something that took something away from the community, we would like the student to give back to the community by performing some kind of service (SU305, I65).

When asked why this was important to students learning from their incident, Jack elaborated:

I don’t think a student in a hearing can come to a concrete realization of what he or she took away from the community. I think they can do community service as a concrete
way of paying it back. It’s something for them, again, to potentially think about as time goes on and for them to create a greater sense of responsibility (SU305, I66).

Also part of the theme, allowing students to learn by doing, were opportunities for students to write reflection papers on their learning from misconduct. Reflection papers were described to students as “a way to continue to think about the incident,” (Fitzwilliam, CU70, H44). Fitzwilliam took that point a bit further with another student when he told him, “We have started a conversation about what you are feeling and learning and I want you to continue that,” (CU101, H75). Opportunities that required the student to actively engage in community restitution, write a paper, or attend a workshop put the student in charge of continuing the learning and reflection that began in the student conduct hearing. Evidence of the mutual meaning principle was evident in the student conduct environment. Hearing officers helped students see the incident more clearly and from multiple perspectives by exploring the impact of the incident on themselves and others. Hearing officers used their knowledge to identify educational sanctions that identified ways students could learn from the incident as well as experience appropriate consequences for their misconduct.

In this chapter I have discussed the evidence of each principle: validating capacity, situating learning, and mutual meaning that I observed in the student conduct environment. In Chapter 5, I will describe how the three principles interact with one another in unique ways in the student conduct environment.
Chapter Five
Discussion and Implications

In this chapter I note the limitations of the study. Next I discuss the research findings and review how these findings relate to previous research. This is followed by a discussion of how my findings might influence future practice, research, and policy. I end the chapter with concluding remarks.

Limitations

There were limitations to my study that merit discussion. One was my study design. I chose qualitative methodology to answer my research questions. Qualitative studies are not generalizable to a broader population. As such, applying the findings of my study to other campuses may not be appropriate.

Additionally, my study was limited to three campuses. On each campus, there were hearings that I was not able to observe, primarily due to schedule constraints. For example, when I was at RU, several hearings overlapped, and I attended hearings that allowed me to observe each hearing officer at least once. Also, while at all three campuses, I had at least one hearing that was cancelled when the student did not attend the meeting. The hearings that I did not observe and those that were cancelled may have provided different information than the ones included in my study, and this may have limited my findings. Additionally, all of the hearings I observed were less serious in nature (not resulting in suspension or dismissal from the university) and if I had observed more serious hearings I may have reached different conclusions.

My interview protocols were based on what I observed in each hearing. My findings may have been influenced by what caught my attention when observing and which questions I chose to ask in my interview protocols with hearing officers. If I had made different observations, that might have led me to ask questions that would have provided different responses from participants. My findings are limited by the questions I chose to ask.

Finally, my prior experience in student conduct probably created bias that influenced my analysis of the data. My own experiences hearing cases could have influenced how I collected the data and/or interpreted the findings. A researcher with different professional history may have reached different conclusions than I did.
Discussion

My study was designed to answer my overarching research question, which asked how each of the three principles of the learning partnerships model (LPM) were evident in the student conduct environment where learning seemed to be occurring. In my data analysis, the principles of the LPM were evident in the student conduct environment. I identified 12 themes that described behaviors related to the principles of the LPM – four themes for each of the three principles. I described the data that supported those themes in Chapter Four. However, as I reflected on my findings, I realized that the principles did not occur in isolation from one another; in fact, the hearing officers’ behaviors highlighted the interactions that occur amongst the principles.

That led me to review the 12 themes again. As I did so, I realized that I could further collapse those themes into categories of themes. I recognized that those categories of themes could be summarized into four key findings that described the hearing officers’ behaviors: a) creating a connection with the student, b) seeking understanding of the situation c) providing encouragement, and d) promoting learning and autonomy. The analysis that led to those findings is outlined in Table 6, which should be read from the bottom up.

Educators can intentionally use the three principles to create environments where self-authorship can flourish (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Enacting the principles can create conditions for educators to join students on their developmental journey by providing challenge and support to bridge the developmental gap (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). My four key findings demonstrate an approach to the principles enacted by hearing officers that began with intentionally creating an environment that supported learning and then promoting that learning over the course of the hearing.

Creating Connections with Students

The first key finding of my study was creating connections with students. Baxter Magolda and King (2004) described the LPM as an ongoing partnership between the educator and the student. There is little doubt that a student conduct hearing is anxiety producing for students. They know that they have been accused of violating university standards, yet they may not fully understand what that means. They are likely to be apprehensive at the start of the hearing. That is why it is incumbent upon hearing officers to create connections with them. To do that, officers dedicated time to learning about the students’ experiences outside of the
Table 6
*Code Mapping for Principles of the LPM in the Student Conduct Environment*

RQ 1.1. How are the principles in the learning partnerships model (LPM) reflected in student conduct environments where learning seems to be influenced in a positive manner?

**Key Findings**

A. Creating a connection with the student
B. Seeking understanding of the situation
C. Providing encouragement
D. Promoting learning and autonomy

**Categories of Themes**

A. Welcoming environment and sharing expertise
   - A1. Showing interest learner’s experience (VC2)
   - A2. Building rapport (SL1)
   - A3. Connecting educator knowledge to participants (MM2)

B. Processing the incident
   - B1. Soliciting perspectives (VC1)
   - B2. Hearing stories (first-hand experiences are powerful) (SL2)
   - B3. Helping clarify perspectives (MM1)

C. What hearing officers provide
   - C1. Offering respect (VC3)
   - C2. Boosting confidence (VC4)
   - C3. Connecting with participant’s development (SL3)

D. Preventing future misconduct
   - D1. Connecting experience to future learning/decision-making (SL4)
   - D2. Allowing students to experience consequences (MM3)
   - D3. Allowing students to learn by doing (MM4)

**Themes by Principle**

VC1. Soliciting perspectives
VC2. Showing interest in the learner’s experiences
VC3. Offering respect
VC4. Boosting confidence

SL1. Building rapport
SL2. Hearing stories (first-hand experiences are powerful)
SL3. Connecting with participant’s development
SL4. Connecting experience to future learning/decision-making

MM1. Helping clarify perspectives
MM2. Connecting educator knowledge to participants
MM3. Allowing students to experience consequences
MM4. Allowing students to learn by doing
misconduct as outlined in the findings related to the validating capacity principle: showing interest in the learner’s experiences. The evidence was clear that hearing officers spent time in the hearing helping students feel comfortable by asking about their interests. They cared about more than the misconduct that led to the hearing, and what was occurring in the student’s life was important to the hearing officer and perhaps important to helping the student move forward after the incident. As Jack said:

I am really interested in meeting people and have them view me as someone who cares about them as a whole person—not just as an incident (SU260, I20).

Creating a meaningful connection required more than simply caring about a student’s interests. In every hearing, student conduct hearing officers wanted to create an environment where students could share information about themselves and feel comfortable talking about the incident. Hearing officers relied on behaviors aimed at building rapport, an element associated with the situating learning principle. Officers could build on the groundwork laid by learning about students’ interests to discuss more difficult topics. Building rapport was a necessary component of creating connections with students who were apprehensive about the process. Creating that rapport went beyond simply verbal exchanges, however. For example, hearing officers gave students choices of where to sit in their offices and portrayed a calm and open demeanor so students would feel comfortable opening up as the hearing progressed and the topics of conversation increased in intensity.

The final element that was critical to creating connections with students was connecting educator knowledge to participants, an element associated with the mutual meaning principle. While it was important for hearing officers to encourage sharing and to portray themselves as a welcoming and supportive person, officers also had to weave their knowledge of the student conduct policies into the conversation. Likewise, they had to identify and explain appropriate sanctions to encourage learning from the process. Hearing officers prioritized making connections so they had deeper information about the student at the ready to assist them in the decision-making process. Those connections, coupled with the hearing officer’s expertise, helped to ensure that the student’s sanctions and future learning were connected in some meaningful way. King summarized the overall importance of creating connections with students:
I think, like I mentioned building that rapport. You’ve got a student who I never met them before. They never met me before. And sometimes these conversations are really difficult; sometimes you get into really deep serious things that are going on with the student. And so I think that rapport is really important to get them to be willing to talk to you and open up to you. And I think students come into a conduct meeting with kind of a wall built up. They get this really formal letter. They’re like—man, I’m in trouble or I feel like I’m getting called to the Principal’s Office—or things like that. And so I think there’s already a little bit of a wall there. And so as much as I can break that down, I try to do that because I think that (1) the student’s probably going to be more likely and willing to share information with me, which means I can make better informed decisions, but also helps me get at what are some of those things going on behind the behavior (RU536-537, I152-153).

The foundation of an on-going partnership is a connection between the student and the educator. In the student conduct context that connection must be built because the student would not likely be interacting with the hearing officer outside of the misconduct and would not interact with that officer in the future, unless the groundwork for a potential relationship is laid during the hearing process. Therefore, time spent creating connections is important to creating a supportive context for learning both during and after the hearing. A high level of support at the start of the hearing mirrors the heightened focus on support in the beginning of a learning partnership to create a foundation for the more challenging experiences that will follow.

**Seeking Understanding of the Situation**

I labeled my second key *seeking understanding of the situation*. Important to this finding was *soliciting perspectives*, an element of the *validating capacity* principle. To effectively resolve a student conduct violation, hearing officers asked questions to thoroughly understand what happened. Beyond asking questions, hearing officers in my study sought a deep comprehension of the incident at hand. This was evident in how important it was for hearing officers to encourage students to tell their stories (*hearing stories [first hand experiences as powerful]*), a behavior associated with the *situating learning* principle.

On all three campuses, hearing officers had initial reports that described the misconduct from the reporting party’s perspective. One could argue that a decision could be made from that report. However, that was not an option for the hearing officers in my study. They wanted to hear first-hand from students what occurred and ask questions about the students’ perspective as well as questions about how others perceived the incident. They wanted to know why students
engaged in the misconduct, how they felt after the incident was over and the report was filed, and how students perceived their misconduct through the lenses of others.

Seeing the incident from the lenses of others was important to the final element connected to this key finding, helping clarify perspectives (associated with the mutual meaning principle). By fully processing the incident from multiple vantage points, students could begin to appreciate the complexity of their misconduct, seeing it from their own point of view as well as the point of view of others. This was one important way hearing officers helped students see events in more complex ways. Examining the situation from others’ vantage points built on the acknowledgment that others had a unique angle on the misconduct. Hearing officers were able to question students using a variety of perspectives and use those perspectives as the basis for continued learning. Officers used the incident as a platform to engage students in conversations that highlighted that there was more than one way to look at a situation and that while students’ have an important perspective, understanding what others see can be an important learning experience.

An important outcome of the LPM is for students to begin to see increased complexity in relationships with others, or increased interpersonal intricacy (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). This is developmentally challenging work. In my study, students were asked to see their actions from the vantage point of others only after they had already answered questions about their interests and perspectives. The more difficult conversation about others’ perspectives took place in the context of a supportive environment generated by creating a connection with the student. Without that supportive environment, it may have been more difficult for hearing officers to challenge students to critically examine their behavior.

**Providing Encouragement**

The student conduct process can be quite intimidating for students. In light of that, hearing officers engaged in affirming students throughout the process. Thus, I labeled my third key finding providing encouragement. It was important that hearing officers demonstrate support for students in their interactions in the student conduct office and during the hearings. Challenge is inherent in the student conduct process. Students participate in hearings because they have engaged in behavior that is contrary to university expectations. Oftentimes students expected the hearing officer to view them as a “bad person,” and they feared that label was unshakeable. In offering respect, an element associated with the validating capacity principle,
hearing officers were explicit with students that mistakes are part of learning and that the officer’s job was to help students identify alternative pathways they could take in the future to avoid misconduct. I selected these three campuses as sites for the study because prior assessments had suggested that students who interacted with the conduct environments on these campuses reported evidence of learning. Hearing officers’ ability to help students identify alternative pathways may be part of that learning.

*Providing encouragement* extended beyond the conduct issue as evident in the element *boosting confidence* (associated with the *validating capacity* principle). Hearing officers enthusiastically encouraged students to pursue their goals and to look past the student conduct hearing. They wanted to engage students in developmentally appropriate conversations in the hearings to help maximize learning. While the nature of the student conduct process centers around accountability, affirming statements and providing information about other campus resources were quite common. Hearing officers did not tear students down for their poor choices; rather, they encouraged students to persevere through the challenge and use the support the officers and the institution could offer them to succeed. This is important because oftentimes hearings end with sanctions imposed on students that require the student to rise to the challenge of meetings those expectations. Students are more able to rise to that challenge if they feel confident.

The most important behavior hearing officers engaged in during their student conduct hearings was *connecting with participant’s development*. This element, associated with the *situating learning* principle, describes how hearing officers promoted learning. By demonstrating their support and encouragement, they then connected their expertise on the student conduct process to discern educationally meaningful sanctions for students. Hearing officers all described themselves as a resource for students, and they fully considered all of the information provided from students when determining the most appropriate outcomes. This attention to holistic student development meant that hearing officers often asked student to share what they felt would be helpful to their learning and considered that information when sanctioning and connecting students to other campus resources.

**Promoting Learning and Autonomy**

My final key finding was *promoting learning and autonomy*. First, hearing officers had to engage in behaviors designed at *connecting experience to future learning/decision-making*, an
element associated with the *situating learning* principle. Toward the end of hearings, I observed hearing officers ask students to consider alternatives ways they could respond if they found themselves in similar situations in the future. After talking about their perspective on their behavior and discussing their actions from the perspectives of others, students were prepared to consider how they could take what they had learned and apply it to future situations. Hearing officers intentionally engaged in this dialogue toward the end of the hearing so they could help make connections to what had already been discussed in the hearing. This was also a natural transition to discussing the consequences of the misconduct.

*Allowing students to experience consequences*, a theme associated with the *mutual meaning* principle, was an important step to *promoting learning and autonomy*. As the hearings were concluding, hearing officers’ focused on how students could take ownership over the next phase of learning from their misconduct. This included accepting the consequences for their misconduct. It also included encouraging students to avoid similar situations and considering the circumstances that resulted in the misconduct. While that was a necessary and important component of the student conduct process, hearing officers hoped that students would see beyond the initial sanction to the ultimate goal – their learning and success. Jack illustrated this well when he told me:

> And it isn’t always about giving what they want. Students don’t like being found in violation; they don’t like being sanctioned. But I think that if I’m doing my job well, they understand why I’m doing what I’m doing, and they understand that it’s something which—although it may be unpleasant in the short term—it’s going to facilitate their success in the long term (SU249, I9).

In addition to issuing sanctions, hearings officers designed educational requirements for students to continue learning. This was evident in *allowing students to learn by doing* (associated with the *mutual meaning* principle). Officers used their expertise to create educational interventions that would help students see themselves as capable learners while considering the broader impact of their actions on the community. Sanctions included active learning components like completing community service and structured reflection activities that required students to take control over the next phase of their learning. Hearing officers offered support to students if they had questions on their assignments and encouraged students to come back and see them after the hearing. Hearing officers all hoped that the hearing would be a launching point for continued learning and reflection. The end of the hearing did not signify the
end of the connection between the student and the hearing officer. It was the beginning of a partnership with the student that would continue the learning at least through the completion of sanctions.

The LPM can be used to structure environments where co-creation of meaning is required so students grow interpersonally and intrapersonally as they struggle to navigate their internal beliefs about community and accountability (Piper & Buckley, 2004). In my study, the hearing officers and students worked together to dialogue about what happened, and each provided input into the potential outcome. By using that process, students may feel more ownership over the sanctions than if the hearing officers had not spent as much time creating a supportive space that engaged the student in meaningful ways. A student conduct hearing results in sanctions when the student is found to have violated policy, regardless of the approach taken. On the campuses in my study, hearing officers took care to understand who the student was and how they were making sense of the incident. They also engaged the student in meaningful reflection to produce the most educationally valuable educational outcomes. The hearing was more than the space to deliver punitive sanctions. It was a rich learning environment.

Overall, hearing officers capitalized on the challenging conditions created by student misconduct to build a welcoming environment where students felt valued. This enabled officers to solicit information so they could better understand students’ lived experiences and developmental capacities. They used this information to create expectations for future behavior that were supportive, while encouraging student autonomy and accountability. These behaviors, collectively, created conditions in the student conduct environment where hearing officers could intentionally promote learning and development.

**Relationship of the Findings to Prior Research**

The research on the student conduct environment is quite limited so this study expands professionals’ understanding of how the conduct process can promote learning and development. My study is the only study that has used the LPM to examine student conduct environments where learning seems to be occurring, so my findings provide a unique contribution to the literature. Given that, I first examine how my findings relate to prior research on the LPM and conclude by exploring how my findings connect to prior research on student conduct.

In previous studies, the LPM has been used to structure curricular environments to promote student learning (Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004; Johnson, 2013; Olsen, Bekken,
McConnell, & Walter, 2011; Rogers, Magolda, & Baxter Magolda, 2004; Swanson, 2010). In my study, hearing officers intentionally moved from a more supportive approach to one with increased challenge as they questioned students about their misconduct and asked them to view it from multiple perspectives. This process in hearings mirrored the intentional movement from simple to complex learning in classrooms that requires increasing levels of challenge and support from instructors as described by Olsen, et.al. (2011). Similarly, the challenging of viewpoints noted in my findings is much like students challenging theirs and others’ worldviews in the classroom (Haynes, 2004; Hornak & Ortiz, 2004). To do this in a curricular setting required balancing challenging experiences in a supportive and reciprocal environment (Haynes, 2004; Olsen, et. al., 2011; Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, 2004). My findings affirm these prior results as hearing officers worked to build an environment where the student felt they had been heard and encouraged to share while confronting challenging questions about their misconduct.

The effective implementation of the principles of the LPM in a co-curricular context requires educators who can capitalize on the inherent challenge in the environment and provide the necessary support to promote learning and development (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Egart and Healy (2004) in their study took a challenging environment (an urban site for an internship) and built the necessary support structures, including reflection and hands-on activities, to promote development toward self-authorship. The findings of my study show that hearing officers take a similar approach when using a difficult environment (a student conduct hearing) and incorporate hands-on activities (sanctions like community service) and reflection to promote learning.

Further, the findings from this study confirm the importance of perspective sharing and taking for hearing officers. Hearing officers spent significant time encouraging students to share their story as well as asking them to consider the perspectives of others. Hearing others’ perspective allows for mutual meaning-making; when students can share a personal story with peers, it validates their capacity to know and situates learning in their experience (Quaye & Baxter Magolda, 2007). Hearing officers intentionally used the hearings as a place for students to recall their experiences directly and related them in meaningful ways to their future actions.

My findings explored how educators in the student conduct environment can promote learning using the LPM as a framework for that learning. Students report that when they make meaning of their conduct experiences, they increase their understanding of the process and their
likelihood to refrain from future misconduct (Howell, 2005). In my study, hearing officers engaged in behaviors to ensure that students were reflecting on their misconduct in meaningful ways and were fully informed about the conduct process throughout their hearing. Howell (2005) also suggested that as students consider consequences of their actions, how their actions impact others, and how the student conduct process works, they report learning from the process. Hearing officers in my study engaged students in intentional conversations around these topics. Similarly, the way in which they are treated in the student conduct process is a key indicator of satisfaction with and learning from the experience (Lucas, 2009). Treating students with kindness and respect, while showing genuine interest in their experiences during the incident and in their life more broadly, was evident in my findings. Overall, hearing officers established an environment for the hearing, and that environment had the greatest transformative power to promote learning and development (King, 2012). The data in my study clearly corroborated this finding. Stimpson and Janosik (2015) reaffirm that hearing officers have a significant influence on positive student learning outcomes. My findings support that hearing officers on campus where learning seems to be occurring are taking great care to establish connections with students and create a welcoming space for students to share, while also challenging them to view their misconduct from multiple perspectives.

Implications for Practice, Research, and Policy

The findings of my study have potential implications for practice, research, and policy. To start, my findings provide implications for practice, particularly for those working directly in student conduct offices, but also for key constituents on campus like other professionals in Housing and Residence Life who deal with conduct cases. I review my implications for practice as they relate to my key findings: creating connections with the student, seeking understanding of the situation, providing encouragement, and promoting learning and autonomy.

Creating Connections with the Student

Hearing officers have direct impact on the students they encounter in hearings. My findings provide concrete strategies to promote learning and development in those meetings. Hearing officers should adjust their practices to take time to create meaningful connections with students. This includes spending time asking students about their curricular and co-curricular lives as part of the conduct meetings. These connections foster a relationship where students feel more open talking about themselves and the incident that, in turn, helps the hearing officer.
increase their understanding of the student and the situation at hand. If hearing officers adjust their practice to include encouragement, students may feel empowered to continue to learn from the incident. All of these are behaviors that hearing officers can easily employ in their daily practice. The findings from my study show that hearing officers are most effective when they can spend time with each student in their student conduct meetings. This may require campuses to evaluate the resources allocated to student conduct staffing. Student conduct offices are often staffed with a small number of hearing officers. Additional human resources may need to be allocated to the student conduct offices so hearing officers can enact the principles of the LPM in every hearing. Otherwise the volume of hearings that each hearing officer is required to adjudicate may limit the time investment that can be made with each student.

Another way student conduct offices and their staff can create connections with students is by examining how their office staff deals with students. In my study, there were staff members (and in some cases student staff members) who welcomed students and guests. There were comfortable places to sit, and students were informed on how long they might have to wait. Similarly, hearing officers can create connections with students by examining how their offices create welcoming spaces for students. In my study, hearing officers had personalized their offices and often asked students to choose a seat for the hearing. These behaviors signify to students that they are welcomed and that the hearing officer is interested in them. How students experience the student conduct office from their first encounter with office staff may contribute to their perceptions of how welcoming the hearing officer will be during the meeting. This may impact their willingness to share information that could directly impact how much learning can be promoted during the conduct meeting.

A final way that hearing officers can create connections with students is by how knowledgeable the hearing officers are about campus and community resources. In my study, hearing officers took opportunities to point students toward resources when they thought such resources could help. Hearing officers could work to expand their knowledge of campus and community resources so that students see them not only as their hearing officer but as someone who can help them navigate campus and community life. This may help increase the learning from a student conduct meeting because students may take advantage of a resource that they did not know about before their hearing. This may also create the conditions for a continued learning partnership after the initial student conduct hearing.
Seeking Understanding of the Situation

There are several implications for practice related to seeking understanding of the situation. First, I found that how well hearing officers understood the misconduct at hand and how well they processed that understanding with the student had an impact on student learning. Hearing officers in my study were skilled at asking open-ended questions that required the student to expand upon the information provided in the initial report. How hearing officers are trained to ask questions may influence how well they are able to get the student to share information about their perspective on the incident. Additionally, hearing officers in my study were able to ask students questions that required them to examine their misconduct from multiple perspectives. Hearing officer training could include strategies on how to use questions to challenge students’ perspectives as a way to deepen the learning.

Additionally, hearing officers in my study provided students with information about the process, the student conduct polices that may have been violated, and the incident report outlining the misconduct. A clear roadmap of how the hearing was going to proceed, along with all the information that resulted in the hearing, was readily available to the students. This showed students that the hearing officer was transparent in what was going to be discussed in the meeting. Hearing officers may want to consider how students are prepared for their student conduct meetings so that the information provided is clear and expectations are stated in a manner that gives the student perspective equal consideration. This may help encourage more honesty about what occurred as well as create the conditions for learning and reflection. How students are prepared for their meeting and how the hearing officer approaches the information that is available to them before the hearing may make processing the incident from multiple perspectives easier for students to accomplish.

Providing Encouragement

My finding, providing encouragement, has several implications for practice. The hearing officers I observed in my study all viewed themselves as educators who could promote student learning and development. They all wanted to deeply understand who the student was and how they could help the student learn from the incident. Chief student conduct officers can use the information from my study to identify dispositions that officers need to succeed in promoting learning. They could use elements of disposition to inform hiring practices for student conduct hearing officers. For instance, they can ask potential hearing officers to describe the behaviors
that should be used in hearings and look for individuals who prioritize learning and development over managing an administrative hearing process.

Another implication for practice connected to providing encouragement is to examine how the staff members in the student conduct office can provide encouragement to students. Hearing officers in my study encouraged students who seemed to be discouraged by their student conduct violation. They also were the most likely personnel to encourage students to move forward after the incident. However, hearing officers are not the only individuals whom students encounter as part of their student conduct experience. Office staff may also play a role in encouraging students. I observed front desk staff collect reflection papers, answer questions, and provide information on sanctions when hearing officers were not available. By hiring and training office staff members who can help encourage students, student conduct officers may be able to expand their ability and reach to provide encouragement to students who are already facing a difficult situation.

**Promoting Learning and Autonomy**

There are also implications for practice associated with promoting learning and autonomy. First, hearing officers in my study identified student learning as the key outcome of the student conduct process. Hearing officers on other campuses may want to examine how they view learning and to evaluate if student learning is a key outcome of their process. Ensuring that learning is central to the student conduct process may help promote learning.

Hearing officers in my study asked students to take ownership over their misconduct by considering a variety of alternative pathways that could have prevented their misconduct. Helping students see alternatives is an important way to increase their ability to view their conduct situation more complexly and increase their developmental capacity to handle ill-structured problems that may arise in the future. Hearing officers may want to consider adjusting their practice to allow sufficient time in their hearings to engage in a meaningful dialogue about alternatives. This may increase the learning that results from the student conduct hearing.

Sanctions are an important part of that learning. Hearing officers in my study employed a variety of sanctions that required hands-on work by students. If the sanction imposed was not action oriented, I observed hearing officers require students to engage in reflection-oriented sanctions designed to encourage students to contemplate their motivations, actions, and their reactions to their conduct hearing. Those two types of sanctions, hands-on sanctions and
reflection-based sanctions, may be beneficial to other hearing officers who seek to continue learning after the initial meeting.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study also laid the groundwork for future research. Missing from the findings are the voices and experiences of students. A complementary qualitative study that interviewed students on campuses who were involved in student conduct hearings is merited. Their perspectives might be compared with the current findings to better understand the impact of hearing officers’ behaviors on student experiences in the conduct process. I selected my sample institutions based on a quantitative measure of student learning but did not examine the student experience; such a study would expand what is known about learning and the student conduct environment in meaningful ways.

Also, future research should consider the implications of staffing changes on the student conduct environment. Since this study focused on the behaviors of hearing officers, it would be interesting to see how those behaviors are enacted differently by different individuals. Some campuses may dictate the approach and style a hearing officer may use in the student conduct meeting. It would be interesting to replicate my study in such an environment.

Another future study could examine hearing officer competencies that support the LPM and the development of self-authorship. My study used the LPM as a framework to explain the behaviors that officers engaged in on campuses where learning was occurring. A future study could explore how those behaviors are developed and could then serve as a basis for future hearing officer training.

Finally, my study’s findings provided evidence of the principles of the LPM in the student conduct environment where learning is occurring. There are tangible behaviors that hearing officers engaged in that seemed to promote learning. A future study could expand on these findings by looking at campuses that are not demonstrating that learning is occurring in the conduct environment. This could be particularly valuable to highlight what practices that hearing officers are using that may be counter-productive to learning.

**Implications for Policy**

Regarding policy, universities have student codes of conduct that provide structure to the student conduct meetings. The data from my study may help chief conduct officers implement a learning-centered student conduct code of conduct. Chief conduct officers may want to review
their student codes of conduct to examine how the structure of hearings is outlined in policy and consider altering the code of conduct to maximize learning opportunities for students.

In addition to the structure of hearings, student codes of conduct often dictate the sanctions that must be imposed for particular violations of policy. Student conduct officers may want to examine sanctions that are required based on certain policy violations and consider expanding the flexibility hearing officers can exert when determining sanctions. In my study, officers took significant time and care with students to understand their misconduct and their specific needs. By allowing hearing officers flexibility in sanctioning, learning may be improved. This may require adjusting policies that dictate certain sanctions.

Finally, student conduct officers may want to examine policies that often are connected to the student conduct process. For example, housing contracts are often cancelled as a result of certain policy violations. If viewing the student conduct process and student conduct hearing as an on-going partnership between students and hearing officers, such policies that dictate certain outcomes may be counter-productive to promoting learning. Similarly, hearing officers may need the ability to impose certain sanctions, like cancellation of a housing contract, in a case that would not typically carry that outcome based on the policy violation. Viewing the student conduct process as a learning partnership requires flexibility to enact the approach most likely to promote learning and development. Perhaps more flexibility for incident-specific sanctions is important.

**Conclusion**

This qualitative examination of the student conduct environment focused on how learning happens in the disciplinary processes (Swinton, 2008) at institutions that seem to encourage learning (as reflected in their scores on the SCAPQ). Despite the limitations, the study added to the limited research on the student conduct environment. It provided evidence of how the LPM can help explain the learning occurring in high-performing student conduct environments.

This study was important in two important ways. First, my findings showed that the principles of the LPM, *validating capacity, situating learning*, and *mutual meaning* are evident in some student conduct environments. In these instances, hearing officers engaged students in ways that created conditions for learning and development to occur. Second, the findings provided hearing officers and student conduct office staff with tangible strategies that can be used in student conduct hearings to create the conditions to promote self-authorship. The results
expanded on the largely quantitative body of work about student conduct environments and outcomes.

The student conduct environment is one where educators may profoundly influence student development (Taylor & Varner, 2009). Hearing officers are largely responsible for crafting the environment of a student conduct hearing and can emphasize learning in their approach. By incorporating an approach that integrates the principles of the LPM, hearing officers can dramatically impact the experience of students.
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Appendix A
Recruitment Emails and Scripts

Introductory Email to Director sent by NASCAP Director

Dear______,

Frances Keene is a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Virginia Tech. I am also a member of her dissertation research committee. This semester she is conducting observations of student conduct operations and student conduct hearings, and interviewing hearing officers on campuses that have participated in the NASCAP study where students report through that instrument that learning is occurring. She is interested in examining how that learning is occurring.

The outcome of this study may help to provide information that will benefit hearing officers and staff members in student conduct offices. According to our records, you meet the criteria to participate in her study. If you are willing, you would be asked to allow her into your office to observe your office operations, observe hearings, and interview hearing officers. This will take place on campus and will include at least one day of office observations, one day where she will observe student conduct hearings and then on the third day, she will interview hearing officers. During observations, no identifying information will be recorded in her observation data. The interviews with hearing officers will be recorded and participants will be asked to review a transcript of the interview. If you are interested in participating, please let me know and I will contact Frances to contact you. She will arrange a time to contact you by phone to explain the study, ask a few questions, and schedule a campus visit when it is convenient for you. I am happy to speak with you by phone as well if you have questions for me.

Sincerely,

NASCAP Project
Director
Hello –

My name is Frances Keene and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Virginia Tech. This semester I am conducting observations of student conduct operations and student conduct hearings and interviews of hearing officers on campuses that have participated in the NASCAP study where students report through that instrument that learning is occurring. I am interested in examining how that learning is occurring. The outcome of this study may help to provide information that will benefit hearing officers and staff in student conduct systems. I hope that we can set up a 30-minute phone call for me to review my study. I have attached my informed consent forms for your review. If you are interested in participating, please let me know the best way to arrange a time to contact you by phone to explain the study, ask a few questions, and schedule an in-person visit to your campus.

Thank you for your consideration,

Frances Keene

Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Virginia Tech
Dear_______,

Frances Keene is a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Virginia Tech. This semester she is conducting observations of student conduct operations and student conduct hearings and interviewing hearing officers on campuses that have participated in the NASCAP study where students report through that instrument that learning is occurring. She is interested in examining how that learning is occurring. The outcome of this study may help to provide information that will benefit hearing officers and staff in student conduct systems. According to her records, our campus meets the criteria to participate in her study. If you are willing, you will be asked to have her observe your work in our office, observe hearings of hearing officers, and interview hearing officers. This will take place on campus and will include at least one day of observations, one day where she will observe student conduct hearings and then interviews on the third day with hearing officers. The interviews will be recorded and participants will be asked to review a transcript of the interview. Anyone who wishes to decline participation in this study can do so without any penalty. Frances will contact you directly, via email with this same message. She will review the attached signed informed consent when she visits our campus. Participation is entirely voluntary and not participating will have no impact on your employment.

Sincerely,

[name deleted]

Director of Student Conduct
Script for Recruiting Students to Participate in Hearing Observations

-Ask the student if you can speak with him/her in an area away from the student conduct office staff and/or hearing officer.

Script:

“My name is Frances Keene and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at Virginia Tech. This semester I am conducting observations of student conduct operations and student conduct hearings and interviews of hearing officers on campuses that have participated in a national study where students report through that instrument that learning is occurring. I am interested in examining how that learning is occurring. The outcome of this study may help to provide information that will benefit hearing officers and staff in student conduct systems. I would like to ask your permission to observe your student conduct meeting. I have an informed consent forms for your review. If you are interested in allowing me to observe, I will not record your name anywhere in my observation notes and that data will remain confidential and only my dissertation chair, Dr. Joan Hirt, and I will have access to the data. My notes will be stored on my personal computer and hard copies will be kept under lock and key in my office. After my study is complete and I have defended my dissertation, the raw data will be destroyed. Participation is completely voluntary. If you decline to have me observe it will not have any negative impact on your student conduct meeting.”

-Give the student time to read the informed consent form.

Script:
“Thank you for your consideration”.

-If consent is given, “Thank you for your consideration, here is a signed copy of the informed consent for your records.”

-If no consent is given, “Thank you for your consideration.”
Appendix B

Initial Call Checklist

Name: ______________________ Pseudonym: __________________ Date/time: __________
Campus: _____________________ Campus Pseudonym: ______________________________

Script:
Thank you for speaking with me today and for serving as a one of my participating institutions.
As we discussed, the purpose of this study is to describe how the student conduct system
promotes student learning. Today, I would like to review the several points about my campus
visit.

1. Review approval from Virginia Tech IRB
   a. Discuss whether participating institution requires IRB approval
2. Review informed consent
3. Request contact information for all hearing officers in student conduct office
   a. Discuss plan to share copy of informed consent via email
4. Request copies of or links to policies and procedures for the student conduct office
5. Request copy of most recent annual report for the student conduct office
6. Determine best dates for campus visit
7. Review the items discussed in the call

Script: Thank you so much for allowing me to visit your campus and observe your office. If you
need to reach me, please contact me at fbabb@vt.edu.
Appendix C
Informed Consent Form for Office Staff

Project Title: Fostering Self-authorship in the Student Conduct Environment

Investigator: Frances B. Keene  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Joan B. Hirt
Doctoral Candidate: Professor
Higher Education: Higher Education
New Hall West, suite 144 (0428) 307 E. Eggleston Hall, Virginia Tech (0302)
Blacksburg, VA 24061 Blacksburg, VA 24061
Cell: (540) 230-3147 (540) 231-9700, FAX: (540) 231-7845
fbabb@vt.edu jbhirt@vt.edu

Purpose of the research: This study was designed to examine how the principles of the LPM conceptual framework are reflected in the student conduct environment.

Procedures: You have been identified by the Director of your office as someone who may be interested in participating in this study. If so, you will be observed as you perform your job duties.

Risk: There are minimal risks involved with participating in this study. Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that the questions may create some discomfort. If you must seek medical or counseling services as a result of your participation in this study, however, neither the investigators nor the University have funds to pay for such services.

Benefits: As a participant, you may benefit only indirectly from this study. You may gain insight into your practice as a staff member in student conduct. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. The findings of this study will provide information to other researchers and college administrators who work in student conduct. This information may improve services provided to students and improve training provided staff members. You may contact the investigator at a later time for a summary of the research results.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality: To maintain anonymity, you will not be identified by name, only as “staff member”. Your identity will not be divulged to anyone. At no time will I release the results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. All data collected from observations will be locked in a file cabinet in my office or stored on a flash drive maintained by the researcher. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech may view the data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed.

Compensation: You will not be compensated for participating in the observations.
Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to refuse to allow the observation to take place without penalty.

Subject’s Responsibilities: I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:
- To be observed as you perform your job duties

Subject’s Permission: I have read the Informed Consent Form and the conditions of this study. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

___________________________________________________________________________

Participant’s Signature

Date

University

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research, I may contact:

Frances Keene  Dr. Joan Hirt (faculty advisor)
(540) 230-3147  (540) 231-9700
fbabb@vt.edu  jbhirt@vt.edu

Should I have any pertinent questions about research conduct, and research subjects’ rights, I may contact:

Dr. David Moore, VT IRB Chair
(540) 231-4991
moored@vt.edu
Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for Hearing Officers

Project Title: Fostering Self-authorship in the Student Conduct Environment

Investigator: Frances B. Keene
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education
New Hall West, suite 144 (0428)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Cell: (540) 230-3147
fbabb@vt.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Joan B. Hirt
Professor
Higher Education
307 E. Eggleston Hall, Virginia Tech (0302)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 231-9700, FAX: (540) 231-7845
jbhirt@vt.edu

Purpose of the research: This study was designed to examine how the principles of the LPM conceptual framework are reflected in the student conduct environment.

Procedures: You have been identified by the Director of your office as someone who may be interested in participating in this study. If so, you will be observed conducting at least two student-conduct meetings and participate in one 60 minute interview that will take place on your campus. If you are interviewed and you agree, your interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed so I am sure I accurately interpret your information.

Risk: There are minimal risks involved with participating in this study. Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that the questions may create some discomfort. If you must seek medical or counseling services as a result of your participation in this study, however, neither the investigators nor the University have funds to pay for such services.

Benefits: As a participant, you may benefit only indirectly from this study. You may gain insight into your practice as a staff member in student conduct. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. The findings of this study will provide information to other researchers and college administrators who work in student conduct. This information may improve services provided to students and improve training provided staff members. You may contact the investigator at a later time for a summary of the research results.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality: To maintain anonymity, you will not be identified by name, only as “staff member”. Your identity will not be divulged to anyone. At no time will I release the results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. All data collected from observations will be locked in a file cabinet in my office or stored on a flash drive maintained by the researcher. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech may view the data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed.
Compensation: You will not be compensated for participating in the observations.

Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to refuse to allow the observation to take place without penalty.

Subject’s Responsibilities: I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- To be observed as you perform your job duties
- To be observed conducting at least two student-conduct meetings
- To participate in one 60 minute interview
- To review the transcript from my interview to ensure that it accurately reflects what I said during the interview

Subject’s Permission: I have read the Informed Consent Form and the conditions of this study. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

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<th>Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>University</th>
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Should I have any pertinent questions about this research, I may contact:

Frances Keene       Dr. Joan Hirt (faculty advisor)
(540) 230-3147       (540) 231-9700
fbabb@vt.edu         jbhirt@vt.edu

Should I have any pertinent questions about research conduct, and research subjects’ rights, I may contact:

Dr. David Moore, VT IRB Chair
(540) 231-4991
moored@vt.edu
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Students in Hearing Observations

Project Title: Fostering Self-authorship in the Student Conduct Environment

Investigator: Frances B. Keene
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education
New Hall West, suite 144 (0428)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Cell: (540) 230-3147
fbabb@vt.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Joan B. Hirt
Professor
Higher Education
307 E. Eggleston Hall, Virginia Tech (0302)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 231-9700, FAX: (540) 231-7845
jbhirt@vt.edu

Purpose of the research: This study was designed to examine how the principles of the LPM conceptual framework are reflected in the student conduct environment.

Procedures: You have been identified by the Director of the student conduct office as someone who may be interested in participating in this study. If so, you will be observed as you participate in your student conduct hearing.

Risk: There are minimal risks involved with participating in this study. Given the nature of the topic, it is possible that the questions may create some discomfort. If you must seek medical or counseling services as a result of your participation in this study, however, neither the investigators nor the University have funds to pay for such services.

Benefits: As a participant, you may benefit only indirectly from this study. You may gain insight into your practice as a staff member in student conduct. No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. The findings of this study will provide information to other researchers and college administrators who work in student conduct. This information may improve services provided to students and improve training provided staff members. You may contact the investigator at a later time for a summary of the research results.

Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality: To maintain anonymity, you will not be identified by name, only as “staff member”. Your identity will not be divulged to anyone. At no time will I release the results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. All data collected from observations will be locked in a file cabinet in my office or stored on a flash drive maintained by the researcher. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board at Virginia Tech may view the data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. The data will be destroyed after the study is completed.

Compensation: You will not be compensated for participating in the observations.
Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free to refuse to allow the observation to take place without penalty.

Subject’s Responsibilities: I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:
- To be observed as you participate in your student conduct hearing

Subject’s Permission: I have read the Informed Consent Form and the conditions of this study. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

______________________________________________________________
Participant’s Signature Date University

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research, I may contact:

Frances Keene Dr. Joan Hirt (faculty advisor)
(540) 230-3147 (540) 231-9700
fbabb@vt.edu jbhirt@vt.edu

Should I have any pertinent questions about research conduct, and research subjects’ rights, I may contact:

Dr. David Moore, VT IRB Chair
(540) 231-4991
moored@vt.edu
Appendix F

Hearing/Office Operations Observation Protocol

Campus: _______________  Campus Pseudonym: _____________________  Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Number</th>
<th>Comment or Behavior</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Responder</th>
<th>Interaction Type</th>
<th>Principle(s) Observed</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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Appendix G
Interview Protocol – Hearing Officer
Name: ______________________  Pseudonym: __________________  Date/time: __________
Campus: _____________________  Campus Pseudonym: __________________________________
Script:
Thank you for meeting with me today. As we discussed, the purpose of this study is to describe how the student conduct system promotes student learning. I have a copy of the informed consent and we can review that and any questions you have. Once you sign the form we will begin the interview. [Review informed consent]. Our conversation today will include questions regarding the hearings I observed with you during my visit.

Section 1 (Introduction)

1. Tell me how you got into a career in student conduct.
2. Why do you stay in student conduct work?
3. What was the most memorable conduct hearing you have had?

Section 2 (Discussion of five salient interactions from observed conduct hearings)

1. Question about salient interaction #1.
   a. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #1.
   b. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #1.

2. Question about salient interaction #2.
   a. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #2.
   b. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #2.

3. Question about salient interaction #3.
   a. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #3.
   b. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #3.

4. Question about salient interaction #4.
a. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #4.
b. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #4.

5. Question about salient interaction #5.
   a. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #5.
   b. Follow-up question based on response to salient interaction #5.

Section 3 (Conclusion)

1. Is there anything else about your work that you would like to share with me?

   I will recap the main themes from our conversation.

2. Are there any important points that I left out from my recap that you would like to add?

Script: I will share the final transcript of our interview for your review. If you have any comments or additions you can send those back to me after your review. Thank you for your participation. Thank you!
Appendix H
IRB Approval Letter

MEMORANDUM
DATE: March 4, 2015
TO: Joan B Hirt, Frances Keene
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA0000572, expires April 25, 2018)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Self-Authorship in the Student Conduct Environment
IRB NUMBER: 15-141

Effective March 3, 2015, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:
Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7
Protocol Approval Date: March 3, 2015
Protocol Expiration Date: March 2, 2016
Continuing Review Due Date*: February 17, 2016

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:
Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.