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The Community Narrative Research Project: Organizational Learning and Change
Through College-Based Community Research Initiatives

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Abstract

The Community Narrative Research Project: Organizational Learning and Change
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Adele V. Malpert

This paper explores the role of participatory research and narrative research methods in fostering organizational learning and change in a college setting. Using the Community Narrative Research Project (CNRP) and the Rhodes College Bonner Scholars Program as a case study, this research examines relationships between research methodologies and community practices. I examined student-written narratives, interviews with researchers, and focus groups with research participants to assess the role of the CNRP in promoting learning and change within the Bonner Scholars Program. My analyses focused on understanding the potential of written narratives to promote problem identification within the Bonner Scholars organization and on CNRP researcher and student experiences of narrative and participatory research strategies. I explore strengths and weaknesses of the CNRP, focusing on tensions between methodological theory and practice. Results suggest that narrative and participatory methodologies might serve as a useful model for understanding organizational learning and change in college settings. Implications for future research are discussed.

The Community Narrative Research Project: Organizational Learning and Change
Through College-Based Community Research Initiatives

In the spring of 2013, researchers at Rhodes College began a four-year initiative referred to in this study as the Community Narrative Research Project (CNRP). The ongoing project, led by two faculty members of the Psychology Department, is a longitudinal study of written narratives collected from Rhodes College students participating in a national service learning scholarship program known as the Bonner Scholars Program. Designed as an inquiry into student identity development and change through participation in service learning, the project is grounded in a narrative constructivist approach that asserts that social and cultural experiences are processed and meaning and identity are constructed through narrative (Bruner, 1990). Through the telling of narratives, meaning and identity are shared with others (Bruner, 1990). By asking Bonner Scholars to write narratives about their experiences with service, the CNRP research team is able to obtain rich qualitative description of the experiences of Bonner Scholars.

The CNRP research team has grown to include psychology faculty members, Bonner Scholars staff, psychology students, and Bonner Scholars. This collaboration supports a research environment in which multiple stakeholders within the college community have joined together to analyze the narratives. In lieu of adhering to a traditional researcher participant relationship, the CNRP has fostered elements of participatory research in which participants become active contributors to the research process (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, Elias, & Dalton, 2011). In the CNRP, narratives written by Bonner Scholars give Bonner Scholars the opportunity to share

perspectives on their service learning experiences, which in turn influence the research process. Collaboration between research faculty, Bonner staff, and students in analyzing the narratives allows for new interpretations of the data as different perspectives and experiences are considered in planning and problem solving.

The CNRP sits at a unique theoretical intersection of narrative research and participatory research. The current study recognizes the uniqueness of this position and considers implications of the CNRP outside of the project's primary interest in identity development. Knowledge generated from the CNRP has potential to directly and indirectly influence the future actions of Rhodes College community members. Through narrative, Bonner Scholars are able to identify problems and benefits associated with their experiences in the Bonner Scholars Program. This may help to identify strengths and weaknesses that directly influence program decisions made by staff involved in the research process. Indirectly, the experience of working in a participatory research project and collaborating with community partners may influence future social and academic endeavors. In this sense, the narrative and participatory methodologies employed by the CNRP are a potentially important mechanism for organizational learning and change. However, the role of narrative and participatory research in fostering organizational learning and change has yet to be explored within the CNRP.

Thus, the current study asks, how does the CNRP contribute to organizational learning and change within the Bonner Scholars Program and community partners? The study seeks to provide an analysis of the narrative and participatory methodologies underlining the CNRP and to evaluate their implications on organizational learning and change. The current study uses interviews with Bonner Scholar participants and members

of the CNRP research team to assess the organizational impact of the research project. Thus, at its core, the current study is research assessing research. Through this assessment, this study hopes to provide insight into the usefulness of community-based narrative and participatory research methodology in fostering organizational learning and change in communities, examining existing and potential areas of change. The following introduction provides a brief overview of existing theory and research concerning organizational learning and change, narrative research methodologies, participatory research methodologies, and service learning. I will begin with an overview of organizational learning and change, highlighting existing theory. I will then explore both narrative and participatory research methodologies examining their ability to foster organizational learning and change. I will then conclude with a brief description of service learning as a potential setting for better understanding relationships between narrative research methodologies, participatory research methodologies, and service learning.

Organizational Learning and Change

Organizational learning and organizational change represent two distinct yet interdependent processes within organizational development. Perkins, Bess, Cooper, Jones, Armstead, & Speer (2007) suggest organizational learning is primarily concerned with how organizations adopt knowledge to adapt to their environments and develop positive, sustainable practices. Organizations are an integral part of communities and allow individuals to join together to achieve common goals, but how do organizations learn? And what processes facilitate learning to support effective and sustainable organizations? Perkins et al. (2007) conceptualized organizational learning as a cyclical

process in which learning and action at the individual level influence learning and action at the organizational level, which in turn influences individual understanding. From this perspective, organizational learning is strongly related to concepts of empowerment.

Organizational learning is facilitated when individual members have agency and power in learning processes. More broadly, organizations can be conceptualized as a system of inputs, outputs, and feedback in which organizational parts interact with and influence each other (Ford & Foster-Fishman, 2012). In this sense, individual learning and organizational learning are highly interconnected. The current study focuses on learning at both the individual and the organizational level, using organizational learning as a broadly defined term to reflect learning processes within an organizational setting.

Organizational change is concerned with how learning is incorporated into organizational systems to foster new actions and understandings (Perkins et al., 2007). Organizational change is often conceptualized as either first order change or second order change (Ford & Foster-Fishman, 2012; Perkins et al., 2007). First order change is change that influences individual members of the group by changing how those individuals behave or by replacing them with others, while leaving socio-cultural structures intact (Kloos et al., 2011; Perkins et al., 2007). This type of change can be seen as a change in personnel or strategies (Fouts, 2003). First order change is likely to have only a short-term impact, as old behaviors are likely to be resumed (Kloos et al., 2011). Second order change is change that addresses relationships between individuals by changing roles, goals, and power structures (Kloos et al., 2011). This type of change can be understood as a change in philosophy (Fouts, 2003) and/or routine practices. Second order change is

likely to result in sustained change and is the goal of much research and action in Community Psychology (Kloos et al., 2011).

Organizational learning and organizational change can be understood as reciprocal processes within organizations (Perkins et al., 2007). Organizational learning is useful to inform organizational change, which in turn influences organizational learning. Though organizational learning does not necessitate change and organizational change does not necessitate learning, each provides the impetus for the other. By considering organizational learning and organizational change together, researchers can better understand organizational development and relationships between individual and community level change. Perkins et al. 2007's description of the St. Daniel's Community Organization provides an example of such relationships. St. Daniel's is a non-profit community organization that seeks to improve living conditions for poor residents in its surrounding neighborhood. Perkins et al. suggested that St. Daniel's long-term success was based on links between learning processes and the organization's mission statement and change within the organization. More specifically, they noted that "the expectation of change has been integrated into organizational life historically in the form of a learning culture and exemplifies key characteristics of a learning organization, the capacity to shift to changes in the environment." St. Daniels provides an exemplar for reciprocal relationships between organizational learning and organizational change and suggests that successful organization learn in change contexts.

Narrative Research and Organizational Learning and Change

Narrative research is broadly defined as research in which stories collected from individuals or groups are analyzed as an object of research or as an approach to research

(Lieblich, 1998). In recent decades, narrative research has become an increasingly important research methodology within the social sciences (Aranda & Street, 2001; Barry, 1997; Lieblich, 1998; Thorne & Nam, 2007). Due to its ability to provide researchers with rich, descriptive accounts of their subjects, narrative research has largely gained prominence in qualitative research (Elliot, 2005). However, narrative research has also been used in quantitative work, in which narrative characteristics are counted or rated and given mathematical importance (Elliot, 2005). Thus, narrative may simultaneously provide qualitative and quantitative data when used in research. This versatility makes narrative a valuable methodological resource in psychological research.

Fundamental to the practice of narrative research is a commitment to narrative theory. The CNRP is grounded in a cultural constructivist theory of narrative that asserts that culture, narrative, meaning, and identity are fundamentally intertwined (Bruner, 1990; Hammack, 2008). The theory suggests that individuals establish identity through participation in culture. This cultural participation is a process of creating narratives or stories and sharing them with others in conversation and routine interactions (Bruner, 1990; Rogoff, 2003). Narratives allow individuals to describe, elaborate, change, highlight, and explore their life experiences with others to create joint concepts of typical and atypical, good and bad, and fact and fiction (Aranda & Street, 2001). This joint exploration provides an opportunity for evaluation in which identity and meaning can be processed and understood. Thus, through these cultural processes, narratives become imperative to understanding meaning and identity (Bruner, 1990; Hammack, 2008).

The cultural constructivist theory of narrative highlights epistemological concerns in psychological research. Jerome Bruner (1990) suggested that, as the field has

progressed, psychological research has become increasingly centered on questions of information processing and has lost sight of meaning making. This has resulted in an undue emphasis on quantitative and computational methods of data analysis. Bruner suggested that these methodologies limit understanding by placing data into fixed categories without deference to context or subtle variations in meaning. He argued that to truly begin to understand meaning and identity, psychological research should consider narrative methodologies.

David Barry (1997) considered how narrative approaches might contribute to a better understanding of organizations. He suggested that narratives have potential to foster positive change at an organizational level. He asserted that the meaning making processes evident in personal narratives may also be present in stories about organizations. By telling stories about organizations, people can articulate their experiences within the organization and influence learning. Barry illustrated this point using a case study of a medical clinic experiencing numerous organizational difficulties. Barry asked staff members to explore these difficulties through narrative. Results suggested that narratives prove useful in conceptualizing organizational issues, allowing staff members to deeply consider the organization of the clinic and better understand their problems. Barry suggested that by using narrative, relationships between staff and how they related to organizational issues in the clinic were changed.

Narrative research methods have also been used to inform organizational learning and change in healthcare practice by facilitating problem identification. Hsu and McCormack (2012) examined the potential of narrative analysis in improving health services for hospitalized elderly patients. Elderly patients were asked to tell narratives by

responding to the prompt “What is it like being in the hospital?” These narratives were then analyzed in seminars with hospital staff. Staff members were asked to listen to the narratives and consider how they describe patient experiences. They were then asked to assess the usefulness of the patient narratives in contributing to an understanding of and change in their own professional performance. Results suggested that narratives contributed to problem and strength identification for staff members. Narratives provided description of strengths and weakness within care practices that staff members may not have been aware of and that could contribute to better healthcare practice. This suggests that narrative may be a useful tool in informing problem identification to enact organizational change.

Narrative may also contribute to organizational change by influencing power structures within communities. Julian Rappaport (1995) drew links between narrative research and research on empowerment. Empowerment, the increased ability of individuals and communities to control their own lives (Kloos et al., 2011), can be pursued through research using narrative. Rappaport suggested that narratives might be understood as resources for individuals and organizations in a community. If narratives represent meaning making and identity, then to have one’s story be valued is to have one’s sense of meaning and identity legitimized, while to be unable to tell one’s story is to have one’s sense of meaning and identity muted. Having the ability to tell one’s story to others is having the ability to contribute to community learning and change. In this sense, a commitment to narrative research can be organizational change in itself. Through the use of narrative research, individual participants and groups of stakeholders are given a voice in research that allows them to share their experiences with researchers. This

creates collaboration in which participant perspectives are listened to and valued.

Resource structures are changed and participants receive narrative resources that may not have previously existed. Through these narrative resources participants may become empowered to contribute to organizational change by offering their opinions and perspectives on research topics.

Participatory Research and Organizational Learning and Change

Participatory research is a research framework in which research participants are active contributors throughout the research process (Kloos et al., 2011). This framework challenges the traditional researcher vs. participant relationship in which participants simply serve as a source of data for researchers and adopts a researcher-participant relationship that promotes collaboration and mutual interest (Kloos et al., 2011).

Participants become involved in processes of problem identification, research design, data collection, data analysis, and action by offering their perspectives to the research process (Baum, 2006). In a sense, “the researched become the researchers” (Baum, 2006). This participatory approach to research has become increasingly popular and has been shown to foster high quality research while requiring less time and funding than traditional research methods (Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995).

Brodsky, Senuta, Weiss, Marx, Loomis, Arteaga, Moore, Behorin and Castagnera-Fletcher (2004) argued that, over time, psychology has become increasingly experimental and controlled. The discipline, though originally rooted in philosophy, has gradually grown methodologically closer to the natural sciences. Research methods have stressed the positivistic values of strict experimental designs and objective analysis. Emphasis on these values has led the relationship between researchers, participants, and

their respective perspectives to become controlled for or even ignored in research, undermining social context and perspective in the research process. This stressing of positivistic research has been strongly critiqued within feminist psychological literature, which suggests that social context is embedded within the research process and the knowledge it generates (Eagly & Riger, 2014; Eagly, Eaton, Rose, Riger, & McHugh, 2012). Participatory research frameworks value social context in the research process. Researchers employing such frameworks recognize that there is value in experience when considering certain social phenomena such as meaning making, social relationships, and community engagement. Through experience individuals gain knowledge that can change practices (Baum, 2006). Different experiences lead to different knowledge, which leads to different perspectives. At the heart of the practice of participatory research lies the belief that multiple perspectives enhance the effectiveness of the research process (Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2010). Participatory research utilizes the perspectives and social context of the research community as well as those of the participant community to create a new, collaborative context (Brodsky et al., 2004). This sharing of differing social perspectives promotes the challenging of ideas and consideration of conflicting perspectives on research problems and solutions. In depth consideration of conflicting perspectives can lead to more effective research results.

Margaret Brown-Sica (2012) provides a useful summary of participatory research. She conceptualizes participatory research as embodying four overarching characteristics. Firstly, participatory research is collaborative. Researchers work with participants to foster research that is mutually beneficial, rather than using participants for data. Secondly, participatory research is emancipatory. Participant and researcher perspectives

are equally valued in the research process. The researchers are not seen as superior to participants. Thirdly, participatory research is interpretive. Results and solutions are based on the value of researcher and participant perspectives and interpretations. Finally, participatory research is practical. Results obtained from participatory research have not only theoretical significance, but also practical significance. The research process can lead to organizational and community improvements as community members work together to achieve research goals.

Participatory research practices have the potential to foster learning and change processes in organizations (Bess, Prilleltensky, Perkins, & Collins, 2009). One key way in which participatory research may influence organizational change is by moving research goals from fostering first order change to creating second order change. Recall, first order change is change that influences individual members of the group by changing how those individuals behave or by replacing them with others, while leaving socio-cultural structures intact (Kloos et al., 2011; Perkins et al., 2007). First order change is likely to have only a short-term impact, as old behaviors are likely to be resumed (Kloos et al., 2011). Second order change is change that addresses relationships between individuals by changing roles, goals, and power structures and leads to lasting, sustainable change (Kloos et al., 2011). This lasting second order change is the goal of participatory research. Researchers and participants often undergo personal change as a result of participation in participatory research (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Deacon, Nievar, & McCann, 2005). Exposure to new relationships, new research environments, and new ideas can have a profound effect on those involved in the research process. Personal change may occur as first or second level change and can influence future action

in the community as cumulative effects of individual change lead to community change (Bess et al., 2009).

Participatory research also has the potential to empower participants (Baum, 2006; Bess et al., 2009). Giving participants a voice in the research process allows them to have increased control over decision-making and actions of the community. In addition, participants may learn new skills throughout the research process that can be used in future endeavors. Participants are able to control what questions are deemed meaningful and what information is shared in the research process. Rather than being passive recipients of research, participants have power to control it. This overturns the traditional researcher participant relationship and opens up the possibility for more equal relationships.

Service Learning as a Setting for Organizational Learning and Change

Service learning paradigms, such as the Bonner Scholars Program, have become an increasingly popular means of enhancing higher education's applicability to real world scenarios (Rosing, Reed, Ferrari, & Bothne, 2010; Gibson, Hauf, Long, & Sampson, 2011; Yorio & Ye, 2012). Students in a multitude of university settings are participating in service-learning initiatives designed to make links between formal classroom learning and community involvement. Through service learning, students translate classroom concepts into action in order to help and learn from communities outside of the classroom. Education becomes a process of not only academic growth, but also social growth as students engage in productive citizenry. As service learning becomes increasingly popular, researchers have begun to evaluate the processes behind service learning. Inherent in the process of service learning is an emphasis on reflective practices

(Stewart & Webster, 2011). Service learning entails regular evaluations of past experiences to make meaning that can inform future action. Students must consider community experiences and integrate them into the greater service learning experience. In this sense, service learning programs such as the Bonner Program may be particularly apt to experiencing organizational change as reflective processes contribute to personal and structural changes within the organization. In addition, these reflective processes are closely tied to constructivist notions of meaning making (Stewart & Webster, 2011), making the narrative methodologies of the CNRP a particularly useful means of assessing service learning experiences.

Research Questions

The current study seeks to evaluate the potential of the CNRP to foster organizational learning and change. Specifically, how do the CNRP and its associated methodologies contribute to organizational learning and change within the Bonner Scholars Program and groups of community partners? Based on existing literature and theory, I propose two potential mechanisms within the CNRP that may contribute to organizational learning and change. First, I recognize the potential of the narratives themselves to foster learning and change, specifically by serving as a means for identifying potential problems with the organization such as difficulties with particular service sites, a need for skills training, or dissatisfaction with service outcomes. To evaluate this potential, I will formally analyze the CNRP's Bonner Scholars narratives for evidence of problem identification within the Bonner Scholars Program. How are narrators identifying and describing problems and challenges in their service? How might

these problems identified through narrative influence organizational learning and change?

What are potential changes that could be made based upon narrative data?

Secondly, I recognize the potential of participation in a participatory research project as a mechanism for organizational learning and change. As students and researchers participate in a participatory research project, there is potential for empowerment and the adoption of new roles in the community. These new relationships may contribute to lasting organizational change. To examine effects of the participatory research process on organizational learning and change, I will examine narrative participant and researcher perspectives on the CNRP using focus groups with Bonner Scholars narrators and semi-structured interviews of research team members. How are participants and researchers experiencing and understanding the research process? What perceived effects or potential effects are the CNRP having on the Bonner Scholars Program and the research team?

Methods

Setting and Participants

Rhodes College and The Bonner Scholars Program. The Bonner Scholars Program is a service-based scholarship program that operates on 24 campuses nationwide. On the Rhodes College campus, the Bonner Scholars Program provides four years of scholarship aid to 15 incoming students with financial need who have shown a deep commitment to community service. As part of the program, Bonner Scholars participate in 10 hours a week of campus programming led by an on-site Bonner Foundation coordinator. This programming is designed to foster active involvement and personal development in service and includes direct community service, Bonner Program meetings and training,

and service reflection. The Bonner Scholars program has a culture and climate dedicated to fostering personal learning and growth, as well as ownership for students participating in the program. In addition to community service and programming, participants are required to attend national Bonner Foundation conferences and are expected to design and complete two summer service projects (About the Program, 2014). During participation in the Bonner Scholars program, students are also expected to meet a series of developmental goals known as the five E's: expectation, explore, experience, example, and expertise (Meisel, 2002). At Rhodes College, these developmental goals are often referred to as the Bonner trajectory. Prior to college admission, students meet the expectation goal by preparing for participation in the program. First year students are expected to explore, becoming involved in many service experiences. By second year, students are expected to focus service in one particular service area. Third year students are expected to take leadership positions and serve by example. Finally, fourth year students are expected to translate service experiences into long-term expertise. This model of the five E's serves as the developmental basis for the Bonner Scholars program and is integrated into programming.

The CNRP. The current study is an offshoot of a larger project, the CNRP. Begun in Spring 2013, the project is a four-year longitudinal study of student identity development and change through participation in the Bonner Scholars Program. The study collects narratives from Bonner Scholars to be analyzed by a team of researchers. The CNRP emerged from discussions between Bonner Scholars Program leadership and faculty from the Department of Psychology. Bonner Scholar leadership recognized the importance of exploring identity and organizational issues within in the program and seriously took on

the project, fostering a climate open to discussing and interpreting student narratives. Each of the 60 Bonner Scholars (15 from each grade level) are approached at the beginning of each academic semester and asked to write narratives. At the time of the current study, narratives had been collected over four semesters, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014, and Fall 2014. There was a potential for 240 narratives written by 90 Bonner Students. These narratives were analyzed by the CNRP research team. At the time of the current study, the CNRP research team consisted of two members of faculty in the Department of Psychology, the on-campus Bonner Scholars coordinator, one psychology student (excluding the current author), and two Bonner Scholars and Psychology students.

Participants

Narrative participants were all Bonner Scholars who had previously participated in narrative writing as part of the CNRP. At the time of the current study, 86 Bonner Scholars had written 197 narratives as part of the CNRP. Participants included students from the Bonner Scholars entering classes of 2009-2014 and were evenly distributed across entering year. At each data collection a subset of the 60 potential Bonner Scholars participating in the program did not share narratives. This was due to lack of consent, attrition in the program itself, and absence from data collection. In Spring 2013, 52 Bonner Scholars participated, 8 did not provide consent, and none were absent from data collection. In Fall 2013, 42 Bonner Scholars participated, 2 did not provide consent, and 16 were absent from data collection. In Spring 2014, 50 Bonner Scholars participated, 1 did not provide consent, and 10 were absent from data collection. In Fall 2014, 45 Bonner Scholars participated, 0 did not provide consent, and 15 were not present.

Focus Group Participants were recruited based on prior participation in the CNRP. 43 active Bonner Scholars who had consented to future contact from CNRP researchers in the fall of 2014 were asked to participate in focus groups. Participants were contacted via e-mail and invited to participate in one of two focus groups during fall 2014. Participants were offered five dollars in Starbucks gift cards in exchange for participation. A total of 8 Bonner Scholars participated in focus groups. Participants included first-year students (n = 5) and fourth-year students (n = 3) and were evenly distributed across gender. No first-year or second-year students volunteered to participate in focus groups.

Interview participants were members of the CNRP research team. All 7 CNRP research team members agreed to be interviewed, however, due to scheduling complications, data are unavailable for 1 team member. Thus, a total of 6 research team members participated in interviews.

Procedure

The Rhodes College IRB approved the CNRP narrative data collection procedure. Narratives were collected as part of programming at a Bonner Scholars retreat that occurred at the beginning of each academic semester. All Bonner Scholars were required to attend this retreat and were encouraged to participate in writing the CNRP narratives. At the retreat, a member of the research team explained the CNRP to the students. Participants were informed that their narratives would be read and studied by the CNRP research team to gain better insight into the Bonner Scholars Program. All participants were given the same prompt. In the fall of each year, the prompt was: *Please write about an experience related to your community service in the last year that was particularly*

meaningful, an experience that mattered to you and that you will remember. In the spring of each year, the prompt was: *Please write about a situation related to your community service this year that felt particularly awkward, a situation in which you weren't sure what to do.* They were given 30 minutes to complete their narratives using personal computers. Upon completion, narratives were saved onto a research team flash drive, stripped of names, and assigned participant ID numbers for subsequent analyses. Once authors were assigned a participant ID number, all subsequent narratives by that author were assigned the same ID number.

The participant focus groups used in the current study were held on a volunteer basis outside of required Bonner Scholars programming. IRB approval was obtained to discuss the narrative collection process and the CNRP with the Bonner Scholars. Informed consent was obtained from all focus group participants. Focus group participants met with the author following a regularly scheduled Bonner Scholars meeting on Rhodes College Campus. Focus groups were conducted in an informal setting with the focus group leader and students sitting together on a circle of couches. Students were invited to reflect on the CNRP and their perceptions of the project. Focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed into text. A focus group protocol is included here as Appendix A.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual CNRP research team members to obtain insight into their experiences and understandings of the CNRP. Prior to data collection, faculty and staff members of the CNRP research team had given initial approval and support for these interviews. One-on-one interviews with the author were scheduled with each team member based on personal convenience. Informed consent was

obtained from each team member prior to data collection. Research team members were invited to reflect upon their participation in the CNRP research team and were asked about their perceptions of the research. The interviews were conducted using a standard set of open questions and were recorded for analysis. An interview protocol is included here as Appendix B.

Analysis

Narrative Analysis.

Narrative data were analyzed for evidence of problem identification using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The data were analyzed in accordance with a grounded theory approach to data analysis (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). I began with an in-depth reading of 197 narratives collected as part of the CNRP, paying close attention to descriptive detail and thematic similarities and differences. Narratives included in the current study's analyses were selected for evidence of problem identification using a series of selection criteria (See Appendix C.). These selection criteria were based upon initial interpretations of narrative data and discussions with Bonner Scholars and Bonner Scholars staff conducted as part of the CNRP. Through prior participation in the CNRP, I was familiar with existing CNRP narrative data and discourse surrounding problem identification in the narratives. Initial readings suggested that authors might be identifying problems associated with the Bonner Scholars Program such as: harassment during service, having difficulties with particular service site staff or procedures, lacking a sense of purpose in service, requiring additional training or skills building, and struggling to reconcile program experiences with academic experiences. These five themes in problem identification provided the basis for initial selection criteria. I openly

coded 20 randomly chosen narratives using initial selection criteria, noting and refining any new categories and themes as they emerged while reading the stories. This process resulted in the addition of two new criteria: a sense of burden resulting from Bonner Scholar commitments and difficulties with race or privilege. Once selection criteria were solidified, I discussed the criteria with a faculty supervisor to determine agreement over the appropriateness of determined categories. Following faculty agreement, I coded an additional 20 randomly chosen narratives to ensure no new themes or observations emerged from the data. I then coded all remaining stories according to the seven established selection criteria: harassment during service, having difficulties with particular service site staff or procedures, lacking a sense of purpose in service, requiring additional training or skills building, struggling to reconcile program experiences with academic experiences, a sense of burden resulting from Bonner Scholar commitments, and difficulties with race or privilege. An overview of these seven categories is included in Table 1. Through this process, 106 of 197 stories collected as part of the CNRP were identified as containing evidence of problem identification.

Focus Group and Interview Analysis.

Focus group and interview recordings were transcribed into text and imported for analysis using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. I read through each focus group and interview noting recurring themes and ideas within the data. Particularly salient or descriptive data were flagged using NVivo's coding program and saved for interpretive analyses. Focus group and interview data were also flagged for the problem identification criteria examined in the CNRP narrative data.

Results

Narrative Research Results

Problem Identification.

The following analyses investigate how Bonner Scholars identify problems within their Bonner Scholar Program service experiences. I asked the following: Are narrators identifying and describing problems and challenges in their service? What themes emerge in descriptions of problems within the Bonner Scholars program? Narratives were coded for various types of problems identified through service according to selection criteria. This resulted in the 7 overarching coding groups described in the methods section: lack of skills or training, lack of purpose, service site difficulties, harassment, burden, race and privilege, and experience reconciliation difficulties. Within these groups, harassment and service site difficulties were coded for sub-themes. Coding frequencies for problem identification are included in Table 2. Of the 197 stories collected as part of the CNRP, 106 stories made reference to problems during Bonner Scholar service.

Lack of skills or training. The most frequent source of problem identification within the stories was a lack of skills or training in service. Authors made 65 references to feeling inadequate in terms of interpersonal or practical skills or training in service across 48 of the 197 CNRP stories. Authors referenced situations in their service in which they were unsure of how to act or felt ill prepared to meet service responsibilities. This lack of skills or training manifested itself in the narratives as explicit statements of inadequacy (e.g. “I truly did not know what to do or how to comfort her”; “I suddenly realized the complete lack of experience I had with this issue”). All 65 references included explicit references to feelings of lacking the skills or training needed during a service experience.

Lack of purpose. Authors noted feelings of a lack of purpose in service 40 times across 28 of the 197 CNRP stories. In these 28 stories, authors reflected upon feelings that their service experiences were lacking. Authors noted that their service was not useful (e.g. “So I began my sophomore year disappointed in myself and feeling like nothing mattered.”), that their service was not enjoyable (e.g. “I didn’t really enjoy most of the work I was doing. And even though I knew I was making a difference, it wasn’t enough to make me happy.”), and that their service was not appreciated (e.g. “I go through the motions of my daily service work without a nod or a thank you.”). The most frequent of these categories was a sense that service was neither useful nor meaningful. Of 40 references to feeling a lack of purpose, 28 references suggested that Bonner Scholars felt that their service was not useful or meaningful.

Service site difficulties. Difficulties in particular service sites were identified 23 times across 16 stories. Authors identified problems within particular service sites. These problems focused on concerns with leadership, concerns about Bonner Scholar responsibilities, or difficulties with patrons or peers. Of the 16 stories including service site difficulties, 11 referenced concerns with leadership. These stories referenced conflicts with leadership within service sites. These conflicts largely centered on disagreement over best service practices within the service site. Authors noted having different approaches, values, and goals than leadership in their service sites. These stories were particularly salient within service sites geared toward child education. Five of the eleven stories referencing concerns with leadership occurred in education settings. Excerpt 1. provides an example of one such story.

Excerpt 1.

Why don't you just trace it out for him? Just dot out the sentence, he can trace it. He doesn't know how to read or write. That's why his mom is holding him back a grade." It was Ms. Courtney, his counselor; the woman in charge of the group of children. I was dumbfounded. I turned. "Excuse me." "I said why don't you trace out the sentence for him." "Because otherwise he won't learn how to write." It seemed almost elementary to me. I was a tool, a resource that this child would use, like a dictionary. Ms. Courtney wanted me to become a crutch and I was just not going to do that.

In this story, the author highlights difficulties with a teacher who holds a leadership position within the service site. The author notes a conflicting understanding of what teaching should look like at the service site. The author notes a tension between the leader's expectations and the author's expectations for the child. This story reflects recurring themes of conflicting understandings between service site leadership and Bonner Scholars and highlights potential sources of difficulty for students in the Bonner Scholars program.

Harassment. Bonner Scholars identified instances of harassment during service in 15 of 197 stories. Within these 15 stories, issues of harassment were referenced 38 times. These instances included four types of harassment: sexual harassment, verbal harassment, harassment by law enforcement, and intrusive requests for personal information. Nine authors included instances of sexual harassment in their stories. Within the 9 stories, sexual harassment was referenced 13 times. These references ranged from explicit references to sexual harassment in which authors identify service site patrons or staff as harassers (e.g. "unfortunately, I felt that I needed to move on from this organization because of the harassment I was facing.") to more subtle descriptions of sexual harassment. These more subtle descriptions of sexual harassment accounted for a

majority of references to sexual harassment. Excerpt 2. shows an example of a particularly salient instant of sexual harassment in the narratives.

Excerpt 2.

When a man looks at me a certain way or starts commenting on every article clothing I'm wearing, how I'm wearing my hair, or simply going a little to far when saying I'm pretty; I feel uncomfortable. I know I am there to serve them & be respectful, positive face, but sometimes, I feel myself not wanting to strike up as many conversations with the men I serve.

Here, the author describes recurring instances of sexual harassment during her service.

The author frames the harassment in terms of her service learning, suggesting the harassment has led her to behave differently in her service responsibilities. Of the 13 instances of sexual harassment referenced, 7 noted regular, recurring sexual harassment. Such references underline sexual harassment as a problem for some students participating in the Bonner Scholars Program.

Authors also identified instances of verbal, non-sexual harassment. Verbal harassment was referenced 7 times across four stories. These references included explicit references to verbal harassment such as "During my volunteer work as a meal server, I was verbally harassed by one of the regular customers." and more implicit references such as a reference to communication that "was full of hateful words attacking the values of our organization and contempt over how we were handling this situation." Unlike references to sexual harassment, references to verbal harassment reflected isolated incidents of harassment. Only 2 of the 7 references to verbal harassment contained suggestions of recurrence.

A small, but salient sub-group of stories included references to harassment by members of local law enforcement. Two stories made three references to harassment by police officers. These stories included experiences of verbal abuse, abuse of authority, and threats of deportation. In order to protect the privacy of the authors, examples from these stories will not be included in this paper. However, these stories reflect a potentially important source of problems for students within the Bonner Scholars program.

Another small, but salient sub-group of stories identifying harassment included references to intrusive requests for personal information. Three authors identified problems with intrusive requests for personal information. These stories included references to patrons requesting personal information that made the authors feel uncomfortable or unsafe. These instances often co-occurred with instances of sexual or verbal harassment. One author noted, “When the people [service patrons] ask me where I live on campus and what school I attend it makes me feel very vulnerable. The sharing of personal information with strangers triggers my alarms and makes me feel threatened.” Though infrequent, the stories highlight instances of harassment that are problematic for some students in the Bonner Scholars Program.

Burden. A sense of burden from participation in the Bonner Scholars was identified 19 times across 15 stories. References to burden included instances in which authors commented on feeling a sense of burden or strain resulting from participation in the Bonner Scholars program. These references centered on burden from time commitments (e.g. “Sometimes I felt like there was not enough time to finish each task.”), physical burden or stress (e.g. “I have gotten to the point where I get very little sleep;” “It drained me a bit: physically more than anything.”), programming burden (e.g.

“The best part of my year was escaping all the planning, beauraucracy, paper work, team building, and general craziness of my commitments to the Bonner Program.”), and outside expectations (e.g. “I have to leave Memphis sometimes, to get away from all the things that people expect from me here.”). Authors who reflected on a sense of burden often commented on a combination of sources of burden. Excerpt 3. exemplifies one such story:

Excerpt 3.

I love the community development work I do as a Bonner. I love my classmates. I love the opportunities Rhodes has given me. But the Bonner experience has been a noisy one for me. Overwhelmingly noisy. The culture of the program and of the school is one that promotes “walking loudly.” There is immense pressure to leave a lasting mark on the community inside and outside the iron gates- and to do it while maintaining an astronomical GPA, applying to big name grad programs and fellowships, and somehow staying stable as a human being. It is constant noise.

In this story, the author acknowledges several sources of burden resulting from her participation in the Bonner Scholars program. She comments on a feeling of pressure to not only provide service to the outside community, but also to visibly succeed as a Bonner Scholar within Rhodes College. This example provides a salient example of themes of burden in the program.

In addition to a sense of burden from time commitments, physical burden or stress, programming burden, and outside expectations, a subset of Bonner Scholars commented on a sense of burden arising from the Bonner developmental model or trajectory. Specifically, students suggested that the development trajectory, and the reflective processes associated with it, hindered their ability to grow in the Bonner

Scholars program. Students suggested that the developmental model might not apply to all students and that reflective processes may not be beneficial to Bonner Scholar development. These themes were referenced in 5 stories. One particular story focused entirely on burden arising from the Bonner developmental model:

Excerpt 4.

We're supposed to start out exploring different sites and issues, then over time narrow down our interests and gain expertise in a specific service area. We're told that we're supposed to learn to get uncomfortable with our service. We're supposed to do all of these things and then reflect on how well (or how poorly) we've done them. The problem, though, is that everybody's service experiences are different... Doing reflections like this one, however, puts an immense amount of pressure on us. Of course we're always told that there's no wrong answer and that we can write whatever we feel, but if we're really being honest nobody believes that. There is *literally* a diagram that maps out where and how Bonner wants us to grow. When I do individual written reflection like this, I feel a pressure to come up with some experience that I think fits into that trajectory. Of course, I never come up with anything that seems good enough and I always end up feeling inadequate by the end.

In this story, the student reflects upon his or her perceptions of the Bonner trajectory and suggests that the developmental trajectory may place burden on students to meet and reflect upon goals that are unobtainable for some students. The student shares feelings of inadequacy in meeting developmental goals and a sense of resentment for being forced to conform to the developmental trajectory. This story suggests that some students identify problems within the Bonner Scholars program arising from the developmental model.

Race and Privilege. Issues of race and privilege were identified 30 times across 15 stories. Authors identified difficulties associated with race and privilege (racial privilege or socio-economic privilege) during their service. These stories included comments on differences in race or privilege between Bonner Scholars and target communities, increased awareness of personal racial or socio-economic and privilege, verbal

harassment from patrons about race, and feelings of being limited in service by issues of race and privilege. The latter category, feelings of being limited in service by issues of race and privilege, was particularly salient. Excerpts 5. and 6. provide examples of two such stories.

Excerpt 5.

I was already feeling uncomfortable in the room, as I was the only White person present. I first felt that I had no business being there, I am not a woman of color. In fact, I felt that I should *not* be there. Was I encroaching upon a culture that I am not a part of? Was it rude of me to assume that I could be included in this community, clearly based on a very different experience than my own? What insight could I provide as a White woman, when my narrative is already the dominant culture? I thought that perhaps my insight was not needed at all, or my presence.

Excerpt 6.

It occurred to me that day that the children could see the Club environment that the staff was setting before them. That because the staff made it acceptable to ignore me, to see that there was a separate bond between them and me as a volunteer, that there was a difference between us. I felt it was because they didn't trust why I was there. As a result of that the children identified the only reason they could to see me differently from the other staff: our skin color. If their parents taught them that their neighborhood was designated for African Americans, they are automatically going to assume anyone of a different race as an outsider...I feel that I am in a segregated and bias community environment and that it does affect my service site.

In each of these stories, the authors reflect upon feelings of being unable to effectively or comfortably provide service at their sites due to issues of race. Interestingly, in each example, authors identify different sources of difficulties. For the author of excerpt 5, perceived racial tensions were the result of personal understandings of race. In contrast, the author of excerpt 6 cites service site staff and patrons as the source of racial tension.

These stories highlight issues of race and privilege in Bonner Scholars service, stemming from both personal and external forces.

Difficulties reconciling experiences. Difficulties reconciling service experiences with outside experiences were referenced 30 times in 10 stories. Ten stories identified difficulties relating service experiences to experiences in other areas of collegiate experience. Within these 10 stories, authors referenced difficulties reconciling Bonner Scholar service experiences with academic experiences, social experiences and other service experiences. These references suggested that students might feel Bonner Scholar program activities and outside experiences are in conflict with each other. One student reflected, “Bonner was inhibiting my progress in college and professional development instead of supplementing it”. Another student reflected, “I have difficulty at times reflecting my personal identities at Rhodes.” These students suggest that students are experiencing Bonner Scholar expectations and activities as incompatible with other collegiate experiences.

Participatory Research Results

CNRP Researchers and Narrative Research.

The following analyses explore the 6 CNRP research team members’ perceptions of the narrative research methodologies employed by the CNRP. I asked the following: How are narrative methods being understood within the CNRP research team? Do research team members identify strengths or weaknesses in narrative methodologies? By analyzing research team members’ broad perceptions of narrative methodologies, I can better understand the role of narrative in contributing to understandings of organizational learning and change in the Bonner Program. The following analyses consider CNRP

narratives separate from organizational learning and change in order to gain a broader understanding of the role of narrative within the project and to inform later analyses of learning and change processes.

Support for narrative methodologies. I examined research team members' support for narrative methodologies in the CNRP. Research team members were asked to reflect upon narrative method, explaining how narrative methods were employed by the project and how those methods contributed to understanding CNRP research questions. More specifically, participants were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of narrative methods in the CNRP. In general, research team members offered strong support for narrative methodologies. Five of the six research team members expressed that narrative methodologies provided a good framework for understanding Bonner Scholar experiences. The researcher who did not offer strong support for narrative methodologies cited personal preference as the rationale behind her lack of support for narrative, noting that narrative methodologies had proven useful for others on the research team. All five supportive research team members focused on benefits of narrative analyses in contrast to quantitative analyses. Specifically, all five researchers suggested that narrative methodologies gave data an organic quality by giving Bonner Scholars freedom to put "things in their own words" and "express themselves" by "framing their experiences" without feeling limited by research questions. One researcher reflected, "Compared to the other ways that psychologists tend to collect data, giving out a questionnaire where we decide what the questions are and what the possible responses are, this leaves a lot more things open and therefore it allows us to describe what we, what people want us to know. In other words, they are telling us what they want to tell us in the way that they would

ordinarily tell things.” Another research commented on this organic quality, reflecting on the variety of stories and perspectives evoked by narrative methods, “We’ve seen just by reading all the different narratives that a lot of them won’t write about the same things and their stories vary greatly, but what we find most is that when they write... a lot of them really make it personal or really write down things that they feel are really important to their development as a Bonner or their development as a person. So, I think writing narratives is a really good way to bring that out.” These sentiments were echoed by each of the five supportive research team members.

Prompts. In addition to providing support for narrative methodology in the CNRP, research team members also highlighted potential weaknesses of narrative methodology. One frequent area of concern surrounded the use of prompts to obtain narratives. Prompts were identified as a point of contention within the research team, particularly among student research team participants. All student research team members expressed concerns over the appropriateness of narrative prompts. Specifically, student research team members noticed priming effects within the narrative prompts. One researcher suggested, “When we have the prompt, write about something that’s meaningful, it’s usually an experience that is non-canonical. It won’t get us the realistic idea of what it is like every single day at the service site that [Bonner Scholars] work at, but it will look at an instance or just a single experience.” Here, the researcher suggests that prompts may drive Bonner Scholars to reflect upon particularly important, isolated incidents that may not be reflective of regular experiences within the program. In the same vein, another researcher commented upon the specificity of the research prompts, “I don’t know how much you can really glean about the service that people are doing from and awkward

experience because they are already kind of viewing their service, taking their service, and putting it under the light and the influence of a negative experience and I think you are only going to get one answer.” In contrast, another student researcher reflected,

“Sometimes I think the prompts can be a little too vague and we are not really sure what we are supposed to write about and then other times we just don’t know what it’s for.”

In addition to concerns about the appropriateness of prompts, concerns were also raised concerning redundancy in prompts. One researcher noted that, as the research continued, the use of recurring prompts could become detrimental, “perhaps becoming repetitive for students and maybe not knowing what more to say beyond what they have already said.”

In addition, another researcher suggested that prompts that proved relevant to one class of Bonner Scholars may prove irrelevant to another class, particularly between first years and fourth years. These weaknesses in prompts provided the basis for a majority of the research team’s concerns regarding narrative methodology.

Interpretation. Research team members highlighted important difficulties surrounding interpretation of narrative data. These difficulties centered on three characteristics of narrative methodology. Firstly, researchers highlighted the variety of ways in which narratives could be interpreted. Because narrative methodologies foster variability in responses, narrative data could be perceived as overwhelming. One researcher suggested, “there are so many ways people can go with it when we ask them to write a story about a particular experience, and the 60 different individuals choose, of course, 60 different experiences and those experiences may be similar in some ways and different in way more ways than they are similar. So, it leaves us with years and years of analysis to do rather than a couple of afternoons of analysis to do cause there is no end to the ways that

we can study it.” Here the researcher suggests that narrative methodologies allow researchers to interpret data in a number of ways, which may have practical concerns. Secondly, researchers addressed difficulties with determining authors’ intentions during interpretive processes. One researcher comments on issues of determining author’s intentions in narrative interpretation, “You have more of a back story to it and it’s, I don’t know, a different perspective but a lot of times it can be hard because you can have different people reading them and taking them differently.” Here, the researcher notes variations in researcher’s interpretations of Bonner Scholars’ narratives, suggesting that it might be difficult to determine the author’s true intention. Another research team member provided an instance where members of the team made an error in interpretive work, “but when we heard the researchers interpreting the story and kind of like making assumptions based on the story, it was completely wrong because they didn’t have all that background and they didn’t know these things but we knew.” The researcher highlights tensions between author intent and narrative interpretation. A final area of interpretive concern centered on issues of sharing results. Specifically, one researcher shared concerns about sharing interpretations of narratives with the community, “people are used to seeing data that come in columns of numbers and in some ways we will have columns of numbers too, we will count how many times students did a b or c and we can put those in columns of numbers, but it is a bit of a challenge to know how to persuade others that, that the interpretive findings, our interpretive work with the narratives is indeed within the sphere of appropriate psychological methods.” Here, the researcher comments upon potential difficulties with sharing interpretive findings, particularly within the academic community.

Discussion and follow up. One research team member highlighted a need for discussion and follow up with Bonner Scholars. Though not necessarily framed as a weakness of narrative methodologies, this need for discussion was often expressed in relation to narrative methodologies. One researcher reflected, “I sure do enjoy working with people in communities and having conversations...this strategy doesn’t, is not really a dialogue based approach ... there would be something to be said in doing interviews with Bonner scholars and having more conversation.” Here the researcher suggests that narrative methodology does not allow dialogue between Bonner Scholars and research team members and suggests that dialogue might be useful in the future.

Bonner Scholars and Narrative Research.

The following analyses explore Bonner Scholars’ perceptions of the narrative research methodologies employed by the CNRP as expressed in focus groups and informal conversations with the researcher (See appendices). I asked, how do Bonner Scholars understand the role of narratives in the CNRP research process? Do Bonner Scholars see writing narratives as a useful process for helping researchers to understand service experiences? What aspects of the narrative research do Bonner Scholars see as potentially beneficial? What aspects of the narrative research do Bonner Scholars see as negative?

Discussion and Dialogue. Bonner Scholars highlighted a need for more discussion and dialogue during the CNRP. When asked whether narrative was a useful form of understanding their services experiences, students often noted that, while many enjoyed the writing process, for some, conversation and dialogue would be a better approach to understanding service experiences. Students expressed a desire to share stories orally rather than in writing, suggesting that oral stories would increase the quality of the stories

by allowing Bonner Scholars to expand upon their experiences through dialogue with the researchers. One student suggested, “If we’re going back and forth and you’re asking me questions based on what I say, because I might, my mind is clicking at a thousand different ways at the same time so you’re not going to find one of those paths, you’re only going to get one of those paths from me writing. While, if we are having a conversation, then we can hop around a bit more and you can get a better picture of what’s actually in my mind.” Another student agreed noting, “verbal interaction where I see the person, I could, through exchange of ideas, some things could become more clear to me, to express my ideas. [Conversation] would help me to express my ideas.” In the same vein, Bonner Scholars suggested that if dialogue were infeasible, Bonner Scholars would benefit from increased discussion with each other following story-writing sessions. They focused on a previous retreat in which they had discussed their narratives with each other in small groups. One student reflected, “I felt like the discussion with the small groups was actually more beneficial for me than the actual writing of the story. Just being able to bounce off ideas and hearing other people’s stories and kind of compare and contrast.” Students who supported more discussion often noted a better understanding of their respective stories as a result of discussion with others, “we found a common theme that we were discussing which was not something that I wrote at all about within my paper and I think that like through that conversation and hearing about other people’s stories you begin to look at your own story from a different perspective.” This understanding often came from realizations of collective understandings of experience. In contrast, one Bonner Scholar reflected upon the benefits of written narrative in contrast to oral reflection and discussion, “And it was really helpful to be thoughtful enough about it

to write something down because even like verbally reflecting on something or like mentally reflecting on something doesn't do quite the same thing that writing about it does and this is really the only way that we get to do that." She noted that narrative writing served as a deeply personal process in which she was able to grapple with her personal experiences in the Bonner Program. She viewed written narrative as an integral part of understanding the Bonner Scholar experience.

Narrative Production. Bonner Scholars often commented upon ease of narrative production as a concern during the research process. The Bonner Scholars shared experiences of difficulties determining what stories they had to tell and difficulties with being able to tell the story effectively. One area in which students noted concerns with narrative production concerned determining what stories should be told. This was particularly true for first-year students who felt they had a paucity of service experiences, in other words "it was hard to come up with stories to write about." One first-year student noted, "I just, at that point we just hadn't done service for that long and so we hadn't had that much experience, especially like you said it's really hard to pinpoint specific like something really big happened here because we had only done service for such a short time." All first-year students echoed this sentiment, devoting a majority of their responses in the focus groups to this issue. Fourth-year students also reflected on difficulties determining what stories to write. However, fourth year concerns largely stemmed from appropriateness and usefulness of stories for researchers. They noted feelings of being unsure what researchers were looking for. A second area in which students noted concerns with narrative production concerned Bonner Scholars' inability to tell their stories effectively. When asked if communicative goals were met through the story,

students were divided in their responses. One fourth-year student suggested that she had met her communicative goals “I do think that I conveyed what I wanted to convey with mine, but I also think that until I talked with other Bonners about what maybe they had put in it, I wasn’t really sure what I was supposed to write.” Here she comments on previously reported feelings of being unsure what researchers were looking for in her story, but also suggests that her story ultimately accomplished her communicative goals. In contrast, students also felt that their stories were unable to meet their communicative goals. Specifically, two-fourth year students commented upon their narratives’ inability to capture the “complexity” of their experiences in Bonner Scholar experience. One student reflected, “I have things that I want to convey and most of it is complexity, like that’s what I want to convey, that it’s complex. The problems we are working on are complex, the service itself is complex, like the service sites, the people, the emotions, the organization itself as Bonner.” This complexity was echoed across participants in the focus group. Participants noted that they felt unable to share this sense of complexity through a written story. One student reflected that his written story did not meet his communicative goals “because I was trying to put it in the words and constrain it down to maybe time or to a length.” Here he notes being limited in his ability to tell his story on paper. Another student noted a similar difficulty, “I understand using one story as a snapshot to show a moment in time and to show evidence, but we do so much, most of us are campus leaders in other respects and so Bonner isn’t just service, it’s service and programming... and it’s really hard to hit all of those points when you are talking about one moment.” These authors highlighted an inability to share all the complexities of their Bonner Scholar experience through narrative.

Prompts. Bonner Scholars expressed conflicting understandings of narrative prompts used in the CNRP. Discussions of prompts were closely related to difficulties in narrative production. First-year students who had difficulties producing stories suggested that more guidance was needed from researchers in what to write about. In response, one fourth-year Bonner Scholar reflected, “I think this is just really interesting from a senior’s perspective because we’ve had more concrete prompts in the past and people have often remarked upon feeling locked into that prompt.” This remark led another first-year student to reflect, “I think that maybe for the first year students, maybe consider doing different prompts for different age groups,” suggesting that existing prompts might not be appropriate for all class levels.

Research goals. Bonner Scholars participating in the focus group articulated concerns about being unaware of research methods and goals. Bonner Scholars exhibited a profound lack of knowledge about the CNRP and its associated methodologies. The Bonner Scholars frequently questioned me about CNRP research methods and goals asking questions and making comments such as: “I don’t know if that’s what you are looking for,” “May I ask, what are you specifically researching or does it change year to year?” Bonner Scholars framed their responses in terms of meeting research goals, often noting that they felt unprepared to reflect on the CNRP without a better understanding of research methodologies. One Bonner Scholar, when asked about potential for positive outcomes from the CNRP, suggested he could not understand how narratives could portray an accurate description of the Bonner Scholar experience. He further noted, “I mean maybe I don’t know how this study is structured,” suggesting his lack of confidence in research outcomes may be reflective of a lack of understanding of research

methods. Another student suggested that her participation in the CNRP narrative writing was hindered by a lack of understanding of research goals and methods. She reflected, “ I just feel like if we had had direction or I had just known more what you were looking for, because it was hard to figure out what to write about and how like and what context or what we were supposed to focus on I guess which made it a little bit harder for me.”

CNRP Researchers and Participatory Research.

The following analyses consider the 6 CNRP research team members’ understandings of participatory research methodologies employed by the CNRP. I asked, how are CNRP researchers experiencing and understanding participatory research? Do CNRP researchers identify strengths and weaknesses associated with participatory research practices? By examining CNRP researchers’ understandings of participatory research methodologies, I can better explore the role of participatory research methodologies in supporting organizational learning and change. The following analyses consider participatory research strategies separate from their role in fostering organizational learning and change in order to gain broad understanding of the role of participatory research methodologies in informing later analyses of organizational learning and change processes.

Understandings of participatory research. CNRP research team members were asked to reflect upon the use of participatory research methodologies in the CNRP, noting how such methodologies were incorporated into the research process. When asked to describe how the CNRP employs a participatory research framework, 2 of 6 research team members, both students, were unable to define or explain participatory research. This prompted me to explain participatory methods to the 2 research team members and to re-

question them about their understandings of participatory research methods in the CNRP. Following prompting of a definition of participatory research, the 2 research team members were able to articulate their perceptions of the role of participatory research in the CNRP.

Understandings of the role of participatory research in the CNRP focused on three themes: active participation of Bonner Scholars students and staff on the research team, giving Bonner Scholar authors opportunities to follow up with researchers, and transparency in sharing results with Bonner Scholar authors. These themes provided the basis for research team members' definitions of participatory research in the CNRP. Five research team members considered the active participation of Bonner Scholars students and staff members on the research team to be the basis for the CNRP's participatory methodologies. These team members considered the participation of the three Bonner Scholars students and the one staff member to be inherently participatory. In addition, all research team members noted the importance of giving Bonner Scholar authors the opportunity to follow up with researchers as a participatory tool in the research project. Research team members suggested that the research team actively encouraged Bonner Scholar authors to approach them with questions, concerns, or feedback throughout the research process. This openness to Bonner Scholar feedback was seen as an additional avenue for participatory processes within the research project. Finally, two research team members recognized transparency with research results as a participatory methodology. These research members noted that CNRP researchers were concerned with how research results were shared with Bonner Scholars and were careful to share results and member

check results often. The researchers understood this transparency as a part of participatory research methodologies.

In addition to providing examples of participatory methodologies within the CNRP, research team members also commented upon ways in which the CNRP was not meeting participatory goals. Specifically, researchers noted that the CNRP was not fully participatory for a vast majority of Bonner Scholars. A lack of resources combined with limited interest, prohibited most Bonner Scholars from directly participating as part of the research team. Researchers noted that, though no one had yet been turned away from participating in the research team, opportunities for active participation from Bonner Scholars were limited. This caused these researchers to question how truly participatory the research project could be.

Strengths and weakness. CNRP research team members identified a number of perceived strengths and weaknesses from using participatory research methodologies in the research process. Strengths were largely focused on benefits from having multiple perspectives involved in the research process. Researchers suggested that, by virtue of having varied perspectives in the research process, results were of stronger quality and more closely related to Bonner Scholar experience than they might have been if only psychology researchers had interpreted them. Specifically, Bonner Scholars were able to speak to their own experiences during interpretive work, providing essential background for researchers. Researchers also suggested that participatory methods allowed the project to remain fluid and open to changes in understanding as multiple perspectives were incorporated into the research project. Though this fluidity was recognized as a potential weakness if it impeded the research's ability to progress, researchers generally interpreted

fluidity as strengths of participatory methods. In addition to benefits from having multiple perspectives involved in the research process, team members recognized benefits resulting from connections to Bonner Scholars staff. By having a major Bonner Scholars staff member participate in the CNRP, the project created a strong connection between the research project and the Bonner organization. This resulted in tangible opportunities for CNRP findings to be easily incorporated into Bonner programming. This was seen as strength of participatory methodologies in research. Researchers were pleased that team members could immediately use findings to create program change to benefit Bonner Scholars instead of allowing findings to remain unused or delayed.

Weaknesses largely centered on privacy concerns resulting from participatory practices. Researchers noted that, by sharing stories with a research team that consisted of peers, Bonner Scholar authors were placed in a vulnerable state concerning privacy. Though narratives were stripped of overtly identifying information, the Bonner Scholars program reflected a tight knit community in which even subtle information might lead an author to be identified by a peer. This meant that Bonner Scholars on the research team might have learned highly personal, private information. Learning this information might have placed Bonner Scholar research team members in an ethically tenuous position. Researchers suggested that this ethical tenuousness could be understood as a tradeoff between privacy and interpretation. By participating in the research team, Bonner Scholar researchers provided important interpretative perspective, speaking from Bonner Scholar experience. However, that experience placed their Bonner Scholar author peers in a state of compromised privacy.

Bonner Scholars and Participatory Research.

The following analyses consider Bonner Scholar understandings of the participatory research methodologies employed by the CNRP. These analyses reflect findings from focus groups as well as from informal conversations with Bonner Scholars. I asked, how are Bonner Scholars experiencing and understanding participatory research? How do Bonner Scholars view the research team? How do Bonner Scholars understand their own participation in the CNRP? By examining Bonner Scholars' experiences with the participatory research methodologies employed by the CNRP, I can better understand the role of participatory research methodologies in supporting organizational learning and change. The following analyses consider Bonner Scholars' perceptions of participatory research strategies separate from their role in fostering organizational learning and change in order to gain broad understanding of the role of participatory research methodologies in the CNRP.

Opportunities for meaningful participation. When asked if they felt they had meaningfully participated in the CNRP, Bonner Scholars almost exclusively reported that they did not feel their personal participation was meaningful. For first-years, this lack of meaningful participation was largely related to difficulties in narrative production. First-year Bonner Scholars reported feeling that their ability to meaningfully participate in the CNRP was hindered by feelings of inadequacy in story telling. One student said that he had not meaningfully participated because he felt as if "I really had to come up with something on the spot with like a month of experience so I do not feel like it was very good. Especially considering where I am now. I would have a lot better things to write about if you had asked me to write it today than I had then. So I would say at this point, no [I did not meaningfully participate in the CNRP]." Fourth-year students were also

hesitant to say they had meaningfully participated in the CNRP. Specifically, multiple students suggested that they were unsure if their stories could be helpful in understanding the Bonner Scholars programs. They expressed feelings that their narratives were not reflective of larger themes within the Bonner Scholars Program. One student reflected, “I think I am an outlier so you are probably not going to find a lot of useful stuff from me.” In addition to concerns about the meaningfulness of participation in terms of story writing, students also commented about personal meaningfulness. Bonner Scholars suggested that the research process had very little influence on their personal understandings of the Bonner Scholars program. Specifically, Bonner Scholars suggested that narratives were not sufficient reflection. One fourth-year explained that in her narratives, “I would say like this is where I am at, this is what I am doing, this is how I feel about it. But it wasn’t, it was just a small snippet of the thoughts I had been ruminating on in my own personal reflection time and conversations with people. This reflection was a photocopy of what I was already doing in my life not a new space that brought me new ideas or further focus onto something bigger.” The Bonner Scholars largely agreed with this statement and suggested that they would enjoy more opportunities to participate meaningfully in the research. However, it is important to note that the Bonner Scholars who volunteered to participate in the current study may not be representative of all Bonner Scholars in terms of participation. Bonner Scholars who volunteered may be more likely to want to actively participate in research in general. Interestingly, though CNRP researchers believed they had been actively suggesting that they would be open to follow up throughout the narrative collection process, Bonner Scholars expressed that they had been given no opportunities for follow up before the

focus group. Bonner Scholars requested additional narrative data collection, more group follow up, individual longitudinal case studies, and individual conversations and interviews.

Privacy, Power, and Privilege. Three areas of concern that permeated my conversations with Bonner Scholars were issues surrounding privacy, power, and privilege. These issues were directly related to participatory methodology, specifically the inclusion of Bonner Scholars and Bonner staff on the research team. Students regularly expressed concerns about the privacy of their narratives. Student focalized worry that other Bonner Scholars or staff members would be able to identify their stories. One student explained, “ We are a very tight knit group and so like if I write about working in [my site] or someone writes about who is in the farmer’s market then there’s only one or two people who work in those service sites and so that’s still an identifying marker even if it is just very general description.” Bonner Scholars noted that while they felt it was important to have other Bonner Scholars on the research team to give an “insider’s perspective”, having Bonner Scholars on the team read their stories made them uncomfortable. In addition to concerns over privacy, Bonner Scholars noted that participation in the CNRP research team gave Bonner Scholar researchers power over the program. Research team members became the interpretive voice of their peers, seemingly without their permission. Because participation in the research team was largely based on individual decisions to join the team, Bonner Scholars did not always feel that members of the team were representative of the group as a whole. One Bonner Scholar noted that Bonner Scholars on the research team enjoyed positions of privilege and often held leadership roles within the Bonner Program. These leadership positions gave Bonner Scholars

insight into administrative decisions that was only increased by participating in the CNRP. Bonner Scholars noted a state of information asymmetry between Bonner Scholars in leadership positions and the average Bonner Scholars.

Organizational Learning and Change Results

The following analyses explore the role of the CNRP in fostering organizational learning and change. I asked, how do CNRP researchers and Bonner Scholars see the CNRP contributing to organizational learning and change? What potential does the CNRP have for fostering organizational learning and change? How has the CNRP tangibly contributed to organizational learning and change? What characteristics of the CNRP inhibit potential organizational learning and change? The following analyses address these questions and explore the CNRP's role in supporting organizational learning and change within the Bonner Scholars Program.

CNRP Researchers and Organizational Learning and Change.

When asked about the CNRP's potential role in fostering organizational learning and change in the Bonner Scholars program and the Rhodes College Community, CNRP researchers were optimistic that the CNRP would be a source of positive learning and change. Though researchers often noted that it was likely too early in the data analysis process to make any real conclusions about learning and change from the project, they were optimistic about progress in the project. Researchers highlighted a number of areas that they believed proved promising for making changes to the Bonner Scholars Program. Many of these potential changes were associated with staff participation on the research team. Researchers noted that having a staff member on the CNRP team created a direct tie to the Bonner Scholars for implementing research results. As the team noticed

potential areas of change in the data, they could turn directly to Bonner Scholar staff to influence programming. One researcher mentioned two situations in which CNRP research findings had already contributed to change. In the first, data suggested that the Bonner developmental model might not be applicable to many students. As a result, programming was changed to make the developmental model more fluid for students. In the second, data suggested that expectations from students at certain service sites were unclear. As a result, staff introduced more specific, written agreements between Bonner Scholars and their service sites. These represented tangible changes that occurred from the CNRP. Research members also provided examples of existing data that they believed had not contributed to change yet, but had the potential to in the future. One example that was mentioned by several team members was the frequency of stories about harassment. One researcher reflected, “I know one of the other things we have talked about is cause there are stories of harassment at different service sites and students not knowing, students explicitly stating they didn’t know how to handle the situation and they wished they had handled it better. So finding stories like that and finding a way to learn from those stories and create different, different trainings or different sessions or finding, getting a professor to come and speak to the Bonners on how to handle situations like that.” Harassment training was seen as a potentially beneficial change to the Bonner Scholars program. Researchers also noted that the project could contribute better to understandings of Bonner Scholar’s development through the program that would allow programming to be more supportive of students. One Bonner Scholar researcher suggested, “I think it could offer a way of knowing how to support the Bonners through their different stages and maybe prepare them for what kind of issues they may face, that

we may not be able to recognize now on our own.” For researchers, the CNRP was seen as a potential source of support for students. The project could highlight trends that would allow for collective understandings of the program. Researchers also noted that the CNRP could foster better relationships between the Bonner Scholars Program and the outside Rhodes College community. Bonner Scholars and staff members suggested that relationships between the Bonner Scholar program and the Rhodes College community were not always positive. They noted that members of the Rhodes College community often did not know much about the Bonner Scholars Program. Researchers saw the CNRP as a potential source of information about the Bonner Scholars for others and as an ally for the program. CNRP members also suggested that the Bonner Scholars Program had a semi-negative reputation on the Rhodes College campus. Researchers and Bonner Scholars noted that many students felt that Bonner Scholars were “big headed” and exclusive in their service. Researchers hoped that the CNRP would help Bonner Scholars gain a better reputation on campus, by helping to provide ways to understand service learning and make it more accessible for average students. In general, the CNRP was seen as a way to share information about the Bonner Scholars program with Rhodes College community members.

Bonner Scholars and Organizational Learning and Change.

Bonner Scholars were asked to reflect upon the CNRP’s potential for promoting organizational learning and change. Bonner Scholars were asked how the CNRP was contributing or could contribute to better understandings of the Bonner Scholars Program and the Rhodes College community and how the CNRP was contributing or could contribute to change within the Bonner Scholars Program and the Rhodes College community. Bonner Scholars’ perceptions of the CNRP’s for potential learning and

change centered on recurring themes emerging from the narrative writing process.

Bonner Scholars differentiated between individual stories and the collection of stories as a whole. Some noted that, while their individual stories may not be useful, the collection of stories as a whole could contain unifying themes and similarities that could be used to influence change in the Bonner Program. Bonner Scholars noted tensions between their own stories' perspectives and those of the Bonner Scholars as a whole. One student reflected, "well, I don't know what, if there's anything in particular that I want researchers to learn from my story, but if there is a general like collective sense of something I think that that's a great way to learn what changes should maybe be made in the program." Another Bonner Scholar reflected upon relationships between his individual narrative and those of the group, noting that each might be interpreted differently. He reflected, "It's kind of hard for me to say what is going to come out of [the CNRP] because I do not know what other people are writing. Like, if I know that if what I was writing taken at, what I was thinking specifically and then directly applied, it would change the Bonner Program." Overall, students reflected that the CNRP's ability to influence change would result from collective themes over individual themes. This sense of the power of the collective to influence change was closely related to notions of democratic processes. Bonner Scholars noted that if a majority of students wrote about similar concerns, those concerns should influence organizational change. One Bonner Scholar reflected, "I am hoping that there's a more democratic process brought up in these stories that we can utilize to better improve programming over the years." Another Bonner Scholar suggested, "if people are expressing inappropriate levels of discomfort or a lot of the same types of questions or qualms, yeah I think it should guide change."

Bonner Scholars also provides examples of how they had seen the stories contribute to change already. One Bonner Scholar explained that the researchers had shared themes of discomfort with the Bonner developmental model in the stories with Bonner Scholars staff, which had led to changes in how staff presented the developmental model to first-year students. This change was viewed as a positive outcome of the project. However, Bonner Scholars also noted possible negative outcomes of the CNRP. Students warned that changes in the program based on narratives might be misguided if stories were not reflective of regular experience. One student noted, “I guess you can take things from our narratives and you can learn stuff that can potentially change the program, but I think with the narrative you are only getting a snapshot...people choose different aspects of what they want to represent in that one story and so for some people that may be like a really negative experience that they remember, but for some people it may be that one positive experience among many negative experiences.” The student noted that stories might reflect the non-canonical portions of Bonner Scholar service and that more information would be needed to understand if changes should be made in the program. Specifically, students suggested Bonner Scholars should be given more opportunities to share their service experiences and stories through discussion.

Preliminary results from the CNRP and the current study have begun to influence change within the CNRP and the Bonner Scholar Program. Based on narrative and participatory research findings, several changes were made to research protocols in order to better meet the needs and desires of Bonner Scholars participating in the CNRP. These changes were largely first-order changes, reflecting changes in strategies employed by the CNRP and the Bonner Scholars program. First, researchers introduced greater variation

in narrative prompts. During data collection and discussions with research team members, Bonner Scholars expressed concern over prompts. They noted that prompts were repetitive and often felt either limiting or broad. As a result, CNRP research team members introduced new prompts to avoid repetition. Initial feedback from Bonner Scholars was echoed in the current study, supporting changes to narrative prompts.

Secondly, researchers introduced new data collection procedures. Researchers noted that data collection using flash-drives seemed tedious for Bonner Scholars. As a result, Google forms were introduced to make data collection simpler for Bonner Scholars.

Thirdly, CNRP researchers introduced more opportunities for Bonner Scholars to discuss their narratives. Bonner Scholars suggested that they would benefit from more opportunities to discuss narrative collection with each other and the researchers following data collection. As a result researchers provided opportunities for discussion outside of data collection during an all Bonner Scholars meeting. Finally, perhaps the most significant change made in CNRP research protocols was a shift in participatory methodologies from direct participation of Bonner Scholars on the CNRP research team to a Bonner Scholars Advisory Committee. Due to recurring concerns over privacy, power, and privilege resulting from Bonner Scholars participating in the CNRP research team and reading other Bonner Scholars' narratives, CNRP researchers considered alternative forms of Bonner Scholar participation in the CNRP. Researchers considered alternatives in which Bonner Scholars would be able to meaningfully participate in research processes without working directly with data. CNRP researchers developed a plan for a Bonner Scholars Advisory Committee that would serve as advisors to the CNRP research team, consulting on research questions, data collection procedures,

analysis procedures, and any other relevant research procedures. The suggestion of an advisory committee was presented to Bonner Scholars during an all Bonner Scholars meeting. Bonner Scholars were asked to meet by entering class and discuss the potential for an advisory committee and, if the advisory was seen as a positive suggestion, to nominate two students from each class to serve as members. Reactions were overwhelmingly positive and each class nominated 2-3 members. Bonner Scholars were eager to pursue the Bonner Scholars Advisory Committee as an alternative to direct Bonner Scholar participation on the research team. At the time of the current study, CNRP researchers were in the process of contacting nominated advisory committee members to create the committee and outline goals and responsibilities for it within the CNRP. CNRP researchers hope that this committee will provide a meaningful way for Bonner Scholars to participate in CNRP without compromising the privacy of narrative authors. Following the creation of the advisory committee, Bonner Scholars would no longer actively participate in the CNRP research team. In addition to these four concrete changes, CNRP researchers had begun discussing potential changes to other facets of the research protocol including, but not limited to: changing data collection procedures to collect narratives outside of Bonner Retreat in order to minimize time burden on Bonner Scholars, working with Bonner Scholar staff to introduce programming surrounding harassment during service to help students effectively deal with harassment, and reporting results to Bonner Scholars more often to ensure students are aware of CNRP research.

Empowerment. Feelings of empowerment from participation in the CNRP were a recurring theme in discussions with CNRP research team members. Team members

suggested that participation in the CNRP served as a source of empowerment for Bonner Scholar Program staff and Bonner Scholars on the research team. For Bonner Scholar affiliated researchers, the CNRP served as a source of affirmation. The CNRP was understood as an ally for Bonner Scholar students and staff, providing support for Bonner interests and creating an opportunity for academically driven changes. One researcher reflected, “It’s just nice to know that there are other champions of this program on the campus and not just people that are like yeah that is really cool, but who have an intimate understanding of all that we do in the program. That just to me its just, it allows me to take a deep breath and be like oh I have friends who get what I am working at.”

Researchers also noted that, by participating in the CNRP, they felt empowered as academics on campus. For Bonner Scholars staff, this was tied to increased recognition and respect of their academic abilities outside of their staff position, a sense that “I am an intellectual and an academic member of this campus.” For students on the research team, the CNRP also served as a source of academic empowerment. All students noted feelings of increased academic skills ranging from new research skills to greater ability to work as team. For several students, these increased academic skills were linked to working closely with Psychology faculty. Students often noted that faculty members were incredibly knowledgeable and shared their knowledge with students on the research team in a manner where students felt respected as equals. This often gave students a sense of academic accomplishment. One student researcher suggested that student researchers “link this project to something great that they have done at Rhodes, it’s something they accomplishment for them. It gave them a sense of purpose on this campus.” Faculty members echoed this sentiment, noting that students had grown both personally and

professionally through participation in the CNRP. Researchers also suggested that, by participating in the CNRP research team, they were able to build new professional relationships and friendships with other team members. Researchers saw these relationships as rewarding outcomes from the CNRP.

While CNRP research team members expressed feelings of empowerment, the effects of the CNRP on Bonner Scholars participating in the study were unclear. Bonner Scholars themselves offered little insight into their own experiences participating in the study. Those who commented on their personal experiences noted they enjoyed the process, but did not comment on other personal reactions. When CNRP research team members were asked how they believed Bonner Scholars were benefiting from the CNRP, they often remarked that they were unaware of how Bonner Scholars perceived the research as beneficial. This was largely due to a feeling that the CNRP was too new to support any conclusions. Research team members were hesitant to make conclusions midway through the longitudinal study. Several researchers also noted that Bonner Scholars had not had an opportunity to be empowered or to benefit from the CNRP. Specifically, researchers shared that Bonner Scholars were unaware of the project's purpose, which limited their ability to benefit from the study. Research team members noted that they believed that research team members might even be disempowered by the research. One researcher reflected, "I feel as though the general sentiment is kind of like another job tacked onto Bonner." Another researcher noted, "I don't know if I can say that [The CNRP] has [benefited Bonner Scholars] yet. I think going in this past fall and explaining what the project is has been very beneficial and opened people up a lot more to wanting to participate and participate in a more earnest and thoughtful way than in the

past when they thought we were just study rats and I think that's been positive." Overall, researchers suggested unclear effects on empowerment for Bonner Scholars who participated in the CNRP.

Discussion

The current study sought to examine the potential of the CNRP in fostering organizational learning and change in the Rhodes College Bonner Scholar Program. I asked, how does the CNRP and its associated methodologies contribute to learning and change processes within the Bonner Scholars program and community partners? Through an evaluation of Bonner Scholar narratives, focus groups with Bonner Scholars, and interviews with CNRP research team members, I examined the perceived effects of the CNRP on organizational learning and change within Bonner Scholar program. Emphasis was placed on participant and researcher understandings of the narrative methodologies and participatory methodologies employed by the CNRP and their relationship to potential organizational learning and change. Results highlighted a number of recurring themes in participants and researchers' understandings of the CNRP and its potential for fostering organizational learning and change in the Bonner Scholars program. The following discussion explores these themes and considers implications for future research.

Narrative Research in the CNRP

Narrative research results suggest that Bonner Scholars' narratives may be an effective mechanism for problem identification within the Bonner Scholars program. Bonner Scholar authors often wrote narratives that included descriptions of problems or difficulties arising from Bonner Scholar service. These descriptions included a wide

range of instances of problems associated with lack of skills or training, lack of purpose, service site difficulties, harassment, burden, race or privilege, and experience reconciliation in Bonner Scholars' service learning experiences. Narratives that identified such problems or difficulties may provide insight into potentially negative aspects of the Bonner Scholar service and raise questions about how the Bonner Scholar Program experience could be improved. Narratives highlighted recurring negative themes and opened those themes to discussion between CNRP research team members, Bonner Scholars, and Bonner Scholar Program staff. For example, narrative results suggested that a subset of Bonner Scholars were experiencing harassment as a part of their service experience. This harassment was framed as a recurring negative experience for many authors. However, prior to narrative collection, Bonner Scholar affiliated CNRP researchers were unaware of the degree of harassment students were experiencing during service. In the case of harassment, the narratives provided a tool for Bonner Scholar problem identification that led to learning processes for members of the Bonner Scholars organization. In addition, recognition of recurring harassment led to discussions with team members about best practices for dealing with issues of harassment in the Bonner Scholars program and how those practices could lead to changes in the Bonner Scholars program. This suggests that, as researchers work with Bonner Scholar staff and Bonner Scholars, analyses and discussion of each area of problem identification may serve as an impetus for changes in the Bonner Scholar Program. Through the narratives, researchers were able to see that Bonner Scholars were identifying problems associated with lack of skills or training, lack of purpose, service site difficulties, harassment, burden, race and privilege, and experience reconciliation difficulties in their service experiences. As the

CNRP continues, CNRP researchers and the Bonner Scholar program can use narratives as a basis to fuel discussion and influence future practices concerning each of these problem areas.

Narratives collected in the CNRP also highlight difficulties in promoting organizational learning and change. Translating problems identified through narrative into change underscores tensions in organizational learning and change processes. Though identifying instances of problem identification within narratives can be achieved through a simple coding procedure, determining the quality or magnitude of identified problems and evaluating the best practices for responding to them may prove difficult using solely narrative research methodologies. For each instance of problem identification, researchers must determine the magnitude of the problem. How severe is the problem? What are the implications for Bonner Scholars or the surrounding community if the problem goes unaddressed? Researchers must also determine the origins of the problem. Is the problem unavoidable, or is it a natural result of service? What problems are inherent in service learning, what problems are not? In the same vein, who or what is the source of the problem? Would interventions target Bonner Scholars or community partners? If interventions were determined necessary, who would implement them? Would community partners, Bonner Scholar programming, or individual Bonner Scholars be responsible for change? Finally, whose perspectives would be involved in determining the nature of problems identified through narrative? As problems emerge from Bonner Scholar narratives, each of these questions must be considered before changes can be implemented to address problems in the Bonner Scholars Program. For example, consider the issue of harassment in service. A number of Bonner Scholars

identified instances of harassment in their narratives. However, the frequency of harassment and magnitude of its negative effects on the author were not always explicitly defined in the narratives. In instances of significant harassment, how should harassment be addressed? Is harassment an avoidable problem that interventions can fix? Who would be responsible for such programming and who would be targeted to avoid harassment. Would Bonner Scholars be taught to cope with harassment or would offenders be confronted? A number of questions would need to be considered before harassment could be addressed. This example suggests that, as the research team and the Bonner Scholars organization react to problems identified through narrative, new processes of learning must emerge before change can be effectively implemented.

The CNRP's unique methodological position at the intersection of narrative research and participatory research allows such learning and change processes to emerge from the research. Problems identified through the narrative lead to questions that may be addressed through participatory strategies. As questions and themes emerge from the narratives, CNRP researchers and Bonner Scholars can collaborate to better understand and address them. For example, in the case of harassment, CNRP narratives highlighted a number of questions about best practices for addressing harassment issues in the Bonner Scholars program. If narrative methods were the sole method of inquiry, these questions might go unanswered. However, the participatory nature of the CNRP allows researchers and Bonner Scholars to collaborate to address harassment. In this sense, narrative and participatory methodologies become fundamentally intertwined in the CNRP. CNRP researchers can use the narratives as an impetus for collaboration to address problems within the narratives using participatory strategies. In turn, as researchers and Bonner

Scholars collaborate through participatory strategies, evidence from narratives support discussion and implementation of potential solutions.

The reciprocal relationship between narrative and participatory methods is a strength of the CNRP that could be applied to influence new models of understanding service learning and student experience in higher education. Results from the current study suggest that when narrative and participatory methodologies are combined, they may enhance understandings of student experience in service learning by identifying themes in student experience and providing opportunities to collaboratively explore those themes. Such collaborative practices allow multiple perspectives to be incorporated into the research process to gain a better understanding of service learning.

Participatory Research in the CNRP

Participatory research methodologies were considered a fundamental part of the CNRP. As part of the CNRP, researchers placed an emphasis on incorporating a variety of community voices into the research process. Researchers pursued a number of participatory strategies in the CNRP such as soliciting active participation of Bonner Scholars students and staff on the research team, giving Bonner Scholar authors opportunities to follow up with researchers, and valuing transparency in sharing results with Bonner Scholar authors. The CNRP project was understood as a process in which multiple stakeholders would be able to meaningfully contribute to the research process. As these stakeholders made contributions, the CNRP would be fluid and open to change as new perspectives and contributions were evaluated and incorporated into research processes. In its ideal form, the CNRP would successfully implement each of these participatory strategies.

In practice, successfully implementing participatory strategies into the CNRP proved difficult for CNRP researchers. Results from both discussions with CNRP research team members and Bonner Scholars highlighted tensions between participatory strategies in theory and participatory strategies in action. One area in which tensions were most apparent was in the active participation of Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team. In theory, including Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team offered an opportunity for Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team to meaningfully contribute to the research process, providing useful perspectives in developing research questions and procedures and interpreting and analyzing results. However, in practice, including Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team also created tensions within the research and highlighted issues of privacy, privilege, and power that existed in the Bonner Scholars program. While the CNRP was participatory for research team members, not all Bonner Scholars were able to directly contribute to the research process. In fact, most Bonner Scholars were unable to participate in the CNRP research team directly or indirectly. This created a privileged group of Bonner Scholars and Bonner Scholar staff in the CNRP. In this sense, the CNRP could be construed as participatory research for some, but not for all. In such a case, would the CNRP truly be meeting its goals of inclusion and openness to multiple perspectives? In addition to creating a privileged group in terms of research participation, including Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team created concerns over privacy of narratives. Though Bonner Scholars student and staff perspectives were seen as a useful tool for narrative interpretation, they also were understood as compromised privacy. For authors who shared deeply personal or private

experiences in their narratives, there was concern that Bonner Scholar researchers would be able to identify their narratives. This was especially concerning for students who felt the Bonner Scholars on the research team held leadership positions within the Bonner Scholars program in which they would have greater access to personal information to connect to research narratives. This created a tension between interpretation and privacy for authors. While it may have been beneficial to the research to maximize effective interpretation of narratives through participatory strategies, those participatory strategies placed authors at risk for privacy violations. Here participatory strategies that were strong in theory, were much more tenuous in practice. This tension begs the question, what outcomes are valued in participatory research processes, research outcomes or participants' wellbeing? In addition to including Bonner Scholars students and staff on the CNRP research team, the CNRP emphasized giving Bonner Scholar authors opportunities to follow up with researchers after data collection to discuss any questions, concerns, or suggestions about the research process. Researchers attempted to remain open to Bonner Scholars perspectives throughout the CNRP and to be welcoming and approachable for future contact or discussion. However, many Bonner Scholars noted that they felt that discussion and opportunities to meaningfully contribute in the CNRP were lacking. Bonner Scholars suggested that researchers should include more opportunities for formal discussion of the narratives. However, researchers believed they had been open to follow-up for discussion of the narratives. Perhaps this reflects a distinction between being offered opportunities for follow-up versus being required to follow-up. This suggests that tensions may exist between research perceptions of participatory strategies and participant perceptions of participatory strategies. The CNRP

also valued transparency in sharing results with Bonner Scholar authors as a participatory strategy. Researchers actively tried to share descriptions of research methodologies and results with Bonner Scholars throughout the research process. Researchers highlighted transparency as a participatory method and viewed transparency as crucial part of the research process. However, when asked about the CNRP, Bonner Scholars reported very little knowledge of the CNRP project, its methods, and its results. They suggested that this lack of knowledge prohibited meaningful participation in the project and was a source of concern. Again, this suggests that tensions may exist between researcher perceptions of participatory strategies and participant perceptions of participatory strategies.

Tensions between theory and practice and researcher and participant understandings in participatory research methodologies employed by the CNRP may reflect difficulties inherent in participatory research. As researchers employ participatory research methodologies, they must constantly communicate with participants to ensure that participants' needs are being met in the research process. As researchers communicate with participants to understand participants' needs, the research project must be open to changes. In the current study, ongoing communication with Bonner Scholars led to changes in participatory methodologies such as the creation of a Bonner Scholars Advisory Committee. This is particularly important as a means for empowering participants and research team members. The current study highlights the importance of considering the practical implementation of participatory methodologies and provides a case study for future practitioners.

Organizational Learning and Change in the CNRP

Results suggest that CNRP researchers and Bonner Scholars participants have begun to see evidence of the CNRP's potential to foster organizational learning and change within the Bonner Scholars program and the surrounding community. CNRP research team members and Bonner Scholars noted that, though the CNRP was in its fledgling stages and long-term conclusions could not be made in that stage of the project, the CNRP showed signs of potential for fostering organizational learning and change. CNRP research team members and Bonner Scholars suggested that themes emerging from Bonner Scholar narratives could be useful sources for influencing change. However, it was also suggested that narratives would only prove useful if combined with other opportunities for discussion. Bonner Scholars noted that while themes in stories might be used to influence change, these themes would be difficult to interpret without contextual information. Bonner Scholars highlighted this lack of contextual information as a weakness of narrative methodologies, noting that they would appreciate supplemental opportunities to discuss their stories with researchers rather than relying on the stories as a tool for change. In this sense, CNRP researchers and Bonner scholars largely saw the CNRP as an initial stage in fostering organizational change.

At the time of the current study, organizational learning and change processes resulting from the CNRP were largely recognized as occurring at the first-order level of change. When asked about benefits of the CNRP, researchers and participants focused on tangible changes in research practices and organizational programming. They underscored the potential of the CNRP for identifying practical, programming related problems in the Bonner Scholars program and the CNRP. This would suggest that the CNRP was contributing to first-order change in the Bonner Scholar and CNRP

communities. However, CNRP researchers also noted they felt empowered by the CNRP and that participation in the CNRP made them feel more valued as scholars. Bonner Scholars and CNRP researchers also noted that the CNRP might be fostering democratic processes within the Bonner Scholars program and new networks for Bonner Scholars in the campus community. These changes might contribute to long-lasting second-order changes in Bonner Scholar and CNRP practices. As the CNRP progresses, these second-order changes may become more or less apparent. Overall, results from the current study suggest that narrative and participatory research methods may contribute to both first and second order change within organizations and may serve as a useful model for organizational learning and change research.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study should be considered in light of several limitations. First, the Bonner Scholar perspectives reflected in the current study reflect the perspectives of a relatively small group of Bonner Scholars. Of 60 Bonner Scholars, only 8 volunteered to participate in focus groups. The perspectives of the 8 Bonner Scholars may not be representative of the larger Bonner Scholars community. I speculate that this limited participation may be due to limited understandings of the CNRP and limited buy-in from Bonner Scholars. Prior to focus groups, Bonner Scholars had limited opportunities to participate in the CNRP outside of narrative collection and had little rapport with researchers. Future research should establish rapport prior to data collection to encourage participation from participants in order to obtain larger samples. Secondly, future research should consider the role of narrative and participatory research methodologies in understanding service learning across multiple higher education settings. Rhodes College

represents only one type of higher education institution. Participatory and narrative research methodologies may be received differently in a tight knit, small campus than in larger university settings. By comparing results across multiple settings, researchers could identify recurring themes in understandings of narrative and participatory research methodologies to better understand their potential for fostering organizational change and learning. Similarly, the Rhodes College Bonner Scholars program may represent a unique organization for study. Bonner Scholar leadership fosters a climate and culture of learning within in the organizations. The organization as a whole may be more open to participatory research methodologies than other organizations. The ability of the CNRP and the current study to function was based on the Bonner Scholars Program's organizational support. Another limitation of our study is our use of formal prompts in a formal research setting. Narratives collected through this process may be limited by what and by how participants were willing to share in a formal research setting. The narratives collected in the CNRP may not be generalizable to more informal settings such as in oral or written stories shared with friends or family. Future research could consider a multitude of settings for collecting student narratives. Finally, at the time of the current study, the CNRP was in its infancy. Data collection was only half completed and narrative analyses were just beginning. This limited my ability to draw conclusions about the long-term impact of the CNRP on the Rhodes College Community as new understandings and results continued to emerge from the CNRP.

The current study highlights potential future directions in service-learning research and evaluation. Specifically, results support narrative and participatory research methods as a potential model for understanding organizational learning and change in

higher education. Preliminary results suggest that narrative and participatory research methodologies fostered learning processes in the Bonner Scholars program and the CNRP that could promote change in understandings of service learning. However, the precise links between these methodologies and change processes remain unexplored outside of the CNRP. Future research should continue to explore these methods and their potential for modeling organizational learning and change across multiple organizational settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study sought to examine the potential of the CNRP in fostering organizational learning and change in the Rhodes College Bonner Scholar Program. Specifically, I examined CNRP researcher and Bonner Scholar participants' perceptions of narrative research and participatory research's role in promoting organizational learning and change within the Bonner Scholars program. Results suggested that Bonner Scholar narratives provided a mechanism for problem identification that could be used to influence organizational learning and change. Results also highlighted tensions between researcher and participant understandings of participatory methodologies and the CNRP. These tensions spurred organizational learning and change processes as CNRP researchers and Bonner Scholar participants' perspectives were discussed and shared to influence change.

Table 1. Coding Groups

Code:	Description:	Example:
Lack of skills or training	Narrator makes reference to a lack of skills or training required to complete service.	I felt very uncomfortable during this conversation because I felt like I had nothing to contribute to the dialogue.
Lack of purpose	Narrator notes a lack of purpose in service.	“I felt defeated and like we weren’t making that big of a difference.
Service site difficulties	Narrator makes reference to difficulties or problems at a particular service site. Includes difficulties with site leadership or staff.	This was awkward for me because in my experience with other avenues of service I was taught to not judge based on outward appearances... I was asked to abandon this mindset and go off my initial reactions to people’s appearances and use my perception of who they were in my assessment”.
Harassment	Narrator makes reference to harassment during service.	During my volunteer work at [my service site], I was verbally harassed by one of the regular customers.
Burden	Narrator makes reference to over commitment and/or burden resulting from service	Bonnors deserve a chance to get away and be able to reflect without the continued burden of all of the responsibilities that are put on us from the first day we atep on campus.
Race and privilege	Narrator makes reference to personal issues of economic privilege, white privilege, or racial concerns	I know that being a white girl in this neighborhood can be an issue. People may not want me here because of my race or economic background but these are the people I choose to be with and if they joke about my race and gender I will let them unless it becomes destructive or dangerous.
Experience reconciliation difficulties	Narrator makes reference to difficulties reconciling program experiences with an outside academic, social, or service experience	“I have difficulty at times reflecting my personal identities at Rhodes”.

Table 2. Coding Problem Identification

Coding Category:	Stories:	References:
Lack of skills or training	48	65
Lack of purpose	28	40
Service site difficulties	16	23
Leadership	6	7
Harassment	15	38
Sexual harassment	9	13
Verbal harassment	4	7
Personal information	3	3
Law enforcement	2	3
Burden	15	19
Race and privilege	15	30
Experience reconciliation difficulties	10	32

Appendix A.
Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for participating in the Community Narrative Research Project. We appreciate you taking the time to write your narratives. We value your perspectives on the research project and would like to discuss a series of questions with you, as a group, to better understand your experiences with the project. We are also interested in your perspectives on possible outcomes of the project. We will use the information discussed here today as part of an ongoing evaluation of the Community Narrative Research Project and its relationship with the Bonner Scholars Program and the greater Rhodes College Community. This discussion will be recorded.

- I. What was your experience of writing the story? (follow up: easy to generate, difficult, other thoughts)
 - II. Do you think writing your story was a good way to share your service experience? (follow up: communicative goals, representative, alternatives)
 - III. What do you want researchers to learn from your story? (follow up: learn about personal experience, the organization, relationships)
 - IV. Do you see the narratives helping to better understand the Bonner Scholars Program and our community partners? If not, why? If so, how? (follow up: personal growth in students, structure organization)
 - V. Do you think the narratives could influence change in the Bonner Scholars Program or our partnering service sites? If not, why? If so, how? (follow up: new practices based on the narratives)
- I. Do you feel you have meaningfully contributed to the research process? If not, why? If so, how? (follow up: shared meaningful or useful information, other contributions)
 - II. How could we enhance or improve the research project? (follow up: type of data collected, collection process, relationship with participants)

Thank you again for participating in the Community Narrative Research project. We appreciate your input on the project. Please feel free to contact us in the future with any comments, questions, suggestions, or concerns. Have a great rest of retreat.

Appendix B.
Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about the Community Narrative Research Project. As part of my Honors Research Project, I am interested in evaluating your participation in and understanding of the Community Narrative Research Project. Your perspective will help to better understand the relationship of the Community Narrative Research Project to the Bonner Scholars Program and the Greater Rhodes College Community. During this interview, I will ask you a series of questions about the project and record your answers. Do you feel comfortable continuing?

- I. What is your role within the Community Narrative Research Project? (follow up: title, tasks, responsibilities)
- II. How does the Community Narrative Research Project use a narrative research approach? (follow up: how do we use narratives to understand the research question)
- III. What are the strengths of the narratives approach? Weaknesses? (follow up: usefulness of the data, ease of collection, analysis)
- IV. How does the Community Narrative Research Project use a participatory approach to research? (follow up: varied perspectives, value of perspectives, active participation)
- V. What are the strengths of the participatory approach? Weaknesses? (follow up: level of participation, multiple perspectives)
- VI. Do you think the Community Narrative Research Project is contributing to a better understanding of student experience in the Bonner Scholars Program and with community partners? If so, how? (follow up: negative, positive, identity, meaning)

- VII. How can knowledge from the Community Narrative Research Project contribute to change in the Bonner Scholars Program? (follow up: relationships, training, organization)
- VIII. Do you think the Community Narrative Research Project is contributing to a better understanding of the greater Rhodes Community? If so, how? (follow up: service learning, relationships, organization)
- IX. How could knowledge from the Community Narrative Research Project contribute to change in the Rhodes College Community? What do you see as the potential opportunities and challenges? (follow up: putting research into action)
- X. Will the knowledge you have gained through the Community Narrative Research Project influence your future course of study or actions? If so, how? (follow up: new perspectives, new methods)
- XI. How has your involvement in the Community Narrative Research Project affected you? (follow up: new perspectives, emotions, actions)
- XII. How do you think participation in the Community Narrative Research Project has affected the Bonner Scholars? (follow up: new perspectives, emotions, actions)
- XIII. How do you think participation in the Community Narrative Research Project has affected research team members?
- XIV. How could the Community Narrative Research Project better serve the Bonner Scholars or Rhodes College Community?

Appendix C.
Selection Criteria

I. Narrator makes reference to difficulties or problems at a particular service site. This may be in reference to self or Bonner peers.

a. Conflict with leaders or administrators

Ex. “Ms.Hayley wanted me to become a crutch and I was just not going to do that”.

b. Disagreement with service site values

Ex. “As a patient advocate you recognize how disconnected the whole process is, you meet a doctor that you’ll probably never see again, but they take away something that holds so much potential: good and bad. I’ll never know why any of the lady’s hands I hold are lying on that table, why the decided that life wasn’t the best choice for them. Yes, it’s a powerful situation to experience, but it’s not one that’s very heroic in my eyes. I respect the choices of all people, but I’m not sure that the choice of [my service site] is for me.”

c. Conflicting expectations

Ex. “When I got in to the actual internship, though, it was very different. They seem to be only catering to the older, upper/middle class white people in the area by doing dumb stuff like having a seed exchange as their first event. They are stuck in their ways but also have no idea what they are doing. I’m no expert on farmer’s markets but I think with a little effort and support I could help to build a pretty cool program but they don’t even have the same idea of a farmer’s market as I do. They want to develop some big fancy educational event before even having anything established. It seems like a little bit of bullshit to me”.

II. Narrator notes a lack of purpose in service.

Ex. “I had the pleasure of listening to all of my peers talk about how much they were going to accomplish on the trip, how much “good” they were going to do. Having been on these sort of service trips before, I was much more disillusioned.”

“I finally explained to them many of my frustrations, and told them what I was looking for in an organization and how I couldn’t find it. I told them

that Bonner was inhibiting my progress in college and professional development instead of supplementing it.”

“I felt defeated and like we weren’t making that big of a difference.”

III. Narrator makes reference to a lack of skills or training required to complete service.

a. Not knowing what to do.

Ex. “I was so confused and worried because I had no real authority there, I did not know what to do! I was so used to just taking instructions from my site supervisors”.

b. Feelings of inadequacy in contributions to patrons. May be framed as inability to relate.

Ex. “I felt very uncomfortable during this conversation because I felt like I had nothing to contribute to the dialogue.”

IV. Narrator makes reference to difficulties reconciling program experiences with an outside academic, social, or service experience.

Ex. “This was awkward for me because in my experience with other avenues of service I was taught to not judge based on outward appearances. I was taught to learn about the people with whom I interacted, to speak with them as equals, to learn their story, and to understand that I was receiving from them as much as I liked to think I was giving. I was asked to abandon this mindset and go off my initial reactions to people’s appearances and use my perception of who they were in my assessment”.

“I have difficulty at times reconciling my personal identities at Rhodes. This particular situation found me intersected at many of them.”

V. Narrator makes reference to harassment during service.

a. Sexual harassment

Ex. “When a man looks at me a certain way or starts commenting on every article of clothing I’m wearing, how I’m wearing my hair, or simply going a little too far when saying I’m pretty; I feel uncomfortable”.

b. Verbal harassment

Ex. “During my volunteer work at [my service site], I was verbally harassed by one of the regular customers.”

c. Personal Information

Ex. “He wanted to know how old I was, where I went to school, what I’m studying, my sexuality, very personal things, which I preferred not to disclose because I felt that it was crossing the line.”

d. Law enforcement

Ex. “During the ordeal, one of my friends, an older lady, ended up crying as the officers verbally abused her and ignored her medical need to sit down and take a breath.”

VI. Narrator makes reference to over commitment and/or burden resulting from service.

Ex. “Getting away was the best part of my past year. Bonner is great. However, forced reflection and team building do not work for me. I felt trapped. It took a monk in purple crocs to help me realize that I can truly do what I want to do and not be tied to the expectations of the program or be caught up in the politics of it. Programming and group things don’t work for me, and that’s ok. Bonners deserve a chance to get away and be able to reflect without the continued burden of all of the responsibilities that are put on us from the first day we step on campus”.

“I told them that Bonner was inhibiting my progress in college and professional development instead of supplementing it.”

“I love the community development work I do as a Bonner. I love my classmates. I love the opportunities Rhodes has given me. But the Bonner experience has been a noisy one for me. Overwhelmingly noisy. The culture of the program and of the school is one that promotes “walking loudly.” There is immense pressure to leave a lasting mark on the community inside and outside the iron gates – and to do it while maintaining an astronomical GPA, applying to big name grad programs and fellowships, and somehow staying stable as a human being. It is constant noise.”

VII. Narrator makes reference to personal issues of economic privilege, white privilege, or racial concerns.

Ex. “I do not know if I can truly compare myself to my personal heroes like Nelson Mandela and Dorothy Day if I continue to live in my personal bubble of privilege.”

“I know that being a white girl in this neighborhood can be an issue. People may not want me here because of my race or economic background

but these are the people I choose to be with and if they joke about my race and gender I will let them unless it becomes destructive or dangerous.”

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