UNITING SOMATIC PEDAGOGY
WITH MANAGEMENT EDUCATION:
A FEMINIST PARTICPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

A Thesis in
Adult Education

by

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The purpose of this feminist participatory action research study was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers. The objective was to explore the significance of gender for women managers, the relationship of the body to management, and uncover knowledge of fostering somatic pedagogy.

The theoretical framework guiding this study, feminist poststructuralism, offered a lens through which to view the importance of gender. Additionally, the feminist poststructural constructs of positionality, deconstructing binaries, language, and discourse offered insight into the way women managers make meaning of their bodies’ role in constructing and making meaning of knowledge.

Utilizing a feminist participatory action research design, the study offers an example of feminist research that takes women’s issues and concerns into consideration and emphasizes collaboration through active participation. As action research, the study is unique because of its origination and implementation in the community as opposed to a formal classroom or organization. Data collection was completed through an initial interview, journaling, email communication, and a follow-up interview. The fifteen participants offered a range of perspectives about the bodies’ connection to management as well as the significant ways gender impacts their managerial style and experiences as a female manager.

The study contributes to the fields of adult and management education considerable data about embodied ways of sharing and creating knowledge, which adds to an under-researched but developing aspect of each field. Specifically, the study offers both adult and management education three major areas important to somatic pedagogy.
First, the relationship of dialogue to somatic learning emerged as critical to the experience. The participants found the embodied dialogue during the workshop sessions validating, empowering, and reassuring. Second, maintaining learner centrality involves ongoing inclusiveness of lived experiences, existing knowledge, and ideas and opinions of those invested in the learning process. Fostering learner-centeredness was especially important to the participants who strongly valued the interaction with other professional women and for creating a safe atmosphere in which to share details about their body’s experience in relationship to managing. Third, the study expanded upon the participants’ existing consciousness of their bodies and urged them to consider their bodies’ actions and reactions in a particular context, which in this case was management. Through yoga, the women were able to relate concepts from poses to management practice such as flexibility, strength, conflict, balance, honoring decisions, taking time to focus, and stress management. Each of these findings presents vast implications for the development and implementation of a somatic pedagogy for adult and management education as well as organizations dedicated to holistic training and development.
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DEDICATION

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PART I

Part I includes the first three chapters of this feminist participatory action research study. Chapter one offers the introduction and purpose of the study, chapter two offers an extensive review of the related literature, and chapter three offers a detailed description of feminist participatory action research as the methodology.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“Embodied learning blends two parallel and complementary ways of knowing: the knowing that is discoverable in and mediated by concretized text, and the knowing that is discoverable in our experiences as embodied beings” (Gustafson, 1999, p. 250).

This chapter provides an overview of a feminist participatory action research study that explores a somatic learning approach to management education for women managers. The chapter includes the background to the problem, a purpose statement, guiding research questions, an overview of the theoretical framework supporting the study, an overview of the research methodology, the significance of the study, and an explanation of the assumptions and limitations associated with the study.

Women Managers and Management Education

Women constitute half of the workforce and increasingly make their way into managerial ranks; therefore, the presence of women in masters of business administration programs has also increased. In 2004, women held half of all management, professional and related occupations (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005). However, women hold only 7.9% of the highest-ranking corporate officership positions and 13.6% of board seats in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2002). Additionally, women make up an average of only 29% of enrolled full-time students in the top 20 M.B.A. programs (U.S. News and World Report, 2005). Despite the increased numbers of women into managerial positions and competitive management schools, the impact of gender on the teaching and learning of management education has not been considered.
Throughout history and in various disciplines, men were usually the sole subjects of research studies, whether the field was education or medicine. The findings of such research were then indiscriminately applied to both men and women. This approach of prescribing research results found from male populations to women is called gender-blind. A gender-neutral approach assumes that gender is simply not an issue. The historical gender-blind approach to research where findings for men are assumed to be applicable to women holds true in management education (Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004a; Smith, 1997; Thomas & Pullen, 2000). Regardless of the terminology, ignoring gender or applying research about men to women does not account for the influence of the dominant culture on a field of study. Collinson and Hearn (1994) found that “men and masculinity are frequently central to analyses, yet they remain taken for granted, hidden and unexamined” (p. 3). Men managed to dominate the discourse but elude examination. Casting out gender as irrelevant to management education allows schools “to collude with the status quo; simply repeating the existing management theory and practice” (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004a, ¶ 3). The majority of the literature on gender and management for this study originated in the UK or Australia (Gatenby & Humphries, 1999; Marshall, 1999; Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004a; Perriton, 1999; Sinclair, 1997; Smith, 1998; Tanton & Hughes, 1999). However, “seminal, male only, American studies based on MBA students remain unchallenged and perpetuate the male stream of management research and knowledge, whilst women only populations are criticized as unbalanced and unrepresentative” (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004a, ¶ 21).
Management education includes the teaching of skills and theories required of people in managerial/leadership positions, including but not limited to intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; conflict management skills; communication skills; stress management skills; and leadership skills as well as theories around human resources; organizational behavior and development; strategy and policy; ethics and social responsibility, and international management. Management education can occur in academia in undergraduate or graduate programs as well as in organizational contexts through training and development programs, succession programs, and career management. Informal management education also occurs within organizations, for example, through on-the-job learning.

The dominant discourse discussed in the management education literature often avoids addressing issues of managerial power and who makes most of the decisions within organizations. Similarly, organization theory does not question its gendered nature. The underlying “assumption has been that leadership is synonymous with men and that gender is not an issue worthy of exploration” (Collinson & Hearn, 1996, p. 6). An examination of men and masculinities within management serves to examine men as socially produced, reproduced, and changing identities. Emphasizing the difference in women’s leadership and managerial styles or trying to fit women’s skills into current managerial structures reflects a position that risks ‘blaming the victim’ or essentialism. Further, Mavin, Bryans, and Waring (2004a) point out that continuing to ignore gender in management allows business and management schools to uphold the status quo. Therefore, existing theories and practices of management remain unchallenged. An outcome of this passivity occurs around the issue of power. Current management practice
typically associates higher-level management positions with higher levels of power, and this association has implications for women managers.

Gendered power is significant because of the disproportionate numbers of men in managerial and executive positions within organizations. The higher a manager falls on the organizational hierarchy, the more power they possess. Marshall (1995) described senior level power in terms of status, authority, position, and decision-making. Power can also be associated with the privilege of naming, defining, and valuing those issues that frame discussions about gender (Spender, 1984). When women are excluded from the most senior levels of management, their power in a variety of contexts is limited. An additional concern for women results from the powers of communities who potentially recruit and reward people who resemble their membership, exert power over inclusion and exclusion, allocate resources, and set agendas (Marshall, 1995). Feminist poststructuralist would argue that power is not an individual concern but instead one of power relations; the ongoing interaction within a relationship whereby control over the other goes back and forth (St. Pierre, 2000). Power is an ever-shifting dynamic, and people are always within the relations of power. For feminist poststructuralists, this means that resistance is always a possibility, and with resistance power relations can change (Foucault, 1984).

Ignoring the issue of gender is also perpetuated in the management education classroom. The result is that women’s experiences in the MBA classroom include feeling alienated by the competitive culture, centralization of power, disregard for prior learning, behavior toward not-knowing, an outward versus inward perspective towards finding information, and programmed/mechanistic approaches to tasks (Sinclair, 1997). Other
research finds that ignoring gender allows management education to overlook students’ current perceptions and experiences of management in organizations, which allows the possibility of associating male with manager to go uncontested (Gatenby & Humphries, 1999; Marshall, 1999; Perriton, 1999; Smith, 1997; Tanton & Hughes, 1999). The result of ignoring gender uncovers a masculine bias in management education. For example, women students often experience instructors as being more receptive to male perspectives than female perspectives (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004a; Smith, 1997).

Despite the male bias of management education there are efforts taking place that are attempting to address this concern. For example, Gallos (1995) advocates for valuing the life experiences of women in the management education classroom and letting them know that educational experiences can be positive. She found that women often appreciate validation and acceptance in the classroom for their ways of knowing and experiences because of the likelihood that social factors directed them into pink-collar jobs or dead-end work. Pink-collar jobs are secondary labor market jobs predominantly filled by women, which are low in status and pay, and have limited benefits or chances for advancement. For example, teaching, nursing, clerical work, cleaning, aged care, food preparation and service, and childcare are all considered pink-collar jobs. Family relationships may have also superseded career aspirations and the chance to climb the corporate ladder, or they may have encountered “blatant or subtle biases that have robbed them of their faith in the system or themselves” (¶ 8).

Management, as a discipline, is slowly making space to educate managers in ways that veer from the traditional ways of knowing that most men in business are comfortable with (and many women as well) such as exploring the affective component through
research on emotional intelligence at work and in management education (Clark, Callister & Wallace, 2003; Goleman, 1998; Mavin, Bryans, and Waring, 2004a) and spirituality in management education, to which the Journal of Management Education devoted an entire issue in October 2000 (Daniels, Franz & Wong, 2000; Neal, 1997), and the workplace (Dehler & Welsh, 1994; English, 2002; Wheatley, 1992). However, the dominant discourse and most management education usually entirely ignore the role of the body. As a result students learn an un-embodied approach to management, and instructors, especially women instructors, check their bodies at the door in favor of a pedagogy that privileges the cognitive, the rational, and ultimately, the masculine (Mavin, Bryans, and Waring, 2004; Perriton, 1999). A significant need exists to consider how the body can contribute to learning of management by women managers.

This study explores the possibility of approaching management education from a somatically-oriented epistemology that positions gender as critical to the process of learning. Management education’s historically rational, masculine approaches to teaching and learning broadens from the opportunity to dispense with the false “gender-blind” perspectives and inclusion of the body as way to make space for the whole person within its discipline.

Somatic Learning

Somatic or bodily learning takes on many forms in various disciplines. Matthews (1998) defines somatic knowing as “an experiential knowing that involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction—a knowing, feeling, and acting that includes more of the broad range of human experience” (¶ 4). At its core, he describes somatic knowing as
an “embodied experience of being and doing” (¶ 4). Therefore, embodied learning literally means giving a body to learning. Somatic learning often occurs in experiential learning, where the learner becomes an active participant in the knowledge acquisition process through activities like role-plays and discussion. Clark (2001) generalized somatic learning even more, describing it as “how we learn from our bodily experience” (¶ 3). She gives the example of how often stress manifests itself in our body before our mind recognizes the situation as an example to how we discount the body’s message until our minds can define it.

Fundamentally, each definition positions somatic learning or knowing within or through the body rather than knowledge about or without the body (Brockman, 2001; Chapman, 1998; Clark, 2001; Matthews, 1998; Sellers-Young, 1998). Chapman (1998), Brockman (2001), and Crowdes (2000) all recognize the body’s inclusion in the learning environment as having implications for how we make sense of social and cultural norms and issues such as power and gender. Matthews (1998), Sellers-Young (1998), Michelson (1998), and Crowdes (2000) all recognize somatic learning as experiential and involving the body’s action and reaction. Each author uses similar concepts to define experiential learning including gaining knowledge through the senses or perception and the importance of tacit involvement in learning that results in knowing, feeling or acting on that experience. Experiential exercises, such as debate, group collaboration, and action-oriented activities, create learning through our experiences, and a major contributor to experience occurs from our environment, which includes all of our senses and our bodies via nerve receptors on each muscle and organ (Hannaford, 1995). The body is designed to gather information both externally through our sensory organs or internally where each
movement instantaneously carries a chaotic selection of impulses quickly to the brain so it knows precisely where the body is in space. Such critical sensations provide us with ideas of the self and the world as well as creating a basis for knowledge. We learn first through our senses and through exploration of the world, and these initial sensory patterns are mapped out on elaborate nerve networks. The sensory patterns form the center of our personal information system and become more complex and rich with each new experience. Each sensory pattern provides a context for all learning, thought, and creativity (Hannaford, 1995). Thus, somatic learning may provide the women managers in this study a means to more authentically engage in a learning experience that will connect their mind, body, and spirit. A more somatic approach to learning management education can broaden the discipline of management in general by expanding the accepted ways of knowing and sharing information.

Somatic learning is felt by the body, and defining such knowing in rational terms has limited not only the understanding of somatic education but also its development. While the range of learning that is classified within somatic learning is broad and interpreted differently, it is the body itself that continuously emerges as a multi-faceted force for making meaning of our experience.

My observations as a student and instructor in university settings reveal how drastically formal learning situations rely on the cognitive aspects of learning and limit the learning that occurs from other aspects of the self. Specifically, the body as a place of learning and knowing rarely appears in both the adult education and management education literature. While the body’s role in learning is significant, finding a place for the body within management education is more challenging.
Because of the great breach in the literature on the body and management education, it’s necessary to envision ways to bring people’s bodies to life as part of their learning about management. Integrating somatic learning with management education allows women to draw on knowledge gained from their bodies to make sense of, reflect on, and confront issues such as power, conflict, negotiation, communication, change and leadership, which are key concepts within management education. Bringing the body into the realm of management education can take on various forms, for example role-play, meditation, mindfulness training, or ropes courses, which are popular today. In this study, the practice of yoga provided a way to explore somatic learning and management education.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word that means to join or yoke (Iyengar, 1979). While yoga practice can be an entire lifestyle or way of being, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the physical practice of yoga. Asanas, or postures, are the third aspect of the eight limbs or stages of yoga according to Patanjali (1990). The purpose of using yoga as a type of somatic learning is to create a connection between the mind and body so that the participants can integrate somatic learning with management concepts. As Sinclair (2005) states, “we need to introduce the body into management education in a revealing but freeing way—using a focus on the body to find new ways of thinking and being, as well as teaching and learning” (p. 90). Teaching yoga together with management concepts meets this challenge and provides an undeniable link between the body and learning.

Sinclair’s (2005) suggestions for bringing the body into the management classroom include linking classroom topics and learning to the body, adopting different bodily positions and gestures to mirror a point about content, or as Sinclair did, bring
yoga to the business school. While Sinclair does not teach yoga in her management courses, she does offer it in the business school setting to both colleagues and students. Her aim was to bring the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits of yoga to participants, but in actuality she realized she was doing much more. She states:

I had transgressed some boundaries…by creating a setting which holds students, administrative and academic staff on the same level (the floor), I was removing status and power props and reducing those who participated to a metaphorical nakedness—without their brainpower, just the raw material of their body.

(Sinclair, 2005, p. 101)

The positioning of yoga so close to the domain of academic learning, which is bound up in cognitive connotation, inspired Sinclair to find ways to further break down boundaries between the body and management education. Sinclair’s inspiration created the impetus for this study to explore how of management education, yoga and women managers might combine to inform one another.

Problem Statement

Drawing from my personal and professional experiences I observed a lack of attention to both somatic ways of learning and feminist approaches within management education. As an instructor of management education, I continually witness the expectation of traditional, rational, and cognitive modes of teaching and learning. Women are often sidelined in an environment that supports debate and argument over discussion and active listening. In my role as a female instructor, I also noticed my own silencing of somatic approaches for fear that students would resist or find my attempts to integrate the
body into the learning space silly or ineffective. Feminist academic practice, as defined by Luke and Gore (1992), can take many forms such as combating sexist, patriarchal, and phallocentric knowledges at many different institutional levels. Because feminist pedagogy continues to be disregarded and labeled as personal, opinionated, biased, and begrudging, a realm of rationality is created (Markowitz, 2005; Wallace, 1999; Webber, 2005). On the other hand, a feminist approach acknowledges that the professors do not possess all the knowledge, recognizes the need to negotiate power relations between instructors and students, and includes participants as co-researchers (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000). In addition to a feminist epistemological orientation, the study is grounded in a feminist theoretical framework.

In particular, feminist poststructuralism allows for the examination of the construction of meaning, power relationships, and the importance of language within a managerial context (St. Pierre, 2000). It seeks to identify and expose biases that impact the education of women in management positions. In a field where feminist voices are nearly non-existent, a feminist poststructuralist perspective also presents an alternative paradigm for delivering management education. As St. Pierre explains, “In poststructuralism, meaning can be strategically reinterpreted, reworked, and deferred” and we are thereby “complicit in the production of ourselves (p. 504). In order to apply this same idea of reinterpretation to management education, alternative ways of learning should be considered. Specifically, the ways in which the body can inform learning management require exploration.

There are clear ways in which yoga, as a mode of somatic learning, can also inform management education and vice versa. For women, their bodies have always
served the functional purpose of (re)production, so their body alienation is well in tact even before interaction with the world of work. Yoga offers the possibility of affirmation and sensitivity to one’s body through breath work, centering, and movement. In order to create a somatic link between management education and women managers requires attention to the lived, bodily experience of the women.

Most studies on women in organizational contexts consider their particular managerial or leadership style or compare their career mobility to that of men. Rarely does the research on women managers consider how alternative approaches to learning management could impact both classroom and organizational contexts. No research exists that explores including somatic learning as a method for learning management education, and there is a profound lack of action research studies on women managers that allows for their active participation in the research process. Therefore, the combination of traditional, masculine approaches to management, unembodied teaching and learning environments, and the missing acknowledgement of gender demand an investigation that challenges these issues.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this feminist participatory action research study was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education for women managers. The underlying framework of this study explored the field of management education and specifically examined the impact of gender and feminist theory within the discipline. The design of the study utilized feminist participatory action research to bring together the
teaching of management education with the practice of yoga in a nonformal educational setting.

Guiding Research Questions

The objective of this feminist participatory action research study with women managers was to combine yoga, as a somatic learning approach, with management concepts. There were four questions that guided and provided the focus for this study:

1. How do participants in this study view their experiences as a manager in general and the influence of gender more specifically?

2. How do these women make meaning of their body and its relationship to management within their environment?

3. How does the active engagement of the mind and body in the process of teaching and learning management, encourage women in managerial positions to acknowledge and/or bring to the forefront issues of gender, discourse, knowledge, language, and power within their current managerial position?

4. How can a somatic pedagogy aid management education instructors in both workplace and classroom settings in fostering the personal and professional development of managers?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study drew from feminist pedagogy as well as the tenets of feminist poststructuralism. “Feminist pedagogy attempts to make students aware of the social construction of knowledge by challenging traditional methods of teaching” (Markowitz, 2005, p. 43). Poststructuralism, however, reminds feminist
pedagogues that even alternative methods of teaching require instructors to take a position. The positionality (race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and ableness) of the instructor necessarily follows the instructor into the classroom (Tisdell, 1998). Poststructuralism denies the validity of structuralism's method of binary opposition and maintains that meanings and intellectual categories are shifting and unstable. By adding feminist principles to poststructuralist philosophy, analysis of social constructions of gender and sexuality as well as the study of gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues become central. Weedon (1987) would add to the definition of feminist poststructuralism the necessity of examining relationships between women’s experiences, social power, and resistance while taking into consideration the subjective nature of making meaning of women’s lived realities. Both feminist pedagogy and feminist poststructuralism served as a lens for understanding the literature reviewed and the feminist participatory action research process.

Feminist poststructuralism served as a lens so that issues around gender, power, language, discourse, knowledge, and truth become central. As a framework, feminist poststructuralism problematizes all these philosophical concepts with the purpose of searching for meanings, which constantly shift, and deconstructing essentialist ideas (Mann & Huffman, 2005; St. Pierre, 2000). The ongoing cycle of critique and deconstruction characterize the difficult to define realm of poststructuralism. The key difference between structural and poststructural feminist theories is the significance of gender combined with other structural systems of privilege and oppression such as race, class, and sexual orientation (St. Pierre, 2000; Tisdell, 1998). For adult education this means that connections between individuals and the intersecting structural systems of
oppression and privilege may determine how students build knowledge, talk about their own experience, and relate in the classroom.

This study also looked to feminist theory, in specific feminist poststructuralism, to help inform the research problem because of its historically unique relationship with the body and embodied epistemologies. Beginning in the late 1980’s, feminist theories on the body were primarily poststructuralist (Uhlmann & Uhlmann, 2005). By deconstructing the physical world, poststructuralists sought to expose socially constructed, “gendered, embodied subjectivities” (p.94). Within both organizations and higher education, men continue to hold the most high-ranking positions and wield the most power. Self-consciousness and lack of confidence usually occur when someone is not dominant, and in typically masculine spheres, the bodily orientation of women may portray negative self-awareness and lack of confidence (Uhlmann & Uhlmann, 2005; Young, 1990). In his study of subjection and the internalization of oppression, Foucault (1984) reveals new ideas of political liberty with “a darker side: the emergence of a new and unprecedented discipline directed against the body” (Mann & Huffman, 2005). Feminists have taken Foucault’s perspective of the body as bound up in social control to analyze body politics and examine the anthropology and sociology of bodies (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993).

At the foundation of feminist research is the importance of gender relations and the integration of women’s experiences into the learning process. Because my participants were women, a feminist perspective allows for the examination of gender and how it shapes the learning process in management education. Women’s learning as a field of study was popularized by Gilligan (1977) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) who cautioned against simply labeling women learners as collaborative
and emphatic. Rather their research encourages viewing women as impacted by their experiences and contexts. Overall, the research promotes an alternative approach to learning “in the workplace and formal education [other] than the competitive, individualistic modes of knowing traditionally associated with men” (Hayes, 2001, ¶ 2). It is a basic tenet of adult education to use learners’ current knowledge and interests as a starting point for learning. Using gender (and other factors of positionality) “as a lens for understanding why learners may have some kinds of knowledge and not others, why they have some interests and not others, we can gain more insight into appropriate instructional approaches and ways of presenting subject matter” (¶ 14). Women managers are uniquely positioned to not only experience society’s constructions of them as women in general, but also the impact of taking on a managerial role when aspects such as status, power, and authority are traditionally viewed as masculine.

Further analysis in the literature review in Chapter two will examine the constructs of feminist poststructuralism, in specific the topics of power, language, discourse, knowledge and truth, and reason and rationality. A feminist framework also assumes a more collaborative and participatory approach to research (Patton, 2002) and dovetails neatly with the feminist participatory action research design intended for this study, which is discussed in detail in Chapter three. The following section briefly discusses the proposed research design and explains the significance of choosing qualitative research an action research generally, and feminist participatory action research in specific to explore a somatic learning approach to management education for women managers.
Overview of the Research Design

The focus of this research lends itself to a qualitative study informed by feminist and action research paradigms. Merriam (2002) identifies four key components of qualitative research and each of these is reflected in this study. First, a qualitative approach was chosen because a primary focus of this study is to analyze how meaning is made from integrating somatic learning with management education. Second, the researcher acts as the principal mechanism for collecting and analyzing data. Third, the outcome of qualitative research is “richly descriptive,” meaning there will be extensive descriptions of participants, activities, discussions, and context. Fourth, qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals experience and interact with their social world in a process that is inductive (Merriam, 2002). While having the researcher so central to the research process is both advantageous and disadvantageous, a qualitative approach capitalizes on the primary goal of understanding. Qualitative research served the purpose of this study by focusing on the meaning-making process and the lived experiences of the women managers by exploring a somatic approach to management education. Specifically, this study utilized a feminist participatory action research method. Both participatory action research (PAR) and feminist approaches to PAR are explained in the next sections.

Participatory Action Research

An action research design allows for a collaborative approach with participants, including an ongoing, systematic process of reflection and action, aims to address the immediate needs of people in specific contexts, and often seeks to achieve improvement
through change on either individual or institutional levels (Herr & Anderson, 2005). For the purposes of this study, such an aim fit well for understanding how somatic learning impacts learning about management in the contexts of formal classroom education and the formal and informal education that takes place within organizations. By removing women managers from the politically charged contexts of their organizations and the potentially limited formal management education classroom environment, less inhibited learning occurred. The participants fully articulated their experiences as women managers learning about management through a somatic approach without fear of organizational retribution or the need to perform for a letter grade.

The specific type of action research used for this study was Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is defined by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) as "collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social...practices" (p. 5). For the purpose of this study, using a PAR approach with women managers also brought attention to the status of gender in managerial roles, highlighted the experiences and knowledge of women experiencing managerial contexts, and capitalized on collaboration between participants and the researcher (Reason, 1994). Collaboration as well as ongoing dialogue with participants is also identified by Gatenby & Humphries (2000) as critical to the PAR process. To this end, it was the goal of this study to explore a somatic approach to management education with women managers that honors the collaborative intention of PAR. The following section explores how feminist research influences PAR and describes a feminist approach to the method.
The participatory nature of feminist methodologies encourages that participants of the inquiry process contribute to the creation of the study. According to Patton, this process “is facilitated by the researcher, but is controlled by the people in the program” (Patton, 2002, p. 183). Keeping this aim in mind, the study utilized a feminist approach to participatory action research. On the surface, the methodology of participatory action research (PAR) seems to mesh very well with the concerns of feminist poststructuralism, which “helps to recover and elevate the importance of marginalized voices” and “elevates types of knowledge that previously had been treated as inadequate or lesser, such as the socially lived knowledge of everyday life” (Mann & Huffman, 2005, p. 65). Furthermore, feminist PAR stresses the liberation, participation and collaboration of women’s experiences in collusion for creating social change (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000). The troublesome issue is that even PAR has traditionally been employed with little attention to gender. Feminist research recognizes gender as an important unit of analysis, believes in empowering women participants, identifies research as inherently political, and views the researcher as a non-neutral participant. The self-reflexivity required on the part of a feminist researcher is necessary because PAR “inevitably changes the researcher” (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p. 90).

Feminist participatory action research was the most appropriate research paradigm for this study because it takes into consideration the lived experience of women managers, capitalizes on participatory and collaborative methods, and incorporates self-reflexivity on the part of the participants and myself as the researcher. Primarily, the methodology being employed can be characterized as feminist “by virtue of the roles of
and benefits to the participants rather than the techniques used” (Rheinharz, 1992). To follow true action research, change is imminent. Change in the instance of this study resulted in a shift in perspective or within the personal and/or professional lives of the participants and researcher. The overall objective is to discover a way for somatic learning, through the use of yoga, to inform management education for women managers. The overlap in concepts between the practices of yoga and management were many. For example, the concept of flexibility in yoga can help explain seeking alternatives in decision-making and problem solving situations as a manager. Yoga poses that focused on balance corresponded to the needs of a manager to be both professionally and personally balanced. The self-awareness and bodily awareness cultivated in yoga practice carried over into management practice—through posture, confidence, and the ability to stay focused and deal with changes. Further justification for a feminist participatory action research methodology follows in Chapter 3.

Significance of the Study

Somatic learning as a field of study only exists within the gray, poorly defined areas of various disciplines. Within the broader umbrella of holistic learning, the occasional piece of literature will include the body and the experience of learning within or through the body as part of learning as a whole person. Literature devoted exclusively to learning somatically within adult education is sparse. This study contributes research that clearly defines and provides a model for somatic learning and illustrates the phenomenon of bodily learning through an embodied approach to management education. There are several reasons this study is significant to field of adult education.
First, the existing research on holistic learning drastically calls out for a focus on how adults learn through and with their bodies. Second, because the body is so integrally bound to women, their identities, and their experiences, this study enriches the women as learners’ literature by concentrating on the somatic learning of women. Furthermore, the feminist participatory action research (FPAR) design is not often utilized within adult education. As a research design, FPAR is messy and unpredictable, but offers the most effective way to capture the lived experiences of woman through intense collaboration and ongoing action and reflection around the issues under study.

This study contributes to the field of adult education by bringing an emergent embodied approach to learning that can be applied to various contexts. By applying a somatic framework to management education, the body as pedagogy becomes a viable way to meet the multifaceted learning needs of managers. Additionally, by using a feminist poststructural theoretical framework, the study brings to the forefront issues around the positionality of both participants and researcher. This intersection of somatic learning, management education, and analysis of the structural variables provides a perspective largely ignored in adult education contexts.

This study offers the field of management education both a somatic pedagogy that can integrate with or replace current approaches to teaching management and ideas for practice in the details of the activities, experiences, and topics covered throughout the research process. The body remains a largely untapped resource for self-awareness and learning. Learning somatically requires intention; a purposeful attention to how the body makes sense of, manifests, and creates knowledge. Traditional, rational approaches to management privilege the mind at the expense of the body; however, a somatic approach
seeks to bridge the two. Yoga practice teaches that the breath is the connection between the body and mind. By focusing on the breath, a centered, mindful self that is more able to notice the experiences and teachings of the body can be created. Adult education in general should embrace any new pedagogy that is inclusive of different styles of teaching and learning. Management education specifically owes its instructors and students, trainers and employees, an alternative way of learning the skills necessary to become self-aware, and subsequently, an effective manager of others. Managers guide others in carrying out the goals and objectives of an organization, and without the ability to gather and make sense of information from a variety of perspectives, their potential for success is limited.

Another contribution to the management education field from this study stems from the learning of women managers engaging in a nonformal management education context. The women’s subsequent sense making and clarification of how their new knowledge impacts their understanding of self and their managerial contexts also informs the management education discipline. Focusing this study exclusively on women managers will provide a significant contribution to the literature on women as learners by focusing on the personal and professional development of the participants. Additionally, the use of a feminist poststructural theoretical lens will aid in engaging the women “in identifying the gender belief systems that have affected them as learners, and in challenging those beliefs that might limit their learning” (Hayes, 2001, 15). In the following section, the assumptions and limitations associated with this study are discussed.
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The greatest strength and weakness of qualitative research is the human factor (Patton, 2002). It is our capacity to be human that both aids qualitative inquiry and provides the greatest limitations. As with any research process that is ongoing and cyclical in nature, this study considered several limitations, including issues around participants, time, cost, and definitions. First, the participants who agree to take part in the study came from a pool of people who possessed the time necessary to devote to a research study that spanned four months. Participation in the study often required a juggling of the participants’ schedules to arrange for childcare or other accommodations for family. This could involve an expense on the part of the participants, and therefore impacted who could or could not participate. Given these time and cost restraints, participants came from similar and stable economic backgrounds.

A limitation of the existing definitions offered in the literature of somatic learning suggest that the term “somatic” is being used indiscriminately whether the author means to explain, for example, affective or kinesthetic learning. Many authors seeking to define somatic ways of understanding often admit they overlap other ways of learning, such as spiritual learning, but explaining this overlap in cognitive terms is difficult.

Management education is a broad discipline that encompasses academic and organizational contexts. For the purpose of the study, the participants and researcher collaboratively determined the topics to include in the study so as to adhere to the feminist participatory action research approach. Given that the study needed to have an ending date for collecting data, there was a restriction on the possible number of management topics that could be addressed.
This study made several underlying assumptions about scope and content that requires disclosure. First, it was assumed that anyone joining the study as a participant was therefore interested in learning about management. A second major assumption was that a significant link exists between the body and learning, and that women specifically could use their bodies to understand management concepts. A third assumption was that women managers experience issues around gender, discourse, knowledge, language, and power and would benefit from a feminist poststructural analysis of learning management. Fourth, there could have been implications for personal and professional growth in combining somatic learning and management education. Lastly, it was assumed the participants possessed the self-awareness to notice and articulate the learning and bodily awareness they experience.

Definitions of Terms

In order to more clearly understand the terms presented in this study, the following definitions are offered to provide clarity.

**Action Research**: a disciplined method for intentional learning from experience. Action Research is a type of applied research characterised by intervention in real world systems followed by close scrutiny of the effects. This dissertation uses the definition by Herr and Anderson (2005), which states: “action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process, but is different from isloated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken and generally requires some form of evidence be presented to support assertions” (p. 3).
**Feminist Participatory Action Research**: a form of participatory action research that emphasizes emancipation, participation, and collaboration; people’s (women’s) experiences and knowledge; and knowledge for the purpose of political action (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000).

**Management Education**: the teaching of skills and theories required of people in managerial/leadership positions, including but not limited to intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; conflict management skills; communication skills; stress management skills; and leadership skills as well as theories around human resources; organizational behavior and development; strategy and policy; ethics and social responsibility, and international management. Management education can occur in academia in undergraduate or graduate programs as well as in organizational contexts through training and development programs, succession programs, and career management. Informal management education also occurs within organizations, for example, through on-the-job learning.

**Nonformal Education**: Nonformal education is instruction that is not obligatory and structured and is learned outside the context of a formal school. The term is often used in reference to adult education.

**Participatory Action Research**: typically includes shared ownership of research objectives by participants and researchers; requires a community-based analysis of social problems; and an orientation toward community action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

**Somatic Learning**: learning that is felt by the body and is distinguishable from a particular body part, the mind, or the environment.
Yoga: literally meaning “to yoke” or “to join” in reference to both the joining of the body and breath or the soul and the cosmos; for the purpose of this study it will be expressed primarily through the practice of asanas, or postures, that are intended to promote control of the body and mind and to attain physical and spiritual well-being.

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this first chapter is to familiarize the reader with the framework for the study and its primary purpose and guiding research questions. Chapter two provides a detailed literature review of the major areas of study, including feminist poststructuralism, women managers and gender and management education, and somatic learning. The details of the feminist participatory action research design are described in Chapter three.
CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

“We live a ‘masculine’ femininity which alienates us from our bodies”
(Weedon, 1997, p. 7).

This chapter explores the three bodies of literature that were pertinent to this research study, which was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education for women managers. The first body of literature addresses feminist poststructuralism, which provided the theoretical grounding of this study. The analysis of feminist poststructuralism analyzes its key constructs including structural systems, shifting identities, and deconstructing binaries, as well as the philosophical issues of power, language, discourse, knowledge and truth. Collectively, this literature provided a background in understanding how to explore a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers. The second body of literature offered consideration to women as managers and explored the topics of gender identity, discourse, relational management, gender and management education, power, language, reason and rationality as well as the significance of the body in management education. The third area of literature provided an in depth review of somatic learning beginning with an overview of holistic learning, narrowing to somatic learning and offering definitions, a working model, a theoretical analysis, implications for teachers and students, and the significance to management education. The analysis of the literature highlights the limitations of existing research, providing justification for this study and its research methodology.
Theoretical Framework: Feminist Poststructuralism

This study was framed through the lens of a feminist theoretical framework. Specifically, feminist poststructuralism was selected as the theoretical framework for this study for a number of reasons. First, issues around gender, power, language, discourse, knowledge, and truth are central to a feminist poststructural framework. Second, the purpose of examining the intersection of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and religious orientation helps to understand the experiences of women’s lives. This concept is defined as positionality, which provides an understanding of how people are impacted historically, culturally, and politically. Third, feminist poststructuralism seeks to challenge the existing patriarchal structure and acknowledges the differences between men and women. These differences are noted as a way to seek social change, and particularly, for women to reconsider their position within a patriarchal society.

To lay the foundation of poststructural thought, four critical concepts are explored: structural systems, truth, shifting identity, and deconstructing binaries. Then, an exploration of feminist poststructuralism as it is relevant to adult education examines the issues of power, language, discourse, knowledge, and truth.

Structural Systems, Truth, Shifting Identity, and Deconstructing Binaries

A feminist approach to poststructuralism embraces the poststructural notion of plurality in that meanings are never static. Feminist poststructuralism goes further to analyze the relationship between language, social institutions, and individual consciousness and how these factors interrelate with power and impact the potential for change (Weedon, 1987). The usefulness of feminist poststructuralism is demonstrated if
it can highlight how social power is used and how the positionality of people is affected as a result.

Tisdell (1998) positions poststructural feminist thought as significant to feminist pedagogies in adult education in four primary ways. First, the key difference between structural and poststructural feminist theories is the significance of gender combined with other structural systems of privilege and oppression such as race, class, and sexual orientation. “The intersections of gender with other systems of oppression and privilege are key to the construction of the self in feminist poststructuralism” and where issues of positionality are highlighted (¶10). For adult education this means that connections between individuals and the intersecting structural systems of oppression and privilege may determine how students build knowledge, talk about their own experience, and relate in the classroom. Second, students who are encouraged to critically analyze social systems and the construction of knowledge begin to see that there are multiple ‘truths’ as opposed to one dominant ‘Truth’ as defined by people in privileged groups. By questioning what counts as knowledge, a feminist poststructural perspective not only highlights the interests of women, but also attempts “to change educational systems to also benefit those who have been marginalized by race, class, sexual orientation, and ableness” (Tisdell, 1998, ¶ 12). Third, the concept of a constantly shifting identity recognizes that the acquisition of new knowledge and altered perspectives on the world, knowledge, and structural systems can create a need to reexamine previously held beliefs and values. While the construct of a constantly shifting identity is one of poststructuralism in general and applies to the individual, a feminist perspective deconstructs the notion of a gender-neutral “subject” and brings gender to the forefront of
analysis (St. Pierre, 2000). Lastly, the deconstruction of binaries is perhaps the most radical and progressive way poststructural feminist thought has advanced feminist theory. By breaking down notions of subject/object, male/female, and mind/body categorical assignments such as these are rendered less powerful and potent. Poststructural feminists specifically tackle the rational/affective binary that so obviously privileges rationality over emotion (Mann & Huffman, 2005; St. Pierre, 2000). Given the historical associations of rationality to masculinity and emotionality to femininity, it is obvious how women have remained oppressed through the reinforcement of binary thinking. While feminist poststructuralism does not advocate the erasure of rationality, it does assert that knowledge is always partial. St. Pierre states:

Reason cannot be a transcendent absolute, since it too is contingent and historical. Reason, like all other concepts, is produced within discourses in which certain statements are privileged and others are silences or excluded. Therefore, poststructuralism acknowledges and investigates multiple forms of rationality produced by the codes and regularities of various discourses and cultural practices. (p. 487)

Finally, and of critical importance to this study, feminist poststructuralism also deconstructs the male/female binary. While gender represents the primary unit of analysis within feminist poststructuralism, the hegemonic notions of gender and the way people have been socialized by those notions are also deconstructed as part of the framework. The tendency to classify men as representing a certain set of traits and women others, creates the exact kind of dichotomous relationship feminist poststructuralism seeks to analyze. In other words, feminist poststructuralism
problematizes this essentialist notion while at the same time acknowledging it because most people have been socialized by or are at least affected by this dominant narrative. Further analysis examines the constructs of power, language, discourse, knowledge, and truth by relating poststructural thought to feminist theory.

**Power, Language, Discourse, Knowledge and Truth**

Feminist poststructuralism emphasizes the relationship between power and its other key philosophical concepts, language, discourse, and knowledge and truth (Weedon, 1987). Most poststructural notions of power draw on Foucault’s premises that power is constantly present, circulating, and multifarious. While humanism considered power as a product of agency (the ability to act), inherently evil, and something individuals possess, poststructuralists disagree (St. Pierre, 2000). Foucault proposed that power was not negative in nature but that it was always tied into our relationships with others. In fact, for Foucault, power is everywhere, and “modern power operates through ‘new’ discourses and modes of activity rather than by setting limits on pre-existing ones” (Orner, 1992, p. 82). Poststructural feminists utilize Foucault’s theories of power in working toward social justice. Believing that power relations are constantly shifting and complicated, poststructural feminist negate the humanist perspective of power, which posits that power results from agency and is something to which everyone has access. Instead, feminist poststructuralists choose to view the struggles of women as localized and particular (St. Pierre, 2000). For example, this study exclusively focuses on women managers to capture their unique, lived experiences, which occur in a variety of organizational contexts. Because this study also includes a focus on the body, it is
necessary to explore how power intersects with the body. Diamond and Quinby (1988) acknowledge, “feminism and Foucault have much in common: they both agree that power is enacted in/on the body; it is a site through which docility is accomplished and subjectivity is constituted (p. 1). Feminists have long claimed regaining control from men over their bodies as a key political issue. Foucault’s ideas add to this crusade an argument that power is a structure that helps to define the female body as both passive and subject to negative connotations.

For poststructuralists, language is problematic because it lacks clarity. In contrast to humanism, poststructural theories do not conceive of language as a mere tool (St.Pierre, 2000). “Rather, poststructuralists see language as a site of struggle where subjectivity and consciousness are produced” (Orner, 1992, p. 80). Language is another construct that requires deconstruction because we cannot be fully present in language and language is not fixed—different words have different meanings for different people and contexts. Therefore it is necessary “to make visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 481). By questioning the absolutes and taken for granted transparency of language, poststructural feminists shine light on language that leads to “categories, binaries, hierarchies, grids of intelligibility based on essences—that reward identity and punish difference” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 484). Helping women managers to make sense of the impact of language on their personal sense of self and subjectivity is a possible outcome of using feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical lens in this study. The idea of a socially constructed subjectivity, the individual’s personal impressions, feelings and opinions, leads to an examination of how language aids in this construction in a way that creates a constantly
shifting identity (Weedon, 1987). As women managers, the participants of this study may find an investigation of the meanings situated in language useful in analyzing the intersection of somatic learning and management education.

Discourse, a system of ideas or knowledge that is inscribed in a specific vocabulary, is rooted in a cultural and rhetorical context in which meaning is a collaboratively constructed. Whereas language in feminist poststructuralism requires an analysis of the socially attached meaning to words and an understanding that such meanings are constantly in flux, discourse encourages the analysis of language and how the taken-for-granted assumptions that structure it often enforce patriarchy and reinforce oppression of women (St. Pierre, 2000).

Poststructural feminism does not ignore its own contributions to discourse and history, “and therefore remains critical of its own complicity in writing gender and writing others” (Luke & Gore, 1992, p. 7). A feminist poststructural epistemology is grounded on a foundation of difference. The difference of poststructural thought transcends that of class, race, or gender and the subject location, identity and knowledge. Feminist poststructuralists reject the certainty promised by modernist discourse and “accepts that knowledge is always provisional, open-ended and relational” (p. 7). No longer are the ‘grand narratives’ or ‘dominant discourses of masculinity’ taken as the foundation of discourse. Rather the lens turns to examine how power shapes discourse and who decides what knowledge is counted as valid. Specifically, feminists draw on Foucault’s theory of discourse which illustrates that when people find different ways to express themselves, it is possible to shift historical thought (St. Pierre, 2000). For feminists, this means questioning the existence of patriarchy, its structure and ability to
oppress women. This study may encourage the analysis of cultural practice as the women managers consider the assumptions made within their own organizations around how knowledge, truth, and subjects are produced through language. By naming these oppressive discourses, the women may identify ways in which patriarchy influences their local contexts and begin to construct new ideas about their experiences.

The way that knowledge and truth are constructed and accepted also concerns feminist poststructural theorists, especially as the two intersect with power. For poststructural theorists, power is implied in knowledge production and knowledge cannot exist without inaccuracy. Power’s influence on knowledge creation emerges in what can be said and by whom. Poststructuralists also problematize the humanist conception of one single Truth (St. Pierre, 2000). The concept of truth is also intimately bound up with power and the discourses society accepts, which are always politically influenced (Foucault, 1984). The influence of power over what counts as knowledge and becomes translated as truth impacts women significantly because they often do not participate in the creation knowledge or construction of truth. While feminists often disagree on theoretical and political issues, “they do agree on the rejection of the masculinist subject in history as foundational to all truth and knowledge” (Luke & Gore, 1992, p. 7). Understanding the instability of knowledge and truth allows feminist poststructuralists to create a discourse that co-exists with patriarchal discourses while simultaneously working within and against its assumptions. The investigation of how certain knowledge and truth about women have become accepted and unchallenged creates an ongoing critique, which is helpful to studies like this that aim to produce knowledge in different ways and problematize what counts as truth. By using a somatic learning approach to management
education, this study proposed a ‘different’ way to think about how learning through and with the body can influence how women can make sense of new knowledge about their managerial role.

The Body

This review would not be complete without the analyzing the body in relationship to feminist poststructural constructs. One of the most recent linkages between the body and feminist poststructural research comes from Sommerville (2004) who reviews prior literature that positioned the body firmly within feminist theory including Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader (Price & Shildrick, 1999) and Volatile Bodies (Grosz, 1994). Sommerville adds her own voice to these earlier perspectives by examining the “range of methodological and theoretical gestures to bring the lived body into discursive relation with contemporary feminist body theory” (p. 52). She offers readers journals from various contexts such as a women’s peace camp, the Australian desert, a rural Indigenous community, an individual Aboriginal woman’s place, a beach community involved in conservation, and the inside space of a home. “The journals explore the simultaneous connection and separation of the experiencing body in place observing itself in/through writing” (p. 52). While refusing the confines of essentialism, Sommerville’s strategy is to place her body centrally at the sight of writing. By “inhabiting place” (p. 53) she describes a process of deconstructing body/place relations and questioning the binaries such as body/place, body/mind, and inside/outside. While Sommerville’s research is primarily phenomenological, it is always in juxtaposition to
feminist poststructural theories about the body. Her contribution of placing the “body-at-the-scene-of-writing” furthers the poststructural lens on her work (p. 55).

Other research examines the body at the site of work (McWilliams, 1999), the female body in teaching (Probyn, 2004; Sinclair, 2005), and the embodied knowledge of coal miners and the implications for their bodily interpretations on safe work practices (Sauers, 1998). Similarly, Sommerville (2004) in an ethnographic study interviewing mine workers at their site of work finds the construct of body/place relations relevant to the mine workers, which was a crucial aspect to their day to day safety. Her work has extended beyond the mines to also include aged care facilities. In placing the body at the site of her own academic work, she continues to find places for the body in other work contexts. “Bodies are productive of texts and work spaces as well as work being inscribed on the body” (p. 62).

Beyond the placement of bodies at work, research on teaching bodies has emerged from the work of Probyn (2004) and Sinclair (2005). Probyn’s work focuses on bodies, teachers, students and curriculum from her position as a women’s studies professor. She is critical of the fact that there has been much written on the politics of teaching, but “there has been less concern with what actual bodies do in classrooms” (p. 22). Through an analysis of theoretical approaches to affect, Probyn criticizes the complex language that often guides the field of women’s studies saying that such “convoluted phrasing does everything to distract us” from focusing on women’s lived experiences and actually instead seems “to be a recommendation that we avoid using the fact of women’s bodies and lived experiences as pedagogical material in our classrooms” (p. 32-33). She goes on to question how concepts about the body can be taught without
recognizing the various ways bodies are inhabited. Beyond the “talk of ‘postmodern pedagogies of the body,’ it’s rare to find discussions of what concepts of the body actually do within the classroom” (p. 33). Drawing on the work of Deleuze (1992) and his definition of ethology, which is “the compositions of relations or capacities between different things,” (p. 628) Probyn believes ethology also describes the body’s capacity for affecting or being affected stating:

Of necessity, this micro-analysis of movement, gesture and behavior draws us down from the heights of abstraction to an awareness of how bits of bodies connect (or don’t). In concrete terms, this can be evidenced in multiple ways, not all of which are comfortable and in fact are, I think, central to the dismissal and distrust of live bodies. (p. 37)

As a concept, ethology helps to understand how this study integrates somatic learning with management education. Finding a connection from two very different subjects poses significant challenges, especially when existing literature supporting such a combination is scarce. Finding a connection between somatic learning and management education will require attention to both subjects individually and how each impacts the other. Relating ethology to bodies, Probyn (2004) also provides a relevant connection explaining in her quote above that mindful awareness of how bodies can connect to other ideas may be uncomfortable, but informative. By connecting the body, through yoga, to management concepts, both awareness and learning can result; however it will be necessary to navigate the possibilities for discomfort and distrust mentioned by Probyn while exploring the possibilities of a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers.
Women Managers

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau March 2000 publication, Facts on Working Women, the most significant change between 1900-1990 was the rise of women managers (Women at the Millenium, 2000). For the purpose of this study, women managers are defined as including all occupational titles with the words administrator, director, manager or supervisor (Robertson, 2002). Despite the fact that women’s share of managerial positions in some 60 countries ranges between 20 and 40 percent, “the data show that women are markedly under-represented in management compared to their overall share of employment” (“The glass ceiling,” 2004). As a way to make sense of this data, this study considers women managers in the context of management education. In addition to reviewing women managers in general, this review examines how women are educated or trained to be managers. By reviewing the existing literature on women managers, the field of management education may be able to find new ways to contribute to the development of women in management. Therefore, the literature reviewed about women managers first explores empirically how women managers have recently been studied and reveals a particular focus on gender identity, discourse of women managers, and relational management. These areas are significant for this study because of the importance placed on shifting identities and discourse within the feminist poststructural theoretical framework discussed later in the review. Relational management speaks to a way women are typically classified as being more compassionate and understanding in their role as managers and raises interesting questions about the perceptions of how women actually perform their managerial role as well as how they are expected to behave (Fletcher, 1995). The review then narrows the
focus on the learning and development of women managers. Exploring how women managers learn management concepts and develop in their role as managers is critical for the purpose of this study, which seeks to incorporate a somatic approach.

**Gender Identity at Work & Social Construction**

As managers, women often find themselves navigating their gender identity in the workplace to find a comfortable place between society’s expectations of femininity and organizational expectations of masculine approaches to management. This study sought to uncover how learning about management somatically might offer women an alternative way to express their managerial identity. A review of the women in management literature uncovered many studies focused on the women’s identities as managers or leaders. Each person plays various roles in their lives and subsequently makes sense of their identity through those roles. Women are often required to make sense of and perform their various roles based on the expectations of their gender, which is often based on the beliefs of the dominant culture. As managers, women face the challenge of defining their gender identity within the context of society at large and the organization in specific. Several authors distinguish gender as an influence on identity and leadership style as a significant contextual factor along with “organizational culture, one’s roles at work or home, and the people who work together” (Nah, 2003, ¶4). For example, in 1995, Ely conducted a qualitative and quantitative study based on the social construction approach also used by Nah (2003) and Olsson and Walker (2004). The social identity theory used by Ely (1995) tries to characterize how individuals’ identity with group memberships shapes their perspectives and experiences in different settings.
The purpose of her study was to examine how women’s proportional representation in the upper echelons of organizations affects professional women’s social constructions of gender difference and gender identity at work. Her findings illustrate how the proportional representation of women in positions of power affects professional women’s gender identities at work. She states:

In firms in which few women were in positions of power, sex roles were more stereotypical and more problematic. Women in these firms, when compared to women in firms with higher proportions of senior women, characterized men as more masculine and less feminine, evaluated feminine attributes and attributes they associated with women less favorably in relation to their firm’s requirements for success, and had more difficulty enacting gender roles that were both personally satisfying and consistent with their firms’ norms and expectations. (p. 625)

More recent studies further the social constructionist notion of gender identity impacting the professional lives of women in management roles. Nah (2003) studied the learning processes of Korean women leaders in male-dominated professions and how they dealt with gender-based discrimination in organizations. The rationale for studying women in this male-dominated context was because of the hostile nature of the workplace, the frustration of making a way and finding a place in the organization, and that women’s stories of struggle and survival would provide the most useful explanations. Nah interviewed five Korean women leaders in male-dominated professions on three separate occasions.
From her research, Nah (2003) recommends to those interested in the education of female adult learners to make an active point to acknowledge women’s major roles in their life settings. “Simply identifying women learners as mothers and caregivers in relation to their families and the people surrounding them would overlook individual women’s educational needs and desires, which have their origin in their major roles as professionals as well as mothers” (¶ 43). She advises that the traditional model of teaching women strategies to gain their voices and join in relational learning models may be too limiting for most women. Due to the differences in each woman’s unique situation, their methods of forming an identity also differed. Nah encourages an understanding of women’s identities in relation to their profession and roles at work as well as their relationships with others (¶ 46).

She critiques studies on leadership styles in their “dichotomous constructs” and because they tend to associate leadership style with gender (Nah, 2003, ¶ 51). Her respondents indicate that task-oriented and interpersonally oriented styles may not be mutually exclusive. Because Nah’s research showed that all leaders tend to be focused on task completion, she recommends that leadership styles might be measured by the styles leaders use in having their tasks completed (¶ 51). Nah also found that the women leaders varied their style in accordance to the people they were working with. Overall, Nah heavily critiques the positioning of women leaders as following a more relational model that unnecessarily positions them as caregivers. She advocates for considering gender as just one of many possible contextual factors that influence the leadership style of women in male-dominated professions (¶ 67).
Olsson and Walker (2004) build upon the social constructionist approach to gender and identity advocated by Nah (2003) by examining the career representations of 30 senior women executives. Similar to Nah, Olsson and Walker (2004) sought to explore “women’s positioning of self within the [management] discourse and how they deal with the apparent paradoxes and contradictions of female identity within a world dominated by corporate masculinity” (p. 244). The social constructionist framework used by Olsson and Walker defined identities and roles as not being “fixed or static, but shifting, fragmentary, multiple, frequently contradictory, and constantly in the process of being constituted and negotiated in discursive practices” (p. 245). Their research included personal, in-depth interviews with women from both public and private sectors in New Zealand.

They found that women’s construction of career identity in some ways paralleled the paradigm for men in management. “Women position their difference, status, and power through discursive practices which involve identification with some individual men, unity with some individual women and differentiation from other groups of both men and women” (Olsson & Walker, 2004, p. 250). These discursive practices are the ways women examine the practices of the organization to discover acceptable norms or codes of conduct. For example, individuals learn cultural norms by observing how other members of the organization dress and matching their attire accordingly or paying attention to what time most people arrive and leave for the day and adopting that schedule. Further, Olsson and Walker also found that women’s expressions of their career identity also “unfolded in a series of unresolved paradoxes” (p. 250). The participants constructed a female identity in their corporate culture through an identification with the
qualities needed to perform the executive role and a denial of gender as an issue in their career progression. Despite their denial of gender, the women also identified with and recognized the need for male mentors. Furthering the paradox, the women participants also constructed a form of “belonging” that situated the self to claim executive status and power. The women would identify with some individual men, unite with some individual women, and yet differentiate from other groups of both men and women.

Women executives also disclosed that they differentiate themselves from women altogether or either exhibit stereotypically male behaviors or use sex as a way to get ahead in their careers. Additionally, the women executives separated themselves from “Locker Room Culture,” which is described as “the game playing and the ‘bullshit’ of internal male politicking” (Olsson & Walker, 2004, p. 250-251). A final paradox of Olsson and Walker’s findings is that despite the rejection of both female and male stereotypical behaviors, the women executives cited a traditionally female quality, intuition, as a source for female difference and advantage while citing competitiveness, a traditionally male quality, as crucial for their success.

In conclusion, the gender identities of women managers are complex formations that do not follow one set of prescribed techniques. The literature suggests that individual organizational cultures play a large role in the identity formation of women managers and that women’s identities often form similarly to male manager’s identities. Women are often expected to choose a more relational style, but often do not fit this paradigm. The literature does not include a consideration that both female and male identities are not constant; they are always evolving and reforming as new learning and knowledge is acquired. The impact of socially defined roles and ways of acting in those roles appears
inconclusive, and would benefit from a feminist poststructural analysis that makes room for an ongoing construction of women’s identities as managers. An understanding of how women shape their professional identities can inform management education about the importance of recognizing gender within its subject matter.

*Business Students’ Perceptions of Gender Identity*

Before women and men step into the actual managerial ranks of organizations, many of them are business students forming their ideas of what makes an effective manager. As students who aspire to enter the realm of business, their perspective on the gender identity of managers proves insightful. Several quantitative studies have polled students in business and management programs to assess the identities they prescribe to male and female managers to detect inherent stereotypes. Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, and Liu (1996) sought to discover if the “think manager—think male” concept is a global phenomenon, which was predicated on a 1970’s empirical study that managerial sex role stereotyping revealed that “think manager—think male” was a commonly held belief among middle managers in the United States. The new findings revealed that the male and female participants in both China and Japan perceive that successful middle managers possess characteristics, attitudes, and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men in general than to women in general. By comparing these results to previous studies (Schein, 1973; Schein, 1975) conducted in the United Kingdom, and Germany, using the same index, the comparison supports the view that ‘think manager—think male’ is a global phenomenon, especially among men and male management students (Brenner, Tomkiewiecz, & Schein, 1989; Heilman, Block, Martell
& Simon, 1989; Schein, Mueller & Jacobson, 1989). Independent of the country context, there was a strong and similar degree of managerial sex typing among male management students in all five countries. Among females, the managerial sex typing hypothesis was confirmed in every country except the United States, where men and women are seen as equally likely to possess requisite management characteristics (Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996). Similarly, Fernandes and Cabral-Cardoso (2003) studied the relationship between gender stereotypes and the characteristics of the manager’s role as perceived by undergraduate management students of both sexes from a Portuguese university. True to the author’s hypothesis, the Portuguese management students of both sexes tended to perceive the manager category as closer to the masculine than to the feminine stereotype, which is consistent with the findings of Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, and Liu (1996).

A U.S. based study focused on the gender difference in aspirations to top management in conjunction with a gender identity consisting of high masculinity and low femininity (Powell & Butterfield, 2003). The authors define masculine qualities as “agentic” and feminine qualities as “communal” (p. 88). These definitions enforce an essentialist perspective of gender despite the use of the term gender-related. The data were collected at two U.S. universities from two populations with significant differences in age, education, and work experience. Consistent with the authors’ hypothesis those most likely to desire top management roles described their characteristics more masculine, regardless if they were a man or woman. Additionally, women proved less likely to seek higher levels of management responsibility. In contradiction to another hypothesis however, Powell and Butterfield found that femininity did not predict aspirations to top management nor was gender difference in aspirations to top
management smaller in the newly collected data set. Making sense of their findings, the authors conclude that a self-concept includes a high degree of masculine characteristics associated with both males and managers were associated with aspirations to top management. “Such stereotypes put women who are interested in managerial careers at a distinct disadvantage by forcing them to deal with the perceived incongruity between the managerial role and their gender role” (p. 94). These findings coincide dramatically with the role incongruity experienced by women in various work contexts cited in other research (Ely, 1995; Fernandes and Cabral-Cardoso, 2003; Nah, 2003; Olsson and Walker, 2004). Women are caught in a no-win situation—either conforming to a female gender role and displaying feminine characteristics to meet the requirements of a managerial role, which typically calls for masculine characteristics, or competing with men for managerial positions by displaying masculine characteristics and thereby conforming to the managerial role. In either scenario, women fall short of meeting the female gender role. Such a disparity between the managerial role and the female gender role has the potential to contribute to discrimination of women who aspire to top-level management positions. A feminist poststructural perspective would deconstruct the terms feminine and masculine, the dominant culture that suggests that masculine is competitive, aggressive, and rational, and feminine is compassionate, emotional, and passive. Whether or not women agree with these notions or not, they are affected by these ideas in the dominant culture.

The studies discussed above offer a perspective about how gender identity as it relates to managerial roles among business students, prior to their entry into the managerial ranks. The studies with business students reinforce the studies of gender
identity in the workplace, which illustrate women manager’s ongoing struggle to define a managerial identity outside the expectations of gender. The implications of each approach to examining gender identity for this study illustrates that not enough is known, from the voices of actual women managers, about how they make sense of their experiences. Particularly lacking is an exploration of how different workplace cultures support or suppress women’s attempts to learn and understand their role as a manager. Emphasizing the role organizational cultures play on the formation of professional identities would allow the field of management education to more effectively develop managers who can adapt within changing environments. While gender identity at work clearly emerges as one of the most popularly researched topics regarding women managers, other less-researched areas such as discursive practice inform the analysis of gender and organizational contexts.

Discourse and Women Managers

Foucault’s (1984) vision of discourse as a system of ideas or knowledge, contained within certain disciplines or areas of study, also emphasized that such discourses were used to legitimate the exercise of power over certain persons by categorizing them as particular 'types.' Discourse also emerges as a unit of analysis within the research on women managers. Forbes (2002) builds upon Foucault’s notion of discourse to arrive at a definition that fits the context of organizations:

Discourses are ways of constituting knowledge or “truth.” The conceptualization of discourse focuses on the concrete practices in which people engage in the process of constituting the meaning systems that describe and make sense of their
everyday world. The process of communicating necessarily takes place in a context of power relations; communication is both defined by and defines the structure of those relations. (p. 274)

Forbes (2002) analyzes the pervasiveness of masculinity in organizations through the organizational experiences of Black women managers through their discursive choices, values and norms. In some ways, Forbes’ study is much like those explained above that analyze the formation of professional identity considering gender as a key construct. However, Forbes specifically analyzes the participants’ discourse to highlight the ways in which women may “actively participate in the reproduction of masculinity(s) through a set of micropractices that contribute to the construction of a more hegemonic and resistant patriarchy” (p. 270). Her findings suggest that women do indeed use language and make other discursive choices that serve to uphold the hegemonic and patriarchal culture of the organization. Such discursive choice can include ways of representing oneself and the principles and practices of language that create meaning within a particular organization. English (2006) describes discourse as more than language and can be structured by a person’s status or how much experience they have with the organization. In contrast to Forbes (2002), English found that women board member and non-profit directors utilize the discourse of equality and voice as a means of negotiating power. In addition to silence, the women used compliance and resistance as they navigated their organization’s power relationships.

A qualitative and quantitative analysis by Holmes, Burns, Marra, Stubbe, and Vine (2003) challenges the negative stereotypes of women managers. Using a large database of recorded material collected from women in a variety of New Zealand
workplaces, the authors sought to analyze a range of aspects of workplace talk including directives, social talk, humor, problem-solving, and management. Another aim of the investigation was to examine the relevance of gender in the workplace by initially focusing on the discursive skills displayed by the women managers. The qualitative aspect of the study found that the women managers used an extremely wide range of styles in getting things accomplished at work (directives). The quantitative analysis revealed, “women contributed at least as much humour (sic) as men to the workplace meetings” that were analyzed refuting misconceptions about women’s sense of humor in the workplace (p. 423). Overall, the ongoing analysis of workplace discourse revealed the complex nature of workplace interaction and that effective managers need both sensitivity and stylistic flexibility in their verbal skills. Flexibility in style also relates to the leadership or managerial style enacted by women managers. Much of the gender identity research recounted above advocated for alternative ways of measuring men and women’s approaches to leadership outside of the masculine/feminine dichotomy. Particularly, Nah (2003) is highly critical of models that automatically categorize women as being more relational and needing to find their voice. Likewise, Mavin, Bryan, and Waring (2004a) also criticize the upsurge in transformational leadership styles and emphasis on emotional intelligence as important to organizations because despite their popularity, “they are a call for men to ‘feminise’ (sic) their styles and skills rather than encouraging and including more women into management and leadership” (p. 295). Such an intent risks further entrenching men in the management roles, and continuing to limit women’s upward organizational progress. Despite these criticisms, some research reflects women manager’s strong connection to relational styles of leading and managing
(Bolman & Deal, 1992; Perrow, 1979; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Senge, 1990). Again, in either position, the essentialist tendency to classify the management styles of men and women into separate, dichotomous characteristics is apparent. Management education needs to find a way of acknowledging gender while committing to deconstructing how it is implicated in management by the dominant culture.

**Relational Management**

Relational leadership and/or management styles have been frequently addressed in the mainstream literature (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Perrow, 1979; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Senge, 1990). A relational style of leading or managing describes a philosophy that believes in sincere connections with, genuine concern about, and active participation from employees. A manager using a relational style of leadership or management prioritizes relationships with others and is generally characterized has having a strong concern for people, their development, and their achievement of goals. Feminist approaches to leadership and management are often negatively labeled relational activities and as a result are often marginalized by current definitions of work (Fletcher, 1995). Using a feminist poststructural perspective, Fletcher conducted a qualitative study of six female engineers. Her objectives revolved around the concept of Relational Practice, which she defines as “work practices and strategies that differ in significant ways from conventional ‘strategies for success’ and uses a set of skills not commonly associated with organization effectiveness” (p. 449).

By shadowing six female engineers, each for one day, Fletcher’s (1995) objective was to discover the extent of Relational Practice in organizational settings, the
characteristics of the practice, and the inherent belief system imbedded in the practice. Additionally, she sought to uncover how women make sense of Relational Practice when they are subjected to the dominate discourse and explore the power dynamic intrinsic to current definitions of real work. The results of Fletcher’s (1995) analysis “suggest that workers operating from a relational belief system look to relational interactions in the workplace not so much to enhance their affective personal relationships with others but rather to enhance their own and others’ achievement and work effectiveness” (p. 449).

Similarly, Clark, Caffarella, and Ingram (1998) discovered a highly relational style of leadership among their 23 mid-level managers. They describe relational leadership as focusing on “participation, collaborative interaction, and knowing and embracing the different styles of their people” (¶ 19). The women also valued responsiveness and not only with their co-workers but also within the context of their work situations. They add that the challenge in adopting more relational models is to convince leaders that doing things with people is more effective and rewarding than doing things to or for people.

Despite the participant’s use of the Relational Practice model in Fletcher’s (1995) study, within the organizational context these approaches “get disappeared” (p. 450). Fletcher identifies three ways this disappearing act occurs. First, a relational style is attributed as unsuitable by way of favoring a culture of individualism and inapproachability. Second, the limits of language restrict relational practice. For example, why use collaborative language if the culture dictates “one right answer,” and the person who claims this answer is the winner? Third, through the social construction of gender, which means being confined to behaving within the feminine attributes of the gender
dichotomy, for example being helpful and supportive. Fletcher’s advice for organizations is blunt:

What this means for organizations that are calling for team oriented, less hierarchical, empowered workers is that they are unlikely to get them from current practice, regardless of calls for transformation. Rather, it suggests that true transformation will require a feminist reconstruction of real work—one that makes visible a contradiction the power-knowledge system of patriarchy works to suppress: relational activity is not needed and women will provide it. (p. 452)

This new construction of real work goes beyond a resistance of traditional hierarchies to resist the ways in which these organizational models reinforce a gendered split between the public and private spheres and to the power structure that relies on this dichotomy.

The two studies described do not go far enough to analyze the tendency of women to prefer a relational style or the prevalence of women who actually use this style. The implications of these studies suggest more questions than answers. For example, does the development of women as managers necessarily imply their preference to or not to use a relational style of management? How does organizational culture encourage or discourage the use of relational styles? What implications does gender, as defined by the dominant culture, have on the tendency to choose a relational style? Other than a relational style, what other models can women managers follow, and how are they taught? Without exploring these questions, management education continues to make overt and implied assumptions about women managers, and therefore limits of the field of management for the development of all would-be managers by separating management styles into either/or categories. The following section explores the limited literature on
gender and management education including discussion of how the topics are addressed in both classrooms and workplaces to develop women managers.

**Gender and Management Education**

Feminist research emphasizes the importance of gender relations and women’s ways of knowing, and an objective of this study analyzes the issue of gender when incorporating the body with management education. The purpose of applying a feminist lens in this study was to focus on the significance of gender within management education and for women managers in their organizational contexts.

The historical gender-blind approach to research where findings for men are applied to women or a gender-neutral approach (gender is not an issue) holds true in management education (Acker, 1990; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004b; Smith, 1997; Thomas & Pullen, 2000). However, simply ignoring gender does not make a discipline blind or neutral. Collinson and Hearn (1994) find that “men and masculinity are frequently central to analyses, yet they remain taken for granted, hidden and unexamined” (p. 3). Men manage to dominate the discourse but elude examination. Casting out gender as irrelevant to management education allows schools “to collude with the status quo; simply repeating the existing management theory and practice” (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004b, ¶ 3). The concept of manager equals male is still prevalent, both within management research and in the classrooms. The majority of the literature on gender and management for this study originated in the UK or Australia, however “seminal, male only, American studies based on MBA students remain unchallenged and perpetuate the male stream of management research and
knowledge, whilst women only populations are criticized as unbalanced and unrepresentative” (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004b, ¶ 21).

The dominant discourse of management avoids addressing issues of managerial power and who makes most of the decisions within organizations. The literature on management and organization theory does not question its gendered nature to the extreme that the underlying “assumption has been that leadership is synonymous with men and that gender is not an issue worthy of exploration” (Collinson & Hearn, 1996, p. 6). An examination of men and masculinities within management serves to examine men as socially produced, reproduced, and changing identities. Collinson & Hearn (1996) critique the ‘women in management’ literature that neglects a critical analysis of hierarchal power and the gendered nature of power as they relate to men as managers. Their view finds that emphasizing the difference in women’s leadership and managerial styles or trying to fit women’s skills into current managerial structures reflects a position that risks ‘blaming the victim’ or essentialism.

The exclusion of gender continues in the management education classroom. Sinclair (1997) examined women’s experience in the MBA classroom and discovered that women were alienated by the competitive culture, centralization of power, disregard for prior learning, behavior toward not-knowing, an outward versus inward perspective towards finding information, and programmed/mechanistic approaches to tasks. Through her interviews with 16 women MBA students, Sinclair confirmed her assumption “that women prefer to learn and be taught in different ways to those traditionally fostered and adopted in management education” (p. 314). Similarly, Mavin, Bryans and Waring (2004a) found that gender blindness allows management education to overlook students’
current perceptions and experiences of management in organizations, which allows the possibility of associating male with manager to go uncontested. Gallos (1995) also advocated for valuing the life experiences of women in the management education classroom and letting them know that educational experiences can be positive. She also found that women need validation and acceptance in the classroom for their ways of knowing and experiences because of the likelihood that social factors directed them into pink-collar jobs or dead-end work, family relationships may have superseded career aspirations and the chance to climb the corporate ladder, or they may have encountered “blatant or subtle biases that have robbed them of their faith in the system or themselves” (¶ 8). Smith’s (1997) research reiterated the partiality of findings by uncovering “a masculine bias in management education” (¶ 18) as women experienced instructors as being more receptive to male perspectives than female perspectives.

The education of women managers at work has been explored from the perspective of how managerial level and gender impact learning (Klein, Astrachan & Kosseck, 1996), how women in management roles impacts the financial performance outcomes of firms (Shrader, Blackburn & Iles, 1996), and how gender impacts managerial career success (Eddleston, Baldrige & Veiga, 2004). The literature on specifically how women managers learn or the most effective ways to train and develop managers is quite limited. Some educational programs for women have been created to help women gain their voices, an objective based upon the premise that women learners are more oriented to relationships and tend to silence their ideas (Nah, 2003). Many of these programs focus on women-only scenarios in order to foster a community of safety for participants. Lewis and Fagenson (1995) argue that single-sex development programs
cut women off from networking opportunities and do not allow a chance for reducing negative stereotypes and biases. Workplace training and development initiatives such as mentoring has received some attention, but is often criticized for the lack of senior level women available to mentor younger women (Klein, Astrachan & Kossek, 1996). Women managers however, continue to voice their interest in being able to participate in mentoring relationships and similar arrangements such as job shadowing of senior members of the organization (Mallon & Cassell, 1999). Further research shows that despite efforts to develop women managers they are still not finding their way into the most senior levels of management. Bartram (2005) argues that, “women find it difficult to break into the highest levels of organizations because men are preserving a site of power and knowledge, to let women in would be to lose this status (p. 112). A range of factors including, family obligations, willingness to relocate, and education level often complicates the promotion of women.

Literature suggests that organizations need to examine their promotion practices in order to ensure the equality of opportunities for women (Eddleston, Baldridge & Veiga, 2004). The way power and knowledge are used within organizations often correlates to a manager’s rank in the organizational hierarchy. According to Bartram (2005), men often used their power in mixed-sex groups through how they communicate. Men are more likely to talk longer, take more talking turns, and interrupt more often than women. Woman also tend to defer to men in mixed-sex groups, which has the effect of allowing men’s knowledge to be privileged and valued above women’s knowledge (Bartram, 2005).
From this limited literature, there has been little attention paid to what makes women managers unique from men managers and how their learning and development needs could require unique approaches to management education. Women managers typically receive the same training as men, which does not take into consideration the distinctive roles that women are often responsible for at home or their unique learning needs. Also lacking is any mention of how the body can contribute to learning and open pathways to understanding management. To fill this gap, this study agrees with the recommendation by Bartram (2005) to reconsider the traditional management education workshop and the development of women as managers. She advocates for researchers to work alongside women and construct a feminist poststructural research methodology that values and privileges women’s perspectives and experiences.

The issues of power, language, reason and rationality emerged as significant components in examining management education through the lens of feminist poststructuralism and are each explored in the following section. Management education typically includes information about the types of power managers can possess and the importance of language often emerges through the teaching of interpersonal and communication skills. Both power and language are examined within management education under a feminist poststructuralist lens. Additionally, as a field of study, management education has typically relied on rational approaches to management that include a focus on logical, practical methods of decision-making and management. These styles ignore those facets of human behavior that are positioned in opposition to “rational” approaches, such as emotional, spiritual or physical. The importance of reason
and rationality as feminist poststructuralist constructs are also further deconstructed within management education.

*Power, Language, Reason and Rationality*

An ever-present and unavoidable issue for teaching and management education both in the classroom and workplace contexts is the issue of power. Marshall (1995) recognizes powers of communities, either senior managers or academics) “to recruit and reward in like-image, to include and exclude, to assign resources, and to define agendas or frameworks of meaning” (p. 6). The idea of power belonging to communities relates to the Foucauldian notion of power as existing in relationships. The premise of Foucault’s (1984) power relations recognizes the fluid, unstable nature of power and the idea that power is neither evil nor negative. Power is viewed as productive and a producer of reality. The importance, to Foucault, is to examine power relations for what they create. While feminist poststructural philosophy recognizes power as shifting and constantly being negotiated, management education often recognizes it simply as something some people possess and others do not.

Sinclair (1997) found power and dominance to be an area of stark significance to women’s experience in the MBA classroom. The centralization of power in the MBA classroom equated with necessary dominance on the part of the instructor, which resulted in disappointing and alienating experiences for women (Sinclair, 1997). Considering that management theory is controlled by a male paradigm and men constitute the majority of executive management and tenured faculty positions, the challenge to women management educators is monumental. Sinclair (1997) notes that if it’s a necessity “for
teachers is to establish dominance in order to commence a learning transaction, this establishes a special hurdle for women professors” (p. 326). Assertiveness by women is often considered aggressive or out of character making it more challenging for women to overcome stereotypes and expectations of both male and female students. Women students in a management education classroom may also experience difficulty in finding an instructor, to whom they can relate, further diminishing their chances for success. Smith (1997) found that women were more comfortable contributing to class discussion when the lecturer shared their gender. The respondents also shared their perceptions that not only were men taken more seriously as students, but they were also “more powerful because of their more visible and vocal behavior” (Smith, 1997, ¶ 17).

From an organizational context, English (2005) explores how women negotiate power relations within their own organizations and with government. Using the unique theoretical lens of pastoral power, “a productive power that produces subjects” and “is concerned with both individuals and totalisation (sic), and in so doing produces the submissive subject” (¶ 6). English goes further to describe the pastoral power theoretical lens as “a post-structuralist analysis, which is an under-utilised (sic) research perspective in adult education, a field that has tended to privilege relational and caring readings of women” (¶ 2). English also draws on feminism and Foucault as way of making sense of the power principle. She finds that Foucault finds a way of avoiding essentialism by viewing identity as always in flux and that Foucault, like feminism are both interested in power in local sites where power is implemented in the margins rather than at the higher levels. English’s research included interviews of eight directors and assistant directors (minimally paid) and eight board members (volunteers) of grassroots and non-profit
organizations that are dedicated to feminist causes. Data analysis utilized a poststructuralist discourse analysis so as to complicate the relationships and the power dynamics in everyday feminist relationships. Her findings uncover that the use of pastoral power by the feminist organizations creates a productive power of resistance. “The feminists in these organizations move back and forth between what the government wants and what it sets out to do on its own. The power relations of the government enable them to produce truth of their own, and to resist, subvert, oppose and create” (¶ 24). Through her discoveries, English urges adult educators who are interested in informal and community-based learning to pay attention to these feminist practices of power and resistance, which is a particularly relevant advisement for the scope of this study.

The concept of power through language is another feminist poststructural construct that resonates strongly in the management education literature. The fact that the words manager and management include the word ‘man’ in their construction is merely a starting point for the ways in which language can be deconstructed within management education. The strong masculine slant of management language pervades management education with frequent references to the military or war and metaphors that compare organizations to machines. Such language benefits from the deconstructing techniques of poststructuralism, which problematizes language as a mirror of the world. Feminist poststructuralism examines how language is used to create binaries and either/or scenarios. “Feminists believe that the first term in binaries such as culture/nature, mind/body, rational/irrational, subject/object is male and privileged and the second term is female and disadvantaged” (St. Pierre, 2000, p.481).
Communication styles and the different ways men and women use language contribute powerfully to their classroom and organizational experiences (Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004b; Sinclair, 1997; Tannen, 1994). Sinclair (1997) found that women in an MBA program use language to communicate emotions and vulnerability as a way to generate dialogue. Men were more likely to use strategies that enforced hierarchy and maintained positionality. Men switched conversations about emotion or uncertainty to focus on ideas or information. These findings echo a classic characteristic of management education: valuing and emphasizing rationality and reason and devaluing and rejecting knowledge gained from methods such as emotion, imagination, or intuition. Mavin, Bryans, and Waring (2004a) also find “the very language of management is resolutely masculine,” making organizations a critical context for the “ordering of gender and for the establishment and preservation of male power” (p. 295). The language of managers requires deconstruction and examination for its implications toward gender blindness in management education.

Management education has its very roots well entrenched in the ‘rational’ approach to organizing, planning, decision-making, and leading. Rational approaches emphasize the use of the mind or intellect as opposed to relying on other ways of knowing for information. It’s not surprising that these “programmed and mechanistic” approaches were “unsatisfying” to women MBA students (Sinclair, 1997, p. 323) since the rational and reasonable have always been associated with masculinity and irrationality, emotionality, and the body have been linked with femininity. Sinclair’s research found that emphasis on logic and application frustrated women who often had no background knowledge of the subject presented in cases or activities. While the
women in the study were capable of using analytical skills, the “opportunities to use imagination and intuition” were the occasions when women identified their experience as meaningful (Sinclair, 1997, p. 324). Poststructural thought also questions the implications of privileging reason, particularly Foucault (1984) recognizes reason as simply “one narrative among others in history” and one that can include other narratives (p. 205). The contingent, historical nature of reason renders it impossible as an absolute. Poststructuralists recognize reason as simply another concept meant for deconstruction and investigation of “multiple forms of rationality produced by the codes and regularities of various discourses and cultural practices” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 487). Reason forms from specific contextual situations, which are always informed by our values, passions, and desires.

Yet women have long fought the battle of being the overly emotional, irrational sex. Management theory itself has traditionally operated out of the “management as male” paradigm (Mavin, Bryans, & Waring, 2004a). McGregor (1967) commented that the ideal model of a successful manager was aggressive, competitive, firm and just, and argued that he is not feminine or intuitive in a womanly sense. Evidently, “the very expression of emotion was widely viewed as a feminine weakness that would interfere with the business process” (Mavin, Bryans, & Waring, 2004a, p. 295). Because historically the management discipline has equated with maleness, the social construction of management became one in which the competencies required of managers were inextricably bound to men. The outcome results in the more independent, objective, and competitive male typified as more appropriate for leadership positions than the stereotyped, gentle, sensitive, and passive woman.
Given that notions of rationality as defined by modernist approaches communicate a specific, socially constructed form of masculinity that allows men to display their patriarchal credentials, it is not hard to imagine why in competition with men, “women may anticipate or discover that their bodies are obstacles to full participation” because of bodily processes such as menstruation, lactation and premenstrual symptoms being unaccounted for in organizations built on masculine principles (Hassard, Holliday & Willmott, 2000, p. 9). The perspective of the body as an obstacle to management leads naturally to an examination of the gendered nature of bodies and the body’s role in learning management.

The Body in Management Education

While feminist theory has had a long history of association with the body (Price & Shildreck, 1999, p. 1), particularly the female body, poststructural thought has not made room for the body among its key philosophical constructs (Sommerville, 2004). Conversely, it is the very issues that are central to poststructural thought—agency, reflexivity, and identity formation—that have spurred the consideration of the body within organizational practice. Rather than open up this study to the vast literature of broadly examining the importance of the body to feminist theory, a more focused approach will consider the body as a way of learning and knowing within management education; however, while a feminist poststructural examination of management education literature that considers the body is scarce, an effort will be made to apply poststructural thought when it is not overtly present.
Acker (1990) called for a systematic theory of gender and organizations for five primary reasons: the gender segregation of work; income and status equality; organizations help construct cultural images of gender; some aspects of individual gender identity are products of organizational processes, particularly masculinity; and part of the feminist project is to help democratize large-scale organizations. She further critiques one of the most well-known analysis of gender and organizations, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, but Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977). Despite Kanter’s work in examining gender differences in organizational behavior, her analysis becomes focused on organizational structure as opposed to gender (Acker, 1990). Bringing her critique back to the question of embodiment, Acker takes on Foucault who she says focuses on power more than gender, which “results in a disembodied, and consequently gender-neutral, bureaucracy as the oppressor” (p. 144). Acker then describes the five ways in which gendering occurs in organizations: 1) along divisions of labor; 2) in the constructions of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions; 3) interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men, including those patterns that enact dominance and submission; 4) the previous three processes then contribute to producing a gendered component of individual identity; and 5) through the ongoing process of creating and conceptualizing social structures. Going further in her deconstruction of organizations, Acker explains that even the term “job” is gendered, despite organizational logic, which presents it as gender-neutral since by definition it “contains the gender-based division of labor and the separation between the public and the private sphere” (p. 149). By categorizing the status of “job” as gender-neutral the assumption becomes “that the worker is abstract, disembodied” when in
actuality, both jobs and real workers are deeply gendered and bodied (p. 150). Building on the disembodied job and gender-neutral organization ideas, Acker explains that this allows no room for other ‘bodied’ processes such as a reproduction or emotions. She states:

Sexuality, procreation, and emotions all intrude upon and disrupt the ideal functioning of the organization, which tries to control such interferences.

However, as argued above, the abstract worker is actually a man, and it is the man’s body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation, and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organizational processes. Women’s bodies—female sexuality, their ability to procreate and their pregnancy, breastfeeding, and child care, menstruation, and mythic “emotionality”—are suspect, stigmatized, and used as grounds for control and exclusion. (p. 152)

Acker continues to analyze how these premises influence the gendered hierarchy of organizations thereby limiting women, because of their bodied processes, to lower levels of status and control. Further, she provides the example of the military and male world of sports as prominent examples of what represents valued training for organizational success. For Acker, a gendered theory of organizations is necessary to avoid falling into the chasm that obscures the embodied nature of work and the inclination to view organizational structure as gender-neutral.

In the article that inspired this study, Amanda Sinclair discusses the very topic this study seeks to highlight: Body and Management Pedagogy (2005). Sinclair draws on body theory but her actual goal is to contribute “primarily to embodied reflection—to encouraging the inclusion of the body in the moment-to-moment process of being reflective scholars and teachers” (p. 90). Arguing the traditional ideologies that view
teaching as disembodied, Sinclair argues instead that the body is pedagogy and occurs at visceral, sensual, intellectual, and imaginative levels.

Probyn’s (2004) work on the place of bodies in classrooms explores the intersection of affect, interest and bodies. Her research is similar to Sinclair (2005) whose focus was on incorporating the body as part of a teaching strategy. Probyn advocates for a pedagogy of the body but cautions that to recognize the place of the body within educational theory risks bringing the scrutiny of the educational establishment. Her pedagogy encourages the body, with all of its emotional expressions, to integrate with the dispensation and acquisition of knowledge. Eagleton (1998) agrees, and she finds “there is a deep irony in feminist teachers bringing into the academy responses, such as the embodied, that have traditionally been excluded, only then to render those responses subject to institutional management” (p. 347). In striving for just such an embodied theory, Probyn analyzes texts with her students as a way of getting at affect and “an embodied acknowledgement” (p. 29). She explains this acknowledgement as working with the affective reactions to text and expanding on those insights. Her findings reveal that even within the realm of women’s studies researchers seem to be warning against the privileging of ‘women’s experiences.’ Probyn inquires how concepts concerned with bodies can possibly be addressed without acknowledging the ways in which bodies are inhabited—in other words, it requires the active engagement of actual bodies in critical reflection that often captures the lived experiences of individuals. She describes this experience as one where students have a moment of realization depicted on their bodies, which brings to light reasons for their beliefs or behaviors. Denying women’s bodies and lived experiences as pedagogical substance in classrooms disregards the possibility of
moving towards a theory of embodiment. In other words, the lack of an accepted explanation to describe the phenomenon of embodiment marginalizes the body’s potential to be part of the learning experience. She states:

Particles of bodies, the body fragmented in affect, continually batter against the armor of the pedagogical body, they thrust fears and curiosity into the center stage of the classroom. In gesture, in confession, in papers, in evaluations they deeply disturb any pretence of privacy of the body that teaches or learns. (p. 37)

Probyn further emphasizes the need for a theory of embodiment because current literature on the body disregards the body as a pedagogical element in the classroom and instead focuses on the sexual aspects of women’s bodies. However, most researchers argue that sexuality is an always-present factor and one often difficult for women to negotiate (Hassard, Holliday & Willmott, 2000; Lewis, 1992; Perriton, 1999; Sinclair, 1995a; Sinclair, 1995b). A bodily inscription of knowledge often constitutes part of the hidden curriculum of universities. Recounting her experience in defining boundaries of her physical person from the unwanted “harmless” affections of male colleagues, Lewis (1992) describes her understanding of the hidden curriculum as coming through the body, her body, and explicitly owned by the academy within an ideological framework that defines what knowledge is allowable. The frustration of having to take positions within other people’s discourse causes not only disempowerment (Luke & Gore, 1992) but also defines for women an identity bound with sexuality.

Identity formation was also found to be significant around the issue of managers’ bodily performances outside work (Sinclair, 2005). Research on Australian managers uncovered those managers who participate in athletics or ride Harley Davidson’s, for
example, become legends and contribute to corporate rituals such as being invited to corporate boxes to view sports such as football or tennis. The result is that ‘looking good’ often equates to ‘being good’ (Piller, 1996). For example, Trethewey (1999) found that women frequently strive to emulate the flat, toned, and muscular bodies of men. Women, who fail to meet these rigorous male standards of professional identity or find themselves sexualized in their professional roles, often leave the corporate world.

Further, for those women who are not pushed out of organizational life, they often find themselves in a world dominated by the need to control everything, including bodies. Within an environment that highly values control, language can become a mechanism to exert control over individual bodies. Meyerson (1998) explains, “language that treats the body as a site of control is reinforced” in that workers “remain a body until given permission to participate as a mind” (p. 107). She argues that contemporary strategies like participative management and empowerment still enforce the idea of a person behind the scenes, a modern day Wizard of Oz, who controls workers participation. Meyerson’s (1998) research goes a step further and uses a feminist postmodern critique of the language associated with stress and burnout. She begins by dissecting the discourse of rationality versus emotionality. While emotions have historically been devalued in support of rationality, choosing “a discourse that values emotions would overturn the rational/emotional dichotomy and place emotions, not as that which is not rational or irrational but as a distinct and legitimate realm of experience” (p. 112). This means allowing people to feel and fully experience their emotions rather than controlling, getting through or containing their feelings. Such a shift in language is crucial to re-envisioning stress from a feminist viewpoint. While the dominant discourse does not
allow space for engagement of emotions or feeling ‘out of control,’ the right to control the body has long been a feminist struggle of making the personal political. Meyerson (1998) explains the connection between the body and control:

The preceding deconstruction of the mind/body dualism indicates how the false separation of mind/body and the gender associations of those spheres have perpetuated the political contest about control over the body. Should the dichotomy be overturned and the separation dissolved, a person—as mind and body—must naturally be “in control of” his/her own body. With this power relation suspended, the body could legitimately become a distinct source of subjectivity. Overturning the relation therefore entails a shift from a perspective that categorizes, disembodies, and attempts to control bodily experiences to one that appreciates the body as an important source of subjectivity. (p. 113)

Kerfoot and Knights (1996) take up the same issue with body and control but from the perspective of masculinities. They state, “contemporary masculine identities are discursively bound up with high levels of purposive-rational instrumentality characterized by an urge to be in control” (p. 80). The desire for more and greater conquests or challenges creates a constant state of grasping for control—a behavior equating to compulsive masculinity. The field of management illustrates the desire for control especially well in that personal life, family, physical and mental health all subordinate to the ultimate goal of control. The pursuit of control plays out most eloquently in contemporary management through pursuit of strategy. Consultants and gurus alike proclaim the necessity to plan and organize for the purpose of having strategic goals—a way to order and control the world of management. Yet Kerfoot and Knights
(1996) argue that this “ceaseless pursuit of strategic goals” actually “involves a disembodied and emotionally estranged conception of reason….the attainment of which confirms the promise, though rarely the reality, of a secure masculine identity” (p. 83). Applying a poststructural perspective to this misconception, as Kerfoot and Knights do, masculinity cannot be secure or fixed because it is constantly shifting and fluid, just as femininity is not fixed. While the authors resist matching masculine with men or feminine with women, they do acknowledge that the terms are used in the socially constructed manner of what it means to be a man or woman. The dominant masculine nature of management and gendered nature of management discourse means “everyone is judged against a single masculine measure of competence” (Kerfoot & Knights, 1996, p. 86). Bringing the discussion back to the body, the authors explain that it is significant to define masculinity and femininity in this way because:

Femininity represents ideal-typically a less disembodied mode of being.
Femininity is not instrumentally attached to securing itself through projects and goals, and it can be more engaged with, rather than detached from, the world. This engagement is at once immediate, sensual, and embodied, not driven by cognitive and goal-centered designs and preoccupations. While femininity may not engender a disembodied mode of being as does the cognitively goal-directed compulsiveness of masculinity, it is frequently associated with a passivity that lacks purpose and direction, other than that given to it by others. Consequently those whose identities are discursively constituted as feminine are invariably vulnerable to whose expectations feminine women often live their lives. (p. 87)
Although the authors seem to be perpetuating the binary thinking of modernist philosophy, their aim is instead to illustrate the different ways gender engage and the impact for changing management practice and organizational life. Management styles that rely on numbers and data rather than interpersonal interaction privilege masculine models of leading, and perpetuate the disembodied and emotionless nature of management. In contrast, a feminist poststructuralist perspective acknowledges the gender constructions of the dominant culture as something that affects everyone through the propagation of hegemony, while simultaneously deconstructing those ideas.

An objective of this study seeks to problematize the issue of gender as critical to somatic management learning, and the next section defines somatic learning. As a way of honoring the whole person in teaching and learning, holistic learning encompasses many dimensions. One of these dimensions is somatic learning, which includes learning through and with the body. The following section reviews the broader literature on holistic learning and narrows to explain somatic learning specifically.

**Somatic Learning: A Holistic Perspective**

A prerequisite of examining the literature about somatic learning was to look more broadly at what it means to learn holistically. This study considered somatic learning as part of holistic learning, which includes the whole person in the process of teaching and learning. This section first explains holistic learning by making sense of definitions, terminology, and approaches and then delves deeper into the significance of somatic learning as the central focus of this study.
Defining Holistic Learning

In order to focus on a holistic approach to adult education, definitions are grouped into three main categories: whole person learning, holistic learning, and holistic education. Apps’ (1996) book, *Teaching from the Heart*, best captures the approach to holistic adult education for this study. He defines learning for the whole person as a process that attends to the spiritual, intellectual, biological, and emotional. Similarly, Hill (1999) describes the whole person as someone who is capable of balancing his/her mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual human capabilities both internally and externally. Lee (2003) begins to add an experiential element in addition to the qualities suggested by Apps (1996) and Hill (1999), by defining whole person learning as touching the affective, working with experiences, strengthening the cognitive, and enhancing the social. This coincides with Vogel (2000) who advocates recognizing the presence of multiple intelligences among adults and addressing them as whole persons who are invited “to bring their life experiences and questions to a safe table where all are given a voice and can be heard” (¶ 1). Kasl and Yorks (2002) expound upon experiential knowing calling on Heron and Reason’s (1997) four ways of knowing, which are experiential, presentational, prepositional, and practical. The most relevant type of learning proposed by Heron and Reason to the experiential knowing described by Kasl and Yorks is presentational knowing. Heron and Reason define this term:

> Presentational knowing emerges from and is grounded on experiential knowing. It is evident in an intuitive grasp of the significance of our resonance with and imaging of our world, as this grasp is symbolized in graphic, plastic, musical, vocal and verbal art-forms. It clothes our experiential knowing of the world in the
metaphors of aesthetic creation, in expressive spatiotemporal forms of imagery. These forms symbolize both our felt attunement with the world and the primary meaning embedded in our enactment of its appearing (p. 275).

By providing multiple ways of knowing, a whole person oriented approach to teaching and learning becomes possible. Finally, in the context of advocating for a more authentic, embodied approach to education Beckett and Morris (2001) view lifelong learning as inextricably linked to being a whole person.

Within the definitions of holistic learning, the overlap with whole person learning is immediately apparent. Joyce (1996) referencing Griffin (1990) defined holistic learning as a combination of the physical, emotional, cognitive, intuitional/metaphoric, spiritual, and relational. Similarly, Love and Love (1996) describe holistic learning as the integration of intellectual, social, and emotional aspects, and Light and Fawns (2002) agree while adding the physical dimension. Miller (1998) begins to focus on the spirit of the individual by defining holistic learning as providing “a broader vision of education and human development by seeking to nurture the human spirit as well as to improve academic performance and ability” (¶ 1). Lastly, from the context of a pastoral education program, DeCourcey (1998) simply defines holistic learning as paying attention to feeling, thinking, and behaving.

Connected to Vogel’s (2000) approach, Colalillo Kates (2002) describes holistic education as developing multidimensional levels of intelligence, including spiritual, dynamic, physical, emotional, and logical, combined with imagination, intuition, and vision. Voke (2003) also closely mimics the previous definitions of both whole person and holistic learning by defining holistic education as including the moral, emotional,
physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. Grauerholz (2001) who specifically identifies the elements of holistic teaching as pedagogical approaches that consciously attempt to advance student growth and learning further than the cognitive includes a variety of techniques for students. Such techniques include personally exploring and connecting course content to their lives and facilitating clarification of student values and sense of responsibility to self and society. Macklin (1998) examined educators in a holistic education context, which she described as an environment that emphasizes the holistic principles of wholeness, creativity, and connections. Finally, Lakes (2000) approached holistic education from a vocational education viewpoint that focused heavily on the aspects of authenticity, spirituality, and human development.

To make sense of these seemingly similar and various definitions about how to approach adult education holistically it is useful to identify where they overlap. Perhaps the most common thread among the definitions is the desire to categorize dimensions and/or recognize the existence of multiple intelligences or ways of knowing. Six main learning dimensions emerge under various names: cognitive (intellectual/logical/mental); affective (emotional/feeling); spiritual; social (socio-cultural); somatic (biological/physical); and psychological (intuition/imagination/vision). Another pervasive theme throughout the literature was the inclusion of the spirit or the spiritual dimension within the holistic learning environment. Many researchers recognize the body (physical) and emotional (affective) aspects as necessary elements of holistic learning, and spirituality has a strong presence in almost every definition of whole person and holistic learning and holistic education. While these definitions offer a starting point for understanding the teaching and learning of the whole person, the ways in which a holistic
The Significance of Holistic Learning to Adult Education

Holistic learning, also known as whole person learning, is important to the field of adult education for four main reasons: helping students to make meaning of their lives (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Vella, 2000); fostering the growth and development of adult students (Grauerholz, 2001; Love & Love, 1995); emphasizing collaboration over competition and appreciating differences (Voke, 2003; Yorks & Kasl, 2002b); and nurturing the human spirit in addition to the intellect and emotions (Chisholm, 1993; Colalillo, 2002; Dirix, 1997; English, 2000; Miller, 1998; Tisdell, 2003; Vogel, 2000). Love and Love (1996) take note of higher education’s struggle with the fragmented process of learning—learning that focuses only on the parts rather than the whole. Their argument for intellectual, social and emotional integration within higher education is supported by what they identify as:

A continuing paradigm shift in the social sciences and education, the emergence of disciplines that incorporate the impact of social processes and issues of affect (e.g., Women’s Studies; Pan-African Studies; Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Studies), continuing reform efforts (e.g., total quality management, general education and core curriculum reemergence), and external pressures (e.g., the accountability movement, mandated outcomes assessment, and financial cutbacks at the state and federal level). (¶ 2)
However, the struggle to address students holistically does not reside solely within academia. Many researchers agree with Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) that society itself is to blame: “In contemporary English-speaking society, there is a cultural bias towards the cognitive and conative aspects of learning. The development of affect is inhibited…leading to a lack of emphasis on people as whole persons” (pp. 12-13). Others specifically address the need to teach adult students as whole persons. In her development of a spirited epistemology, Vella (2000) grounds her framework in the idea that adult learners are Subjects and decision makers in their own learning process. She emphasizes the humanity of her framework, which extends to instructing adults holistically. “When you design learning tasks for adult learners in order to learn what you are teaching, you always include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements” (¶ 21). Taylor (1998) also examines “other ways of knowing” as part of his transformative learning literature review and cites a study by The Group for Collaborative Inquiry (1994) that acknowledged the significance of whole person learning, which includes use of “cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual domains” (p. 171).

Holistic learning has been written about from a variety of perspectives including vocational education (Lakes, 2000; Mulcahy, 2000), collaborative learning (Lee, 2003; Kasl & Yorks, 2002; Yorks & Kasl, 2002a), workplace learning (Beckett & Morris, 2001), and pastoral education (DeCourcey, 1998). Some researchers have developed holistic models of education drawing from such sources as Native American culture (Armstrong, 2000; Orr, 2000), Aboriginal culture (Hill, 1999), and Narrative Education (Tondreau, 2003). The suggested approaches for teaching the whole person and learning holistically are various and offer many useful ideas. The specific ways the various
dimensions of holistic learning can be expressed is noticeably missing in both research and practical application. For the purpose of this study, somatic learning provides the most epistemological significance and is further defined and critiqued in the next section.

Defining Somatic Learning

The existing literature regarding somatic learning at first glance appears minimal, but a deeper investigation revealed that it takes on many forms in various disciplines. Matthews (1998) defines somatic knowing as “an experiential knowing that involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction—a knowing, feeling, and acting that includes more of the broad range of human experience” (¶ 4). At its core, he describes somatic knowing as an “embodied experience of being and doing” (¶ 4). To embody something is to give it a body. Therefore, embodied learning literally means giving a body to learning. Somatic learning often occurs in experiential learning, where the learner becomes an active participant in the knowledge acquisition process through activities like role plays and discussion. Clark (2001) generalized somatic learning even more, describing it as “how we learn from our bodily experience” (¶ 3). She gives the example of how often stress manifests itself in our body before our mind recognizes the situation as an example of how we discount the body’s message until our minds can define it. While these two definitions sound similar, it is necessary to explain what somatic learning looks like in action. Clark (2001) provides examples of somatic learning ranging from the artistic to the emotional to the physical. Others have included the body in the learning process using movement and art (Crawford, 1998) tacit learning (Durrance, 1998) and dance (Fortin, 1998). Crowdes (2000) also used experiential techniques with somatic and
emotional learning with sociology students studying power relations. She explains somatic learning in terms of a “conscious embodiment” that goes beyond simply connecting the affective and cognitive domains in experiential learning. Further, “it implies an integrity of mind, body, and action accompanied by some awareness in the broader social context” (p. 27). Conscious embodiment includes but is not limited to body posture, style, emotions, and simple body actions (Crowdes, 2000).

Chapman (1998) recognizes the recent push to acknowledge affective and somatic knowledge, but makes the case that it is unnecessary to re-invite the body to the classroom, as it has always been present. For her, recognition of bodies in the classroom opens the door for a vast array of psychological and sociological issues, including gender, power, race, and sexual orientation. Like Matthews (1998), Chapman (1998) views somatic learning from an embodied perspective. She references Schatzki’s (1996) model of corporeality, the embodiment of socioculturation, which distinguishes between the physical body, bodily activity, the lived body, and the surface of the body. The model purports that the body is socially sculpted by our practices in both political and social realms. For example, eating and drinking habits reflect on the physical health of our body, and our gender, character and mental health reflect onto our bodily activity. The lived body is the actual experience of giving a body to the self—the act of embodiment. The surface of the body is where we often place or wear social or cultural symbols such as tattoos, jewelry, piercings, or clothing as a symbol of our beliefs, values, or attitudes. From Schatzki’s (1996) model Chapman (1998) proposes an understanding of how educational discourse and institutions contribute to represent bodies and ultimately, identities.
The body as a medium for understanding society and culture is also discussed by Brockman (2001) who uses a multicultural and postmodern lens for viewing somatic knowing, which he describes as knowledge known by the body through physical sensation. He believes that somatic knowing offers a fundamental knowledge source that can aid educators and philosophers in sorting “the cultural goods from the cultural evils” (¶ 19). Like Matthews (1998), Brockman (2001) views the exclusion of somatic knowing in favor of cultural-linguistic dimensions as extremely problematic. A cultural-linguistic approach transmits knowledge through a lens emphasizing the customs, beliefs, and social norms combined with speech patterns of a particular race, religious or social group. By assuming knowledge to be historical, cultural, and linguistic in nature it implies that groups of different cultures are unable to learn from one another. In other words, if knowledge is constructed culturally and linguistically, then it may not be transferable to other cultural and linguistic systems. Brockman (2001) differentiates somatic knowledge as being received from within the individual and cultural knowledge as being received from without the individual. Consider someone who has just been diagnosed with a disease. The individual can research the condition and talk to others with the same disease, which is a way of acquiring cultural-linguistic knowledge. However, until the individual begins to experience the symptoms of his or her disease, the knowledge he or she has comes from outside the body. Going through the disease and experiencing it within the body becomes a somatic experience. The knowledge gained from pain, discomfort, or fatigue then becomes more tangible and concrete than the knowledge received from others. Because somatic knowledge is experienced directly, it can offer a dimension of learning that is common to all cultural contexts.
Making Sense of the Definitions of Somatic Learning

The diversity of the possible ways to explain somatic learning failed to offer conclusiveness about exactly what somatic learning looks like in practice. The intent of this section is to provide some sense-making about the various definitions and then to critique these definitions by discussing their limitations, developing a somatic learning model, and explaining how the domains of somatic learning might be integrated.

Fundamentally, each definition positions somatic learning or knowing within or through the body rather than knowledge about or without the body (Matthews, 1998; Chapman, 1998; Brockman, 2001; Clark, 2001; Sellers-Young, 1998). Chapman (1998), Brockman (2001), and Crowdes (2000) all recognize the body’s inclusion in the learning environment as having implications for how we make sense of social and cultural norms and issues such as power and gender. Matthews (1998), Sellers-Young (1998), Michelson (1998), and Crowdes (2000) all recognize somatic learning as experiential and involving the body’s action and reaction. Each uses similar terminology to define experiential learning such as knowledge that is gained through the senses or perception as well as the reactive knowing, feeling or acting that results from tacit involvement. Experiential exercises, such as debate, group collaboration, and action-oriented activities, create learning through our experiences, and a major contributor to experience occurs from our environment, which includes all of our senses and our bodies via nerve receptors on each muscle and organ (Hannaford, 1995). The body is designed to gather information both externally through our sensory organs or internally where each movement instantaneously carries a chaotic selection of impulses quickly to the brain so it knows precisely where the body is in space. Such critical sensations provide us with ideas of the
self and the world as well as creating a basis for knowledge. We learn first through our
senses, and through exploration of the world, initial sensory patterns are mapped out on
elaborate nerve networks. The sensory patterns form the center of our personal
information system and become more complex and rich with each new experience. Each
sensory pattern provides a context for all learning, thought, and creativity (Hannaford,
1995). Thus, experiential learning provides authentic learning opportunities that engage
the whole learner.

A limitation of the existing definitions offered in the literature suggest that the
term “somatic” is being used indiscriminately whether the author means to explain, for
example, affective or kinesthetic learning. Since the term somatic literally means body,
somatic learning as a concept is used to explain the emotional reactions that occur within
the body (affective) as well as learning through bodily movements (kinesthetic). The
existing definitions also often overlap other ways of learning, such as spiritual learning,
because many people who describe spiritual learning include their bodies as being
integral to their spiritual growth. Explaining this overlap in cognitive terms and in
narrative is difficult. Somatic learning is felt by the body, and defining such knowing in
rationale terms has limited not only the understanding of somatic education but also its
development. While the range of learning that is classified within somatic learning is
broad and interpreted differently, it is the body itself that continuously emerges as a
multi-faceted force for making meaning of our experience. In response to this ambiguity,
a framework developed that encompasses four domains, with each being somatic in
nature. The framework resulted from a review of the literature that revealed “somatic”
learning or knowing was often represented under other terminology. Since somatic
simply means relating to or affecting the body, somatic learning, as illustrated in the literature reviewed, can be categorized into four main areas: kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual. These categories effectively organize into a model, which provides a framework for understanding the dimensions of somatic learning. The next few sections explain the model, offer a way to think about the integration of the domains, and provide the first ideas of how to integrate holistic and somatic learning with management education.

*Developing a Somatic Learning Model*

The rationale for this model builds upon each of the previously identified definitions in that the body through movement, each of the five senses, emotions, and/or our spirituality, creates meaning. The model offers a visual explanation of how somatic learning often acts as an umbrella for many types of bodily learning and that each of the four domains also often intersects with one another. Because of the variety and disparity between the definitions of somatic learning, this model provides a more inclusive representation of the aspects of learning through the body. Each domain, represented by a circle, overlaps to depict the practical way each aspect of somatic learning tend to intersect. The four main areas of somatic learning are kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual.
Kinesthetic Learning. Learning that occurs as a result of the concerted movements of muscles, tendons, and joints is labeled kinesthetic. Drawing on his experience as a high school cross-country and track runner, Matthews (1998) describes his involvement in athletics as an embodied experience that allowed him to endure the disembodied high school curriculum. The somatic engagement expressed by Matthews is echoed in a reference to long distance running by Csikzentmihalyi (1990) who describes bodily learning as, “the simple act of moving the body across space becomes a source of complex feedback that provides optimal experience and adds strength to the self” (p. 95). Matthews (1998) references Csikzentmihalyi’s (1990) concept of “flow,” the occurrence of being so actively involved in something that we are oblivious to distraction, time becomes irrelevant, and the mind and body work as one. Advocating that all fields and levels of education can benefit from an embodied approach to education, Matthews
(1998) warns that continuing to follow a bodily detached attitude toward learning will reinforce obsession with grades and paper and pencil learning and alienate scores of students who learn in other ways.

Beaudoin (1999) conducted a study of six adults who integrated somatic education into their everyday lives using body-centered approaches. She describes somatic education as approaches that aid individuals in developing increased awareness of their bodies in movement. Beaudoin’s research examined the areas of daily life that somatic education participants applied their learning to improve their efficiency and quality of life and the level of integration they achieved. Participants had an average of six years of experience using body-centered approaches such as the Eutonia method, Alexander and Feldenkrais techniques, yoga, and Somarythm. Data collection occurred through interviews asking participants to describe the life circumstance where they used somatic learning with particular attention paid to the transference of this learning to daily living. Over a six-month period, each participant was interviewed on average six times. The interviews yielded 70 integration stories. Beaudoin (1999) found that participants chose to use somatic techniques mainly when they were suffering emotional discomfort such as fear, anger, or distress. She determined six somatic learning elements were most helpful to the participants: a) doing some movement, b) modifying body posture, c) coming back to body sensations, d) being attentive to what was happening, e) letting themselves go along with what was happening or what they were feeling, and f) developing a quality of “presence.” These somatic education techniques tie movement to body awareness creating a kinesthetic version of somatic learning.
The theory of multiple intelligences also recognizes kinesthetic learning and proposes that human beings have all of the intelligences, but each person has a unique combination or profile (Gardner, 1983). We possess the capability to improve our intelligences, but some people have natural tendencies in certain areas. Gardner (1983) recognizes seven areas of intelligence, including bodily kinesthetic intelligence, which is the ability to control one's body movements and to handle objects skillfully. Someone possessing bodily kinesthetic intelligence expresses themselves through movement and also prefers this method for learning. Bodily kinesthetic learners can be athletes, artists, dancers, or inventors. Recognizing kinesthetic learning as a facet of somatic learning opens up possibilities not only for how information is presented but also for learning by individuals whose strengths lie in bodily kinesthetic intelligence. Fundamentally, kinesthetic learning involves movement. From the use of fine and/or gross motor skills, our bodies spring into action. The body produces movement and action that often yields lessons about discipline, diligence, dealing with stress, or solving problems. Kinesthetic learners need to be actively engaged in their learning by involving hands-on manipulation, physical involvement, and role plays.

_Sensory Learning._ Utilizing the five senses to construct knowledge or make meaning of our learning is considered sensory learning. Our senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling each require a distinct function of our bodies, and as information is accumulated through each sense, we relate that information to our experience and extrapolate meanings significant to our lives. Bach, Kennedy, and Michelson (1999) explore sensory knowing through autobiographical narratives of
sensory perception as a way of relating the senses of hearing, visual awareness, speech/verbal expression and the sense of smell to pedagogy. Each author shares personal stories from a historical context and relates learning experiences to each of our senses. As an example, one of the authors relates a story about how her family’s mealtimes during childhood were spent in silence as dictated by her father. She learned that expression of any sort at the dinner table equated into punishment; even laughter was not tolerated. She came to feel that being silent was necessary for survival and that her “body was devalued, and became a repository for all that was deemed undesirable” (¶ 12). Bach, Kennedy, and Michelson (1999) conclude that “It is through stories of understanding our bodies and our senses, through all their migrations and peregrinations, their processes and their connections, that we wish to make meaning in our lives” (¶ 46). They advocate opening curriculum to incorporate sentience, a consciousness of perception and thought that occurs through our senses. Because our eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and ability to touch are all part of our bodies, sensory learning is inherently somatic.

Affective Learning. The acquisition of knowledge as a result of paying attention to and honoring our feelings and emotions is called affective learning. Many times in life we find ourselves at a decision point and although our head examines the rational choices we can make, our gut or an internal feelings instruct us otherwise.

Emotional Intelligence has also emerged in mainstream literature as a way of measuring an individual’s control over emotional responses. Goleman’s (1995) work in particular has made an impact on the management field as business schools and organizations realize the importance of the “soft skills” in the workplace. Emotional
intelligence is fundamentally about self-awareness. Being aware of our emotions and
being able to identify them, gives us an opportunity to reflect on the impulses certain
emotions cause. We then make choices about how to react—we can choose our first
impulse, or we can decide on a mutually beneficial response for all parties involved.
Recognizing the impact of emotions on our personal and professional lives has further
legitimized the affective realm as a domain of learning.

Yorks and Kasl (2002b) wholeheartedly advocate a push toward a more holistic
view of learning but acknowledge that many educators are unsure of how to handle
emotions and feelings in the context of the classroom. They caution that the pragmatist
view of experiences “casts affective knowing as an object for reflection, [and] so
permeates adult education discourse that it has narrowed our theoretical vision and
truncated our practice” (¶ 25). Therefore, Yorks and Kasl recommend a theoretical
roadmap to guide educators and the use of four interconnected ways of knowing—
experiential, presentational, prepositional, and practical to more fully embrace the learner
as a whole person.

Taylor (1996) examined the role of emotions within transformative learning
type from a neurobiological perspective and found that while feelings are recognized as
part of transformative learning, the interactive relationship between emotion and
rationality is still unacknowledged. Using affective learning or fostering emotional
intelligence requires some of the same interactive, experiential techniques as are found in
kinesthetic and sensory learning. Collaborative learning that involves discussion and role
play can be valuable for understanding differing perspectives, resolving conflict, and
improving communication. Again, the use of the body emerges as integral in these activities and affective learning in general.

**Spiritual Learning.** Including spiritual learning within this model of somatic learning makes sense primarily because spirituality is essentially about making meaning of our lives. One of Tisdell’s (2003) definitions of spirituality describes it as how people construct knowledge, and this process is often carried out in symbolic and unconscious ways such as creativity through music, art, imagery, symbols, and rituals. Symbols can be represented as a concept, a person, a physical object, or a movement or gesture (Tisdell, 2003). Much of the spirituality literature makes direct links between our spiritual learning and learning through our feelings, senses, and movements. Spiritual writer Gary Zukov (2000) suggests a multisensory type of constructing knowledge that not only uses the five senses but other modes of learning such as using intuition.

Wuthnow (2001) explores the role of the artist and spirituality citing many stories of how artists interpret and define their own spiritual journeys and discoveries. A painter, Nancy Chinn described a particular spiritual experience as this: “the phrase ‘God is a Spirit’ flowed into me and I understood in a kinesthetic way what that meant” (p. 23). She believes spirituality should be sensual; “relating to God should be so emotionally fulfilling that it generates bodily movement” (p. 24). Wuthnow also interviewed a dancer, Ann Biddle, who similarly found chanting as “kinesthetic, physiological” (p. 109). She “could feel something happening” (p. 109, emphasis mine). For Biddle, “the kinesthetic effect of chanting is especially meaningful because it resembles the bodily transformation that occurs from dancing” (p. 110). Often Biddle will choreograph a piece that came to
her while chanting, which she describes as a spiritual place. At their core, these two women found their spiritual experiences to be intertwined and dependent on a simultaneous bodily experience. For them, the overlap of spiritual and somatic learning is quite clear.

Other examples of the somatic and spiritual domains overlapping occur in Tisdell’s (2003) work. A Chinese American woman named Janine commented on her experience giving birth as a somatic experience. “The most cosmic spiritual transformative events of my life are strongly related to the body. One was giving birth to my daughter” (p. 76). These are only a few of the many stories that combine spiritual learning and experience with other domains of somatic learning such as affective, sensory, and kinesthetic. The intent here is to simply demonstrate that by combining the cognitive domain with the many forms of somatic learning, the body becomes central to the learning process. Taking the model a step further than its individual elements, the following section explains how the domains integrate, creating multiple ways to foster somatic learning.

*Integrating the Domains of Somatic Learning*

The concept of integration of multiple modes of bodily learning identified in the model above offers implications for somatic learning. The ambiguous nature of somatic learning requires the understanding of multiple ways the body can take in, process, and make sense of new knowledge. Brooks and Clark (2001) utilize narratives to encompass the cognitive, affective, spiritual, and somatic dimensions. They make the case that in order for a story to be accepted by our society, it must somehow make a cognitive link by
having a “point” to the story. Stories that are particularly compelling often appeal to affect in that they can possibly cause people to feel differently or experience a change in opinion or a call to action. The narratives embrace spiritual and somatic learning when the story touches us on a visceral level where we are left touched or moved in some way from the information we have read.

Instructors who strive to create somatic learning experiences for their students can take many things from the somatic learning model offered here. Somatic learning offers an opportunity to break out of the thinking that the mind offers the only way to engage in knowledge acquisition. By incorporating learning experiences that engage the whole person and often several modes of learning, a more complete learning experience will occur. Kinesthetic learning offers the opportunity for students to move by engaging in role plays or dramatizations of situations or cases. Participating in building or creating activities that require use of fine and/or gross motor skills also provide kinesthetic experience. Sensory learning can be incorporated using music or artwork that is interpreted visually and aurally in relation to the subject matter being taught. Storytelling has also been proven useful to capitalize on the sensory experiences of our pasts. We can bring emotions and feelings to the forefront of our classrooms by illustrating the power and significance of emotional awareness. The ability to recognize emotions in a variety of situations is a valuable development tool for adults in any field. From a spiritual perspective, students have opportunities for expression through movement, art, music, or symbol to construct meaning, connectedness, and awareness. Each of these options centralizes the body so that it is integral to the learning experience.
The following section explains holistic approach to management education that considers learning inherently personal and experiential, helping to tie together two seemingly different subjects.

_Learning as a Way of Being_

Peter Vaill, a professor of human systems and director of the Ph.D. program at the School of Business and Public Management at George Washington University, was once described as one of the top ten organization development specialists in the United States. In his book (1996), *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water*, Vaill outlines his approach to learning through the lens of constant change and systems theory. His theory is very experiential in nature and offers a wonderful model from the field of organization development to help inform management education. Vaill’s model of learning as a way of being dovetails neatly with the previous discussion of holistic and somatic learning.

Vaill (1996) describes “bone-deep” understandings and commitments of members in excellent organizations as “learning that resonates in the total person in an integrated flow of mind, body, and spirit, no matter how humble or mundane the activity” (p. 67). Vaill insists that the concept of “going with the flow” is absent from formal management education and training because most management and leadership learning systems do not emphasize the importance of expressiveness, which is his term for “taking things as they come” or “playing it by ear” (p. 71). Vaill points out the singular focus of the last thirty years on cognitive learning and questions the dichotomy of separating new learning trends such as “nonverbal learning,” “body work,” “poetic learning,” or “deep knowing”
from the cognitive aspects of learning (p. 74). Instead, he believes that learning has both
cognitive and affective aspects and we should honor each equally. “Learning as a way of
being is learning by a whole person, and that means feeling the learning as well as
possessing it intellectually” (p. 75). From the broader field of management education and
the specific field of organization development, Vaill contributes a theory of learning that
echoes the research conducted on holistic learning within adult education and offers a
model that can also be considered embodied. Vaill’s emphasis on ‘expressiveness,’ which
values the somatic experience of learning nicely compliments the proposed model of
somatic learning discussed above.

**Implications of Holistic and Somatic Learning**

Based on extensive review of both the holistic and somatic learning literature
within adult education as well as the theoretical analysis presented above, there are
additional implications of teaching and learning to consider. The roles of instructor and
student in holistic learning are explored from the perspective of educating holistically
because there is a lack of literature informing these roles from a somatic perspective. The
implications for management education are explored through the somatic lens in terms of
how the body impacts that discipline. The purpose of this study is to understand how
instructors and students can foster a holistic learning environment, which primarily
focuses on somatic learning, as well as how management education in particular can
embrace an embodied approach.
Instructor and Student Roles in Somatic Learning

The research indicated that the role of the instructor in adopting holistic learning principles requires the instructor to develop a partnership attitude so that learning occurs in tandem with students (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Grauerholz, 2001; Vella, 2000). In order to create more democratic and equitable learning environments, instructors should work at reducing power and authority differentials between teacher and student (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Grauerholz, 2001). Integral to holistic learning is personalization of the content by relating curriculum to the lives and experiences of students and taking an interest in their personal life and development (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Grauerholz, 2001; Love & Love, 1996). Instructors also have the responsibility of providing multi-dimensional learning so as to create meaning making opportunities (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Lakes, 2000; Love & Love, 1996; Miller, 1998; Vogel, 2000). The instructor should also take personal responsibility for nurturing their own inner life and capacity for multiple ways of knowing (Vogel, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2002b). Because holistic learning is process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented, it is important to balance the aspects of learning and assessment (Grauerholz, 2001; Miller, 1998).

Some of the more distinct recommendations for instructors using a holistic approach include reassuring students that not knowing is sometimes legitimate and appropriate (DeCourcy, 1998) and using environmental thinking to communicate the principles of learning and living (Lakes, 2000). Instructors should develop high expectations of students (Love & Love, 1996) and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning (Apps, 1996). Lastly, holistic learning may meet with resistance from some students, and it is often tempting to abandon the approach.
because of this conflict. However, courage and perseverance is recommended by Apps (1996) who believes that the student may not always be aware of the benefits from alternative learning strategies.

While there are recommendations for instructors about how to foster holistic learning, most of the literature disregards the role of the adult student in holistic learning. From the small amount of information found, only on the age and motivation level of the student is addressed. For example, from the field of pastoral education, DeCourcy (1998) acknowledges that in a holistic learning environment traditional undergraduates (18-22) have the most trouble because they tend to devalue the personal and view learning as an acquisition of factual information. “Older students bring more experience to the classroom, value it, and have already engaged with the information” (DeCourcy, 1998, ¶ 4). He adds that undergraduates can be taught holistically, but it requires additional time, energy, and planning on the part of the instructor. The only other reference to the students’ role indicates that students must be highly motivated to participate in holistic education (Grauerholz, 2001). More guidance is needed for instructors about how to practically teach holistically, including examples from various disciplines. Further, the role students play in being receptive and open to holistic learning methods should be investigated. A broader investigation of holistic learning would allow for its various dimensions, including somatic learning, to be more fully explored and explained. This research could help explain more fully the importance of the students’ role and offer further suggestions for instructors. For the purpose of this study, the following section explores the implications of somatic learning for the field of management education and a critique of the existing literature.
The field of management education requires the teaching of skills and theories to people in managerial/leadership positions, including but not limited to intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; conflict management skills; communication skills; stress management skills; and leadership skills as well as theories around human resources; organizational behavior and development; strategy and policy; ethics and social responsibility, and international management. Management education can occur in academia in undergraduate or graduate programs as well as in organizational contexts through training and development programs, succession programs, and career management. Informal management education also occurs within organizations, for example, through on-the-job learning. Sinclair’s (2005) suggestions for bringing the body into the management classroom include linking classroom topics and learning to the body, adopting different bodily positions and gestures to mirror a point about content, or as Sinclair did, bring yoga to the business school. While Sinclair does not teach yoga in her management courses, she does offer it in the business school setting to both colleagues and students. Her aim was to bring the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits of yoga to participants, but in actuality she realized she was doing much more. Sinclair explains:

I had transgressed some boundaries…by creating a setting which holds students, administrative and academic staff on the same level (the floor), I was removing status and power props and reducing those who participated to a metaphorical nakedness—without their brainpower, just the raw material of their body. (p. 101)
The positioning of yoga so close to the domain of ‘higher learning’ by Sinclair provided inspiration for this study to find ways to further break down boundaries between the body and management education. The purpose of this study is to push those very boundaries to reconsider an alternative method of learning management. Expanding the existing conceptual information about somatic learning into an empirical study of how women in particular benefit from an embodied approach to management education requires framing through a theoretical lens that considers gender as a vital part of the analysis.

Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review captured the relevant and most recent research for this study about feminist poststructuralism, women managers, gender and management education, and the significance of the body to gender, learning, and management education, and holistic and somatic learning. The theoretical lens of feminist poststructuralism provided a way to analyze the literature reviewed by discerning the importance of identity, power, language, discourse, knowledge and truth. The results of the literature review yielded that despite conceptual pieces describing the intersection of the body and organization or bodies in the classroom, no empirical study exists to capture the potential of combining somatic learning with management education in a feminist participatory action research framework.
CHAPTER 3
Methodology

Participatory action research...frequently emerges in situations where people want to make changes thoughtfully—that is, after critical reflection. It emerges when people want to think, 'realistically' about where they are now, how things came to be that way, and, from these starting points, how, in practice, things might be changed. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 573)

This study utilized qualitative research methods, specifically feminist participatory action research, to understand how to explore a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers. The intention was to explore how women managers can pay attention to their body in the context of management. The primary purpose of this chapter is to discuss the study’s research design, participants, workshop design, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design

The design of this study was feminist participatory action research, which draws its principles for research from the qualitative paradigm. A qualitative approach was chosen because a primary focus of this study was to analyze how women understand their learning of management from an embodied approach and relate that knowledge to their self and managerial environment. Qualitative research is positioned firmly on the “idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). The focus of this study lends itself to a qualitative study informed by feminist and action research paradigms. Merriam (2002) identifies four key components of qualitative research and each of these is reflected in this study. First, a qualitative approach was chosen because a primary focus of this study is to analyze how
women understand their learning of management education from a somatic approach and relate that knowledge to their individual and professional lives. The meaning making of the women managers through the experience of participating in the study speaks to the qualitative component of understanding experiences. Qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals experience and interact with their social world (Merriam, 2002). Second, the researcher acts as the principal mechanism for collecting and analyzing data (Merriam, 2002). While having the researcher so central to the research process is both advantageous and disadvantageous, the method overall capitalizes on the primary goal of understanding. As both the qualitative and action researcher, I played a dual role as an observer and participant in the study as the facilitator of the workshop and collector of data.

The third distinguishing feature of qualitative research is its inductive nature. The researcher constructs concepts and theories from observation and intuition as well as from uncovering themes and categories (Merriam, 2002). This is especially relevant because the study sought to develop an embodied pedagogy for teaching management education. While no formal approach currently exists, from the nature of the qualitative research design a new theoretical model emerged by piecing together relevant findings. There is also a marked lack of theory regarding somatic learning, and qualitative research is often used when theory is absent (Merriam, 2002).

Finally, qualitative research is distinctive because of the rich narrative taken from interviews, document analysis, and fieldwork (Merriam, 2002). Rich narrative was especially meaningful in this study because the women manager’s experiences were communicated through interviews, discussions, or written accounts. The nonformal
classroom context for this study and the feminist participatory action research design each yielded opportunities to collect and analyze descriptions and reflections from participants.

The form of qualitative research that was most appropriate for this study was feminist participatory action research. In the following section action research is discussed in greater detail, followed by a discussion of both participatory action research and feminist participatory action research.

**Action Research**

As a research design, action research can be a type of qualitative research. According to Greenwood and Levin (2000), action research defies limitation to one method of research. The definition of action research used to guide this study, provided by Herr and Anderson (2005), describes action research as:

Inquiry that is done *by or with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to or on* them. It is a reflective process, but is different from isolated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken and generally requires that some form of evidence be presented to support assertions.

(p. 3)

Action research maintains rigor through a cyclical process that includes reflection as crucial to the research process (Dick, 2002; Herr & Anderson, 2005). Four elements of action research make it distinct from other forms of inquiry: 1) collaboration with others who are involved in the issue under investigation is essential; 2) the action research approach requires a form of intervention; 3) action research is meant to speak to the
current needs of people in a given situation; and 4) action research dissertations create scholarship that typically makes knowledge claims that are transferable beyond the immediate setting (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Dick (2002) also explains that action research is used when the goal is to achieve understanding and change at the same time. These goals were consistent with this study, which was to better understand the use of somatic learning and management education with women managers.

In particular, the action research approach used in this study followed the four-phase model as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Herr and Anderson (2005), Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), and Patton (2002). Each phase, planning, action, observation, and reflection, was represented within this study. Since somatic learning is not part of the existing action research model, a brief example explains the implementation of the cycle. By facilitating management education with a somatic component, the participants and I discovered new ways of teaching and learning by collaboratively planning a series of workshops that focused on the body as well as management topics. For example, the participants and brainstormed about topics and I created yoga sequences to make the embodied connection with the management content. Challenges and opportunities resulted in the action phase from combining two subjects, somatic learning and management education, that are not often considered in the same context. For this study, yoga served as a somatic learning approach to depict and/or make sense of experiences of the women managers or concepts about management education. For example, during our two sessions focusing on emotions and feelings, our yoga practice incorporating invigorating poses that elicit happy emotions as well as hip-opening poses that often elicit deep feelings of sadness. One of our sessions focusing on
listening as a key communication skill, translated to our yoga practice by encouraging the women to listening to their bodies in every pose. By noticing their moment-to-moment experiences as their bodies moved, the women were able to actively listen to whether their bodies needed more or less from their practice. The skill of active listening translates to their roles as managers by teaching the women to stay focused in the present, thereby more effectively managing whatever or whoever needs their immediate attention. *Observation* in action research allows for the researcher and participant to take note of the process unfolding and the consequences. Observation of the action research process occurred in a variety of ways. Large and small group discussions, for example, presented opportunities to observe openly, and while students moved through yoga poses more discreet observation and note taking occurred on my part. *Reflection* requires analysis and development of concepts and theories, in addition to addressing the research questions. As the researcher, I spent time reflecting on critical incidents and different events that occurred during the workshops, and the students reflected on their experiences during group discussion and through individual reflection in their journals. Both researcher and participant reflections on processes and consequences cycled back to restart the process with replanning, acting, observing, and reflecting in an ever-evolving spiral. In this study, reflection occurs after a reaction of surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a unique or uncertain situation. (Schön, 1983). Reflection in action as described by Schön requires the practitioner to reflect on the current situation and on the prior understandings impacting current behavior. An action element generates new understanding and a change in the situation; in this case, the action portion was provided through yoga practice.
Thinking and doing are not separated because “experimenting is a kind of action” and implementation is part of inquiry (Schön, 1983, p. 69).

Finally, action research should be participative and collaborative allowing participants to contribute to the study (Riding, Fowell & Levy, 1995). The students in the workshop had a significant impact on the results of the research because every attitude and behavior they displayed contributed to a unique and collaborative process. The specific kind of action research used in this study was feminist participatory action research. Because women managers were the participants, their active collaboration through the sharing of their lived experience was critical to this study. It is necessary first to discuss the framework of participatory action research before describing the characteristics that add a feminist approach to the methodology.

**Feminist Participatory Action Research**

The specific type of action research used for this study was Participatory Action Research (PAR), defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) as "collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social...practices" (p. 5). The model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart is spiraling in nature and cycles through the four phases of participatory action research: reflection, planning, action and observation. It is often difficult to determine the beginning and end points of PAR, since the four phases are constantly shifting. During the reflection phase, participants take part in both examination and construction of information as they discuss and identify a mutual concern or problem. Planning results from the preceding discussions among participants and requires critical
examination of any planned change as well as evaluation of the change(s). Action occurs when the proposed plan is executed and the expected improvements occur. The action stage is both purposeful and calculated since in PAR methodology the intention is to affect change in the real world. During the observation phase, participants and researchers watch for the outcomes of the changes taking into consideration contextual variables (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). It is important to note that the stages of observation and action sometimes occur in tandem. Reason (1994) also describes three key features of PAR: 1) a commitment to liberationist movements; 2) a commitment to honoring the lived experience and knowledge of the participants; and 3) a commitment to authentic collaboration between the researcher and the participants. This study followed these PAR principles by focusing on the learning of management education by women managers, an under-researched group as well as a segment that still suffers inequality in both positions of seniority and compensation. By using a feminist participatory approach to action research, the experiences and knowledge of each woman became a central part of the planning and execution of the study. The ongoing collaboration between participants and researcher ensured the participants adopted a co-researcher position within the study.

Central to PAR is the concept of power whereby the goal is to construct knowledge with people “for the express purpose of building power with/by those people” (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p. 89). Collaboration and ongoing dialogue with participants is also identified by Gatenby and Humphries (2000) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) as critical to the PAR process. “Participatory action research offers an opportunity to create forums in which people can join one another as co-participants in the struggle to
remake the practices in which they interact” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 595).

Additionally, whereas traditional action research focuses on issues around improvement of practices and efficiency, participatory research examines problems with equity, self-reliance, and oppression (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The following section explores how feminist research influences PAR and describes a feminist approach to the method.

Feminist participatory action research is distinct from a general approach to PAR because “it generates its problematics from the perspective of women’s experiences” (Harding, 1987, p. 7). The participatory nature of feminist methodologies encourages that participants of the inquiry process contribute to the creation of the study. Further, feminist methodologies “have proposed alternative theories of knowledge that legitimate women as knowers” and contest traditional epistemologies that often exclude the possibility of women as agents of knowledge (Harding, 1987, p. 3). According to Patton, this process “is facilitated by the researcher, but is controlled by the people in the program” (Patton, 2002, p. 183). Keeping this aim in mind, the study utilized a feminist approach to participatory action research. On the surface, the methodology of participatory action research (PAR) seems to compliment the concerns of feminist theory, especially those “which emphasize the emancipation, participation and collaboration, people’s (women’s) experiences and knowledge, and knowledge for the purpose of political action” (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p.90). The troublesome issue is that even PAR has traditionally been employed in a gender-neutral or gender-equal manner.

Feminist research recognizes gender as an important unit of analysis, believes in empowering women participants, identifies research as inherently political, and views the researcher as a non-neutral participant. The self-reflexivity required on the part of a
feminist researcher is necessary because PAR “inevitably changes the researcher” (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p. 90).

In an effort to follow a feminist participatory action research model, the choice of topics and direction of discussion depended on the interests of the women participants. The use of conversations and observation also support the collaborative nature of feminist research because they represent a more comprehensible method to people without background knowledge in the field. Significantly, the majority of the participants admitted they had never considered a connection between the body and management. While the women shared interest in and experience as managers, they also shared an interest in but not knowledge of how the body intersected with management.

Yet the degree of collaboration in feminist research exists on a continuum. A researcher may work with a few other professionals at one end or allow total control of the inquiry to rest with the participants at the other end (Patton, 2002). I collaborated with the participants prior to the workshop through email to gather their thoughts and ideas about how to structure the sessions, and then synthesized that information for our first group meeting. That first gathering also served as a planning session as the participants met for the first time and collaborated in real-time about issues around content and structure. Therefore, many decisions about planning decisions were left to the participants. In this way, the study followed the design of feminist participatory action research because of the strong emphasis on dialogue, collaboration, and the honoring of the lived experience and knowledge of the participants (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000). Finally, the introspection required of the researcher in action research also coincides with the self-reflexive nature of feminist research and was an important element of this study.
As the primary researcher, I kept a journal throughout the course of the study to note my thoughts, feelings, observations, and reflections.

**Participant Selection**

The sample of women managers represented a purposeful sample in that the participants were adults interested in learning about management. A purposeful sample was chosen because it provided “useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). First, the participants held a management position in the community or workplace and were over the age of 25. Next, the participants had an interest in learning how the body could be a source of knowledge. Given the time period allotted to the course, I hoped the participants all had an interest in and/or knowledge of their bodies through some movement practice that engages the body physically. While this was not the case for all participants, several of the women considered their body awareness to be quite strong and/or were involved in some physical activity. The participants chosen were interested in management education and open to the potential of somatic learning informing their managerial practice and vice versa. The specific selection criteria for participants was as follows:

1. Have a management position in the community or workplace (any number of years in a managerial role is acceptable);
2. Be a woman over the age of 25;
3. Have an interest in learning how the body can be a source of knowledge;
4. Have an interest in learning about management;
5. Have an interest in furthering their sense of body awareness and its potential impact on their managerial role;
The intention of this study was to facilitate management education for women from an embodied approach; therefore, the women held a management position within their community or workplace at the time of the study and were able to vocalize their interest in learning about management. Adult education as a field of study generally recognizes an adult to be someone over the age of 25. Because the embodied component of the course relied on the practice of yoga, participants also expressed an interest in either learning yoga or continuing their practice. Overall, the participants possessed a moderate level of body awareness and were receptive to the potential impact of their own bodies on their management style.

Workshop Design

Due to the participatory nature of the study, the participants had an opportunity during a planning meeting prior to the actual workshop sessions to meet as a group with me and talk about their vision for the workshop. While it was impossible to predict the ideas of the participants, as co-researcher in this study I had some general ideas about the workshop design, which included using specific yoga asanas, poses, to represent management concepts. Additionally, I collected via email throughout the month of May initial ideas from the participants for the study topics and structure.

Throughout the eight-week workshop I anticipated covering a variety of management education concepts. Holding true to my prediction, the women elected to cover a broad range of topics including listening, assertiveness/aggressiveness, emotions and feelings, body image and self-confidence, conflict, and stress. The overall approach to the workshop was to help women develop both intrapersonally and interpersonally.
Many aspects of the physical yoga practice correlated with and were integrated into the management content including balance, flexibility, strength, listening, concentration, feeling, breathing, deliberateness, focus, energy, intention, relaxation, centering, and options. For example, concepts such as flexibility were used to illustrate not only the flexibility we could cultivate in our bodies but also the way we could stretch our perspectives of people, situations, or issues. By giving options to yoga postures to make them more or less challenging, we correlated this concept to how we typically have alternatives available to us in life or management if we are open to them.

Transformational and inclusive language was used throughout both yoga practice and content instruction, which is language that is uplifting, positive, inclusive, and incorporates the use of “ing” words (lifting, relaxing, breathing, holding, sinking). For example, rather than telling participants to “Lift your arms above your head,” transformational language sounds like, “We’re sweeping our arms over our heads.” Language, as discussed above, is a powerful construct of feminist poststructuralism, and the workshop took this into consideration through the language we used as a group.

There were three key premises that framed this study’s feminist participatory action research approach: maintaining relationships, creating emancipatory knowledge, and improving practice/developing individuals. First, like most participatory action researchers, I was an outsider to the context of the participants, and therefore, my relationships to each participant shifted and varied throughout the study (Herr & Anderson, 2005). As the researcher and facilitator of the study, my role shifted a great deal internally and externally. My intention was to be more of a facilitator, which would separate me from being one of the participants. However, in order to follow feminist
participatory action research principles, I also tried to involve myself as a co-researcher along with the participants. Walking this line was challenging because while I felt a strong interest in the topics being discussed, I also felt as though I did not “fit in” with the participants because I was not a manager. As a result, my research role was more facilitative and observational. Even when I would plan to share my own experiences openly, a feeling of needing to hold back and let the group share their own experiences prevailed. I often struggled with knowing when I should include my own opinions and ideas, which impacted my own openness with the group. However, I believe the findings indicate that the women shared very openly with one another despite any internal struggles I had as the researcher and managing my role in the study. An example provided by Herr and Anderson (2005) perfectly captures one outcome of this study: “women in a male-dominated organization may become expert observers of the male culture as they navigate their day-to-day interactions with colleagues” (p. 44). The participants colorfully narrate such observations throughout the data presented in chapter five.

The second premise that guided this study was an interest in emancipatory knowledge, which “orients the researchers toward the release of human potential and the investigation of ideology and power within the organization and society” (p. 27). Moving participants from the confinements of tradition, habits, or coercion through a process of self-reflection ultimately led to emancipatory knowledge creation. For example, as women managers, the participants discovered through the practice of powerful yoga poses that they expressed this learning through more confident posture in the workplace.
Finally, an objective of this feminist participatory action research study was to improve practice and/or develop individuals (Herr & Anderson, 2005). By involving individuals who have a stake in the problems under investigation, I tapped into their expert knowledge and applied our ongoing research and action cycles toward the issues under consideration as well as the relevant literature.

Consider the example of combining with yoga practice with the topic of dealing with conflict as a key management concept. When faced with difficult situations, managers need to consider a variety of alternatives, and a range of contextual factors ultimately influences every conflict. The same phenomenon occurs in yoga practice. There are very challenging yoga asanas that require a combination of strength, flexibility, and balance. For many poses there are different options, depending on an individual’s fitness level, mental and emotional states, and experience with yoga in general. This correlates to dealing with conflict because our experience level as a manager, the situational and personal factors involved, and the possible impacts of various courses of action all impact how we deal with the conflict. Our workshop session about conflict opened the opportunity to compare the importance of weighing alternatives carefully in handling conflict as a manager as comparable to choosing the most appropriate option in a particular pose. When choosing the right pose for that moment or choosing the best path for conflict resolution, the learning outcome emphasized an option in both scenarios that honors the individuals own bodily needs, thereby allowing for both a somatic and metaphoric bridge of concepts.
Data Collection

The data collection was performed over a period of five months and consisted of two semi-structured interviews with each participant, journal entries, audiotaped workshop sessions, and informal email exchanges. After participants were recruited for the study, I began emailing them as a group to gather their ideas on how to structure the workshop series. The goal of feminist participatory research is to collaborate with participants as much as possible in the design of the study (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000; Rheinharz, 1992).

The participants in this study were expected to participate in a minimum of two taped semi-structured interviews that took approximately one hour each. Interviews, a way of discovering things we cannot observe (Patton, 2002), were utilized prior to the start and at the conclusion of the workshop series. Semi-structured interviews include pre-determined questions but also allow for topics that emerge during the interview to be explored as well. During the initial interviews in May, questions focused on body awareness, current management education, and positionality as a woman within patriarchal-driven organizations. The workshop sessions began in early June and concluded in late August. I set up post-interviews with each participant throughout the month of September. My objective for the final interviews was to discover if the participants developed an understand or expanded their understanding of how the body could relate to management and how their new knowledge impacted their personal and professional lives.

In addition to the interviews, the participants were asked to maintain a journal of reflective thoughts and questions related to their experience of combining somatic
learning with management education for the duration of the workshop. The journals were provided by me and contained tear-out pages. Time was allotted at the conclusion of each workshop session to allow for reflection, and was shaped from discussion topics from the group or guiding questions from the researcher. Participants also took their journals home after each session in order to record thoughts from week to week. The journal was coded with headings such as initial perceptions of the body, relating gender to managerial style, the significance of yoga, and other sub-categories addressed in chapter five. As the researcher, I was interesting in learning how the participants experienced/questioned the structures that have bound them in relation to their current ways of learning about management and how they overcome these learned ways of knowing/understanding through the use of an embodied approach to learning about management. The participants agreed to give me the journals at the conclusion of each workshop session and at the conclusion of the study for my review. A copy of the journal was made by me to keep for my review and coding and the original was returned to the participant/co-researcher. Keeping with the feminist participatory action research design, the sessions remained flexible in nature allowing for participant input into the flow and direction of the content. The participants chose the first workshop session topic during the planning session and elected to choose new topics from week to week. Because feminist participatory action research requires an ongoing cycling through acting and reflecting, ample opportunities were provided for reflection on the part of participants and researcher both during workshops sessions and outside of them. The intent was to allow the process to be as collaborative as possible with the participants playing an active role in shaping the
learning experience. The pre-interviews and ongoing reflection assignments helped to incorporate the participants’ ideas and concerns into the research process.

Additionally, as the researcher, I kept an ongoing journal of the workshop experiences to add my own reflections to the available data. It was critical to continuously reflect myself on the outcomes of each session and the themes that began to emerge from both written reflections and audio recordings of the sessions. Herr and Anderson (2005) emphasize:

Because of this lived complex reality, keeping a research journal is a vital piece of any action research methodology; it is a chronicle of research decisions; a record of one’s own thoughts, feelings, and impressions; as well as a document reflecting the increased understanding that comes with the action research process. Beyond these, it is important to keep track of the ethical decisions made throughout the research process. (p. 77)

My own reflection after each workshop session was an important part of the observation process, and I also made my own journal available to the participants as a method of verifying my own observations and reflections.

Each workshop session was also audio taped and transcribed so that discussions could be analyzed as an additional source of data. Audio tapes were very useful since I was leading the workshop and had limited opportunity to make observational field notes. Rather than relying on memory, audio tapes provided a script of every verbal interaction. In addition to being able to replay audiotapes, I could also analyze the sequence of conversation since “it is in these sequences, rather than in single turns of talk, that we
make sense of conversation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 830). The tapes and transcripts were also available to the participants for their review.

Observation played a small role during workshop discussions and activities and was recorded as field notes. The field notes were then be analyzed after each workshop session and compared to reflections made in the researcher’s journal. Observation allowed me, as the researcher, to be part of the situation being studied and allowed time for recording of deep and detailed description (Patton, 2002). The underlying principle of feminist participatory action research is to effect change—in this instance my goal was to facilitate the women manager’s learning of management by bringing a somatic element to the process and observing its impact and significance on the participants. All of these assessment attempts required that I was attentive to the appropriate measures for qualitative research, which are addressed next.

Data Analysis

Qualitative as well as participatory action research uses an ongoing analysis of the data, and for this study data was constantly collected and analyzed throughout the research process. A constant comparative method of analysis includes a constant cycle of collecting, recording, and analyzing data (Patton, 2002). Drawing conclusions about the data collected involves a process of developing an initial thought about patterns and explanations from the findings and verifying them constantly by checking the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). All of the data collected in this study, through observation, interviews, and journals, was included in the constant comparative analysis and the initial coding ran parallel with the transcription process. The purpose of inductive designs
creates groupings of common responses or themes in order to analyze differing perspective on key issues (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, constant comparative analysis requires continuous examination and review of the data so that new findings or relationships are always cycling back into previous categories for refinement. After transcribing and reviewing the first few interviews, I immediately began the initial data analysis process looking for emerging themes or patterns in the responses. This served the dual purpose of beginning the analysis process and discovering the effectiveness of my interview questions. Further review of other types of data yielding from reflective writing, the audiotapes, and observation were examined for internal homogeneity in terms of how well the data in a particular category merged together in a meaningful way (Patton, 2002). Important to this process is external homogeneity, which is making sure the categories or themes identified are clear and distinct from one another. The participants also contributed to verifying the themes because as I wrote the findings section, I periodically emailed the group for their feedback. However, participant collaboration is often higher during the problem-posing and data-gathering parts of the study rather than at the writing and dissemination portions (Herr & Anderson, 2005), and this proved true. Participant feedback dwindled as the number of pages of findings grew.

After noticing particular themes, continuous review of the data was necessary to search for patterns that were not immediately noticeable or emergent. In particular, it was necessary to continuously review the transcripts from the audiotapes in comparison to my own journal and the participant journals. It was necessary to find methods to cross-classify data in order to analyze it from various perspectives. Given that this study analyzed, through the lens of gender, somatic learning in relationship to learning
management education, a major focus of analysis was to translate experience into meaning. The data analysis process searched for suggestions that attention to their body influenced (or released) the mindful process of acquiring knowledge as it related to the management of/within the women manager’s environment. Possible themes emerged around the constructs of gender, identity, power, and discourse as they relate to the women’s experiences of being managers and learning management. An important caveat to the data collection and analysis process was the emergent nature of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Patton, 2002). Any action research study should anticipate the potential need to shift the questions, methods, design, and participants as the data gathering and analysis unfold (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Shifts occurred in the study around structural and topical issues and the discussion in Chapter four elaborates on the changes. For action research, this shifting of variables is a necessary component of the constant spiraling of action and understanding. Additionally, it is important to note that the findings in Chapter five are organized primarily in a chronological manner that allows the reader to observe how the participants evolved in their understanding of the body’s connection to management from their pre-study interview through to their follow-up interview at the conclusion of the study.

Trustworthiness of the Study

For a study to be trustworthy, Patton (2002) identifies five key elements. Credibility and authenticity can be achieved through such things as triangulation and member checks. Dependability establishes the study’s consistency and stability over time by using reflexive journals and audit trails. Conformability, the degree to which other
researchers can confirm the results, is ensured by holding on to documentation and coding in ways others can duplicate. Lastly, the element of transferability requires purposeful sampling, rich, descriptive data, and explanations of the context and participants.

According to Patton (2002), credibility of qualitative inquiry is determined by three factors, rigorous methods, the credibility of the researcher, and a philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry. I have accumulated nearly seven years of experience teaching management to adult students and completed five years of doctoral study in adult education, the rigor of my methodology and my own credibility as a teacher and researcher has been established. By choosing a doctoral program in adult education the likelihood of engaging in qualitative research was high and my own interest and research in somatic teaching and learning speaks to my philosophical leanings about qualitative inquiry. Additionally, as a researcher who was positioned as an outsider doing participatory action research, the distance between research and practice posed a potential dilemma. Herr and Anderson (2005) find that the resolution of such a quandary depends “on the extent to which the participants are merely helping out with the research or whether they are true partners in the research,” and that “to the extent that a true partnership exists, the action researcher over time begins to take an insider perspective” (p. 51). My own insider perspective developed as I correlated the experiences of the women managers to the leading and managing aspects of my role as a university instructor.

The researcher is required to report any changes that occur during the research process to the context, participants, or researcher. In addition to accounting for the
changes, the researcher is obligated to outline the affects said changes had on the outcome of the study. I kept a journal before, during, and after the study and included many of those reflections in Chapter five as part of the findings. Participants were asked to review transcripts from individual interviews as well as group discussions. I also asked participants to critique, change, or add to any interpretations I made from the data. Finally, articulating my own potential biases and perspectives on the research questions was a necessary part of building critical reflexivity into the action research process (Herr & Anderson, 2005), and these are also included within the findings in Chapter five.

The degree to which others can confirm the findings of the study is known as conformability. To increase conformability the researcher can use processes such as triangulation, reflective journaling, field notes, and data audits (Patton, 2002). By collecting various forms of data from the personal interviews, my own observations, and document collection in the form of learning journals, I ensured data triangulation. In order to determine if my own observations and interpretation concur with the students’ experience, the follow-up interviews at the end of the course also aided in establishing dependability. In general, the use of triangulation ensured that the data analysis process created “solid, coherent, and consistent” findings (Patton, 2002, p. 467). Member checks were completed with the group as the data was analyzed and compiled through email correspondence with the participants. In order to ensure dependability, as the researcher I kept a detailed daily journal prior to the workshop beginning, during the planning stages, during the workshop sessions, after each session, and in the weeks following the workshops’ conclusion as I continued the data analysis. Analysis of my own reflections
helped to determine if they are consistent with the data collected, thereby helping to ensure dependability.

The intent of transferability is to transfer findings from one context to another. It is the researchers responsibility to generalize findings and apply them to other contexts. By offering rich narratives and thick descriptions of context and participants and clearly stating the purpose of the study, transferability to other individuals and/or situations becomes a viable result of the qualitative research process (Patton, 2002). Interviews with participants as well as workshop discussions yielded the necessary narrative to meet the component of transferability.

In addition to capturing rich descriptions from interviews and reflective writing, it was equally critical to pay attention to the diversity of the group. While I had some control over who actually joined the workshop series, I relied primarily on networking to find participants that met the study criteria. As much as possible among the women that expressed interest in being part of the study, I wanted to achieve some diversity among the participants. To this end, the age range of the participants spanned 30 years, and 20% of the participants were from backgrounds other than European-American, including Mexican, West Indian, and Caribbean nationalities. The participants’ also differed significantly in their years of experience in a management position. The women’s experience ranged from one year up to 30 years in a managerial role. A table, Figure 2, in Chapter four provides details about each of the participants including their company type, job title, age, ethnicity, years of management experience, and level of body awareness, which is defined as the participant’s level of awareness about the relationship between their managerial role and their body at the beginning of the study.
Summary of the Methodology

In choosing a qualitative perspective, I took advantage of both personal inquiry and seeking to improve practice. Through feminist participatory action research the participants and I both benefited from the cyclical design that allowed for constant action and reflection and led to personal and professional development. In summary, a feminist participatory action research approach offered the most effective design to explore the potential for uniting somatic pedagogy with management education for women managers. Part II includes chapter four, five, and six of this research study. Chapter four offers an overview of the participants and the workshops, chapter five describes in detail the study’s findings, and chapter 6 provides a discussion of the findings.
PART II

Part II includes the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of this feminist participatory action research study. Chapter four offers the overview of the study participants and workshop sessions as well as researcher reflections about somatic pedagogy, chapter five describes thematically the findings from the study, and chapter six provides a discussion of the findings in relationship to the literature.
CHAPTER 4

Overview of Participants and Workshops

“My conclusion is that we need to introduce the body into management education in a revealing but freeing way—using a focus on the body to find new ways of thinking and being, as well as teaching and learning” (Sinclair, 2005, p. 90).

The intention of this feminist participatory action research study was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education for women managers. The action research study spanned 10 weeks over the summer months and included nine workshop sessions. The workshop sessions were prefaced by pre-interviews and concluded with post-interviews with each participant as well as a celebratory dinner that most participants attended as a way to commemorate our shared experience. The research study was guided by four research questions:

1. How do participants in this study view their experiences as a manager in general and the influence of gender more specifically?

2. How do these women make meaning of their body and its relationship to management within their environment?

3. How does the active engagement of the mind and body in the process of teaching and learning management encourage women to acknowledge and/or bring to the forefront issues of gender, discourse, knowledge, language, and power within their current managerial position?

4. How can a somatic pedagogy aid management education instructors in both workplace and classroom settings in fostering the personal and professional development of managers?
The following sections describe the details on the women who participated in the study, observations from the interviews from the researcher’s perspective as they relate to the study’s research questions, and information about the planning and workshop sessions as they relate to the action research cycle.

Biographies of the Participants

The response from interested women managers to participate in the study was overwhelming. The intention was to recruit eight to ten women managers to participate, but at the outset, 18 women managers actually committed to participating. Two candidates withdrew their interest prior to the planning meeting and pre-interviews due to other responsibilities and one other candidate withdrew after being pre-interviewed and attending the initial planning gathering. She offered little explanation but was very gracious in her withdrawal. Fifteen women managers participated throughout the entire duration of the action research study. Not every participant attended every workshop session, but each woman would typically stay in communication with me and complete the journaling suggested for that week’s topic. The fifteen participants come from a wide variety of fields, backgrounds, and experiences and vary in age from 27 to 58. The following brief description of each participant illustrates the diversity of this group and includes details about the individual positionality of each woman, what drew them to the study, how they think about the body, their work context, and connection to me. For convenience, Figure 2 on page 139 follows the participants’ biographies and provides a summary of the women by company type, job, title, age, years of management experience, ethnicity, and body awareness at the beginning of the study.
Caroline

Caroline is a white, 36-year old manager within a Fortune 500 company that provides electronic commerce and payment solutions for businesses and consumers worldwide. She supervises a staff of 21 employees, specifically overseeing the day-to-day workflow, strategic planning to meet business needs, and project management. Caroline has been a manager for five years and has worked professionally for 13 years. She does not have her bachelor’s degree, but has about 30 undergraduate credits and returned to school in September 2006. Caroline is married with a 14-year old son from her first marriage. A former MBA student of mine is a senior executive in Caroline’s company, and he forwarded the information about the study on to her, which is how she was able to contact me to join the study group. She was interested in participating in the study to learn how to stay tuned into her body, how to manage stress and her reactions to others at work, and to improve her mental and physical health and managerial skills. Caroline had not considered how her body impacts how she learns but did recognize that her body influences her managerial role through stress and how it manifests itself in her body. Interestingly, Caroline spent most of her life being overweight, but when she became pregnant she made a commitment to getting into shape so she could be healthier when she delivered her son. She stayed with her goal and lost 60 pounds. Reaching a healthier weight took over a year and a dangerous swing in the opposite direction to battle under-eating. Today she is more aware of how food and exercise impact her overall well being and strives to maintain equanimity.
Charlotte

Charlotte is a white, 38-year old legacy manager of a non-profit women’s organization devoted changing the world through successful relationships. She has an undergraduate degree in Finance. In her current role she is responsible for creating and executing the vision for her area, assisting in the creation of goals, creating a legacy of successful relationships, leading a team, participating in and/or leading phone calls, taking care of women, and mentoring. Charlotte also spent over eight years as a manager for an international management consulting firm where she was a program and project manager specializing in telecommunications systems integration. Her managerial role included capital and project budget planning, project planning, timeline management, stakeholder communications and management, team/resource management, communication planning, change management review, quality management, risk management, coaching, subject matter expert, team building, and leading a team of 80-plus people. Charlotte learned about the study from the fliers posted at the local YMCA, and contacted me via phone to express her interest. She is married with two young children, a boy and a girl. Charlotte wanted to participate in the study because she is passionate about the practice of yoga and was at a crossroads in her life about her career path. Similar to many of the other participants, she had not previously considered the body as a source of learning or integrated with management. However, she finds that a few years of yoga practice has changed her life and increased her body awareness. She also recognized in a journal entry that stress was the biggest factor challenging her managerial role, but believes:
As long as I proactively take care of my body, practice yoga, eat well, and exercise then my body will continue to support everything in my life. I see my body as a vessel to manifest my purpose in the world.

Charlotte’s role in this study was unique. She participated in the pre-interview and was able to attend two workshop sessions before taking an independent consulting job. The duration of the job precluded her from participating in any other workshop sessions except the last session. Charlotte did continue to keep up with the journaling and completed a separate set of questions that encouraged her to journal about her transition back to work from staying home with her children and how her life changing experiences over the last four years may have impacted how she now acts in a managerial role.

Dee

Dee is a white, 49-year old owner and director of a wellness center, which offers holistic and alternative approaches to health and nutrition. Dee has a B.S.N. and an M.B.A. She has worked as a clinical nurse in emergency and trauma services as well as a nurse manager in quality improvement, risk management, and utilization review. Her professional career began as a manager of a nine physician medical office. After a two and a half year crash course in management, she left to pursue the clinical side of nursing. Dee just completed her masters in Bioenergetics and is working on a doctorate in Naturopathy. She was a unique candidate for the study because she has experienced long-term chronic illness, which combined with a lifetime of activity and positive body awareness has made her especially cognizant of the limitations to her body as a result of illness. For the last seven years, Dee has struggled with a diagnosis of Lyme Disease,
Fybromalgia, and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. When western medicine failed to offer any solutions, she pursued alternative therapies, and ultimately, the opening of her own wellness center. Dee is married with three children, and was interested in the study because of her affiliation with holistic health. She learned about the study from the Pilates studio owner whose space we used for our workshop sessions. Through her road to recovery from her various illnesses, Dee recognizes acutely how being in balance physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is critical to the body functioning well. Additionally, when any element is out of balance, she particularly recognizes the impact to her cognitive abilities, especially making decisions.

Desi

Desi is a 32-year old Controller of Reporting for the world’s largest manufacturer of heavy-duty diesel engines. She spent the first 13 years of her life in Jamaica before coming to the U.S. and identifies her cultural heritage as West Indian. As the controller for reporting she consolidates financial information for the business unit and reports them globally, as well as planning, forecasting, and analyzing the financial data. Desi has a master’s of business administration and is a Certified Public Accountant (C.P.A.). She has spent two and a half years of her 10-year career in public accounting and the rest in industry and has been a manager for five years. Desi is married and has twin daughters. She is a co-worker of my husbands and approximately seven years ago, she and I worked at the same public accounting firm. I personally invited her to participate in the study knowing she is one of the few women managers at her company. Desi’s interest in participating stemmed from her desire to learn how body awareness affects behavior. She
recognized that when she is healthy, her confidence level is higher and that during especially challenging times, she purposefully prioritizes exercise and eating well.

Grandy

Grandy is white, 55 years old, a Registered Nurse (R.N.) and has been with the hospital for 34 years in various capacities from staff nurse in the Operating Room (O.R.) to a nurse educator to being part of the hospital’s quality improvement area. She missed the OR and returned to become a manager where she is responsible for the coordination of the orthopedic and neurology surgical specialties. Grandy is married with two children, however two years ago she lost a daughter in tragic and unexpected car accident. She became interested in the study after learning about it from Maria, a colleague and co-participant, and part of her intention in participating was to try and re-involve herself in more in outside activities. The death of her daughter took an extremely emotional and physical toll on Grandy. All of her life she considered herself overweight and has lost 100 pounds on two different weight loss initiatives. After her daughters passing, her weight plummeted to a dangerously low weight, introducing Grandy to a new body extreme. She admits that she does not always take care of her body the way she should, and yet believes she is extremely conscious of her body, and even more so as she ages.

Jasa

Jasa is a 27-year old Branch Manager and Assistant Vice President for a regional bank with 650 branches in seven states. She manages the daily operations, customer service, budgeting, sales, and a staff of 14 employees at one of the bank’s busiest branches in the county. Jasa has an undergraduate degree in business administration and a
master’s of business administration. After her undergraduate degree completion, she participated in the bank’s manager trainee program for 18 months and was then assigned to become a branch manager, a rare accomplishment. After just three years of management, Jasa has progressed through the five tiers of the bank’s hierarchy, which increases her responsibilities and workload. She is married without children. Jasa was a former MBA student of mine and learned of the study from me. Her interest in participating stemmed from a strong interest in women manager. She even devoted her undergraduate research paper to the struggles of women in management. Jasa has been active all her life in sports and exercise and learning yoga also piqued her interest. She added that she has “had Tara as a professor in the past and know she is a very effective teacher and an inspiration to her students.”

*Josephine*

Josephine is a white, 58-year old manager of Global Public Policy and Telecommunications Policy for a large engineering, construction, and project management company. The organization includes 40,000 employees participating in projects in nearly 46 countries. Her responsibilities include strategizing and advocating to internal and external constituencies the appropriate public policy initiatives and responses at the international, national, state, and local governmental levels in all geographies in which the organization undertakes telecommunications infrastructure engineering, construction, and project management. Josephine has been in a managerial capacity for over 30 years. She has a bachelor’s degree in International Affairs and her Juris Doctorate. She worked in government and as a law clerk in her early career and
progressed to having her own law firm for 25 years, while simultaneously serving as a state and local official for 15 years. Throughout her professional career she’s often found herself to be “the only woman” and even in her current role she find that in the majority of senior management meetings she is still the only woman in the room aside from the administrative assistant. (personal communication, June 2, 2006). As an interesting sidebar, Josephine managed to stay married to her lawyer and politician husband and raise four children during this ongoing 40-year career progression. She learned about the study from me because she had hosted a women’s tea group several years ago that I had attended, and subsequently she has visited some of my MBA courses as a guest speaker on leadership. Josephine has been involved in higher education governance and as an instructor since 1988, and has an ongoing interest in continuously learning about her areas of interest, which include higher education, business management, and physical well being. Her parents espoused the Greek Olympic ideal of sound mind, body, and soul as she grew up and she has ever since equated a healthy body with a healthy mind throughout her personal and professional lives.

*Makayla*

Makayla is a white 28-year old Human Resource Generalist for the distribution center of a national manufacturing, distributing, and marketing company. She is responsible for employee relations, workers’ compensation administration, benefits administration, employee training, and day-to-day human resource functions. Makayla has been in a managerial capacity for three years within the human resource field. She has an undergraduate degree in business administration with concentrations in human resources and marketing and an MBA with a management concentration. She achieved
her Professional Human Resources certification in January 2007. Makayla is single, lives with her boyfriend, and does not have kids. She became aware of the study through me because she was a former MBA student of mine. Her love of learning in general, continued self-awareness work, an interest in the body as part of decision-making, and an interest in personal fitness and yoga drew her to participate in the study. Like Charlotte, Makayla strongly associated her body with stress and how it relates to her job, but has not previously associated the body with learning. She describes herself as being very aware of her body, especially as someone who suffers from allergies and Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Makayla recognizes more readily her reactions to various stressors and has made significant efforts to find ways to mitigate the negative impacts to her body.

Maria

Maria, Grandy, and Rebecca are all Service Line Managers in the Operating Room (OR) of a hospital. The three OR managers supervise 75-80 employees including staff nurses, relief nurses, surgical technicians, and nursing assistants. Maria is a white, 29-year old, has a bachelor’s degree in nursing (B.S.N.) and is pursuing her MBA. She was a staff nurse at the hospital for seven and a half years and has been a nurse manager for three years. She is responsible for scheduling, evaluations, mentoring, collaborating with surgeons, families, and staff. Maria specializes in Caesarean section surgeries. She learned of the study through me, as she was also a former MBA student. Maria is married with one daughter. Her interest in being a study participant was to help reduce stress, and she describes herself as being very aware of her body. Maria recognizes that she pushes
her body to its limits and often beyond in trying to attend to the needs of those around her.

Melanie

Melanie, a Latina, 32-year old Human Resources Administrator works for the same large engineering, construction, and project management company as Josephine. She has a bachelor’s degree in Industrial Relations, two years of simultaneous translation of English training, and is in pursuit of her MBA. Her professional experience spans 12 ½ years. The first 10 years of Melanie’s professional career began in Mexico, her home country. The beginning of her professional life included work in banking, healthcare, and the postal service. She then began working for the international engineering company and six years ago she took the opportunity transfer to the United States. During the study Melanie worked within Telecommunications for the business line acting as a planner for management. She is responsible for bonuses, salary plans, executive compensation, management workforce planning, and establishing metrics. In January 2007 she was promoted to Training and Development Specialist and will now be responsible for leadership training, talent management, and succession planning. She also plans to pursue her Professional Human Resources certification. An interesting note about Melanie is that part of her motivation to leave Mexico was to escape the unwelcome expectations of traditional gender roles. She came to the U.S. as a single woman without children, leaving all of her family behind in Mexico. Her passion for topics about women and the impact of gender on social differences as well as her acquaintance with me as a former MBA student drew her to the study. Melanie described her body and senses as allowing
her to understand reality and recognized that when she feels good about her body she can be more effective in a leadership role because her concentration and ability to interpret situations is more effective. Her perspectives about gender from Mexican culture compared to the U.S. culture proved very enlightening to our study.

Olivia

Olivia is 36-years old and currently provides personal training services at a local non-profit organization. After spending her formative years in the Caribbean (Antigua), she attended a large U.S. university and completed bachelor’s degree in Engineering Science with a minor in Biomedical Engineering. Olivia then changed professions and countries and worked part-time as a tax accountant in the United Kingdom (U.K.). During this seven-year period she completed her ACCA degree in professional accountancy. Accounting provided Olivia with little happiness so she then pursued a diploma in the Dance, Art, and History of Caribbean and African Peoples while working part-time as an accountant. Still seeking her true purpose in life, she also qualified as group fitness instructor in the U.K. Her husband’s job brought them to the U.S. where she completed her personal training certification through the American Council on Exercise and is currently working on a master’s degree in Holistic Nutrition while working as a personal trainer. Olivia learned about the study through the fliers I posted at the gym where I teach yoga and she trains, and expressed her interest to me verbally. Her desire to participate stemmed from her interest in increasing body awareness and the possibility of sharing newly acquired skills with her own clients to help them attain their own fitness
objectives. As someone very attuned to fitness and the physical body, Olivia eloquently described in a journal entry how she considers the body as a part of learning:

If I am able to relate any experience to my body, for example, the way something feels to the touch, the way my body reacts to a concept, the shape of an object or idea in relation to my body or the way my body moves or works, then it becomes easier to remember. As I become more aware of my body, I am also forced to consider it in the context of the environment in which it is. Hence, I also become more sensitive and aware of the stimuli affecting my body, and this too can facilitate learning.

Olivia hoped to learn specifically how she could integrate yoga into her personal life and use the practice as a way to improve her skills as a personal trainer. She and her husband do not have children.

Rebecca

Rebecca is white, 33-years old, and has a B.S.N. She is responsible for safety, employee evaluations, scheduling, policy/procedures, performance improvement, and her specialty area, perioperative retinal surgery. Rebecca also learned of the study through Maria and wanted to participate to learn yoga and discover ways to minimize stress. She is married with two young sons, a six year old and a two year old. Rebecca described her body awareness as not being what it should be and believes that she always puts the needs of her family ahead of taking care of herself. She described the physical experience of management as being very difficult and described her body’s reaction as tense, anxious, and affecting her ability to sleep. Rebecca recognized that she wears her
emotions on her sleeve and associates much of her body’s integration with her managerial role with her body language and emotional expression.

Rose

Rose is a white, 45-year old Director of Mapping Technologies for an international aerial mapping organization. She is responsible for production support (root cause analysis, corrective action implementation, software utility development) and development of new production tools, workflows, and processes. Rose has been in a managerial role for six years and has a bachelor’s degree in Engineering with a dual master’s degree in Technical Management and Business Administration. She learned of the study from the fliers posted at the local YMCA and contacted me via email. She is a single woman with no children. Her interest in participating in the study stemmed from an on again, off again practice of yoga and the desire to learn how to integrate yoga into daily life. She believed from the outset that there were possibilities of integration between management and yoga. Outside of factors such as stress and body language, Rose had not considered how the body might intersect with learning.

Samantha

Samantha is a white, 50-year old Network Communications Manager for a health care system. She is responsible for the voice and data networking for 40+ medical facilities within the health system and supervises a staff of 12 analysts and specialists. Samantha has a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and renaissance humanities. Before she entered the healthcare field, her many pursuits included working for horse shows to
pursue her love of horses and participating in the international fox hunting circuit. After entering the world of healthcare 15 years ago, she completed a business degree. Her combined management experience spans a variety of positions over nine years, three of which in her current position. Interestingly, all 12 of her current direct reports are men. Samantha describes herself as “divorced, childless, and orphaned.” She has not remarried, elected not to have children, and her parents are deceased. Samantha learned about the study from a flier posted at the local YMCA where I teach yoga and she teaches two 6:00am step classes a week. Samantha describes herself as keenly aware of her body. She found the concept behind the study intriguing and believes people can learn a great deal from their bodies by listening to them. Samantha was also interested in yoga as a way to relieve stress and describes herself as a very kinesthetic learner. At the outset, she recognized that her body image has major affect on her interaction in the workplace, especially how she feels about her appearance day to day. Samantha is a well-rounded athlete who in addition to teaching ski lessons, also participated in her first triathlon just after the study concluded.

Sue

Sue is white, 47 years old, and a manager for a large distribution center that services 30 consumer goods warehouse stores in four states. She is responsible for human resources, accounting, payroll, training, information systems development, equipment maintenance, and purchasing. She completed three years of college in Music Education but did not complete her degree. Her professional career has spanned 20 years, and during that time she has also sustained a marriage and raised three daughters. Sue was
taking Pilates classes with the owner of the studio where the study was held, which is how she discovered the opportunity to participate. Her interest stemmed simply from the desire to learn something new, but while she had not considered how her body intersects with learning she recognized that her body often gives away her thoughts. A significant factor about Sue’s participation in the study was that she has spasmodic dysphonia, which means her vocal chords spasm when she speaks. Normally an outgoing, active, and humorous person, dealing with spasmodic dysphonia has been immensely challenging for Sue. She has tried various treatments including counseling, physical therapy, botox injections, and various breathing techniques, but relief is short-lived and the up and down of having more or less of a voice was too emotionally difficult. She finds there are good days and bad days with the strength of her voice, as well as in her need to educate others about the condition. Sue’s experience with her voice over the past few years has dramatically shifted her recognition of how the body and its functions often go unnoticed and under-appreciated.

In summary, the diverse backgrounds and experiences of this group of 15 women managers provided a rich source from which to gather information for the study. As a researcher, I was fortunate to find a group of women managers from such a wide variety of industries and with a great deal of open-mindedness about exploring the connection between the body and management. The findings provided by these women and their experiences are presented in the next chapter. The following section provides details about the unfolding of the feminist participatory action research process beginning with the planning stages, describing the workshop sessions, and concluding with the follow-up interviews.
**Figure 2. Participant Summary Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company Type</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mgmt Exp (yrs)</th>
<th>Body Awareness*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Fortune 500 Electronic Commerce/Payment Solutions Co.</td>
<td>Manager III Merchant Installer Group</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makayla</td>
<td>Distribution Center</td>
<td>HR Generalist</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>Regional Healthcare System</td>
<td>Manager, Network Communications</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>Intl Engineering, Construction, &amp; Project Mgmt Co.</td>
<td>Mgr, Global Public Policy/Telecomms Policy</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Moderately Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Hospital/Health System</td>
<td>Service Line Manager Operating Room</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Minimally Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Distribution Center</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Moderately Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Non-Profit Health/Fitness</td>
<td>Personal Trainer</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charolotte</td>
<td>Non-Profit Women's Organization</td>
<td>Legacy Manager</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandy</td>
<td>Hospital/Health System</td>
<td>Service Line Manager Operating Room</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Intl Aerial Mapping</td>
<td>Director of Mapping Technologies</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Moderately Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Hospital/Health System</td>
<td>Service Line Manager Operating Room</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Minimally Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desi</td>
<td>Heavy-Duty Diesel Engine Manufacturer</td>
<td>Reporting Controller</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>West Indian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Minimally Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>Intl Engineering, Construction, &amp; Project Mgmt Co.</td>
<td>HR Administrator</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Minimally Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasa</td>
<td>Regional Bank</td>
<td>Branch Mgr/Asst VP</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately Aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dee</td>
<td>Health &amp; Wellness Center</td>
<td>Owner/Director</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Very Aware</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The participants' level of awareness about the relationship between their managerial role and their body at the beginning of the study.*
Overview of the Feminist Participatory Action Research Experience

Feminist participatory research requires the ongoing interaction with participants to foster their ownership of the research so that what is discovered might aid in their own practice as professional and experiences as women. To this end, my dialogue with each participant began in early spring as the recruiting process began and developed into a list of women strongly interested in participating. From this list the pre-interviews were arranged and ideas were solicited via email about what shape the study sessions should take. What emerged from these months prior to the study built the foundation for the first group gathering to plan the general scope of the study and what aspects of management we would explore somatically.

The experience of engaging in Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) yielded its own significant learning points and offered a methodological frame for “doing” somatic pedagogy with women managers. The following sections, Planning Session, Workshop Sessions, and Post-Study Interviews, describe the process of the FPAR approach to research beginning with the planning phase and meeting and progressing through each workshop session by describing the various content, structures, and activities of the group gatherings and concluding with an explanation of the follow-up interview process. Figure 3 on page 141 offers a graphic representation of the study’s progression in the form of a flow chart.
April/May 2006: Recruitment of Participants
Communication via email and phone

June 5, 2006: Planning Session
Agreed on Monday evening workshop sessions meeting for 1.5 hours; topics planned for first week of workshop; agreed to decide additional topics week to week; journal questions provided by

1) June 12, 2006: Listening

2) June 19, 2006: Assertiveness versus Aggressiveness

3) June 26, 2006: Emotions and Feelings
4) July 12, 2006: Emotions and Feelings

5) July 19, 2006: Deepening Our Conversation
Participants explored their background and its impact on their understanding of gender, being a manager and their relationship with their body; significant turning point

6) July 26, 2006: Body Image/Self-Confidence

7) July 31, 2006: Conflict

8) August 6, 2006: Stress & Worry

9) August 21, 2006: Reflection

September 8, 2006: Celebratory Dinner
Planning Session

Planning of the study began March of 2006 through the recruitment of participants. While the first in-person gathering of all the participants occurred in early June 2006, during the spring, I worked on recruiting participants and locating a site to hold the study. I found a Pilates studio approximately 10 minutes from my home where the owner was willing and excited to offer her space for the sake of the study. She even generously helped to spread the word and was integral in referring two participants. Seriously interested participants were added to a group email list, and I initiated contact with each by thanking them for their interest in being a part of the study and soliciting their ideas for topics, meeting days, and times. After communicating with the participants via email for several weeks, the most mutually convenient meeting time was 7:00pm and the preferred day was Monday. The 7:00pm time seemed preferable due to the need to transition from work to the gathering given their long hours, family responsibilities, and various commutes to the studio. I also kept a list of the topics the participants were interested in addressing so as to bring them to our first in-person meeting. After communicating via email with the participants for most of the month of May, I set our first in-person meeting for Monday, June 5th.

Upon their arrival to the studio, the participants were forewarned that they would need to enter quietly as there was a yoga class going on before our session. I greeted everyone at the door and ushered her back to a small room to wait until the larger studio room was free for our use. The atmosphere in our temporary space was simultaneously tense and energized. With the exception of the operating room nurse managers, none of the other participants had met one another. While we waited some whispered
conversations and mood-lightening jokes by Samantha were exchanged. When we were able to move into the large space, we spread out into a wide circle where we sat on yoga mats and blankets. My agenda for the first gathering was brief and open-ended. I tried very hard to keep an open-mind and not let my own expectations or ideas cloud how the participants may envision the study progressing. I was quite anxious prior to the session but once underway, the learned calm I’ve acquired from years of facilitating took over. I tried to revel in the moment of reaching this point in the research endeavor.

I began with extending my gratitude to the participants for agreeing to be part of the research study. They each received a folder of items that I had prepared in advance. The folders contained background about the study, information about yoga practice, an explanation of somatic learning, a personal information form, my biography, information about logging onto the study listserv, and an explanation of the research study design. Participants also received a notebook in which to keep their personal journal.

Then, I invited the participants to introduce themselves by asking what they would like to know about one another. They generated a list including name, occupation, what they do for fun, why they wanted to be in the study, and their background with yoga. Each person responded to each item in turn. The next task was to solidify the schedule for our meetings in regard to days and times. Our first meeting took place on a Monday evening, and after discussing the pros and cons of weekday evenings versus weekends or some combination of both, the group agreed to continue with Monday evening meetings for eight weeks. Everyone agreed we would skip July 3rd because of the 4th of July holiday and extend our sessions until August 7th. Additionally, the group discussed how long each gathering should last and what exactly we would “do” during
each session. All the participants seemed eager for equal amounts of yoga and dialogue and after considering a variety of alternatives, the consensus was that one and a half hours would be the length of our meeting time. Those who wanted to stay beyond this time could do so in order to write in their journals. Otherwise, the women agreed to take their journals home and write in them during the week. They requested, however, that I provide them with questions each week on which to reflect about the next week’s upcoming topic (Appendix D). The notebooks I provided had tear-out pages, making it easy for me to collect journals each week and for them to keep the actual notebook. Regarding the structure of the sessions, the group decided that the initial 15 minutes should be spent doing some light yoga to help them transition from their workday into the gathering. Then, 45 minutes was allotted to addressing that session’s topic followed by 30 more minutes of yoga practice.

Lastly, I led the group in considering the topics that would guide each of our sessions. From my contact with the participants via email before the group meetings, I had solicited ideas of interest and presented those as a starting point for discussion. The three key topics from email conversations were conflict, communication, and emotions. From this list, the group began considering other ideas and ways to expand these broad topics. The most popular ideas included giving and receiving direction and active listening as communication topics; dealing with conflict and negotiating; time management; not being afraid to lead or be led and different ways of leading; and dealing with stress. Despite the lengthy list, the group decided to begin by devoting two weeks to topics within communication and then decide week-to-week what the next session’s topic would be. The group expressed sincere concern that their choice was “OK” with me,
indicating they would change their selection if I were unprepared for what they had selected. This concern for my preparation as the researcher was extremely touching and unexpected. We ended our initial gathering with about 15 minutes of yoga, which was extremely well received. The eight workshop sessions covered a variety of topics, and the following section reveals the diversity in content, structure, and activities of each gathering.

**Workshop Sessions**

The following week our topical sessions began with a focus on active listening. This session followed our original plan of 15 minutes of warm-up yoga, 45 minutes of discussion, and 30 minutes of yoga. For this first session, I had prepared an activity for the group to observe one another as a listener and practice active listening characteristics. This allowed the participants to get into groups of three making it easier to begin to get to know one another. As a way to integrate yoga, we paid attention to our bodies’ posture, language, and mannerisms as we listened to others. Body language was such a strong way these women identified with how the body intersects with management during the pre-interview process so the topic fit very well as a dynamic of working on listening skills.

The group elected to continue with the communication theme for the second session and address the issue of being assertive versus being aggressive. Including the somatic aspect of learning about management concepts as a pedagogical tool followed the same structure as week one by fitting dialogue between practicing yoga. We discussed assertive and aggressive behaviors by listing the traits of each and recalling instances of displaying or witnessing either assertiveness or aggressiveness. During this dialogue,
consideration of how the body represents itself in each dimension was reflected. Participants recognized the impact of voice tone and volume, physical presence, and facial expressions as part of displaying either assertiveness or aggressiveness. A major focus of the yoga practice during this session was powerful, strength-building poses, which include the Warrior postures and poses that draw attention to core strength and stability.

The group gatherings of sessions three and four were both devoted to the topics of emotions and feelings. During week three, the group elected to stay in one large group to discuss the topic, but otherwise the structural format followed the two prior sessions. After beginning with 15 minutes of yoga to warm up our bodies and transition our minds to the topic of emotions and feelings and the relationship to management, the group began a dialogue around the journal questions I had sent via email. A major focus of the conversation centered on “controlling” emotions and/or not revealing feelings at inappropriate times for fear of showing weakness or vulnerability. My impression was that emotions and feelings experienced by these managers were often suppressed, unacknowledged, or labeled as a lack of control. I then focused our 45 minute practice of yoga for that evening on noticing and acknowledging how various poses made the participants feel and what emotions the poses might bring up. My intention was to heighten their awareness about how the body stores emotions in various parts and how stress and pain can be the result of unacknowledged feelings.

The group elected to continue the topic of emotions and feelings into the next session. However, session four brought a deviation to the format of the session as I sensed low energy in the room at the start and felt inspired to try something new. After
questioning the group to assess their openness to a new structure, we began with 15 minutes of yoga as usual, and then, I encouraged each participant to individually journal about how they felt during the poses. We then engaged in some group dialogue to share those feelings. We continued this format for four cycles; 15 minutes of yoga practice, individual journaling, and group discussion. Each segment focused on a different type of pose, each selected to elicit a specific emotion or respond to a physical symptom shared by one of the participants. As usual, we concluded with several minutes of relaxation.

The fifth session evolved much differently and marked a turn in how each session was structured thereafter. The group elected to begin with discussion for 45 minutes or longer and then conclude with a longer yoga session of 45-50 minutes in length. In one of her journals, Samantha included a poem (Appendix E) that beautifully captured how at some point in her life, every woman will have to rely on another woman for something. The poem was so fitting to the study, and such a creative inclusion, that I invited the group to “deepen our conversation” and respond to questions that really probed at how they had formed their identity in relationship to being a woman, to their bodies, and being managers. It was a whimsical idea that yielded wonderful responses in individual journals and during our group session, which was conducted in small groups of four women each. I experimented with a new method of recording data—audio taping all three groups individually. At this point, I noticed a marked increase in camaraderie. The small groups were reluctant to end their conversations to come back together for yoga.

The sixth session evolved from my request, via email, for feedback on how the sessions were progressing and what topics we might address next. Feedback was particularly scant in person when I would ask during group gatherings, but I could
usually get about one-third of the group to respond to an email request. The responses indicated a strong interest in discussing body image and self-confidence, conflict, and stress. We focused on body image and self-confidence during session six. Following the successful format from the previous week, the participants elected to form small groups to discuss their responses to the journal questions, saving the yoga portion for an extended period following the discussion. Again, I audiotaped each group’s dialogue, and there was a marked shift in the conviviality of the group with plenty of laughter and significant personal, and sometimes painful, sharing of experiences. After the small group discussions, we transitioned to yoga practice where I chose to focus on accepting the self in the present moment, letting go of expectations and judgment, and embracing the idea that we are all already whole.

The seventh session focused on the topic of conflict, as requested by the participants. Following our new, revised format the group opted to discuss the guiding journal questions as a way of delving into the issue of conflict. Our focus was centered on how the body reacts to and deals with conflict and encouraged the women to examine how their body helps or hinders their ability to weather such situations. We also discussed the idea that conflict is not an automatically negative experience and often presents an opportunity for needed growth or change. The discussion was audio taped for later analysis. The importance of the yoga practice for that evening invited the students to remain centered through both internal and external distractions or conflict. Remaining centered requires constant attention to the breath and acknowledgement of the body to recognize when to lessen the difficulty of a pose or seek more challenging options. In either scenario, the participants were taught to honor their individual needs in that precise
moment, letting go of how they may have practiced the pose the week before or how they could practice it the following week. Embracing conflict requires a bodily awareness, which cultivates the ability to notice when we should seek other alternatives when dealing with conflict, decision-making, or problem-solving.

The eighth session focused on stress and was by far the most requested topic from the group overall. Once again the participants elected large-group discussion around the questions provided for journaling. Our focus became how the body manifests stress and how the body often notices stressful situations before the brain. As a way of avoiding the duality of mental versus physical stress, we discussed how attention to the body informs how we think about and therefore address stress in our lives. A particularly salient observation was offered by Olivia who said, “I know for sure that there are certain circumstances that exist in my life and that I have made into stressors…” (personal communication, August 7, 2006). The yoga practice following our discussion focused more on restorative poses as well as postures that stretch parts of the body that typically carry stress such as the muscles of the face, jaw, neck, and upper back. I also provided the participants with a list of poses that could be done at their desk to alleviate stress build-up during the workday. An extended relaxation period invited the participants to experience breathing techniques, pranayama, which invite deeper relaxation for the body and the mind. The breath always acts as a bridge, eliminating the need to cast the body and mind off as disconnected forms.

The eighth session on August 7th should have been the last group meeting, however due to my own reluctance to call the study to a close and the strong interest of the participants in continuing the study an additional week, we agreed to have a voluntary
“last” session on August 21st and a group dinner on Friday, September 8th. My intention for the final session was to offer closure to the study and generate some group reflection about the study process. Half of the participants attended this “extra” session where we spent about 20-30 minutes reflecting back on the previous sessions, the course of the study, and the individual experiences of each woman. I audio taped the dialogue, and then, we progressed into a yoga practice of over an hour that incorporated concepts from all of the previous sessions. Ten of the 15 women attended the dinner on September 8th where I presented each participant with a gift of gratitude, and we socialized for nearly four hours!

Follow-up Interviews

Throughout the month of September I conducted follow-up interviews with each of the 15 participants. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed for analysis. The questions used in the follow-up interviews are included in Appendix F. The objective of the follow-up interviews was to explore how the women connected the body and management as well as considered their role as women in relationship to these two areas after experiencing the workshop sessions and participating in individual journals. Additionally, the follow-up interviews asked for insights about the feminist participatory action research process and garnered information about the implementation of somatic pedagogy. The results of the interviews are integrated into the findings presented in the next chapter. The following section presents my own reflections about how using a somatic approach to learning can translate into valuable pedagogy.
Researcher Reflections on Somatic Pedagogy

Considering my approach to this research study was partly to uncover what somatic pedagogy “looks like” or how it might be enacted with a group of people, it is critical to examine how a body-focused way of teaching and learning emerged. Primarily, there was a marked learner-centeredness about making the body central. Calling the body out as the primary focus, whether through yoga practice or discussion, repeatedly brought each woman’s body and bodily experiences to the forefront. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to draw connections between the of interest chosen by the women and encourage them through questioning and movement to consider how the body informs each subject.

The element of time impacts significantly how thoroughly somatic pedagogy can be enacted. The temporal constraints of this study were many, not the least of which was the limited amount of time per group session each woman could devote to coming together. My feeling from experiencing a variety of structural formats throughout the study is that three to four hours of meeting time per session may offer more opportunity for making deeper connections with the body and management and developing relationships between the participants. A series of eight to ten workshops lasting several hours would also allow for cycles of individual, small group, and large group reflection, which could allow for “in-the-moment” journaling following specific yoga practice.

Somatic pedagogy, with its obvious focus on the body, presents challenges to the researcher, especially within a feminist participatory action research framework where the researcher acts as a participant, too. As a subject, the body is one to which I attach various emotionally charged meanings and neuroses. Because of this, I often found it
very difficult to navigate the desire to simply “participate” as a woman with her own deeply imbedded body issues and the responsibility of facilitating discussion as the management instructor and guiding participants as the researcher to the possible connections between body and management. At times, I noticed my own feelings of exclusion as I remembered that while I was a co-researcher, I was different from the participants in that I was not a woman manager. I could relate my past experiences of managing or my experiences leading in a classroom, but I did not have the current connection of being a manager. Equally difficult was suppressing my own body experiences and stories to allow the many voices of the participants to be heard within our limited time frame. My desire to contribute, empathize, and commiserate often took me by surprise. The bodily experiences of being managers of such a diverse group of women were constantly enlightening and ultimately resulted in a strong sense of validation from each of the participants.

Summary of Participants and Workshops

From this explanation of the evolution of identifying and involving participants to planning and executing the workshop sessions, many insightful results of using a somatic learning approach to management education emerged. Chapter five explores a thematic approach to explaining the significant findings from this feminist participatory action research study.
CHAPTER 5

Findings

“We are suggesting that solid action research leads to a deepened understanding of the question posed as well as to more sophisticated questions. The findings should demonstrate this kind of deepened understanding” (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 86).

In this chapter, the findings of the feminist participatory action research study are presented in detail. The purpose of this feminist participatory action research study was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers. The six main themes resulting from the study explore women managers perceptions of the body, how women make sense of the relationship between gender and managerial style, the bridge created between the body and management through yoga practice, essential elements of somatic pedagogy, new perspectives the participants formulated at the conclusion of the study about the integration of the body, management, and being a woman, and suggestions for organizations about honoring the body in the workplace. The findings are organized primarily in a chronological manner that allows the reader to observe how the participants evolved in their understanding of the body’s connection to management from their pre-study interview through to their follow-up interview at the conclusion of the study.

First, the participants perceived the body as significant to the managerial role because of its exhausting and stressful aspects, the importance of appearance, posture, and stature, the significance of illness, fitness, and aging to fulfilling the professional capacity of a manager. The data presented in this section draws on the initial interviews and describes the participants’ limited perceptions about the relationship between management and the body. The second category, Managing as a Woman, describes the
participants’ connections between gender and managerial style. The women identified the challenges of managing in a world where old boys clubs are alive and well, gaining respect requires great effort, working side by side with employees is critical, fulfilling a nurturing role is second nature, and supervising other women provides its own unique difficulties. The data for the second area of findings emerged from the pre-study interviews as well as from some of the workshop audiotapes and participant journals. The third major theme bridges the body with management using yoga practice to reveal how the women think about, make sense of, and express their bodies as managers. The primary sources for this section drew from the workshop audiotapes and the participant and researcher journals. Fourth, the study reveals the essential elements to implementing a somatic pedagogy, including the use of yoga as a pedagogical tool, the importance of gendered discourse using group dialogue, journaling as a way of giving individual voices to experiences, and the imperativeness of fostering a learner-centered atmosphere where each participant feels validated and empowered. The fifth thematic component explores new perspective about the body, management, and women through the topics of body language, expectations, and emotions. Finally, the sixth category offers solutions for organizations to honor the body in the workplace by exploring strategies that relieve stress and save money. The last fourth category utilized data from workshop audiotapes, email communication, participant and researcher journals and the post-study interviews to identify relevant themes. The fifth and sixth categories relied primarily on the final interviews with participants to inform the women’s new viewpoints about a body/management connection as well as their ideas for honoring the body within organizational and workplace contexts.
Women Managers Perceptions of the Body

At the beginning of the research study, the women had a variety of perspectives about the relationship of the body to management. Reviewing the initial interview transcripts revealed some significant categories that defined how the women associate the body with their ongoing roles as managers. Some of the women admitted to being uncertain about a connection between the body and management, saying that they had not previously or consciously considered the relationship, but after contemplation, each participant did identify an example of their interpretation. The connections ranged from the exhaustive and stressful aspects of managing to the significance of appearance, posture, and body language to the implications of being healthy and physically fit. Each of these three categories provides insight about how these women managers think about their body and how it impacts their role as a manager. A fourth category explores how illness impacts the women’s managerial role and a final category examines how some of the participants found the aging process intertwined with their body awareness and professional capacity.

The Physical and Mental Toll of Management

Many of the women associated the physical aspect of management with negativity including describing it as “terrible,” “tough,” and “physically and mentally draining.” From the initial interviews, Maria and Grandy, both operating room (OR) nurse managers, agreed that the mental toll of managing far outweighs the physical toll, but in some ways their further comments contradicted their original assessment. Maria notes that the constant being on their feet and being involved in all aspects of the operating
room becomes “exhausting,” and Grandy added a further twist commenting that “most of it [management] is emotional, which sometimes can manifest itself in a physical way…like an occasional headache or heartburn.” For Rebecca, also a nurse manager, her initiation into management had severe physical implications including anxiety attacks as well as the physical challenge of “managing a home, children, and a full-time job.” Samantha, a network communications manager, immediately recognized the physical connection admitting that for her the stress of management makes her “tired and “sore.” Josephine, manager of global public policy and telecommunications policy, agreed with Samantha and shared in her initial interview that the “physical experience to me is completely related to the mental experience … management is a mental game in some ways, and yet, it takes a huge visible toll.”

In addition to associating the body to exhaustion and pain, the participants also saw a strong relationship between the physical aspects of management and stress, but included both the negative and positive aspects. Dee, a wellness center owner and nurse, described the physical part of managing as “extremely stressful” and pointed out that “80% of diseases are due to stress.” She believes strongly that her own experience from a difficult divorce combined with the ensuing stress resulted in an ongoing struggle with chronic illness. Caroline revealed in her initial interview that “when things are going well, I feel good,” but that when things start to get stressful her back and neck will begin to hurt. She also noted that during a period of lay-offs, a particularly stressful event, “everybody goes through physical trauma that day, and you feel sick.” Makayla, a human resource generalist, also finds that management manifests itself physically through stress, which reveals itself in her stomach and causes her to struggle with Irritable Bowel
Syndrome (IBS). Recalling a particularly stressful period in her career, Makayla recalls, “I could feel it in my body. My body was trying to deal with the stress.” Similarly, Jasa, a bank branch manager and like Makayla a young manager, concurred that “management is very stressful and very much fast-paced,” and looking to her future added, “there’s no way I could keep up this pace for 30 years—physically I just couldn’t do it.”

While Sue, a distribution center manager, recognized the negative aspects of stress, she remarked during her initial interview that the physical experience of management was also “fun” and “rewarding,” and elaborated saying, “It makes you feel...euphoria at times when you know you’ve accomplished what you set out to do—what your team set out to do. I have a feeling of pride, physically, that makes me feel like a better person.” Samantha agreed that, “When things are good, I am totally energized! When things are stressful, I get fatigued more easily. I get headaches, but you have to push through.” Olivia, a personal trainer, admitted to the “draining” aspects of management, but like Sue and Samantha, she believes it “can be quite an energy boost” as well. Samantha described a particularly hectic week filled with deadlines as being similar to “balancing 50 balls in the air—you could work 20 hour days and it wouldn’t bother you. Positive stress is so much less debilitating. Negative stress is hard.”

Charlotte, a non-profit legacy manager, admitted that she had not previously thought about the physical experience of management, but did not hesitate in saying “that the physical experience in general affects anything that you do.” For her, the key is “not taking the stress into your body” because “anything that manifests itself in your body usually is related to stress.”
For most of the participants being a manager has strong connections with physical, mental, and emotional stress. While many of the women made negative associations about the physical nature of managing, some also recognize how being a manager can be very rewarding. This category reveals that the women consider their bodies when their professional role produces anxiety and tension, which manifests itself in easily recognizable signals such as exhaustion, headaches, stomach issues, and mental fatigue.

Standing Up Straight

The impact of erect posture, pleasing appearance, and confident body language was a significant way in which the body manifested itself in the managerial role. Desi, a financial analyst and manager, struggled at first to describe the physical experience of management during her initial interview, but eventually settled on the topic of appearance. “I think as a manager you probably should carry yourself a certain way as to influence or set a good example for your subordinates … because we are in the real world and people actually pay attention to your body…people I find, tend to judge you based on what your physical appearance says,” Desi explained. A comment by Josephine regarding the influence of the body on the managerial role clearly coincides with Desi’s views on the importance of appearance: “If you’re pleasing looking in the grand scheme of things, the door is open to you so much easier to you than if you know for whatever reason you’re bald or ugly.” Olivia’s view of the body/management relationship dovetailed with Desi and Josephine’s explaining that:
In terms of the way you look, body structure, physical appearance, et cetera, people will be more likely to take you seriously if you have the ideal image rather than, for example, if you were overweight and didn’t present yourself properly and kind of looked as if you did not care about the way you are put together.

The idea of “proper” presentation suggests that a preconceived notion of the way women should look exists and that within management a “pleasing” appearance opens more doors and garners more respect and credibility.

After admitting she hadn’t considered the physical experience of management, in her initial interview Rose decided the connection for her also manifested in being more cognizant of how she presents herself in terms of stature. She elaborated saying, “people kind of look at you in a different way when you’re a manager, and you carry yourself differently.” The examples of the body’s relationship to management through posture and expressiveness were reiterated from other participants. Samantha explained her connection by saying:

When I’m tired I slouch, and I just keep thinking if I would sit up straight I would feel better. When I feel great, I’m really tall. I can feel by the way I’m sitting how I feel. Do I feel defeated in a situation? Do I feel empowered in the situation? Do I feel in control in a situation? And I’ve been told, ‘your body language at that meeting was pretty loud!’

Rebecca revealed that she “makes a conscious effort to maintain good posture” because she recognizes she “can be a pushover at times.” As someone who talks a lot with her hands, Rebecca believes that her expressiveness allows her to more easily approach people and in return, for others to come to her with issues. “I was the type who would just
come right up and hug you if you needed it, and I have to separate some of that now in this [managerial] role,” explained Rebecca. Sue believes her body influences her managerial role in a positive way in that her body is “non-threatening” and recognizes that people “read the way that you address them or even make eye contact because some people just want to chat or consume your time. With my body I maybe turn my shoulder so they know the conversation’s over. You need to get back to work.” Melanie agreed commenting that, “your body and part of management has to do also in the way you transmit some of the ideas.” For example, deciding whether to sit versus stand was a critical decision for Melanie while she worked in Mexico. In a culture where height was disdained, especially in women, she learned to leverage her height by determining when it was an advantage or disadvantage, a skill she continues to utilize in the U.S.

Some of the women took note of the influence of gender and suggested that perhaps different standards exist for men and women. Desi commented that “as a woman manager I think you are judged a lot more harshly….men are allowed to look a certain way, and if a woman were to look the exact same way as far as body size compared to height and what not, it’s viewed differently and you are judged differently.” When asked if she had witnessed this judgment, Desi said, “Yes. You are judged as lazy if you are overweight.” Body weight also arose as an issue in relationship to the significance of how stature relates to management. Josephine has noticed that, “the size of the person in a way also matters about how you relate your message. We have a lot big guys who manage by their body weight. They manage by their size.” Melanie, a human resources administrator, noted that in addition to weight, height offers a significant bodily
advantage as well commenting that “sometimes [wearing] those high heels for a meeting…you just feel that you’re coming in right in your best confidence point.”

_The Body Speaks through Illness_

A few of the women participants struggled with chronic illness and disorders that require constant attention to their bodies and conscious care for their health. A few years ago, Sue acquired Spasmodic Dysphonia, a voice disorder caused by involuntary movements of one or more muscles of the larynx or voice box. The disorder causes people to have occasional difficulty saying a word or two or they may experience sufficient difficulty to interfere with communication. Spasmodic Dysphonia causes the voice to break or to have a tight, strained or strangled quality. Because of her struggle with Spasmodic Dysphonia, Sue finds herself retreating in her managerial role to what she calls her “cave.” By taking refuge in this way, Sue explains:

I don’t have to expound or let people hear my garbled speech. In the workplace the phone’s ringing, the copier’s going, a conversation in the corner, somebody’s on the phone over here….so sometimes at work it is hard for me to be understood.

I don’t like looking like a fool. I really hate it.

Similarly, Dee’s body influences her managerial role significantly, as it does for Sue. For several years she has struggled with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Lyme Disease, and Fybromalgia. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a debilitating and complex disorder characterized by profound fatigue that is not improved by bed rest and that may be worsened by physical or mental activity. Lyme Disease is cause by a tick bite and results
in muscle atrophy, joint pain and swelling, headaches, sleeplessness, dizziness, and heart palpitations. Fibromyalgia is a disorder that causes muscle pain and fatigue as well as “tender points” on the body that hurt when pressure is applied.

As Dee continues her ongoing battle with chronic illness, she recognizes her own limitations. When her health or energy begins to decline at work, she notices she can’t think or communicate as clearly. “I recognize, OK, I have to pick up this conversation tomorrow because I can’t do it today. [The body] has a profound affect,” she explained. With or without a chronic illness, Dee stressed that, “your body is telling you stuff all the time.”

As a child, Melanie went through a period where she would faint regularly. Each time she experienced a fainting spell, she was encouraged to eat sugar. After a period of several years, Melanie finally sought the advice of a doctor who told her that eating sugar was the worst thing she could do for her body. Learning that she had hypoglycemia finally explained why Melanie was always tired and lacked motivation. Hypoglycemia occurs when your blood glucose (blood sugar) level drops too low to provide enough energy for your body's activities. After cutting out sugar, Melanie noticed a profound change in her health and her motivation. Reflecting upon learning that she was hypoglycemic, she commented that, “I was always inconsiderate with that body awareness part because I didn’t really treat myself very well.” Knowing that risking sugar intake could put her at risk for diabetes, Melanie made immediate changes to her diet. In addition to paying more attention to the nutritional aspects of her health, during the last three years she has also incorporated exercise as a way of taking care of herself. Melanie proudly explained:
I have been doing a lot more exercise than I have ever done in my whole life, and it has been just such a positive change. I have been trying to cross train with some weight training, hiking, biking, and swimming, and I feel now, even though I know I am far from where I want to be, in the best shape of my life ever! Because now doing exercise I feel that internal, ‘Okay go, Melanie; you can do it.’

The topic of fitness emerged for many other women as well as being intricately bound with being a manager. The following section explores how the participants explained the relationship of being physically fit (or not) to the management role.

*Fitness Equals Confidence and Power*

The connection between being fit and/or healthy and management revealed itself during the pre-interviews as a result of asking the women to relate the body to management. Josephine seized upon an immediate linkage remarking, “if my body isn’t in fairly good form, chances are my mind is lagging behind as well. The two are so interconnected.” Similarly, Grandy reiterated the fitness aspect of the body and managing saying, “I don’t feel like I perform in anyway, whether it is in the rooms, in life in general, or in the management position if I’m not fit.” Melanie, a native of Mexico noted the overweight problems in the United States saying, “if you as a leader are seen as an active person, that will also motivate your team, and when you feel good about yourself you get a sense of confidence that you always transmit to the other person.” Also noting the relationship of health to the body and management, Desi said “if you take care of the body, some of the issues that would probably distract you from focusing on being a good manager would be alleviated.” Yet taking care of themselves by being active can earn
women accolades from their male peers while also proving tough on the body. Samantha explained:

I’m going to be 50 in six months. I’ve got bursitis. I’ve got arthritis. This year, because I’ve been pushing it really hard with this marathon that I did and I’m getting ready for this 150 mile ride this weekend, I’m in a lot more pain. But the guys are like, wow! You do marathons, you teach skiing, you snowboard? But it’s harder when I hurt. Then again, it’s kind of cool when they’re like, oh, it’s kind of neat that you’re hurt!

Samantha’s experience introduces the phenomenon of seeking personal fitness and receiving the unexpected praise from employees for pushing so hard that injury is the result. In the case of either being unfit or over-training, Maria’s observation holds true: “If you don’t take care of it, the body breaks down very easily.”

Many of the women extended the issues of health and fitness to include the impact being unfit or unhealthy has on their self-confidence and self-esteem. Samantha shared: “When I’m fat, I have a harder time. If I feel fat, I feel like I’ve lost power. It makes me less confident.” Rose echoed similar sentiments saying, “If I feel unhappy with my body, which happens sometimes because I’m overweight, I think that affects my self-esteem.” Likewise, Grandy said that the influence of her own body on her managerial role impacted her self-esteem and that she feels better as a manager if she is fit. A lifelong athlete, Jasa agreed that “the better I feel about myself, the better manager I am.” However, she also recognizes that fitness often corresponds to attractiveness, and in her opinion, better opportunities for promotion. “I think it’s easier for a female in my company. We do a lot of business calls, and if you’re a more fit female, it’s easier to be
confident about yourself and be out there promoting the company and your service.” Jasa also recognizes that personally health and fitness correlate to her own health by tying back to the issue of stress saying that her “number one stress relief is working out and eating better.” The combination of being healthy and fit requires equilibrium between all aspects of a manager’s life. “If you’re out of balance physically, you’re out of balance in everything else so you can’t make those mental tough decisions. You can’t deal with people in a pleasant manner,” Dee pointed out. Many of the women expanded on the idea of balance in their lives, which is discussed further in the Role of Yoga section. While several women recognized the importance of physical fitness, for some of the participants, the aging process provides a constant reminder about the body’s boundaries.

*The Body at 50*

Even for someone who has taken their body for granted most of their life, the process of aging calls immediate attention to the physical form. Several of the participants who were near 50 or over 50-years old reflected on their body awareness, which has heightened as they age. Grandy, who is in her 50’s, reflected on her body awareness and how it is intimately connected to her age and managerial role: “I’m very aware of the fact that I’m aging. I look around and I see youth and I’m grateful for it because I’m glad somebody’s coming in here to replace me eventually. That in itself makes you very aware of your body.” Josephine, also in her 50’s, concurs that her body awareness is heightened due to her age. “There was a time, probably in the first 30 years or so, where my body awareness was kind of like my automobile awareness. I get in there, crank it, and go, and it is supposed to take me there and support by body,” she
explained. She realizes now that she took her body for granted by expecting it to perform on command without much caretaking but that “everything changes when you’re 50, and so consequently, I now have to do proactive things to keep it where it is. It’s never going to get back to where it was 30 years ago.”

Samantha, who turned 50 recently, expressed similar concerns about aging relating her awareness to her athletic lifestyle: “My body is aging and is showing evidence of the active and athletic life it has had. That is hard to face. I want to feel like a 30 year old, and the aches and pains are frustrating.” Grandy notices the physical difficulties increasing as well commenting that, “when I get down to hook something up, my knees are just killing me anymore,” which results in a “big awareness” of her body and her perceptions of how she looks and feels unfit. Sue, who is not quite in her 50’s but turned 48 last year, expressed similar concerns. “I’ll be 48 this year so I’m real aware! I know that physically I’ve noticed gaining weight affects your health dramatically. Whether it’s how you walk, your change in your diet, your metabolism. I don’t like some of the changes my body’s been making,” she remarked. Finding humor in her age/body awareness, Grandy joked that if she’s “crawling around the floor trying to get back up—who is going to help me get up?” Laughing at that visual image of herself, she summarized the feelings about aging echoed by Samantha, Josephine, and Sue: “I’m very aware of my body in and out of the management role.” For these women, the process of aging makes them constantly aware of their bodies and affects their image of themselves personally as well as professionally where the demands of management often require physical stamina. The second major outcome describes the participant’s views about
themselves as managers and the influence of gender and being a woman on their managerial style.

Managing as a Woman

The women responded to several pre-interview questions and guiding questions from their journals that inquired about their perspective of executing their management skills as women, their personal managerial style, and the impact of gender on their managerial style. These questions set the stage for what later developed into a validating and empowering discourse throughout the course of the study and the significance of a gendered discourse, which is discussed in the next section. As a thematic component on its own, the ways in which gender impacts these women’s experiences as managers and their approach to managing was also significant, especially given the study’s use of a feminist methodology. As Grandy aptly described, “it is about being comfortable in our own skin and knowing that we are capable of being a good manager and maintaining our womanhood.” By exploring the participant’s viewpoints about how they make sense of the significance of gender to the managerial role, we created a foundation on which to draw in the body as a third and prominent element of our study. The following sections illustrate the significance of “being comfortable in our own skin” by exploring the implications of categories such as The Old Boy’s Club, Fighting for Respect by Flying the F-Bomb, Getting Your Hands Dirty and Being Fair, Fostering Relationships and Mothering, and The Stereotyping of Women.
The Old Boys Club

Several women noted the existence of what Charlotte described as “the old boy network,” which she experienced in the high-pressure, power-rich field of management consulting. “They take care of their own. It’s who knows who at the executive level,” and “it’s very hard to break into that model.” Grandy agreed, offering her perspective of the male surgeon-dominated operating room. She commented:

It’s pretty difficult sometimes to be in this role when the majority of surgeons are men. They are very….they want what they want when they want it. They seem to, a lot of them, have their own ideas about women and the places for women. Even though they know that nursing is normally a female dominated area.

Rebecca, Grandy’s colleague, concurred that it’s challenging to work with the male surgeons dominant personalities because “the history of the senior management at the hospital has catered to them so they come at you like ‘well, I’ll get what I want.’” She added, “Our medical director is a man and a surgeon, so forget it. It’s the boys club, as we call it.” For example, Grandy explains the old boys club in this way: “I could go in a room and do something that I shouldn’t maybe and that surgeon will tear my head off, but the guy comes in and does the same thing I do, and it’s ‘hey, bud!’ Maybe it’s because they take their clothes off together in the locker room.” Despite many women manager’s hope that the glass ceiling has been shattered and men accept women into all professional circles, the experiences of these women is that “the boys” are still sticking together.

The majority of the participants have experienced what it is like to work in either male-dominated professions or to work in a field where there is a preponderance of men
occupying the most senior positions in the organization. The women speak from a variety of perspectives, the experience of managing men, the experience of being the only woman in a particular area, and the experience of managing up, when everyone above is a male. Samantha has both all men working for her and works in a male-dominated profession. While she speculated that upon first becoming their boss, “some of them were scared of me,” she now believes they have a different reaction. Because of her experience in the technology field and having been elevated to management after being a colleague of her employees, she explained her approach to managing men. If an employee challenges her knowledge, a typical response might be: “Dude, I’ve done your job. I’ve been you.” Having walked in their shoes, Samantha feels it’s earned her “a lot of respect.”

For both Dee and Josephine, their entry into management 20-30 years ago meant that they had to get accustomed to “being the only woman,” as Josephine remarked and managing in “the man’s world,” as Dee described. Even after reaching high levels in several industries, Josephine said, “nine times out of ten, in a management meeting, I am the only woman, unless it’s an administrative assistant taking notes.” Similarly, when Rose was in school pursuing an engineering degree she was “one of the few women in classes,” and upon entering the work world “it just seemed like everywhere…there was more men than women.” In the finance area of a large manufacturing company, Desi estimates that “of the 1800 people that work there, there are 39 women managers.” Maria’s experience as an operating room nurse managers is the same: “We have very few women surgeons. The majority [of surgeons] are men.” She speculates that “two out of approximately 50-60 surgeons” are female. And for Jasa, she also manages in an
“industry that is very female dominated; however, my boss is male, his boss is male, and his boss is male.” While at her level “80% of branch managers are female,” at the next level, area manager, “only 20% are female.” Considering this disparity between management levels, Jasa remarked, “when you look at the number of females in my company, it’s so out of proportion to how many higher-level managers are male.” The prevalence of men in senior management positions is a long-standing tradition. For that reason alone, women find the opportunities for breaking into higher-level positions extremely challenging. This difficulty remains in large part because of the continued existence of “the good old boy” mentality within management.

_Fighting for Respect by Flying the F-Bomb_

In male-dominated fields, the women noted that the use of foul language could either gain a woman manager respect or indicate that her being a woman is not longer noticed as unusual. Samantha remarked that, “it was very difficult for them [her employees] to respect me as a woman. They were pretty easy once I flew the F-bomb once or twice. Then, they were fine.” While she has gotten over the experience of frequently being the only woman in the room, she says, “the boys will still start using four-letter words and all the sudden go, oh my god, I forgot you were here!” In her mind, “that’s actually probably a good thing,” since being a female manager is not viewed as out of the ordinary. However, Samantha admitted, “she’s taken on a very male persona” in her management role” and “that’s hard to let go when you leave the office.” While tolerating four-letter words or joining in on the banter may be one way of surviving as a
female manager, many women, like Samantha, resort to these tactics as a means of gaining respect.

As women managers, other participants also described the difficulty of being respected and earning credibility in what are either often male-dominated environments or male-led organizations. Dee described her entry into management as being immediately behind in the game of earning respect: “from the beginning I had the age, lack of experience, and being a female all rolled into one.” With these three marks against her, she realized “the expectations seemed to be higher but the pay was half, and being a female from that perspective, I do think you have to work harder to get the credibility.” Similarly, Charlotte recounts from her experience of working in a male-dominated environment that she “got really good at boosting up their ego” as both her clients and team members were all men. She still struggles with the question that plagued her as senior consultant: “What is a way that I can be successful in this paradigm…standing in my beliefs, standing in what I like to do?” She said she doesn’t have the answer for the question, and sadly, she’s “never found a woman…who was successful in all areas of her life.”

Grandy also finds garnering respect difficult “because sometimes you’re not taken seriously… they [male surgeons] can be intimidating.” She elaborates saying that by having women managers tell the male surgeons what they will do, what they will use, or what they won’t use, “it’s hard for them to even take.” Grandy advised, “you have to be kind of strong…or you can be bulldozed.” Samantha agrees and takes Grandy’s reference to heavy machinery a step further:
I’ve gone to battle. I think as a woman I have to go to battle harder. I’ve always worked with men. The field that I work in is very male-dominated, and I’m comfortable with that. I can be as raunchy as any guy or forceful. It’s forced me to adopt a style sometimes that was more confident than I really felt. It’s like a duck.

Nice and smooth on top—paddle like hell under the water.

For Rose and Desi, they too have various ways of coping with the issue of respect. Desi admitted that she has some “walking in the door issues” and “complexes.” For example, questions such as “I wonder if he said that because I am woman?,” or “Does he think I can’t do it because I’m a woman?,” often cross her mind. Rose responded in a similar manner: “If I feel like someone is maybe not taking me seriously because I am a woman, I can get a little more defensive or a little more adamant about what I’m talking about. I try to let them know I do know what I’m talking about,” she said. (emphasis original)

Finally, Caroline, Jasa, Sue, and Olivia approached the issue of respect from a different angle. For Caroline, it is important to her “to treat people with dignity and respect,” and for Jasa, respect is communicated in her approach to giving feedback:

I’m able to critique and give them feedback without them even knowing that I’m doing it. Just by subtle suggestions or if I’m correcting them, I’ll say, hey, come back to my office for a second. I don’t make them feel intimidated. I don’t put them on the spot. I don’t call them out in front of other people because it would be embarrassing for them and for me.

Following the golden rule is the approach Sue advocated. “I treat people as I would want to be treated,” she said. She hopes that by giving them “respect,” and noting her behavior and role-modeling, they will reciprocate.
Olivia’s experience stands out as unique. From the lack of respect she believes most men give to women, in addition to their strong ego, she has stayed away from taking on male clients. She explained:

I haven’t particularly gone out of my way to get male clients simply because I think I might be uncomfortable training a male. I think it might have something to do with my perception of the macho elements of the male. I’m trying to explain one thing to them, but they’ve already got their preconceived ideas about how it’s supposed to be done. I’m scared of that line where, what if they injure themselves because they just won’t trust that I’m telling them? The experience that I have is that males will take shortcuts when they can.

Recognizing that her ideas about men are most likely impacted by her upbringing in the Caribbean, she said that in addition to having an ego and being “very, very macho,” men also “have this idea that they must do certain things and that women have a lesser role in society.” Olivia elaborated saying that men “can be very, very crass with women,” especially “on the streets when they are hissing at you and all that, and you are expected to accept that. If you do open your mouth, then you got to cursed off.” These dynamics, “which is where I guess I formed some of my opinions about men, has then affected my not being in a hurry to do any personal training with any males,” she concluded.

*Getting Your Hands Dirty and Being Fair*

Getting into the trenches with their employees was very important to Makayla, Samantha, Grandy, and Maria. Makayla described this aspect of managing as “being able to step down and actually be one of your employees, not considering yourself above
them, but when the work needs to get done getting your hands dirty and actually helping.” Samantha’s description of her managerial style was very similar: “I’m a very hands-on manager.” Additionally, she described herself as “an interventional manager” who “clears road blocks” and “gets resources.” Likewise, Grandy reported, “I’m a very hands-on kind of manager as far as what goes on in the [patient] rooms.” She said that this approach brings positive results from her employees: “People will tend to give back to me. If I need somebody to stay over or whatever, they’re more likely to come to my aid if they know that I’m out there in the trenches spending part of my time doing exactly what they do.” Her colleague, Maria has the same style. “I help the assistants. I’ll pick up a mop and clean the floors, clean the rooms, and I help nurses care for the patients. I scrub in and help the surgeons sometimes,” Maria elaborated.

The concept of being fair in their managerial style was repeated by several of the participants. Makayla described her take on fairness in this way: “I have the ability to be objective, to listen, to hear both sides of an argument. I try to be fair even when that’s not always the most popular choice,” because “in the long run people appreciate that more than waiving the rules.” Charlotte also described her managerial approach as “pretty fair,” and Grandy went a step further saying, “I’m probably very fair, but not always equal.” For Rose, fairness is about demonstrating “a more democratic style of management.” She prefers “to collaborate” with the people that work for her and absolutely does not like “to order people around.” In addition to working with people and getting their buy-in, she also solicits “their opinions of things.”
Fostering Relationships and Mothering

As women managers, many of the participants emphasized the importance of relationships and learning details about the people’s lives in order to establish a personal connection. For Charlotte the two areas were connected in her view of managing: “The relationship part was very big; knowing about their family, knowing about their kids, always asking them how it’s going.” Maria agrees that learning about personal details is key to having “a very good relationship” with her employees. “For all my employees, I can tell you how many kids they have, what their kids’ names are, what their husbands’ names are,” she explained. The result of taking a personal approach for Maria is a group of employees who act “like a family.” Describing so many families, she added, “We fight like a family; we come together like a family.”

While forming relationships may be a crucial part of being a manager, making connections is not always easy. At a certain point in her managerial career, Charlotte realized that “the key to success was building and keeping successful relationships with senior level executives, and none of them were women.” Considering ways to foster connections with upper management, she considered sports. “I didn’t play golf, so I was at the point in my career where I thought, do I need to take up golf?” Josephine also recognized the importance of golf to making business connections saying, “I envy those women who are smart enough to learn how” to play golf and that “there is no question as a golfer you get invited to every golf tournament.”

While Makayla tries to “make a personal connection with everybody at work,” Caroline adapts her management style to being “understanding, flexible, and helpful,” so that “when I need something they are more willing to do it than if I was always just harsh
and hard-nosed,” which Caroline described as more of a male style of management. Elaborating on what she considers a male approach, Charlotte said, “women are much more in tune to things than men. Men are more: this is what it is, and this is how it’s going to be done.” Desi would agree that women and men approach personal connections differently and says that as a manager she knows more about “personal happenings” than if she were a man. Jasa creates relationships by being “positive, extremely positive.” She goes on to explain that “everyday I’m trying to encourage everybody and bring everybody up.” Like Caroline, Jasa describes herself not as “an easy manager,” but definitely lenient.” Her rationale echoes Caroline’s management approach of being flexible: “If you need an accommodation for something, I will go out of my way to make sure it happens. But in return, the employees are usually extremely positive.” In addition to valuing relationships and personal connections, the participants also revealed that they see themselves as nurturers who are sensitive to their employees concerns.

In characterizing their managerial style, nearly two-thirds of the participants used terminology associated with mothering, being sensitive and compassionate, and taking care of or nurturing employees. For some of the women, playing the “mother” role and acting sensitively is often quite challenging. As Makayla said, it’s “hard being a woman [manager], especially because women are usually the nurturers of families.” She believes that “men have the tendency to be able to keep the emotion out” of the management realm and “just make a decision and do what’s best for the business,” while women may take “feelings into consideration for certain situations.” Caroline describes the challenge similarly saying, “Managing has been difficult sometimes because I like to help take care of my employees.” The risk of such care taking she finds is that “sometimes they think
that I am soft and that I am always going to bend and let them either leave early or come in late or whatever they need.” Desi agreed that sensitivity is not always a positive trait for a manager to possess. “The fact that I’m a woman…. I’m a little bit more in tune to other people’s feelings, and actually, sometimes I think it’s bad because when I have to make those tough decisions, it becomes that much more difficult.”

Some of the participants interpreted women’s sensitivity and compassion as a positive attribute of being a manager. As Jasa explained, “being a female helps to be a manager because you do understand emotions so much more, and you’re used to dealing with social situations and emotional people.” Dee also framed the ability to be sensitive in a positive light noting:

When you’re a woman you can show sensitivity and emotions and still maintain respect. With a man, it’s harder. When they show that emotion or sensitivity, a lot of times people look at them and think, oh, what a woos. He’s lowered, so they [men] feel like that have to be stoic, unbendable, can’t express any kind of issues because people will look at them differently. As women, we still have to be strong, we can’t fall apart every time we talk to somebody, but we can show sensitivity and compassion without being considered a woos as quickly as a man.

Makayla, Rebecca, and Maria each described themselves as “compassionate” managers. Makayla added that she is also “open and friendly,” “comforting,” and “trustworthy.” She revealed how important these characteristics are to her and her approach to management in this way: “I try to make people feel important. I try to be there for them. I think that I look at them as human beings and not just as employees.” Rebecca also believes part of
her management style is that she is “very friendly and easy to talk to,” however, she recognizes what she described as her “down side: I don’t like to see people unhappy.”

As a self-described “warm, touch-feely kind of person,” Rebecca pointed out that out of the three operating room nurse managers she is “the only one with young children.” The role of mother is, of course, unique to women. Notably, many of the participants reported that part of their managerial style contained elements of mothering. Dee reflected that, “when you become a mom, you see things a little bit differently” and said that the influence of being a mother has filtered into her management style. Caroline’s comments about her own managerial style revealed that she sees herself as the “mother hen, wanting to fix their [her employees] problems.” Josephine, no stranger to the challenges of balancing both motherhood and a demanding career, agreed that she “cares a lot” about the people she manages. However, she integrated the subjects of mothering and sensitivity with management is a slightly different manner:

The women I have known don’t climb the corporate ladder because women don’t climb the corporate ladder. Men tend to do that. Women kind of meander along a path that goes in and out of different pathways, and we will respond to our hormones. Some women will take a huge period of time before they completely drop out of the workforce because they go into the mommy force. Women just have a different way of understanding that whole issue and that is then reflected in the way that we manage. If we have female employees who come to us with one of those points along the road, we might understand that situation differently than someone else.
The implications for comparing the role of mother to the role of manager are vastly significant for women. Overlapping the two roles often requires women to sacrifice appearing strong in their role because of a need to be sensitive and compassionate to everyone.

An additional component of fostering relationships for the participants included ensuring the success of employees. This approach to management requires valuing the achievements of others. Charlotte described her approach: I gave people multiple chances to succeed. Meaning, if somebody was going down the non-performance, potential to be fired track, I would try to set them up for success within the boundaries of the rules.” Dee agreed saying, “I always give people the benefit of the doubt over and over and over again.” Her approach to setting people up for success is “to be very genuine” and be “truly genuine about what their strengths are” so as to point them in the direction of high performance. Sue views herself as a “guide” who often has to “push them” in the direction of success. She does this by “shutting some doors” and “making the path clear” in other directions. Sue’s philosophy: “If I can give them the tools that they need, then they don’t need me other than to praise them or mentor them when they need it. They have their own little piece in that company, and it’s theirs and they own it. Particularly when managing women, she believes it’s critical to “let them be a woman, let them be a person, and let them be recognized as an individual.” As a management goal, ensuring the success of employees makes good managerial sense. These women believe that part of the benefit of being a woman manager is being able to uncover the strengths of their employees, provide them with useful tools, and remove barriers so they can grow professionally.
Stereotyping Other Women

Just as Sue recognized that women might require being managed in particular ways, she and several of her co-participants also identified the challenge of being a woman managing other women. Sue and Desi both described women as “fickle.” For Desi, fickleness reveals itself because “women are very emotional” and part of managing women means having to “go along with that emotional ride.” Sue admitted that in the past she hasn’t gotten “as great a response” from managing women and often find women “feel threatened” as a result of being managed by another woman. “My experience has been not necessarily as their friend, but a mentor.” If she had to choose, Desi said, “it would be a lot easier” to manage a man because the emotionality and fickleness issues would not be a factor. Samantha whole-heartedly agrees with Desi. She explained:

I’d so much rather deal with men than women. Men may be assholes, but if they are, they’re always assholes. Women are too moody. Men, if they have an issue, they address you. It might get heated, but then you move on. Men are less judgmental once they accept you, but you have to get into their world.

Maria seemed to reflect the experiences of Sue, Desi, and Samantha admitting: “It does seem to be different dealing with males versus females. Females seem to need to be stroked a little bit more.” She added that from her management experience:

Most women “like to be talked to like they are people and like you to sit down with them, face them, and explain things really well. Men are just kind of like OK, what do you want to talk about? OK, thanks. See ya. And they’re done. They’re not touchy feely kind of people. It’s hard to work with all females. They’re moody and bitchy.
Interestingly, Sue, Maria, and Desi work in fields where they manage a lot of women, but men dominate the higher-level management positions, and Samantha manages a group made up solely of men. For these women, past experience has provided tough lessons about being a woman manager to other women.

Bridging the Body and Management through Yoga Practice

In order to unite the body with management concepts yoga practice was introduced to the participants. As discussed in chapter four, the majority of the women had not previously experienced yoga. Acknowledging the lack of prior exposure to yoga practice is important because of how the women’s understanding of their body’s relationships to their managerial role evolved over the course of the study through their increased understanding of yoga. As a somatic method, yoga proved to be a powerful avenue for opening the women up to considering their bodies from new perspectives. From the beginning of the study, the women expressed positive comments about experiencing yoga and a willingness to begin incorporating the practice into their personal and professional lives. The following sections offers chronological, narrative explanations from the participants’ journals about how they experienced yoga practice as a medium for bridging the body with management. Journal excerpts are provided from immediately following the planning session through the last workshop session.

Appreciating the Physical Experience: Initial Reactions

After the planning session on June 5th, many of the women were already deeply intrigued by their brief yoga experience. At this early stage in the study, the women
expressed varying levels of connection with the body. During this phase of the study the participants’ comments mainly reflected appreciation about the physical experience of yoga, but lacked deeper a relationship to management or being a woman. The strong feelings about yoga were revealed through the participants’ journal entries.

Samantha commented in her journal, “The taste of yoga was intoxicating. I can only wait to do more.” Sue agreed remarking:

It was so peaceful. One voice—oneeness in the group and luxurious silence. I was amazed at how my breathing changed in 10 minutes. My favorite part was when we laid in silence. I loved that. I felt renewed, restored, and relaxed. I want more!”

During the week after our planning session, Rebecca reported in her journal: “What a day! Why did I get into management again?” She goes on to discuss a difficult employee commenting that dealing with that person “sucks all the energy right out of my life.” As a new approach to dealing with this issue Rebecca explained, “I just attempted to do some of the basic yoga that we learned, and it certainly helped me relax and not feel so drained.” In addition to the physical benefits, the participants also immediately found benefits from the practices of breathwork and reflection. Three days after our first session Melanie says:

Last week I had a 15-minute, nice, calming experience. There was a thunderstorm, and I went to my balcony and saw on the left side gray clouds, and on the right side light blue sky. It was rainy, and the rainbow was the centerpiece of the scene. I believe that yoga made me appreciate deeply. I felt the need to breathe deep, and it was a time that made me reflect on our Monday session.
During our first workshop session, the topic the participants chose to focus on was communication and listening in particular. After completing an exercise about active listening using yogic concepts such as keeping a long spine by sitting up straight, maintaining focus in both mind and eyes, and noticing our own emotions, the women’s connections to their own behaviors as managers were revealed in their journals.

Samantha found the exercise to be challenging saying:

This was a very useful exercise. I think, for me, that the hardest part was sitting up straight! Don’t fidget, don’t think about what you are going to say, but breathe, relax, absorb the other person’s comments instead of just letting them bounce off of you.

Rose agreed that the exercise was helpful and made her own personal observations of her behavior:

The in-class exercise on active listening was good. I have participated in similar exercises, but this time we focused on maintaining good yoga posture, while also focusing on non-verbal and verbal communication. It did bring a different awareness of the body, aside from the obvious body language (i.e., crossed arms, legs, nodding, and eye contact). First lesson: to practice intentional positive body language to promote good communication, you must first be able to recognize and control your own emotions.

Jasa took the exercise directly into her professional role as manager and reported in her journal:

Today I conducted my one on one session with each of my employees. I tried to be conscious of my posture and keep an open frame. I felt when I leaned forward
and remained tall and open, the employees kept talking. When I crossed my arms, I could feel myself not listening as well.

From these beginning journal reflections, the participants obviously have varying levels of body awareness and their comments reflect more about the relaxation and postural benefits of yoga. Samantha, like Jasa, took her new experience with her to work:

Exploring yoga is teaching me to listen to my body—to breathe, to be supple, and relaxed. I sat in a two-hour meeting today that was so stressful. I concentrated on my breathing, on my posture, on opening my chest and freeing my heart—and I was able to relax, think, participate, and be a part of the process rather than being a close-minded, negative, non-verbal drone. 😊

From these initial thoughts the women progress into a deeper awareness and develop stronger connections between yoga practice and their roles as managers.

*Developing Deeper Body Awareness*

The following narratives from the participants’ journals came from the workshop sessions at the mid-point of the study and represent greater insight about the management topics’ relationship to the body. At this phase of the study, the participants began to reflect in their journals about how yogic concepts such as noticing the breath and body, strength, and balance connect with their professional lives. The findings continued to reiterate the participants’ varying levels of understanding and how each woman progresses through the process differently. Because the participants entered the study possessing different levels of body awareness and varying understanding about how the body might relate to management, their reflections were necessarily diverse. Throughout
the next two sections, the data reveals that even those women who struggled to describe a possible relationship between the body and management began to make connections. For example, during our sessions focusing on emotions and feelings, the participants wrote in their journals throughout the workshop session. We completed approximately 15-minute segments of yoga followed by journaling that encouraged the women to consider how they felt in the poses to practice noticing thoughts and emotions without passing judgment on those feelings. Many powerful reflections emerged from this in-workshop journaling. Jasa commented:

I am very tired this evening from lack of sleep last night. I was up thinking all night. Child’s pose and relaxation pose helped me relax and clear the mind of so many thoughts. Forward fold showed me/allowed me to notice the tension in my body. I needed the stretch and release. Plank pose showed me strength that I felt I was lacking. My cousin passed away Saturday after a battle with cancer. I needed the strength to get me through this week and support my family.

Some of the other participants also commented on the feelings of power and strength they felt from the first segment of yoga practice meant to warm up the body. Rose said, “Child’s pose is a good stretch and forces me to breathe; makes me feel peaceful. Cobra pose made me feel good—happy? Empowered. Chair pose makes my legs feel stronger.” Likewise, Melanie also found strength remarking that the, “sensation of heat with strength muscles was a powerful feeling that I have not experienced before.” While these women noticed positive benefits from the first segment of yoga practices, other participants struggled because of outside circumstances. For example, Maria shared in her journal the impact her difficult workday had on her beginning practice:
Because I had a very stressful day, I am harboring heavy feelings around my middle section. Certain poses seemed to burn my middle (abdomen). I also noticed that because of the tension I feel inside, my breathing is harder to get into a pattern. It feels very labored. I also have a headache and I seem to be concentrating on that too much. I am having trouble letting go tonight!!

Similar to Maria, Josephine’s preoccupation with a recent health diagnosis impacted the significance of yoga practice:

Because of the high blood pressure diagnosis I got this weekend, I was very aware of my heart beat when bringing my hands to my heart. As always, I’m aware of the heaviness of my head and now wonder if the high blood pressure is responsible for the heaviness (pressure) in my head.

The second segment of yoga poses focused on strength poses, which were mainly standing postures. The women drew a variety of connections between the yoga poses and their feelings of being strong or weak. Olivia described her experience in some of these standing poses:

Triangle pose elicits feelings of being a bird or a plane; a feeling of freedom and escape. Warrior II combined two ideas/feelings: firstly, the rotation of arms so that palms faced upwards felt like a type of surrender and readiness to receive whatever the universe has to offer. Physically, this was more strenuous on the shoulders so that secondly, I had the idea that a certain degree of strength is required to completely surrender—to surrender is not necessarily a sign of weakness.
For Olivia, the concept of surrender became significant to being strong. Rose comments on this openness from the perspective of other postures: “Mountain pose makes me feel strong, powerful, connected physically and emotionally, well-integrated. Reverse warrior made me feel strong, yet open. Open and reaching out. Good emotion.”

Subsequent to the individual journaling time, the group shared some thoughts with one another in a large group discussion. Jasa shared the news that her family had suffered a loss over the weekend, and during her second opportunity to journal she expressed the following:

After sharing my thoughts with the class, it made me vulnerable. Yet the response was kind. These power poses allowed me to keep building on my strength I lost over the weekend and will need this week. I felt my legs burning but I kept focusing the breath on those spots to overcome the burn/pain. I love overcoming challenges and these new positions keep me interested mentally and physically. When crises strike, I need to use these positions to refocus myself and re-strengthen my mind.

Jasa draws a relationship between the yoga poses that reinforce strength and power and being able to manage difficult, challenging situations throughout her life. Maria found relief from the second segment of yoga poses as well and eliminated some of the tension she felt in the front of her body:

The second set of exercises (chest expansion) made me feel more free by the end. My whole body felt stretched and comfortable. By the end, I felt like I could regulate my breathing again. My body felt very warm and relaxed. I no longer
concentrated on my headache! I will remember these exercises for when I go home after a long, stressful day.

Again, the women are relating their learning through the somatic experience of yoga to improving other aspects of their lives. This segment of poses also produced a strong reaction from Samantha who said:

What did I feel? STRENGTH! Competency and power. The breathing was at times very difficult for me, but when I was successful at breathing down into my tired legs, they immediately felt alive and energized. My mind was calm and focused on the messages being received from my body. I felt strong and disciplined.

There is a mixture of challenge and success in many of these women’s journals. However, the third segment of poses focused on balance, which elicited feelings of vulnerability, discomfort, and frustration. Sue shared that she felt “very weak” and “extremely vulnerable,” and commented that the feeling that arose for her caused a strong realization: “I don’t like to fail at anything.” Yet when she was successful at balancing, “it felt freeing—like flying or floating.” Rose struggled in much the same way, writing in her journal: “I did not feel as stable. Perhaps insecure. Need to work on strengthening my core. Agree that breathing was more difficult in this pose. Once I lose my balance, I seem to lose concentration and focus.” The same feelings are echoed by Melanie, but with much stronger emotion:

Wow, that is what I call real frustration. It brought a lot of anger not being able to find balance with these poses. Funny enough that is the way I feel today in my personal life. Mad for not being able to find balance. I didn’t expect this session
to bring all these emotions. I think the answer may be that I can change the situation if I focus. I just got surprised on what a poor job I do at managing my frustrated feelings. I wish I could do better, faster. I feel almost like crying.

It is not unusual for yoga to elicit very strong emotions. Many poses are associated with feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, or tranquility. After several workshop sessions the women are becoming skilled at noticing how they feel, and noticing in relationship to their bodies and then drawing connections to their lives overall. Olivia demonstrates this ability to connect the yoga practice to not only the study, but aspects of managing as well.

She wrote:

Just the idea of doing balance poses caused an immediate degree of anxiety; the mind went into ‘preparation’ mode. These poses remind me of what often happens in everyday life when there is a crisis or some big important event—i.e. we sometimes forget about the simple, basic but necessary things. Hence to strike the balance poses I have to consciously think about relaxing before I attempt the movements. I have to prevent myself from holding my breath for too long.

Balance poses are great for developing concentration, an important communication skill as far as attentive listening is concerned.

The next segment of poses focused on hip-openers, which are very deep stretching yoga poses known to elicit strong emotions. For Olivia, the experience connected her to and made her thankful for these joints: “I enjoyed breathing into the hips! 😊 It felt like having a conversation with the joints; acknowledging their importance. Thank you hips for taking me wherever I go!” Maria, who had struggled during this session to let go of tension and stress from her workday, reported a breakthrough: “During the stretching
exercises, I felt very warm inside. At the same time, I felt very calm and relaxed. This session seemed to provide some closure for me.” However, Rose struggled somewhat with the poses and considered the connection to herself at work: “The hip-openers were particularly difficult. I am not flexible, but it may also be pent up emotions? Sometimes I feel like I’m so busy (especially at work) that I don’t have time to experience emotions.”

While these observations by the women are significant and salient, as they experienced more yoga practice they became more and more powerful as they made deeper connections between the body and their managerial roles.

*Making Somatic Connections to Management*

As the study evolved into the last several sessions, the participants continued to progress in their ability to make connections. While some of the women reached this point of understanding earlier in the study, others began to evolve in their ability to relate the body with management. The journal entries reflected strong connections around the topics of bodily appearance, noticing conflict and stress, and being able to ‘let go’ more easily. During our fifth workshop session, the participants’ journals exhibit the strengthening of their somatic connections from the intertwined perspective of being a female manager and considering their body as part of that role. Rebecca remarked:

I see my body as part of my negativism toward my job. I think that when you look at your body in a negative way, you tend to not walk with confidence. I look at my feet when I walk and talk. I really attempt to do all the other positives likes making eye contact, walking tall, and keeping my shoulders back, but when I feel that I am being “beaten,” that all changes.
Maria makes observations about women in general and her own experience tying the body to being a manager saying:

I believe it is important to have a good, balanced connection between mind and body in order to handle the demands of management. It would be helpful to women especially if there were some type of relaxation/meditation/yoga classes offered at their place of work. It is important to unwind from work before carrying it home. I recognize when the mind/body connection is not there for me, and I try to be very careful with decisions or actions. I also try to be respectful of others when I notice that they do not have the connection. Women can be very hormonal, and it could negatively affect management decisions.

Continuing in this self-reflective vein, Rose commented:

At work I feel that I am valued for my skills and abilities and that physical appearance is relatively unimportant. I do wonder though, whether it affects me more than I realize, and if my confidence and ability to manage effectively are somewhat undermined because of the perceptions of others about my body or because of my own self-image.

The importance of self-image and self-confidence to the participants became extremely clear. Not only did the women recognize their own personal struggles with a healthy self-image, but they also realized the connection between their own body feeling and the judgments of others about the role of managers. Dee comments that, “My self-confidence really plays a big part in how I feel in my management positions. Some days I feel very powerful…especially when I feel good about my body and health in general. Other days, not so good.” Samantha echoes these sentiments saying, “The more comfortable I am
with my body, the better leader and manager I am. I still feel so defined by my body. Bad hair days bother me less than fat days.” Like the participants, my own researcher’s journal reflected similar sentiments about the struggle to maintain a healthy body image amidst society’s mixed messages. I wrote the following in my journal about this subject:

It occurs to me that my own expectations of this research may be quite selfish—to continue to work towards the elusive self-acceptance of my body—the state of mind that has evaded me, perhaps my whole life. To buy into the ‘strong is beautiful’ idea and appreciate the capability I’ve cultivated in my body rather than constantly berating the parts of myself that I am unhappy with—that in all reality I am never happy with. My obsession with the body is less noble than my lifetime of activeness and my overuse of exercise as a way to cope with everyday life. It’s also about how I, as an individual woman, can continue to endeavor to find acceptance; to love myself, and thereby, my body.

Like the participants, I found it remarkable that despite our different backgrounds, professional fields, and ages, the struggle to accept our bodies was universal.

From the personal perspective the women also drew a relationship between body image and confidence to the expectations of women’s bodily appearances, especially at work. Josephine said, “I have learned that I always have to be more prepared, more professional and more credible than my male counterparts in order for my colleagues to get beyond the physical, female attributes or their perception of those physical attributes.” Olivia provides the most in-depth explanation of her own body image and how she has begun to make sense of its connection to her life:
My relationship with my body has been a love-hate one. Once puberty started, I became more aware of my ‘femaleness’ and loathed my breasts, in particular. I somehow always felt the need to hide my breasts and it was not until I began dance as an adult that I overcame that proclivity. The constant admonitions from my teachers to open my chest; to relax my shoulders; that I had beautiful breasts; that I should not be afraid to use all parts of my body to express my emotions; that there was nothing wrong with being both sensual and sexual while dancing—helped build my confidence and develop a positive body image. I feel freer when I move with an unlocked pelvis and allow my hips to naturally sway as I move from place to place. So, I continue to be aware of the tensions I carry in these places so that I can self-correct as necessary. Now, I believe that the subtle messages I was receiving about my body were rooted in patriarchal culture and stem from an inability in the Western hemisphere [for men] to control their sexual thoughts and actions.

Olivia continue her reflections in her journal by linking this explanation to her current managerial role:

As a woman leader my beliefs and experiences, thus far, about womanhood intersect with my leadership style in various manners. I understand that my body is a powerful communication tool—I can use it to express confidence in my abilities; to provide visual cues for learning; to mime and explain the way a movement should feel for example. I think that feeling comfortable in one’s own skin is the key to success and survival in today’s world and I am extremely sensitive to other women’s self-recrimination and self-destructive behavior. Even
when I have made a plan for a personal training session, that plan is always open to change and flexibility to take into account my client’s current state of emotion at the time we meet. The need to relax first and then ‘do’ is vital—I also learned that from dancing. I also like to explain WHY we do certain things—it helps the learning process and that sort of knowledge can be self-empowering. I suppose that my leadership style with women might be different than for men, mainly because my experiences as a female have lead me to believe that we are deprived of self-empowerment tools at an early age and, somehow, accept that as being normal. Today, I look within for messages about myself and my body. I accept external messages, but I ensure that I process them first and internalize only those aspects of such messages that will help me to grow in a positive manner or that respect my humanness and femininity in all its glory.

Like Olivia, Desi offers equally insightful remarks about her discovery of the mind/body connection explaining:

I find it interesting how easily we can go through life without a connection between mind and body. I think we can feel the disconnect but may be unable to identify it as such. As we participate in yoga practice, I can feel the fulfillment as my mind and my body are aligned. As the two find the connection, I can feel a void being filled.

Desi also goes on to make the overt connection between her new found body/mind connection and her role as a manager:

This may sound strange, but I’ve never really taken my role as a manager very seriously. Don’t get me wrong, I take my job seriously, all except the part about
being a manager; if that makes any sense. The more I think about it, the more I realize that this approach was my defense against my perception of a man’s opinion of women managers. What I label as my “hands off” approach was my way of avoiding being labeled as “emotional” or a “bitch.” Truth is, I am emotional. Before this session, I viewed being emotional as negative. I never considered trying to connect my mind and my body. Now I am aware of my body, and I’m working on understanding it’s signs. As the mind and body become one, I can use my emotions as a strength. I can use the techniques that I’ve learned in yoga to focus and calm my spirit/mind when needed. This will surely make me a better person and manager.

The power behind these observations by the participants reflects that using yoga as a tool to bridge the connection between the body and management has been successful. As the workshop sessions progressed, the women continue to take the yogic concepts and apply them to their managerial lives. Rebecca commented:

It’s amazing how when doing tonight’s yoga, my muscles shook just as they do when I am in an uncomfortable situation at work. It helps me see that those situations will make me a stronger person all around. I need to realize that my body gives me verbal cues on what will eventually make me a stronger, healthier female in all aspects.

Sue described the feeling of wholeness she experiences during yoga that is often absent during her workday: “I love the focus I feel during yoga; a sense of well-being. A wholeness that you never see much less feel during the day.” The ability to focus or relax became a strong outcome of the participants’ experience. Grandy explained:
I was really able to forget about work and other situations by the fact that I was focusing on the poses and really paying close attention to the various parts of my body. Parts ached, sweated, felt hot/burned, but it all felt good also. My body feels lighter now—relaxed—weak—good. And my mind is also more at ease and empty of the daily situations, troubles, etc.

Echoing these comments of Grandy’s, Makayla remarked:

Despite having a stressful day, I found it relatively easy to let the thoughts of the day’s events leave my mind. I can’t help but reflect on your comment about recognizing what my body can do. I’ve been a critic of my body for most of my adult life, and I’m learning to appreciate everything that is wonderful about it. I really liked the moon salutations. Despite the deep stretch I felt, it felt really good. After that move I found that I was really relaxed. I was able to move through the remaining poses with more ease. I also felt a lot more relaxed and not worried about what tomorrow might bring.

For Desi the connection between all the poses offers an idea of what it might be like to experience similar connectedness in her life. She explained:

Child’s pose is very relaxing. Cobra pose makes me feel strong. Mountain pose allows me to be aware. I hope at some point, I’ll be able to tie all the feelings together. Imagine feeling relaxed, aware, and strong all at once. Surprisingly, I rarely feel strong and relaxed at the same time. I hope to house those feelings and draw from them when needed. It’s very surprising how much heat the slow warrior poses produced. During the moves, I felt as though I actually could have physical strength. My muscles actually began to ache. It felt great. It goes to show
that subtle movements can also provide a way to build strength. Balancing poses made me feel determined. Determined to learn how to balance on the mat and in my life. I felt the strength that could come from being balanced. That feeling made me want more.

During the seventh session, the topic under discussion and reflection was conflict. At this point in the study, the women were able to easily make connections between how they deal with conflict, their bodily reactions to conflict and how this recognition impacts their managerial role. Jasa describes her reaction to conflict and how she has experienced conflict during yoga practice:

> My body tenses up when I experience conflict. I can feel my lips tighten, my heart starts to beat faster, my face turns red, and my thoughts flow quickly. I usually speak very quickly and interrupt the other person to get my point across. During the beginning yoga sessions I found it hard to match my breath to the movements. I kept focusing on this part during the sessions and now at week seven, I am feeling like it is flowing better. Also, the balance poses were challenging. I think with practice, this will improve as well.

Desi likewise recognizes her conflict responses and offers suggestions for other women and for managers:

> My blood pressure rises during conflict. My head gets light and my stomach hurts. I recognize my body’s reaction to conflict and without thinking find ways to protect myself. This usually results in an uncomfortable situation. I would tell another woman to be cognizant of the body during times of conflict. More importantly, think before reacting. During our yoga practice, I have noticed
feelings of conflict. Because of yoga, I can now be aware of those feelings. I am working on managing those emotions in an efficient manner. I’ve noticed feelings of conflict when I seem lost during the practice. My thoughts sometimes reappear. I try to clear my mind and get back on track with the practice.

Maria also describes her recognition of her body’s response to conflict and how she tries to present herself during professional conflicts:

My body tenses up when I experience conflict. Conflict sometimes elicits the flight/fight mode. Other times, I feel comfortable enough to handle it. I acknowledge my body’s reaction to conflict because I personally struggle with how I present myself. I have good intentions, but I sometimes come across as curt or rude. If I sense myself reacting that way, I try to take a step back and relax for a moment. I noticed a conflict with my mind/body one evening when I was feeling especially strung out at work. My middle section felt very tight and I could not breathe through the exercise effectively. Tara was able to sense that, and we modified our session to more body opening exercises. At the end of class, I felt a lot better inside.

Our final workshop session addressed the topic of stress. The women had a great deal to say about stress, and with their new understanding of the body’s role in management, their journals reflected a new level of understanding. Rebecca wrote:

Last week I really came to a realization. I don’t carry stress in my shoulders like most people. I carry stress in my jaws. This time that we have spent together has helped me relax more and learn ways that I can relax. By learning to let go, I sleep better and seem to have less headaches. I’ve noticed from weeks of doing
this, I hold my tension in my jaw and in my teeth. Even tonight when we were
doing the relaxation part, I could feel myself (clenches jaw). So, I had to force
myself to relax my jaw. It helped me to find out where I held my stress.

Grandy describes her own body’s coping abilities with stress and offers her insights about
how women handle stress at work. She wrote in her journal:

I think that stress in a woman is demonstrated more on her body that any other
aspect. Our bellies enlarge…I personally carry my stress through my back and
shoulders. I have many trigger points. I think that we get hungry when stressed.

Women typically can handle a good deal because we are used to not only
working, but caring for children, our homes, significant others, etc. We tend to
hold the stress internally and that is where it will manifest itself. I happen to think
that women handle stress in the workplace better than males. They tend to lash
out and are more verbal. The women I work with seem to hold it inside and
sometimes if they reach a breaking point, they may lash out or sometimes cry. In
the OR, the surgeons are primarily males and the women who work with them are
quite good at managing their own stressors as well as diffusing the reaction to
stress of the surgeons. Women can absorb quite a bit in that way.

Jasa accepts stress as part of being a manager. She commented:

Stress is part of being a manager. I feel when the stress is on, the job gets
completed. Stress can affect the women differently than the men, and women tend
to get frustrated quicker. I eat when stressed. I don’t feel like exercising even
though this is what I need the most. I also have difficulty sleeping. Women are
usually more emotional and have a hard time disguising stress. We wear it on our face or portray it in the tone of our voice.

Makayla agrees with Jasa and added in her journal:

Many women tend to wear their feelings or mood blatantly in their facial expressions or body language. Expressions of being overwhelmed or being at one’s breaking point can be signs of weakness in a male-dominated culture. Managers need to be careful of expressing their stress because it affects the employees who work for them.

Likewise, Rebecca recognizes the risk of expressing stress emotionally and the perceptions by male colleagues: “I think that men see our, or my, reaction to stress as being ‘hormonal’ and ‘PMS-ing.’ This is the typical stereotyping that I have observed in the workplace.” Sue agrees with Rebecca and says about stress, “Can’t show it. Must show leadership without ‘falling down.’” Commenting succinctly on the body-stress connection, Samantha added, “The more we are stressed, the more that we are self-conscious of our bodies and their perceived flaws.”

Over the course of the nine weeks the participants and I met for workshop sessions on a wide variety of topics, and the women made huge strides in discovering connections for themselves between their bodies and being a manager. Their journal entries over the course of the study reveal their deepened understanding of how, through the use of yoga practice as somatic pedagogy, they could learn how the body intersects with the managerial role. The following section expands upon the topic of somatic pedagogy by discussing the essential elements that proved beneficial and critical to the success of this research study, including the use of yoga as a pedagogical tool, the
importance of a gendered discourse, the usefulness of journaling, and the criticality of a learner-centered atmosphere.

Essential Elements of Somatic Pedagogy

Committing to somatic pedagogy demands an explicit acknowledgement of the body and an overt integration of the body with the teaching and learning process. The primary vehicle for somatic integration with management topics relied on the practice of yoga and its philosophies. Because the participants possessed their own knowledge about management as well as their own body experiences, it was my responsibility as the researcher to provide the link between the chosen topics and the somatic component, which in this case was yoga. The significant discoveries about creating somatic pedagogy, in a management education context, for these women required providing guiding questions that challenged them to make connections, based on their own experiences, between the body and the topics they chose for discussion. Given that discussion itself requires a focus on the cognitive domain, it became even more crucial as a facilitator to provide an understandable bridge between a discursive practice and a somatic practice.

Accomplishing the objective of creating somatic pedagogy was not without doubt. A journal entry I made in late July reveals my uncertainty just a few weeks from the study’s conclusion: “I’m uncertain about the somatic link the yoga is having in their minds and bodies.” However, the findings reveal that a connection was made, and for this study, the creation of somatic pedagogy relied on a focus on the impact of gender on managerial style, the existence of a gendered discourse, and the role of yoga practice. The
presentation of these findings relies on a combination of pre- and post-interviews, participant and research journal entries, and the data obtained from workshop session discussions in small or large group formats. The primary areas of discovery included the significance of yoga as a somatic practice and its cultivation of relaxation and awareness; the importance of finding common ground through stories and the sharing of experiences, which resulted in feelings of empowerment and validation; the realizations made during journaling; and critiquing the study’s structure for the ongoing development of somatic pedagogy.

Practicing Yoga as a Pedagogical Tool

Most of the women participating in the study had no experience with yoga, but expressed an interest in learning the practice, and more importantly, how yoga would relate to management. The role of yoga practice in this study served as a way to connect a somatic focus with management. The significance of yoga to each of the women varied, and while not everyone planned to maintain yoga practice as part of their life, each woman described the aspects of the practice they would continue to integrate into their personal and/or professional lives.

During the follow-up interviews, the women responded in various ways about how yoga would remain part of their lives. Their responses revealed that yoga and its components provide a combination of physical, mental, and emotional benefits, including relaxation, stress management, and increased fitness. The most important aspect of participating in the study revealed itself to Grandy through yoga practice. She now tries to “pay attention” to the connection between the body, management, and being a woman
by concentrating on breathing and relaxation saying that yoga helped her to “distress and refocus.” For Maria, there were many sessions where she arrived “feeling overwhelmed and left feeling calm and relaxed.” She hopes to carry forward the practice of remembering to “take time out to relax and concentrate on inner breathing.”

Caroline also benefited from the restorative aspects of yoga adding that, “practicing yoga helps me to relax. I need to be present where I’m at, living in the moment.” Rose adds to Caroline’s reference to mindfulness remarking on the importance of being “in the present, which brings focus, clarity, and balance…that’s what I try to get from yoga and bring into my life.” Melanie also benefited from the relaxation portions of yoga practice finding it “surprising” how much she enjoyed it and recognizing she rarely takes time like that for herself.

In paying attention to her thoughts during relaxation, Melanie realized that she is “very stubborn to let go,” but by concentrating on her breathing she can control the thoughts “flashing through her brain.” Letting go is also difficult for Makayla who hopes that in addition to eating healthfully and exercising she can also “let go of certain things” by focusing “on the things I can control and letting go of the things I can’t.” Rebecca and Jasa utilized the philosophy of letting go to help them sleep. For example, Jasa said, “The value of awareness really comes to me at nighttime, because I can’t stress my mind during the day.”

As a dedicated athlete who competes in marathons, triathlons, and long-distance bike races, Samantha said yoga helps her “to gain self-awareness, strength, and flexibility.” Another physically active participant, Olivia, learned that through yoga, “we
can take the movement and directly relate it to things that happen in everyday life or how we solve problems or how we behave.”

Like their co-participants, Desi will also “use the breathing techniques…to manage stress,” and Rebecca will “use the breathing routinely to help settle myself during times of stress.” Desi added that she will also draw on the physical aspects of yoga to “stretch and strengthen” her muscles. Yoga does provide both relaxing and strengthening benefits, and Rose built upon Desi’s remarks by explaining how the concept of “integration” is an important part of yoga practice. She clarified that by reflecting on how yoga integrates the muscles and bones, and by considering the practice more holistically, the “body feels physically more integrated and strong, and…that translates into how you feel mentally.” In many ways, most of the participants arrived at this understanding of integration and recognized the crucial connection between the body and their mind. In fact, Melanie noticed the affect of yoga practice on the entire group:

I have the feeling that everybody needed this distressing process and the meditation in the yoga. Everybody was so different from the time they came into the class to the time they left. Everybody was peaceful and relaxed. All of us experienced a change during the session, and by the end we were just completely relaxed.

Her observation was validated by Jasa who recalled calling her husband on the drive home from a workshop session and telling him, “I am the most relaxed I’ve ever been in my entire life.”

Olivia made another observation of the group’s experience with yoga noticing that “a lot of the decision making would come it seems not even necessarily from the
movement, but from the times of not moving, the times of just being quiet.” She speculated that movement “shows the importance of the transition from one movement and the other and the periods of pausing, staying in the room, and doing the breathing. So you act. Then, you transition into something else. Then you think about what your next move is going to be.” Clearly, the movement and relaxation benefits of yoga were meaningful to the participants.

The incorporation of yoga practice as a medium for understanding management and their managerial roles, proved to be an effective and powerful pedagogical tool for the women managers. As the researcher, I made a concerted effort to keep my own practice going during the course of the study as a way to reflect on how yoga impacts my own experiences. One of my most significant reflections occurred near the end of June in a journal entry that included the following: “I am reminded how closed I am to so many things—in my body, in my mind, in almost everything. I shut down to new things too quickly and give in to not doing well or feeling uncomfortable.” For me, the significance of these reflections were multi-faceted, but they impacted me the most in making sure I stayed flexible to the action research process and stayed committed to the task of creating strong connections for the women participating between the body and management.

Finding Validation through Gendered Discourse

My own journal entries just two weeks into the study reveal my recognition that the emotionally charged topic of the body required a delicate facilitation of and focus on a gendered discourse. For these women, a gendered discourse meant the inclusion of storytelling, experience sharing, and a focus on the body in tandem with dialogue.
Without recognizing these elements as the establishment of a gendered discourse at the time, many of my journal entries described a major outcome of this study—the strong validation the women felt at sharing the same challenges and in some cases, empowerment around their strengths as women. For example:

I love this process so far—looking into women’s eyes and faces; seeing their laughter around questions about gender; hearing their silences around the topic of the body, their’s in particular. The pauses are so filled with meaning; so many words unspoken because no one has asked. There are so many stories of uplifting, so many stories of overcoming the barriers, and I have to continuously tell myself I am up to the task of drawing out those stories. Finding a common ground, a safe foundation, on which each woman can come together and find comfort, validation, inspiration, or support is a goal perhaps I didn’t realize I had.

These reflections hinted at how important the establishment of a safe environment where the sharing of stories and experiences would be a meaningful part of understanding the body’s relationship was to the women’s managerial experience. Hence, our dialogue became gendered—women’s experiences being shared with other women. The creation of this space to foster dialogue between women focusing on the body and management was critical because as Melanie pointed out, “none of us have a forum to talk about” these issues.

The majority of the women completed the study with a strong sense of connection and reflected sentiments of validation and empowerment. Many of the women attributed their ability to connect and relate to one another to the small and large group discussions we had during the workshop sessions. A recurring theme was that the women were
surprised at the ways in which each participant was similar. Rose explains in her follow-up interview:

I really did find it interesting, informative, educational, and beneficial to hear perspectives of other women in the group. It was really empowering and validating. It was interesting to hear how everyone has handled things differently and to learn from each other. As a woman, it’s part of that bonding thing. There’s something really cool about women.

Likewise, several other women commented on the unexpected comfort of realizing they shared a great deal with one another from personal and managerial perspectives. Caroline found it “enlightening to hear everybody’s story” and realized that “the same type of things, battles with men and other struggles are different in different environments, but the troubles are basically the same,” which taught her “to better cope” when stressed out at work.” Makayla also valued the storytelling aspect of the dialogue noting, “I was really impressed with how similar our stories were, although we’re so distinctly different.” Maria valued listening to the other women participants’ experiences saying, “it was interesting to hear others talk and to realize how similar we all actually were.” Rebecca reported that for her, the most valuable aspect of participating in the study was the enjoyment of “meeting new, professional women” and that she now “realize[s] that women managers in all types of professions have the same kinds of issues and deal with the same things.” Grandy agreed with Caroline and Rebecca saying she realizes “I am not alone and that many of us struggle to keep the balance…we all have breakdowns on occasion, and that is OK, too.” Speaking from her bi-cultural perspective, Melanie commented that, “one of the interesting things I learned from this is it doesn’t
matter the nationality, it doesn’t matter where you’re from, it doesn’t matter if you’re thin or fat, everybody’s conscious of the stereotypes” regarding body types. Because she comes from a very machismo culture, Melanie was surprised that, “some of these other women have some of those same notions that I have.” Olivia agreed that it was reassuring to know that the things she worries about “other women are worrying about,” and “the mere fact that it’s reassuring means that I can worry less about them because it’s nothing unique to me, and maybe that comes from the need to be sort of like everyone else, not to be some sort of deviant.” Specifically, Melanie, Olivia, and Makayla agreed that the universal concern about body image among the participants was especially reassuring. “We have so many people from a wide age group…we’re all still dealing with the same issues. It led me to think [body image] is partly a gender thing, not just an age thing,” Makayla explained.

The discussions were also a means of self-validation for Olivia and served as a way for her to test out previously unshared ideas on others. She was pleased to find that her ideas about stress and conflict “were confirmed as a result of the discussion.” Olivia elaborated saying, “being able to verbalize my ideas and seeing other people verbalize it themselves so I understand my idea better” was a form of “validation of my ideas.”

In late July a journal entry of mine read, “I am amazed at the dynamics of the group…the women seem willing to reveal very personal details.” My feelings were echoed by some of the group members. “I was surprise that people that were older still worried about their body image,” Rose commented. Caroline provided a clue as to why this openness may have occurred saying that when “we talked about everybody’s background and how they grew up, that was a good experience for understanding how
they think about other people.” Clearly, dialogue played an important role throughout the
development of the action research process. The discursive element that revealed itself as
so valuable to the participants at first seemed contradictory to a study focusing on
somatic learning, but Rose explained “that’s why I think this [study] was really
good…because we had discussions. It wasn’t just a yoga class. We also talked, so it
allowed me to make more connections about how I can start bringing yoga in.” The
following section will explore the role of yoga in this study and the potential
contributions of the practice for creating somatic pedagogy for women managers.

Taking Time to Journal

As a reflective element of the study, journaling provided unexpected benefits to
some participants. Jasa pointed out that, “journaling is something you never take time to
do; what you’re thinking, or why did you handle something a certain way, and to think
about it was interesting.” For Olivia, the prospect of journaling did not strike her as a
pleasant part of participating in the study. “I don’t like journaling anything, so that for me
was a big struggle. The whole thing of writing down personal thoughts to me is a no-no.
If I write down something, … it is torn up and thrown away,” she explained.

However, Olivia went on to describe how the experience of journaling was
different this time: “on one side it was like pure torture, but on the other side, I was
surprised at what I could produce if I really put my mind to it.” Journaling had produced
surprising benefits for Jasa as well. “The one night that I had a death in my family, and I
came to [the workshop], I wasn’t focusing on what I was doing.” That evening, Jasa said
that writing in her journal “was very interesting and [revealed] things I never thought I
would realize.” The combination of movement, discussion, and individual reflection proved to be a useful approach to the integration of the body with management for these women managers. As a tool for both the action research process and establishing a somatic pedagogy, journaling both during workshop sessions and outside of the sessions provides an invaluable approach for ongoing reflection of the experience.

**Fostering Learner-Centeredness**

During the study, I solicited feedback from the participants about how they felt the study was progressing and for their suggestions for improvement, change, or topics. From the beginning, I received many insightful comments. For example, Makayla shared in an email after the planning session that, “I thought Monday went really great. The women come from such diverse backgrounds, and I think it is really great that there are different ages represented.” Because of the diversity in age represented in the group, Makayla postulated that the study could “be a wonderful opportunity for some of us younger managers/professionals to learn from their experiences, successes and failures.” Sue agreed remarking on the “great group of women with lots of experience” and how she enjoyed “how Tara made it ‘our’ experience and gave us a chance to tell her what we wanted from this adventure.” It was very important to me as part of the feminist participatory action research process to make sure the women felt as though they were collaborators in the research from the beginning. However, my own self-doubt was evident as a novice researcher in the following journal entry:

Tonight's session was good, but SO quick. It's so hard to get 12 people or so involved in just 2 hours time. I am worried about the journals they are supposed to
be doing--I didn't get many turned in, and it's not like they are being graded so it's hard to come up with a reason for them to stay on top of them. I guess it's a low night for me overall---really the ambiguity is killing me---I just don't know if I am doing this whole research thing right. If there is a "right" to this methodology. I am hoping a night's rest will shine a new perspective.

As the study sessions progressed, the women shared with each other via email how they connected their learning from the study to their managerial role. After the session discussing assertiveness and aggressiveness, Samantha reported to me via email that she had received “good input from the group about handling a difficult situation…brewing at work” and that she now had “a game plan to address the issue.” The next day Samantha reported back to the entire study group via email:

Thank you all so much for your input last night—and Tara for the handouts!!! I reviewed them last night, had my meeting this morning to discuss another topic and brought the discussion around to the new hire—everything went perfectly!! I had a win-win and now feel a stronger relationship with this employee, and I feel like the weight of the world is off my shoulders! Thanks for listening and providing such insightful and useful feedback.

The giving and receiving of feedback occurred not only between participants, but also between the participants and me as the researcher. The following email is an example of how I would solicit feedback from the participants about the structure of the sessions as well as asking for suggestions for new topics:

Hello everyone! We had a great session last night (at least I think so) with a slightly revised format. We did some short segments of yoga (15 min or so) then
about 5-7 minutes of journaling and then some large group discussion. We repeated this cycle about 3 times. I felt like the link between emotions/feeling and yoga/body was more obvious with this format. I'll be anxious for feedback from those of you who were there to see what your thoughts were.

We have officially completed 4 sessions of our study! It's time to transition from emotions and feelings on to a new topic. The questions about deepening our conversations could make up our next two sessions, but I really want to hear from everyone about how we can share our stories with one another in a way that involves everyone and includes our bodies!

Three of the participants provided particularly salient responses to my email remarking on both structure and developing ideas for future sessions.

Rose: I think Monday’s format worked well. Since each yoga segment focused on a certain area, that helped direct our focus. And then writing about it immediately afterwards allowed us to capture our feelings real-time. I think we also managed to get more yoga into the session, but also had plenty of focused discussion. As I mentioned to you after the session, I liked the music. I’m still working on the deepening our conversations part.

Desi: I personally like the idea of stress management or maybe something to do with handling the varied emotions we experience at work. How to understand the way our bodies respond to different exposures or situations. Of course with that understanding we can come back to how we can use the practice of Yoga to manage those responses of our bodies. I find that sometimes I don't recognize
some emotions as stress. Since the emotions aren't identified, I don't deal with them accordingly. By the way, I do like the sharing in an open forum. I think it lends different perspectives. Oh, and did I mention that it takes the pressure off of me to speak...:-). I think the sessions are going very well. I look forward to the meetings.

Jasa: I agree last night was another great session! I would like to touch stress management at some point. If we have time, let’s also discuss conflict management. These areas are always good discussions. I think I like the small groups better than the larger groups because people seem to be more willing to share their ideas. The yoga at the end was also nice. We were able to build through the session.

The women strongly valued the group discussions and being able to hear the experiences of other women managers and share their own experiences. Maria describes her reactions to the group discussions:

    During the small group discussions, I felt a connection with the other members. I found myself relating to a lot of what the other women said. We all had a lot in common with regards to beliefs, the way we were raised, etc. Hearing their stories made me feel that I wasn’t so strange after all.

Melanie expanded upon the comments by Maria noting how she felt a closer bond with the group as a result of the discussions: “It was very interesting to hear the group’s comments. [I feel] very united with the group. For some reason I feel more close.”

Agreeing with Maria and Melanie, Makayla added, “I think the sessions are going well. I enjoy hearing the stories of the other women in the group.” Olivia also recognized that
many of the issues discussed by the group revealed the similar concerns possessed by all
women. She remarked in our closing session that “the issues that women face are the
same wherever you go” and that “women in these [managerial] positions don’t get
enough exposure—if they did, that would be great because there would be more role
models for young girls.”

The objective of being a co-researcher along with the participants, proved to be
challenging. Because I often asked the women to share intimate details about themselves
from both personal and professional perspectives, I tried to be equally open about my
own experiences. During our session about body image, I had hoped to disclose my own
issues as a way of setting the stage for open sharing among the group. My journal entry
from that evening reveals my mixed feelings about how I fulfilled my role as co-
researcher:

I feel like I pulled back in my intro to the body image stuff and really didn’t
disclose everything—the whole story of being OCD about food and dropping
weight, counseling, anti-depressants, the whole deal. Even today, the ongoing
struggle—I think I reached out to some individual women—those who I resonate
with the most. That’s what is so rewarding—to see women getting excited and
passionate about issues that are near and dear to my heart in positive and negative
ways. That’s the part I want to continue—the dialogue, the sharing of stories and
experiences, pains and pleasures that bond us together as women, as human
beings.

It seems as though while I felt as if I pulled back from full disclosure, the audiotapes
from the small group discussions revealed that the women did share their own
complicated body image issues. Also, this journal entry reveals how I also noticed the connections being made between the women and how the topics, decided by the participants, and subsequent dialogue became both empowering and validating.

Perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of maintaining email communication between each session with the participants was the peripheral items some of the women would come across and share with me. For example, the poem shared by Samantha that yielded the session about deepening our conversation as a way to strengthen the group’s bond by exploring one another’s background proved to be very powerful. Olivia also sent me an email with a quote that she inserted with her own emphasis, underlining and bolding what she was taking away from the study:

Being able to live our life’s purpose depends on our ability to remember to honor our authentic self – to remember to be grateful and appreciative of all that is around us; **to be grateful to our body, and all its’ parts functions and dysfunctions**, to our mind - the thoughts and the ability we have to quiet them down and “choose what we think”; to be grateful of our time on the planet and enjoy, use and respect every moment; to work towards making every moment count, every moment meaningful; to express our love for others; to forgive, give and be thankful for all that we have; to experience challenges as opportunities for further growth; to continue to realize, remember or return to our authentic self.

That is our life’s purpose.

The purpose of life is to know that we have choices and we can always choose to return to our authentic self—to that place where we know “all is well”—like **choosing to return the attention to our breath during a breathing meditation.**
when the mind tries to distract us. Like Guru Satchidananda always said, we must be like the Lotus Flower—although it lives in muddy waters it never gets soiled, the dirt just rolls off of it.

From someone who was quite unsure about the connection of the body to management and even more uncertain about how yoga could aid in this connection, Olivia’s sharing of this quote was very rewarding to receive.

Additionally, during post-study interviews, I solicited feedback from the participants about their assessment of the study overall. The responses offered helpful suggestions for the future as well as constructive criticism and praise. Commenting on the participatory nature of the study Melanie said, “You were trying to get more participation out of us, but I think we’re kind of shy on what to do also. By you taking some of the original steps and the control saying this is what my plan is and you guys can have some feedback, it worked out really well.” Rose also noticed that fostering participation among the women was challenging. She explained:

At first you were trying to get everybody to participate. I think in some cases, you needed to say this is how I think we should do it. It was obvious you were open to input. Maybe it’s because everyone is so busy, but just tell us what to do and we’ll go with it. We didn’t really know how things were going to go, and it’s so hard to anticipate how it should go.”

Recognizing the difficulty of bringing a diverse group together, Melanie empathized saying, “It was tough because you have all these different people with different interests, but “it was a great effort.” Given the large group and the diversity, Rose suggested permanent nametags so as to learn everyone’s name.
Jasa appreciate the structure of the workshops, especially how the women “could talk bout management things, learn something from each other.” and the relaxation really helped.” Melanie enjoyed the content of the workshops commenting that there was “very good material.”

For most of the women, the study’s main benefit was the discussion and interactive components. As Jasa remarked, “discussing issues helped. I like being in a group. I found that beneficial. I like meeting people constantly, networking with other people.” Olivia agreed saying, “I’ve been in groups with women, but I’ve never really been in a group with all professional women. It was a treat. For me, it’s another step toward valuing women even more.” Rose concurred commenting, “It was a great experience. I enjoyed it on many levels. The interaction with the other women was great. It was fun and nice to share with other people the experiences of management. The information opened up my mind to thinking about things differently.” The discussions and interactions created what Dee noticed as a “bond” among different group members.

For Dee the experience was also personally rewarding in how it emphasized her own development as manager. She explained, “Participating in the class and hearing other people helped me recognize the growth that I’ve had for the years I’ve been involved in management.”

Overall, the women found the experience to be “extremely positive experience,” as described by Jasa. The importance of bringing women together was reflected by comments such as this one by Olivia: “I think that [women’s] role in society is just so hidden and minimized, so it was a good experience. Dee appreciated seeing “women taking time for themselves” because while men tend to take personal time, women often
do not. “So, women taking time to do something, to slow down, to take care of their bodies, and take care of the mental aspect of their world is very important,” she reiterated.

As the researcher, there are many aspects of the research design that I would modify if using a feminist participatory action research approach in the future. The feedback from the participants provides insight into their interpretation of how the study was structured and the challenges and rewards that occur from participant-centered research. As an element of creating somatic pedagogy, it is critical to consider the approach to integrating the body with a specific group. For these women, the value in this approach revolved around dialogue and discussion, the incorporation of yoga practice, which called attention to the body and the benefits of relaxation, and the power of journaling reflections as the process unfolded. As a result of conducting the study, the participants revealed many new insights about the relationship between the body, management, and women. The following section explores this integration in depth.

New Perspectives of the Body, Management, and Women

At the conclusion of the study, the participants made new connections between the body, management, and being a woman. The relationship between these three topics yielded four main categories: discussing aspects of positionality, revealing body language, juggling and balancing expectations, and controlling emotions. Because Feminist Poststructuralism provided the theoretical grounding for this research, exploring how the participants integrated consideration of their positionality is significant. The following explanation provides a deeper understanding of how women managers make
sense of the body’s integration into their lives from the perspective of the intersecting elements of their positionality.

*Discussing Positionality: Ethnicity, Age, Socioeconomic Class, and Religion*

The fifth workshop session focused on deepening the participants’ conversations with one another through a set of journal questions aimed at discussing various aspects of positionality, which seeks to uncover the intersection of elements such as gender, race, age, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, ableness, and religious/spiritual beliefs. Beyond gender, the journal questions encouraged the participants to consider their ethnicity, age, socioeconomic class, and religion. The following dialogues between small groups of participants reveal how these women shared their background and perspectives, which often informed them personally and professionally. In the exchange below, the women discussed the influence of traditional and non-traditional gender roles in their formative years. This first group discussion excerpt alludes to not only issues around gender but also class, ethnicity, and age issues as well. Without using the terminology themselves, the women were beginning to connect different aspects of their positionality. Makayla, Desi, Maria, and Caroline shared the following dialogue:

*Makayla:* I grew up in a single parent household. It was my brother and I and my mom and so, it was really important to my mom that we each had, not traditionally gender-bound chores. We were kind of on this rotating schedule. I was taking out the garbage sometimes and he was setting the table. It’s kind of interesting because I fast-forward 20-years and I’m in this relationship with my
boyfriend and I definitely have taken on more of the female roles in the house. I don’t know exactly how it happened.

*Maria:* My family is very traditional like that. My mom was always doing the cooking and cleaning and my dad mowed the grass and did the male things, and now that I’m married I’m the exact same way.

*Desi:* With me, my parents had totally non-traditional roles, but interestingly enough, in my head, a woman has her place and a man has his place so that totally contradicts the way I was brought up. As I was writing, I wondered, where did I get that, because it wasn’t from my house. My dad cooked; my mom was better out being busy. My dad actually had more maternal instinct than my mom did, surprisingly enough. But still in my mind, a woman should be doing this and a man should be doing that. So then I reflect back, I’m not American, I’m from the West Indies, so the culture there is very male dominant. Women had their place, it should be in the home and men, traditionally in my culture, did not want their wives to work. They worked, the wives staying home and took care of 16 kids, or however many kids they have. Every one of my uncles have six kids minimum and my grandmother had 16. Women were there to have babies, period. So, that had more of an impact on my mind than my immediate household, which is surprising.

From this dialogue Makayla recognized that despite being encouraged to take on non-traditional gender roles, in her current relationship she has become responsible for the “female” roles in her own household. For Maria, she witnessed very traditional gender roles growing up and is repeating those assignments in her own family. For Desi, the
recognition that she was raised in a household modeling non-traditional gender roles does reflect in her own family now, but she realizes that the male-dominant West Indian culture has impacted the way she thinks.

A second small group of participants had a remarkably similar conversation incorporating elements of their positionality as women as well as the impact and significance of culture, religion, and education. The impact of culture and religion are significant to Olivia and Josephine, but in different ways. Like Desi, Olivia experienced non-traditional gender roles at home, but recognized the chauvinism of her culture. The message she received at her all-girls Christian school was for girls to be passive and quiet. Josephine picked up on Olivia’s mention of religious-based education, noting that many women she knows achieved great success as a result of segregated or partially-segregated religion-focused education. A portion of Olivia, Josephine, Rebecca, and Sue’s discussion revealed the following:

*Olivia:* I grew up in a family with two brothers. I was the youngest and I think in terms of gender roles, most of what I saw in terms of division came from outside of the home; actually, in the society itself and in my schools. Within the home itself, both my parents worked, and I saw both my parents do things that women were supposed to do or that men were supposed to do. In fact, when I was doing my write up, I put that it was not uncommon for my father to be doing the cooking. When I was little girl, he used to comb my hair more often than my mother did and do the housecleaning. And vice versa. I remember seeing my mom do things like going up on the ladder and hanging things and changing bulbs and painting. So, there wasn’t a division but I saw it in our society. It’s very, very
chauvinistic in the Caribbean. Caribbean men are the big time macho men. So, it was quite clear what the women were supposed to do and what the men were suppose to do. Also, I went to an all-girls school. It was a Christian school. I started in Catholic school and then ended up in all-girls. It was the sort of thing as girls we had to be all dressed—they used to inspect our fingernails and we’d have to be quiet and the dialect that we spoke—we couldn’t—if they heard us speaking dialect between ourselves we would be in trouble. So, it was the sort of thing that girls were expected to be seen and not heard. The thing about it is that it didn’t affect me that much because to be honest I never really began to think about gender roles until I left university and went out into the workforce. That is the first time that everything began to hit home.

*Josephine:* That’s interesting. I think that educational experience—I have found so many times that the women who I feel have made it successfully have been women who have had some of the experience you’ve just talked about. They came up in a Catholic grade school with all the disciplinary pieces of that plus, at least my recollection, is that boys sat on one side of the room and girls sat on the other or they could be segregated by sex into different classes. Then going into an all-girls high school and college where you were not even with the men and that gave you a confidence level before you got into that male-dominated workforce. Some made it and some caved.

*Rebecca:* Big surprise. (said with sarcasm)

The women from the first group also found that their upbringing impacted their choices about education, which was considered the key to independence from men. The
participants shared details about their upbringing during another portion of their
discussion:

*Makayla*: I was raised to be independent and not dependent on anyone else. In not
so many words, my mom meant on another man. Because my mom got married at
a very young age, she’s always been dependent on someone, so I’ve kind of been
the same way. I’ve always had long-term boyfriends. I’ve never really dated, per
se. So it was really important to me that I have someone who supported that I was
going to school and I wanted to have a career, despite doing these womanly things
that I do—I mean I like doing those things. I don’t mind. I know my boyfriend
appreciates it, but it was really important that I was with someone that respected
me as a woman and the things that I wanted to do. I was really never fond of
people who saw people as a prize, so to speak.

*Maria*: My family is kind of the same way. My mom and dad got married when
they were really young and my mom was still in high school when they got
married. So she never had a college degree and she always preached to me the
same thing: never depend on a man for anything, never depend on a man for
anything. She always depended on my father. She didn’t have a college degree.
Never got one. They’ve been divorced for about five years now and she’s now
going back to college. She said I’ve always wanted to go back to college and I’m
doing it. She started a couple years ago back to college after they got divorced.
She really preached: be independent, take care of yourself, learn how to take care
of yourself. I guess that’s why I’m very independent. I don’t expect my husband
to take care of me.
*Caroline:* I don’t know how I turned out the way I did. Honestly because my parents—they’re relationship was really bad and they fought constantly all the time. Very physically violent and verbally violent in the home all the time. They would say that they were going to get divorced and really, I would be glad that they were because I wouldn’t have to live like that even though it would be hard. And then they never would. They would stay together. Now that they’re older in their 60’s, they at least get along, but I swear I can’t ever remember a time seeing my mom and dad hold hands, kiss, hug, ever and not even to this day.

*Maria:* That sound exactly like my parents. Exactly.

*Desi:* My parents ended up divorcing when I was in college, sophomore year in college and they didn’t fight. But you could tell that they just weren’t close at all. But my dad was very passive as I think you could probably guess from him being the maternal one and my mom was very aggressive. So I think he spent his life trying to figure out who she was and get into to her head and try to switch roles. She didn’t want to do the maternal thing so he filled in whenever he felt it was necessary. So I don’t know. Maybe they taught me what not to do as a woman; how not to be as aggressive. Especially when I got married, I ended up marrying a very passive man as well, so I am going, OK. So maybe she taught me to tone down a little bit, because I am very aggressive just as she is and sometimes I have to think back and go, oh, and I talk to my dad a lot and say, what am I supposed to do in this case, how do you handle that. Maybe it helped me in what not to do and what to pay attention to.
The conversation thread above segues from education to considering how parental relationships impacted the women’s current relationships. For Caroline, she expresses amazement that she escaped her parents abusive relationship relatively unscathed, and Desi reflects further on her parents non-traditional gender roles and speculates the messages she observed from them.

The third group of women immediately engaged their discussion around the topics of culture and age in addition to how they learned about gender roles and the impact of education, which also reveals implications about socioeconomic class. The women reveal that college was an expectation in their families, and for some, they were the first in their family to achieve a masters degree. A selection from their dialogue provides an example:

*Jasa:* So what did we all learn in our different culture?

*Melanie:* Well, I’ll start. I come from a different one so sometimes I just don’t so maybe I offer a different mirror to you guys. The family roles for me were very clear. Women belonged to the house, the kitchen, the kids and that’s it. Meanwhile men are supporting and everything falls from there.

*Jasa:* How young were you expected to start in the kitchen and all of that?

*Melanie:* Oh, always. I had two brothers and I am the only woman, they will leave their things lying around an always have mom to pick up their stuff. When I came (US) and saw guys do their laundry and cook, I was like oh my god! (laughter)
Dee: What culture do you come from? What’s your background?

Melanie: I come from Mexico City. I have been here for five years. A big change, big change. Very much a cultural change.

Dee: How old are you?

Jasa: I’m 26.

Dee: You’re probably the same as me (speaking to Grandy). I was raised in a home where I had a stay at home mom and my dad worked. It was very interesting. It was very divided rules but my brother and I were raised to do everything. He did the dishes and cleaned and I had to change the oil in the car and paint the house so I learned how to do all of those things even though it was so definitive growing up. Was your home like that?

Grandy: Yeah. My mom worked until she had children. It’s my sister and I. Then, she didn’t work outside the home until we were gone and then she went back into the workplace and worked as a bank teller until she retired some years ago. I would say even though my dad worked he did a lot around the house, too. When I was born, I mean—I don’t recall this but my mother talked a lot about it—my dad was taking care of me. He did the bottles and he was so proud to have a daughter and he did a lot of that kind of thing even though he’s the one that worked out of the home. As far as the house kinds of things and cooking and things like that, my mother did. But my father was very, very involved all along the way. Still is.

Jasa: Both of my mom and dad worked, except for the first four years. I have an older brother so by the time I was 4 and my brother was 6, she went back to
work. Both very involved. Like you said my brother and I were taught to do equal things and I definitely think that has helped in our older lives. We’re both very self-sufficient. Both parents were college educated—that was expected that you would do that, too.

_Deep:_ Yeah, that was expected of us, too. I had a counselor that told me that I wasn’t smart enough to go to college. Which was really, really bizarre because I was college bound and he was like it’s going to be very tough for you. In my home going to college is like going to high school. It’s expected. There’s no question that you’re going. It’s whether you’re going to go on for your master’s. It’s kind of interesting how things turn out.

_Grandy:_ The expectation from us is to grow up, get through school and get a good job so you had to have a good education, good training to get that good job.

_Melanie:_ I agree with that point. It’s funny enough. I am doing my MBA just now. I will be the first one on my mom’s side to have a bachelor’s and an MBA. And on my dad’s side I will be the third one to have my bachelor’s and the second one to have my MBA. So we’re like a generation behind you.

_Deep:_ And how old are you?

_Melanie:_ 32.

_Deep:_ Yeah, I’m the first one in my family to have an advanced (degree).

_Grandy:_ I’m probably older than you. How old are you?

_Deep:_ 49.

_Grandy:_ I’m 55.
This conversation thread revealed that the women were interested to know one another’s ages so as to make better sense of their generational influences, particularly in relationship to education.

Dee, Grandy, Jasa, and Melanie continued their discussion, and the topic turned to marital status. Dee had previously shared with the group that she experienced “a really bad divorce,” and she described one of her strategies that attempted to hold the marriage together:

One of the things that I did to try to salvage my marriage before it fell apart was when I did go back to work when the kids were in school I gave my paycheck to my husband, and I didn’t get any money at all. I was bringing home $1,000 every two weeks, and if I took $20 out, it was like what are you taking that for?

Dee’s sharing of personal and painful details about her divorce prompted Melanie to also share a similar experience. Melanie explained:

Before I came here (to the U.S.) I got divorced, too. One of the problems was the money because he wanted me to get out of work and have kids and just stay in the kitchen. I was like you met me working, and I will continue to do it. But I almost paid him to let me come here. I just took my books and my clothes. I left him my car and all my money and said just let me go.

After Melanie recounted this experience Jasa remarked, “Good for you,” and Dee added, “You didn’t let yourself down, that’s for sure.” This small portion of the indication reveals the level of comfort evident in the group as they shared difficult personal stories and offered words of encouragement. Through the sharing of these stories, which
positioned both Dee and Melanie as divorcees, the women revealed another element of their positionality within the complex web of their discussion.

Then, Dee turned the conversation to religion asking about her group member’s religious affiliations. Their conversation revealed the impact of religion on their lives as well as a consideration about how gender and religion intersect. For example:

*Jasa:* I definitely think that shape a lot of my childhood. It was a lot like education. You were also expected to go to church growing up. That really set your morals and your values growing up. I can really tell that has an influence even as an adult now.

*Dee:* What about the roles in the church for men and women?

*Jasa:* Good point. They were very much male-dominated now that you say that.

*Grandy:* And they still are.

*Jasa:* Yeah, the are. I’ve never really thought about that.

*Grandy:* I’m married to a minister. I’m in my second marriage, too. I had a nasty divorce, too.

*Jasa:* My parents had a nasty divorce so I feel all your pain.

*Grandy:* I’ve been married 20 years now in my second marriage, and my husband is a minister of Christ Reformed Church. Both he and I were raised Southern Baptist. He’s divorced. Males. That’s another area, back then, that wasn’t accepted either. So he was out of ministry for a while and then he got back into it. Right now he has an associate pastor who is a female and prior to her he had another associate who was a female. The lady that we had before was not very well accepted because she was very into this inclusive language
where she’s pretty much a women’s libber. Inclusive language means that instead of saying, referring to god as a he you just say god because to someone like that they don’t necessarily give a gender to god. So she didn’t succeed in our church because we had a lot of older folks there and that just turned them. The gal that we have now is very young. She’s like 24, and she’s not really like that so she’s been more accepted in our church, but growing up in the Baptist Church that would be a no-no. Probably still would be a no-no. It’s still very much male-dominated.

*Dee:* In our church it was—actually our church split partway because we decided to accept women elders, which meant that women could be up on the platform and pray and ordain people and all that. Several of the people, and a large majority were women, left our church and went to another church that didn’t accept women elders in their church. This happened just a few ago. (Wows). It’s amazing.

*Jasa:* That you’re still fighting that battle.

*Dee:* Yeah, such a distinction up there between the male and female role.

*Melanie:* I come from a Catholic background. I would say that 90% of Mexicans are Catholic so for me it’s very male-dominated, too. It was announced in school for 18 years and my mom and her sisters went to a Jesuit university and now the Mount is this Catholic university—that was my only reference. I didn’t know any better so I said oh, I’ll come here. It has been a major thing for a set of values and the role for women.
In an interesting turn of the conversation, Dee asks the group about the impact of religion on their managerial role. Each of the women revealed that religion has positively influenced their approach to managing. A portion of the conversation revealed:

Dee: Has your experience and exposure to the Christian environment impacted you in your managerial role?

Jasa: For me I know it’s been very positive in that one my main philosophy as a manager is positive reinforcement totally. In trying to show them a better way without being too directed. Too direct being real forceful and that sort of thing.

Dee: Like dictatorial?

Jasa: Right. Try and be almost not completely opposite but not having them walk away feeling bad. At least letting me know how to do the correction and letting them know this is how to do it without being so direct. I think that’s what I would feel from church—uplifted when I would leave and that sort of thing and I kind of carried that away.

Melanie: I would thing that also to being fair and always telling the truth and a way to be in a more free kind of stage.

Grandy: Our church up here is very into what’s going around downtown. This church had the opportunity to build elsewhere but this church wanted to stay down here where prostitutes are and the homeless are and the folks there chose to stay in this kind of an environment. They are very active in the community. REACH is there now and the Commission on Aging. Our church is so connected with all of those things. I think where that’s helped me is we just totally feel like we respect and try to understand the diversity. My husband is
one of the people involved in the interfaith community in trying to get people to understand and respect the diversity even between religions. The Muslims and things like that. I think that has probably helped me in my managerial role in being accepting of others, the way they feel, their beliefs, the diversity.

*Jasa:* That outreach program is so rewarding. I went and volunteered in it. Very eye-opening.

The second group devoted a portion of their discussion to peer relationships and the difficulty negotiating these relationships as part of the managerial identity. An obvious element of each participant’s positionality was the status as a manager. Being female and a manager revealed itself to be challenging for peer relationships. Rebecca, Josephine, Sue, and Olivia shared the following about peer relationships:

*Rebecca*: I have trouble defining the peer piece. I mean these two are my peers (Maria and Grandy) and the other managers in the hospital are my peers, but I still think of some of the staff as my peers because there’s times when I act in that role so it’s very blurry for me.

*Josephine*: Since these two are your peers, does that mean the rest of your peers are primarily women?

*Rebecca*: Yeah, there’s one male manager at the hospital.

*Josephine*: My entire life, almost without exception my peers have been males and that was difficult as a young woman. It was difficult as a pregnant woman—four times. It’s difficult now because they are still almost all men—well, right now. A year ago there was a woman that left the company. The really hardest part
is when my direct reports who are women are always expecting me to carry the
torch for them. That’s a tough position.  
*Sue*: Because if you let them down….  
*Josephine*: They never forget.  
*Sue*: They never forget. When you fail them, you’re not one of them.  
*Josephine*: You’ve become one of the boys.  
*Rebecca*: Yeah, I don’t have that problem as much, but some of the females can
still call you a bitch. (Laughter)  
*Josephine*: Oh yeah.

From the excerpt above, the women find conflict in the intersection of their managerial
role and their role a peer in the workplace. Not only does Josephine point out the
challenges of pregnancy within an all-male work environment, but she also reflected the
difficulty of being expected to be the voice of all women in the organization by her
female peers.

These small group discussion excerpts from the fifth workshop session revealed
how the women began to develop a deeper sense of trust with one another and were able
to dialogue about various aspects of their positionality, which transcended gender to
include cultural, religious, age, education, and class influences. These discussions
revealed that the participant’s ideas about gender roles, education, and cultural
expectations as well as the influence of religious affiliations and life stages contributed to
their understanding of themselves as women. Chapter six will interpret these findings
from a feminist poststructural lens and the significance of discussing positionality as a
way of constructing knowledge and giving voice to women’s experiences.
A key association for understanding the body in relationship to the managerial role emerged in the women’s reference to the significance of body language and how women specifically represent themselves in this non-verbal mode of communication. In her follow-up interview Rose provided an example of the connection between the body, management, and being a woman as being evident in simple body language. “Women might tend to, if they don’t feel confident or if they feel intimidated by the circumstances, reveal that in their body language,” she elaborated. Rose added that men are more likely to express their confidence in their posture and body language because they are often “more forward and assertive in their mannerisms” and women tend take on more defensive or protective postures such as crossed arms or legs. Jasa also recognized the importance of portraying self-confidence as a manager: “The more confident you feel about yourself and your body, the better manager you’re going to be with your employees and your customers. If you’re tired in your body, you’re not going to be as effective as a leader.” Additionally, Makayla agreed that “as managers we need to be aware of our body language” because “employees can read your body language and acknowledge your tone of voice; they can see when you’re stressed.”

Continuing with her observation of gender difference in body language, Rose explained that men in power positions carry their bodies in certain ways so that “their body shows their power.” Building on Rose’s remarks, Sue pointed out how subtly women can use their bodies: “Women and body language is huge. It could be just an eyebrow going up.” Likewise, Josephine said, “interpersonal savvy body language is just huge.”
Olivia agrees with Josephine’s assessment of the importance of how people portray their bodies:

Within the workplace itself, when the body image that your portraying is one of negativity…. you can put your body in a certain way that makes you look small. When you look small, that’s when people pounce on you and try to take advantage of you. On the other hand, you can sort of pick up your chest, lift up your head, walk with a strong stride instead of looking like a little mouse, and people will think twice before they try to take advantage of you.

Makayla believes in her gut instinct as a way to help her read the body language of others. Noticing people whom “don’t make eye contact with you or they’re kind of shuffling in their seat” helps her to determine honesty when conducting human resource investigations in her managerial role. Noticing others behaviors is also advocated by Dee who says, “If people start paying attention to the people in their environment, they become more in tune with recognizing those things before people do get critically ill.”

Overall, body language reveals many unspoken messages about power, confidence, honesty, and health as well as the significance of non-verbal behaviors based on gender. The following section address the women’s experiences negotiating the pressures of internal and external expectations.

_Juggling and Balancing Expectations_

A prevalent idea that emerged from the follow-up interviews addressed the impact of high expectations, often self-created, that inflict stress and pressure on otherwise already over-taxed women. Many of the participants found a great deal of value in the
sessions addressing stress and worry, and Rose related her own stress as being connected to being a woman saying “a lot of it is managing your own expectations, looking at things from a different perspective of what you can control and change and what you can’t.”

The same connection was made by Caroline who said, “there’s definitely a lot more pressure put on a woman,” but women “put more pressure on ourselves than men do because if I’m seen as weak, then I’m not going to be as effective as a manager.”

Rebecca also finds that “being a woman manager is a juggling act and balancing everything is key.” She explained that she’s always felt compelled to “make sure everything was perfect” and after the study she is “more realistic” with her expectations and does not “punish” herself for those things that are out of her control. Similarly, Maria feels “pulled in many directions most of the time” and that she “needs to be all things to all people.” She finds it difficult to take time out for relaxation, and even feels guilty for slowing down her hectic pace. Rose reiterated these comments from her co-participants by pointing out that the resulting stress of setting high expectations “can definitely influence the way you react to situations or the way you interact with other people or just handle things that come to you everyday as a woman manager.” For Makayla, the management of expectations requires giving herself credit for her many responsibilities. She explains:

I don’t think I give myself enough credit when credit is due. I realize that I do a lot, and it was kind of reassuring to hear from the other women that we can wear so many different hats. This is one reason why I haven’t gotten married, because I feel like I do too much, and I don’t always necessarily have an equal partner. I do
spread myself thin, but it seems like a lot of women do that, and maybe that’s in our nature. Maybe that’s expected.

Other participants concur that these follow-up views on the body, management and being a woman require strength, balance, and flexibility in all roles to effectively manage the pressure and expectations. On a positive note, Grandy finds that “women are pretty strong beings” and they “become experts at management of life, work, children, husbands…” Throughout this delicate balance, she admits that “our bodies do react” and without maintaining equilibrium, women “really notice the impact physically and emotionally.” Likewise, Melanie says, “If you are OK yourself and you have some balance in your physical state, you are able to do a better job of managing.”

Controlling Emotions

The emotional component also emerged as significant to the body, management, and being a woman connection. As other participants discussed the stressful aspects of managing, Caroline finds that in difficult situations she tries to be mindful when she is “working with people that you don’t want to show emotions to” and keeping facial muscles in check and maintaining a passive expression. Desi also found emotions to be a strong issue for women managers in her follow-up interview. She said:

Women are typically emotional beings. In addition, we tend to be very conscious of our body image. Most often we fail to realize that our emotions affect our behaviors and how we care for our bodies. If we lose control of our emotions, we tend to make poor decisions regarding our bodies. This most often translates into poor physical health. Poor health leads to poor body image, which leads to low
self-confidence. The combination produces a poor manager. The reverse is also true; healthy emotional state, health bodies, high self-esteem, productive manager.

In the same vein, Caroline agrees about women’s sensitivity about image and emotions saying, “We automatically think we’re under the microscope.” For her the result is a catch-22. Regardless if women are labeled as too emotional because they are easily upset or too emotional because they’re very forceful, there is a no-win situation as a female manager. Caroline advises finding a “happy medium” and learning “to control these things (emotions).” Samantha also finds the expectations of being a manager “tough, demanding, and usually unfair.” For her the connection between the body, management, and being a women impact her both physically and emotionally:

My body is a barometer of how things are progressing professionally. I take things more personally (as a woman) and those feelings, positive or negative, have a direct impact on how I feel physically and emotionally. There are days when I feel like I am a mannequin—just going through the motions—other days I feel like a whirling dervish—whipping through the day and running with the ball. I have to learn to stay centered and consistent.

Like Samantha, Caroline is always conscious about her body’s expressiveness as a manager. She’s been told she wears her emotions on her face and regularly tries to control actions such as “scrunching her eyebrows” or folding her arms, which has come across as her being angry in the past. Olivia added, “As a woman, I think that emotions, what’s happening to us emotionally, we find it very difficult just to keep it inside, and it tends to be reflected in how we move and in the things that we do.”
The challenge of balancing the emotional strengths of being a woman as well as the pitfalls of revealing too many emotions plagues many of these women. Emotionality in general is viewed negatively and as a potential weakness for women managers. Therefore, emotions are something these women try to “control” as a way to limit their emotional expressiveness. The final major theme identified from the participants resulted from their suggestions about how organizations can encourage people to honor their bodies.

Relieving Stress and Saving Money: Solutions for the Workplace

The women participants in the study had valuable ideas for how organizations can create workplaces that value and honor people’s bodies. Several categories emerged from the women’s responses, and the result of their suggestions center around the importance of reducing stress for employees and saving money for the company. The solutions the women suggested fall into five main categories: teaching body language, providing an active and stress-free workplace, taking breaks, insuring health, and teaming up.

Both Olivia and Makayla believe that training is a viable option for making the body important in the workplace. Olivia advocates that organizations “require employees to go through sensitivity training” focusing on “gestures, movements, and behaviors that are inappropriate in the workplace that could be offensive to other people.” Makayla strongly agreed saying, “everyone needs a class on body language.” Olivia went on to say that the importance of such training is particularly important “if you’re dealing with people from other cultures or other countries because the body language is different from culture to culture.”
Many of the women emphasized the importance of providing a space in the workplace so people can be active and/or reduce their stress. Olivia believes that organizations should be promoting health by “encouraging people to exercise by offering the opportunity in the workplace to be active” and “by offering healthy options in their eating establishments.” Jasa take on the responsibility personally of encouraging healthy habits among her employees recognizing that “by paying attention to yourself, eating right and exercising, you’re going to be less stressed, you’re going to be less tired, and you’re going to perform better.” At Jasa’s bank branch there is “mostly women” and they are “constantly challenging each other, asking who ran what last night?” This form of inter-office motivation creates not only awareness around activity and health, but also a sense of unity among the work group. Desi suggests companies could “have a gym on the premises” or “provide discounts to local gyms.” She also adds, “companies can also offer incentives to have vital signs checked on regular intervals.”

Rebecca and Caroline believe that minimizing stress would help to honor the body in the workplace. Rebecca “would love to have massage therapy on site.” Being in the healthcare industry she does not think the “industry focuses very much on self care” because the focus is “always on the care of others.” By offering classes about self care, Rebecca suggests that this will reverse the other-oriented approach to care and encourage those working in healthcare to pay more attention to their individual health needs. Caroline agrees:

I think that companies should pay more attention about how stress affects the body, and have some alternatives, things for people to do during the workday…a
place where you can go and maybe have games set up, fun stuff to do, those types of things, instead of solitude.

These women agree that organizations have a wide range of options for providing ways for people to be active, health conscious, and stress-free.

Another alternative suggested by the participants, presents a simple intervention for companies. As Dee states, “allow people to take a lunch break,” and provide an area to them where they can bring their own food because it’s healthier.” Charlotte wholeheartedly agreed that if someone “needs to take a break…go take a break…go to lunch.” Likewise, Caroline said, “it would be beneficial if people were feeling stress to allow them to get away for a few minutes.” Dee and Caroline reflected similar sentiments recognizing the importance of “allowing time to really relax because of the stresses that people experience in the workplace,” and that as a result, “there would be a lot less stress-related illnesses,” said Dee and Caroline respectively.

The various health insurance plans offered by organizations provide another avenue for bringing the body into focus at work. Olivia pointed out that, “through the sort of plans that [companies] offer as part of the job package, offering adequate insurance so that people are able to attend to their medical issues, get regular physicals instead of making it every two years” represents a significant way organizations can honor the bodies of those they employ. The impact to the company’s bottom line is just one of the visible benefits to providing adequate health insurance. Grandy commented, “Organizations need to recognize that in the long run you gain a more satisfied and productive employee and that ultimately can be a savings.” Healthier, active, less stressed
people do tend to contribute to a workplace where productivity is high, turnover is low, and job satisfaction is prevalent.

Several of the women saw value in companies offering fitness classes and encouraging people to participate in team exercise events, especially those that contribute to charitable causes. Beyond offering onsite exercise facilities, Olivia also suggested “offering things like teams of employees participate in walk-a-thons for charities.”

Likewise, Melanie commented that as managers there are “always extra activities that the company promotes, like the Wellness walk,” and as a manager, “you can say, ‘hey team, I don’t expect you to go, but I’d like us to go as a team.’”

For Grandy and Charlotte, the introduction of group programs “such as Yoga or Pilates” would “help employees with general health and well being and quite possibly things like attendance, illness, etc. would be less of an issue,” Grandy said. Taking the idea of classes such as Yoga or Pilates a step further, Charlotte contends:

Upper level management is all about strategic thinking and visions, and coming up with new ideas so that you are competitive. The only way new ideas and new inspirations will come to me is during yoga or after yoga after I clear out my head. It’s the clearing out of the thoughts, so you have space to have solutions to that problem. You need to be quiet and sit with the problem, and then, bam, the solution will come. I think with upper level management it’s crucial, because it’s a big strategic problem you have and there’s no quick fix to solve the problem. It would be great, to incorporate yoga, the spiritual side.

An added benefit of encouraging participation in team events is the possible teambuilding that could occur among people. Likewise, bringing classes that promote body awareness
and not just “workout” focused exercise, people in organizations can be reminded of their bodies in the context of working and managing, which is often the source of stress and tension.

From this wonderfully diverse group of women managers emerges thoughtful and practical suggestion about carrying their new or reinforced connections to the body into other contexts. There were many aspects of this research study that provided immense reward, but as one of my own journals explains nearly three quarters of the way through the study, one of the most rewarding elements was “to see women getting excited and passionate about issues that are near and dear to my heart in positive and negative ways. That’s the part I want to continue—the dialogue, the sharing of stories and experiences, pains and pleasures that bond us together as women, as human beings.” The depth of the findings explained in this chapter reinforces my sentiments from months ago, and indicate that there is much to learn from the women’s words.

Summary of Findings

The preceding thematic descriptions of the study’s findings explain how the participants made sense of exploring a somatic approach to management education. The women began their experience in the research process making various levels of connection between their managerial role and the body. Perceptions about the exhaustive qualities of management and the impact of stature, fitness, health, and aging all appeared as significant to the participants experience of management early on in the study. The research expanded to include the participants’ understanding of how gender intersects with managerial style and describes their challenges managing in male-dominated
environments and garnering respect and credibility. In describing their own approaches to managing the women described their styles as being involved, fair, compassionate, and nurturing. The experience of managing other women also emerged as a significant insight into how women themselves fall into the trap of stereotyping. The key factor in bridging the women’s body and management conceptions required a somatic element, which was the use of yoga as an intersecting practice. The use of yoga resulted in an expanded appreciation for the participants’ physicality, deepened their body awareness, and resulted in significant somatic connections to management. This chapter revealed key findings about how to foster somatic pedagogy and addresses the particular use of yoga, and the importance of dialogue, journaling, and learner-centeredness. The participants also shared many significant insights about how they perceive the intersection of the body, management, and being a woman and addressed sensitive issues such as body language, expectations, and emotions. Finally, the findings offer suggestions from the participants’ diverse experience about how the body can be valued and honored in the workplace. Chapter six will discuss these findings in relationship to their significance to feminist poststructuralism, adult and management education, the somatic learning model, and future research.
Chapter 6

Discussion

By showing how bodies contribute to pedagogy, we begin to take up agency, to initiate and innovate rather than ignore. In this process, mindfulness becomes an ally, not enemy, of bodily cognizance, allowing new layers of experience to surface, encouraging resistance to disembodied and dualistic pedagogies and eliciting experimentation in new forms of embodied pedagogy. (Sinclair, 2005, p. 102)

The intention of this chapter is to interpret the findings presented in chapter five and present the implications of the research. The purpose of this feminist participatory action research study was to explore a somatic learning approach to management education with women managers. The study was guided by four key research questions:

1. How do participants in this study view their experiences as a manager in general and the influence of gender more specifically?

2. How do these women make meaning of their body and its relationship to management within their environment?

3. How does the active engagement of the mind and body in the process of teaching management encourage women to acknowledge issues of gender, discourse, knowledge, language, and power?

4. How can a somatic pedagogy aid management education instructors in both workplace and classroom settings in fostering the personal and professional development of managers?

In order to consider a new approach to management education, specifically a somatic approach, the study utilized a feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework and a feminist participatory action research methodology so as to highlight the significance of gender to the research objectives.
This chapter will apply a feminist poststructural framework to analyze the significance of the findings, provide a discussion of the development of a somatic pedagogy and how the findings of this study can inform practice in both management and adult education, reengage the somatic learning model explained in chapter two to explore how the study informs and provides new understanding about the model, and discuss the implications and recommendations for future research. Finally, I reflect on the experience of conducting the study and remark on the whether or not the purpose of the research was accomplished.

Applying a Feminist Poststructural Lens

As a framework, a feminist poststructural lens allowed for examination of the significance of gender, power, language, discourse, knowledge, and truth in the context of somatic pedagogy. The study also considered each woman’s positionality, which is the intersection of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and religious orientation. Recognizing the positionality of the participants helped to provide an understanding of how the women have been impacted historically, culturally, and politically. Another outcome of focusing on gender as a unit of analysis allowed the study to examine existing patriarchal structures within management and discern the differences between women and men. The intention of feminist poststructuralism is to understand these differences as a way to affect social change and encourage women to reconsider their position within a patriarchal society. The critical element added by this study was the inclusion of a somatic approach to making sense of how women managers view their positionality, the impact of socially constructed meanings about gender, and examine their role in a male-
dominated culture. The ‘body as lens’ complimented the theoretical underpinnings of feminist poststructuralism and offered an alternative method for women to make meaning. Lastly, the specific influences of the constructs of language and discourse with this study are discussed and analyzed. The discussion below interprets the outcomes of the study using a feminist poststructural lens and considers how the study’s findings may inform the theoretical framework; explains the implications somatic pedagogy, including the importance of embodied dialogue, centrality of the learner, women’s body consciousness, and yoga as a form of pedagogy; expands the Somatic Learning Model presented in chapter two; offers implications for future research and reflections from the researcher.

Sharing the Intersections of Positionality

As women managers, each of the 15 participants shared two aspects in common—being women and being a professional. Beyond these two similarities, the women differed significantly in age, culture, years of experience in management, and body awareness. A critical part of the pre-interview process and workshop sessions was to solicit from the participants’ information about their background so as to encourage them to consider the significance of their positionality on the discussion topics. The ways in which the women drew connections about their positionality varied from participant to participant and emerged at different times during the course of the study. For example, because of the poem shared by Samantha (Appendix E), the participants had the opportunity to explore aspects of their positionality in depth. The journal questions (Appendix D) provided for the fifth session, entitled Deepening Our Conversation,
emerged from the premise behind the poem shared by Samantha. The journal questions asked how the participants learned about being a woman from their culture, including their family, ethnic, and religious culture. Additionally, the participants explored the ways in which they had learned about their bodies including from where and whom the messages were sent. A final question asked the women to consider how their cultural learning about gender and their body impacted their role as a manager.

This set of journal questions was especially significant to the study because they allowed the group to share intensely private information with one another. The result was that the women felt a strengthened bond with their co-participants and realized that they shared more in common than was assumed and developed a deeper level of cohesiveness. Consider Maria’s comment after this session: “We all had a lot in common with regards to beliefs, the way we were raised, etc. Hearing their stories made me feel that I wasn’t so strange after all.” For Maria, she progressed from feeling somewhat “strange” and different from the other women to realizing that there was much they had in common. Melanie echoed these sentiments saying, “It was very interesting to hear the group’s comments. [I feel] very united with the group. For some reason I feel more close.” (emphasis mine) The significance of sharing with one another details such as ethnicity, education, class, and age, incorporated the concept of positionality into the study. By examining the intersecting elements of their individual positionality and reflecting on the ways in which their ideas about both gender and the body evolved, the women gained appreciation and trust in their co-participants. The section in chapter five titled, *Discussing Aspects of Positionality* provides the dialogue from small groups of the participants and captures their experience with and ideas about gender roles, the impact
of age on their positionality, the intersection of religion with their management role, and their experiences with racism and education.

Moreover, the sharing of their experiences learning about being a woman and their body clearly reflected the feminist poststructural notion that connections between individuals and the intersecting structural systems of oppression and privilege may determine how students build knowledge, talk about their own experience, and relate in the classroom (Tisdell, 1998). A younger member of the group, Makayla, reflected on the ability to relate to one another, despite differences saying, “I was really impressed with how similar our stories were, although we’re so distinctly different.” Caroline was deeply reassured by the sharing of experiences and realized among the participants the women deal “the same type of things, battles with men and other struggles are different in different environments, but the troubles are basically the same.” Because of the fifth workshop session (Deepening Our Conversation) exploring the participant’s positionality through discussion of ethnicity, age, class and education, the women significantly altered the group dynamics by deepening cohesion and sharing remarkable thoughts about how validating they found the opportunity to share with other professional women. For example, Olivia described the significance of the experience for her and other women remarking, “the issues that women face are the same wherever you go” and “women in these [managerial] positions don’t get enough exposure—if they did, that would be great because there would be more role models for young girls.” Sharing intimate details about one another’s positionality, especially around the often highly charged topics of gender and body, increased the level of trust and allowed great space for knowledge creation.
Acknowledging Binaries

Feminist poststructuralism advocates the deconstruction of binary thought so as to expand beyond the notion of ‘either/or.’ An important binary to this study is pitting the rational against the affective (Mann & Huffman, 2005; St. Pierre, 2000). The indication of this either/or notion is that we either function rationally or affectively, but not in both ways. Where in this neat alignment of ‘either/or’ does the body fit? Does somatic knowing contrast with rational or affective knowing? Given the implication of the somatic learning model, affective learning is one aspect of somatic learning, and therefore cannot serve as an opposite construction. Rationality does not exclude our somatic selves—just as the mind does not act independently of the body, the body requires the cognitive functioning of the brain to also work in tandem.

Such black and white thinking has vast repercussions when given gender assignments such as ‘men are rational’ and ‘women are emotional’ (Mavin, Bryans, & Waring, 2004a; Nah, 2003; St. Pierre, 2000). Not only does this imply that women cannot be rational, but also that men do not possess the capability to be emotional. Given that society views emotionality as weak, women automatically emerge from this equation as ‘less than’ men. The male/female binary also emerged in interesting ways in the study. Despite much indignation that women deserve to reach the same managerial levels as men, the women, perhaps unknowingly, often fell into binary thinking in their descriptions of themselves as managers. The women often reinforced the perceived differences between male and female managers through the language they used to describe their managerial style. As reported in chapter five, many of the participants agreed that women tend to be more fair, nurturing, compassionate, and some went so far
as to describe themselves as “mothers” in their managerial role. The fact that these women reinforced the male/female dichotomy supports the feminist poststructural belief that most people have been socialized to view the world through such binary thinking.

In addition, the way the participants describe their managerial style as emphasizing relationships and helping others to succeed, describes the characteristics of a relational style of management (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Perrow, 1979; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Senge, 1990). A relational management style is often attributed to women because of its tendency to value interpersonal connections and genuine concern for the development of others. The findings indicate that many of the women describe themselves in highly relational ways in the context of their managerial role. For example, Caroline describes her management style as “understanding, flexible, and helpful,” and Jasa’s daily managerial objective is to “encourage everybody and bring everybody up.”

Likewise, the mothering terminology used by many of the participants reflects a very relational approach to managing. Makayla values considering people’s “feelings,” even in business contexts, and Caroline admits that she “like(s) to help take care of my employees.” Desi agreed with Makayla and Caroline saying “The fact that I’m a woman…. I’m a little bit more in tune to other people’s feelings,” but recognizes the risk of sensitivity “because when I have to make those tough decisions, it becomes that much more difficult.” Further significance of this finding is that relational management often receives negative connotations and risks marginalization by more traditional approaches to managing (Fletcher, 1995). Like Desi, Caroline is wary of the negative aspects adding, “sometimes they think that I am soft and that I am always going to bend and let them either leave early or come in late or whatever they need.”
However as Jasa explained, there are benefits to relational approaches to managing. “Being a female helps to be a manager because you do understand emotions so much more, and you’re used to dealing with social situations and emotional people,” she said. Therefore, in many ways the participants of this study are well positioned for the team-oriented, global, and diverse organizations constantly evolving among businesses. However, within organizations operating under patriarchal and hierarchical norms, these women managers confront the challenge of advocating for a managerial model that promotes, as they say, ‘getting their hands dirty’ with employees rather than doing things to or for people (Clark, Caffarella, and Ingram, 1998).

Furthering the discussion of the female/male dichotomy, Kerfoot and Knights (1996) contend that femininity corresponds to a more embodied way of being, whereas masculinity equates to a more cognitive, goal-oriented, and disembodied way of being. However, feminist poststructuralist thought encourages analysis beyond mere recognition so as to avoid essentialism and reinforcement of stereotypical, dichotomous thinking. The participants in this study illustrate Kerfoot and Knights underlying point, in their acknowledgement of the gender differences in managerial styles as the first step to influencing managerial and organizational change. Taking note of feminine/masculine dichotomies allows for recognition of approaches to managing that rely on numbers and data as opposed to interpersonal interaction and privileges masculine models of leading. By examining both the masculine-labeled, disembodied and emotionless approach as well as the feminine-labeled, embodied, relational approach to management, deconstruction of both conceptualizations acknowledges the existence of gender constructions by the dominant culture and helps to avoid hegemonic thinking.
Defining Language and Discourse

The importance of language and discourse to this study emerged in several ways. The significance of language relates to the specific words that are used as descriptors for different concepts or ideas. The power contained in the meaning of words is an important aspect of deconstruction from a feminist poststructural view (St. Pierre, 2004; Tisdell, 1998; Weedon, 1997). Discourse, a system of ideas or knowledge that is inscribed in a specific vocabulary, is rooted in a cultural and rhetorical context in which meaning is a collaboratively constructed. Whereas language in feminist poststructuralism requires an analysis of the socially attached meaning to words and an understanding that such meanings are constantly in flux, discourse encourages the analysis of language and how the taken-for-granted assumptions that structure it often enforce patriarchy and reinforce oppression of women (St. Pierre, 2000). The relevancy of language and discourse to somatic pedagogy emerged throughout our workshop sessions as the following examples illustrate.

During our second workshop session, the women elected to explore the topic of assertiveness versus aggressiveness. From the standpoint of language usage, the women were very concerned about how to ‘walk the line’ between expressing assertiveness and aggressiveness. Most of the participants agreed that assertive behavior was preferable over aggressive behavior and listed many qualifiers for each word. Positive language was associated with assertiveness and negative language was associated with aggressiveness. In general the women expressed that they struggled to avoid aggressiveness so as not to earn dreaded labels such as “bitch.” However, many of the participants also suggested that male managers may ‘get away with’ aggressive behaviors more readily, and often, an
assertive response does not hold the same weight. The analysis of assertiveness and aggressiveness served to allow the participants to investigate the meanings situated in those words. This feminist poststructuralist approach to dissecting language seeks to uncover how socially constructed language creates subjectivity. Language cannot be neutral because the attached meanings and connotations result from the influence of the larger culture. In a male-dominated society, language that is socially constructed in this way often results in biased and stereotyped interpretations; hence, how language becomes subjective. The participants experienced this analysis firsthand through their exploration of two loaded managerial terms and came to new conclusions about the importance of gender, context, and experience on language usage and meanings.

The significance of the discourse among the participants given their use of language and analysis of some terms to understand the significance of gender reiterates the feminist poststructuralist notion of analyzing assumptions. Preconceived ideas often serve to reinforce the patriarchal power structure thereby contributing to the ongoing oppression of women (St. Pierre, 2000). The execution of this study avoided the ‘dominant discourses of masculinity’ by focusing the study exclusively on women managers and introducing a new, somatic approach to learning. As Luke & Gore (1992) stress, knowledge is temporary, unlimited, and shared, meaning that knowledge creation is not a static process but an always-changing process with infinite possibilities and connections. History can be changed by examining the implications of power on discourse and who makes decisions about valid knowledge. This study encouraged the analysis of cultural practice by asking the women to consider the assumptions made within their own organizations around how knowledge, truth, and gender are produced
through language. The second major theme in chapter five, Comfortable in Our Own Skin, explores several categories that illustrate this point. For example, the women explain their experiences of managing in a man’s world and the existence of an ‘Old Boy Network’ that reinforces male’s achievement to the highest levels of organizational hierarchy. Additionally, the women comment on the need to “fight” for respect and credibility and one way of achieving this was by using the same colorful language used by the men. By naming these oppressive discourses, the women identified ways in which patriarchy influences their local contexts and began to construct new ideas about their experiences as managers as well as the impact of their bodies.

To summarize, feminist poststructuralism informs the findings of this study in several aspects. In a world where men continue to hold highest offices and executive position in both public and private spheres, there is not a more appropriate group of people to utilize a feminist poststructural framework to analyze and problematize the influence of patriarchy on their professional role than women managers. The findings reinforce that the study participants, despite their managerial level, still find management to be a man’s world. A place where not being ‘one of the boys,’ golfing, or being otherwise athletically inclined casts them outside the center of power. By calling attention to positionality, binary thinking, language and discourse with women managers, there exists the potential for vast social change. Additionally, the introduction of a somatic pedagogy meets the objective of feminist poststructuralism to consider other ways of knowing and experiencing the world. Somerville (2004) has discovered the significance of the body in a range of work contexts, including mining and aged care facilities. With the recognition of the importance of bodies in a variety of workplaces, it
becomes even more critical to consider ways to incorporate somatic learning and understanding into management education. The combination of shared experience and bodies is particularly significant for women learners as pointed out by Probyn (2004) who strongly advocates for recognition of the body in classrooms, especially as they relate to women’s lived experiences. She further explains how linking bodies with curriculum may be uncomfortable, but informative. By connecting the body, through yoga, to management concepts, both awareness and learning can result as indicated in this study’s findings. The importance of navigating the possibilities for discomfort and distrust is clearly demonstrated in this study through activities that foster self-awareness and group cohesiveness and trust. As presented in the findings section, the implications of including the body in learning opens untold opportunities for women to participate in the creation knowledge or construction of truth.

Somatic Pedagogy: Implications for Practice

After examining the research available about holistic and somatic learning, as discussed in chapter two, a clear definition of somatic pedagogy does not exist. One of this study’s unique features was putting into action an approach to teaching and learning somatically. From this research, the definition of somatic pedagogy is clarified as a method of intentionally including the body in the sharing of knowledge through the processes of teaching and learning. The implications for practice within adult education, management education, and organizations are vast. Practitioners should understand that the use of yoga in this study emerged because of my own experience and training and offered a way to combine my diverse areas of interest and expertise. For others seeking to
implement a somatic pedagogy in the classroom or workplace, any way of making the body a more overt part of the learning experience is encouraged.

For adult and management education, additional research about embodied ways of sharing and creating knowledge adds to an under-researched, but developing aspect of each field. Over the course of the study’s development and execution, very little empirical research had been completed about how the body intersects with teaching and learning. However, the body as an avenue for learning is receiving more attention as demonstrated in the newest edition of Learning in Adulthood by Sharan Merriam, Rosemary Caffarella, and Lisa Baumgartner, which features a new chapter devoted to Embodied, Spiritual, and Narrative Learning (2007). For the field of management education, Sinclair (2005) introduced her conceptualization of “body and management pedagogy” by drawing on feminist scholarship to “explore the impact of bodies in management education” and make “bodies more visible in management pedagogy” (p. 89). The most relevant findings from this study that contribute to the adult and management education fields were the relationship of dialogue to somatic learning, the learners’ centrality to the experience, the women’s prior existence of bodily consciousness, and the effectiveness of yoga as pedagogy.

Embodied Dialogue

Overwhelmingly, the participants reported the value they felt from having the opportunity to discuss experiences with other professional women. While Brockman (2001) and Matthews (1998) view a reliance on a cultural-linguistic approach as problematic and separate from somatic learning, this study found that dialogue was a
complimentary component to learning through the body. Brockman specifically describes difficulty in managing a group with differing customs, beliefs, and social norms without privileging the speech patterns of one particular group over another. His premise is that knowledge that comes from such vastly different mindsets cannot translate accurately because of its cultural-linguistic origins. However, the findings of this study strongly indicate that despite a fair amount of diversity within our group, the participants found the discourse validating, empowering, and reassuring. The importance of the connection these women made through dialogue seems to integrate easily with the components of somatic learning identified in Figure 1. The body is central to the interaction with others through discussion through eye contact, positioning, gestures, head movements, facial expressions, and voice tone and volume. Without the body’s continuous engagement, dialogue loses its significance and certainly lacks meaning necessary for learning. In essence, they compliment each other. Also, recognizing the body as a form of communication allows for greater understanding through dialogue. The participants’ in this study found dialogue to be an integral part of their somatic learning experience, which reiterates Clark’s (2001) description of somatic learning as learning from bodily experience. A new iteration of the somatic learning model must make room for the importance of discourse in fostering somatic pedagogy.

The relevancy of dialogue as an important finding is also significant to the field of management education. The knowledge gained about women managers and the introduction of somatic learning to management concepts indicates the value of shared professional experiences through dialogue. Women managers are a growing demographic within organizations as well as an often-untapped population for leadership opportunities.
(“The glass ceiling,” 2004). By focusing exclusively on a group of women managers, this study revealed that the interaction between professional peers was a valuable part of the experience. The women reported repeatedly that the sharing of experiences among peers who were professionals in their field, provided a great deal of value to the experience and offered a sense of validation and reassurance that women from vastly different backgrounds and industries experience similar frustrations and concerns. For this group of participants, the significance of forming an all-female group of participants allowed for trust and group cohesion to be established very early on in the study.

As Sue and Samantha both wrote in their journals after the planning session, “Great group of women.” Noting the group’s positionality as professionals, Samantha went on to write in that same journal that some of the women were “so impressive in their accomplishments.” Equally appreciative of the other participants, Sue added the importance of dialogue in her first journal writing, “Discussion was good. I can tell it will get better.” Her prediction came true, and the dialogue that transpired week after week during the study emerged as one of the most meaningful aspects of the experience to the participants. Many of the women reported feelings of reassurance, even relief, to learn that other professional women have experienced the same challenges or suffer from the same anxieties. The terminology use by the women summarizes what they took away from the dialogue capture their experience: “enlightening,” “validating,” “connection,” “confirmation,” “reassuring,” “impressive,” and “informative.” The next section explores the important of placing the learner at the center of the learning experience, which includes integrating their lived experiences as much as possible.
Centrality of the Learner

Maintaining learner centrality involves ongoing inclusiveness of lived experiences, existing knowledge, and ideas and opinions of those invested in the learning process. Learner centrality, or learner-centeredness, has particular benefits for women learners within management education as well as the discipline in general. The development of a somatic pedagogy offers management education in particular a new perspective to diversify the traditional approaches to teaching management that offer gender-blind or gender-neutral approaches (Acker, 1990; Collinson & Hearn, 1994; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Mavin, Bryans & Waring, 2004b; Smith, 1997; Thomas & Pullen, 2000). By focusing the study exclusively on female participants, specifically female managers, the women immediately had two commonalities: their gender and professional role. This was significant because, as with any group, there were plenty of other diverse aspects that could have challenged the creation of cohesion. In order to let group dynamics evolve naturally, the study followed the principles of both a feminist and participatory approach to action research and fulfilled the recommendation by Bartram (2005) to rethink traditional management education for women by working with women in ways that value and privilege women’s perspectives and experiences. The study achieved “thinking differently” through both a somatic approach to management education and by making the participants experiences central to the learning process.

The importance of learner-centeredness is reflected in the findings especially in the excerpts from email communication with the participants soliciting their feedback on the study’s development and ideas for topics to discuss. A critical component of feminist participatory action research is including the participants as actively as possible in the
research process so they become co-researchers. One of the key methods I used to foster collaboration and including individual women’s voices was to send an email after each workshop session asking for feedback and ideas for the next session. Through email, the women had the opportunity to give their individual feedback, but email communication also served as a way for me to communicate with each woman separately.

For example, in response to a journal by Samantha, I emailed her the following: “I am reading through the journals today, and just had to write to tell you what a joy it is to read your thoughts! The enthusiasm I've come to associate with you just comes through so much in your writing.” She responded with gratitude and expressed her appreciation about being able to share experiences from her life, and added, “I wanted to tell you how much I appreciate being a part of this project - the interactions and self actualization (in only three weeks) have been amazing.” In an email from Desi where she offers her ideas for a future topic she adds a personal note about the structure of the sessions. “By the way, I do like the sharing in an open forum. I think it lends different perspectives. Oh, and did I mention that it takes the pressure off of me to speak....:-),” she wrote.

Communication such as this reassured me as the researcher that Desi’s quietness during our sessions was not disinterest or disengagement. Instead, in a one-on-one forum, she was able to communicate to me that she appreciates the format of the sessions and that she experiences a certain amount of pressure speaking in front of the group. Similarly, Rebecca shared in an email that, “conflict is probably my greatest issue and I would love to hear how the other deal with it.” Self-disclosure to me before facing a group discussion assisted many of the participants to share very personal struggles associated with managing. In an experience where the comfort level of the participants is
important for the learning process, this knowledge is invaluable to a researcher or facilitator.

Journaling provides another method of fostering learner-centeredness because learners can privately share their thoughts, and the instructor can likewise individually respond to key in on particular responses or questions. For example, after the death of a family member over the weekend, Jasa wrote in her journal that she felt “unfocused” during the workshop sessions and writing in her journal that evening revealed, “things I never thought I would realize.” Many of the participants genuinely valued the opportunity to journal. This enthusiastic email response to a new set of journal questions came from Samantha: “Ah, four new questions to journal on. I really enjoyed the last set, so this should be another learning experience.” For Olivia, the initial idea of journaling resulting in feelings of dread, but as the study progressed, she admitted, “I was surprised at what I could produce if I really put my mind to it.”

While the participants in this study did not journal about journaling very much, there was a great deal of concern about whether or not they were “caught up” or had “handed in” everything they owed me. For example, Maria sent an email to me near the end of the study saying, “Can you let me know what I owe you for paperwork? I believe I am caught up but just wanted to make sure.” Charolotte emailed a similar message near the end of July: I am completely swamped and missed my commitment to you, and I apologize. Is there anything you need from me that would be helpful?” Likewise, Rebecca included this helpful comment in an email midway through the study: “If you need more from me, please let me know.” These comments of concern for completing journal questions and staying involved in the study are particularly significant since each
participant voluntarily participated in the study and was not receiving either monetary reward or academic credit. The overwhelming amount of data collected speaks to the interest and commitment of the participants, but also reveals that if asked and given a private forum, women managers have a great deal to share about the body’s connection to management.

The importance of journaling in this study requires an explanation of the type of reflection incorporated in this study. As mentioned in Chapter three, Schön’s (1983) definition of reflection in action helped to inform the manner in which the women engaged in not only individual reflection, but group reflection through dialogue, and reflection as the result of engaging in movement. The study experimented with movement as a way to reframe management to allow the women managers to view their managerial concerns through an embodied lens. Appendix D provides the journal questions answered by the participants and reveals an emphasis on questions that ask for explanations of situations the women encountered in their managerial contexts. Notably, few questions ask the participants to probe more deeply and ask “why” they reacted in certain ways or responded to the journal questions the way they did. More probing questions may have fostered another level of reflection, more specifically, critical reflection. Future research about fostering somatic pedagogy should certainly consider pushing the reflective portion of the action research cycle to ask more “why” questions. Another layer of reflection would offer greater depth to the data and perhaps increase the participant’s self-knowledge and overall learning from the experience. Consider, however, that the women participating in this study had already committed to being present for workshop sessions while managing all of their other work and life roles. Their
response to the journal questions was already an additional significant commitment of time. Asking participants to commit to several iterations of journaling in order to foster critical reflection would require future researchers to include this aspect of the journaling process in the recruitment information provided to interested participants with a thorough explanation of the difference between critical reflection and reflection.

As an individualized practice yoga reinforced the importance of individuals making their own connections. The findings indicate that somatic pedagogy also requires a way for people to individually pay attention to, notice, or get in touch with their body. Recalling that the synthesis of the definitions of somatic learning from the literature describes it as learning that is *within, through, or felt* by the body, further reinforces the implication of personalization for somatic pedagogy. Each learner must be positioned at the heart of the learning experience and then encouraged toward a consciousness of the body.

*Women’s Body Consciousness*

The third implication for somatic pedagogy was revealed throughout the findings as the participants reflected on their existing consciousness about their bodies’ presence as a result of or within their managerial role. Most of the women struggled initially to connect *learning* through the body, somatic learning, to management or their managerial role, but the findings revealed that the participants easily recognized their body’s implications, reactions, and reflections in various contexts. Many researchers argue that sexuality is an always-present factor and one often difficult for women to negotiate (Hassard, Holliday & Willmott, 2000; Lewis, 1991; Perriton, 1999; Sinclair, 1995a;
Sinclair, 1995b). The idea of sexuality as being ever-present is reiterated by Acker (1990) who points out that women are necessarily overt in their reproductive capabilities as well as pregnancy, breast-feeding, and child care, menstruation, and their “mythic emotionality,” which she says are suspicious qualities that earn women negative stigmas and used for “control and exclusion” (p. 152). Given the ubiquitous and sexually-charged nature of women’s bodies, the fact that the participants in this study expressed a pre-existing consciousness about their bodies’ connection to managing was not surprising.

The findings indicated that the women immediately recognized the intersection of their bodies with their managerial role because of the inherent stress of a management position combined with many other roles. Rebecca explained that, “being a woman manager is a juggling act and Maria feels “pulled in many directions most of the time” and that she “needs to be all things to all people.” A similar expression of stress emerged as the women revealed the challenges they feel in trying to balance the expectations set by themselves or others. Caroline reflected that, “there’s definitely a lot more pressure put on a woman,” but women “put more pressure on ourselves than men do because if I’m seen as weak, then I’m to going to be as effective as a manager.” Similarly, Rose related her own stress as being connected to being a woman saying “a lot of it is managing your own expectations, looking at things from a different perspective of what you can control and change and what you can’t.” Making the leap from connecting gender to management, the women then were urged to consider their body’s role in their management position.

At the beginning of the study, most of the women exclusively related their body to the mentally and physically exhaustive qualities of managing others—headaches,
fatigue, stomach issues, sleeplessness. Additionally, another strong connection the participants made early in the study was the significance of appearance as a manager. The women gave examples of the importance of standing up straight to exude confidence, dressing appropriately, and other outward expressions of the body. These initial perceptions by the participants indicate that they naturally possess awareness of their bodies and on varying levels, but most of the women did not implicate their body as a way they create knowledge. This means that despite the assertion that women portray more embodied qualities, for a deeper level of understanding to occur, the body needs to be integrated with a particular subject.

This study expanded upon the participant’s existing consciousness of their body and urged them to consider their bodies’ actions and reactions in a particular context, which was management. Further, the inclusion of yoga as a means of communicating bodily concepts and relating them to management concepts deepened the participants’ body consciousness. As a way of uniting concepts from two vastly different areas, yoga served as the bridge between the women’s bodies and management. For example, Jasa made this connection during feedback sessions with her employees: “I tried to be conscious of my posture and keep an open frame….when I leaned forward and remained tall and open, the employees kept talking. When I crossed my arms, I could feel myself not listening as well.” Similarly, Samantha correlated her experience of noticing her body during yoga and translated it to an experience at work. She commented:

I sat in a two-hour meeting today that was so stressful. I concentrated on my breathing, on my posture, on opening my chest and freeing my heart—and I was
able to relax, think, participate and be a part of the process rather than being a close-minded, negative, non-verbal drone.

Olivia makes a particularly salient connection between her management role and her past and current body experiences. She describes how her role as a woman leader intersects with her beliefs and experiences about womanhood commenting: I understand that my body is a powerful communication tool—I can use it to express confidence in my abilities; to provide visual cues for learning; to mime and explain the way a movement should feel for example.” The women in the study portrayed a vast willingness to be body conscious, but the most significance to somatic pedagogy is that individuals vary in their levels of consciousness as well as in their openness to viewing learning through an embodied lens.

**Yoga as Pedagogy**

The use of yoga in this study served as a useful medium to connect somatic learning to management education. As a form of pedagogy, yoga practice is a particularly appropriate match for fostering a somatic approach to teaching and learning. While yoga is certainly not the only or most practical way for every instructor to implement somatic learning, its significance to this study deserves discussion. Yoga is the oldest physical discipline in existence, and its exact origins are unknown, but thought to be 5,000 years old. The original purpose of yoga was to bring stability and relaxation so practitioners could prepare for the rigors of meditation, sitting still and alert for long periods of time. The word yoga has its roots in Sanskrit language and means to merge, join, or unite. Yoga is a form of exercise based on the belief that the body and breath are connected in
the mind. By controlling the breath and holding the body in steady poses, yoga creates harmony. Therefore, Yoga serves as a means to balance and harmonize the body, mind, and emotions and allow withdrawal from the chaos of the world and find a quiet space within. Hatha yoga is most often practiced in the West and is the practice in which I received my teacher training. The first syllable, Ha, means “sun,” and Tha means “moon.” Hence, Hatha yoga is the union between the sun and moon, suggesting that the healthy joining of opposites (mind and body), leads to strength, vitality, and peace of mind. In yoga practice, any pose practiced on one side of the body is always practiced on the other as a way of further demonstrating the unity of opposites. Many people question the religious affiliations of yoga, and while yoga does not meet traditional definitions of religion Western yoga practitioners often use yoga to enhance their own religious or spiritual beliefs.

Yoga workouts can be challenging, gentle, or somewhere in between and can be practiced by anyone, regardless of age. As with any exercise program, the advice of a doctor should be sought if taking care of a body part or recovering from an injury. The benefits of safely practiced Hatha yoga include improving suppleness and strength; stretching extending, and flexing the spine while exercising muscles and joints; and stimulating circulation, digestion, and nervous and endocrine systems. Hatha yoga poses embody controlled movement, concentration, flexibility, and conscious breathing. The slowness and control of moving through poses flows with the inhalation and exhalation of breath. Pranyama, breathwork, is a vital part of yoga practice, and an element that often takes years of practice before performed effectively.
Yoga is a very individualized practice, and there were varying levels of awareness and understanding about connecting somatic learning to management. Yet the findings from this study illustrate the connection was apparent and indicates the validation of somatic pedagogy. In general, this study indicates that in order to encourage body consciousness, overt attention on the body is critical. Movement practices could be particularly helpful as this study illustrates. Through yoga, the women were able to relate concepts from poses to management practice such as flexibility, strength, conflict, balance, honoring decisions, taking time to focus, and stress management. By introducing the overlap in concepts both through content and yoga practice, the women were able to build a bridge between their bodies and their role as managers. For many people, the body is an afterthought. Fostering somatic pedagogy requires challenging learners to open their hearts and minds to what is already in front of them; the untapped knowledge of the body.

Yoga as a practice is commonly defined as a journey—development in one’s practice can only come with commitment and patience, a constant honoring of the body’s unique state from day to day. Consider that like yoga practice “management never reaches its end—not in that fashionably workaholic sense of unending innovation and challenge—but, because it is an ongoing relationship between the body and its order” (Hassard, Holliday & Willmott, 2000, p. 143). A manager cited in the book *Body and Organization* (Hassard, Holliday & Willmott, 2000) describes the planning process, a common aspect of management, as “a movement, or, rather, a connection of movements—movements that flow between [the] body and the outside” (p. 143). The study’s workshop sessions created this same flow state both during the movement and
non-movement portions of the workshop so as to foster a link between how the body learns and the connection between yogic concepts and management. An additional benefit of yoga practice is an impact on self-awareness and self-confidence. As Christensen (1999) explains, “The ideas and growth associated with Yoga have tremendous value for everyone. As you begin to know yourself better, your self-esteem and leadership abilities emerge” (p. 25). Further, Max Depree, author of Leadership is an Art (1990), poetically describes the body/mind relationship for leaders: “The measure of leadership is not the quality of the head, but the tone of the body” (p. 12).

To summarize, the implications of somatic pedagogy that emerged from this study formed four major categories: embodied dialogue, centrality of the learner, women’s body consciousness, and yoga as pedagogy. A dialogue that includes the body and its relationship to the concepts under study proved to be a valuable aspect of the workshop sessions. Fostering learner-centeredness as part of implementing somatic learning focuses the content on the experiences and concerns of the learner. As women, the participants demonstrated varying levels of pre-existing body consciousness. Throughout the study their awareness deepened and the connections each participant made to management reflected the integration of the body in the learning process. Lastly, yoga practice offers somatic learning a movement-based method to integrate with various topics. The integration of yoga and management emerged easily and participants embraced the connections. In the next section, the significance of the findings is discussed in relationship to the somatic learning model presented in chapter two. The data reveals the need to revise the model and expand its exclusivity of somatic ways of learning.
Expanding the Somatic Learning Model

A framework for somatic learning was introduced in chapter two as a way of explaining graphically my perception of how the existing research characterizes learning through the body. The model depicts four learning domains—kinesthetic, sensory, affective, and spiritual—as intersecting and connected to somatic learning. The intention of the model is to illustrate the various ways learning through the body can occur and by incorporating as many of these learning domains as possible, a more embodied or somatic approach to teaching and learning emerges. As a result of implementing a somatic pedagogy in this study, further understanding and interpretation has surfaced about the various ways of learning through the body that help to inform and expand the model including the significance of the affective domain, the importance of connectedness as a way of spiritual learning, and the inclusion of cognition, dialogue, and reflection as interrelated aspects of somatic learning. (Colalillo Kates, 2002; Crowdes, 2000; Sinclair, 1997)

Learning through emotions and feelings is an ongoing process. Emotions are not turned on and off like a light switch in order to learn cognitively. Affective learning is linked as closely to cognitive learning as it is to somatic learning. Significantly, the women in this study chose to consider the topic of emotions and feelings for two of our workshop sessions. All other topics were only given one session, but the participants decided they wanted more time to explore the relationship between emotions and feelings and their roles as managers. Many of the participants remarked that emotions were something particularly expressed by women and agreed that in the workplace emotions should be controlled. The perception of revealing emotions and feelings in their
managerial role as inherently negative indicates that in some aspects the women try to avoid the stereotype of the “emotional female.” As Mavin, Bryans, & Waring (2004a) explain emotional expression can be viewed as weakness and an intrusion on the processes of business.

Yet the findings reiterate that connecting emotions to the body requires calling attention to where in the body specific feelings arise or manifest. Additionally, the findings indicate that acknowledging emotional triggers and ranges of feelings allowed the participants to maintain their leadership role, make decisions more effectively, and bolster their self-confidence. The relevancy of encouraging managers to notice where in their bodies they experience emotions of all sorts implicates the possibility for more effective problem resolution, decision-making, strategic planning. As self-awareness increases, managers are more capable of fulfilling their role. For example, Crowdes (2000) explains somatic learning in terms of a “conscious embodiment” that “implies an integrity of mind, body, and action accompanied by some awareness in the broader social context” (p. 27). Further, Goleman’s (1995) work on emotional intelligence illustrates the importance of the “soft skills” in the workplace, because emotional intelligence is fundamentally about self-awareness. An example from the findings indicates how Rose makes sense of increased body awareness in relationship to her managerial role. She explained, “The in-class exercise on active listening was good. It did bring a different awareness of the body, aside from the obvious body language.” Rose describes her first lesson from the study as learning “to practice intentional positive body language to promote good communication, you must first be able to recognize and control your own emotions.” The self-awareness brought about by practicing yoga taught Olivia that “we
can take the movement and directly relate it to things that happen in everyday life or how we solve problems or how we behave.” The implication of the literature and the study findings is that body-awareness increases self-awareness and the overall result is positive for those in management roles.

The spiritual domain of the somatic learning model considers how meaning is made through music, art, imagery, symbols, and rituals. Spiritual learning is not easily encapsulated in such a small circle. The way in which learning is characterized as spiritual differs for everyone. The study did not explore overtly the spiritual aspects of the learning experience, but in many ways the women indicated the spiritual nature of their experience. For example, Samantha sent a poem to me via email that served to deepen our conversation with one another. When she initially sent the poem, Samantha expressed how it signified to her the importance of the study and her strong desire to be part of the group. This led to sharing the poem with the other group members and developing questions to explore the significance of gender to their cultural background. The implications of such a short poem on the study’s findings are revealed in the depth of the women’s sentiments and stories; their willingness to be open about a topic as sensitive as the body.

Similarly, Olivia shared two quotes with me via email, which was also shared with the group. In the quotes Olivia underlined phrases that depicted the importance of being grateful for our bodies and paying attention to our breath despite distractions in the mind. All of these examples and the language the women used in the data to describe their experience being part of the study indicate a certain spiritual quality. For many people, spirituality manifests through connectedness to people or things. As Tisdell
(2003) states, spirituality “is also about the search for wholeness and integration” (p. 108). One of the strongest outcomes of the study was the repeated response from the participants that they felt a strong sense of validation and connection to the other women in the group. While there were many significant findings around the participants’ understanding of the body’s relationship to management, the spiritual learning experienced by the women also reflects the intention of the somatic learning model in that each aspect of learning represents a different aspect of learning through the body. The revised model (Figure 4) now mentions connectedness as an expression of spiritual learning since the feeling of community often lends itself to a spiritual connection among group members.

Finally, the model required expansion to include other aspects of knowing that intersect with somatic learning. Cognition, dialogue and reflection are all ways that knowledge is created and understood. While the findings did not mention these aspects directly, there are implications of their existence. The previous model of somatic learning merely implied that cognitive learning existed as part of somatic learning, but did not graphically include mention of this domain. An outcome of the women’s experience in the study indicates that to truly integrate eliminate the tendency to classify learning as either mind or body-oriented, not only should rational, cognitive models of learning make space for ways of learning somatically, but the proposed somatic learning model needs to include those processes that are traditionally considered as only occurring in the mind. For example, cognition, dialogue, and reflection should also be considered as part of somatic learning because without their inclusion, learning becomes disembodied (Lee, 2003; Sinclair, 2005).
In order to consider their bodies as part of the learning process, the participants were asked to notice their emotions or to acknowledge where in their bodies they were feeling something in both yoga and management practice. The linkage of thought to somatic awareness occurs in tandem, not in separation. The recognition of the unity in learning domains offers the implication to rational models of learning that despite the tendency to teach to the mind, the body is always an ever-present part of the teaching and learning process. Cognition includes the mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment. Without cognition the process of learning lacks wholeness. Lee (2003) considers strengthening the cognitive aspect of learning as one part of a holistic approach that includes the affective, working with experiences, and enhancing the social. Vocal, gestural, and hormonal signals all result from cognitive functioning. The significance of including cognition emerges because of the strong implications of dialogue for fostering a somatic pedagogy. The participants in the study emphasized over and over how critical it was to their experience to share their stories with other women and hear the experiences of others, as discussed in the Embodied Dialogue section above. For practitioners seeking to implement a more somatically-oriented pedagogy, that the cognitive aspects of learning are not in contradiction to learning through the body. Instead, as the revised model indicates, a somatic epistemology is inclusive of many modes of learning.

Reflection emerged as another key element of the participants’ experience. The journals completed by the women represented an immense amount of data and indicated that self-reflection is an important aspect of somatic pedagogy. As some of the women indicated, journaling was not something they participated in regularly. For Olivia,
journaling was a particularly dreaded activity, but one in which she found great value. To foster ongoing reflection on the part of learners, the creation of guided questions served to focus broad topics more specifically on the concerns of the group and provided a foundation on which to build workshop sessions. As an important element of all learning, somatic pedagogy should include an active element of reflection, especially for learners just beginning to include their bodies as a part of acquiring and making sense of knowledge.

Figure 4. Revised Somatic Learning Model.
Future research seeking to foster somatic learning or draw on the somatic learning model should consider the aspects of cognition, dialogue, and reflection as critical to somatic pedagogy. Drawing attention to the way the body intersects with cognition, dialogue, and reflection create new pathways for learning somatically and position these aspects of learning as another element of making meaning. The following section explores additional ideas and implications for future research.

Implications for Future Research

The opportunities to build upon this research study are immense. The findings of the research illustrate that there is still much to learn about how learning occurs through the body and the connection of somatic learning to other disciplines. As an under-researched population, women managers present a demographic ripe further in-depth study concerning their personal and professional development. Also, researchers endeavoring to use feminist methodologies can learn much from this studies application of participatory action research.

Additionally, somatic pedagogy provides an alternative to management education where rationality is privileged over other ways of knowing. As a tool for generating greater self-awareness and the ability to be introspective about oneself, a somatic approach to teaching and learning incorporates the body as part of the overall learning process. To exclude the body from the education of future or existing managers is akin to supposing that managers are also unaffected by their emotions and feelings. As a discipline, management education must recognize that a curriculum that excludes certain domains of learning will necessarily be fragmented and incomplete. Therefore, the skills
and knowledge imparted to potential or current managers will leave them woefully unprepared for a constantly changing workplace where the gravity of decisions and depth of problems require not just the mind, but body and soul as well.

Organizations should embrace the fact that their managers and leaders do not lose their bodies or their body’s need for attention when they enter the workplace. By honoring bodies in the workplace through even simple solutions such as allowing adequate lunch breaks, fitness options, or wellness training, organizations can demonstrate a value in the whole person. The benefits to organizations considering all aspects of employees, managers, and leaders are demonstrated oftentimes through increased productivity, decreased turnover and absenteeism, and enhanced trust and loyalty.

As a research methodology, feminist participatory action research (FPAR) is not widely utilized within adult or management education and this study provided a forum where the concerns and experiences of women were a focal point of the research. The collaborative nature of the study, which is recommended for FPAR, was evident throughout as the women made decisions about content, structure, and format of the workshop sessions (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000; Harding, 1987). As an example for adult education researchers, this study provided details beyond why to be collaborative and offers suggestions about how collaboration can be created and sustained throughout the entire research process. For example, the ongoing email communication with the participants from the recruiting phase to the feedback they provided about the overview of backgrounds and workshop sessions and findings was an integral part of the FPAR process. Additionally the cyclical nature of action research is demonstrated and described
throughout chapters three and four and illustrate the four phases of the model: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Herr and Anderson, 2005; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Patton, 2002). For example, the participant’s and I planned new topics from week to week, completed journals weekly on each topic, and tried new structures and formats as the study progressed. As collaborators in the research effort, the participants were highly involved in decision-making throughout the study.

Traditional management education classrooms or training classes often follow the typical scenario in which the instructor is the all-powerful, all-knowing superior and the students or trainees are powerless and lacking any relevant knowledge. Formal learning settings typically do not incorporate active, ongoing participation from the learners and leave decision-making responsibility to the authority figures. Further, Sinclair (1997) found that women’s experiences in MBA classrooms were significantly impacted by a traditional arrangement of power where the instructor was the dominant force. The women came away from their experience with feelings of disappointment and alienation, which can only hinder their understanding of management.Allowing the participants in this study to take part in decision-making and problem-solving allowed them to own the research process and make choices so that their interests could be explored and experiences shared. Another element of keeping the learner central to the process is the consideration of context. Management education is typically situated within the departments and schools of business within academia and the human resource and training areas of organizations. The limited existing literature addressing an integration of the body and management does not address the importance of context for the execution of teaching and learning. Yet, because this study was not held within the workplace or a
classroom setting, the group was able to arrive in comfortable clothes, sit or lie on the floor, and maintain an attitude of informality. The studio where the study was held offered a neutral location—it was not their workplace nor was it a formal educational setting, therefore the women could bring awareness to their bodies and move their bodies without concern of colleagues overseeing or overhearing or people passing by in a hallway. The significance of location becomes apparent when considering the integration of somatic approaches to learning. Sinclair (2005) explains how she endeavored to teach yoga at her university in Australia and had to overcome a great deal of apprehension from those higher up in the administration. Of particular trepidation to her colleagues was “people running around in lycra and various stage of undress” (p.100). Connecting the body to learning does not have to involve tightly fitted clothing or nakedness. A conscious intention to invite the body into the learning space, to tune into the ways in which the body sends and receives information, and consideration to the diverse ways the body learns can be accomplished quite easily. Practice keeping the learner central to the process, and remember the body is already there waiting to be included.

Reflections

A major objective of the study was to relate management concepts to yoga so as to allow the participants a way of making sense of their experiences of management through the body. As a medium for generating this connection, yoga was the most practical approach for me as the researcher. After several years of teaching and practicing yoga, I had a feeling of confidence about leading a group of mostly beginners to the practice and possessed the resources and tools to provide a safe, aesthetically pleasing
environment. For others using the somatic learning model in order to incorporate a somatic pedagogy, other movement-oriented approaches might be more appropriate.

Considering the structure of the study, there are a few changes I would make for a future study or suggestions for other researchers. First, the number of workshop sessions could easily be extended to lengthen the action research study to three or six months or even one year. The nature of yoga practice requires ongoing participation, and the participants may experience further levels of body and self-awareness as well as an increased understanding of somatic learning if there were more workshop sessions. Additionally, I would consider suggesting to future participants that the length of each session be at least two house, and ideally, three hours. A half-day workshop format that allowed for small breaks might work well. Gathering in the morning for example from 9:00am until 12:00pm and then having a group lunch might be another alternative. A lot of quality data could result from time spent together sharing a meal.

As I look back on the experience of conducting this study, the first thought that comes to mind is one of gratitude for how everything dovetailed together. The action research design allowed for precious little planning or anticipation about what they study would look like in progress. However, as many of the women in the study learned, being able to let go is often the best way to move forward. The 15 women who devoted their time and energy to this study were amazing in their commitment and intention to being true collaborators in the research process. As a novice researcher, I often experienced feelings of uncertainty about the process. While I believed very strongly in the integration of the topics, endeavoring to research something outside of traditional boundaries was not always comfortable. The experience of completing the study has given me confidence
about the credibility of my research and great hope for the future of research about the body’s role in learning. There is a strong need for much more research devoted to women managers and their particular learning preferences as well as research that incorporates the body. A feminist participatory approach worked very well for this study, and more research studies that incorporate feminist methodologies as well as somatic pedagogy will significantly add to the fields of adult and management education.

The privilege of working with women to construct knowledge and share experiences allowed me to realize an ambition I have had for a very long time. As a teacher I am always energized by the potential for unexpected synergy and dynamics in a learning situation. As the women noted, there is something unique and special about the way women can come together and relate to one another through a variety of topics and shared experiences. Being able to facilitate such experiences for women is an awesome responsibility and tremendous opportunity. Women’s bodies are often subjected to negative scrutiny and constant messages about ways to fix flaws and imperfections. Rather than perpetuate the barrage of negative messages toward women about their bodies, this study allowed women to consider their bodies through the lens of their managerial role. Considered in a different light, the women realized the strong influence of their bodies on their professional persona and uncovered ways in which the body can be a more connected part of managing. While the participant’s shared through their journals, interviews, and discussions a lot of new understanding about the body and management, each woman solidified my belief in the strength, power, and grace of community. When women come together to deepen their understanding of themselves and their world, they do so body, mind, and soul.
Summary of the Discussion

Although the participants brought to the study varying levels of body awareness and understanding about how somatic learning could link to managing, the research revealed that over time, the women’s understanding and consciousness about the body deepened. Voluntarily, the 15 women who gave their time, energy, and bodies to this endeavor without reservation have opened up the possibility of continued research dedicated to women managers and the significance of bodies in management. The women’s poignant thoughts and keen insights will benefit other women managers who can look to their shared stories and lived experiences to make meaning of their own professional role in contexts often dominated by patriarchy. Without the continued capturing of women’s voices and attention to women as learners all disciplines will lack wholeness and diversity in perspective. As illustrated in the preceding chapters, the 15 women who gave their voices to this study offered their intellect, body, and soul for the sake of creating knowledge that is more inclusive, holistic, and embodied.
Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Describe your educational and professional background.

2. Describe yourself as a manager.

3. In what ways have current organizational beliefs/values of managing influenced how you manage others?

4. How did you learn the management skills you currently use?

5. Describe your management experience (training or execution) from the perspective of being a woman.

6. How would you describe the physical experience of management?

7. How does the body relate to management?

8. How would you describe your body awareness?

9. How does gender influence your managerial style?

10. What are the facilitators and/or barriers you can identify within your organizational/cultural environment that have assisted and/or hindered your management skills?
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Biomedical Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: A Somatic Learning Approach to Management Education: Exploring Feminist Participatory Action Research

Principal Investigator: Tara L. Horst, Graduate Student
728 Antietam Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21742
(301) 797-6883; tla169@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Edward W. Taylor
777 W. Harrisburg Pike
Harrisburg, PA 17057
(814) 948-6364; ewt1@psu.edu

Other Investigator(s):

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to explore the use of yoga as an approach to teaching women managers about management. Using yoga as a somatic learning approach to management development for women managers provides a new way of thinking about learning. The proposed design of the study utilizes a participatory research model that actively involves participants in a highly collaborative process to bring together the teaching of management with the practice of yoga.

2. Procedures to be followed: Participation includes completion of two individual interviews, eight workshop sessions and keeping a reflective journal during each workshop session. The individual interviews will be audiotaped. The workshop sessions, which include both yoga practice and discussion of management, will be videotaped. You will also have the opportunity to participate in an online listserv to discuss issues that emerge from the workshop sessions, ask questions of other participants, and in general, maintain the cohesiveness of our in person sessions. The listserv will be available to participants as a way to further discussion of workshop topics between sessions. Participants will not be required to participate on the listserv.
but it will be available to them as way to communicate with other participants and the principal investigator. The listserv will be set up and managed by the Principal Investigator.

3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There is minimal personal risk involved in this study. The risk of physical injury is also minimal, however participants may experience some muscular discomfort as a result of practicing yoga poses that are new to their bodies. As a Registered Yoga Teacher (R.Y.T.), the principal investigator is trained to inquire about pre-existing injuries and offer poses that provide benefits for people of all fitness, flexibility and strength levels as well as competently minimize physical risk. Since most participants will be new to the practice of yoga, there will be no need to include advanced poses. The format of the poses to be included in the study will be at a beginner level.

If you do not wish to answer questions and/or engage in discussing particular areas, you will not be coerced into doing so. If you appear to be upset or uncomfortable in engaging in the workshop sessions, you will be assured that they do not have to talk about anything that makes you uneasy and/or uncomfortable. In terms of physical risk, the principal investigator will learn about the participants physical concerns before any movement occurs during each workshop sessions. With these knowledge accommodations in the types of yoga poses practiced can be made and options for various poses to meet various bodily conditions can be offered. As with discussion, there is always an option to opt out of physical practice as well.

4. **Referral to Helping Resources:** Should participants feel anxiety or distress as a result of the journaling or interview, the principal investigator will refer them to Catoctin Wellness Center (228 E. Washington Street Hagerstown, MD 21740, 301-745-6687). Likewise, if a participant experiences a physical injury during the yoga practice, I would encourage them to consult their medical doctor and/or a physical therapist.

5. **Benefits:** You might learn more about yourself by participating in this study. You might have a better understanding of how your body contributes to the learning process about yourself and your management role. This research could also help other women managers better understand how learning somatically can inform their management practice.

6. **Duration:** Each interview will take approximately 1 hour each and will be audio taped. Journal writing will be completed at the conclusion of each workshop session, for a total of eight sessions. Actual writing time should take between 10-20 minutes per session. Participation on the listserv is options, so time spent posting responses or questions will vary. An option personal development project may take 2-3 hours to complete.

7. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. Only the researcher will know your identity. If this research is published, no information that would identify you would be written. The researcher and her primary
advisor may read the journals and see your personal development project. Audiotapes and videotapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher’s home until one year after the study is complete. The audiotapes and videotapes will be destroyed 2 years after the research concludes, in August 2008. Transcripts and files will be kept on a password protected computer with access only to the principal investigator.

The following may review and copy records related to this research: The Office of Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Penn State University’s Biomedical Institutional Review Board, and Penn State University’s Office for Research Protections.

Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

8. **Right to Ask Questions:** You have the right to ask questions and to have questions answered. Contact Tara Horst at 301-797-6883 or tla169@psu.edu or Dr. Taylor at 717-948-6364 or ewt1@psu.edu if you have questions about this study. If you have questions about your right as a research participant, contact Penn State’s Office for Research Protections at 814-865-1775.

9. **Payment for participation:** You will not receive monetary compensation for participating in this study.

10. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

11. **Options for use of Recording Devices:**

______ I give my permission to be audio taped.

______ I do not give my permission to be audio taped.

______ I give my permission to be video taped.

______ I do not give my permission to be video taped.

12. **Injury Clause:** In the unlikely event you become injured as a result of your participation in this study, medical care is available. It is the policy of this institution to provide neither financial compensation nor free medical treatment for research related injury. By signing this document, you are not waiving any rights that you
have against The Pennsylvania State University for injury resulting from negligence of the University or its investigators.

13. **Focus Group Confidentiality**: If you speak about the contents of the small group discussions or Listserv Blogging, it is expected that you will not tell others what individual participants said.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent for your records.

______________________________________________ _____________________
Participant Signature       Date

______________________________________________ _____________________
Person Obtaining Consent     Date
May 20, 2006

Diana Gore, Owner
My Pilates Place
16 W. Washington Street
Hagerstown, MD 21742

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is confirm that as the owner of My Pilates Place, the location where Tara Horst will hold her research study as part of her doctorate in Adult Education at Penn State Harrisburg, I am aware of the scope of the investigation. I have met with Ms. Horst, and we have discussed the purpose and procedures of her research study entitled *A Somatic Learning Approach to Management Education: Exploring Feminist Participatory Action Research*. As the proprietor of My Pilates Place, I have given Ms. Horst permission to access to my clients and use the studio name and address in association with her research study. I am also be aware of the days and times the study will take place and that participants in the research study will be coming and going from the studio and using its facilities.

Sincerely,

Diana Gore
APPENDIX D

Journal Questions

Workshop Session # 1
Topic: Communication/Listening
Date: June 12, 2006

1. How does your body intersect with the communication process in your role as a manager/leader?
2. How does being a woman intersect with how you communicate or how others communicate to you?
3. In your opinion or from feedback you have received from others, in what areas of communication do you excel and in what areas do you need improvement?

Workshop Session # 2
Topic: Communication: Assertiveness vs. Aggressiveness
Date: June 19, 2006

1. In your words, what is the difference between being assertive and being aggressive? Who decides what kind of person or behavior is assertive or aggressive?
2. What type of person do you associate with being assertive? What type of person do you associate with being aggressive? List characteristics for each.
3. Note an occasion during this next week where you effectively or ineffectively displayed assertiveness or aggressiveness. Explain the scenario and note your behaviors, body language and, verbal language as well as those of the other person(s).

Workshop Session # 3
Topic: Emotions/Feelings
Date: June 26, 2006

Think about a time you experienced a strong emotion at work. Although we might not talk about it much, we experience a variety of emotions at work, and these experiences have clear impacts—on our decision making, our productivity, our view of others, and our view of the work itself. These questions are concerned with your experience of specific emotions at work, what caused the emotion, whether you expressed it, and what happened afterwards.

Think about a time when you felt accepting, liking, or trusting for others in response to a situation at work. Consider the situation that brought about this feeling, and how you felt at the time. Specifically, think about:

- What circumstances or events caused this feeling? What made you accepting, liking, or trusting?
- Who were the key players involved? What was your relationship with them?
- Did you express your emotion? How was it expressed (or not expressed)? To whom?
- What were the consequences of this situation? What happened as a result?
Briefly describe the incident below.

The same exercise provided for Anger, Fear/Anxiety, and Happiness with these instructions:
Try to respond to at least 3 of the 4 emotions, but if you have time, please feel free to do them all! Consider these two elements as you ponder your experiences: 1) the influence of gender and 2) the influence of your body.

Workshop Session # 4
Topic: Emotions/Feelings
Date: July 10, 2006

Given the week break for the July 4th holiday, the women did not respond to additional questions about emotions and journaling. I did send them the questions used for session five to begin responding to in their journals.

Workshop Session # 5
Topic: Deepening Our Conversation
Date: July 17, 2006

In addition to sending the poem in Appendix E, the following questions were posed:

Consider the following questions to build your own story—a biography of sorts to share with the other members of our group.

1. What did you learn from your culture (includes, family culture, ethnic culture, religious culture) about what it meant to be a woman in relation to:
   a. Family roles and types of work expected in the home/family life
   b. Peer relations with the same sex and opposite sex
   c. Romantic relationships with the same or opposite sex
   d. Types of relationships allowed with members outside one’s own culture, and the nature of the boundaries of those relationships
   e. What was the nature of power relations in these various relational configurations?
   f. What people and/or institutions were the most significant teachers of these gendered relations?

2. How did you (or not) learn about your body?
   a. How did you learn what was expected or not expected of you having a female body?
   b. What messages did you receive about your body?
   c. Where did the messages about your body come from, and where did they not come from?

3. How do the pieces of your story from the first two questions intersect with your role as a woman manager or leader? Consider:
a. How your learning about gender has informed or shaped your management or leadership practices?

b. How your learning about the body and your relationship with your body has informed or shaped your management or leadership practices?

Workshop Session # 6
Topic: Body Image/Self-Confidence
Date: July 24, 2006

1. How do you see or picture yourself?
2. How do you feel others perceive you?
3. What do you believe about your physical appearance?
4. How do you feel about your body?
5. How do you feel in your body?
6. When do you feel most confident about your body? Least confident?

Workshop Session # 7
Topic: Conflict
Date: July 31, 2006

For each of the following, please list enough detail so that you can explain the situation to someone else.

1. Recall a conflict situation in which you were satisfied with the outcome, and outline the details of that incident below.
2. Recall a conflict situation in which you were dissatisfied with the outcome, and outline the details of the incident below.
3. Consider a current situation that you are in that involves conflict or a potential situation in your life that may result in conflict. List the details of that situation below.

Workshop Session # 8
Topic: Stress and Worry
Date: August 7, 2006

1. For you, how does stress intersect with being a woman manager?
2. How does your body express, react, or deal with stress?
3. How do women’s body’s and stress intersect in the workplace?
4. How did reading the newsletters on worry and distress impact your understanding of the two topics?
5. What techniques have you used that did/did not help you with stress or worry?
6. How do your employees, co-workers, and bosses handle stress?
7. What approach to “managing” stress does your organization take?
8. How does your organization help or hinder your ability to “manage” stress?
APPENDIX E

Poem Shared by Samantha

at some point in her career, every woman has shared
challenges with another woman
down the hall
up the street
in a corner office
three thousand miles away.

at some point in her career, every woman has needed
to compete with another woman
to fight on behalf of another woman
to place her trust in another woman
to interview another woman.

at some point in her career, every woman has needed
another woman to trust with her children
to remind her of who she used to be
to be a role model without ever knowing it
to listen.

at some point in her career, every woman should tell her story.
not for her, but for another woman not so different from herself.

change begins with understanding.
understanding begins with conversation.
APPENDIX F

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. What pseudonym would you like me to use?
2. What is your age?
3. Describe the physical experience of management.
4. How does the body relate to management?
5. Describe your body awareness.
6. Now that the study has concluded, how would you describe the connection between management, the body, and being a woman?
7. How is that connection significant for you?
8. What have you learned over the last 10 weeks about:
   a. yourself in general;
   b. being a woman;
   c. your body;
   d. management?
9. What topic, session, discussion or experience during the study did you find most valuable? Why?
10. How can paying attention to the body in the workplace be accomplished? (ie, how can organizations help people to value their bodies and value the way bodies relate to managing or leading?)
11. How will you go forward to honor your body and the bodies of those you manage or lead?
12. How will you continue to include yoga in your life in the future?
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194.


VITA

Tara Lynne Horst

Prior to her doctoral studies, Tara earned a baccalaureate degree in education and a master’s degree in business administration from Frostburg State University. After working in the fields of supplemental education, research and publishing, and web development and management consulting, she transitioned into university teaching.

Tara has taught both undergraduate and master’s level business management classes for Mount St. Mary’s University for seven years. She became a full-time member of the Business, Accounting, and Economics department in 2003. The management courses Tara teaches include business communications, business management and organizations, leadership and organizations, self-assessment and managerial skills, organizational behavior, organization theory and management practice, and the capstone research course for the master’s of business administration. She also serves as the faculty advisor for the Women in Business club.

Within the fields of adult and management education, Tara has written papers for and presented at the Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference, the International Transformative Learning Conference, the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education Conference, and the Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference.

Simultaneous to her doctoral work, Tara completed over 200-hours of yoga teacher training earning her the distinction of Registered Yoga Teacher as recognized by the Yoga Alliance. She has taught yoga throughout her hometown and at her university since 2002.