Exploring male batterer's experiences in a batterer education program: implications to educational practice

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Exploring male batterer's experiences in a batterer education program: Implications to educational practice

by

Jill Schafer Godbersen

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Adult and Extension Education)

Major Professor: Nancy J. Evans

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1999

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This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of

Jill Schafer Godbersen

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Major Professor

For the Major Program

For the Graduate College
This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Dr. John P. Wilson, former Interim Chair of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies Department. John hired me as his Research Assistant and exposed me to work with batterer education programs. John was the catalyst for my research topic and his knowledge regarding domestic violence was invaluable to me. His unexpected death was devastating to all who knew him. John was a motivated instructor who taught me much about adult education, but more importantly, about life. I will forever be grateful to him for all that he did for me as a Ph.D. student at Iowa State University.
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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

Despite recent research on domestic violence intervention programs, controversial and inconclusive results exist regarding how male batterers stop their abuse against their partners (Chen, Bersani, Myers, & Denton, 1989; Edleson, 1990; Gondolf, 1987). Although interventions for male batterers are growing in number and use in the United States, the evidence for their efficacy is not conclusive (Austin & Dankwort, 1999; Rosenfeld, 1992). Using a phenomenological approach, this study's purpose was to learn more about male batterers' transformational process in becoming non-batterers. By exploring male batterer's experiences in a batterer education program, we can investigate the learning processes and apply them to our current batterer educational programs and work with batterers.

Although much research has been conducted on male batterers, research including the victim's input along with the male batterer's responses is insufficient (Austin & Dankwort, 1999). This study aimed to extend the literature regarding the experiences of both the male batterer and the female victim during the batterer's educational program. Because few studies have investigated the change process from abuser to non-abuser while including the victim's input, the phenomenological approach used in this study provided a holistic view of the batterer education program's effect on both batterers and victims.

Additionally, few studies on batterer intervention investigate men's experiences from the perspective of learning theory (Williams, 1986). This study's phenomenological approach investigated the process of men's learning using transformative learning theory as a lens. Mezirow (1991) defined his perspective transformation learning theory as, the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions
have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (p. 167)

Transformative learning offers a potential explanation of how male batterers move from abusive to non-abusive behaviors towards their partners. The experience of a batterer education program for male spouse abusers provides insights for exploring and testing transformative learning theory.

**Domestic Violence Throughout History**

Patriarchy has been defined by Hartmann (1979) as:

a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. The material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men’s control over women’s labor power. (p. 11)

Men maintain this control by denying women access to the most lucrative and powerful positions and allowing them to work only in the lower paid, less prestigious jobs. Within patriarchy, traditional roles provide a rationale for the separateness of men and women. Women are responsible for reproduction and child rearing, while men are viewed as providers. Knowledge of the history of male spouse abuse is critical in understanding the current abuse directed towards women. Consistently, male domination, power and
control of women, and patriarchy have been found to be critical elements of spouse abuse (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987).

Domestic violence by husbands against their wives is not a creation of the 20th century, but rather a phenomenon that has existed for many centuries. Domestic violence dates back to the Roman times, when husbands had complete authority over their wives. Upon marriage, women acquired the status of daughter to their husbands. This authority by husbands, called *patria potestas*, included physical chastisement of wives and the power of life and death (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992).

The Puritans brought similar attitudes from England, which were then planted in the United States. Acceptance of the right to chastise women was maintained until the late 1830s (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992). Bills were passed in three states between 1876 and 1906 that validated whipping wife beaters. Although these laws were rarely enacted, some people acknowledged that wife beating was a social problem. Despite the legislation, wife abuse was still believed to be a family matter that should be handled privately (American Psychological Association, 1996).

Similarly, men have disciplined women with physical punishment for centuries. The age-old term “rule of thumb” comes from a husband being allowed to beat his wife with sticks no wider than his thumb. Our U.S. Constitution declared “all men are created equal.” This type of terminology depicts how women were perceived in the 1700s. Women were property that could be bought and sold. They did not have the right to own property, to vote, or to manage their wages as late as the 18th century (Stalans & Lurigio, 1995). Finally in 1857, the Married Women’s Property Act forbade a husband to “seize his wife’s
earnings and neglect her and allowed her to keep her own wages after the desertion of her lord" (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, pp. 67-68).

**Domestic Violence in Today’s Society**

Domestic violence continues to be a social problem in our society for which we have yet to find a cure. While women are also batterers, the vast majority of abusers in domestic incidents are men. Ninety-five percent of victims of partner abuse are women (Barnett & La Violette, 1993), women are ten times more likely to be victims of domestic violence than men, and over six million women are beaten every year (Stalans & Lurigio, 1995). Because of the staggering number of reported spouse abuse incidents against women, this research focused on men as the abuser and women as the victim.

Although ethnic or racial background is not related to violence, social class and age are correlated, with younger women with less education and lower incomes experiencing higher rates of violence by their partners (Stalans & Lurigio, 1995). Additionally, police are called to domestic disturbances mostly among the poor and uneducated. Although spouse abuse is present in all races and socioeconomic levels, non-white, lower income women are more than twice as likely to report an incident than are white, higher income women (Schulman, 1979).

Startling statistics from the American Psychological Association (1996) indicate that one in three women will experience at least one physical assault by a partner during adulthood; four million American women experience a serious assault by a partner over a one year period; in 1993, about 575,000 men were arrested for domestic violence against
women; in 1993, 1,300 women in the U.S. were killed by abusive partners or former partners; and 3.3 million children are exposed to domestic abuse.

The estimated number of women who are victims of domestic violence each year varies greatly, ranging from 2.1 million (Langan & Innes, 1986) to more than 8 million (Straus, 1991). The wide discrepancy is due to differences in definitions of spouse abuse, different sources of data, and discrepancies between self-reported abuser data and victim-reported data. Hirschel and Hutchison (1992) reported that because of varying methods of measurement, estimates of spouse assaults actually reported to the police range from 10% to 66% of all abused women. No one really knows for sure how many domestic abuse incidents occur each year because many go unreported.

**Domestic Violence Interventions**

Domestic violence in the United States became a more visible issue in the mid-1970s. With the women's movement of the 1960s, pressure was put on police to do something regarding violence against women. Mediation and crisis intervention techniques were taught to police forces with the hope that trained officers could diffuse heated domestic disturbances. Despite this added intervention, there was little evidence that mediation and crisis intervention by police officers was contributing anything positive to diminish domestic violence. Demands from women's groups led to mandatory arrest laws being enacted.

Increasing pressure on legislators and police led to a search for solutions to domestic violence. Batterer Education Programs (BEPs) began materializing across the U.S. in the late 1970s, but evaluations of these programs did not occur until the late 1980s.
The U.S. Department of Justice published a study in 1983 recommending that family violence be criminalized and that state law enforcement be used to force offenders into treatment and to sentence others to jail (American Psychological Association, 1996). Since then, many different types of batterer educational programs have been implemented, including anger management, cognitive skill building, trauma therapy (Tolman & Bennett, 1990), family systems therapy, cognitive-behavioral, social learning, and unstructured group therapy (Rosenfeld, 1992). There is no evidence that one format is substantially better than another and our understanding of the effectiveness of these interventions is limited (Gondolf, 1997a).

**Statement of the Problem**

One out of four men physically abuses his partner over the period of one year, and 50% of men physically assault their partners at some point during their marriage (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Marshall (1994) reported that other forms of violence—verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse—likely occur more often than physical violence.

Unfortunately, wife beating has historically been a legal and cultural method for a man to gain and maintain control in his family (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Although the legal right of a man to abuse his wife has been removed, cultural approval of the behavior still remains (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Abusive men base their violence on two beliefs: first, that they have the right to control their partners, and second, that violence is a legitimate method of achieving that control (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The U.S. Surgeon General declared spouse abuse a national epidemic in 1985 (American Psychological Association, 1996). But the United States is not alone when dealing with this problem. The
Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 stated that spouse abuse is epidemic in most societies around the world (American Psychological Association, 1996).

Violence and abuse between partners have real and significant effects on individuals, families, communities, and society. Spouse abuse may cause devastating psychological damage and be at the root of many current social problems (American Psychological Association, 1996). Domestic violence is traumatizing to its victims. Just one act of violence may cause long-lasting trauma and immediate harm to a victim or observer. Repeated abuse causes psychological distress and can result in posttraumatic stress disorder (American Psychological Association, 1996). Domestic abuse could also lead to suicidal feelings, suicide attempts, substance abuse, depression, or anxiety disorders (American Psychological Association, 1996).

Domestic abuse is often also connected to other social problems. For example, victims of spouse abuse often have increased health problems, and are at an increased risk for poor job performance (American Psychological Association, 1996). Domestic violence increases health care, police, and correctional system costs (American Psychological Association, 1996). Additionally, spouse abuse affects the economic well-being of families. Domestic violence can lead to the breakup of families, resulting in poverty for women who become single heads of households (American Psychological Association, 1996). Because of the extent and consequences of marital abuse in the United States, the topic is increasingly receiving the interest of psychologists, family theorists, criminologists, and researchers.
Because domestic abuse has such far-reaching drastic effects on society, it is a research topic that deserves attention. This phenomenological study provides an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to learn more about the transformation process of male spouse abusers.

In the area of domestic violence, victim input and learning processes are aspects that need more attention and inclusion. Information about how men learn to stop their abuse is missing from the current literature. Mezirow's transformative learning theory may illuminate why some spouse abusers change their behavior to become non-abusers.

**Purpose of the Study**

The general purposes of this study were (1) to examine the experiences of male batterers in batterer education programs, (2) to examine victim input regarding batterer's educational experience and to validate batterer's self-reports, (3) to follow/track male batterers through their educational programs, and (4) to explore Mezirow's transformative learning theory as a possible explanation for the learning and change batterers experience in stopping their abuse.

The aforementioned purposes all emphasize understanding the educational experience of batterers utilizing victim insight and transformative learning theory. The knowledge gained from this exploration can be used to design batterer education programs and to educate batterers. This study offers greater understanding of the application of perspective transformation theory and the utilization of victim input. Ideally, this research will also contribute to the advancement of a society without violence.
Research Questions

The research questions guiding this phenomenological study were:

(1) Do abusers and victims share similar opinions about abuser's behaviors while abusers are in the educational program?

(2) What patterns emerge from the narratives of the batterers?

(3) What about the educational program assists men in stopping their abuse?

(4) If a perspective transformation occurs in the process of a batterer education program, how does this happen?

Operational Definitions

Coercive behavior—"an action taken with the intention of imposing harm on another or forcing compliance" (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994, p. 168)

Critical reflection—assessment of the validity of the presuppositions of one's meaning perspectives, and examination of their sources and consequences (Mezirow, 1990, p. xvi)

Domestic abuse—physical, sexual, or emotional coercion for the purpose of achieving power and control over another person, or to punish another person for not meeting one's needs (American Psychological Association, 1996)

Emotional abuse—any attempt to make one's partner feel bad about herself or any attack on her self-esteem (Pence & Paymar, 1993)

Learning—the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12)
Punishments—acts intended to do harm to another (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994, p. 168)

Spouse abuse—discrete and subtle behaviors designed to gain and maintain control over the woman (American Psychological Association, 1996)

Threats—expressions of an intent to do harm to another (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994, p. 168)

Transformative learning—the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one’s experience. Learning includes acting on these insights (Mezirow, 1990, p. xvi)

Verbal aggression—“a communication, either verbal or nonverbal, intended to cause psychological pain to another person or perceived as having that intent” (Straus, Sweet, & Vissing, 1989, p. 3)

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Even though much effort has been channeled into researching batterers and batterer interventions, the causes of and solutions for domestic violence remain unanswered. Many different explanations for domestic violence exist, with none outweighing the other. Among the theories applied to understand spouse abuse, social learning theory is a predominant explanation. It suggests that violence in the family is learned behavior (American Psychological Association, 1996; Mihalic & Elliott, 1997). This theory says
that violence is learned from watching others engage in violence and is accepted as an appropriate way to handle conflicts. Evidence suggests that violence is transmitted from one generation to another, but that social learning is not the lone cause. Interpersonal violence is a complex behavior with many influences and contributing factors. Higher rates of marital violence are associated with exposure to violence during childhood, but not in all cases. Thus, other variables are factoring in to this phenomenon.

Social learning theory deals with socially determined behavior involving stimuli provided by people (Gelfand, 1975). Social behavior is not determined solely by interpersonal events. Individual’s temperament and physical factors also play roles in social behavior. Social learning theory emphasizes the acquired, environmentally determined behavioral aspects. Social learning theorists are mainly concerned with the impact of the environment on human behavior (Gelfand, 1975). Children are not born violent, rather they model their behavior based on observation, experience, and exposure. Boys who are exposed to violence are at high risk to commit violence themselves, and are at major risk for becoming batterers (American Psychological Association, 1996).

Learned Gender Roles

In addition to learned violence, the effects of learned gender role socialization are apparent upon examination of some batterer’s attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding men and women. Gender role socialization defines those life experiences that encourage people to behave according to predetermined expectations based on their gender (American Psychological Association, 1996). Gender roles play a vital part in how people learn to accept and use violence in their relationships. Some boys and girls are taught that according to social “rules,” the two genders should behave differently. Girls are
unfortunately taught to be passive, submissive, and dependent. Boys, on the other hand, are taught to be aggressive, active, and dominant. Because of these gender myths, men can receive the false message that they have the right to control women (American Psychological Association, 1996). The acquisition of socially learned behaviors that perpetuate violence and traditional gender role expectations leads to the continuation of domestic violence.

Although sex roles in our society are changing, many batterers still hold traditional beliefs that support male privilege. The intent of this male privilege is to establish and maintain control of the relationship (Pence & Paymar, 1993). This belief system has deep roots in our culture and throughout history. Male privilege is the belief that men are entitled to certain privileges just because they are men (Pence & Paymar, 1993). This male privilege idea is something that men have woven into society and that they fight to maintain. The theory guiding batterer curriculum and practice is based on the premise that men who batter are using tactics to exert control over their partners in a culture that is structured hierarchically, with someone always on top (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

To summarize then, this study’s theoretical foundation is based on a combination of ideologies. This research is based on the underlying premise that domestic violence is a complex interpersonal behavioral pattern that has roots in patriarchy, socially learned behavior, and learned gender roles. Many contributing factors affect whether or not one is a spouse abuser, as opposed to just one cause. The theoretical variables are interwoven into one another and overlap each other, creating a complex interpersonal behavior, spouse abuse.
Change is a Choice

Values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that have been a part of a man for many years are difficult to change. Even when a man begins to understand that his beliefs and actions are destructive, he probably will not stop controlling immediately. A whole new set of behaviors must be built. The educational intervention teaches new skills to the men who decide to change and build new behavioral patterns (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The decision by batterers to change is a crucial component in order for transformative learning to occur.

Interventions challenge men to see their use of violence as a choice, not an uncontrolled reaction to situations that make them angry or that they perceive they cannot control (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Batterer education programs challenge much of what men have been raised to believe through their adult lives. Batterer education programs ask men to respect women and to give up the privileged status society has given them.

To date, no one theory has adequately accounted for domestic violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Experts agree that violence is often a learned behavior and that much of that learned violence takes place in the home (American Psychological Association, 1996). If violence is a learned behavior, then educational interventions can assist in unlearning violent behavior. But no intervention or program will change a man (Pence & Paymar, 1993). It is only when the batterer makes the very personal decision to change that the abusive behaviors will cease. The change process is a long and difficult one that requires brutal honesty with oneself. But if violence and abuse can be learned, then it seems plausible that violent behavior can also be unlearned and replaced with new, more appropriate behaviors.
Transformative Learning Theory

The learning provided to us as children from our parents and culture is the learning that is rewarded (Mezirow, 1991). Adults define a child's reality, as they have an investment in their own interpretations of reality. Bowers (1984) noted that socialization involves internalizing the assumptions taken for granted and communicated by others. As adults, we each come with our own personal histories. We all make sense of our experiences and begin with what we have been given and operate within the context of understanding that we have acquired through prior learning. Thus, the formative learning of childhood becomes transformative learning in adulthood (Mezirow, 1991).

Jack Mezirow (1991) described his transformative learning theory by stating that, “It seeks to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what processes the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed” (p. xiii). His approach has roots in constructivism, critical theory, and deconstructivism in social theory. Transformative learning presupposes that meaning is interpretation, and since meanings change, a present interpretation of reality is always subject to change or revision (Mezirow, 1991).

Mezirow (1991) listed the ten phases of perspective transformation:

1—A disorienting dilemma
2—Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3—A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
4—Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5—Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6—Planning of a course of action  
7—Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans  
8—Provisional trying of new roles  
9—Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships  
10—A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective. (pp. 168-169)

Transformation theory includes how meaning is construed and how learning takes place. To make meaning is to interpret experiences and give them coherence (Mezirow, 1991). Meaning perspectives give us boundaries for perceiving and comprehending new data. Consequently, data that has been uncritically assimilated into meaning can distort our ways of knowing.

**Critical Reflection**

Reflecting critically on our assumptions could result in the transformation of meaning perspectives and how experiences were interpreted (Mezirow, 1991). A vital component of transformative learning is critical reflection. John Dewey’s definition of critical reflection is, “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (1933, p. 9). Dewey’s reflective process is referred to as critical inquiry (Dewey, 1933). Additionally, Dewey’s reflection is transformation theory’s validity testing (Mezirow, 1991).

Throughout his book, Dewey (1933) stated that the process of critical inquiry requires an awareness that a true problem exists for which the solution is unknown at the
time. In transformation theory, we see the habitual ways that we have interpreted our experiences to rationally validate our meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991).

Meaning is transformed through critical reflection. We critically reflect on the unexamined assumptions of our beliefs and values when they are not working well for us, or when our old ways of thinking are no longer functional (Mezirow, 1994). Critical reflection includes a critique of long-held assumptions to determine whether the belief, often acquired in childhood, remains functional for us as adults (Mezirow, 1994).

Sources of authority and taken-for-granted norms that distribute privilege and power are subject to validity testing through rational dialogue (Mezirow, 1990). Through this critical examination of our paradigms and the way we understand our being, we can change the way we make sense of our world. This transformative learning, if turned into action, can change our lives (Mezirow, 1990).

Critical reflection also enables us to correct errors and distortions in our beliefs (Mezirow, 1990). Our current frame of reference is based on a set of assumptions that structures the way we interpret our experiences. Reflecting back on prior learning to determine what is justified and appropriate behavior is central to adult learning (Mezirow, 1990). We are critically reflective when we challenge an established interpretation of meaning. We reassess the beliefs we possess and discover why we have these beliefs. If needed, we change the belief if the current interpretation does not fit our new experience. As Mezirow (1990) explained, adulthood is the time for reexamining the assumptions of our childhood that have resulted in distorted views of reality. Typically, perspective transformation occurs in response to an externally imposed dilemma (Mezirow, 1990). Old
ways of knowing cannot make sense of this trigger event, and the event becomes the catalyst that begins the process of perspective transformation.

Mezirow (1990) described the process of critical reflection in three interrelated phases:

1—identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions
2—scrutinizing the accuracy and validity of these thoughts and actions in terms of how they connect to, or are discrepant with, our experience of reality
3—reconstituting these assumptions to make them more inclusive and integrative. (p. 177)

Dialogue, Reflective Learning, and Transformative Learning

The role of dialogue is critical in the process of critical reflection. We try to understand and learn why we believe in our taken-for-granted assumptions that guide our life courses. Through dialogue we are challenged and confronted by others who may see through our justifications better than we do. By sharing beliefs and values that have been with us for decades, we openly allow ourselves to be examined by others. The threat of security is imminent in transformative learning. By challenging comfortable beliefs we challenge our way of being. The purpose of dialogue is to assist people in their examination of the sources and consequences of their taken-for-granted assumptions about how life works for them (Mezirow, 1990).

Mezirow (1991) stated that reflective learning involves a reassessment of our assumptions. Whenever assumptions are found to be distorted or invalid, transformative learning has taken place.
Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (p.167)

Perspective transformation cannot be evoked upon demand from either learner or educator. The learner may have difficulty in accepting the new meaning perspective because it conflicts with an established meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1991). Learners enter educational programs at different levels of readiness for transformative learning. From his research, Mezirow concluded that there is some evidence to suggest that people ahead of others can be influential in fostering transformative changes. Thus, the group dialogue process in batterer education programs may be beneficial to batterers at different stages of transformative learning.

Transformative learning is an interactive process whereby a perspective is transformed by resolving a dilemma through exposure to alternative perspectives (Mezirow, 1990). Applying this process to batterer education programs, the mandatory educational intervention may serve as the disorienting dilemma for batterers. This process could be the catalyst for the batterers to examine their previously held beliefs about women and violence.

Applying Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning to the experiences of batterers in educational programs may provide understanding and insight into the process of moving from an abuser to a non-abuser. Through exploring the perspective transformation process that domestic abusers go through we may learn new ways of
designing and implementing batterer education programs. Understanding the process of change and adaptation to new ways of thinking of abusive men will result in more effective interventions and hopefully less violence.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one introduces the topic of domestic violence, states the problem and the purpose of this research, presents the research questions of this study, defines terms, and provides the theoretical framework for this research. Chapter two consists of the literature review, which discusses batterers, batter education programs, transformative learning in batterers, and the effectiveness of interventions. Chapter three consists of the methodology. In this chapter the details of the methods used to conduct this research study are discussed. Chapter four consists of the participant profiles, which detail the individuals as well as the group under study. Chapter five consists of the findings of this study. The study’s questions are revisited, the patterns in the narratives are detailed, the positive aspects of the program are discussed, and perspective transformation in the participants is reviewed. Chapter six concludes this paper with the conclusions found from the study. Five conclusions are discussed, as well as limitations, reflections, and recommendations. A final summary of the research is presented. Appendices and references follow at the end of the paper.
CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite evidence that abusers can decrease their violence (Gondolf, 1997a), researchers have been unable to identify the active agent(s) responsible for the change (Austin & Dankwort, 1999; Tolman & Edleson, 1995). Currently, insufficient information exists in the literature regarding the personal transformation from abuser to non-abuser (Chen et al., 1989; Rosenfeld, 1992). This phenomenological study extends knowledge of the transformational process that batterers experience in educational programs. The literature reviewed here covers vital aspects of what we currently know about batterers and batterer interventions including: jealousy, an abusive framework, verbal aggression, power and control, communication, reformed batterers, transformative learning applied to batterers, batterer education programs, and effectiveness of batterer education programs. The intent of this review is to summarize the current knowledge regarding male spouse abusers and the interventions designed to assist them in the cessation of violence against their partners.

What We Know About Men Who Batter

To design more effective interventions, researchers are attempting to learn more about the men who batter their partners. Jealousy has recently been found to be a common characteristic of some batterers. Research by Dutton, Van Ginkel, and Landolt (1996) focused on extreme jealousy as a central characteristic of batterers. Results indicated that jealousy was related to borderline personality in assaultive males and significant correlations between jealousy and abusiveness were found.
In 1984 Pence and Paymar (1993) began developing a framework for describing the behavior of male batterers. Many of their study’s female participants were critical of the theories that depicted a cycle of violence in relationships as opposed to a constant force. The women they studied believed that domestic violence is not an isolated incident nor is it based on cyclical responses of anger. Rather, domestic violence is something the women live with constantly. Abusive men possess violent, intimidating personality characteristics that affect their partners daily.

The behavioral tendencies of abusive men also consist of verbal as well as physical aggression. Hyden (1995) conducted a qualitative study that looked at the association of verbal aggression and woman battering. The violence exhibited was described as a physical fight where the man used physical violence to end a verbal fight or as part of the verbal fight to communicate worthlessness to his partner. The goal of the verbal fight was to change the partner’s behavior and to make her feel inferior. This goal was usually reached in the short term, but over time it was not successful. Verbal and physical violence were linked together. The men hit their partners as a way to demand subordination and stop the verbal fighting. This study demonstrated that the issue of power and control is an important factor in spouse abuse.

In addition to displaying jealous behavior, verbal aggression, and an abusive framework, Coleman (1980) found that abusive men also use violence when they perceive a loss of control. Abusers use physical force to make their partners comply with their wishes. When other methods fail to make the partner do what the abuser wants, he resorts to violence to get his way. Abusers report that their behaviors escalate to violence when they feel they are out of control (Stets, 1988).
Prince and Arias (1994) conducted a study examining the relationship between perceived control and the desirability of control among abusive and non-abusive husbands. Results confirmed the hypothesis that, in fact, control is a vital ingredient in understanding domestic violence. A key finding in this study was that abusers' beliefs about their ability to control the outcome of an event were significantly related to their use of violence.

Power and control continues to be one of the most popular areas of study with abusive men. Stets (1995) examined the relationship between gender identity, the mastery identity, and control over one's partner in intimate relationships. Gender identity refers to the meaning an individual gives to being male or female. Mastery is defined as the extent to which people view themselves as being in control of their lives. Results indicated that men with a more masculine gender identity were more likely to perceive that they do indeed control their wives. In our culture being male is linked to control.

Equality of power and control in relationships has been linked to non-abusive and satisfactory relationships. A qualitative study done by Blaisure and Allen (1995) was based on interviews of married couples who perceived that they had a "progressive" marital relationship. The researchers found that when couples strive for equality of power and authority in their marriage, they have more satisfactory marriages. Interestingly, the women in this study were financially able and willing to leave their marriages, if necessary. Okin (1989) argued that women's ability to leave relationships is largely a matter of finances, which really is power in a relationship.

Since domestic violence occurs in a relationship, it is important that the dynamics of relationships be studied. Communication plays a major role in relationships and the lack of appropriate communication skills often leads to destructive communication patterns.
The family of origin tends to pass down learned behaviors regarding how to solve disputes in a family (The American Psychological Association, 1996). Batterers often try to persuade their partners that their way is the right way and they also believe it is possible to change their partner (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

**Batterer Education Programs**

Punishment alone has not been found to bring about permanent change in abusers (American Psychological Association, 1996), so educational strategies have also been implemented. Because batterers are rarely motivated to seek assistance voluntarily, the legal system has been instrumental in moving batterers into treatment and motivating them to change their behavior. Educational interventions seek to help the abuser change his behavior and immediately stop his abuse by addressing personal issues, attitudes, behavior patterns, and characteristics that influence the likelihood of committing future acts of abuse. Some batterer education programs have been found to assist in the decrease of violence, but the aspects of these programs that are important in this decrease remain a mystery (Austin & Dankwort, 1999; Gondolf, 1997a). The ineffectiveness of arrest as a deterrent to spouse abuse led to education and therapy as interventions for abusers.

The purpose of batterer education programs is to challenge patterns of thinking and acting that lead to destructive and violent relationships. A person’s thinking reflects values and beliefs, which in turn effect behaviors. A typical curriculum is designed so that men can explore their definitions of what it means to be a man. This reflective process is gradual and can require confrontation of previously held beliefs. Participants in programs learn that socially constructed versions of male and female behavior can be changed.
Batterer education programs occur in group settings that encourage men to share their feelings.

The cognitive behavioral approach used in many batterer education programs is based on learning theory. The underlying premise of this approach is that change is best achieved by focusing on how the abuser thinks about his behavior and how he interprets events. If change is made in how a batterer understands his behavior and events, changes in his feelings and behavior will follow (American Psychological Association, 1996). Men are also challenged to take a critical look at their values regarding what they want in an intimate relationship with a woman. Men are helped to understand the root of their abusive behaviors and are offered concrete ways they can change those abusive behaviors. Overall, then, the curriculum of a typical batterer education program provides the men with information and practical tools to change those values, beliefs, and behaviors, that have been the foundation for their use of violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

A respected batterer education program (BEP) that has been a model for other programs was developed in 1986 in Duluth, Minnesota. This program consists of a 24-week curriculum designed to help men change from using the behaviors described on a Power and Control Wheel (see Appendix G), which result in authoritarian and destructive relationships, to using behaviors described on an Equality Wheel (see Appendix H) (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Long term change in gender relationships requires batterers to honestly examine their long held beliefs about relationships with women. This curriculum advocates that men must make personal commitments to give up automatic authority based on their gender, and strive for a more equal relationship with their partners.
In domestic abuse incidents, the purpose of the abuse is to establish and maintain control over the partner (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The premise of the Duluth curriculum is that the purpose of using abusive behavior toward a partner is to control the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the partner. This behavior is a deliberate attempt to control the partner. A man’s aggression against his partner is linked to his perception of the world and how men and women should behave. Without a change in his worldview, the abusive man will continue to justify his actions based on his worldview. The curriculum emphasizes the batterer’s thinking about his choice to abuse, the intent of the physical behavior, what value he places on the behavior, and its impact on his life (Pence & Paymar, 1993). A vital factor in batterer education is the notion of critical thinking (Dewey, 1933). A goal of the intervention is to assist the batterers to critically reflect on their worldviews regarding male and female relationships.

**Transformative Learning in Reformed Batterers**

Few investigators have conducted research on the reformed batterer’s transformation process while utilizing partner input. But in an interesting study, Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) interviewed reformed batterers regarding how they stopped their abuse and additionally verified these responses with their partners. Results showed that the reformed men believed their failed macho complex was the reason for their abuse, they believed the educational program was the catalyst for their personal change, and they viewed the change as personal growth where they “accepted responsibility, became empathetic, and redefined their manhood” (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987, p. 191). An important finding from the men’s interviews was that they saw themselves as “failed
macho men who compensated for their inadequacy with abuse” (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987, p. 181).

The reformed batterers viewed the educational program as an integral part of their personal recovery. The men were adamant that they entered the program because of their personal interest in stopping their abuse. The program acted as a reinforcement of their goal.

The reformed batterers discussed two components of the educational program that were of value to them that other forms of counseling were not able to provide. The men appreciated the discussions and the closeness that developed within the group of men. The discussions and closeness helped them to identify with other men in similar situations.

Interestingly enough, the reformed batterers in this study did not see their change as behavioral or attitudinal. They described their change as long-term personal growth. They stopped treating their wives like “objects.” “This personal growth appeared to occur in three steps: accepting responsibility for the physical and verbal abuse; becoming aware of their feelings and developing empathy toward others; and redefining their sense of masculinity and resisting the pressure to conform” (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987, p. 187).

Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) offered three implications for future batterer educational programs from their work on this study:

1) Programs must account for the men’s low self-esteem without lending support to the abuse, 2) Programs for men who batter need to reinforce the men’s need for self-determination through a group self-help format, and 3) Programs that work with men who batter must prepare themselves, and their clients, for the long haul of the change process. (p. 189)
The findings led to the conclusion that the process of change for batterers goes well beyond the last day of the program. As these researchers stated, "Ultimately our conceptions of masculinity need to be redefined, for the batterers’ anger towards and control of women appear to be rooted in an unattainable and repressive gender image" (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987, p. 189).

Another study investigated transformative learning as a possible explanation for reduced abusive behavior. Williams (1986) conducted an empirical study to investigate whether or not perspective transformation assisted in understanding and facilitating change in abusive behavior toward one’s spouse. Results of the study suggested that an educational program designed to foster perspective transformation did lower the abusive behavior in the participants. Specifically, the men who experienced a perspective transformation made the greatest changes in decreasing their use of abusive physical behavior (Williams, 1986). Williams concluded that perspective transformation is an effective theory for explaining the process of change in spouse abusers.

**Effectiveness of Interventions**

The main criteria for judging success in batterer interventions has usually been the degree to which violence occurs again after the treatment (Edleson, 1990). A review of the literature generated some studies documenting the percentage of men who decrease their violence after participating in a batterer education program. Unfortunately, very few studies that report recidivism (repeat offense) data discuss the methods used to retrieve this data (i.e., self-reports, victims’ reports, or police reports). It appears that the average reported recidivism rate in the literature is around 25% (Rosenfeld, 1992). Interestingly,
though, victims report a higher recidivism rate (36%). Edleson (1990) found recidivism rates of 32% to 41% in three of his studies, reported six months later by the partners of the abusers.

In a study by Waldo (1988), no re-arrests were made after a one-year period. Dutton (1986) found that 4% of batterers had re-offended after a 6-month to 3-year follow-up period. Chen et al. (1989) found 5% of treated men were recidivists during a 14-month follow-up period. Additionally, DeMaris and Jackson (1987) found 34% of abusers who acknowledged at least one incident of violence during the follow-up period. And finally, in a comparison study of batterer interventions in four different cities, the overall re-assault rate was found to be 29% after a 12-month follow-up (Gondolf, 1997c).

The studies discussed here have reported varying recidivism rates of violence, mostly reported by abusers. Unfortunately, we have little information regarding other changes that may have resulted from batterer interventions, how the intervention contributed to a man's nonviolence, and what processes in the batterer program enhanced change (Edleson, 1990).

Summary

Useful information is currently available regarding batterer education programs. The theory behind the curriculum, the goals and objectives, and the plans for implementation have been laid out clearly (Pence & Paymar, 1993). More information is now needed on the educational experiences of batterers who go through batterer education programs and on the learning and change process experienced by some men who discontinue their violence towards women.
In summary, the most effective intervention for male spouse abusers remains controversial (Rosenfeld, 1992). There is no decisive empirical evidence that distinguishes one intervention over another at this time (Gondolf, 1997a). The debate over which intervention is most successful with spouse abusers is likely to continue for some time. A study by Davis and Smith (1995) concluded that we are far from “developing a set of tools that work well across a variety of situations in reducing the likelihood of future violence” (p. 541). Although the literature possesses information about men who batter and evaluations of batterer interventions, limited knowledge is available regarding how men stop their abuse. Insufficient inclusion of victim reports in batterer intervention research has allowed male batterers the luxury of not having their abusive incidents confirmed or denied by their victims.

Because very little is actually known about batterer’s transformational experiences, a phenomenological study can be useful in revealing the learning processes important in batterer education programs. Understanding these processes will assist in the design and implementation of future interventions. Utilizing victim input with batterer input can assist in the validation of batterer responses and illuminate how women view batterers’ experiences in classes. Detailed investigation into the experiences of men who stop abusing their partners is needed to better understand the learning and change associated with a personal transformation of this extent.
CHAPTER THREE. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to develop a comprehensive understanding of male batterers’ experiences in a batterer education program. Past studies have shown that intervention can lead to cessation of violence in relationships (Edleson & Syers, 1990; Gondolf, 1997a), but information regarding how men come to end their abuse is limited. A qualitative design assisted in the exploration of the batterers’ experiences and in understanding the batterers’ educational processes.

Because qualitative methods are oriented towards exploration and discovery, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate method for this study. Qualitative designs allow researchers to study selected issues in depth. Qualitative methods also produce rich, detailed data about a small number of cases (Patton, 1987). Qualitative inquiry aims to capture the richness of people’s personal experiences using their own words, with understanding and meaning emerging from detailed, in-depth analysis.

Qualitative inquiry is supported by the interpretivist paradigm that portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Instead of simplifying social phenomena, qualitative research explores the range of behaviors and tries to understand the resulting interactions. Additionally, qualitative research seeks to make sense out of personal stories, which were a main focus of this study.

Additionally, qualitative inquiry is an ideal methodology for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena (Merriam, 1988). Qualitative designs utilize a naturalistic approach whereby the researcher does not manipulate the participants.
or the program. Rather, the researcher studies naturally occurring activities and processes. The qualitative inquiry focuses on capturing the natural phenomenon under study by documenting the processes, variations, experiences, and outcomes (Patton, 1987).

Because of the traits possessed by qualitative inquiry, it served as an appropriate method for this study. The qualitative approach views people and processes as dynamic and developing, which is characteristic of batterers and batterer interventions.

Qualitative researchers strive to understand situations as a whole by searching for totality. This holistic approach assumes that a description and understanding of a phenomenon's social and political context is essential for overall understanding of the situation (Patton, 1987). Finally, qualitative researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation (Merriam, 1988). By concentrating on a single phenomenon, the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon that ultimately seek holistic description and explanation.

Context

This research was conducted with the State of Iowa Woodbury County Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services. When men are arrested in Woodbury County for domestic abuse, they are court-ordered to attend a sixteen-week Batterers Education Program coordinated by the Department of Human Services. Working together, the Department of Corrections and Human Services make sure that all court ordered men complete this educational program.

The Woodbury County BEP has one coordinator of the program and numerous facilitators for the classes. Six classes are generally offered during the week, and men are
allowed to choose the day and time that fits their schedule. The sixteen-week class meets once a week for two hours. The men pay for their own classes, with payment varying per man based on income. If men are re-arrested for spouse abuse they are automatically dismissed from the class.

One male and one female facilitate each class. This is intentionally done, as the program wants a female present and part of the dialog. A question to consider is whether or not the presence of a female inhibits the dialog between the men. Batterers may hold certain beliefs and attitudes about women that are not necessarily positive. It is possible that the men in the class may refrain from verbalizing their true negative feelings about women because of the presence of a woman facilitator.

Ideally, class size is limited to around fifteen men, but the size may be increased due to a large number of participants. Men begin each class at varying times throughout the year, so each class is comprised of men who are just beginning the program to men who are just completing the program. Consequently, the make-up of the class can change from week to week. This fact has its advantages as well as disadvantages. An advantage of this cyclical rotation of men in and out of the class is that men who are just beginning the class can hopefully learn from the men who have been enrolled for a longer period of time. The dialog that occurs between the men is an important aspect of the learning process. The men also confront one another and challenge each other on their attitudes and behaviors. A disadvantage of the changing class roster is that the men are not all at the same learning stage at the same time. Men just beginning the program may begin in the middle of the curriculum instead of at the beginning, so they may be confused about the material for a few weeks.
Men court ordered to attend the BEP first go through an intake and then an orientation with the BEP staff before beginning the classes. The intake consists of batterers meeting with the BEP Coordinator one-on-one to discuss their personal history of abuse. This information is self-reported by the batterers and based on a Domestic Violence Intake/Lethality Assessment tool (Sonkin, 1985). The purpose of the intake is to examine the lethality of the relationship. The men are asked a number of questions that address the following twelve topics: 1) frequency/cycle of violence, 2) history of violence, 3) substance use/abuse, 4) assaults on other family members, 5) previous criminal history/activity, 6) violence outside the home, 7) isolation, 8) proximity of victim and offender, 9) attitudes towards violence, 10) life stresses, 11) general mental functioning, and 12) physical health. The BEP Coordinator then decides if the batterer should attend the BEP classes. Reasons why the Coordinator would choose not to enroll a batterer in a class might include alcohol/drug addiction, suicidal tendencies, re-offenses, and English or Spanish not being the man’s native language. When the BEP Coordinator passes the batterer out of the intake, he then proceeds to the orientation.

The orientation is conducted in a small group setting that includes the BEP Coordinator and three to five batterers. During the orientation the men are given a general overview of the BEP class. The Coordinator also discusses the rules of the program and explains the basic philosophy of the program. The men are told that they cannot miss more than two sessions or they will be sent back to the judge. They cannot be more than ten minutes late for a class, or they will be counted absent. If a staff member smells alcohol on their breath they will not be allowed into class. Any intimidating behavior will not be tolerated in class nor will unwillingness to participate be accepted. Participants are
expected to complete any homework assignments, as well as participate in exercises done in class. During the orientation the men must also verbally acknowledge to the Coordinator that they are indeed batterers.

The BEP curriculum is based on the Duluth Model curriculum developed by Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar (1993) titled "Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter." The curriculum consists of eight main themes, with each theme representing an aspect of nonviolent and respectful relationships: non-threatening behavior, respect, trust and support, honesty and accountability, responsible parenting, shared responsibility, economic partnership, and negotiation and fairness (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The facilitators led each class with some lecture, discussion, and exercises.

An example of a weekly exercise is one entitled, "Recently, Have You?" This short exercise instructs the men to respond to five questions regarding their behavior in the past week. The purpose of the exercise is for the men to become more aware of their recent controlling behaviors and talk about them in class. The facilitators went around the room and asked each man to share all of his answers out loud with the class. This self-disclosure appeared to be uncomfortable for some men. The men who acknowledged that they used controlling behaviors were usually confronted by other men in the class if they tried to justify their controlling behavior. This dialog was a vital component of the transformative learning process. The men were held accountable by the facilitators and their peers, and were forced into discussion about their attitudes and beliefs.

Another exercise in the curriculum was titled, "I Am Beginning to Feel Angry." This exercise had the men distinguish their anger at different levels, from beginning to feel angry, to a moderate anger level, and a high anger level. The purpose of this tool was to
teach men about the physical warning signs of an oncoming outburst of anger. Many batterers initially believe that they cannot control their anger. They believe their anger is something that is out of their control. This exercise teaches men to become aware of an increasing heart rate, perspiration, negative self-talk, fidgeting, and uneasiness as potential signs of a high anger level. When the men are more aware of their level of anger, they can do things like leave the house to get away and cool down before they get into a fight that could potentially lead to abuse.

Site and Program Staff

On February 13, 1998, I met with the Woodbury County Department of Corrections Staff and Human Services Staff regarding the issue of conducting dissertation research with their BEP (see Appendix B). A letter dated September 22, 1998 was sent to Human Services detailing the nature of the study (see Appendix C). An acceptance letter dated October 14, 1998 was sent to Iowa State acknowledging that I had permission to begin collecting data and work with the BEP (see Appendix C).

Denny Boots, the BEP Coordinator for Woodbury County, was my main contact throughout the research. We agreed that I would attend the Monday evening BEP sessions that were scheduled from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The Human Services office was located in a residential area in an older section of Sioux City. The parking lot was always overcrowded with vehicles and many men were standing outside the entrance smoking prior to the start of the class.

I met with Denny Boots in his office prior to each BEP session to discuss the status of my research. I interviewed participants in a staff member’s office and I observed the
men in their class in the upstairs classroom. The building was compact and full of many offices and classrooms. As the men came to class each night they had to sign in and pay their weekly fee for the class.

The central BEP program staff consisted of the BEP Coordinator, Denny Boots, and numerous BEP facilitators. Deb Campbell, the Community Program Monitor at the Department of Corrections, monitored the status of each BEP participant. It was Deb’s job to follow every man in Woodbury County who was arrested and sentenced for domestic violence. She made sure every man who was supposed to attend the BEP followed through with it. She reported delinquent men to the judge in Woodbury County. Meg Bessman-Quintero was another staff member who worked with the domestic victims. She talked to the women and offered them services and support.

The BEP facilitators are also an integral part of the staff. I worked with three facilitators during this study. As mentioned earlier, each class has one female facilitator and one male facilitator. One person must have their Masters of Social Work and the other must have a Bachelor’s degree. No specific academic discipline is required, as facilitators are difficult to find. The BEP staff suggested this is so because of the high burnout and turnover of BEP facilitators. The staff believed that this work is emotionally challenging. People who are interested and committed in working with batterers are preferred as facilitators. The formal preparation for facilitators is a three-day training program offered in the state of Iowa.
Participant Selection

For in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, researchers should spend repetitive extended periods of time with a few respondents (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Qualitative research does not depend on a particular number of respondents for sampling (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Since participant selection has the sole purpose of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding, much time should be spent carefully selecting participants.

For the purposes of this research, a purposive sampling method was used to select study participants. Purposive sampling techniques are utilized when a researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight. Chein (1981) described this technique as the process of selecting a sample from which one can learn the most. The researcher selects participants specifically because of their particular experiences. In this study, men participating in the batterer education program were selected based on their specific experience in this program. These men were able to share their personal experiences of violence in their relationships. Most importantly, the men provided data that were analyzed to determine whether transformative learning was used in their process of becoming nonviolent.

The Woodbury County BEP Coordinator assisted the researcher with sample selection procedures. The following criteria were used in selecting participants:

1. The participant had to currently be in a relationship with his partner from the abusive incident for which he was arrested.
2. The participant had to voluntarily want to participate and needed to be a talkative, open person.
3. The participant had to be going through this BEP for the first time.
4. The participant had to agree to his partner being contacted to participate in the study.

The Woodbury County Batterer Education Program has approximately twenty men enrolled in it at any one time. The BEP Coordinator identified which men were going through the program for the first time and which men were currently with their partners. I then observed the men who met these criteria during their classes and chose men who I felt might be open and talkative. Working with the BEP coordinator, I selected seven men who were just beginning the program. I invited the chosen men to participate in this study and went through the consent forms with them (see Appendix D). The participants were told that they would need to talk with me three times throughout the BEP class and that they would be paid $7 for each interview.

I began interviewing participants on November 9, 1998, and completed interviews on June 28, 1999. Each male participant was interviewed at the beginning of his BEP class, in the middle of the class, and at the end of the BEP class. All interviews were audio-taped. After transcription, the tapes were destroyed. The men were told that their real names would not be used; rather pseudonyms would be assigned to protect their anonymity. The participants were informed that each conversation would be audio-taped for purposes of transcription, and that all tapes would be destroyed upon completion of transcription. Additionally, the participants had to agree to let me talk to their partners either in person or via telephone once or twice during the time period in which they were enrolled in the class. The participants were informed that they could discontinue their involvement with the study at any time, and for any reason. Profiles of the participants are found in Chapter Four.
Research Design

To gain understanding and insight into the experiences of men who batter, this study utilized the phenomenological approach. Using this approach, researchers do not assume they understand the meaning that others place on things. Phenomenologists, rather, try to understand how people construct meaning around events in their lives (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). This method allowed me to gain information from the batterer’s point of view. Through the batterers’ narratives I explored how the men perceive and attribute meaning to their violence. The data also enabled me to understand how batterers interpret what assists them in stopping their violence.

The phenomenological approach emphasizes that reality is socially constructed, thus multiple ways of interpreting experiences are possible. The goal of the phenomenological approach is to understand the participant’s point of view, as reality is understood only in the form in which it is perceived (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). Phenomenology emphasizes “verstehen,” the interpretive understanding of human interaction (Bogden & Biklen, 1992).

The phenomenological theoretical perspective is concerned with understanding human behavior from the participant’s frame of reference (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced and what reality is through the eyes of the people involved. The phenomenologist seeks understanding of another’s experience through qualitative methods such as observation, interviewing, and personal documents. These methods yield descriptive data that enable the phenomenologist to see the world as the participant sees it (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The research goal is to
understand others and how they see the world. Neither truth nor morality is sought, but rather, understanding.

Use of the phenomenological approach in this study allowed the batterers to construct their experiences using their words and ideas. The narratives were used to gather information concerning how the men stopped using violence against their partners. The men's realities were essential for understanding how they interpreted and dealt with learning programs to end their violence. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities—that the world is a function of personal interaction and perception (Merriam, 1988). Through understanding how batterers ascribed meaning and interpreted the abusive events in their lives, a holistic view of the batterer's experiences was achieved. The patterns of change by the men provided insight into the transformative learning used by the batterers to end the abuse against their partners.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted before the initial data collection procedures began. Two men in the BEP were interviewed one time each to gain a better understanding of how to word questions, if the questions were addressing issues important to the men in the BEP, and to provide experience for me in interviewing. Debriefing was done with the participants after each pilot study interview. The men were told that their interviews would not be included in the study, but rather that they were pilot interviews. I asked the two men if they understood the questions, if the questions were repetitive, and if there were questions I should have asked but did not ask that would have helped me learn more about their experiences. The pilot interviews proved to be very useful to me. I learned to probe
more after initial responses were given, I learned not to counsel the men but rather to just listen to their responses, and my nerves were calmed after experiencing two interviews before the real interviews. Some questions were reworded and some questions were added and deleted after the pilot interviews.

A question that kept surfacing in my mind was whether or not my gender influenced the men's responses to me. I wondered at times if the men were telling me what they thought I wanted to hear or what they thought was the "right" answer. From the pilot study I learned to ask my questions to the men without implying that there indeed was a "right" answer. I tried to be very non-judgmental and not answer them with value-laden responses.

**Data Collection**

Multiple methods of data collection, or triangulation (Denzin, 1970), were utilized in this study. Triangulation involves collection of data through various means, including interviews, observations, and documents to study the phenomenon under investigation.

**Interviews with Men**

A semi-structured interview format (Merriam, 1988) was used in this study. With this format, certain information was desired from all participants and an interview guide was used to address topics with the participants (see Appendix E). The questions were asked in generally the same order but reworded for each participant. The semi-structured format allowed me to respond to each situation uniquely (Merriam, 1988). Open-ended responses allowed me to understand the participant's world from his viewpoint. The intent of the open-ended format was to permit me to capture the perspective of the participants.
without predetermining their perspective through prior selection of topics (Patton, 1987). The men’s interviews emphasized their experiences in the BEP. The interviews took place during their BEP class in an office located near their classroom. Each interview took approximately 30-60 minutes.

**Experiences with Women Partners**

I was able to interview only one female partner for this study. Numerous unsuccessful attempts were made to make contact with the other six female partners. The six women were either never home to receive phone calls or did not appear for scheduled interviews either in person or by telephone. I spent seven months attempting to establish relationships with the victims, but six of the seven victims were clearly not interested in speaking with me. This result was disappointing and unfortunate to the research study at hand, as I had hoped that I would get a better understanding of the batterers’ experiences from the victims.

The one woman who agreed to participate was also paid $7 for each interview, had to sign a consent form (see Appendix D), was given a pseudonym, and had taped conversations. The woman who did participate in this study was interviewed two times, once in person and once over the phone. The semi-structured interview format was also used for the woman’s interview (see Appendix E). Questions asked of her focused on her perspective of her partner’s experiences in the BEP.

**Observations**

Observations were also a critical data collection method in this study. Observations of the participants occurred throughout their four-month program. I sat in on BEP sessions, intakes, and orientation sessions to observe both individual and group dynamics of the men
participating in the study. This method enabled me to see how the participants acted during the educational program. Valuable data were gained from their verbal and nonverbal language during these sessions that may not have been present during the one-on-one interviews. Observations permitted me to understand a phenomenon to an extent not entirely possible using only interview methods (Patton, 1987).

**Records and Staff Interviews**

The BEP Coordinator provided official documents for review for purposes of this study. These documents included police records concerning the abusive incidents that led to arrest, as well as self-reported in-take and orientation information from the participants. These documents provided other views of the men’s lives that they were not able or willing to provide to me directly.

Interviews were also conducted with key staff members who work with the BEP. The BEP Coordinator, Denny Boots, was interviewed, as were Deb Campbell, Community Program Monitor at the Department of Corrections, and Meg Bessman-Quintero, Program Supervisor. These staff interviews assisted me in gaining knowledge about how the program is run and history and background concerning the development of the program. The staff members also shared their insights about how the program works from their perspectives.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected in this study were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to inductively discover theory from data. This method of analysis encompassed the development of categories, properties, and tentative hypotheses.
It is a process in which the data gradually evolve into a core of emerging theory. The constant comparative method is a research design for multi-data sources in which formal analysis begins early in the study and is nearly completed by the end of data collection (Bogden & Biklen, 1992).

Glaser (1978) listed the following steps of developing theory in the constant comparative method:

1. Begin collecting data.
2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus.
3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.
4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.
5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.
6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories.

Although the above events are listed as steps, Glaser noted that these activities occur all at once, with the researcher continually going back to collect more data and re-coding. Analysis and data collection should occur at the same time, with emergent themes guiding data collection (Merriam, 1988). This process is a theoretical framework that guides the further collection of data. Formal analysis and theory development occur after
data collection is completed (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). This continual refinement of hypotheses is the development of grounded theory (Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative researchers analyze data inductively by building theory from the bottom up, which is referred to as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory analysis is building theory from descriptive data that is grounded in real-life situations (Merriam, 1988). With this method, the researcher uses part of the study to find out what the important questions are (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). The direction you will go with your research becomes apparent after you have spent time with your participants and data.

The phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry utilizes inductive logic to the extent that the researcher begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns (Patton, 1987). Inductive reasoning utilizes generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses that emerge from the examination of data grounded in the context itself (Merriam, 1988). Dimensions of analysis emerge as the researcher comes to make meaning out of the phenomenon’s patterns (Patton, 1987).

Upon review of the men’s personally shared experiences in this study, categories and themes emerged that described the meaning and understanding of the experience for the men. Analysis of the data included categorizing units of information by a coding scheme (see Appendix F). Data analysis consisted of systematically organizing the data into patterns (Bogden & Biklen, 1992). The purpose of this analysis was to identify the common as well as the unique experiences of the men in the BEP.
Establishing Trustworthiness

Although all research is concerned with validity and reliability, qualitative research must be especially concerned because of the particular nature of the research. Internal validity addresses how the research findings match reality (Merriam, 1988). External validity is concerned with issues of generalizability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or rather, to what extent the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Reliability in qualitative research addresses issues of dependability and consistency of the results obtained from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure validity and reliability in this study, triangulation of multiple sources of data was used, member checks were utilized, and I acknowledged my personal biases.

The triangulation of data collection methods included gathering data through interviews, observations, and documents. After the interviews were transcribed and the observations carefully recorded, I emphasized inconsistencies and questions that became relevant with each participant. Any misunderstandings on my part were cleared up by the participants through member checking so that an accurate understanding of their experiences were taken from their viewpoints.

Part of trustworthiness is also realizing the limitations of your research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This means discussing what was not available to the researcher, the peculiarities of the study, and the researcher’s personal biases. Acknowledging genuine thoughts in a personal journal throughout the study helped me deal with subjective opinions regarding the study. Recording reflections and insights throughout the study also assisted in the data analysis used for the study.
CHAPTER FOUR. PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overall profile of the seven male participants in this study, as well as individual profiles of each participant. I looked at the participants as a whole, or rather as a group of batterers, and then looked at each batterer and his personal experience with the class, and his relationship with his intimate partner. These composite pictures came from data that were received from interviews, observations, police reports, orientation sessions, and in-takes. At the end of the chapter available information about the women partners is also provided.

Composite Profile

The age of the seven male participants ranged from 20 years old to 45 years old, with an average age of 33. Six of the participants were Caucasian and one was Hispanic. Four men were currently married to their partners, one was engaged to be married, one was separated, and one had broken up with his partner. Five of the seven men were currently living with their victims at the time of this study. The length of the relationships with the victims ranged from 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) years to 20 years, with an average relationship period of 10 years.

The educational level of male participants ranged from completion of 11\(^{th}\) grade to a Bachelor's degree. One man completed 11\(^{th}\) grade in high school, two men received their high school G.E.D.'s, two men completed 12\(^{th}\) grade and received their high school diplomas, one man had completed some community college classes, and one man had received a Bachelor's degree. Four of the men worked in the construction industry, one man was an auto mechanic, one man worked in the food industry, and one man was a hog farm manager.
Six of the seven men struggled with alcohol and/or drug problems, and six of the men held traditional, patriarchal beliefs and values regarding relationships with women. The number of children of each participant ranged from zero to five, with an average of two per participant. One participant did not have a telephone in his home, and three of the men lived in trailer homes. Two of the participants had previously been enrolled in classes for domestic abuse in other states where additional domestic crimes were committed, one in South Dakota and one in Kansas.

The personal profiles of each individual male participant follow. The names used are pseudonyms.

Individual Profiles

Bob

Bob is a 33-year-old white male. He has a B.S. degree and works for a hog farm. He makes about $27,000 a year. Bob has been in a relationship with Jenny for one and a half years. They currently live together and are engaged to be married with a child on the way.

Jenny is a 29-year-old white female. She is divorced and has a seven-year old daughter. She has a high school diploma and works as an administrative assistant at a large manufacturing company.

Bob admitted to having grabbed, choked, pushed, and blocked Jenny during his intake session. He acknowledged leaving black and blue marks on her, calling her names, breaking property, and pulling her child’s hair. Bob had also gone through an anger management class in South Dakota due to an arrest for domestic abuse against Jenny.
According to the police report, Bob was arrested for physically assaulting Jenny at her trailer. He was upset that she still had a picture of an old boyfriend hanging up, so he broke it and a heated argument ensued. He shoved her into a counter, shook her, and shoved her into a wall. He put a hole in the wall and Jenny suffered bruises and a scrape. Bob’s version of this assault and the police report were virtually the same.

Bob was a physically large man at around 6’2” and 230 pounds. He was clean-cut, laid back, and yet assertive when he spoke. Bob appeared to be on the right track towards non-abuse. From observations of the class sessions, it appeared that he was sincere in his remorse regarding the abuse, and accepted responsibility for his actions. Bob had the most positive attitude of the participants interviewed, and he seemed to accept the consequences for his actions. He was alert in the classes, paid attention, and actively participated in the class discussions.

Although Bob was a talkative participant, he often avoided answering questions directly. He switched topics frequently and contradicted his statements throughout the interviews. For example, at one point in the interview Bob said he could not promise that he would never physically abuse Jenny again: “She wants me to promise that I’ll never do it. And I say ‘I’ll never say never.’ I say ‘I’ll try.’” But later in the same interview, Bob revises his statement: “She’s made it clear to me that if it ever happens again, we’re totally done. And I’ve promised it never would.”

Additionally, Bob wavered throughout the interviews on whether or not he trusts Jenny. Here he claimed that he did trust her: “She goes out with her friends. They go to movies and go out to dinner and stuff like that. And I never have any problem with that.
We trust one another in that way.” But later on his statements suggest that he did not trust her:

I’m not going to restrict her from doing what she wants to do. Cause she needs her own life. The first time, though [that she went out with her girlfriends], I couldn’t even sleep. I’d wait for her to come home. I acted like I was sleeping. This was the first time she went out with her girlfriends. She’s never been unfaithful to me, that I know of. It’s just a thing with me. I’m afraid of that. I don’t know why. I worry about her judgment when she drinks. I would prefer in a bar situation that me and her went out together, not just herself and not just myself. I got to learn to be more trusting of her. Maybe it’s a fake trust. I tell her I do, but then I get all....

Bob believed he had strong, traditional values, while Jenny was more of a modern woman. He admitted that he struggled with jealousy and insecurity and at times felt inferior in their relationship:

The jealousy thing, though, seeing her talking to other men. She’s very boisterous, very outgoing, she’s an extrovert. I’m an introvert more than likely. She’s probably just innocent and striking up conversation... but if it wasn’t a good looking guy...I feel inferior sometimes.

Bob also felt that they had different belief systems:

We’re two different people. She’s Catholic, I’m Lutheran. I’m rural, she’s urban. Farm boy, country. A lot of times she’ll bring in my values... that I’m behind times, traditional. I have a lot of more strong, traditional values. She’s more of a modern woman. By modern, she’s more modern in her beliefs, more liberal than I would be. There are some things that are very important that we are very different on.
Things we value. I like being alone sometimes at home, renting movies and watching TV. Sometimes she gets bored with that. Jenny likes a lot of activity. It’s more of a status thing, I think.

Bob stated that he gained the following from the batterer’s class—learning about his beliefs regarding the provider role, his jealousy and lack of trust, and his negative self-talk. Bob also learned how he used control and manipulation with Jenny to achieve his goals in the relationship. He appeared to sincerely want to change his thoughts and actions and work towards having a healthier relationship with Jenny. Bob ultimately accepted responsibility for his abusive behavior:

I know I’m a batterer. I use it just to control things. The most common thing I do is the emotional abuse, just using that and it turned to physical in a couple situations. And I think if I learn to control that type of response and be more respectful, then it won’t get out of hand. I was hesitant when the program started just to see what the program was, but I knew I needed to find help. What was going on was wrong. I needed to learn about myself.

Mark

Mark is a 41-year-old Hispanic male. He completed school through the 11th grade in Mexico and now works as an auto mechanic, making about $10,000 a year. Mark has been in a relationship with Pam for 15 years. They are married and have four children together. Mark was married once prior to Pam and had one child in that marriage. Mark has dark skin and dark hair, has a small build, is about 5'5", and weighs around 140 pounds.
According to the police report, Mark was arrested for beating his wife. The police report and Mark’s personal testimony regarding the abusive incident that led to his arrest were very different versions. Mark stated that he was arrested for arguing with his daughter, while the police report claims that he physically assaulted his wife, leaving welts, including the imprint of a shoe, on her back. According to the police report, Mark also threw a TV against a wall, which almost hit Pam. He ruined the TV and put a hole in the wall. During his intake session Mark admitted to having hit Pam in the past, to breaking things, and to calling her names.

Mark had prior trouble with the law for public intoxication and he has been on probation in Iowa. He had also attended a batterer’s class in Kansas. He claims the abuse happens only when he is drinking. Mark seemed to be exceptionally controlling of Pam. He admitted that he gets jealous of his wife and he worries that she may leave him. Mark believes that he was raised to think that his wife should serve him: “I used to always expect my wife to serve me. I was born, I mean I was raised that way. And I thought it was the normal thing to do.”

Mark stated that he was physically abused as a child, and that he has had an alcohol problem in the past. He went through alcohol treatment six years ago. He also admitted to having been in many bar fights and he was stabbed seven years ago. Mark additionally stated that his father was violent to his mother.

Mark’s wife, Pam, is a 35-year-old white female. She completed school through the 11th grade and is currently unemployed. She periodically works in the retail business. They do not have a phone in their home.
Mark and Pam have numerous problems with their children. One teenage daughter has a child of her own, lives at their home, and refuses to go to school. One teenage son is involved in a gang and has been in trouble with the law. Mark felt that he did not have any control over his children. Their children were taken away from them at one point, but they did get them back. Mark says Pam and he argue because he tries to put some order and control in the house:

Me and my wife don’t really argue. But we argue because of the boys. Me and my wife argue because I’m trying to control and put some order in the house and then she jumps in the kids’ favor. So it’s not me and my wife splitting us apart. My problem is not because of my wife; it’s because of my kids.

Mark was a talkative and eager participant. He spoke English, but it appeared that Spanish was his native tongue. Many times I asked him to repeat himself to make sure I understood his words completely. Mark was also an active participant in the group discussions. In observing the group, I could see that he spoke up readily, but he also engaged in much laughter and joking around with the men next to him. When he took the class and interviews seriously, he appeared to understand the curriculum.

Mark is working on trying to give his wife more space and not to be so controlling over her:

Like giving her more space. I used to always ask her, “Where are you going? Who are you going with? What are you going for?” Now as long as she writes me a note and lets me know where she’s at, I don’t care. That’s a big change. The other day she wanted to go out drinking with her friends. Before I would have stopped her.
You’re with me. Now if you want to go somewhere, you go. Just let me know when you get home.

He admits to being a batterer and believes he is in the process of changing:

If you’re willing to change, cause I said it and I’ve proved it, to change your behavior you need to change your ways of thinking. If you want to keep on thinking wrong, there’s no way. So you need to change your ways of thinking. I’m in the process of changing.

Although Mark seemed to make profound statements of comprehension at times, it was worrisome that his story of the abusive incident and the police report were two completely different stories. These contrasting versions led me to wonder about the truthfulness of other statements.

Tom

Tom is a 45-year-old white male. He has a high school G.E.D. and works in the construction business. Tom has been in a relationship with Sharon for about 20 years. They have four children together. Tom was married once prior to Sharon and had two children in that marriage. Tom is a short man with a protruding belly and a big, scruffy beard. He is missing a couple of teeth and he always wore a baseball cap.

Sharon is a 43-year-old Native American woman. She has a bachelor’s degree in nursing and currently works as a nurse. Sharon’s son committed suicide in their garage a few years ago.

According to the police report of the incident, Tom was arrested for an argument that he had with his wife and stepdaughter. Tom felt that his adult stepdaughter needed to move out of their home and their verbal argument about the issue led to a shoving match.
with his wife, as she attempted to intervene. Tom grabbed Sharon by the throat and pushed her up against the wall. He also shoved Sharon in the chest, pushed her back, and told her to stay out of the fight. Sharon had several bruises on her arm and shoulder from previous fights with Tom. Data from his intake session revealed that Tom admitted to having slapped, pushed, grabbed, and threatened Sharon. He had also given Sharon a black eye, pulled her hair, and thrown things.

Tom has a .22 caliber gun in his house and has been in the service. He stated that his father was violent to his mother. Tom went through alcohol treatment in 1980 and was in many street fights in the 1980s. He has financial problems and has also been arrested for writing bad checks.

Tom complained of serious problems with their children. Tom says that he cannot control his kids. He claims there is a lot of tension at home: "I have noticed in the last two years that it’s gotten to a point that it’s really hard to control. There’s just really a lot of tension at my house. It’s been hectic."

Tom focused on his wife’s alcohol problem as a main thorn in their relationship: She does drink. I guess that’s my biggest bitch. Her drinking is just... it comes to a point where I wish she’d quit drinking. She just doesn’t realize it. It’s her drinking... "You’re a god damn drunk. A lot of good it did you to go to school and get a degree. And you just don’t give a shit."

Tom has learned to use time-outs and how to better control his temper. He claimed he has learned to catch himself before he blows up:

I’m learning to control my anger before I get heated up too much and it gets to a bad situation. I’ve learned time-outs. My stomach knots, my heart starts beating,
and it’s time to take a time-out. I think it’s me coming to these classes that’s helped me control my temper more. Not yell; talk in a more calm voice. Before I’d go off the handle.

Tom believed he was in the process of change:

I don’t think I’ll be cured in a year. I can never be cured. It’s just a slow learning process. It’s taught me what abuse is. You’ve got to admit that you’ve got a problem first. You’ve got to be willing to deal with the problem first. It’s like a dark tunnel and you’re starting to see a peek of the light. And I hope this program really does it for me. I want some use out of it.

Tom was a gruff man to speak with. While observing the group dynamics, it was apparent that he was rough around the edges and he told it like he saw it. He admitted that he was not thrilled to be in the program, but by the end of the interviews, he shared many things that he had learned. My sense is that Tom lives in a very volatile family environment. I went to Tom’s home to interview his wife, Sharon, but she did not show up for the interview.

Mike

Mike is a 36-year-old white male. He has a high school diploma and works in the construction industry for $16 an hour. Mike and Lori have been together for 19 years. They have three children, one whom they adopted from a relative. Mike is a tall, thin man, around 6’2.” He has long, unruly hair and a mustache. From observing the class sessions, I could see that Mike seemed uncomfortable when he had to speak; he would fidget and move around nervously in his seat.
Lori is a 35-year-old white female. She has a high school diploma and currently works in home health care. Lori is a small woman, standing at only 5’4.”

According to the police report, Mike was arrested for repeatedly violating no-contact orders from his wife and returning to their trailer home. He went back to the trailer and grabbed, punched, and pulled Lori across the floor by her hair. Police found cocaine and a syringe on him when they arrested him.

During his intake session with the BEP Coordinator, Mike admitted to having pushed, slapped, blocked, damaged property, and called Lori names. He stated that he and Lori really don’t do much together anymore as a couple.

Mike has had problems with drugs in the past and he believes many of their arguments were because of Lori’s lack of trust regarding his past problems:

If she accuses me of something, I just say ok. I just try to agree. Even if I did it or not. I know that’s not right, but… when she gets something in her mind or assumes something, it’s there. Because of all the mistrust she has for me, things I’ve done in the past. Come on, you’ve got to get the past out of your mind sometime.

Mike was unemployed for two years and it was during this time that his drug problem got out of hand and the fighting was really bad. Mike viewed their arguments as a shared responsibility between he and Lori. He said that Lori usually started the fights by yelling. He admitted to having hit his wife, but only after she started the fights:

She likes to hit. She’s got a temper. I’d like to say she starts the fights. She’s more of a yeller than me. I’ve never hit her unless she was hitting me, and finally I lose it, I guess, and strike back. That’s how I’ve always been provoked to do it. I don’t come home mad about something so I start slapping people around. It’s things I
was doing that provoked her to do the things that she did, get angry, and then accused me of more and more things that I really wasn’t doing.

Mike missed three BEP classes and was sent back to see the judge. The judge put him in jail for 30 days and then he restarted the BEP class, having to make up two classes. Mike admitted that he was scared of what will happen to him if he gets in this situation again. He was scared that he would get locked up again: “I’m scared of what will happen to me if I get in that situation again. Which sounds selfish. Well, they’ll lock you up.”

Initially Mike claimed to be a victim of alcohol, drugs, and a mean-tempered wife. He went from believing in a shared responsibility for the abuse to accepting responsibility for his own behavior in the incidents. Mike has been exposed to new information that may need time to settle into his worldview of how to settle arguments.

Mike did not seem at ease with himself in the class or in the interviews when he had to speak. It was visibly apparent that he had nervous energy, as his legs were moving around and he frequently touched his face with his hands. His social skills were lacking and he appeared to be quite miserable in the class. Although this experience may have been mentally painful for him, he did show signs of learning new information that he wanted to use in his relationship.

Paul

Paul is a 33-year-old white male. He has a high school diploma and works as a carpenter for about $10,000 a year. Paul and Carol had been in a relationship for three years and were engaged at the beginning of this study, but broke up by the end of the study. Paul and Carol lived 70 miles apart from one another and saw each other on the weekends. Paul had been married once prior to this relationship. Paul was a heavy-set man,
with a big mustache. He had deep, dark eyes that bore into you when you spoke to him. Paul had a low, gruff voice that rose as he became angry or excited.

Carol is a 34-year-old white female. She had been married twice prior to the relationship with Paul, and Carol has one child from a previous marriage. Carol has a high school diploma and works in retail.

From data taken from the police report, Paul was arrested because he had escaped from a minimum security prison where he was serving a sentence for his third OWI offense—Operating a Motor Vehicle While Intoxicated. There were also two domestic assault charges and a criminal mischief charge out against him. He broke into Carol’s home, breaking the locks and the door. He broke and threw things around the home, yelling threats, using profanity, and calling Carol names. He had broken into her home once before, and had been caught throwing snowballs at her home. During his intake session, Paul admitted to having pushed and grabbed Carol, and having damaged property.

Paul has been through three alcohol and drug treatment programs. He had additionally spent two days in a mental ward. In his mind, Paul’s alcohol and drug addictions explained away everything in which he had been involved. Paul sees himself as a victim—a victim of addictions and a victim of an unhealthy relationship:

I was drinking when we first met and it seems like our relationship... we got sucked into each other. Fed off each other and it was a vicious circle. She doesn’t drink, but she’s codependent. By all rights, most of our deal is drugs and alcohol. The sicker I got, the sicker she got. I feel like I just got sucked into it. And the drugs and alcohol fed into that. It’s an unhealthy relationship. Sick people attract sick people.
Paul contradicted himself many times throughout the interviews. For example, he would state that he was now in control his anger: "Nothing is going to make me angry anymore. I just walk away from it. I just don’t get pissed off at people.” Later Paul would state that he would never be able to control his anger:

My anger is always going to be my anger. I’m going to go off the wall, I’m going to get pissed off at certain things. That’s never going to change I don’t think. You can take the drugs and booze away, and the anger is still there. None of the anger is gone. Things are still going to make me mad.

Additionally, Paul would contradict himself over whether or not he still wanted Carol in his life:

The hell with the relationship. There’s no fighting with her; she always wants her way. It’s time to move on. I’m not going to feed into this crap anymore, this arguing, this fighting, it’s ridiculous. It’s just a sick love. Sick, unhealthy love.

But later he stated that he wanted Carol in his life:

When Carol goes with me [to AA meetings] things go a lot better. When she doesn’t go I start to get depressed. But I don’t want to see her go…I get used to seeing her every weekend. I want to be with her all the time. I don’t accept the fact she lives away. I don’t like it. I’d rather have her here.

Paul strongly believed that Carol should be in the classes, too. He said that control was a big factor in their relationship. They both tried to control one another:

It’s a control deal. She has her way of controlling, she likes to be in control and I like to be in controls, and we clash heads. She does everything I want her to do if I
don’t ask her. But the second I ask her to do something it’s a hassle. It’s a control deal.

Paul had traditional views regarding relationships and believed that it was a negative thing for women to be independent: “She’s so damn independent. We became independent and we do things our own way. She’s not relationship-oriented at all. She goes out and does her own thing. You just can’t change people like that.”

From observing the class sessions, I could see that Paul was a scary man. He was physically big and he looked through people with a very intense stare. He never smiled during the interviews or classes. Paul would get agitated after talking about his relationship and situation and his voice would get louder and stronger. He was angry towards his ex-girlfriend and blamed his past offenses on their relationship and his drug and alcohol addictions. During one interview Paul suddenly stood up announcing it was time for him to go, and he just walked out of the room.

Although Paul admits that he acted like an idiot and did things that he never should have done, he still firmly believed that Carol should be in the class also. He acknowledged that he learned some useful tools in the BEP class, but he vehemently felt that the abuse was a shared responsibility between himself and Carol.

John

John is a 20-year-old white male. He has a high school G.E.D. and works in the fast food industry, making $5.65 an hour. John has been in a relationship with Kristi for seven years. John was a small, young man with bleached blonde hair and earrings. He wore baggy clothes, as is currently popular with the grunge fad. John had a bearded goatee and a tattoo of a joker on his back. From observations of the class sessions, I could see that John
wanted to learn about violence and appeared interested because he asked many questions of the facilitators as well as the other men in the class.

Kristi is a 19-year-old white female. She did not complete high school and is currently unemployed. John and Kristi dropped out of high school to get married and have been married for three years. Currently they are separated due to the domestic violence incident. While separated from John, Kristi allegedly became pregnant by another man.

According to the police report, John was arrested for a physical fight that he had with Kristi. The two pushed one another and then John attacked another male bystander. John bit this man because he thought the man might attack him. In his intake session John admitted to having slapped, pushed, pulled, kicked, and blocked Kristi, and he has been in numerous fights.

John has never seen his real dad, as his parents divorced when he was very young. He has had a few different stepfathers throughout the years. His family moved around a lot while he was growing up. As a child John had a bad speech problem and was made fun of by the other kids.

John believed that he and Kristi had a joint responsibility in their fights. He felt that Kristi should have been arrested for domestic abuse and he thought the police were against him when they arrested him:

I think it’s my fault for kicking her, but it takes two to tango. I take responsibility for my part, for kicking and stuff. But I know she did instigate a lot, and she admits it. She comes up and pushes me, kicks me, throws things at me. She didn’t get charged with nothing. Honestly, I think she should have. I don’t know how the police make those decisions. I think I was discriminated against with the cops.
John acknowledged that he isolated Kristi while in their relationship together. He was afraid that she would be unfaithful to him and leave him:

I asked her if I isolated her. She said I did. Back then I thought... to make sure she won’t leave. So she won’t go messing around on me. I just didn’t want it happening to me. I thought the best thing was to block it from everything.

John said that he mentally blanks out when he fights with Kristi so he cannot remember everything that has happened. He does remember that they would fight until one of them got hurt. John said he did not know his own strength with women. He stated that he did want to change:

I found out I’m a real bossy person. So I’ve been learning how to ask, not “do this or do that.” I made a promise to myself that I’m not going to go back to how I used to be. I want to change. I learned quite a bit. My goal right now is to not go back that way. I’ve changed so much in the past couple of months.

John learned about the King Baby beliefs, time-outs, and how to talk using “I feel...” and “I wish that you would....” in the BEP. He also learned about the different levels of his anger.

Although John felt that he and Kristi were both to blame in their abusiveness to one another, John appeared to critically reflect upon his own behavior and accepted responsibility for his actions. He was uncomfortable when he learned that some of the behaviors he had been using with Kristi were wrong, which is a component of the process of perspective transformation.

John said that he had been practicing some of the newly learned tools and that he thinks he has a better attitude towards life now. John is young and has lived a rough,
difficult life, with little support from family and resources. Although he had made some poor choices that have already shaped his life at 20, this class seems to have exposed John to alternative ways to live his life.

Joe

Joe is a 23-year-old white male. He has a high school diploma and is working on a community college apprenticeship. Joe works in the construction business and makes $16 an hour. Joe was a short, heavy-set man with a clean-cut look. He speaks slowly and articulately, with a slightly crooked smile.

Tammy is a 21-year-old white female. She has a high school diploma and she attended a community college for one year. Tammy currently works for a local newspaper. Joe and Tammy live in a trailer with their daughter and are expecting another child soon. They have been together for six years and married for three years.

According to the police report, Joe was arrested for pushing and shoving his wife, and then grabbing Tammy around the neck and pulling her across the trailer. They were arguing over how they were going to pay their bills. Joe was extremely angry when the police arrived and kept telling them that this matter was none of their business. During his intake session with the BEP Coordinator, Joe admitted to having pushed, slapped, and grabbed Tammy in the past. He also admitted to having damaged property in past arguments.

Joe held very strong, traditional, patriarchal beliefs and values. He believed that it is too easy to get divorced today, and that society is to blame for problems in relationships. He thought that people should make a marriage work no matter what. He expected Tammy to clean their trailer, make the meals, and take care of the baby in addition to her full-time
job. He also wanted to be in charge of making the rules for the house and the relationship. He did not think that there should be stress at home, for him:

Sometimes I just want to be left alone. I just want to get cleaned up and sit on my couch and take it easy. At home there really shouldn’t be a lot of stress. My Mom always took care of the housework, and I expected my wife to do that. But, I guess this is the 90s now. Women now days have lost a lot of things from when my grandmother was young. There’s a lot of women who don’t know how to crochet anymore. Society lets you get divorced easier now. Society is changing so much.

Joe acknowledged that he had learned useful tools in the class. He learned how to be aware of the physical signs that your body gives off when you get mad. He learned to use time-outs, the King Baby theory, and how to say, “I don’t like it when you do this...”

Like the time before you get mad. The signs before your spouse knows you get mad. Just knowing before you get to the boiling point and then you get mad. My stomach starts going, talking in my head. When you know that you’re getting mad your body will tell you. You might be swearing in your head. Your palms might be getting sweaty. Things other people don’t know but you know. You need to realize that and calm yourself down. Take a time-out.

After learning about verbal abuse and control tactics, Joe acknowledged that he now understands how he behaved in controlling, abusive ways toward his wife. For example, Joe and Tammy argued over money and paying the bills which led to abuse from Joe:

I just hollered at her, you know. I told her the only f-ing job you have here is to pay the bills and make sure they get paid. And I take care of everything else. One
little job, what do you want, me to do that, too? Now I’ve learned that is verbal abuse. I was scary. I picked up a wooden chair with mattresses on it and I threw it across the room. It was a bad deal. That night I got out of hand.

From observing the group dynamics during the class sessions, it appeared that Joe was a very likeable, talkative, and reflective participant. He usually seemed worn out and tired, coming straight from work with dirty clothes on. Joe started out the class and interviews cocky, but throughout the months he became more humbled. As he was exposed to information that contradicted his past assumptions about marriage and relationships, he appeared to wrestle with his past behavior. Joe indicated that he did want to improve his marital relationship, and he did accept responsibility for the abuse to which he had subjected Tammy.

**Participant Profile Comparison**

Men of any age, ethnicity, education, profession, or religion could potentially be batterers. Although demographics of batterers vary according to studies, common personality and behavioral characteristics of batterers have been compiled. Some researchers have attempted to develop a batterer profile that would depict typical characteristics and behaviors of men who batter (Dutton, 1994; Dutton & Starzomski, 1993).

Dutton and Starzomski (1997) worked with the Minnesota Power and Control Wheel (see Appendix G) used in the Duluth Model BEP curriculum and discovered that the power and control tactics used by assaultive men (using intimidation, using emotional abuse, using isolation, minimizing, denying and blaming, using children, using male
privilege, using economic abuse, and using coercion and threats) constituted a cohesive set of actions among batterers. Furthermore, it was found that these tactics were significantly correlated with some forms of personality dysfunction (Dutton & Starzomski, 1997).

Additionally, Dutton and Van Ginkel (1995) found that men with elevated scores of abusive personality were more likely to adopt negative cultural perspectives about women. Consequently, some researchers do suggest a prevailing abusive personality disorder (Dutton, 1994; Dutton & Starzomski, 1993).

This study produced results that portrayed some common characteristics among the participants. Six of the men studied here discussed alcohol abuse as a problem for them, with two of the seven men having gone through alcohol/drug treatment programs. Six of the participants displayed jealous and controlling behaviors towards their partners, and 85 percent of the men blamed others for their situation. Accordingly, six of the batterers studied here possessed patriarchal beliefs regarding women and relationships, and all of the men had financial difficulties.

There appears to be somewhat of a debate over whether or not we can or should develop a batterer profile. Gondolf summarized the profile debate succinctly and stated his view that, “Overall, the men in batterer programs appear to be a diverse group that defy a distinct characterization or profile” (1997b, p. 7).

**Summary of Profiles**

The above seven profiles of the male participants detail what each man is like, both personally and in their relationships. We can also view these men as a group. As a composite, the men studied here demonstrate controlling behaviors, jealous personalities,
and insecurity with their relationships. They hold traditional, patriarchal beliefs regarding their relationships. They struggle with alcohol or drug issues, and they are verbally and physically abusive to their partners.

The men under review in this research all had financial problems and finances were a main cause of disagreement in their relationships. The men were mostly working in blue-collar professions that did not pay well. The relationships with their partners did not appear to be very healthy, and their treatment of their partners seemed improper. These men wanted to control their partners and be in charge of decision-making and rule making in the relationships. The men seemed insecure and jealous of their partners and these traits led to arguments in the relationships, which consequently led to both verbal and physical abuse.

An interesting note was that the participant most successful in perspective transformation was Bob, who also happened to be the only participant with a four-year college degree and who made by far the highest income. Compared to batterers in previous studies, the men here displayed similar characteristics and behaviors.

**Women Partners**

Although only one of the seven female victims was available to interview, information about the other six women was collected from their male counterparts. The following represents the information that was collected from the male participants regarding their partners.

The age of the victims ranged from 19 to 43, with an average age of almost 31 years. Six women were Caucasian and one was Native American. The victims included
one woman with a Bachelor’s degree, one woman with some community college classes, three women with high school diplomas, and two women who completed high school through the 11th grade. Five of the seven women were gainfully employed, as one woman worked as an administrative assistant, one woman as a nurse, one woman in retail, one woman in the newspaper business, and one woman in home health care. The other two women were unemployed.

The one female victim who agreed to participate in this study was Jenny, the partner of Bob. Jenny was very cooperative and eager to discuss the past abuse in her relationship.

Jenny is a 29-year-old white female. She has a high school diploma and works as an administrative assistant at a large manufacturing company. Jenny is divorced and has a seven-year-old daughter from her first marriage. She is currently engaged to Bob and has been in a relationship with him for a year and a half.

Jenny has not been to college and married early out of high school. Two major physically abusive incidents occurred that forced Jenny to call the police regarding Bob’s behavior. The first abusive incident occurred in South Dakota, so Bob attended an anger management class there. The second incident occurred in Iowa so he went through the BEP class. Both incidents happened when they both were drinking and Bob became jealous of other men. Jenny believes Bob’s problem is his insecurity. He doesn’t like her to go out with her girlfriends, and especially doesn’t like her going out to bars with them:

He has issues that he obviously needs to work on. I think it all boils down to security for him, insecurity I should say. He is afraid of my independence. Because I go out with my girlfriends. We go out to the bars and dance. He says he knows
what the guys at the bars want... they’re there to pick up women, they’re there to have a good time, and they’re all slime, they’re dirt bags. He thinks I can’t control myself, that I’ll just get drunk and let myself go. I’m responsible about it. I just don’t see what the hang-up is.

Jenny and Bob also have some very different outlooks on life. Bob has called her white trash, a city slicker, and told her that she was born in a barn. Bob’s father also told Bob not to let Jenny control everything. Bob is much more traditional and Jenny is more “modern.” Bob thinks he needs to be in control of everything, and this belief exacerbates the problem because he makes more money than she does:

I’m pretty independent, and I remember Bob saying once that he helps us out as much as he can, and I think that makes him feel like he is the one in control because he financially makes more than I do, and that he can provide things for my daughter that I wouldn’t be able to do if he weren’t there.

Jenny sincerely believed that Bob does want to change. Jenny stated that the BEP class has helped him become more aware of his controlling behaviors, his tone of voice, their financial issues, and the issue of her going out with her girlfriends. Hearing other men’s stories has also been beneficial to Bob. He has learned new ways to cope and has new information now. Jenny mentioned that she would have liked it if she and Bob could have gone to a couple’s class though. Jenny ultimately believed that Bob has changed:

He says he doesn’t want to live his life that way. He doesn’t want to put me in that situation, especially with my daughter. He just doesn’t want to live his life that way. I believe that he is sincere about wanting to change the way he responds to certain things. I think he’s a lot more conscious about what he will do that will
affect us. He's thinking long term, not just at the moment about what that would do if it ever would happen again.

The program has helped him realize things that he hadn't realized before. Mainly the use of some of his controlling behaviors with me. His tone of voice with me, money situations, thinking he's in charge of our finances. He always took over the bread-winning responsibilities on his own. He didn't fully accept it until this program. And ways to control it, now he has information if he feels he needs to use it. He didn't realize some of the ways he could be controlling. Yes, he has changed.

This research could have been enlightened had the other female victims been willing to participate in the study. Because we do not know their feelings, we are left with the batterer's view and the police's view. The victim can either validate or refute what the batterer's version was, but without the victim's input, we must rely on the batterer's self-report of his abuse. There is much need for future research utilizing victim input in domestic abuse.
CHAPTER FIVE. FINDINGS

This chapter responds to each research study question that guided the study, with a discussion of the guiding questions ensuing.

Research Study Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

(1) Do abusers and victims share similar opinions about abuser's behaviors while abusers are in the educational program?

(2) What patterns emerge from the narratives of the batterers?

(3) What about the educational program assists men in stopping their abuse?

(4) If a perspective transformation occurs in the process of a batterer education program, how does this happen?

Following is a discussion of the findings pertaining to each of these research questions.

Victims' Opinions

Unfortunately, the first question will be difficult to address since only one victim was willing to participate in this study. Similar difficulties have been experienced by other researchers who have studied domestic abuse (Austin & Dankwort, 1999). Although we will never know why these victims were unwilling to participate in this study, some possible reasons may include fear of additional abuse from their partner for talking to the researcher, unwillingness to acknowledge that abuse is going on in their relationship, fear
of other people knowing that they are involved in an abusive relationship, or possibly just not being interested in talking to a stranger about a very personal topic.

One victim, Jenny, was willing to participate in this study and she was interviewed two times, once in person and once over the telephone. Overall, Jenny and her partner, Bob, did share similar opinions about Bob’s behaviors while he was in the educational program. I asked similar questions of Jenny and Bob and both participants responded with comparable answers. Both held Bob responsible for his jealousy, control, anger, and abuse. Both believe that Bob was sincere about wanting to learn how to change his behaviors. Both felt that Bob had improved in the management of his emotions and the handling of his temper. Communication was becoming more open and the couple talked about their relationship more and tried to work through their problems. Jenny and Bob believed that Bob sincerely took full responsibility for his abuse, truly knew it was his problem to change, and was actively working to change.

**Patterns in Narratives**

Question number two, what patterns emerged from the narratives of the batterers, was answered through the constant comparative data analysis method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Using this qualitative data analysis procedure, theory was inferred from the data. The six major themes that emerged from the data are as follows: (a) patriarchal belief systems, (b) jealousy and control, (c) verbal and physical abuse, (d) blaming others, (e) learning tools from the class, and (f) making changes.
Patriarchal Belief Systems

Six of the seven men talked about possessing traditional and patriarchal belief systems. Within patriarchal belief systems, traditional roles for men and women provide a separation of men and women (Hartmann, 1979). Under this worldview, men believe that women have particular roles for which they are naturally responsible (i.e., cooking, cleaning, raising children) and that men have particular roles for which they are naturally responsible (i.e., providing for the family by earning the money and working outside the home).

In this study, the men’s traditional belief systems included their views of marital relationships and how these relationships “should” function. The men talked about how they viewed women and the roles women “should” play in life. Sometimes the men were aware of their beliefs, and at other times their beliefs seemed to emerge subconsciously.

For instance, Bob and his partner, Jenny, argued over finances and who was in charge of making financial decisions: “The provider role for me really hits home. That’s engrained in my mind cause that’s the environment I grew up in. I’m probably two-thirds of the income, and I catch myself saying, ‘Well, I make more....’”

Mark also discussed his traditional views on marriage: “I used to always expect my wife to serve me. I was born, I mean I was raised that way. And I thought it was the normal thing to do. I used to want to know everything about her. Cause I was raised that way.”

Paul talked about how head of the household and breadwinner titles were in his family: “I grew up where my father was the head of the household. Well, not head of the household, but made the big decisions. Mom always agreed. Not even big decisions, just breadwinner.”
Joe also held very strong, traditional beliefs regarding men's and women's roles in marriage:

Anymore it's so hard with the cost of living. It does take two to work to just live. People say our kids are so out of control now. They need to understand that they need to pay people enough money so that men could make a living so that women could stay home so that the wife could raise the kids. Or vice versa. And not at a babysitter or at home by themselves. Things would be different. That's just my belief. My Mom also took care of the housework, and I expected my wife to do that. Women now days have lost a lot of things from when my grandmother was young. There's a lot of women who don't know how to crochet anymore. Society lets you get divorced easier now.

**Jealousy and Control**

All seven men discussed jealousy and control as part of their problem. Most of the men were very aware that they were jealous and insecure in their relationships at times and that these traits led them to attempt to control their partners for fear of losing them.

Batterers often believe that they also have the power to change their partner (Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Paul described his feelings of jealousy and control while acknowledging that his low self-esteem is one root of the problem:

I think sex should have a lot to do with this class. It makes you jealous, your imagination runs wild, you think she's cheating on you. Your wife or girlfriend wants to go out for the night or a weekend. Instantly what's the first thing you think of, she's screwing someone else. A lot of control comes into that. You want to keep
her in birds eye view of you all the time. You what to know what the hell they’re doing, when they’re doing it, and you don’t have any trust. It’s called low self-esteem is what it is.

Bob was also aware of his feelings of jealousy and inferiority, and worried that Jenny would leave him for someone else:

What have I done that causes her to look at someone else, and what am I not providing her with? I look at myself and feel inferior. Sometimes I think she’s looking for a bigger and better deal. Somebody with more money, somebody with a higher status job. That type of situation makes me very jealous.

Mark knew that he had been jealous of his wife and that he used physical abuse in an effort to maintain his status in the relationship:

I got jealous while we were drinking. Cause some guy... we were drinking at my house and for some reason I started to get jealous. I don’t know why. And I started arguing with her, and I slapped her. And I got physical with her. Well maybe it was jealous. Thinking that she might see somebody else and not come back to me.

**Verbal and Physical Abuse**

Verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse are even more likely to occur in relationships than physical abuse (Marshall, 1994). The men in this study reported much more frequent use of some type of verbal abuse, as is consistent with past research findings. The men admit more readily to their verbal abuse, perhaps thinking that this type of abuse is less serious.

Bob acknowledged he verbally abuses Jenny, and he consciously knows what he is doing:
I'm very, very hurtful, she's told me that. I called her white trash once. She hated that. There's a part in my mind that I know what I'm doing when I say that. I want her to hurt like I do. It's more of a spontaneous thing, it's a payback thing.

Tom was honest about his physical abuse with Sharon and he constructed meaning out of his abusiveness in his mind:

I figure over the 21 years I've been married to her, I suppose I've hit her 10, 12, maybe 20 times. I've given her a black eye. At first I felt mighty. I guess I've never really beat the shit out of my wife, I mean bruised from head to toe. Never have in my life. Maybe I should have beat my first wife, I don't know. I don't know why the woman stays with me.

Mike discussed an abusive incident with Lori. Many of the men, including Mike here, distinguish between hitting and other forms of abuse. Men tend to view hitting as abuse, but not other forms of physical control:

It was pretty bad. That time it got out of hand. We were screaming and yelling, and she hit and bit me and stuff. So I threw her down on the floor and I was banging her head on the floor. She wanted me to leave and I wouldn't. She told them that I'd hit her or something. But I hadn't hit her. Drugs were involved with both of us.

John realized that he abused his wife Kristi through measures of isolation:

I asked her if I isolated her and she said I did. Back then I thought…to make sure she won't leave. So she won't go messing around on me. I just didn't want it happening to me. I thought the best thing was to block it from everything.
Many abusive men use verbal abuse in order to get their way. They belittle, they destruct property, they are scary, and they use these behaviors to get what they want. Joe described an abusive incident between he and his wife Tammy:

I just hollered at her, you know. I told her the only f-ing job you have here is to pay the bills and make sure they get paid. And I take care of everything else. One little job, what do you want me to do that too? Now I’ve learned that’s verbal abuse. I was scary. I picked up a wooden chair with a mattress on it and I threw it across the room. It was a bad deal. I’m not going to sugar coat the whole ordeal. That night got out of hand. I know I did.

**Blaming Others**

Abusive men tend to blame others for their abuse and their problems (Faulkner et al., 1992; Serum, 1982). Many times they believe they were actually the victims in the situations, or at least they try to believe they were in order to justify their actions. They blame their victims, they blame the police, they blame their neighbors, and they blame the system. This pattern of blame was found in the current study.

Mark believed his behavior was not his fault, but rather the fault of his children:

My problem is not because of my wife, it’s because of my kids. I blame my behavior on my two oldest boys. Cause me and my wife don’t really argue. But we argue because of the boys. So it’s not me and my wife splitting us apart.

Neither did Tom find responsibility in his own behavior, but rather in his view the abuse was his wife’s fault:

I can remember my wife calling the cops when I was really drunk one time. And boy was I really pissed. Hey, wait till I get out I’m going to kick the shit out of this
bitch. And that's the way I saw it. I felt it was her fault because I was at home when the cops come and took me to jail. I admit I did go home and I yelled at her. Hey, you didn’t have to throw me in jail.

Mike also believed his wife was to blame for starting all of their fights:
I’d like to say she starts all the fights. She’s pretty bossy. She’s more of a yeller than me. She likes to hit. She’s got a temper. I’ve never hit her unless she was hitting me, and finally I lose it I guess and strike back. She’s got a really bad temper. I don’t like fighting. Coming home to someone who’s always in a bad mood.

John felt that he was discriminated against with the cops and that the abuse was a shared responsibility between he and his wife:
Kristi’s sister made it seem like I was really into the fight. Kristi and I were arguing. And then I thought her sister’s boyfriend was attacking me and I tried to self-defend myself. And everything got confused. I think I was discriminated against with the cops. They believed him over me. Her sister made it seem like I was the bad guy. Kristi and I were grabbing each other. She didn’t get charged with nothing. I don’t know how the police make those decisions.

Learning Tools From the BEP Class

All of the men were able to articulate particular things they learned from the class.
The main tools that the men mentioned were taking time-outs, being aware of the physical signs that accompany one’s anger, the different levels of anger that one has, rewording one’s thoughts when one is angry, and the King Baby beliefs.

Bob described what he took home from the class:
I think I used it a lot. I used some of the theories involved with it. It makes you very aware of when you are getting to a point where you could get into a volatile state. Just being aware of myself as a person and what I feel. You catch yourself. You may feel angry, but you’ve got to learn to back away from that and then you kind of do it in a different manner. A lot of mine with Jenny was just the words I chose, and it would hurt her, and I didn’t understand that. But the awareness is the big thing, and knowing when.

Mark shared how taking a time-out was a tool he learned that helped him to control his temper: “As soon as you notice yourself not being calm, you want to find a way to not get angry. The one thing that worked for me is taking a time-out. Or just walking around.”

Tom learned a myriad of tools he can now use when he knows that he is getting angry:

I learned time-outs. My stomach knots, my heart starts beating, and it’s time to take a time-out. Your tone of voice is up to yelling. I’ve learned that I can scare. I’ve learned to listen to her side of the problems. I think it’s me coming to these classes that’s helped me control my temper more. Not yell; talk in a more calm voice. Before maybe I’d go off the handle. I helped her out with the housework; that’s something I’ve learned.

John shared that he practiced what he learned:

The three main things I’ve learned is to say, “I feel...” and “I would like....” One thing I’ve learned is there is no reason for any violence. You should be able to stop. I’ve been learning and practicing a lot. I realize what level I’m getting to, to walk
away from some things and come back later and take care of it. I use time-outs every day. I think the King Baby stuff is cool, too.

The Process of Changing

The BEP teaches new skills to men who decide to build new behavior patterns (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The class challenges the men’s basic worldviews and their basic assumptions about relationships, power, and control. The intervention also exposes men to new ideas, new ways of being, and challenges men to view their use of violence as a choice on their part, not as an uncontrolled reaction. Changing their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors is a gradual process.

Bob believed that a central part of changing one’s behavior was to first change one’s attitude:

I really think there’s an attitude, and whether or not you want to learn. I think the program itself has helped me to learn more about me and what I do, and to try to focus myself and to catch myself getting to the point where I may get angry. The way we discuss things with one another has changed. We’re more open about things. Anymore, I unload the dishwasher, I feed the cat, I put stuff away out of the dishwasher, I pick up behind myself, where before I didn’t. I think I just kind of thought I was providing for her because I helped do a lot of these things. And the classes have helped me see that.

Tom admitted that changing himself will take some time. He knew that it would be a gradual process and he was aware that he had a problem:

I don’t think I’ll be cured in a year. I can never be cured. It’s just a slow learning process. I use words a little better. It’s taught me to know what abuse is. Verbal...I
thought you had to hit them, push them. Name-calling is abuse, too. It’s verbal abuse. You’ve got to admit that you’ve got a problem first. You’ve got to be willing to deal with the problem first.

Mike learned that hitting was wrong. He said he was going to change his behaviors for two main reasons, one because he doesn’t want to go back to jail, and two because it is wrong:

I’m scared of what will happen to me if I get in that situation again. Which sounds selfish. Well, they’ll lock you up. That was kind of my own fault, really. They’re pretty strict on this domestic stuff. I haven’t hit, and I tell myself I never will, I don’t care what happens, or what happens to me, it’s wrong. That’s what this class has taught me. There’s no reason for hitting no matter how angry you are I guess. I believe that. And I don’t believe guys should hit back even if a woman is hitting them or starting it. It’s not right, you just aren’t supposed to. There’s better ways to solve your problems than hitting. Hitting don’t solve anything. It just hurts the other person or makes them madder.

Paul did not have a positive outlook on the change process for batterers. He believed that they might stop abusing for fear of going back to jail, not because they changed their beliefs and values. Paul also believed that it is difficult to change someone after many years of particular behaviors:

I think it’s more of a stimulus response thing. They beat someone and they go to jail. You beat someone and you go to batterer’s class. They don’t want to do that, so they’re not going to beat anybody. Do they get it? I don’t know. You take a guy that was raised in a family like that [abusive]. It didn’t start happening two or three
years ago. Here's a guy that's been programmed and wired backwards from the norm of society. And to take 35 years and rewire him, it's almost impossible. I don't think it can be done. I think it can be dealt with. It's almost just a way of life. That's just the way it is. There really ain't no choice to it. You just can't change people like that.

Joe said that he and Tammy do behave differently now when they argue. He believed that many of his changes were due to the class:

I think we argue differently now. I kind of let things go anymore. I don't even argue. It's been new and different. I'm sure it's because of this class. I guess the class was a wake up call, and I just want to better my relationship with Tammy.

Positive Aspects of the Program

Question number three, what about the program assists men in stopping their abuse, was answered in the theme, "Learning New Tools," discussed above. Although the previous discussion of the theme details more specific responses concerning what they learned, overall the men noted that they learned the following things in the class and that these things helped them change their behaviors:

1. They learned how to become more aware of their anger.
2. They learned to notice the physical signs of what their bodies do when they get angry (i.e., heart beats fast, deep breathing, stomach knots, get tingly).
3. They learned that they are jealous and insecure.
4. They learned about their negative self-talk.
5. They learned to take time-outs when they feel themselves getting angry.
6. They learned to listen to their partners more.

7. They learned not to yell, but rather to speak in a calmer voice.

8. They learned that you don’t have to hit to be considered a batterer.

9. They learned that King Baby beliefs are beliefs that men hold that justify their childish behavior.

10. They learned that there are different levels of anger.

11. They learned to speak saying, “I feel...” and “I would like....”

12. And they learned to stop and think.

The men additionally reported that they liked having other men to talk to about their situation. They liked to hear other men’s stories and gain insight from them. The camaraderie that developed from the classes was another positive aspect for the class participants. The program also held the men responsible for their behaviors, and they were required to admit that they were indeed batterers. The facilitators as well as other participants in the class confronted the men when they heard denial, justifications, or contradictions.

A crucial component for the BEP to work is the interaction between the facilitators and the men, and amongst the men themselves. The interaction includes confrontation of previously held assumptions and beliefs, and questioning of the men’s long held values. The men in the class are exposed to new information during each class session, and the process of critically examining one’s attitudes towards the new information as well as old beliefs, is a vital part of the transformative learning process.

In addition to being confronted by the facilitators and their peers, the men also see videotapes of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors by men toward their partners. The
class then dissects these vignettes piece by piece, and discusses why particular actions by the men in the videos are wrong. This part of the curriculum gives men role modeling and new behaviors to use in their own lives.

Weekly in-class assignments are also an important facet of the learning process. The class begins each week with an exercise where the men need to fill out their answers to questions. The facilitators then focus on each man one at a time and he responds to each question out loud. This gives the other men in the class an opportunity to give advice or question the man’s thinking.

For example, one exercise titled, “Control Log” was conducted periodically throughout the class. The men were instructed to think of a recent situation when they behaved in a controlling manner with their partner. They had to describe the situation and their actions toward their partner. They discussed their intentions, beliefs, feelings at the time, and ways that they minimized or denied their behavior. The men also talked about the effect or impact of their actions and how they could have handled the situation differently.

For the men in this BEP class, then, it appeared that the process of acquiring new information, being confronted by facilitators and peers, interacting with the group, watching videotapes, and doing exercises assisted the men in specifically learning how to stop their abuse.
Perspective Transformation

The fourth question asked in this study was, How does perspective transformation occur in the program? As mentioned earlier, the following are Mezirow's (1991) ten phases of perspective transformation:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning of a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (pp. 168-169)

Transformative learning is an interactive process whereby a perspective is transformed by resolving a dilemma through exposure to alternative perspectives (Mezirow, 1990). The batterers in this study went through the above listed ten phases as a result of their dilemma, which was their arrest and subsequent batterers' class. All seven men did not progress at the same pace, nor did the men get to the same level by the end of the class. Based on observations of the class, interviews, and data from intakes, orientation
sessions, and police reports, by the end of the batterer’s class the seven participants appeared to have progressed through the ten phases as follows:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Paul   Joe, Tom, Mike, Mark,   John, Bob

Central to a complete perspective transformation is action based upon new understandings. If changes in behavior have not taken place, then true transformative learning has not taken place. Changes in attitudes and beliefs are a big step in the right direction, but for the process to be complete, behavioral changes must be integrated into life.

For example, all of the men in this study obviously reached the first phase of perspective transformation, the dilemma. The men were arrested for spouse abuse and subsequently were court mandated to attend the BEP. Their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors were confronted, and the confrontation ended in a dilemma for the batterers. All of the men additionally made it to phase two, self-examination. The self-examination occurred in the class, as men were forced to discuss their abuse and examine whether or not this behavior was acceptable. Bob represents the participants with his statement: “I knew what I done was wrong, and it was a matter of getting help for me because it was really something I needed to get myself straight.”

In this study, Paul was the only participant not able to advance to phase three, a critical assessment of his assumptions. He insisted that his behaviors were justified and that the abuse was a shared responsibility between himself and Carol. The men who did
advance to phase three were willing to critically assess their assumptions. Mark summed this up nicely:

If you’re willing to change, cause I said it and I’ve proved it, to change your behavior you need to change your ways of thinking. If you want to keep on thinking wrong, there’s no way. So you need to change your way of thinking.

Joe also was able to critically reflect upon his previously held assumptions regarding the learned roles of men and women: “I look at things differently now. My Mom always took care of the housework, and I expected my wife to do that. But, I guess this is the 90s now.”

Six of the seven participants progressed through the transformative learning stages to phase four, the recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared. The experience of cognitive dissonance is related to the process of transformation. We need to understand and feel that we are unsatisfied with our current beliefs and behaviors, and then make efforts to transform them into something different that better fits our new paradigms. As Mark described, “You need to be aware of what got you here, and you are the one who needs to be willing to make the changes.”

John also experienced discontent when he viewed the videos in the class: “But when I watch the videos, things bug me. I just start thinking about things. I think it’s good to think about it, to not forget it and know you won’t do it again. I felt like a jackass.”

Phase five is the exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions. Most of the men showed signs of some movement in this area. Once exposed to alternative options for roles, relationships, and actions, many men were able to experiment with ideas
regarding new behaviors. Tom explained his alternative options for how he can behave in a relationship with his wife:

I’ve learned to listen to her side of the problems. I think it’s me coming to these classes that’s helped me control my temper more. Not yell, talk in a more calm voice. I helped her out with the housework; that’s something I’ve learned. If there’s a bunch of clothes downstairs in the basement, before I used to nag about it. Now I just go ahead and wash them.

Mike also explored new ways of handling conflict at home:

It helps to come here. Like if we’re gonna have an argument, now I think a little bit more about the classes, and it kind of helps me deal with it better, I guess. I’ve learned not to talk back when we do start to get...I just shut up and leave it at that. I guess I just let it blow over.

Phase six is planning of a course of action. In order to advance to phase six, the men should have shown signs of thinking about what they would do differently in the future. For example, Tom explains that he does do some things differently now because of what he learned in the class:

It [the class] showed me to take time-outs; that was one of the biggest things. And to catch yourself before you blow up. The first time I tried it, it didn’t work. But then I thought about it, and ran it through my mind when I was going to get scary, before I kill my partner. But this program taught me how to listen to her now.

Before I used to just sit in my head and swear.

Many of the men discussed phase seven, acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans. The men were able to discuss the tools and information they
acquired through the class and they were beginning to implement their plans for behavioral changes. Joe talked about the importance of what he had learned:

The class has given me a few tools, and it makes me think more. That is what I'm getting out of this whole class. If you just stop and think about what you’re saying and what you’re doing. This is the person you love and you’re saying these things to her?

Bob also displayed movement in the phase of skill acquisition and implementing new ideas to his way of being: “This program as a whole has been real beneficial teaching-wise, the concepts of taking time-outs, when you get to that point when I’m not really rational, when I need to think. Promoting an open discussion between us.”

Phase eight, provisional trying of new roles, was also utilized by six of the seven men throughout their four-month class. The men shared how they would try new tools they had learned with their partners. Sometimes these tools worked well, and sometimes the men had to try them again before noticing improvement in their relationships.

Mark explained how he tried out his new role at home:

Like giving her more space. I always ask her, ‘Where are you going? Who are you going with? What are you going for?’ Now as long as she writes me a note and lets me know where she’s at, I don’t care. That’s a big change. And the other thing was I always expected my meals on time. And if it’s not on time, I get mad. But I have to change that now, too. If there’s nothing there, “Well, will you please make something?” But I don’t get mad now. But before I would. That’s another big change.

Mike tried a new way of responding to his anger and to his wife when they argue:
It makes me stop and think before I do hit or yell now, or just jump into a fight with her. I try to talk to her, don’t yell, or talk nice to her even when she does yell at me. It seems to work. She’ll just roll over and maybe not talk to me for awhile. It’s better.

Phase nine, building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships, was more challenging to find examples of from the men. The men needed to show new self-confidence and that they were building competence in their newly acquired roles. For example, here Mark does display new confidence in how he behaves when his wife wants to go out with her friends:

The other day she wanted to go out drinking with her friends. Before I would have stopped her. You’re with me. I’m a controlling person. Now if you want to go somewhere, you go. Just let me know when you get home.

John also showed signs of building competence in his new roles through the acceptance of his past behaviors: “I think it’s doing me some good. I’m learning some stuff. I’m figuring out that I did have some problems that I’ve had all my life. I’m learning how to deal with them and find my anger.”

And finally, some of the men did show progress towards phase ten, a reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective. Mark discussed how he now integrates what he has learned into his new life perspective:

This program works if you want it to work. I want to change. I’m trying to do as many things possible in a positive way. That’s the whole process of change. I’m trying to make things work better. In the end you need to make better relationships
with everybody. I found out it’s not just about your partner. It’s about everyone.

Not to control. To be more aware of your own feelings in situations.

John additionally progressed to the integration of his new perspective:

I found out I’m a real bossy person. So I’ve been learning how to ask, not do this or
do that. I made a promise to myself that I’m not going to go back to how I used to
be. I want to change. I learned quite a bit. My goal right now is to not go back that
way. My next goal is to not get into a fight.

The above mentioned ten phases of perspective transformation showed how the
men in this study progressed from phase one to phase ten. Not all of the men reached phase
ten, nor did the ones who reached phase ten necessarily stay there. The ten phases are fluid,
so men can pass in and out of each phase periodically. A complete and final perspective
transformation through all ten phases may take much longer to achieve than the four
months of the batterers’ class. Again, in order to qualify for a true perspective
transformation, the men must have acted upon their new understandings. Two of the men,
John and Bob, appeared to have acted upon their new understandings that they learned in
the class. John and Bob also seemed to change their meaning structures to a more
integrative perspective, which included integrating the new information they learned in the
class.

Upon a critical examination of paradigms, individuals can change the way they
make sense of the world. John and Bob appeared to change the way they made meaning
out of their relationships, violence, and control. Mark, Tom, Joe, and Mike seemed to be
well on their way to a perspective transformation, but not quite there yet. Paul, on the other
hand, appeared to be stuck around phase two of the transformational learning theory. As of
October 5, 1999, none of the participants in this research had been rearrested for domestic abuse. This fact serves as additional evidence that transformative learning took place.

Summary

This chapter addressed the guiding questions of the study. An abuser and his victim were found to share similar opinions about the abuser’s behaviors while he was in the BEP. Unfortunately, only one victim was willing to participate in this study. I do not have information from the other six victims, so I was not able to draw substantial conclusions based on one victim.

The themes that emerged from the narratives of the batterers were patriarchal belief systems, jealousy and control, verbal and physical abuse, blaming others, learning tools from class, and making changes. Quotes from each of these themes offered insight into the perspectives of the batterers.

The batterers addressed several aspects of the class that assisted them in stopping their abuse. And finally, the transformative learning process that the men went through due to their exposure in the class was detailed.
CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSIONS

The general purposes of this study were (1) to examine the experiences of male batterers in a batterer education program, (2) to examine victim input regarding batterers' educational experiences and to validate men's self-reports, (3) to follow/track male batterers through their educational programs, and (4) to explore Mezirow's transformative learning theory as a possible explanation for the learning and change batterers experience in stopping their abuse.

The experiences of male batterers in a batterer education program were examined through the use of batterer, victim, and staff interviews, observations, police records, and program in-take information. In one case, victim input was examined to see how it related to batterer input regarding the batterer's educational experience. Additionally, male batterers were tracked from the beginning of their four-month class through the end of their class to see if learning and change had taken place. And finally, Mezirow's transformative learning theory was explored as a possible explanation for the learning and change batterers experience in stopping their abuse.

For this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with seven male batterers and one female victim. The interview data served as a vital component of the research in an attempt to describe the process of change from the batterer's perspective. Conclusions from the data follow.

Conclusions

**Conclusion #1: Becoming a non-batterer is a slow, gradual process.** The men who participated in this study showed progress towards becoming non-batterers, but the
progress appeared to take time over the four-month program. Men who have been conditioned to behave in an abusive manner are not likely to suddenly change their behaviors. The men in this study showed signs of struggling with their previously held assumptions and beliefs regarding women, relationships, and abuse. Part of Mezirow's perspective transformation theory (1991) is that a critical assessment of assumptions is undertaken, which causes the men to review their belief systems and question whether this system is valid.

**Conclusion #2: Critical reflection needs to occur if batterers are going to make serious, life-long changes in their behavior.** Mezirow (1990) described the process of critical reflection in three interrelated phases:

1. identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions
2. scrutinizing the accuracy and validity of these thoughts and actions in terms of how they connect to, or are discrepant with, our experience of reality
3. reconstituting these assumptions to make them more inclusive and integrative. (p. 177)

Dewey (1933) described critical reflection as, “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (p. 9). The process of critical reflection requires an awareness that a true problem exists. Upon critically reflecting on the previously unexamined assumptions of our belief system, meaning is transformed. Critical reflection includes a critique of long-held assumptions to determine whether the belief, often acquired in childhood, remains functional for us as adults (Mezirow, 1994).
Through a critical examination of paradigms and the way batterers understand their abuse, they can change the way they make sense of their world. Their current frame of reference is based on a set of assumptions that structures the way they interpret their experiences. Batterers are critically reflective when they challenge an established interpretation of meaning. Typically, perspective transformations occur in response to an externally imposed dilemma (Mezirow, 1990). In the batterers’ case, the externally imposed dilemma would be arrest, followed by the class. The batterers’ class becomes the trigger event, and this event becomes the catalyst that begins the process of perspective transformation.

Upon critical reflection of his abusive behaviors, John experienced discontent in learning that what he had done was wrong. Recognizing this discomfort and acknowledging that his behaviors were unhealthy for his relationship, John was progressing through the process of perspective transformation:

My attitude used to be real bad. I’m not the same person now. I have a good attitude now. I think I have done quite a bit of what’s in those videos. But when I watch the videos, things bug me. I just start thinking about things. I think it’s good to think about it, to not forget it and know you won’t do it again. I felt like a jackass. I just think about it a lot now.

Conclusion #3: Information learned in the BEP did assist the batterers in changing their abusive behaviors. The batterers discussed many things they learned that helped them realize their abusiveness and then change their abusive behaviors. The men learned how to be more aware of their bodies physically and notice when their bodies tell them they are getting angry. For example, their bodies may show the following signs of
anger: stomach knots, deep breathing, faster heart beats, or tingly arms. The men learned to
notice these physical signs and then take measures to calm themselves down before the
anger escalates even further.

Many of the batterers said that taking time-outs was one tool that helped them calm
down and get away from the problem for a little while. Physically removing themselves
from the anger lowered the chances of abuse taking place. The men also learned about
negative self-talk that goes on in their heads that has a detrimental effect on their outlook.

The men learned about King Baby beliefs, which refers to men who act like babies,
men who need constant attention from their partners, and men who have temper tantrums
when they don’t get their way. And finally, the men learned to communicate better with
their partners by expressing what they really think, using the “I feel...” and “I would
like...” choice of words. All of these tools assisted the batterers in changing their abusive
behaviors to healthier, non-abusive behaviors in their relationships.

Conclusion #4: The BEP served as a catalyst in assisting the batterers to see
alternative worldviews regarding women, relationships, and violence. Were it not for
the mandatory program, many of the batterers probably would not have found reason to
critically assess their abusive behaviors. Upon their arrest for domestic abuse, the men
quickly learned that legally their abuse was wrong. The BEP takes the learning a step
above the legal reason, though.

The BEP was likely the first exposure batterers had to the idea that their conduct in
relationships was unacceptable. The road to perspective transformation requires that the
batterers confront themselves and their assumptions and beliefs. One does not normally
confront one’s beliefs unless given reason to. Here the reason would be the dilemma; i.e.,
the arrest and subsequent mandatory class.

**Conclusion #5:** Perspective transformation did occur to different degrees in
each batterer. Perspective transformation is not a quick and easy ten-step procedure.
Rather, perspective transformation is a gradual process, one that can take days, weeks,
months, or even years to finally complete. Some never reach full completion of
transformation. People can also waver back and forth among the ten different steps in the
process.

The purpose of the BEP curriculum is to challenge patterns of thinking and acting
that lead to destructive and violent relationships. Change is best achieved by focusing on
how the batterer interprets his behavior. If cognitive changes are made in how the batterer
interprets his behavior, then changes in his behavior will follow.

For example, Mark’s statement below represents what the batterers believed was
necessary for true, life-long change to occur within them. The statements here coincide
with what Mezirow (1994) believes to be true regarding perspective transformations:

If you’re willing to change, cause I’ve said it and proved it, to change your
behavior you need to change your ways of thinking. If you want to keep on
thinking wrong, there’s no way. So you need to change your way of thinking. What
really counts is that this program is not going to change no one unless the person is
willing to change. And most of us are here because of the law, a court order. But it
helps if you’re willing to. If you’re not willing to change, nothing’s going to
happen. You just comply with the order. That’s it. It’s over; the program is over.
You’re going to go back to the same thing. I’m willing to change. Everybody needs
to change their beliefs. I'm in the process of changing. You need to be aware of what got you here, and you are the one who needs to be willing to make the changes. Just by accepting that you are a batterer, you are a step ahead. The program works if you want it to work. I want to change. I'm trying to do as many things as possible in a positive way. That's the whole process of change. I'm trying to make things work better. In the end you need to make better relationships with everybody. Not to control. To be more aware of your own feelings in situations.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the fact that only one of seven victims was accessed for interviews. I do not know why the victims were unwilling to meet with me. The Sioux City Department of Corrections has not had success in their attempts to incorporate victims into their system either. In the future it is a hope of the Sioux City Department of Corrections that resources will be allocated to this effort so that relationships can be built with the victims. If victims are involved in the system, hopefully more can be learned from them regarding their perspectives on the batterers' experiences in the program.

A possible limitation could also be that the men selected to participate in this study were identified as verbal and motivated. The selected men were motivated enough that they agreed to participate in this study. So it could be possible that these men showed more improvement in their learning due to their motivation level. Not all men may be motivated to change.
Another limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reported data. The data collected from interviews and in-takes are based on self-reported data from the participants, and inaccurate information is always a possibility from self-reports. Additionally, it is possible that the men were just not honest with their responses.

My presence in the classes may have served as a limitation. The men were aware that I was in the room, as I was seated in front at the staff table. Although I attempted to blend in with the group, I was only one of two females in the room, and possibly perceived as a staff member as well. The participants in this study may have behaved differently because of my presence. They may have tried to look good in my eyes by responding with “correct” answers and behaving in an appropriate manner.

Time was another limitation of this study. The batterers were interviewed over a four-month period while they were participants in the class. Ideally it would have been more beneficial to remain in contact with the batterers months and years after their class was over. Prolonged contact would allow investigation of whether or not abuse continued in their relationships. Because of graduation deadlines, however, this research study could not have continued for a longer period of time.

Reflections

As I reflected back on the past year and a half spent on this project, it became apparent that this research experience provided a great learning experience to me personally and educationally. Particularly from notes in my journal, I reflected upon my feelings and thoughts throughout this experience. I noticed that at the beginning of my journey I was apprehensive about interviewing the batterers by myself. I was cautious and
guarded, as I knew that these men had been convicted of violence. As my time with the batterers wore on, I became less guarded and did not feel anxious around them. I learned that these men looked and acted like any men I might meet on the street or interact with on a daily basis.

Initially in the interviews I noticed that I had a tendency to counsel the men at times. Some of the men asked for my opinion and sought assistance from me about their personal situations. At first I responded in what I thought was a helpful manner. But after listening to the taped transcriptions, I learned that I did not need to answer their questions directly, but instead just remain in the researcher role, that of listening and asking questions.

My disappointment with the failure to obtain victim interviews was also apparent in my journal. I had so hoped to get rich data from the victims that consequently it was disappointing and frustrating to reach a dead end with the victims time after time again.

I reflected on the “what if’s” in my research. What if I could interview these men again in six months, a year, two years, and so on. Wouldn’t it be interesting if I could keep in contact with these men and their partners to see if they re-offend again in the future? Unfortunately my contact with the men through Human Services would no longer exist, so the contacts would need to be made on a personal level.

A reflection that kept resurfacing concerned the issue of couples conflict resolution. This idea would not be popular with many women’s groups today since feminist groups believe that abuse is the man’s sole responsibility and it is he who must change. But after my experience with this study, I wonder about involving the victims in some type of couples conflict management class. I believe that each situation is different and should be
reviewed individually. I saw so much conflict between partners that I am ultimately led to believe that these couples did not have healthy, functional ways of arguing.

**Recommendations**

**Program Design**

After examining the experiences of male batterers in a BEP, recommendations regarding program design are offered here. This study's findings show that the curriculum appears to be effective at serving as a catalyst for change in abusive behaviors. The class challenged the men to see their abuse as a choice, and it challenged much of what they had been raised to believe. The curriculum and facilitators of the program were instrumental in providing an environment in which the batterers were exposed to new information and tools for behavior change. Little change in the program design seems warranted, as it appears to be confronting and challenging the batterers' established paradigms. The curriculum could be reviewed and updated periodically with new exercises as time allows.

One topic that has not been addressed is the factors that could influence the learning capabilities of the adult men. Results of this study suggest that the program works well for verbal, motivated individuals such as the study's participants. However, the impact of the program on men with learning disabilities, men who are illiterate, those with low IQs, or concrete thinkers was not addressed. The varying emotional capacities of men as well as the different cognitive levels could seemingly affect the degree of success that men have in the BEP class. These issues have the potential to greatly determine the success or failure of class participants. It is recommended that the BEP curriculum address the different learning capabilities of men and how they deal with them.
The size of the classes also appeared to be quite large, with 20 to 30 men sometimes enrolled. More classes with fewer participants would be an ideal situation, in order to make more personal contact with each batterer.

Additionally, the men and woman interviewed suggested a couples format for the classes. The need for assistance in their relationships was apparent with this request. Ultimately, it appeared that the program effectively provided useful and challenging information to the batterers that was instrumental in transforming their learning. They appeared to learn a number of helpful strategies that they used in their daily lives.

Collaborative Efforts

Working together to jointly study the effectiveness of current BEP programs would assist both state programs and universities. State programs would benefit from including a research component in their intervention efforts. Such components would keep programs abreast of the latest academic and research knowledge regarding domestic violence. Being familiar with current research and developments around the country could provide insight for state programs. Universities can provide people with research skills, while state programs can provide a practical, real-world setting for research studies. Universities would offer graduate students to do the research work, at no cost to the state programs. Graduate students need supportive programs that welcome them to conduct their graduate research. Together, universities and state programs could address the financial, practical, and program-enriching needs of both institutions.
Victim Participation

Getting female domestic abuse victims to participate in research, as well as educational programs, has been a challenge. Establishing a community stance on domestic violence is the first step. When women perceive that their community supports victims and prosecutes abusers, then women victims may feel more at ease to become involved in opening up about their personal situation. When women victims feel threatened for their own and their children’s lives, they may not be inclined to seek assistance, for fear of future consequences from their abusers.

Once a community has developed a solid stance on domestic violence, then they could structure a resource for victims as soon as a complaint or arrest is made. Developing rapport with the victims right away, assisting them with childcare, finances, education, and possibly even legal counsel, may provide enough security and support for victims to share their lives with researchers.

Facilitators

The role of facilitators may not be emphasized nearly enough considering the amount of responsibility assigned to them in this learning process. A recommendation for enhancing program effectiveness is to examine more closely the impact that facilitators have on the transformative learning process. Facilitators well versed and trained in adult education practice and theory may be better able to facilitate the perspective transformation process in batterers. More rigorous, on-going training for facilitators may be needed to educate them regarding the transformative learning process. It is vital that facilitators know how adults learn, and that they also know how to question their own assumptions and critically examine their own beliefs.
Future Research

Taking into account that the purpose of BEP is to educate and change behaviors of batterers as well as to improve the lives of victims, future research is needed that includes richer accounts from victims. Victims could provide rich, detailed input regarding their views on what is beneficial and meaningful for batterers in learning to stop their abuse. Furthermore, state programs could provide resources for the purpose of making contacts with victims so as to establish open and trustworthy relationships with the victims, which would lead to richer and thicker accounts from the victims. As is often the case, financial resources need to be allocated to victim research. Higher payment to victims for their participation could possibly entice women to get involved with researchers. Allocating more funding for staff could also assist in calling and interviewing victims.

Richer, detailed accounts from batterers are also needed to better understand the experiences of batterers. Many quantitative studies have been conducted, with a variety of conclusions regarding effectiveness of interventions (Chen, et al., 1989; Dutton, 1986; Edleson & Syers, 1990). Detailed accounts through the use of qualitative methods may provide researchers with different perspectives regarding batterers and their lives.

Future research focus could also be directed towards studying men who have successfully reformed to become non-batterers. Focusing on men who have undergone perspective transformations could help researchers better understand the process of transformative learning that occurs in interventions. When we pinpoint the agents that are specifically helpful in the transformational process of batterer to non-batterer, we can work on improving our interventions.
Clinicians have speculated that BEP interventions may assist in the decrease of physical violence, but that emotional violence may then increase instead (Rosenfeld, 1992). In addition to following-up regarding physical abuse, researchers should also ask batterers and victims about emotional abuse.

Research on the different styles of facilitators would be interesting to study. Since we now know that facilitators play such a crucial role in guiding the men toward reflective, critical thinking, it would be valuable to conduct research on the facilitators and their contributions to the learning process.

And lastly, more longitudinal studies are needed in work with batterers. A batterer may learn to stop his violent behavior for a few months, or even a few years. Research is needed to follow-up with batterers over a longer period of time to discover whether or not abuse has reoccurred and if physical abuse changed to emotional abuse. Additionally, the possibility for long-term treatments rather than brief interventions should be considered since we know that transformations are gradual processes that can take years to occur.

How batterers change their behaviors from abuse to non-abuse is still not clearly understood. Studies like this one may shed light on the processes that batterers encounter over time while learning not to abuse their partners. More research is needed to help practitioners and researchers better understand the perspective transformation process of batterers.

**Implications for Educational Practice**

The major contribution this study made was that it illuminated the step-by-step procedural process that batterers go through during perspective transformation. This
detailed account has not been found elsewhere in the literature. The crucial question in this study was how batterers change from abusers to non-abusers. This study’s findings displayed the specific tools that batterers used to create a life of non-violence for themselves. The implication of this detailed knowledge is that we can now better understand the process of change that occurs in transformative learning and specifically how it relates to batterers.

Additionally, this study contributed to our current knowledge regarding facilitators of educational practice. The facilitators of the BEP classes have a crucial role in guiding the transformative learning process. Facilitators need to be good educators, have knowledge regarding adult education philosophies, and be able to think critically themselves. Active ingredients important in the learning process are dialog and interaction between the facilitator and men in the class. Facilitators need to be able to model critical thinking. If they cannot do this, we should not expect batterers to think critically. The facilitators of batterer education programs must be rigorously trained and prepared to lead these groups of men for true transformative learning to occur. The implication for this knowledge regarding facilitators is that we must be certain that we are providing batterer programs with top notch facilitators who know how to teach others the basic ideologies of adult education practice if we want to see batterers change to non-batterers.

Since many batterer program facilitators come from a social work background and not an educational background, adult educators can offer insight into the learning process for social workers. By working with social workers we can share our knowledge of the transformative learning process and the critical role that facilitators play in helping to make that transformation in batterers. We need to share our knowledge about the process of
learning over time, critical thinking, confrontation by peers, exposure to new information and tools for success, and of course our experience in working with adults specifically.

This study’s findings also highlighted the difficult procedure of attaining victim input in domestic abuse cases. This fact corroborated past research and the challenging nature of accessing victims of domestic violence. The implication here is that we need to change something in the way we have been going about trying to get victims involved in research. In order to advance batterer research to a higher level, we must find a way to involve victims in the research.

This study contributed advanced knowledge about the process of transformative learning theory. By examining each participant and his learning process against the transformative learning steps, we gained information about the complex interpersonal variables associated with a paradigm shift, or a perspective transformation. An implication for practice that deserves more attention is the consideration that this program may work better for certain men than others. For example, critical, reflective thinking is associated with a higher level of cognitive thinking. Will this program benefit men who are not able or willing to advance to a higher cognitive level? A seemingly easy question to answer, but with reverberating effects on the established BEP and transformative learning foundations and principles.

This study also validated the theoretical foundation that was used as its underlying roots. The data attained through observation, documents, and interviews validated the patriarchy ideology as a main component of the batterers’ attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors. The data also substantiated the social learning and learned gender role theoretical premise. The batterers validated that although a complicated mixture, their
abusive behaviors stemmed from a combination of their traditional patriarchal beliefs, abusive behavior that was modeled to them, and learned gender role beliefs.

Summary

Findings from this study disclosed six main themes, which in sum suggested that the male batterers in this study had progressed towards perspective transformation due to their presence in the BEP. As anticipated, the phenomenological design of this study enabled batterers to provide the context for their reported learning and changes.

These findings additionally illustrated how perspective transformation learning theory can be used to describe the progress of change. The ten phases of the learning theory took the batterer from the first event, arrest and subsequent program enrollment, to a critical examination of his assumptions, and finally, to the acquisition of new perspectives.

In-depth, open-ended interviewing appeared to be an appropriate method of identifying the agents of reported changes. As the men discussed their experiences from their perspectives, many of the batterers noted that the experience of being arrested was indeed one of the components for not wanting to abuse again. The men's behavioral changes regarding violence may be related to combined interventions of arrest coupled with education.

This study demonstrated the salience of using in-depth interviews with batterers when examining their experiences in mandatory programs. Ultimately it was discovered here that batterers did progress through the ten phases of perspective transformation theory, and although many of them did not experience full transformations, all of the batterers made progress towards changing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
Caution should be taken in interpreting the optimistic results from the batterers in this study. Given that changes in attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors can be a life-long process, it should be noted that complete perspective transformations can take a very long period of time to occur. An examination time period of four months is not long enough to definitively state that complete and nonreversible behavior changes did indeed occur. Ultimately, transformative learning was found to have taken place in degrees, and all batterers did show signs of progress regarding their perspectives during the four month time period under review.
APPENDIX A. SIGNED HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL FORM

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. ☒ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) the purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
   d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) that participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. ☒ Signed consent form (if applicable)

14. ☒ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. ☒ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

   First contact: October 15, 1998
   Last contact: February 15, 1999

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   May 1, 1999

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

   [Signature]

   Date: [04/13/98]

   Department or Administrative Unit

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   ☒ Project approved  ☐ Project not approved  ☐ No action required

   Patricia M. Keith 10-2-99
   Name of Committee Chairperson  Date  Signature of Committee Chairperson

GC 06/97
APPENDIX B. CORRESPONDENCE WITH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Letter to Department of Corrections identifying research study interest
February 13, 1998

To: Jeff Page, Deb Campbell, Denny Boots
Sioux City Department of Corrections

From: Jill Schafer Godbersen
Iowa State University Ph.D. Candidate in Adult Education

Re: Research on the Batterers Education Program

As you know, I am interested in conducting my Ph.D. dissertation research on your Batterers Education Program. I am primarily interested in discovering whether or not this adult learning program is working, i.e. whether or not males in the program change their attitudes and behaviors towards women because of their experience in this program. I am concerned about the social issue of domestic violence and the destruction it causes to women, families, and to relationships.

My ultimate goal is to add knowledge to the domestic violence field that would lead towards the understanding of education that assists domestic abusers in their behavioral and attitudinal change towards women. I am interested in seeking knowledge that would add to the intervention of spouse abuse programs. What works during intervention to assist in the transformation from abuser to non-abuser? Is change attributed to the process, the curriculum, the confrontation and challenges by peers, is it due to self-motivation on the abuser's behalf, or something completely different?

I am interested in specifically looking at the BEP participant and his partner. I believe the relationship between a man and a woman is a crucial factor in domestic violence that has not been sufficiently researched. By talking with the BEP participant and his partner, I hope to discover what they both think about the educational experience of the BEP. Is his behavior any different now that he has completed the BEP?

Some questions regarding this research initiative that concern me are: Could I locate reformed batterers and interview them on their transformational process from abuser to non-abuser? How does this process take place? Does the BEP have any impact on the personal change? I am particularly concerned about the safety of the woman during this research. How can I be certain that she will not be in danger because of things that she disclosed while speaking with me?

Ultimately I would like to dig deep into the BEP to discover what, if anything, about this process assists in the change of abusers. Ultimately, what is it about the current BEP that works well and what can we do to improve the intervention process?
APPENDIX C. CORRESPONDENCE WITH BOYS & GIRLS HOME & FAMILY SERVICES

Letter requesting official agency approval of research study

September 22, 1998

Mr. Jeff Hackett
Boys & Girls Home and Family Services, Inc.
P.O. Box #1197
Sioux City, Iowa 51102-1197

Dear Mr. Hackett,

As a Ph.D. student in Adult Education at Iowa State University, I am interested in conducting my dissertation research with your agency. Last winter I met with Denny Boots, Deb Campbell, and Dean Williams regarding the nature of my research. I am writing to you to receive official written approval of this project.

My doctoral research focuses on domestic violence in the USA. I want to explore the educational process of male batterers who are enrolled in Batterer Education Programs. The nature of the research will be a qualitative design allowing for exploration and discovery. Participants in the study will be selected by Denny Boots and myself. Criteria for selection will focus on ability and willingness to speak with me about their educational experience in the BEP.

I will interview selected male participants during their scheduled BEP sessions. The male participant’s partner or spouse will also be interviewed either over the telephone or in person. The men and women will be briefed on the nature and purpose of the research, will be paid $8 per interview, will have a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality, will need to approve their partner or spouse’s participation in the research, and will read and sign a consent form. At any time the men and women may cease their involvement in this research for any reason.

Each participant will be interviewed approximately three times, and the interviews will occur from approximately October 1, 1998 through February 1, 1999. In addition to interviews, I will also occasionally observe the men in their weekly BEP sessions and I will review documents (police reports, etc.) provided to me by Deb Campbell.

I plan to initially interview a couple of men as a pilot study, testing whether or not the questions I am asking are relevant. When I believe the content of the interview questions are suitable, I will then select five to eight men and their partners as participants. All interviews will be audio-taped so that I can transcribe the tapes for data analysis purposes. By May 1, 1999 all audio-tapes will be destroyed.
Letter requesting official agency approval of research study

The interview questions for the men will focus on their experiences in the BEP. The interview questions for the women will focus on their perspective of their partner's experiences in the BEP.

All data collected through interviews, observations, and documents will be analyzed by me and written up in a doctoral dissertation format. My co-chairs at Iowa State will periodically receive copies and will guide me through the final writing stages. A completed dissertation will remain in the Graduate College of Education and the Iowa State Parks Library. All real names of participants in this study will have pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Assuming you approve of the data collection procedures outlined for this research, could you please send a letter confirming your acceptance of my entrance into your agency for research purposes to:

Dr. Nancy Evans
Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
N243 Lagomarcino Hall, ISU
Ames, Iowa 50011-3195

If you have any further questions regarding my research, please contact me at 712-364-4006, or Dr. Evans at 515-294-7113. I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration. It is my goal that this research is useful to your agency as well as to my educational pursuits.

Sincerely,

Jill Schafer Godbersen
Ph.D. Candidate, Iowa State University
October 14, 1998

Dr. Nancy Evans
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
N 243 Lagomarcino Hall, ISU
Ames, Iowa 50011-3195

Re: Jill Godbersen

Dear Dr. Evans:

I am writing to inform you of this agency's interest and willingness to work with Jill Schafer Godbersen on her dissertation research. I have reviewed her data collection procedures and discussed those with Denny Boots, Deb Campbell and our Human Resources Department. All are in agreement that the clients' rights and confidentiality are protected and the provision of services will not be adversely effected.

Ms. Godbersen may contact Denny Boots(712-277-4031) and start at her earliest convenience.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me (712-293-4727).

Sincerely,

Jeff Hackett, Vice President of Operations

cc: Denny Boots
Thank You Letter to BEP Coordinator for His Cooperation with Research Study

August 20, 1999

Denny Boots
BEP Coordinator
Boys & Girls Home and Family Services
2601 Douglas Street
Sioux City, Iowa 51102

Dear Denny,

I want to thank you for all of the time and attention you gave to me while I worked on my dissertation research with your batterer’s education program. I am near completion of my research and plan to graduate from Iowa State in December.

You and your staff treated me as though I was part of your family every Monday night that I attended the BEP sessions. You let me use your personal office space for interviews, and you were always willing to answer my numerous questions. Additionally, I appreciated the time that Deb Campbell, Judy Stafford, and Meg Bessman-Quintero spent with me. All four of you provided valuable information to me for my research.

I must mention that I was very impressed with the level of professionalism and integrity in your office. You do important work, and it was apparent that you are passionate and determined with the BEP.

When I do complete my dissertation I will send a copy to you for your reading enjoyment. I cannot thank you enough for providing me with access to the men who served as my participants, and for your guidance, cooperation, and enthusiasm. I truly hope that my research will illuminate better understanding about the learning processes of the men who participate in batterer education programs. It has been a rewarding experience working with you and again, I thank you for all that you did to accommodate my study.

Sincerely,

Jill Godbersen
Cc: Jeff Hackett
Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student at Iowa State University working on a degree in Education. Before I can attain my degree I am required to conduct research in my area of study. You are invited to participate in a study exploring the experiences of men enrolled in a batterer education program. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your enrollment in the Woodbury County Batterer Education Program.

If you decide to participate, I will conduct two or three tape-recorded conversations with you during BEP sessions regarding your personal experience in the batterer education program. The interviews may occur over a time of up to five months, and each interview will take no longer than one hour. Additionally, I will need to talk to your girlfriend or spouse two or three times on the telephone regarding her views of the batterer education program. I will also review documents that Family Services has filed on you.

All information obtained from you for this study will be confidential. I will assign a pseudonym to you so that no one will be able to identify you. All tapes will be destroyed by May 1, 1999. You will be paid $7 per interview for your participation in this study.

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not effect your status in the batterer education program. If you decide now to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time in the future. If you would like to participate, please sign the consent form below. If you have any further questions regarding this research study, you may contact me at 712-364-4006. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Schafer Godbersen

I understand the information presented above and agree to participate in this study. I understand that the conversation will be tape-recorded and a pseudonym will be assigned to insure my confidentiality. If I choose to withdraw from the study, I may do so at any time.

Participant Signature ________________________ Researcher Signature ________________________

Date ________________________ Date ________________________

Girlfriend/Spouse Name ________________________
Victim Signed Consent Form

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student at Iowa State University working on a degree in Education. Before I can attain my degree I am required to conduct research in my area of study. You are invited to participate in a study exploring the experiences of men enrolled in batterer education programs. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your boyfriend or husband's participation in the Woodbury County Batterer Education Program.

If you decide to participate, I will conduct two or three tape-recorded conversations with your boyfriend or husband regarding his personal experience in the batterer education program. Additionally, I will talk to you two or three times regarding your views of the batterer education program. These conversations may occur over a time of up to five months, and I will meet you at a location of your choice. I will also review documents that Family Services has filed on you.

All information obtained from you for this study will be confidential. I will assign a pseudonym to you so that no one will be able to identify you. All tapes will be destroyed by May 1, 1999. You will be paid $7 per interview for your participation in this study. Should you wish to talk with a counselor regarding feelings that may surface because of your participation in this study, a counselor will be available to you at no cost.

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your boyfriend's or husband's status in the batterer education program. If you decide now to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time. If you would like to participate, please sign the consent form below. If you have any further questions regarding this research study, you may contact me at 712-364-4006. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill Schafer Godbersen

I understand the information presented above and agree to participate in this study. I understand that the conversation will be tape-recorded and a pseudonym will be assigned to insure my confidentiality. If I choose to withdraw from the study, I may do so at any time.

________________________________________  ______________________________
Participant Signature                              Researcher Signature

___________                                     ___________
Date                                              Date

Boyfriend/Husband Name
APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Batterer Interview Questions

Interview #1
**Tell me a bit about yourself and your background.
**Tell me about the relationship you have with your wife/girlfriend.
**Is this your first time in a BEP?
**Are you currently with your wife/partner from the incident that led to your arrest?
**What is her name?
**How do you feel about being here?
**Tell me in detail about the incident that led to your arrest. Describe your physically abusive behaviors towards her.
**Talk about verbally abusive behaviors that you have used against your wife/girlfriend.
**Tell me about the history of how you two resolve conflict/argue.
**How did you initially feel about having to go through this 16 week program?
**Tell me about your experience in the BEP. Talk about how the program is working for you.
**Do you want to change?

Interview #2
**Talk about how your experience in the BEP is going now?
**Tell me what, if anything, about BEP has assisted you in the relationship with your wife/girlfriend.
**Talk about what you have learned in the BEP and what you plan to take home and use in your relationship with your partner/spouse.
**Talk about how your life may be different now because of your experience in the BEP.
**Describe some of the difficult experiences of being in the BEP.

Interview #3
**Describe your arguments with your wife/girlfriend now. Describe any name-calling and physical gestures.
**How do you deal with anger toward your wife/girlfriend now?
**Have you changed?
**As you are about to complete the BEP, describe how you feel about your experience in the BEP?
**What do you see as the positive and negative aspects of this program?
**Do you understand now what you did that got you into this program?
**Victim Interview Questions**

**Interview #1**
**Tell me a bit about yourself and your background.**
**Tell me about the relationship with your husband/boyfriend.**
**Is this the first time your husband/boyfriend has been in a BEP?**
**Are you and your husband/boyfriend currently living together?**
**Tell me about the incident that led to his arrest and entrance into the BEP. Describe the physically abusive behaviors he used towards you.**
**Tell me about how the history of how you two resolve conflict/argue.**
**How did he initially feel about having to go through this 16 week program?**
**Tell me about verbally abusive behaviors that he has used against you.**
**Tell me about how you perceive his experience in the BEP?**
**Do you think he seriously wants to change?**

**Interview #2/3**
**Tell me about the relationship with your husband/boyfriend since we last spoke.**
**Does he talk about the BEP with you?**
**Talk about how your relationship and life may be different now because of his experience in the BEP.**
**Tell me about the latest argument you two had. Describe name-calling and physical actions.**
**How does he deal with his anger now?**
**As he is about to complete the BEP, do you think the program has helped him?**
**Has he changed? If so, how?**
**What do you see as positive and negative aspects of this program?**
**Are you as scared of him today as you were 4 months ago?**
APPENDIX F. BATTERER AND VICTIM CATEGORIES

Batterer Categories

1. jealousy/trust
2. financial problems
3. stress—work, family
4. reasons for abuse—excuses, explanations—lost control, out of character, alcohol
5. dominating character trait
6. sports
7. how we met
8. our relationship—good and bad
9. differences between us
10. reconciliation
11. incident that led to your arrest
12. alcohol use/drug use
13. work stress
14. blaming the victim
14.5. blaming the system/others
15. physical actions
16. minimizing the incident
17. accepting responsibility for behavior
18. verbal abuse—manipulation, neglect, control
19. problems with in-laws
20. seeking parental approval
21. negative self-talk
22. insecurity
23. resolving conflict
24. experiences with BEP—what you have learned
25. change
26. shared responsibility
27. growing up with physical violence
28. prior trouble with law
29. trouble with kids
30. emotional consequences of abuse
31. women sticking by their men after abuse
32. dealing with anger/arguments after abusive incident
Batterer Categories

33-control issues
34-relationship after abusive incident
35-pregnancy
36-using BEP strategies—apply in life
37-gender roles
38-what you learned/used in BEP
39-learning from other men in the class
40-how to improve BEP
41-changing
42-admitting/denying he’s a batterer
43-getting women partners to speak to me
44-counseling/emotional issues
45-kicked out of BEP
46-negative thoughts about BEP
Victim Categories

1-background information
2-stress
3-anger management
4-insecurity
5-her response to violence
6-her explanations for his violence
7-police response
8-your relationship with batterer
9-his response to violence
10-why she’s still with him
11-incident that led to his arrest
12-alcohol
13-verbal abuse
14-gender roles
15-physical actions
16-financial control
17-control issues
18-how to deal with his anger now
19-is he changing?
20-in-law problems
21-how he’s changed because of BEP
22-what about BEP helped him
23-improvement for BEP
APPENDIX G. POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL CURRICULUM

Power and Control
Physical and Sexual Violence

Using Intimidation: Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures; smashing things; destroying her property; abusing pets; displaying weapons.

Using Emotional Abuse: Putting her down; making her feel bad about herself; calling her names; making her think she’s crazy; playing mind games; humiliating her; making her feel guilty.

Using Isolation: Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes; limiting her outside involvement; using jealousy to justify actions.

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming: Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously; saying the abuse didn’t happen; shifting responsibility for abusive behavior; saying she caused it.

Using Children: Making her feel guilty about the children; using the children to relay messages; using visitation to harass her; threatening to take the children away.

Using Male Privilege: Treating her like a servant; making all the big decisions; acting like the ‘master of the castle;’ being the one to define men’s and women’s roles.

Using Economic Abuse: Preventing her from getting or keeping a job; making her ask for money; giving her an allowance; taking her money; not letting her know about or have access to family income.

Using Coercion and threats: Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her; threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare; making her drop charges; making her do illegal things.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
206 West Fourth Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55806
218-722-4134
APPENDIX H. EQUALITY WHEEL CURRICULUM

Equality

Nonviolence

**Non-Threatening Behavior:** Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

**Respect:** Listening to her non-judgmentally; being emotionally affirming and understanding; valuing opinions.

**Trust and Support:** Supporting her goals in life; respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

**Honesty and Accountability:** Accepting responsibility for self; acknowledging past use of violence; admitting being wrong; communicating openly and truthfully.

**Responsible Parenting:** Sharing parental responsibilities; being a positive non-violent role model for the children.

**Shared Responsibility:** Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work; making family decisions together.

**Economic Partnership:** Making money decisions together; making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

**Negotiation and Fairness:** Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict; accepting change; being willing to compromise.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
206 West Fourth Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55806
218-722-4134
REFERENCES


Washington, DC: Publisher for the American Enterprise Institute.


Hartmann, H. I. (1979). The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism: Towards a more progressive union. *Capital and Class, 8*, 1-34.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jill Schafer Godbersen was born May 29, 1967 in Sibley, Iowa. She received the Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Iowa State University in 1989, the Master of Science in Higher Education from Mankato State University in 1991, and the Doctorate of Philosophy in Adult Education from Iowa State University in 1999. She was awarded induction into Phi Kappa Phi Honorary Society in 1997 and published an article titled \textit{Gender Socialization: Separating Women Scientists and Engineers} in the Iowa Student Personnel Association (ISPA) Journal in 1997. She has served on the faculty at Western Iowa Tech Community College, served as a Research Assistant in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at Iowa State University, worked in the Program for Women in Science and Engineering at Iowa State University, and worked in Residence Life at Mankato State University and The University of Iowa.