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# Exploring the Links Among Silence, Learning, and Innovation at Work

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<http://hdl.handle.net/11023/1524>

*Downloaded from PRISM Repository, University of Calgary*

## **Appendix #1**

Information Letter

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a Doctoral student in the Graduate Division of Education Research at the University of Calgary. Working under the supervision of Dr. Colleen Kawalilak, I am conducting a qualitative research study to explore the role of silence in individual and organizational workplace learning.

The importance of silence has been explored for learning in general, however, no one has addressed this essential pause in the workplace learning literature. Some researchers contend silence is an impediment to workplace learning. My intent in conducting this study is to gain a clearer understanding of how silence influences learning in the workplace.

*I am inviting you to assist me by agreeing to participate in this study. The study will involve no more than two in-depth face-to-face interviews with those participants living in the Greater Toronto area. Participants living outside the Greater Toronto area will be asked to participate in telephone interviews. In addition to the interviews, participants will be asked to review their own core stories and the themes that emerge from all the interviews, to ensure the findings reflect the essence of their lived experience. Participants will be asked to return their comments and changes regarding the core story and emerging themes to the researcher within three weeks from the time that they receive the materials. Otherwise, an absence of response*

*within the specified time period will be taken to mean that participants approve of the materials in their present form.*

In total, participants will be asked to spend no more than three hours participating in interviews, plus up to one hour reviewing stories and themes during the five-month study period.

Interviews will be arranged at times convenient for participants. The interviews will focus on participants' thoughts, experiences, and perspectives on silence and its influence on participants' individual learning and organizational learning within their workplaces. The researcher will take notes and audio record during the interviews.

All data gathered during this study will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher will have access to primary data. All data, including notes and audio-cassettes will be destroyed two years after the study is concluded. Anonymity will also be protected. Participant's names will not be used in the written report of the study findings. The findings of the study may be disseminated to the public, or may be published in a peer-reviewed journal. At no time, will participant names, or any identifying descriptors be used in the published study.

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to the accumulation and development of new and potentially significant knowledge about how silence influences individual and organizational workplace learning. In addition, by participating in this study, you may acquire a greater appreciation of silence and its influence on learning. I believe the knowledge generated through this study could raise awareness of silence as a conduit to learning and provide a jumping off point for further study and dialogue. You will receive a copy of the summary of findings from the study, and may of course access the entire report once it is published if you wish. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report, please indicate your request on the space provided in the written consent form.

Please be assured that you are under no obligation to agree to participate. Should you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time if you so choose. Should a participant choose to withdraw from the study, any and all data collected up to that point, will be destroyed. Please feel free to raise any questions or concerns with me, or Dr. Colleen Kawalilak throughout the study.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at [REDACTED], or by e-mail at [REDACTED]. Alternatively, you may contact Dr. Colleen Kawalilak at [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anne-Liisa Longmore

## **Appendix 2**

### **Letter of Consent**

(On University of Calgary Letterhead)

**Research Project Title:** Jumpstarting an organization's competitive advantage:  
Injecting a pause in our work. Exploring the link between silence, learning and innovation

**Investigator(s):** Anne-Liisa Longmore

**Supervisor:** Dr. Colleen Kawalilak

This consent form, a copy of which has been provided to you, is only one part of the process of informed consent. The information included in this letter and the information letter should provide you with a general overview of the research study and the nature of your involvement. If you require additional information regarding any of the material provided, please feel free to ask. We ask that you carefully review this letter and take the time to fully understand the information contained therein.

This study is being conducted to meet the requirements of the Doctor of Education Program.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of silence in individual and organizational workplace learning. The findings of this study may provide important information to organizations and researchers alike about how silence influences learning in the workplace. There are no known harms associated with your participation in this research study.

You will be asked to participate in one or more semi-structured interview(s) at the beginning of the study. This interview(s) will be either face-to-face or by telephone depending

upon whether or not you reside in the Greater Toronto area. The time and place in which the interview will take place will be at your convenience. The researcher will ask you a number of questions relating to your thoughts and perceptions regarding your experience with silence in your workplace (or learning project), and its influence on your learning. You will be asked to review the transcribed interview and comment on accuracy and agreement. You will be able to provide further clarification at that time. When the data are analyzed, you will be asked to review the interim texts to see if they reflect the essence of your experience. You will only be asked for the time required to participate in the interview – approximately three hours and then to review the transcripts and the interim texts, approximately thirty minutes each.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained through the assignment of codes for your name, workplace, and contact information. Only the researcher will have access to the primary data. All transcripts, computer discs and audio recordings from the study shall be maintained at the researcher's home office in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after two years. Data will be used in a combined form for final reports, publications and presentations of the research information. If and when specific information is reported, or quotes used, it will be associated with a code name. At no time will your name or any other personally identifying information be associated with any of the data presented. You may have a copy of the final research report.

There are not financial costs associated with participating in this study. As a result, you will receive no financial compensation for your agreement to participate in the study. You have the right to refuse to participate in the study and may withdraw from the study at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study all data collected to date will be destroyed. Also, you may choose not to respond to a question(s) asked by the researcher. Your continued

participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information regarding your participation in the research study and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this study, please contact:

Principal investigator: Anne-Liisa Longmore, B.Comm, MCE, EdD student

Or, if you wish, you may also contact my Supervisor, Dr. Colleen Kawalilak at The University of Calgary.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study that are not related to the specifics of the research, you may also contact the Research Services Office at [REDACTED] and ask for Mrs. Patricia Evans.

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Participant's Signature

Date

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Participant's Signature

Date

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Investigator and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

To indicate your agreement to participate in this study, please sign and date the consent form, and keeping a copy for yourself return the original to the researcher in person, or if required, in the addressed and stamped envelope provided.



## **Appendix #3**

### **Interview Guide**

1. Welcome the participant and thank them for agreeing to participate in the study.
2. Confirm with participant that they may choose to withdraw from the study at any time and may choose not to answer a question. Should the participant choose to withdraw from the study all data collected to that point will be destroyed.
3. Review the purpose of the study and the procedures for the interview.
4. Review the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Ask if the participant would like to choose a pseudonym or if they would prefer one be chosen for them. Ask participant for demographic information such as age, cultural heritage, and nature of work.
5. Ask the participant if they are ready to begin the interview and if they are comfortable with the interview being audiotape recorded. Once approval is given, begin recording.
6. Share with the participant that the researcher will be taking notes as well during the course of the interview as a back up and to capture additional thoughts and ideas.
7. Begin the interview by sharing a story about researcher's experience with silence. Follow own story by asking the following questions. Ensure both answers and perceptions regarding the participant are recorded.

Name of the Study:\_\_\_\_\_

Description of the Study:\_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym code for Participant:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Location of Interview:\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer:\_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Information: (Age, cultural heritage, nature of work)

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### **Appendix #3 continued**

Please note: Questions identified are to be used as a guide:

Questions	Responses	Observations
Would you tell me about a time when you experienced silence in the workplace (or in your graduate studies)?		
Would you tell me if and how did silence influence your thoughts, ideas, perceptions and/or sense-making ability in your work and workplace?		
Would you provide me with an example of when silence influenced your learning? How do you believe silence influenced your learning?		
When you have chosen to be silent, how did/do you choose silence? What kind of process do you go through? What do you do?		
How do you define silence? What does silence mean to you?		
How do you believe silence has influenced your learning in the workplace (or graduate school learning)?		

Note: This table will be larger and the layout may be slightly different to accommodate for writing space. Also, the format will accommodate for new questions that may arise through the flow of the interview.