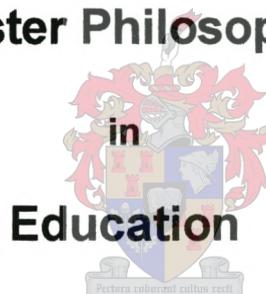


Transformative and Emancipatory Challenges for Facilitators of Adult Learning: A Learning Journey

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Magister Philosophiae



at the

University of Stellenbosch

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December 2000

DECLARATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE WORK CONTAINED IN THIS THESIS IS MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY IN ITS ENTIRETY OR IN PART BEEN SUBMITTED AT ANY UNIVERSITY FOR A DEGREE.

"The new era of rapid change plays to the greatest strength of human beings: adaptability. The squirrel will always gather nuts by instinct and the beaver will always build its house in the same way. Humans are the learning species, the fittest to learn. We can adapt to rapid change by constantly seeking ways to expand our opportunities for learning. Even more important, we are capable of developing our varied talents to the fullest and dreaming dreams of what might be."

(Davis & Davis, 2000:199)

SUMMARY

Transformative and Emancipatory Challenges for Facilitators of Adult Learning: A Learning Journey

Exploring emancipatory and transformative paradigms towards lifelong learning in the new millennium confront facilitators of adult learning to reflect critically on their own paradigms and practices of learning. Transformative learning occurs in this process of revision and reflection and when it leads to transformed meaning perspectives or change, emancipatory learning takes place. This implies that the process of critical reflection can be seen as a key to adult learning.

Out of this background the broad question arises of how facilitators of adult learning can be prompted to engage in reflection on their own learning journeys to play a role in uplifting the status of adult learning and to become lifelong learners themselves. This study, in the form of a personal learning journey, in the short term addresses this question by focusing on three levels namely:

- Exploring more relevant and alternative research approaches to the field of adult learning
- Exploring adult learning theory in a dialogical and reflective manner
- Developing integrated and holistic models for adult learning and lifelong learning in a constructivist and reflective manner.

In the long term the learning journey aims to effect a framework for the narratives of other facilitators of adult learning in constructing meaning-making in their processes of transformative and emancipatory learning.

A constructivist, biographical and dialogical approach is followed to engage reflectively with my inquiry and aiming at creating emancipatory and

transformative challenges for facilitators of adult learning. It invites facilitators to respond in a critical, dialogical and reflective manner to their changing environments and practices. Adult learning theory is explored in a dialogical manner and an integrated and holistic model for adult learning is developed.

My learning journey thus challenges other facilitators of adult learning to provide leadership in their practice by developing the ability to reflect critically resulting in alternative ways of engaging with the challenges facing us towards a learning millenium.

OPSOMMING

Transformatiewe en Emansipatoriese Uitdagings vir Fasiliteerders van Volwassene Leer: 'n Lerende Reis

Deur emansipatoriese en transformatiewe paradigmas op pad na lewenslange leer in die nuwe millenium te eksplorieer word fasiliteerders van volwassene leer gekonfronteer om krities oor hul eie paradigmas en praktyke van leer te reflekteer. Transformatiewe leer vind plaas in die proses van revisie en refleksie en wanneer dit lei tot getransformeerde betekenis perspektiewe of verandering, vind emansipatoriese leer plaas. Dit impliseer dat die proses van kritiese refleksie as 'n sleutel tot volwassene leer gesien kan word.

Vanuit hierdie agtergrond ontstaan die breë vraag van hoe fasiliteerders van volwassene leer geïnspireer kan word om te reflekteer oor hulle eie lerende reise en daardeur 'n rol te speel in die opheffing van die status van volwassene leer en om hulself lewenslange leerders te word. Hierdie studie, in die vorm van 'n persoonlike lerende reis, spreek die vraag op die korttermyn op drie vlakke aan, naamlik:

- Eksplorering van meer relevante en alternatiewe navorsingsbenaderings in die veld van volwassene leer
- Eksplorering van volwassene leer teorie op 'n dialogiese en reflektiewe wyse
- Ontwikkeling van geïntegreerde en holistiese modelle vir volwassene leer en lewenslange leer op 'n konstruktivistiese en reflektiewe wyse.

Die lerende reis beoog om op die langtermyn 'n raamwerk vir die narratiewe van ander fasiliteerders van volwassene leer daar te stel in konstruktiewe

betekenismaking in hul prosesse van transformatiewe en emansipatoriese leer.

'n Konstruktivistiese, biografiese en dialogiese benadering word gevolg ten einde reflektief om te gaan met my ondersoek met die doel om emansipatoriese en transformatiewe uitdagings aan fasiliteerders van volwassene leer te stel. Fasiliteerders word uitgenooi om op 'n kritiese, dialogiese en reflektiewe wyse te reageer op hul veranderende omgewings en praktyke. Volwassene leer teorie word geëksploreer op 'n dialogiese wyse en 'n geïntegreerde en holistiese model vir volwassene leer is ontwikkel.

My lerende reis konfronteer dus ander fasiliteerders van volwassene leer met die uitdaging om leierskap daar te stel in hulle praktyk deur die vermoë te ontwikkel om krities te reflekteer. Die resultaat hiervan is om oorweging te skenk aan alternatiewe maniere van omgaan met die uitdagings wat ons in die gesig staar op pad na 'n lerende millenium.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to:

- God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the gift of wisdom and the privilege to learn.
- Prof. Chris Kapp, who acted as study leader. Chris, thank you for risking with me. Instead of following rules creative and critical thinkers will always break them.
- Dr. Alan Chadwick, who acted as moderator of this learning programme. Alan, thank you for being a role model of a lifelong learner.
- My dearest wife, Elise and children, Martin and Marize. Elise for all the typing, love and support and for sharing this learning journey with me. Thank you for believing in me and for always being willing to reflect and learn with me.
- Our parents for all the love and encouragement.
- Jean Grundling for travelling the learning journey with me. We learned from each other.
- Technikon SA for financial support and approval of study leave.

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CHAPTER 1

*“The significant problems we face,
cannot be solved at the same
level of thinking we were at when we
created them.”*

Albert Einstein

ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE LEARNING JOURNEY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

My learning journey was very much influenced and stimulated by two critical factors, namely:

- my own learning experiences as a M Phil (Education) learner at Stellenbosch University, South Africa and
- the fight for the status of adult learning on a national and international level which became apparent at the fifth United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) conference on adult education in Hamburg, Germany during 1997.

These two factors challenged me on my learning journey with many critical questions probing me to continuously reflect on them. Some of these questions are:

- Why is adult education suffering from an identity crisis?
- Why is it that adult education is losing direction?

- How can adult education redefine its role and demarginilise itself?
- How can adult education permeate through the boundaries of higher education?
- How can adult education promote its ethos?
- How can the doors of learning be opened to adult learners?
- Should learning programmes be adapted at university, technikon and college levels to meet the needs of adults?
- How can research impact on the field of adult learning?
- What role should adult learning play in promoting the transformation of learning institutions to become lifelong learning institutions?
- Should more relevant and alternative research approaches be explored in the field of adult learning?
- What emancipatory and transformative challenges face the facilitators of adult learning when reflecting on some of the abovementioned critical questions?

Although all of the above questions were very relevant, I especially focused on the last two in my constant reflections since if they could stimulate dialogue, tremendous impact can be made in the field of adult learning. Merriam (1993:12) confirms my feelings where she describes the complexity of adult learning as a phenomenon and invites more efforts to contribute to the understanding of adult learning. She is of the opinion that we are moving towards a multifaceted understanding of adult learning that calls for continuous reflection on the inherent richness and complexity of the phenomenon. The issue at stake is: Are we aware of the challenges and transformative and emancipatory roles we have to constantly challenge and reflect on in the field of adult learning? Apps (1994:244) stresses that the unknown, chaotic future will require and demand this and even much more of us.

Facilitators of adult learning are thus put to the challenge to explore new paradigms towards lifelong learning in the new millenium. As facilitators we are faced by and challenged to explore new and alternative ways to collaborate and make improvements towards adult learning. Do we realise

that we should continuously seek stimulation for reflection to critically evaluate our paradigms and move away from rigid structures and approaches?

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

A goal of adult learning should be to create lifelong learners who are capable and willing to do new things, not simply repeating what others have done – learners who are creative, inventive and discoverers. These learners must be able to shift and move boundaries. They should be able to think critically, verify and not merely accept everything they are offered. Brockbank and McGill (1998:4) see this as learners being able to construct knowledge by means of the capacity of learning being in the learner. They feel the learner has the ability to be critical in relations to the domains of knowledge, self and the world. The learner, according to them, is able not only to embrace knowledge but also to bring self, including emotion and action, into the learning process. This creates the ability in the learner to be reflexive about learning, what is learned and how is learned.

Exploring emancipatory and transformative paradigms towards lifelong learning in the new millenium confronts facilitators of adult learning to reflect critically on their own paradigms and learning. Cranton (1996:1-2) states that the facilitators of learning should become learners again and engage in critical reflection, revise perspectives and become more autonomous and independent in their learning. In this process of reflection and revision transformative learning occurs. When it leads to transformed meaning perspectives or changed ways of seeing the world, emancipatory learning takes place. During this process we liberate ourselves from forces limiting our options and forces we see as beyond our control. This process of critical reflection is a key to adult learning. According to Cranton (1996:5-6) no one theory of adult learning is informative to all facilitators as no one model or paradigm underlies and describes adult learning research. She states that we are entering an era in the field that is reflective, critical and comprehensive.

As it is of critical importance for facilitators to know and understand how their learners engage in critical reflection, transformative learning, constructivism, self-directed learning, outcomes-based learning and workplace learning, it is essential that we, as facilitators of adult learning, apply this ourselves. We seem to sometimes avoid the issue of reflecting on our own learning, growth and development and forget that the issues applicable to our learners should be equally applicable to us. This is supported by Brookfield (1995: 215) who is of the opinion that professional education has taken a wrong turn in seeing the role of the facilitator as interpreter, translator, and implementer of theory reduced by academic researchers and thinkers. He confirms the fact that facilitators should continuously understand, question, investigate and take seriously their own learning and practice. Could it be assumed that we as facilitators of adult learning are not also adult learners on a lifelong learning journey continuously experimenting creatively with approaches and assumptions behind our own practices to respond to the unique demands facing us?

Thompson (in Armstrong, Thompson & Brown, 1997:2-3) verifies my views by stating that employers want their workforce to be flexible and innovative, expecting them to be capable of learning new things as the need arises. They talk of a culture of lifelong learning focusing on competence in a range of core skills, which generate adaptability, creativity and the flexibility to respond to changing demands. Goleman (1998:244-245) goes so far to suggest a different model of learning focusing on flexibility, integrity, interpersonal skills, listening better and giving feedback skillfully. He identifies and labels this as emotional competence, which assists us in handling others and ourselves in a better way. How does this impact on adult learning?

Usher, Bryant and Johnson (1997:x) argue the necessity for deconstructing the dominant discourses of adult education by recognising that adult education has to change and accommodate itself to the new social phenomenon of adult learning and find a new role within changing contexts. Does this ask of us as facilitators to continually expand our capabilities, shift our boundaries and constantly prod and provoke ourselves and other around

us to learn in order to shape our future? Should we take up this learning challenge and start altering what we think, feel and do towards the field of adult learning?

Out of this background and the critical issues confronting adult learning as stipulated in the introduction, the broad research question arises:

How can facilitators of adult learning be prompted in a provocative, facilitative way to engage in reflection on their own learning journeys and therefore play a role in uplifting the status of adult learning by becoming lifelong learners themselves?

Against this background and within the framework set by the broad research question, the following assumptions can be made:

- Different and alternative approaches and theories towards adult learning can be explored. An analysis will show that alternative approaches necessitate critical thinking, reflective competencies and dialogical competencies from facilitators when facilitating adult learning in an emancipatory and transformative manner.
- Conceptual and theoretical models can be developed to create integrated and holistic paradigms for adult learning and lifelong learning. These could assist in demarginalising the field and challenging the current insecurities.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY (LEARNING JOURNEY)

The learning journey aims to focus on three levels, namely:

- Level 1: exploring more relevant and alternative research approaches to the field of adult learning by way of literature research
- Level 2: exploring adult learning theory in a dialogical and reflective manner in order to identify and facilitate the emancipatory and transformative challenges for the new millennium

Level 3: developing integrated and holistic models for adult learning and lifelong learning in a constructivist and reflective manner to demarginalise the field and challenge current insecurities

In addition to the above short term aims which serves as a pilot study, the learning journey aims to, in the long term, effect a framework for the narratives of other facilitators of adult learning in constructing meaning-making in their processes of transformative and emancipatory learning. Rossiter (in Clark & Caffarella, 1999:84) stresses the necessity for the ongoing construction of the self-narrative to be experienced and understood in the framework of personal transformation and development.

1.4 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The focus and central concepts in my learning journey may be unfamiliar to some readers, therefore it is necessary to clarify the following concepts:

1.4.1 Transformative learning

Transformative learning occurs when the learners engage in critical reflection, revise perspectives and become autonomous and independent in their learning (Cranton, 1996:1-2). Mezirow (1990:xvi) describes transformative learning as "... 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."

1.4.2 Emancipatory learning

When transformative learning leads to transformed meaning perspectives or changed ways of seeing the world, emancipatory learning takes place (Cranton, 1996: 1-2). Mezirow (1990:xvi) explains emancipatory learning as

"an organised effort to precipitate or to facilitate transformative learning in others."

1.4.3 Postmodern

According to Scott and Usher (1996:25) the postmodern questions formally secure foundations of knowledge and understanding. It expresses a loss of certainty in what is known and in ways of knowing and focuses on the complexity through which knowledge is constructed about the world and ourselves. It further emphasises the need for science to be self-reflexive about its limitations.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 13) identify the postmodern era as a new era where the qualitative researcher "... does more than observe history; he or she plays a part in it. New tales of the field will now be written, and they will reflect the researcher's direct and personal engagement with this period."

1.4.4 Metanoia

Metanoia means a total or fundamental shift of mind, which effects change (Senge, 1990:13-14).

1.4.5 Constructivism

Guba and Lincoln (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:128-129) describe the constructivist paradigm as an act of inquiry beginning with issues and/or concerns of participants and unfolding through a dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis and so on that leads to eventually constructing a model or concept. Mouton (1996:46) clarifies this by stating that constructivism is the doctrine that complex mental structures are neither innate nor passively derived from experience, but are actively constructed by the mind. Child (in Sutherland, 1997:86) supports this viewpoint in defining

constructivism as where the learner actively constructs both the knowledge acquired and the strategies used to acquire it.

1.4.6 Reflection

According to Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:vii) reflection means "... interpreting one's own interpretations, looking at one's own perspectives from other perspectives, and turning a self-critical eye onto one's own authority as interpreter and author." Palmer, Burns and Bulman (1994:13) describe reflection as being "... initiated by an awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts which arise from a realization that the knowledge one was applying in a situation was not itself sufficient to explain what was happening in that unique situation..... reflection therefore has the potential to address the problems of practice in a way that the application of technical rational approaches alone do not."

Critical reflection can be described as the "... assessment of the validity of the *presumptions* of one's meaning perspectives, and examination of their sources and consequences" (Mezirow, 1990:xvi). Mezirow (1990:xvi) further describes critical self-reflection as "... assessment of the way one has posed problems and of one's own meaning perspectives."

1.4.7 Deconstruction

Usher and Edwards (1996:144&145) defines deconstruction as "... subverting the restriction of meaning in texts, opening them up to show how meaning is organised in powerful interpretations, and what function that organisation serves."

1.5 EXPLORING MORE RELEVANT AND ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES TO THE FIELD OF ADULT LEARNING

Being confronted with the challenge of altering much of how I reflect, construct and do if I was serious about the learning and research challenges facing me in the field of adult learning, I realised it would be necessary to go beyond orthodox approaches and mainstream paradigms of research. The reflexive methodology, which I followed, falls within the broad qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed and how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in their world (Merriam, 1998:6). Merriam (1998:8) argues that qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding which results in a richly descriptive study using words and pictures rather than numbers as in the quantitative approach.

This led me to consider alternative and more appropriate research paradigms for modeling adult learning. Houle (in Langenbach, 1993:215) reminds us of the creative anarchy of adult learning. It is argued that to look for a rational order in something as complex as adult learning has to be tempered with the realisation that we work with unpredictable people, who defy simple analysis and are not always accommodated by models that reduce all outcomes to specific predetermined behaviours.

Collins (1991:33) stimulated my search for more relevant and alternative approaches and paradigms by stating that many academicians and students of adult learning are inclined to emulate the methodological approaches of the natural sciences. Topping (in Sutherland, 1997:106) is of the opinion that research on adult learning, quality and quantity wise, is surprisingly limited. What could be the reason for this? Quigley (in Quigley & Kuhne, 1997:18) is of the opinion that research begins with a question and a desire for change. Do researchers in the field of adult learning realise this?

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:25) confirm that facilitators of adult learning have relied extensively on the general body of theory and research findings in education and that this has been insufficient. They call for the development of a body of research and theory unique to adult education so that facilitators may gain a deeper understanding of their practice and conditions for successful facilitation. Merriam and Brockett (1997:283) argue that the actual practice of adult education involve more than familiarity with technical (positivist) rationalities like knowledge, skills, concepts and theories of the field. They are of the opinion that effective practice also involves being able to reflect critically upon your own practice and as a result consider alternative ways of engaging in your work.

Collins (in Edwards, Hanson & Raggat, 1996:125) confronts this issue in a reflective critical manner. According to him the obsession with technique, a technical rationality, has induced modern adult education to evade serious engagement with critical and ethical issues. In the process adult education is sidelined. This calls for adult education to rise out of the crisis and to shape into a genuinely reflective, emancipating and transformative practice which challenge presuppositions, analyse and explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding and act on new perspectives. Briton (1996:10-11) calls for a persuasive critique of the modern practice of adult learning as the deeply entrenched technicist ideas need to be overturned towards more transformative and emancipatory forms of adult learning. He further argues that alternative adult learning practices need to be pursued by means of continuous questioning of prevailing practices through critical reflection. Gericke and Smit (1999:7) link this with constructivism where critical reflection leads to a change in views and paradigms.

All too often research in adult learning relies on assumptions and methodologies of the natural sciences by applying them to the study of adult learning (Briton, 1996:79). Palmer et al. (1994:78) are of the opinion that it is not possible to do justice to critical reflection when applying traditional scientific criteria underpinned by positivistic research methods. Alternative paradigms should be sought and explored as developmental towards learning,

teaching, facilitation and professional development in adult learning. The aim should be to provide alternative meta-frameworks integrating the various aspects that could impact on new learning frontiers without getting caught in the web of emphasis on technique and quantification.

Collins (1991:33-34) is quite critical about technician and pseudo-scientific orientations and endeavours in the field of adult learning. He calls it an aura of artificiality and accuses the adult education enterprise of bestowing favour on academics that stress techniques and methodological approaches in line with conventional scientific research. He suggests that adult education should not only be justified as an artificial and coercive technique, but rather grow into an emancipating and transformative practice. This calls for the necessity for critical reflection and analysis to conceptualise adult education as an emancipating and transformative field of practice. Are we serious when attempting to emancipate and transform adult education by means of searching for and reflecting on more relevant research approaches?

Usher et al. (1997:x-xi) attempt to challenge this even more. They are of the opinion that the significance of adult education moving to adult learning needs to be elaborated. They share with us their critical and iconoclastic views of the orthodoxies and the "sacred cows" of adult education as well as a desire to deconstruct these dominant discourses. According to them this is a call for adult education to change and accommodate itself to the new social phenomenon of adult learning and find a new role within changing contexts. Are these already stimulating signs of a metanoia and perhaps a need for learning leadership? Is this stimulating reflection for holistic and integrated models to be developed towards adult learning and lifelong learning?

Are we realising that new challenges face adult learning and researchers attempting to impact in this field? This is an invitation to researchers and learners to reflect carefully on what it is they do and what it is they are. It needs to be done by continuous reflection on everyday practices of adult learning and its relevant implications. According to Collins (in Edwards et al., 1996:125) this thoughtful commitment cannot be found in technocratic

stipulations of bureaucracy and professionalised pedagogy. Does this call for an emancipatory and transformative paradigm of adult learning?

1.6 FURTHER REFLECTION: SOME TRANSFORMATIVE AND EMANCIPATORY VOICES: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Continuous reflection, the call for emancipation and the challenge for more appropriate and transformative paradigms facilitated me to recognise the prospects for relevant and alternative approaches to develop integrated and holistic models for adult and lifelong learning. Collins (1991:36) supports me as he states that more academics in the field of adult education are beginning to recognise the prospects of non-empirical investigations, exploratory studies and interpretative work as relevant approaches to research in adult education.

Experiencing a lot of creative tension between what is and what ought to be, I formed the opinion that searching for rational order whilst involved with adult learning is fatal. Collins (1991:40-41) supports this fatality by criticising the endeavours sustaining the facade of a more or less clearly defined and technicist approach in the modern practice of adult education. He calls for a vocational commitment towards a critical, self-reflective practice of adult education. He argues that it is not necessary to introduce a radically new orientation to the field of research in adult education, but rather to demarginalise an approach that has been pushed to the margins by obsession with pedagogical technique. Quigley (in Quigley & Kuhne, 1997:4-5) calls for a direct challenge to the mainstream of adult education research as he sees this mainstream as remarkably slow in being affected by change. He even argues that the formal mainstream resists change from the non-traditional areas of its own field.

Usher et al. (1997:212) see research as going beyond the limits of what is known, to offer new facts and explanations and, to question and enquire critically. Research is thus seen as a practice where the self is engaged as a

reflective practitioner. It seems to me as if the focus should be on change occurring through learning as accompanied and consolidated by paradigm shifts in the ways we feel, think and see. I am stimulated by their view on new paradigm research representing a potential liberation from the technical-rationality approach and its restrictive ways. They see the challenge for new research voices to find their place in a world of competing voices of conventional researchers (Usher et al., 1997:212). A call is also made for informing and transforming adult learning by means of research and by producing new, alternative and more relevant discourses. Boshier, as quoted by Quigley (in Quigley & Kuhne, 1997:12), is of the opinion that the doors to critical and more alternative research approaches have been opened by the postmodern turn. This has created space for more voices to be heard in adult learning research.

After critically reflecting on the above I saw this as the ideal opportunity to show a commitment to change and be a true adult learner seeking new meaning about learning in adulthood. I see my research as a process of coming to understand and to make claims what I discovered on my learning journey. Usher et al. (1997:216-218) identify this as relocating the self in research. They criticise researchers in adult education, notwithstanding a commitment to learner-centredness, for still unreflectively following conventional methodology and writing themselves out of the research process. Until the emergence of new paradigm research, there was little appreciation of researchers as agents making sense in developing understanding through dialogue and a dialectical approach. I was particularly interested in the notion of the self becoming a questioning practitioner within the research arena. I realised that as a critically reflective practitioner of adult learning, I could not model my research in a conventional manner.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:4&5) identify the above approach as " ...qualitative research which allows for ambiguity as regards interpretive possibilities, and lets the researcher's construction of what is explored become more visible..."

1.7 OWN RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research paradigm

Carr and Kemmiss (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1996:13) confirm the role of the self becoming a questioning practitioner in the research arena by identifying this role as one of an inquirer in understanding and reconstruction of constructions being open to new interpretations. They see advocacy and activism as key concepts in this constructivist approach where the inquirer becomes a participant and facilitator in his/her own approach.

Potter and Wetherell (in Usher et al., 1997:217-218) draw on a discourse-analytic methodology where the self dialogue in a constructivist manner and engage in constructing plausible accounts within the research arena about what is going on and what should be done. The aim would be to generate and explore by means of reflective practice by the self as a researcher. I realise that this calls for critical interrogation of the authorship and authority of knowledge claims. Is this not what adult learning should be about?

Walker (in Mouton, Muller, Franks & Sono, 1998:239) states that "... all research practices and theories need to be continually open to question rather than pushing for closure." She further identifies the role of the self as an insider researcher where "the practitioner is also the researcher and the practitioner's own professional work is the focus of the research. Research problems and research questions arise out of insider concerns rather than outsider agendas." She sees this as a reflexive process in which the researcher's own actions are always subject to critical scrutiny (in Mouton, Muller, Franks & Sono, 1998:241-242).

Burge and Haughey (in Evans & Nation, 1993:93) are of the opinion that if we are to encourage transformative learning and critical self-reflection in adult learning, we had better to do the same ourselves. This is confirmed by Gore (in Evans & Nation, 1993:93) who sees transformation in learning as being

about challenge, creativity and risk. Minnich (in Evans & Nation, 1993:93) agrees in challenging us to immerse ourselves again in our learning processes and to learn to listen to new voices. The result of this being new definitions, new approaches and concepts being more adequate to the interrelated world we live in.

1.7.2 Constructivist approach

My challenge was to engage reflectively and productively with my chosen enquiry to create an emancipatory and transformative challenge for facilitators of adult learning. Hallenbeck (in Collins, 1991:91) motivated me as I see my challenge as integral to an adult learning experience. Hallenbeck echoes that no adult education experience can attain its best possibilities on the basis of a predetermined recipe, for every situation is different and must be handled in its own terms. Reflecting on Hallenbeck and my own challenge, it became clear to me that I am following a constructivist approach in a postmodern era.

Another strong viewpoint that fits in well with my research methodology is the one of Mezirow (in Sutherland, 1997:88) who states that the application of reflective learning and reflective judgement is a version of constructivism applicable to mature adults.

Berry (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:584) helped me to understand these approaches by saying that we are between stories. The old story will no longer do, and we know that it is inadequate. The new story is not yet in place. So we look for the pieces of the story, ways of telling it, and the elements that will make it whole, but all haven't come to us yet. I am of the opinion that this led me to realise that I am functioning within a constructivist paradigm. How did this paradigm shape my interpretive imagination as a researcher?

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:200) are of the opinion that studies shaped by constructivist paradigms and perspectives go with great ambiguity. There is

less emphasis on formality, well-formulated hypothesis and predetermined research strategies and methods of analysis. The constructivist researcher follows a path of discovery. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:125) also argue that this path of discovery includes constructing knowledge, inventing concepts, models and scenes to make sense of experience.

1.7.3 Constructing models

Schwandt (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:125&126) sees constructivist thinking as the mind being active in the constructing of knowledge and at the very least forming abstractions or concepts. He (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:125&126) is of the opinion that "... human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes ...". By using constructivist thinking I constructed a model which will be fully described in chapter 3. According to Mouton (1996:195 & 198) models "provide a systematic representation of phenomena by identifying patterns and regularities amongst variables." He is of the opinion that models have a guiding and heuristic function, which means that it helps to discover or to reveal new areas of research. Giere (as cited by Mouton and Marais, 1990:139) argues that models can be seen as the asking of new questions and also the suggesting of ways of answering these questions. He emphasises that models play an important role in scientific research.

Mezirow (1990:336) adds to this by stating that and describing conceptual mapping as a method used to reflect critically upon our concepts, their relationship to each other, and our underlying assumptions and values about matters. He is of the opinion that it can be applied to a broad range of subject matter to assist us as learners in clarifying and exploring taken for granted frameworks, propositions and structures that influence the way we perceive, feel and act upon our experience. While using this method we reveal new pathways and correct propositions and concepts. At the same time it reveals to us missing links, omissions, inconsistencies, false assumptions and

previously unrecognised relationships. It also provides a basis for shared meaning and communicative validation.

Novak and Gowin (in Mezirow, 1990:337) see a concept map as a schematic device for representing sets of concept meanings embedded in a framework of propositions. According to Mezirow (1990:337-338) concept maps are holistic, spatial, constructed representations of the relationships among essential concepts. This is applicable to and inclusive of any subject matter or discipline and assists us in checking our assumptions and relationships among our ideas, problems with our thinking and futurising. It helps us towards more holistic thinking, critical evaluation, synthesizing and perceiving in new ways. My experience of this method led me to critical reflection, reconstruction and deconstruction, validation of ideas and it contributed towards my constructivist process and emancipating and transformative research approach.

1.7.4 Biographical approach

I also follow a biographical approach. Dominicé (in Mezirow, 1990:194) considers the biographical approach as an attempt to take a learning situation as relevant context for research. He sees the learning of the learner as an object for research and research as an opportunity for transformative learning for the adult learner. This approach concerns continuous reflection about learning and is based on the interpretation by adults of their own reconstructed learning processes.

My purpose for using this approach was to reconstruct my own learning while busy with the M. Phil (Education). The aim was to get a better understanding of adult learning and its impact on my own learning. I thus had to get actively involved in a participatory manner which could assist me to become aware of and more responsible for my own learning process. According to Dominicé (in Mezirow and Associates, 1990:196) this approach can be utilized as a tool for

critical reflection. The dynamics of this reflection becomes for the researcher the real object of research.

By following this approach the issue of subjectivity confronted me on a continuous basis. Dominicé (in Mezirow and Associates, 1990:199-200) shares this issue with me and is of the opinion that subjectivity does not necessarily invalidate, but it shows the complexity of adult learning. Adult learners never learn the same thing in the same way. Although the biographical approach follows the subjectivity of the researcher, it should be heard and read within the subjective categories of the hermeneutics of the researcher. Critical questions that stimulated me to utilise this approach are:

How can I understand adult learning without entering into dialogue with the dynamics of my own learning process?

How can I come to any conclusions about adult learning without analysing and testing my own assertions through new observations?

These questions made me to conclude that when I started the M. Phil (Education) as an attempt to understand better the field of adult learning, I already entered into a kind of a learning biography. This thesis is seen as an opportunity to share this biography with others. Dominicé (in Mezirow, 1990:211) sees the biography neither as a mode or a technique, but rather a method of research centered on adult learning that facilitates transformative learning by means of critical reflection.

1.7.5 Dialogical approach

In chapter 2 a dialogical approach is used to explore the different theories on adult learning. Guba and Lincoln (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:114), arguing from a constructivist viewpoint, see the inquirer (the researcher) as an orchestrator and facilitator of the inquiry process. Gergen and Gergen (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 128) sketch "an interactive approach to inquiry called

the 'reflexive elaboration of the event,' in which the researcher and participants open a sociopsychological phenomenon to inspection and through dialogue generate a process of continuous reflexivity, thereby 'enabling new forms of linguistic reality to emerge'. The overall aim of this approach is 'to expand and enrich the vocabulary of understanding'."

This path of expanding and enriching involves dialogue and reflection in a constant process of forming and reforming. Burge and Haughey (in Evans et al., 1993:106-107) describe this process as transformative learning in reflective practice. Dialogue is seen as part of the reflective process moving beyond the asking and answering of questions. They see reflection as an aspect of thought, obviously metacognitive thought, where we fold our thinking back on itself and one layer of thinking is enmeshed in the other in an integrative manner. This leads to internal dialogue with the self and vocal conversations with others. It is also dialectical focusing on internal conversations through reflection and requiring constant re-examination and critical thinking.

1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF APPROACH

It became clear to me that I am being informed and guided in my approach by the constructivist paradigm. I had to consider certain limitations of this paradigm and came to the same conclusion as Denzin and Lincoln (1994:108) that any human construction is an invention of the human mind and hence subject to human error. No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right. Advocates of any particular construction must rely on persuasiveness and utility rather than proof in arguing their position. This made me realise that although this is a road less traveled by researchers, it will stimulate me not only to pay lip service to the ideal of adult learning as reflective and emancipating practice, but to actively seek new meaning by means of reflection.

Walker (in Mouton et al., 1998:243) clearly challenges “the idea of objective, value-free research and the neutral role of the researcher. Rather, the insider-researcher’s assumptions and values shape the enquiry and become part of the argument – there can be no disinterested research. In this, subjectivity needs to be seen as a strength rather than a weakness in the research design and process.” She quotes Schratz and Walker (in Mouton et al., 1998:243) saying: “Social science has only recently come to realise that subjectivity, rather than threatening claims to scientific status, actually marks claims to disciplinary uniqueness.”

1.9 RESEARCH LAYOUT

Chapter 2 deals with exploring different adult learning theories in a dialogical and reflective manner.

In chapter 3 the holistic and integrated model for adult and lifelong learning constructed by me will be described.

The conclusion and recommendations are dealt with in chapter 4 by means of a postscript and final reflection.

1.10 CONCLUSION

As I explored and constructed the models for integrated and holistic adult and lifelong learning, I reflected on being guided and informed by a dialogic/ dialectical methodology within a constructivist paradigm. This led me to continuously explore, reflect critically in a dialectic manner and construct/ deconstruct/reconstruct for future revision when different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. I trust that these approaches will stimulate adult learners towards critical reflexivity to transform, emancipate and transcend the limits of their own practice. This should be an

invitation to continually reflect on the possibilities and limitations of postmodern research approaches.

What are the implications of this for facilitators of adult learning? It stimulated me to reflect critically and dialogically on integrated and holistic theories for adult learning and new paradigms for adult and lifelong learning on my challenging journey. The aim of these methods will be to facilitate emancipatory and transformative challenges for facilitators of adult and lifelong learning. The methods could thus be used as empowering and heuristic devices for facilitators to respond in a critical, dialogical and reflective manner to their changing environments and practices.

CHAPTER 2

The way we see (our paradigm) leads to what we do (our attitudes and behaviours), and what we do leads to the results we get in our lives. So if we want to create significant change in results, we can't just change attitudes and behaviours, methods or techniques; we have to change the basic paradigms out of which they grow.

Stephen R Covey

EXPLORING REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE AS METHODS TOWARDS DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED THEORY FOR ADULT LEARNING

2.1 GENERAL ORIENTATION

In this chapter an attempt is made to follow a critical dialogical approach in reflecting on adult learning. Considering my target audience being adult learners and facilitators of adult learning I had to be creative and innovative in integrating theory, practice and experience. Therefore, to create an exciting learning venture for myself and those around me, I decided on an **open dialogue** between several adult learning theorists, myself as inquirer and some adult learners. As relevant issues are dialogued I invited inputs from the role-players to make this as dynamic as possible with the aim of creating and developing an adult learning theory for the complex context of adult

learning that is sustainable and workable. I also invite facilitators of adult learning, adult learners and other relevant role-players to take ownership of this approach, reflect on it and make use of it in their practice.

2.2 TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY OF REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

By utilising the methods of reflection and dialogue I am exploring and building toward an integrated theory of adult learning. I am motivated by the great need for an integrated and holistic theory of adult learning. I realise that many attempts have been made and many stumbling blocks like complexity and diversity are perceived, but there still seems to be a neglect of philosophy and theory to be framed. An integrated and holistic theory can have major impact, although it needs to be realised that even the best attempt will need ongoing reflection, re-examination and refinement. This should not prevent us from playing a role in improving the role of adult learning. By exploring these methods it can be concluded that an integrated theory is needed for improving practice in adult learning. By going through a process of critically assessing, by means of reflective dialogue, some of the content, process and premises of the efforts of adult learning theorists an attempt is made to interpret and give meaning to this learning experience.

The aim of the following dialogue is an attempt to synthesize by means of praxis in order to invite an inquiry into relevant theories. The cycle of praxis as suggested by Vella (1995:181) is:

- Do
- Look at what you did
- Reflect using theory
- Change
- Do

By utilising this cycle I was enabled by means of reflective dialogue and critical reflective learning to engage with some of the adult learner theorists concerning their assumptions about adult learning. Brockbank and McGill

(1998:57) argue that this creates an environment for individuals to challenge assumptions about understandings, self and the world. They are of the opinion that this dialogical approach "... becomes reflectively critical when the emergent ideas are related to existing senses of knowledge and the world and a new understanding emerges." In order to construct meaning, chapter 17 "Integrating theory and practice" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999:387-404) was used as a narrative framework. Rossiter (in Clark & Caffarella, 1999:79) states that "... narrative is not only a method for the study of lives but a construct that refers to the product of meaning-making."

In this approach I make use of perspectives of leading thinkers on adult learning and imagine that they are physically present and participating in the dialogue. Moon (1999:198) sees the purpose of such an exercise as a useful means by which the process of reflecting is facilitated. Progoff (in Moon, 1999:201) distinguishes between the two methods of dialogue as utilised by me namely dialogues with people and dialogues with events and projects. Progoff (in Moon, 1999:201) further describes the use of dialogues with people as being imaginary between the inquirer and others who could be mentors, spiritual figures or wisdom figures (leading thinkers). Dialogues with events and projects are described as imaginary dialogues in educational situations by writing of essays. It is the opinion of Moon (1999:186) that this method of dialogue encourages reflection and creates a learning environment for being reflective.

2.3 LET THE DIALOGUE START: A REFLECTIVE AND DIALOGICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Chapter 17 "Integrating theory and practice" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 387-404) was used as a narrative framework.

Let the dialogue start:

Merriam and Learning in adulthood is an intensely personal activity.

Caffarella:

Relevant to this activity is:

- the nature of adults as learners;
- the distinguishing characteristics of the adult learning process;
- understanding adult learners and how they learn best;
- who is the adult learner?; and
- why are adults involved in learning? We are in desperate need of a comprehensive overview of what we know about adult learning.

This should include:

- context in which it takes place;
- who the participants are;
- what they learn and why;
- the nature of the learning process;
- the development of theories in adult learning; and
- all other relevant issues to the practice of adult learning (i.e. ethics and social issues).

Inquirer:

Does this tell us something about the uniqueness of adult learning?

Merriam and
Caffarella:

Unique indeed. We need to realise though that there is no single theory of adult learning nor is there likely to be one!

Inquirer:

Does this call for a more holistic and integrated picture? Should this prevent us from attempting to provide an integrated theory and philosophical underpinning for improving our practice?

- Kidd: Nearly twenty years ago I observed that no such magical or scientific theory is likely to arise or be formulated.
- Brookfield: I tend to compare the search for such a theory to the quest for the *Holy Grail*.
- Cross: There will be not one but many theories useful in improving our understanding of adults as learners.
- Inquirer: Are we saying that we have several models, formulations, suggestions and constructs and not fully developed theory? If so, there seems to be a major learning challenge to get involved in developing theory for this important area to impact on the improvement of our practice.
- Merriam and Caffarella: We find that adult learning theory can be divided into three categories:
- theories based on adult characteristics;
 - theories based on an adults life situation; and
 - theories based on changes in consciousness.
- Inquirer: Malcolm, would you lead us in the **first theory** as you are often seen as the father of this theory?
- Knowles: I base this theory on **five assumptions** therefore giving adult learning a badge of identity. The assumptions have numerous implications for the design, implementation and evaluation of learning with adults. The assumptions are based on the characteristics of adult learners:

- maturity leads to the self concept of the adult moving from dependence to self-direction;
- the reservoir of experience of an adult is a rich resource for learning;
- the readiness of an adult to learn closely related to their social roles;
- adults are more problem-centered than subject-centered in their learning and want to immediately apply; and
- adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones.

I need to clarify that my aim was never to say andragogy vs. pedagogy but rather stating that andragogy-pedagogy represents a continuum and that the use of both techniques is appropriate at different times in different situations.

Brookfield:

I always wondered whether andragogy is a *proven theory* searching for a set of well grounded principles of good practice to be derived from it. Many of the assumptions by Knowles are problematic and could be seen as narrow and reductionist. I do agree with the experience assumption and find it well grounded.

Cross:

Maybe I can shed some light with my theory based on the characteristics of adult learners. I attempt to offer a framework for thinking about what and how adults learn rather than suggesting implications for practice. I realise my model still has to be empirically tested, but my points on personal characteristics and situational characteristics need to be considered in any adult learning theory.

Personal characteristics include physical, psychological and sociocultural dimensions in a continuous form reflecting growth and development from childhood into adult life.

Situational characteristics focus on variables unique to adult participants for example:

- part-time vs. full-time learning; and
- voluntary vs. compulsory learning

Adult learner :

I identify a bit of both theories based on characteristics within myself. Could we also explore the other theories as I am beginning to form a holistic and integrated picture of myself as an adult learner?

Inquirer:

As Peter Jarvis is present today we would appreciate him leading us into the theories based on an adult's life situation.

Jarvis:

I am of the opinion that all learning begins with experience and all experience occurs within a social situation. Social situations create potential learning experiences, but all of them do not necessarily result in learning. I distinguish between **non-reflective, non-learning and reflective learning**; the latter being a higher form of learning. The adult can respond in the following **non-learning** way:

- mechanical (what has worked before will work again);
- preoccupation (to preoccupy to consider a response);
- rejection (reject the opportunity to learn) or in the following higher form of learning calling for more

involvement;

- contemplation (thinking about what is learned)
- reflective practice (problem-solving); and
- experimental learning (experimenting upon the environment).

The adult can also respond in a **non-reflective** way:

- preconscious (unconsciously internalising something);
- practice a new skill until it is learned (skills learning); and
- memorisation (acquire information and learn it for reproduction).

My focus thus is on learning per se and not only on characteristics as the theories by Cross and Knowles. Learning is focused within a social context and I see it as an interactive phenomenon and not an isolated internal process. I see it as a continuing process of making sense and **reflecting** on everyday experience.

Adult learner: Is your model/theory unique to adults?

Jarvis: I constructed this theory from research with adult learners and it has been used with adults in various settings, but I suspect that it may be as valid for children as with adults

Inquirer: Do we pick up some Freirian ideas in Jarvis?

Freire: My approach clearly focuses on the facilitation of adults in learning. I believe people are learners and expect of them, once they have learned, not to remain passive,

but become active participants in the wider world and their own social context. I regard it as a process where learners discover themselves and achieve something more of the fullness of their humanity by acting upon the world and transforming it. I focus on dialogue and a two-way theory of human interaction. The role of the teacher I regard as that of a facilitator stimulating the learning process. Learners should be free to reflect upon their experiences and to harmonise their reflections and actions. Learners should create their own roles and not merely react upon roles given to them by others. I thus argue for a theory of adult education within a larger framework of social radical change.

Merriam and
Caffarella:

This brings us to theories based on changes in consciousness. Jack Mezirow, will you lead us in this discussion?

Mezirow:

Indeed. What a pleasure to share the platform with all of you. As with Freire I stress the importance of inner meaning and mental constructs in defining a theory on the nature of adult learning. I focus on critical reflectivity marked by a thorough analysis of problems, self-awareness and self-reflection. Instead of focusing on adult characteristics and adult social roles I tend to stress the relevance of reflection upon the content of one's experiences. By critically reflecting upon our lives and becoming aware of why we attach meanings to reality, roles and relationships is significant to adult learning. New learning by adults transforms existing knowledge into new perspectives and emancipates the learners. It creates an awareness of the cultural assumptions governing the rules, roles conventions and

social expectations dictating the ways we see, think, feel and act. This creates a responsibility with adult learning giving it a distinctive mission and meaning.

Griffin:

I do not see Mezirow as presenting us with a theory. He is presenting us more with a set of good prescriptions for the practice of adult learning and aims at facilitators of adult learning committed to self-directed learning. I see it as a charter for andragogy stressing the facilitators' role as one of enhancing the learners' ability for self-direction.

Adult learner:

I have now been introduced to several theory-building efforts in adult learning. Can I summarise? Knowles and Cross stressed the characteristics of adult learners. Jarvis by means of a model to the learning process focused on the adults life situation. Mezirow and Freire stressed the relevance of changes in consciousness.

Critical questions that I have to ask at this stage:

- Are these theories comprehensive?
- Are these theories practical?
- Are these theories universally applicable?
- Have these theories been applied in practice?

Inquirer:

Asking these critical questions are of vital importance in attempts to demystify adult learning, stimulate inquiry, stimulate reflection and research and assisting us in integrative and holistic approaches towards this very important learning venture. The complexity of adult learning is acknowledged in all attempts to adequately explain adult learning theory. We also need to realise that many other theories exist and will be developed to be reviewed and reflected upon in attempts to improve

practice.

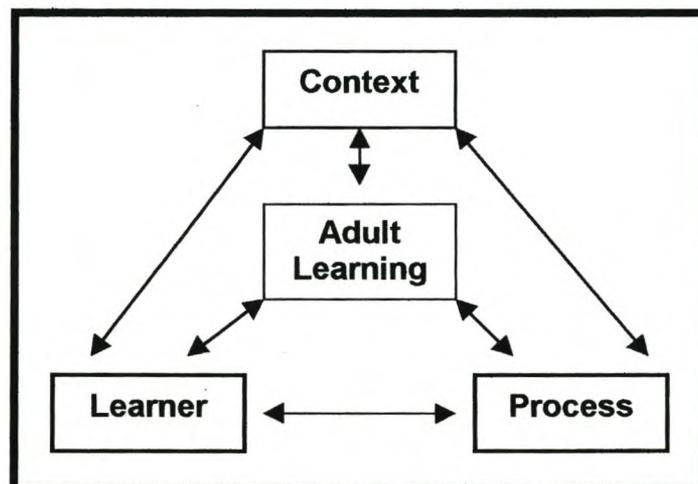
Merriam and
Caffarella:

We identify three relevant areas on learning in adulthood. They are:

- context
- learner
- process

and there seems to be a natural interaction between these. We suggest that future research in these areas be designed collaboratively with adult learners and we suggest that there is still much to be learned about learning in adulthood.

We can illustrate it as follows:



Inquirer:

Vital new issues are confronting us for example sexism, racism, classism and several ethical dilemmas arise in the field of adult learning. These need to be addressed and reflected upon. And also to be considered are the trends of learning organisations, learning communities, learning societies and lifelong learning. Where does the adult learner fit into these trends? What is the role of the facilitator of learning in these trends? How do people learn in these trends? Are the theories we discussed relevant to these trends? Do these trends

create a platform for new emerging theory building processes in the field of adult learning? How can we become lifelong learners? How do we create a culture for lifelong learning? These are questions we seriously need to reflect upon in the near future.

Adult learner: Where do I fit into the picture? Am I as an adult learner seen as a lifelong learner? Are there any theoretical frameworks accommodating me?

Inquirer: This creates the platform for dialogue on a very important issue that will assist me in developing a theoretical framework for facilitating adult and lifelong learning. It is necessary to move towards integrating theory and practice and develop a sustainable and workable theory for improving practice in adult learning. From this dialogue it seems clear that the recurrent themes are process, learner and context and that these themes should form the intellectual foundation for further research as they will provide key insights into the adult learning practice and act as a launch pad for further dialogue and reflection. This can be the beginning towards developing an integrated and holistic theory for improving adult learning practice.

2.4 FURTHER REFLECTION ON LEARNING AND DIALOGUE: A PARADIGM SHIFT

Vogt (in Chawla & Renesch, 1995:300) was instrumental in shaping some of my viewpoints and also confirming the **asking of critical questions rather than having the right answers**. I support his strong views towards valuing a critical pre-condition for learning namely ignorance. He states that people

(learners) are often prized for having an answer and not for having a question and admitting ignorance. This leads to rewards for knowing and not for searching. Did this perhaps lead to the paradigm paralysis concerning the field of facilitators and researchers of adult learning? He calls for a paradigm shift from where learning is viewed as transferring knowledge from the expert to the learner to where learning should be a continuous mindset and a process of idea generation, creating/constructing and sharing new perspectives.

Ryan (in Chawla & Renesch, 1995:279,280) in a sense supports Vogt and calls for an alternative to the expert learning model. The expert model refers to people (learners) knowing the right answers to questions. Learners in the expert model are generally assumed to be ignorant, passive, empty vessels who can be effectively filled up by the expert expounding knowledge. This implies little feedback and one-way flow of information. She calls for an alternative model of learning where space is created and freedom of voice is given to both *what I know* and *what I do not know*. According to her this creates an atmosphere of learning together and venturing into the realm of curiosity together. It also values the collective process of discovering and exploring together. Is this where the heuristic, reflective and dialogical approaches fit in with constructivism?

Levey & Levey (in Chawla & Renesch, 1995:257-276) stress that our current generation is facing a learning challenge of an unprecedented magnitude. They reflect on learning and identify some higher order learning capabilities leading to a path of innovation, development, insight and discovery. These capabilities include:

- the ability to think, respond, adapt with an extraordinary quality and depth (reflection and dialogue); and
- greater ethical integrity and enhanced quality of relationships.

Another interesting viewpoint to reflect on is that of Brown (in Chawla & Renesch, 1995:153-163). She sees **dialogue as being central to learning**.

According to her dialogue seeks to build deeper understanding, new perceptions, new models, new openings, new paths to effective action and deeper truths. She sees dialogue as building certain capacities within the learner and the facilitator of learning. These include:

- listening/understanding deeply;
- asking questions/increasing the skill of inquiry;
- bringing forth thoughts;
- valuing reflection;
- common understanding; and
- developing capacity to move into and toward difficult issues.

This is a confirmation of the dialogical approach in constructivism.

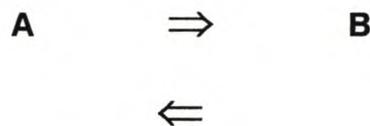
Considering and reflecting on all these viewpoints lead me to Senge (1990:13,14) where he states that grasping the meaning of *metanoia* (shift of mind) is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning. He is of the opinion, as also stated in some of the other viewpoints, that learning has lost its central meaning in contemporary usage by being synonymous with taking in information. Senge states that real learning should enhance our capacity to create and it is a generative and continuous process. It creates the capacity to reflect and see the interdependence of patterns. It also creates an ability to see and understand the wholes. Senge (1990:241) sees the tool of dialogue as relevant to learning. He views it as a learning opportunity to explore complex and difficult issues from many points of view. Individual assumptions are suspended allowing a free flow of communication. This results in a free exploration bringing to the surface the full depth of people's experience and thoughts. Senge (1990:246) explains this view by saying that dialogue is playful and requires a willingness to play with new ideas, to examine them and to test them. Is this not what adult learning should be about?

At this stage being confronted with a *metanoia* towards learning it was relevant and interesting to consider again Freire and his viewpoints on learning and dialogue. Freire (1982:ix) made a strong statement correlating

with many of the viewpoints as discussed by stressing the **importance of dialogue**. Freire (1982:36) calls for an education of *I wonder* (asking questions) instead of merely *I do*. Freire (1982:45) also stresses the necessity for engaging in active, dialogical, critical and criticism stimulated methods. He sees dialogue as a horizontal relationship between persons creating critical searches and a critical attitude:

DIALOGUE

(Process of communication and intercommunication. Open dialogue leading to learning)



This process implies two human beings as subjects of their own learning, sharing research data, experience, and questions to transform both their own learning and the very knowledge they are examining at an open and equal level (Vella, 1995:162).

ANTI DIALOGUE

(A critical process without creating a critical attitude. It does not communicate. No open dialogue with little learning taking place.)



This process implies a top down, one way approach from the facilitator to the learner. There is no engagement and according to Vella (1995:165) without engagement and involvement, there is no learning.

A lot of learning was facilitated within myself whilst reflecting on these viewpoints about learning. It leads me to Brookfield (1994:vii) as he states that the facilitation of learning - assisting adults to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational and political environments in which they live - is an important, exhilarating and profound activity, **both for learners and facilitators**. Brookfield (1994:viii) sees the facilitation of adult learning as a transactional drama in which the personalities, philosophies and priorities of the chief players (learners and facilitators) interact continuously to influence the nature, direction and form of the subsequent learning. What transformative and emancipatory challenges do these opinions hold for facilitators of adult learning?

2.5 TRANSFORMATIVE AND EMANCIPATORY CHALLENGES FOR FACILITATORS OF ADULT LEARNING

At this stage my own learning is influenced by the obvious differences in vocabulary. I am for example being confronted by concepts such as learning, dialogue, facilitators of learning and reflection. I realise though that the centre point remains learning. My focus is now shifted towards the implications and impact that the turbulence in this area has on the facilitators of adult learning.

According to Gravett (1997:5) a diversity of terms are used when referred to those who are officially responsible for assisting adults to learn. She mentions the terms teacher, instructor, facilitator, trainer, educator, tutor, educational practitioner and learning consultant. I prefer (due to the *metanoia* in learning) to make use of the term facilitator of adult learning. My viewpoint also relies on Brookfield (1994:23) who refers to facilitation as a **transactional dialogue between participants** (note the relevance to Senge and Freire) who bring to the encounter experiences, attitudinal sets and alternative ways of looking at personal, professional, political and recreational worlds, along with a multitude of differing purposes, orientations and expectations. The particular function of the facilitator is to challenge learners with alternative ways of interpreting their experience and to present to them and with them ideas and behaviours that

cause them to examine critically their values, ways of acting and the assumptions by which they live.

This has a major impact on the learning field for those involved with the facilitation of adult learning (for that matter any learning!).

Boud (in Boud & Griffin, 1987:223), who raised a very important point by stating that facilitators are adult learners too, also influenced my thinking and learning framework. He sees a facilitator as anyone who helps others to learn - in a formal setting or an informal setting. It goes beyond the conventional teaching role into the wide and varied contexts in which adult learning takes place.

It is clear that the paradigm shift in learning impacts on the roles and therefore the *education, training and development* of the facilitators of adult learning. According to Boud (in Boud & Griffin, 1987:235) Brookfield has some interesting views on this issue stating that facilitators need to be any or all of the following, depending on the situation in which they operate and the learners with whom they are working:

- presenter of expertise (can one ever be an expert?);
- democrat and learner-centred guide;
- provider of access to personal and material resources;
- supporter and encourager;
- critical friend and stimulator of critical reflection; and
- challenger of assumptions.

Boud (in Boud & Griffin, 1987:236) adds an important issue by stating that facilitators of adult learning **should be able**, as circumstances indicate, to deploy themselves with appropriate emphasis on any aspect of their potential roles and that they have the ability in doing so. Is he implying that facilitators of adult learning should become learners themselves before attempting to facilitate learning with adults?

Asking this critical question on my own learning venture stimulates me to reflect on Senge. Senge (1990:340) reflects on **learning leadership**. The questions that I ask are: **Should facilitators of adult learning be learning leaders in their field? What impact would this have?** According to Senge (1990:340-360) the learning leader is a designer, steward and teacher. They are responsible in assisting people (learners) to continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision and improve shared mental models - they are thus responsible for learning. It is about fostering learning, for everyone and not about always having the answer as in some traditional viewpoints.

When exploring the broader areas of adult learning and the roles and competencies of facilitators of adult learning I was confronted with what kinds of learning should a facilitator of adult learning facilitate. I found an inclusive and broad framework for consideration by Guns (in Chawla & Renesch, 1995:340). It considers the following areas:

- **technical/task learning** - related to functional expertise;
- **systematic learning** - understanding basic systems and processes;
- **cultural learning** - learning about myths, values, beliefs and attitudes;
- **group/team learning** - learning how to effectively function in a group or team and how to foster its learning, growth and maturity;
- **leadership/management learning** - learning how to better lead and manage people, work groups and teams;
- **business learning** - learning the basics of business;
- **strategic learning** - understanding strategies, the development, implementation and improvement thereof;
- **reflective learning** - how to think about and question assumptions, models, paradigms; and
- **transformational learning** - how to bring about significant and needed change in individuals, teams and organisations.

These are interesting learning areas and create a challenging paradigm to facilitators of adult learning. These seem to be world trends. I find it

necessary to pose the critical question and ask: **are facilitators of adult learning enabled and empowered to deal with the transformative and emancipatory challenges created by their changing environment?**

2.6 CONCLUSION

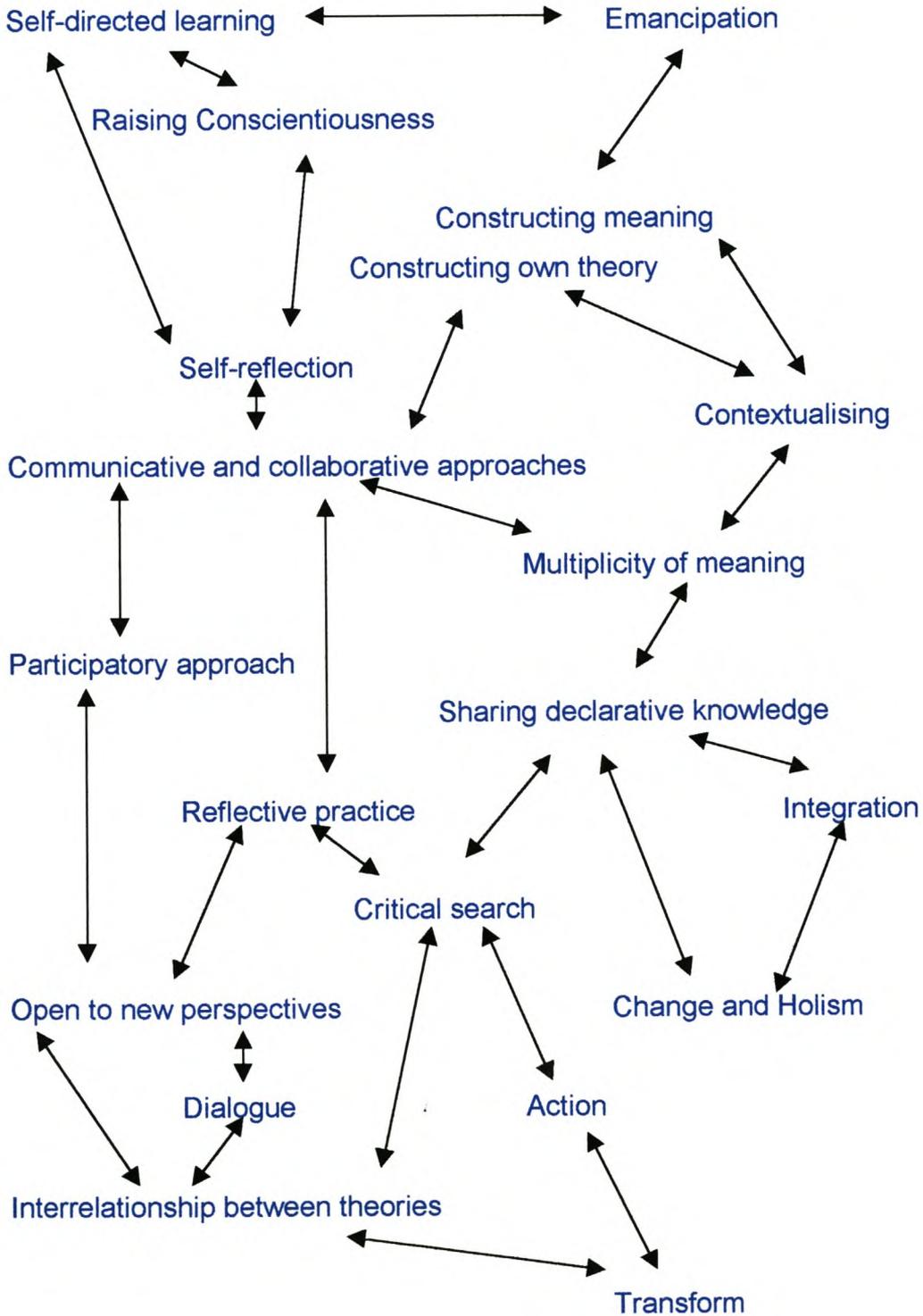
By exploring the methods of critical reflection and dialogue to construct an integrated and holistic theory for adult learning, I attempted to:

- focus on the emergence of an interest in and discourse on the possibility of an integrated and holistic theory;
- open up different terrains for exploration, critical examination and dialogue. These terrains are paradigm shifts in learning and transformative and emancipatory challenges for facilitators of adult learning; and
- share my learning and research journey in a reflective manner and therefore contributing to and challenging the changing environment of our practice.

This changing environment can conceptually be depicted as follows after critically analysing the dialogue on adult learning as set out in earlier in this chapter :

FIGURE 2.1
ADULT LEARNING

Adult learning
Adult learning



The aim of the depiction is to confirm what Brookfield (1995:221) sees as the necessity for developing a kind of situational reasoning used to interpret the experiences and actions of adult learners. Brookfield (1995:221) sees this reasoning by adults as not following "the rules of formal logic" and adjusting "to the nuances of situations in which they find themselves by evolving theories of action that change from time to time and place to place."

Transformative and emancipatory challenges for facilitators of adult learning thus grow from this changing and dynamic environment. Facilitators have to become conversant with the multiplicity of perspectives, contrast them, reflect critically by searching for meaning in a participative and collaborative manner, integrate them and construct own perspectives and theories. This necessitates critical thinking skills, flexibility and reflective competencies. Will this assist us in making meaning of our experiences in the process of developing new or revised interpretations of the complexity of adult learning? Brookfield (1995:221) also seems to be probing this issue by stating "... attempts to research teachers as adult learners and to analyse teachers' development of critical reflection as an adult learning process are rare indeed."

CHAPTER 3

A new civilisation is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it ... Millions are already attuning their lives to the rhythms of tomorrow. Other, terrified of future, are engaged in a desperate, futile flight into the past and are trying to restore the dying world that gave them birth.

Alvin Toffler

ADULT LEARNING: RESTORING THE DYING WORLD OR ATTUNING TO THE RHYTHMS OF TOMORROW? AN INTEGRATED AND HOLISTIC APPROACH

3.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

When confronted with the fields of adult education, adult training and adult development a need arose with me to clarify the creative tension between these concepts. This led to developing an integrated and holistic model of adult learning aiming to facilitate a *metanoia* with those involved in challenging new frontiers towards learning. The shift from fragmentation to integration takes place within the framework of the learning organisation, the learning community, the learning society and lifelong learning. Integrating these concepts into a holistic model could help to raise the status of the field of adult learning.

After exposure to the learning programme MPhil (Education) at the University of Stellenbosch certain conflicting areas developed within my own learning and thinking processes concerning adult education, adult training, adult development and adult learning. The aim of this chapter will be to clarify, interrogate and explore these tensions by means of thorough literature research, critical reflection, heuristic and dialogical methods in a constructivist paradigm. This enabled and empowered me to facilitate the creative tension within myself concerning this relevant issue. It also enabled me in demystifying certain concepts and creating active dialogue for further learning. After a wide range of literature research and keeping track with current developments and trends in South Africa within this area I experienced a *metanoia* (shift of mind) facilitating me to start thinking about and constructing a model. The model shifts the fragmented framework on adult education, adult training and adult development to an integrated framework of adult learning within the paradigms of a learning organisation, learning community, learning society and lifelong learning. The model attempts not to provide more boundaries to an already boundary full and complex environment, but rather to stretch and shift these boundaries and focus on the changing boundaries presenting us with ongoing challenges.

3.2. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

To enable me to take the dialogue and the learning to deeper dimensions it is necessary to clarify the following concepts:

- Andragogy
- Adult education
- Adult training
- Adult development
- Adult learning
- Adult learner
- Learning organisation
- Learning community

- Learning society
- Lifelong learning

3.2.1. Andragogy

When attempting to clarify this concept I can only but agree with Gravett (1997:3-5) that it is often difficult to define, seen as it is sometimes formulated as a theory, a set of hypotheses or guidelines for adult education practice. It is also stated that the North American meaning (associated with Malcolm Knowles) differs from the European meaning and the view based on the original Greek meaning.

For the purpose of this study I found it necessary to reflect on these and other views in order to be in line with the suggested learning paradigm and my suggested model.

3.2.1(a) The meaning based on the original Greek

Gravett (1997:5) gives a valid and sensible breakdown of the original Greek meaning of the parts of the term andragogy. Conceptually in a tabulated format it can be viewed as follows:

TABLE 3.1
GREEK MEANING OF ANDRAGOGY

AGOGY	ANDR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ago ➤ I lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aner ➤ Man

The concept thus refers to the leading and/or guiding of another person or as stated by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:13&14) being "... the art and science of helping adults learn."

When reflecting on Brookfield (1994:92) a clear link could be established where he sees andragogy as a process where an educational programme and setting is created for the adult learner to develop their latent self-directed learning skills.

My conclusion after being confronted and challenged with clarifying andragogy is that it will never be a simplistic issue as people like Knowles, Brookfield and Jarvis surely have found. For the aim of this study I was enabled to view this in a holistic and integrated manner, obviously influencing my thinking and learning paradigm, focusing rather on the central similarities and using the differences to stimulate further reflection, deeper learning and dialogue.

3.2.1(b) Knowles

According to Gravett (1997:3-4) the thinking of Knowles changed and developed gradually (maybe he can be classified as a lifelong learner!). Despite this he is viewed as being influential and as evoking much research and dialogue.

Knowles (1980:43) describes andragogy as simply another model of assumptions, about adult learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions, thereby providing two alternative models for testing out the assumptions as to their *fit* within particular situations. Furthermore, the models are probably most useful when not seen as *dichotomous* but rather as two ends of a spectrum, with a realistic assumption (about learners) in a given situation falling in between the two ends.

The four main assumptions according to Knowles (1980:43-44) are:

- a movement towards self-direction in self-concept as a person matures;
- accumulating experience becomes a resource for learning with effects on the effectivity of adult learning;
- learning programmes should be organised around life application development tasks and social roles. This is influenced by the readiness to learn; and
- adults want to immediately apply with more of a focus on problem-centredness and performance-centredness.

To clarify and demystify Knowles I view it as important to stress that andragogy concerns itself with two main points:

- helping adults to learn; and
- the development of adult learners by facilitating learning and developing their latent self-directed learning potential.

3.2.1(c) Brookfield

Brookfield (1994:91) associates himself with Knowles by stating that the concept of andragogy should be treated exactly for what Knowles claims it to be namely, a set of assumptions. He further states that the concept is the single most popular idea in the education and training of adults as it supplies educators of adults with a sense of distinct professional identity.

3.2.1(d) Darkenwald and Merriam

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:14) identify that there is a resistance to the use of the term 'andragogy' and it prevails from the view that there is not a fundamental difference in education for adults and children. They are further of the opinion that non the less this critical view, andragogy can still be seen and employed "... as a set of assumptions and methods pertaining to the process of helping adults learn."

3.2.1(e) Merriam and Caffarella

I support the viewpoint of Merriam and Caffarella (1999:277-278) that despite all the debate about andragogy practitioners who work with adult learners still find Knowles' s andragogy with its characteristics of adult learners to be a guideline for better understanding adults as learners. They further identify andragogy

"... as an enduring model for understanding certain aspects of adult learning."

3.2.1(f) European conceptualisation of andragogy

According to Gravett (1997:4-5) the issue of andragogy is quite confusing in European countries. The term is not used in a similar way. Brookfield (1994:90) supports this statement when stating that the concept of andragogy can be interpreted in several ways.

Long (in Gravett 1997:4-5) states and argues that three related terms confront each other in European literature namely:

- Andragogy
- Andragogics
- Andragology

In a table format deduced from Gravett (1997:4-5) it can be viewed as follows:

TABLE 3.2
EUROPEAN CONCEPTUALISATION OF ANDRAGOGY

ANDRAGOGY	ANDRAGOGICS	ANDRAGOGY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ intentional and professional guided activity ➤ aiming to change in adult persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ governs the process of andragogy ➤ methodical and ideological systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ scientific study of both andragogy and andragogics

Jarvis (1990:22) is of the opinion that in Holland andragogy means the overall study of social work, community organisation and adult education.

Although confusing I am of the opinion that integrating this with Knowles I would like to fully support Brookfield (1994:92) that andragogy concerns the self-concept and self-directedness in preparing and facilitating the adult for the social roles such as worker, parent, spouse and citizen.

3.2.2 Adult education, training and development

In attempting to clarify and demystify without oversimplifying the above concepts I reflected on definitions of these areas as found in Rothwell and Sredl (1992:4-7) who described the concepts from a human resources development viewpoint. They deal with the concepts as three fragmented areas each with its own specific focus. The focuses are:

- Adult education: learning focuses on a future job with the primary emphasis on career preparation.
- Adult training: learning related to present jobs and seen as a short term learning intervention.
- Adult development: ongoing learning experiences and seen as long term learning interventions.

(Rothwell and Sredl, 1992:4-7)

Tight (1996:11-12) confirms the different focuses and states that, although simplistic, these different focuses demonstrate and represent widely held views or perceptions.

Although some clear differences were identified in clarifying these concepts, it was very stimulating to, whilst reflecting critically, focus on the central concept of learning. This played a major role when constructing a model and a new paradigm and facilitated and stimulated me again in thinking in a holistic and integrated manner, already drawing the broad parameters for a new model.

3.2.3 Adult learning

Boud (in Boud & Griffin, 1994:222-226) was influential in stimulating my thoughts when clarifying the concept of adult learning. According to him the concept of adult learning is influenced by four major traditions as tabulated conceptually by me:

**TABLE 3.3
CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPT: ADULT LEARNING**

	Technical approach to training/learning	Self-directed learning/andragogy	Learner-centred humanistic	Critical/Social action
AIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ straightforward focus on skills ➤ comprising a technical outlook ➤ all learning directed towards a particular topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ unique goals of individuals ➤ structure to assist learners in achieving own ends ➤ create a climate for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ personal needs of learners ➤ value each learner ➤ respect the thinking of each learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ shift in ideology ➤ focus on dialectics/collective action ➤ embedded in historical, social and material context
METHOD/STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ programmed learning ➤ traditional authoritative learning ➤ clear learning goals ➤ analysed tasks ➤ learners treated as intelligent machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ learning contracts ➤ freedom as learners ➤ contractual exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ assisted by others ➤ totally non-directive ➤ assist individuals in finding their own way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ leading people to change ➤ critical thinking ➤ integrating theory/practice ➤ pursuing freedom through learning
INFLUENTIAL FIGURES	Mager, Davies and Gagne	Knowles	Rogers	Freire

When reflecting on the views of Boud I had to think holistically and in an integrative manner. This was very influential in facilitating my proposed model and also led me to appreciate the continuing reflection and critical debate on adult learning as the four approaches tabulated indicate clearly distinct aims, methods and structures.

3.2.4 Adult learner

Boud & Griffin (1994:7) stimulated my reflective senses with a very challenging viewpoint on the adult learner. It assisted me in a simplistic yet appreciating manner to clarify this concept. They have a viewpoint of implying not to separate adults from other learners, **but appreciating rather than understanding the adult learner**. By doing this they stress the importance and value the experience of the adult learner. This provoked me to develop a sensitive awareness for the adult learner and my own learning process as an adult learner.

Caffarella (in Merriam, 1993:32) views self-directed learning as fundamental to how we as facilitators of adult learning view learners. She further states that the ability to be self-directed in one's learning is critical when understanding and appreciating the adult learner.

Again I have to agree with Gravett (1997:9) in stating that the literature on the adult learner is extensive and often differs depending on the research background and theoretical orientation of the authors.

In clarifying this concept I would like to go along with what various writers concluded in Rothwell & Sredl (1992:337). The adult learner:

- initiates own learning in response to life events including marriage, divorce, parenthood, promotion and job transfers;
- increases motivation to learn as the number of significant events in their lives increase;
- pursues learning experiences related to above events; and

- is open to learning before, during, and after a significant life event.

I support the view of Pogson & Tennant (in Foley, 1995:29) who call for a continuous development in understanding and respecting the adult learner and to appreciate him/her within a paradigm of ongoing, constant growth and change. Is this not the role of the adult learner in a lifelong learning process?

3.2.5 Learning organisation, learning community, learning society and lifelong learning

The concepts of the learning organisation, community and society played a major role in facilitating my *metanoia* (fundamental shift/change) concerning adult education, adult training and adult development. The main reason for this is the central notion of learning in these concepts. Although I have identified some tension between the concepts learning organisation, learning community and learning society I decided to utilise the tension in the form of creative tension in my suggested model. It was a reflective learning experience and assisted me in integrating these concepts focusing on the central notion of learning. At this stage of the process it was necessary for me to become a learner again by means of self-reflection before attempting to construct and facilitate a new paradigm and model for adult learning. These concepts are sometimes used imprecisely and call for further critical exploration.

3.2.5(a) Learning organisation

A group of Ashridge academics (in Sloman, 1994:35) influenced my views on integration and holism. They stated the following on the learning organisation:

- learning is not restricted to discrete chunks of activity; and
- learning is neither fragmented nor systematic but a continuous process, a way of life.

The learning organisation views learning as a central part of its day-to-day activity. Is this already a conceptualisation of lifelong adult learning? Is this already creating a responsibility with organisations to facilitate the learning of their workers? I am asking these questions as a means of inviting dialogue. Vella (1995:179-180) sees open questions as inviting critical reflection, analysis, review, and personal perceptions.

Kandola (in Sloman, 1994:39) sees a learning organisation as one, which places high value on individual and organisational learning as a prime asset. The importance of identifying and removing barriers to learning is stressed together with strong enhances and structural support for continuous learning. Thus, a climate of continuous learning is to be created. Could the relevance of lifelong learning and a culture of learning be read into this?

Senge (1991:41-42) is quoted as defining the learning organisation as an organisation where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together. Learning organisations have to do with how we think, what we truly want and how we interact and learn with one another. Simply defined a learning organisation would be a group of people continually enhancing their capacity to create what they want to create.

3.2.5(b) Learning community

Ryan (in Chawla and Rennisch, 1995: 279-280) explains learning communities as communities of inquirers. Hence, the roles of expert and learner become arbitrary delineations. Everyone is asked to venture into the realm of curiosity together. With this invitation comes the challenge to suspend certainty and the need for answers outside ourselves. As an initial definition, learning communities value the collective process of discovery and people within them value living with their questions. These communities are sustained by a continued commitment to share this journey of exploration with one another on matters people care deeply about.

Van der Zee (in Raggat, Edwards and Small, 1996:165) identifies four strategic issues for the development of a learning community. This tells us more about such a community.

These are:

- need to broaden the definition of learning;
- need to redirect the goal of learning;
- need to go beyond learning and instruction; and
- need to foster autonomy in learning.

A learning community would thus stimulate and allow its members and groups continually to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Van der Zee (in Raggat et al., 1996:180) concludes by stating that the concept learning community is a society in which learning is the whole of life and the whole of life is learning (this seems to be closely related to adult learning and lifelong learning).

3.2.5(c) Learning society

Cross (1981:2) sees a learning society as the spread of education to all people in the society and into the multiple organisations of society.

According to Wain (in Edwards, 1997:176) the learning society is therefore one that is exceedingly self-conscious about education in its total sense; that is conscious of educational relevance and potential of its own institutions and of the general environment that is its own way of life, and is determined to maximise its resources in these respects to the utmost.

3.2.5(d) Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals

to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments (Longworth, 1997:22).

According to Cropley (in Tight, 1996:3-4) lifelong education, conceptualised as a means for facilitating lifelong learning, would:

- last the whole life of each individual;
- lead to the systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading and completion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as became necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life, with the ultimate goal of promoting the self-fulfilment of each individual;
- be dependent for its successful implementation on people's increasing ability and motivation to engage in self-directed learning activities; and
- acknowledge the contribution of all available educational influences including formal, non-formal and informal .

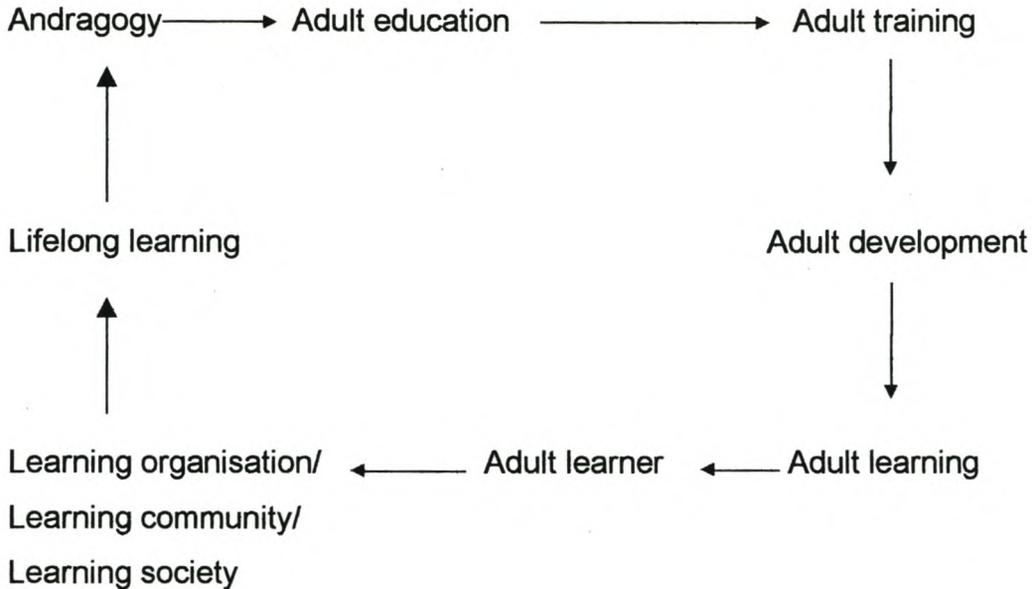
3.3 FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION: A LEARNING CHALLENGE

I was challenged to find creative approaches and explore new ways of expressing my process of learning and research. This gave me the opportunity for deeper learning to get a leading edge in this very important field of learning. This was done by constructing a holistic and integrated model for future dialogue and exploration. My challenge is to create the model and subject it to the scrutiny of critical dialogue. The focus of my learning and research thus lies in the challenge of not only finding out but of changing and challenging existing paradigms of adult education whilst making meaning of my own processes.

Conceptually at this stage I arrived at the following broad framework:

FIGURE 3.1

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION: A LEARNING CHALLENGE



This needed a revisit as it could still be viewed as fragmented and cyclic. I decided to view current trends in South Africa to assist me in my construction towards a more integrated and holistic model.

3.4 THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (NQF) IN SOUTH AFRICA

Meyer (1996:14-29) gives a valuable and relevant critical discussion on the influence of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in shifting the paradigm from education and training to learning in South Africa. Tabulated and summarised by me it can be viewed as follows:

TABLE 3.4
THE INFLUENCE OF THE NQF: PARADIGM SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO LEARNING

Traditional education	Traditional training	New learning paradigm
➤ Long term	➤ Narrow focus on task behaviour	➤ Conceptual shift from education, training and development towards learning
➤ Content driven	➤ Task analysis primary role	➤ Multi-dimensional learning
➤ Teacher centred	➤ Lack of integration	➤ Integration of information and learning management systems
➤ Assessment by examination ➤ (assesses only recall abilities)	➤ Criterion reference assessment	➤ Individuals and individual learning seen as holistic
➤ Separate theory/practice		➤ Integrated learning systems
➤ Limited flexibility		➤ Key principles are integration, relevance, credibility, coherence, flexibility, standards, legitimacy, access, articulation, progression, portability and recognition of prior learning

From table 3.4 it can be deduced that the NQF intends to ensure an integrated approach changing from traditional education and training to a new learning paradigm to enable and promote lifelong learning.

The *metanoia* facilitated by the NQF was influential in my thinking when deciding to construct a new model. The clear paradigm shift from reflecting traditionally on education, training and development to reflecting holistically on

the central notion of learning facilitated me to construct a model accommodating and realising the current trends in South Africa.

3.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF A SUGGESTED MODEL

It is of value to conceptually indicate the development of my thinking and learning whilst constructing a new model. There were some clear movements and shifts in my own learning paradigms as indicated.

Mezirow (1990:350-352) guided me in my approach towards constructing a conceptual framework for a suggested model. He describes it as a transformative learning process enabling researchers to accomplish a synthesis of concepts and an integrative reconciliation. In this process critical reflection and engagement in construction by means of self-reflection and shared dialogue are used. This is seen as a recommended practice for learners and researchers with the purpose of:

- critical reflection;
- constructing concept relationships; and
- validating assumptions through critical thought and dialogue.

The models that follow are part of my transformative learning process that enabled me to accomplish a synthesis and integrative reconciliation of the concepts adult education, adult training and adult development towards lifelong learning. Catalysts in these models are the learning organisation, learning community and the learning society within the broad theoretical framework of andragogy.

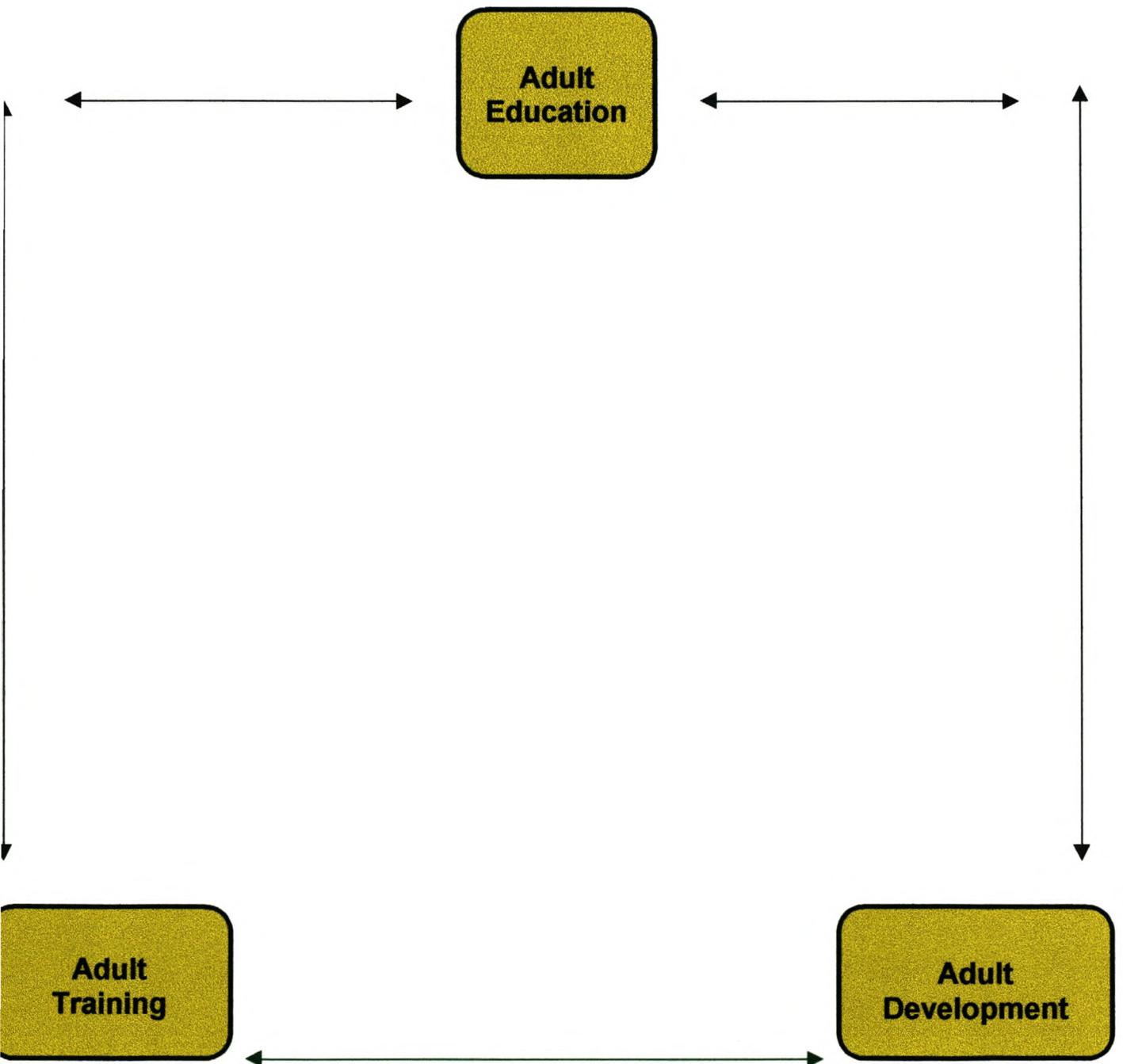
Model 3.1(a) Fragmented Framework

**Adult
Education**

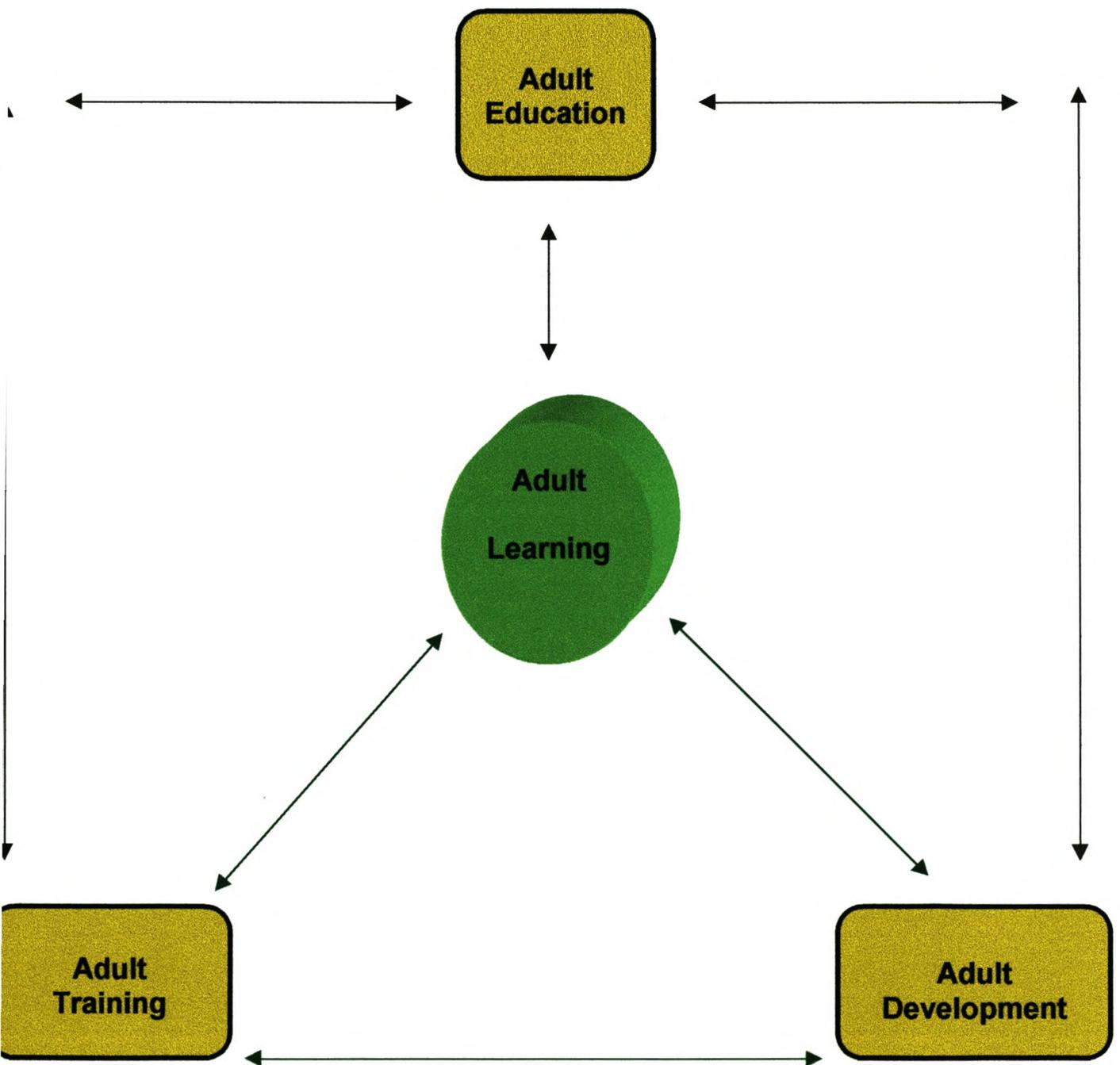
**Adult
Training**

**Adult
Development**

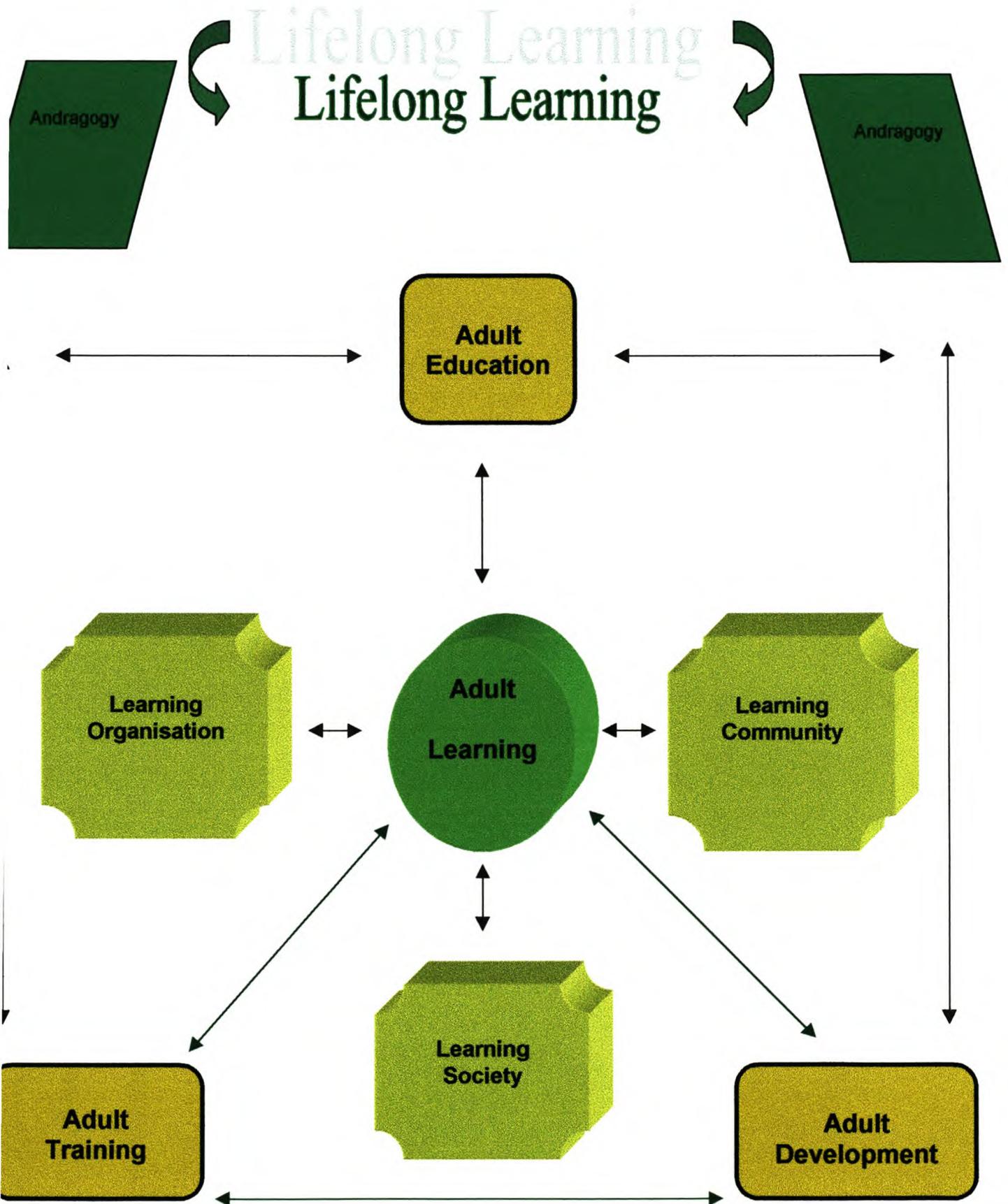
Model 3.1(b) From Fragmentation to Integration



Model 3.1(c) From Fragmentation to Integration



Model 3.1(d)



As clearly indicated the relevant areas in this model are:

- the concepts of adult education, adult development and adult training integrated into adult learning;
- the concept of andragogy with all its assumptions; and
- the concepts of the learning organisation, learning community and learning society.

All these concepts impact in a dynamic way on and are interrelated to each other. Therefore a holistic and integrated model impacting on a culture of lifelong learning is constructed. I realised that this model should not and cannot be complete as it calls for serious critical debate in this dynamic field. As indicated the one learning area continually impacts on the others making this a dynamic model calling for serious critical reflection.

In developing the model I went through a critically reflective process where I continuously assessed previous understandings and assumptions and compared it with my current learning framework. I thus went through the praxis of transforming old meaning schemes and acquiring new meaning schemes. In the process new knowledge was constructed by means of emphasising reflection. I had to foster an integration of thinking, feeling and acting whilst shaping my constructivist framework.

3.6. RELEVANCE TO THE FIELD OF STUDY

As adult learners and facilitators of adult learning are confronted by the dynamics of this relevant field of learning we should all be encouraged to be proactive and creative in our approaches. We should be encouraged to express our critical thoughts in an integrative and holistic manner, continually using our intuition, intelligence and imagination to find new ways of being competitive and gathering leading edges in one of the most transforming and emancipatory learning challenges facing our practice. I believe this model

creates a paradigm for synthesising concepts in order to transform and emancipate the status of adult learning. In the process it challenges adult educators, adult trainers and adult developers to become facilitators of adult learning in the changing context of their practices and within the framework of lifelong learning.

3.7. CONCLUSION AND CRITICAL REMARKS

By following a process of interactive dialogue (self) and integrative reflection a model was constructed with the concept of adult learning as the central catalyst.

Relevant to stress in my conclusion is not so much the model, but rather the learning that was facilitated by many factors in my constructivist research process. At all times I was confronted with relevant research, relevant opinions, current trends, set paradigms, open paradigms and my own paradigms.

I was very much stimulated and facilitated to an integrative, holistic, dialogic and heuristic (exploratory) approach in my search for a model and demystifying the creative tension between the relevant concepts. I integratively reconciled meaning during reflection and validation by critiquing myself and sharing dialogue with others. I had to reflect critically on initial concepts and engaged in reconstructing them. This led me to realise that this model calls for further debate, deeper research and more transformative learning. I attempted to create a reflective, dialogic milieu for any learner willing and feeling free to challenge this model. It is also a challenge to me to critically examine my own thinking, meaning and interpretations.

The model is not the ideal but only one step in making me realise that we all have to establish ourselves firstly as learners before attempting and approaching this relevant field of learning. It should be a lifelong learning process and the key critical question at stake is whether we are aware of this.

This model challenges those working with adults to re-assess and stretch the boundaries surrounding the field and practices of adult learning. It is an invitation to challenge, explore and create new learning opportunities towards the global dream of lifelong learning.

This model does not represent a theory, which would explain, predict and provide control over all aspects of adult learning and lifelong learning. Rather, it provides a theoretical framework, a paradigm or a metatheory, which is developed by integrating various aspects of previously unrelated or fragmented concepts of adult learning and lifelong learning into a more holistic paradigm.

CHAPTER 4

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who can not read and write, but those who can not learn, unlearn and relearn.

Alvin Toffler

A POSTSCRIPT: FINAL REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS/CHALLENGES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND LEARNING

4.1 FINAL REFLECTION

My learning journey offers challenges to facilitators of adult learning on ways forward in transforming and emancipating their practices. In my journey I often take a critical standpoint when challenging contemporary trends in exploring uncertainties and insecurities when engaging with change. The challenge is to learn from this and to draw from intellectual frameworks of postmodernism, constructivism, reflective practice and dialogical learning. To move beyond the orthodoxies of adult learning and to stretch the boundaries of the practice becomes necessary to recognise and practice going beyond the limits of traditions towards transcending, transforming and emancipating adult learning.

Drawing on and continually interrogating by means of critical reflective practice, I was challenged with the possibilities and limitations of my own thinking and the thinking of others. I had to give meaning and voice to my learning and research as I was influenced by Lyotard (in Usher, et al.,

1997:224) stating that the postmodern lesson in this is that “there is no one story to end all others, no grand narrative of all encompassing explanation, no final theory of everything.” I was also challenged by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000:196) towards the emancipation from and a more experimenting attitude in relation to established intellectual traditions. The influence of this on my study is that I am encouraging critical reflection to develop further challenges for facilitators of adult learning.

On my learning journey I often found myself in a narrative role as an active teller of the story of my discoveries and learning and not as a passive witness and reporter of events. Usher et al. (1997:223) identify this as a feature of the narrativity of research made explicit in reflective practice.

Usher et al. (1997:220) describe the researcher as a sense-making self and acknowledge the heuristic, interactionist and dialogical approaches as the writing up of one’s own practice in order to assist other would-be researchers and learners to engage actively and reflectively with their enquiries. This gives the study a claim to contextual validity as it is close to the real world of the readers and subject to critical review.

Another relevant dimension to my learning journey is the dialogue method. Usher et al. (1997:189) describe this as a matter of having your arguments subjected to critical dialogue. As a researcher and learner I am thus bringing my understandings into contact through dialogue, with the understandings of other researchers and learners in order not only to find out about adult learning, but also to challenge and change the practice.

Cowan (1998:18-19) encouraged me to deliberately follow the road of reflection on my learning journey. I identified with the following points he made on reflection:

- a commitment to reflect;
- reflection in order to find improvement, explanation or understanding (learning);
- asking questions (dialogue);

- interventions requiring reflections (learning journeys);
- dialogue (self and others); and
- reflections about own reflection.

Palmer, Burns and Bulman (1996:13) see reflection as being initiated by an awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts of insufficient knowledge being applied in practice. Reflection assists us to focus on learning upon the initial analysis of our unique practice situations. It involves exploring and generating of new knowledge and it has the potential to address the problems of practice as well as to pose new challenges. I was continually stimulated and provoked to explore, construct and challenge by means of reflection, dialogue and seeking meaning.

Mezirow (1990:13-14) argues that adulthood creates the environment for reassessing and rethinking assumptions and meaning perspectives. He further argues that meaning schemes and meaning perspectives may be transformed through reflection in response to as imposed disorienting dilemma. In my case the M. Phil (Education) learning journey served as a catalyst precipitating critical reflection and transformation.

This enabled me to learn from my own experience. I developed the ability to view adult learning from different perspectives and translate these perspectives into challenges for transforming and emancipating the practice. Jarvis (in Palmer et al., 1994:86) sees this as an important habit and a valuable way of safeguarding practice from becoming mindless and ritualised.

My learning journey can be seen as an example of utilising experience and knowledge and an awareness of the self in order to facilitate reflection. It developed into a process of critical and analytical thinking about practice and willingness to challenge and act upon the realities of practice in order to learn from it.

Brockbank and McGill (1998:1-2) identify this process as intending to promote risk taking to move beyond necessary improvement in our capacities to think, be and act as critical learners whilst exploring our learning journeys.

When I started my process I did not imagine how tough it would be to articulate and realise my experience. It was a process of being pushed to the limits and going beyond the limits to transcend into critical reflective learning and research. It was a process of rigorously facilitating reflective dialogue in a constructivist manner to impact on the field of adult learning. As I sought to influence, I was confronted with the necessity to develop a capacity to learn in terms of ambiguity and continuous transition. This is a major challenge for all facilitators of adult learning to dare to reflect differently on their learning practice. I trust that my learning journey will enable and empower facilitators of adult learning to enhance their abilities to face their challenges in a transformative and emancipatory way by reflecting on the challenges and complexities of our practice. Cervero (1988:56) encourages facilitators of adult learning on their journeys towards knowing to "... become researchers of their own practice."

Learning from my own experience as an adult learner and facilitator of adult learning and reflecting on my learning journey, I am now able to put forward the following four abilities and challenges to other learners and facilitators:

- Do you display an openness and willingness to involve yourself in new learning experiences?
- Are you enhancing your observational, reflective and dialogical skills so that these new learning experiences can be viewed from a variety of perspectives?
- Are you enhancing your analytical and critical abilities so that integrative and holistic ideas and concepts can be created from these experiences and be conceptualised into models and theories?
- Do you display an openness and willingness to actively experiment with these new ideas and concepts in actual practice?

Reflecting on these critical questions leads one to seriously consider your role as a facilitator of adult learning – one of assisting other adult learners by

means of dialogue to interpret their own knowledge and opening up different experiences so that they can view alternative ways of thinking about adult learning. As a result of this we should all become more empowered to respond to a transformative and emancipatory environment. Are we aware of this?

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND LEARNING

Research and learning in the field of adult learning will more than ever before have to be focussed on change, innovation, emancipation and transformation. By focusing on this, facilitators of adult learning will be empowered and enabled to maintain and constantly improve on high quality, impact driven research and learning.

Although informed by existing theories, facilitators of adult learning should also develop their own theories, models and paradigms to impact on their practice and actions. This is supported by Merriam and Caffarella's (1999:325-326) opinion that inner meaning and mental constructs can be seen as important to the development of the field of adult learning. They see the key to both of these concepts as change: change leading to new understandings and new meanings to be tested in dialogue with others. They also view change as being a continuous process and that new understandings and meanings need to be acted upon.

The challenge and recommendations for further research and learning growing out of my learning journey is in line with Freire's praxis as described by Merriam and Caffarella (1999:326). It is an ongoing cycle of reflecting, acting in your world of new understanding and meaning and then critically reflecting on those actions. My invitation to other interested facilitators of adult learning is to:

- challenge and learn from the more orthodox approaches to research in their search for more relevant and applicable approaches to research in adult learning;
- assess the relevance of a communicative approach (dialogue) towards constructing own theories of adult learning as well as the relevance of the dialogic approach as assessment method of adult learning;
- create dialogue on the integrated and holistic model developed and assess the impact and applicability of the model in the field of adult learning;
- assess the relevance of my learning journey and compare with the learning journeys of other adult learners at this level of study in order to:
 - develop new adult learning theories;
 - integrate similarities with the aim of developing learning programmes for empowering and enabling other facilitators of adult learning;
- apply the approaches of critical reflection and dialogue towards the improvement of high quality and impact driven research in adult learning; and
- develop new leadership models enabling facilitators of adult learning to cope with changes and the dynamics of the field of adult learning.

4.3 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This study (learning journey) offers and covers three relevant areas and challenges to the facilitators of adult learning, namely:

- Exploring more relevant and alternative research approaches to the field of adult learning.
- Exploring adult learning theories in a dialogical and reflective manner in order to identify and facilitate the emancipatory and informative challenges for the new millenium.
- Developing integrated and holistic models for adult learning and lifelong learning in a constructivist manner.

In the light of this being a pilot study, the necessity exists to follow it up with further studies with other facilitators of adult learning by writing up case studies concerning their learning journeys to act as future frameworks for continuing professional learning programmes.

By focusing on these areas facilitators of adult learning are provoked and challenged to face the radical changes and develop effective ways of meeting the demands of change in this field in a transformative and emancipatory manner. It becomes clear that the future success of adult learning and the ongoing challenge of uplifting the status of the field and addressing the insecurities will depend upon facilitators acting as leaders in a very different way from our closely held traditional stereotypes. It calls for a flexible approach in a world of ambiguity, change and challenge. Galbraith (1991:x) sees the approach as a process characterised by elements of collaboration, challenge, reflectivity, action, respect, freedom and equality. This is an invitation to facilitators of adult learning to think and act differently and to discover new meaning to their experiences, in other words, to become learners again.

The critical questions as highlighted by my learning journey are:

- How can one understand adult learning without entering into dialogue with the dynamics of your own learning process?
- How can you come to any conclusions and seek meaning concerning adult learning without analysing and critically reflecting on your own assertions through new and multiple observations?

If sharing my learning journey provoked and stimulated you to reflect on and create dialogue about these two critical questions, I trust that a paradigm will be created for us to take advantage of the opportunities that change creates for us. This will enable us to gain satisfaction from providing leadership in adult learning.

Merriam and Brockett (1997:283) state that the actual practice of adult education calls for much deeper involvement than being familiar with the basic knowledge, skills, concepts and theories of the field. As I do in this study, they challenge us towards more effective practice by developing the ability to reflect critically upon our practice and as a result consider alternative ways of engaging in our work.

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