

# ANY CURRICULUM WILL DO: STRUCTURE AS A CATALYST FOR ADULT TRANSFORMATION.

Submitted by Paul Alexander Cook, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education May 2013.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis employs phenomenological hermeneutic circle analysis, to investigate structure versus agency and adult identity change in lifelong learning. Achieving transformed agency and enhanced identity is argued to be about *other* ways of doing and *other* ways of seeing (Mezirow 2000:21). It proceeds by exploring if curricula employed in education can provide structure and/or the catalyst which allows '*other*' to be revealed, agency to be regained, and to explicate what contribution curricula might make in transforming adult identities.

Drawing upon the disciplines of sociology and psychology it provides holistic interpretations of participant accounts in the contemporary competitive world and explores the interstices in the duality of tensions between the utilitarian, and pragmatic adult, who employs education as a developmental pathway of choice. Interviews with six participants tell individual stories to provide holistic data of their erudition and experiences of cognitive and social change. Data are then employed to essentialise similarities, differences, themes, and congruent essences, and to distil factors which exemplify growth in understanding and expectations of the self. Growth in self-assurance and identity change capability is then contrasted with the fragility of adult identity; whereupon, this thesis critically positions fragility causation amongst the instrumental policies and forces of lifelong learning.

Mezirow contends that agency is achieved by elaborating existing frames, learning new frames, transforming habits, and transforming points of view. This thesis moves to discuss the connected nature of these developmental factors and 'glass ceilings', and how immanent personal potential is (re) revealed to the adult self.

Employing an archaeological hermeneutic research tool which suggests reflection is a central and developing feature in adult's educational development the thesis finally contends that education is important in the personal delivery of agency over structure, and that curricula of any structurally legitimate form make a significant contribution to allowing persons to both flourish and confront a range of '*other*' life circumstances and dilemmas.

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Paul Cook.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS**

AB	Awarding Body: An organisation which provides curricula approved by Government, for delivery in a College setting.
Access	A term used to describe a course of learning undertaken by adults, which provides an alternative form of qualification for entry to a University degree course.
A level	Advanced level qualifications, provided by schools and colleges as both compulsory education to the 16-19 age group and voluntary adult education.
APCE	Adult Post Compulsory Education: all forms of education delivered to students who have selected it and returned to it, by own choice, after a period of work or family related absence.
AS level	Advanced Supplementary Qualifications provided by schools and colleges as compulsory education to the 16-19 age group.
FE	Further Education delivered primarily in Colleges.
Foundation Degree	A qualification delivered principally in colleges which constitutes the first two years of a University delivered degree programme, and confers 'associate' degree status.
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education.
HE	Higher Education delivered in Universities.
HE in FE	Higher Education delivered in FE Colleges.
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England: The body which approves the loan funding for courses of higher education administered by Student Finance England
HEI	Higher Education Institutions: used collectively to describe all institutions that provide education at degree level and above.
National Diploma	Qualifications delivered in schools and colleges which are skills related and provide equivalence to A and AS levels of study
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education: A body which defines standards to be applied to schools and colleges and who warrant the quality of provision by regular inspection.
PCE	Post Compulsory Education: all forms of education delivered by Colleges and Universities to over 16 years of age students who have selected it, by own choice or as an alternative to compulsory routes.
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency: The body which checks and audits the provision of education in Universities in England.
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (See HEFCE above). The course approval body for Scottish higher education funding.
SSC	Sector Skills Council: A consultative body which provides advice and guidance to AB organisations on curricular content.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1: Overview**

This thesis, focussing on the dynamics of lifelong learning and adult agency, explores both the practical and affective experiences of adult students, who have engaged with curricula as a structural developmental tool. Bringing together the voices of six participants who had returned to learning in adult life in contemporary Britain, it critically investigates the impact of lifelong learning curricula encountered by those adults. It sets out to interpret how the research participants retrospectively saw their own degree of agency and identities, before, during, and after completion of a course of study. Through their points of view, the research interprets the diversity of their student experiences as they journeyed through their chosen curriculum encounter to graduation. Moreover, it goes beyond these educational encounters to examine their post educational experiences, and to evaluate their self-realised developments amongst subsequent life trajectories.

Academic critics of lifelong learning curricula argue for the exposure of their symbolically political foundations, (Pinar et al 2008). Critical commentary suggests that adults, in receipt of the teachings of a curriculum, study to achieve what someone else requires them to do (Huebner 1993). Huebner (1993) expands on this claim suggesting that this is not for their transformation, and critically points to the student's struggle with the spirit and otherness that mechanistic prescriptions might engender. This thesis seeks to investigate, question and evaluate such assertions.

Whilst undoubtedly curricula are, and can be, examined in more detailed and complex fashions, this thesis takes the view that contemporary curricula are structures which can be more straight-forwardly understood in the narrow context of being a list and description of what a person must be able to know, and do, by the end of a period of institutionally delivered learning. The thesis examines this basic understanding and proceeds to develop what else lifelong learning curricula might have offered and conferred on adults seeking a range of possible changes.

In contemporary Britain and in wider capitalist forms of economy, adults regularly employ institutionally provided curricula when seeking to increase, develop, and acquire capabilities. Important in their quest is improving their relative competitiveness, and to realise new or improved opportunity, principally in job markets. The motivator of income improvement, change to, or gaining of, employment can be seen as an overt and relevant adult educational pursuit; beyond these horizons, however, is a landscape, which this thesis seeks to open up and explore.

## **1.2: The adult curriculum**

Paechter (1999) argues that lifelong learning has become dominantly known as a term which refers to education delivered through institutions and workplaces. Paechter (1999) importantly argues that lifelong learning curricula delivered in institutions have risen and taken prominence because they provide a recognised qualification for and within a vocation, which verifies and widely legitimates vocational competence. Problematically, this reduces the validity of learning for life and devalues the life experiences of adults as a means of obtaining access to growth. The autodidactic and more informal capabilities of adults to realise directional fulfilment are, in Paechters' (1999) terms, eroded. The consequence of this centralised ownership of validation is that curricula with instrumental design present a fixed and politically defined view of what constitutes valuable knowledge. These curricula represent the current structure employed in APCE (TLRP 2008a). This research accepts the conceptualisation of adult lifelong learning curricula on this basis. It also maintains that qualifications are realised by the successful achievement of the assessed outcomes; qualifications for employability being the purpose of dominantly delivered lifelong learning in FE and HE in FE.

In the broader learning context of teacher and learning support, a range of staff are trained and instructed in how to support the instrumental design of curricula. This means that institutions structure their teachings and educational services to adults, with the objective of supporting them in achieving the outcomes of prescribed curricula. Conversely, tutors are expected to deal with the more pastoral matters of adults but are constrained by financial funding mechanisms

to limit their services to that which gets the student to achieve; behaviouristic achievement approaches thus become embedded in adult lifelong learning, across the institutions of their delivery.

Structural support by institutions is thus overtly directed at quantitative levels of skills achievement across a pre-prescribed hierarchy of levels and targeted at creating institutional performance data, but not at measuring the well-being of the adult. The attributes, values and disposition of adults become secondary to the collection of data on what qualifications have been achieved. In the attempt to justify the value for money obtained for the public purse and provide data on cross-comparative institutional performance, curricula focus is, critically, deflected in adult lifelong learning, from being a vehicle for increasing, achieving and realising wider adult potential.

In summary, the definition of the contemporary adult lifelong learning curriculum employed in this thesis suggests that content is defined by prescribed outcomes which will be assessed. Teachers and tutors are expected to deliver to prescribed outcomes, in order to evidence the adult's understanding of those outcomes. Assessments are used to test the adult's understanding and are set to provide challenge to the student and to collect valid evidence for audit by awarding bodies. In this definition a preoccupation with data at the level of student throughput rather than the pursuit of wisdom, well-being and empowerment for either students or the institutions of their delivery, defines how the pedagogy of FE and HE in FE is structured and overtly delivered.

### **1.3: Transformation and related concepts**

Evaluating whether transformation of the adult individual occurs through confrontation with lifelong learning curricula includes the need to define a range of linked concepts. These include notions of identity, awareness of self and well-being. What adults feel they are additionally able to achieve and whether the inner strength and resilience to pursue expanded potential is achieved in the longer term, underpins this range of related concepts.

Transformation is the process by which an individual becomes different. In this thesis, transformation is conceptualised as the individual's perception of their sense of being differently able, after a successful encounter with adult lifelong

learning. This thesis seeks to understand how the lifelong learning curricula encountered has enhanced the wider potential of the adult in their own estimation.

How achievement of qualifications contributes to adult well-being is about how education can transform. What the adult believes they subsequently are, and can do as a result, explains notions of revised identity and agency. This research investigates how the adult perceives 'what I am' and 'what I want to be able to achieve', before and after curriculum engagement. It focusses on how what I am, want to be and what I want to do, have been revised by lifelong learning curriculum engagement.

Identity, seen from a psychological perspective, includes self-image, self-esteem and an awareness of own individuality. Identity in relevant sociological terms includes gender, notions of class, nationality, language, group and family association, culture and ethnicity. Social identity is where the individual is defined by what they are, for example mother, protestant or student and which is socially shared by/with others with similar characteristics (Giddens 2001). Identity is also personal where the individual constantly negotiates a sense of self in the world (Heidegger 1962) amongst factors such as nationality, class and social groups (Giddens 2001). The background of adults is thus diverse and what constitutes an understanding of transformed identity for this research is what the adult professes was evident before and after curriculum engagement across a synthesis of relevant sociological and psychological concepts. This also justifies the focus to the research on the affective and the situational change, which has been realised as a result of the curriculum encounter.

Becoming 'different' and revising the self is transformation, insofar as the concept of the self is affectively enhanced by moving in a direction in life which feels satisfying and meaningful. The concept of the self is a contested notion which includes our perception of our abilities, beliefs about our nature, uniqueness, physical attributes, social role and personal traits which when

altered, can be observed as transformation (Pope and Denicolo 2001, Knowles 1984, Fromm 1976, Bandura 1977). Positive transformation in this thesis is when relevant aspects of the self are enhanced, such as when ability growth is recognised or negative inner dialogue, externally recounted, is reduced. When this movement and feedback from achievements occurs, then a sense of well-being can be established (Rogers 1961, Festinger 1957).

Resilience, conceptually, in this thesis, is how an individual is able to confront difficulties and setbacks and continue to apply effort to work toward a personally set objective. How resilience is established or enhanced in the adult being is also important in achieving post encounter goals and is further defined and justified, in this research, as the transformation of perceived ability to overcome obstacles (Murray 2009). Evidencing resilience can be achieved through hearing about frustrations and difficulties in realising dreams before curriculum engagement. This can then be compared to achievement and participant data about how the adult might have removed obstacles to progress, or to hear of progress, towards own goals. A measure of transformed resilience is therefore the adult's before and after view and whether the previously deemed impossible has become conceivable, and/or obstacles are viewed in the post encounter state as more easy to circumvent.

Empowerment in this thesis refers to renewed sense of purpose, acceptance of self, self-respect and the achievement of the respect of others; where sense of security in self and an enhanced sense of belonging provide stability. Springing from security and the confidence of belonging is the notion of subjective well-being, where the re-energised self can achieve a sense of intrinsic contentment and balance (Dodge et al 2012). This conception of well-being suggests that when resources available to the individual and challenges in life are also suitably balanced, then a greater sense of subjective well-being can be achieved (Brickman and Campbell 1971).

Haslam et al (2009) makes a significant point in justifying their research:

*“Social identities—and the sense of psychological community associated with them—constitute much of what we live for and of what we live by... the research agenda that this work sets is truly radical. For not only does this involve a rethinking of the source of well-being, but so too it forces us to rethink the means by which it can be promoted and maintained.”*

(Haslam et al 2009: 18)

This thesis takes the view that researching social and personal identity and its connection to psychological well-being, in synthesis with how contemporary lifelong learning curricula influences adults, is important in understanding how those curricula promote such psychological and sociological well-being. The nature of the relationships between these concepts for this research is detailed at Figure 1.

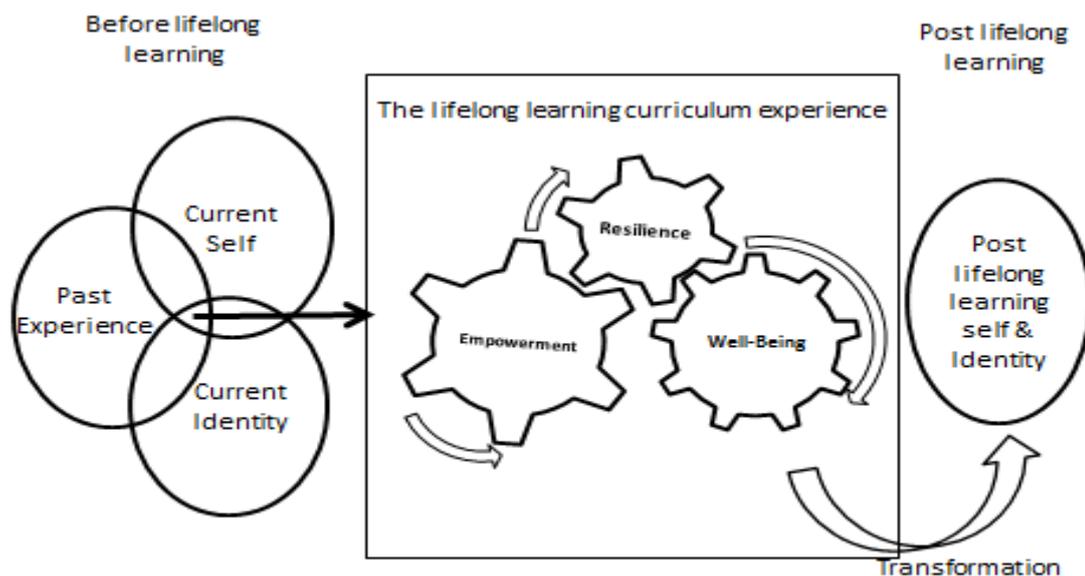


Figure 1: Transformation and related concepts: A synthesis

#### 1.4: The politics of lifelong learning and personal governance

In capitalist economies persons are expected to strive for economic self-sufficiency, compete with other individuals for opportunity, and develop marketable job skills, competences and competencies. Such actions are politically, sociologically and economically encouraged. In British society, self-sufficient action is widely ideologically promoted and embedded in a hegemonic culture. This culture contends that personal development and growth is best

achieved through individual effort. Returning to structured education in adulthood provides such a route for realisation of opportunity, where outcomes from courses of education are constructed, for the most part, to support career development and are designed to authenticate academic competence in, and for, a chosen vocational pathway. This thesis will not delve into the specific subject and content of the curriculum employed by participants but, rather, will interpret the perceived consequences of their engagement with such structures. The purpose of this focus is to analyse and synthesise the changes they realised, to inform, illuminate, and critique expectations of contemporary lifelong learning, and to elucidate upon the effectiveness, relevance, and outputs of present curricular structures as seen uniquely from and amongst adult perceptions.

Developing self and career can offer the prospect of finding direction, obtain or raise income, and help to realise a wider sense of life purpose. Such action can support individual notions of living a valuable life for immediate family, dependents, and importantly, for self; moreover, it provides the wider associated potential of making and realising a positive contribution to society. Critically, the ability to make such contributions is consistent with feeling able, capable, and sufficiently prepared to do so. The adult journey must therefore begin with reflexive self-analysis and the determination to realise that which will close the gap between present issues of dissonance between what is, and what one would like, to be, or become. From pre-contemplation about existing status, plans for change, through to setting of an educational pathway as the choice for transformation, to a detailed interpretation of post educational reminiscences, the thesis will unfold and critique the rhizomatic psychological connections in adult thinking, and the sociological factors which generated change as identified by participants, (Deleuze 1988, 2001). It will then analyse their responses, obtained through interview.

In critical juxtaposition, to any positive affective potential of lifelong learning curricula, are those political critics who claim that adult education as a whole concept has been hijacked: that we (adults) are extrinsically compelled by policy

to constantly up-skill; what we now call lifelong learning is a covert title for giving precedence to education which is almost singularly work skills based. Field (2006), Edwards (1997) and Coffield (2000a) claim, for example, that Government prescription is a coercive force in contemporary Britain and that adults are compelled and 'commodified' by such policies, needing to regard themselves in competition with others in job markets. Moreover, businesses empirically claim that they need to be able to compete in an ambiguously mediated global market dominated by economics, where employee income and costs must be controlled, whilst simultaneously driving up the competence and creative competencies of those who are employed, to achieve commercial advantage. Long term individual income and career expectations in tenuous and uncertain market led circumstances can be experienced as a threatening force; the blame for not being able to secure desired employment in such global economic meta-narratives being recast toward the individual. Up-skilling, or retraining, thus becomes an imperative, which dictates individual need for further engagement with lifelong learning, in a coercive fashion. Amongst these critical assertions and competing senses of adult responsibility, the thesis will examine the curricula dominant in Adult Post Compulsory Education (APCE), which empirically is the dominant location of lifelong learning delivery, to establish if it is able to provide focus, and sense of purpose, beyond such criticisms.

Escaping cognitively and economically, from a place where circumstance either encourages or dictates change; working toward casting off feelings of disadvantage; confronting affective and competence based deficiencies versus that which is required for a given vocation; planning a route toward desired vocation and resiliently overcoming the challenges necessary to arrive at a planned destination, are possible factors pre-conceived in this thesis. These factors can be justifiably examined as points along an educational journey, which the participant is able to self-narrate. It will therefore examine the stories of adults who, in their own view and words, have successfully employed education as their instrument of choice, critically examining whether this led them to the predicted or unexpected and whether they achieved authentic

competence and/or, if this took them to forms of anticipated and/or, alternative destinations. The specific focus is to interpret the recounted experiences of those who have completed and graduated from an engagement with a self-chosen curriculum and examine how, in their evaluation, it might have transformed their identity and perception of own agency. In this fashion, the interviews will hear and consider whether affective notions of change were present, and if so, interpret participant journeys through the curriculum undertaken, examining and analysing the impact of those encounters, with primacy given to their wider sense of transformative well-being, and sense of perceived meaning, to expose if curricula as a structural developmental tool can be identified as the essential catalyst of change.

### **1.5: Researching the dynamics of adult change**

Rose (1990) points to adult change in an incongruous fashion when saying, that maturation requires: “Living one’s life according to the norm of autonomy” (Rose 1990:115). This thesis conceives of such incongruity as the interstices between the concepts of culturally driven, and politically hegemonic, social normalisation, (Fromm1990: Durkheim 1952) and that of individualistic autonomy, and proposes to examine and interpret the participant narratives of change in this dynamic and complex context. Examining how and if adult transformation might be achieved through the employment of curricula, connotes how the dominant expectations of society, in the making of autonomy, which are evidentially levelled upon the person, may have dynamic agency related consequences beyond the anticipated. The thesis therefore examines the accounts of participants in relation to their passage through a curriculum in this unique and distinctive way.

### **1.6: Locating the thesis in a transformational theoretical framework**

In theoretical framework terms, the thesis will principally employ the work of Mezirow (1981) to provide a relevant transformational focus. In his work, he developed the term “meaning perspectives”; later, he defined this as: “the structure of assumptions within which new (adult) experience is assimilated and transformed by one’s past experience” (Mezirow 1991:2). This term provides a

significant frame of reference in the literature review and equally, provides specific form to what the thesis will attempt to analyse. This form is distinctively and dynamically diverse, and is about how the person narrates former, current and future identity as a result of following a self-chosen developmental pathway.

The literature review will begin by considering structure, shape, and sociological influence of lifelong learning curricula, in the guidance of the actualisation of adult students and synthesise the role of curricula, to Mezirow's principal theme. It will position Mezirow's (1991) approach in relevant context and amongst the wider field of transformational education and learning research. Psychological factors such as consciousness management and critical self-reflection, developed by this author are, moreover, considered by a range of theorists; (Habermas 1979, Weinstein 1985, Kuhn 1962, Kelly 1963, Knowles 1975, Kolb 1984, Piaget 1953; 1972, Vygotsky 1978) as fundamentally party to the transformational effects of education and learning by adults. A detailed review of a range of these interpretations will attempt to enrich, test and critique such assumptions.

In providing this theoretical focus, the second chapter of the literature review will consider texts relevant, or conceptually adaptable to, institutionally available APCE. The final literature summary will briefly draw upon significant, recent, and relevant research, provided by the Learning Lives Project (Learninglives.org 2009). The review will further consider, in synthesis, in what measure a range of primary and secondary texts might contend that students, through lifelong learning and continuing learning experiences, achieve transformative "understandings" (Mezirow 1990) of the self. Such understandings will be the key measure of the curriculum structure's impact.

The thesis will progress by synthesising the relevant and existing germane research in the field of transformative education, with the findings of this research. In the discussion section, the text will clarify the relationship and relevance of a range of sociological and psychological perspectives; it will outline, critique and relate historical and contemporary views of APCE, overt and hidden, in contemporary lifelong learning.

In the conclusion the thesis will bring together the findings of the research and the contribution made to both theory and practice in the fields of curricula, identity, and adult agency: and it will point to any possible realisable broader significance in latent adult potential. It will equally examine and more widely consider the contribution that, on the one hand, politically neutral developmental versus, on the other, politically instrumental lifelong learning might offer, both for and beyond a lifelong learning imperative of adult competence.

### **1.7: The gap in current research**

#### *Relevant themes*

Research in the field of adult transformative education and learning has recurrent thematic perspectives. Sociology, Psychology, Biology, Learning theories, and environmental inspirations for change in adults' life course, highlight and unearth the range and diversity of these themes. Past research contributes to an apposite understanding of their application and theoretical synthesis exposes previously unexplored terrains. In this research factors influencing identity, and perspectives offered by key authors, have been grouped thematically to convey new significance as follows:

Namely:

'Stages' in Adult development: e.g. Erikson (1959), Kegan(1982), Maslow(1954), Maslow and Lowry (1999), Levinson (1978), Kohlberg (1981), Piaget (1953), Freud (1997, 2002), Knowles (1970, 1973, 1984), Knowles et al (2005).

Critical/ Political awareness: e.g. Freire (1970), Brookfield (1987), Palmer (1990), Capra (2002).

Consciousness Management: e.g. Mezirow (1981-2006), Schon (1983), Jung (1995), Jung and Kerenyi (2002), Csikszentmihalyi (1994), Weinstein (1985), Dewey (1966).

Self-Regard: e.g. Kelly (1963), Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978), Rogers (1961), Damasio (1991).

## **1.8: Justification for the research gap and focus**

In each of these perspectives, the authors above and others, and this author, seeks to explain how transformation is identified, conceptually distilled and observed in a person. The theoretical contention and foundation of this thesis is that measurement of transformational change relies on three change factors, and that evidence of such change can be gleaned from observation and dialogue, so that the research data can unearth how it is evidentially brought about. The evidence factors employed are; that it can be identified in the body (as a participant recounted/felt experience of the Soma), in the cognitive (recounted as a positive revision of the holistic psyche) and/or in the social (recounted as a sense of belonging and connection in society as observed by self and/or others) of the adult self.

Little research has directly focussed upon, whether, and if, lifelong learning curricula dominantly employed in APCE, can be considered the cause of positive transformational change to identity and/or individual agency using the measures originally employed here. The Learning lives project (ending 2008) did, however, consider access to education, and subsequent adult trajectories; enquiries with the managing project fund holder confirmed, (on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011) that the project did not attempt to address this area, thus this research opens up new strands for exploration. In transformational terms, and for clarity, the turbulence in the interactions between the four theoretical perspectives (above) and how participants come to identify themselves differently as a result of engaging with curricula is the unique difference and justification for this research.

In personal terms, I also declare a significant interest in understanding the journey toward the enhanced agency of others. Given a personal journey from the world of business, in which I had lost personal agency through encountering redundancy, I embarked upon a second career of becoming a teacher. From academic growth came invigoration and a feeling of being alive through learning. In justificatory terms, understanding if my experience is replicated more widely, is a personal quest and challenge; not only in the avoidance of

polemical analysis, but in bringing greater understandings to future adult education practice, for myself and others. In objective fashion, therefore, the research introduction will justify the interpretation of participant accounts as both a personal comparative opportunity, and a uniquely different research focus.

### **1.9: Research and the politics of agency**

The research will explore the view that adult developmental agendas have shifted position in the contemporary British economy; from their historical roots of diverse learning provision, they are argued to have become the dominant instrument of business related skills provision, delivered at both the public, taxpayers and students expense. Usher et al (2001), for example, suggests that citizenship and identity have shifted to a dominant postmodern consumerist interpretation, where educational cultural enrichment curricula have been the victim, and skills development curricula, the beneficiary, such that much of the training (a term used interchangeably and conflated with that of education) conducted by business, has become increasingly, publicly, institutionalised. At a time when the teaching profession seeks to understand how we can enable individuals to employ agency to be active democratic and empowered citizens, Usher et al (2001) contends that education is working toward a “training” agenda (Usher et al 2001:80) where institutions have downgraded diversity in learning, by prescribing and exalting what can be considered worthwhile knowledge. Political notions of lifelong learning, moreover, suggest that adults (specifically) must put aside self-actualisation for the greater need of enhancing their contribution to the economy, where employers reap the benefits of a steady stream of trained labour, at limited direct cost to their respective organisations.

### **1.10: Why research this subject now?**

The important justification for researching lifelong learning curricula and transformation potential, at the present time, is to attempt to clarify what is happening at the macro social and sociological and individually relevant micro sociological and psychological level; the significant questions arising being: are

the results of dominant economic agendas and the significant investment it entails, working? If so, for who, and to what extent is the emphasis of dominant curricula beneficial to those individuals who engage? Whilst accepting that small scale research cannot be universally generalised, without justification, the insights will attempt to offer a contribution to a more informed debate on Adult Education Policy and to a lesser extent examine the philosophy of education issues that might emerge. In this respect it is, however, critically expedient to claim that taxpayers carry the major share of the economic burden of education for business. In providing balance at the individuals level of the argument, however, we must examine benefit, with and without such weight of politics, in order to establish who benefits, how they benefit and what personally perceived 'well-being' can be engendered beyond the singularity of competence growth, from currently dominant styles of curricula.

### **1.11: Positioning the research**

This research starts from the view that PCE has perceived and somewhat situated (within the range of available modes and) status amongst stakeholders in society. Adult students, in the act of education, may have perceived sociological and psychological views about what those alternatives might be, and analysis will seek these out; it is thus the remit of the research to explore participant views, through their interpretations of their journey. The literature review will, in contrast, explain and critique, a range of relevant theory which has already identified and contributed to an equally diverse range of thematic perspectives. In exploration, analysis, evaluation, contrasting and comparison, the wider research will explore the interstices of prescribed APCE, participant awareness, and consciousness from sociological and psychological viewpoints. It will finally attempt to construct, via analysis and interpretation, what the post lifelong learning student realised outcomes were, (tested against the three factors influencing identity already outlined) and whether their accounts indicate achievement of identity transformations and, moreover, what possible benefits and challenges this might offer to what has been widely described (above) in contemporary Britain, as an increasingly mechanistic form of Adult Education.

### **1.12: Relevance of the research**

This research will seek to establish if a range of adults have realised, and/or confronted, transformative adjustment, through successful involvement with dominant curricular structures; attempting, through interpretation to establish in the participant's own evaluation, how their sense of identity might have changed. This sense of identity relates directly in conception to the factors of soma, psyche, and sociality, as common denominators of measurement, upon which the thesis is founded. Identity and agency enrichment are thus measured from the phenomenological combination of impact of these relevant fragments.

The experience of being in a curriculum: if and how it has enabled a changed way of "seeing and being in the world" (Heidegger 1962) and what transitions participants may have undergone, are all core to what the research fundamentally asks and questions; the participant accounts being the interpretive evidence of whether any identified identity change might be considered life changing for those who have followed these particularly dominant contemporary routes.

### **1.13: Stakeholder research value**

This research has worth and benefit to FE and HE Practitioners, Distance Learning and Institutional Curriculum Designers and Awarding Bodies, FE College Managers, Career and Employment Advisors, Policy Makers and the wider Academic Community. It sets out to synthesise, analyse and interpret the experiences of those who have successfully participated; to explain and analyse the level of agency of participants before and after successful engagement with a curriculum, and to illuminate adult advice and guidance services principally in FE, distance education, and wider public communities.

## **CHAPTER 2: SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING; A LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review, which is developed across the next two chapters, will begin with a detailed analysis of PCE curricula. It will specifically relate and blend the distinctiveness of provision to contemporary British debates on lifelong learning, and will examine the structure and current critiques evident in the sector, whilst also examining the range and diversity of students embraced by the curricula offered.

### **2.2: Further higher and distance adult education curricula in Britain.**

Institutional Further Education (FE) is comprised of a wide range of levels and qualifications from remedial to Higher Education (HE: normally to degree status, more regularly Foundation Degree). The curriculum, in some, is further extended to embrace General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced Level (AS and A2), and which is more generally the domain of Secondary Schools. The Higher Education curriculum associated and delivered by Higher Education Institutions (Universities known as HEIs) has, in recent years, become the additional subject of expanded operations in FE.

Fuelled by widening participation (DFES 2010), FE college links with employers are seen as an important factor in developing relevant, employer defined qualifications. At central British education policy level both HEIs and FE have experienced two significant waves of expansion; Robbins 1963, Dearing 1997 initiatives; the involvement of HE in FE was, and has been, deemed necessary by successive contemporary British Government policies, in increasing the overall quantity and accessibility of provision. This wide ranging and diverse, yet distinctively skills dominant curriculum offering across Institutional FE, provides the landscape between and from the formality of 'secondary' compulsory education and along a continuum, to operate amongst University levels.

This chapter will continue by defining and considering the curricula of FE, HE in FE, HE and distance education as it relates to Adult students, who are returning to education. It will discuss and analyse current critiques, locating FE, distance,

and HE curricula, amongst the social and economic structure of education in Britain.

### **2.3: The structure and quality of curricula in FE, HE and distance learning**

FE institutions, unlike traditional British attendance based HEIs, but similar to preceding Primary and Secondary education, are not (for the most part) equipped, nor do they consider themselves able, to write curricula, which have national recognition, yet they deliver to 3.4 million students (AOC 2011). They do, however, deliver some, leisure and community based education on the basis of a local certification processes, and co-author HE curricula under university guidance. In business terms, this places them in the position of being a retailer of other organisations' products, which are validated externally, controlled centrally and supplied by wholesalers.

Wholesalers of the curriculum product which supplies institutional FE are known as Awarding Bodies (AB) who work with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), made up of representatives from Government, Education, and Industry. It is not the remit of this research to examine the relative power within each of the collaborating parties, nor to examine the power between those bodies, but is concerned with how 'standards' and standardisation are seen to be employed and how these have been critically described as instrumental and mechanistic in their characteristics. In this respect, the imposed regimes of AB prescription are set out as a list of defined outcomes and content. These, and the wider instructions provided by AB modular qualifications, propose methods of delivery and assessment which are expected to be suitably independently audited and verified, for which colleges and students pay fees, and where students are permitted (by Government decreed authorised listing) to access grants and loans.

The audit quality of the delivery of 'the educational product' (course of study) in both FE and HE follows a regime where the institution must supply an internal verification process. In FE the AB provides an external verifier, with powers of surveillance and ultimate sanction, and which expects AB provided guidelines to be followed. External verifiers are appointed by the AB from an independent

educational source (an educator familiar with the subject, but remote and independent of the FE institution). In HEIs the delivering University is responsible for locating and employing the services of suitably qualified external assessors from another University, which is independent and unconnected. Standards levels which are deemed to have been achieved are reported through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in England and Wales (SHEFC in Scotland), who have ultimate financial sanction authority.

In this highly regulated and structured way, curricula in Britain, have, since the early 1900s, (more evidently from 1970s) progressively and successively moved to standardised structural familiarity, akin to “factory production models of education” (Wayne 2011:26). Based upon the scientific management principles of F.W. Taylor, Bobbitt (1912, 1920) proposed, developed and influenced what has, in contemporary Britain, evolved into the modularised curriculum (Squires 1987). Overseen by managerial direction and the forms of audit detailed above, this structured approach to learning brings an expectation of linearity and transparency to the delivery process (Tyler 1949; Taba 1962); it imposes structured accountabilities at teacher, teacher management and institutional levels, from ABs or independent HEI quality assessors. Accountability for quality/standardisation differs at HEI and AB subject level. In FE, Government requires the application of specific teaching approaches for AB qualifications, monitoring this via the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). The surveillance of quality at FE level is at both management and learning delivery levels. In HEIs the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is responsible for maintaining standards at both HE and Access to HE levels (normally delivered in FE Colleges as an alternative adult pre-university qualification). Surveillance is normally at management levels only. Through these regimes of external audit management the modularised curriculum, and its delivery, are regulated; assessment is standardised and student achievement is monitored.

#### **2.4: Curricula contrasted: expectations and outcomes in PCE**

In 2007, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA – abolished in 2011) published a document called “A big picture of the curriculum” (QCA 2011).

Whilst the primary application of this document was aimed at compulsory education it, has been adopted by PCE, and forms a comparable frame of reference consistent with current (2012) application at FE Institutional level. The document (Appendix 1) sets out to identify, and provide structure to, how a prescribed curriculum can be broken into structured delivery components and use diverse learning approaches to meet statutory expectations.

Legally, an APCE student is one who enrolled upon and commenced education after their nineteenth birthday (Skills Funding Agency 2012), yet FE lifelong learning curricula make no mention of age beyond this definition nor offer any form of advice or tactics to deal with the diverse adult students who might choose to engage. As a model consistent across Institutional FE practices, the structures of compulsory curricula are straight-forwardly substituted for those curricula prescribed by the AB. The choice of what to study is, however, clearly different to compulsory education and is the remit/choice of the student of FE and/or distance provider.

At even wider policy making level the European context of lifelong learning has become thematically used to address the changing economic balance between countries of the world. In Britain, relative economic decline has been critically interpreted and become a governmental call for all to engage with continuous learning (Field 2006; Edwards 1997; Coffield 2000a). In such rhetoric is an imperative for adults to be competitive; to build security from being a desirable asset to employers: an imperative to seek self-development for the purposes and end goal of personal and national economic stability, and to achieve economic growth through personal and national economic self-sufficiency (Crowther 2004a).

The body of knowledge, comprising the curricula of PCE, is organised and delivered differently in adult education to that of previous educational encounters (Rogers 1996). Settings and climate too, in FE and HE provide a sense of difference to students, in that modules are sanctioned centrally but broadly delivered and/or constructed by exponents of that area of expertise.

Bruner (1973,1986,1990) related these settings of climate and delivery expertise to the wider embracing concept of learning within a culture; moreover, he contended that (variable) cultures, (variable) contexts and (variable) student participation work together to produce (variable) outcomes; he described this style of learning as a: “Knowledge getting” (Bruner 1966:72) exercise contending that learning is an individually diverse process and not (just) that of a product emerging from a production activity. In critical terms Bruner (1966) idealistically proposed how teaching and instruction should proceed, in an informal student centred fashion and by implication, suggested that teachers should adopt a particular style; that of active student participation (Bruner 1973), basing this upon their current and past knowledge, by Socratic means. In more pragmatic terms, Rogers (1996), proposes that positive outcomes might be achieved by adopting a range of approaches as detailed in figure 2.

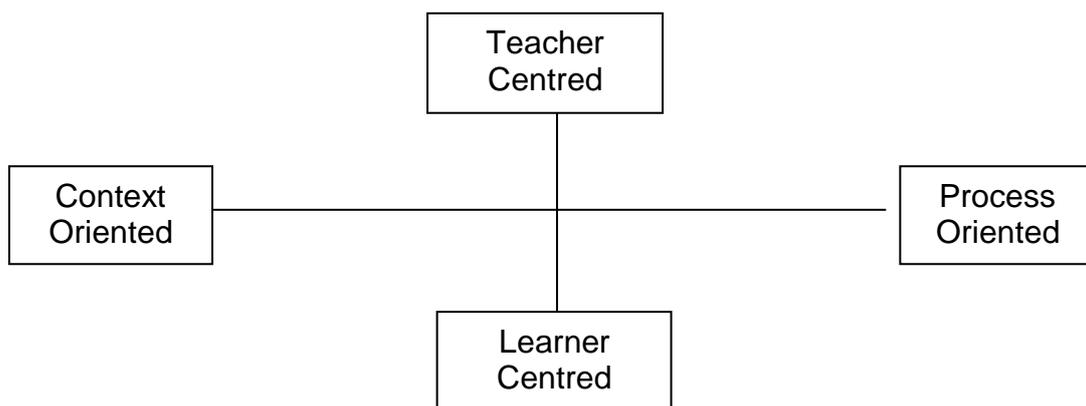


Figure 2: Matrix of methods in adult learning (Rogers 1996:179)

The proposal in figure 2 is that the teacher (application of teaching material for distance education) operates in an appropriately varied, tacitly understood way, by moving toward methods which achieve “best fit” for the specific delivery in question. This approach contends that the teacher has the freedom and latitude to be flexible, and to be able to seek relevance for each individual taught. Critically, dominant curricula are both teacher centred and context oriented so, if emphasis is given to learner centred process orientations (broadly accepted as more humanistic), teachers might be considered subversive of the overarching goals of education and inconsistent with the outcomes detailed by the modern state; attendance to achieving outcomes thus becomes dominant and

competence is therefore critically established as the overarching priority and (we can deduce) not primarily that of student well-being.

Contemporary institutional curricula are considered by Habermas (1984) to be structurally instrumentalist rather than communicative, i.e. they describe outcomes (assessment criteria) and content (expectations of the range of what should be known), and recommend but do not prescribe how these should be transmitted. The fundamental difference between communication of data and communicative learning, however, critically lies between aspects of the technical, practical, and the emancipatory (Kitchenam 2008). Outcomes prescribing what a student must factually know about a subject are but one aspect of the FE, HE, and distance experience. For a skill to be mastered, for the learning to be applied and to move beyond the critical objectification of the individual, outcomes expect that the qualities and capacities of the student will be enhanced, that students will move beyond the passive cognitive reception of information, that consciousness will be moved and that moral and ethical factors influencing the changed person will be augmented (Pring 2004).

Kitchenam (2008), in contrast, provides a diagrammatic view of Mezirow's alternatively transformational approach to the wider (beyond the given curriculum) expectations of learning as shown in figure 3.

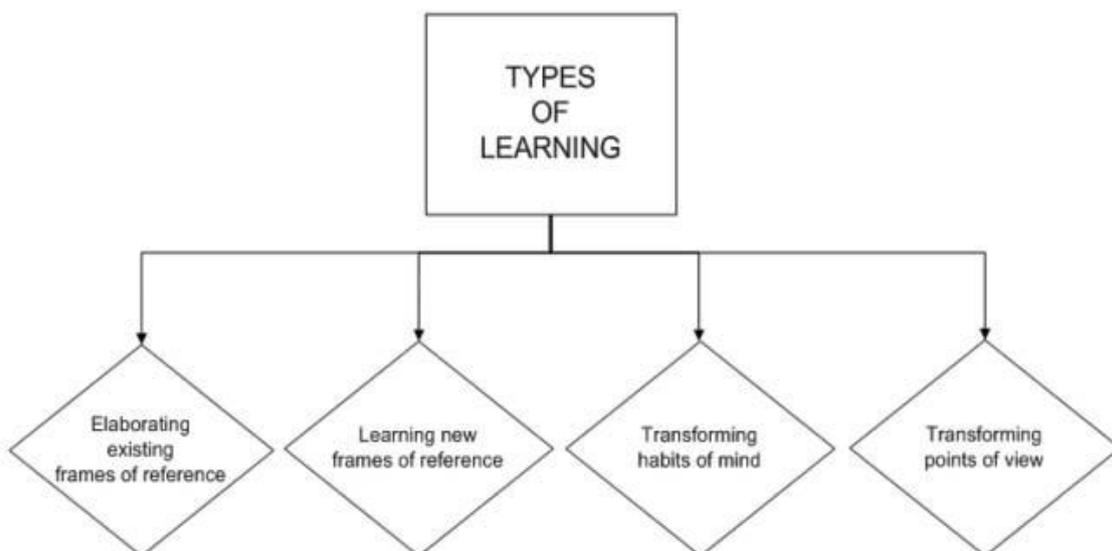


Figure 3: - Diagrammatic Representation of Mezirow's (2000) Four Types of Learning - Revised Theory of Transformative Learning (Kitchenam 2008:120)

These then point to;

Types of learning	Institutional action
Elaborating existing frames	To be inclusive, equal and egalitarian, providers must collect the student from their own starting points, move them to the expected standard and create meaningful relevance en-route. This is mandated in Britain by Ofsted and QAA
Learn new frames	The contention that learning involves confronting that which students do not already know or, to re-visit and deepen that which (perhaps through familiarity) has become obscured. This is essential to achieving movement of an individual's perspective
Transforming habits of mind	To move beyond current student conscious awareness, by super-imposing (learning content) options and new potential responses as alternatives to the individual's present automatic (sub-conscious) response. This is pursued through assessments, designed to show competent demonstrative understanding of the course material by students.
Transforming points of view	Through "trying on" others points of view (Mezirow 2000:21), students are expected to contrast with own and arrive at the same, similar or critically and defensibly alternatively understood points of view. This too is pursued through introducing students to other ways of "doing" and other ways of "thinking" and asking students to reflect on the connection, such that one might adjust the other.

Table 1: Interpretation of Mezirow's four types of learning

Curricula outcomes in FE, HE, and distance education, are thus an expression of what the student should know (adapted from Bloom et al 1956; Gagne 1969). However, alongside this explicit communication device is what the curriculum implies and covertly expects. It is to further aspects of this 'hidden curriculum' that this literature review will now turn.

## 2.5: The hidden curriculum

The concept of the hidden curriculum has been evident in a significant range of publications over many years. Peddiwell (1939), Illich (1973a, 1973b), Fromm (1976, 1991), Apple (1982) and Bernstein (1977, 2000) amongst others, have contributed to a detailed critical view of what education delivers beyond the stated curricular outcomes. Ranciere (1991) also considered this factor from the viewpoint of whether students are alternatively targets or agents in their own development (Suoranta 2010), and if such targeting is complicit with the directed educational policies of the modern state. The critical question emerging asks: does education explicitly function as a (re)socialising and/or corrective device? This section continues by discussing and developing a range of implicit, un-said, and undocumented, contentions in the hidden curriculum of FE, HE, and distance education.

### 2.5.1: Curricula for employability

Curricula play a central role in the student's provision of a selling story for existing, new, or potential employers. Whilst of itself the qualification product, and/or the learning process, cannot guarantee subsequent work, employers and senior business organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), recognise the worth of an individual's efforts made to enhance and improve their competence and thinking. Commentary from this organisation states:

*“A strong relationship between business and education is critical to the UK's competitiveness. Whether in developing graduates with the skills and knowledge to drive business forward, improving the skills of the existing workforce or ensuring that all school leavers possess the right literacy, numeracy and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics skills, an effective partnership between business and UK education will help create the right solutions for employers, employees and young people entering the world of work.”*

(Education and Skills – CBI 2011)

Empirical research contends that income level and education have significant correlative effect, and that both men and women: “experience a fifty per cent wage increase as the length of education rises from 16 to 21” (ONS 2011). For adult returners to education the attempt to catch up with wage and salary levels, or to realise job opportunities which provide better terms and conditions, is

located in the level and quality of education they have achieved, both past and present (ONS 2011), and is deemed to be important in adults' reflections about the extent of their agency at a given time. The employability curriculum would therefore suggest that increasing your education is likely to increase your income. Income levels, despite contrary narratives, have an impact on an individual's level and quality of consumption. Consumption in turn has the potential to provide access to a range of goods and services including education (itself) for self, and others in a family group. Such pragmatic and altruistic motivational assertions are relevant to understanding how education is chosen as the implement for change. Equally and alternatively, what becomes identified as valuable change to identity and level of agency requires critical attention and evaluation.

#### *2.5.2: Curricula as product consumption*

Illich (1973a) and Fromm (1976) take the issue of consumption and opportunity in life into, and amongst, the areas of philosophy of education, and critique the nature of society as institutionally constraining and spiritually debasing. Illich (1973a) contends that much of education is: "passive consumption" aimed at "conditioning" (Illich 1975:74) whilst Fromm (1976) says:

*"The student and the content of lectures remain strangers to each other, except that each student has become owner of a collection of statements made by somebody else (who had created them or taken them over from another source)."*

(Fromm 1976: 24)

In hidden curriculum terms, the tension between student and institutional views, is an, "identity crisis of modern society produced by the fact that its members have become selfless instruments" (Fromm 1976:121), and must: "lose all sense of self" (Fromm 1991:139). In these terms Fromm (1991) critically contends that under capitalism education becomes a possession, and that the minimum receivable is that which guarantees a level which permits functioning in society: to go beyond your place in society, in contrast, becomes indulgent and equates to luxury spending; educational institutions alternatively claim that the pursuit of knowledge is: "to bring the student in touch with the highest achievements of the human mind" (Fromm 1991: 34). These critical and

competing perspectives are developed sociologically by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), who suggest that there are enduring structures in society and that attempts to collect educational possessions, is an attempt to change personal status in and amongst society. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) point to the concept of cultural reproduction and suggest that educational institutions might well assist with changing a persons' status but also and more powerfully exist, to maintain and perpetuate economic and social inequality across generations (1977). In critical sociological terms they contend that values, attitudes, and habits, are reinforced by educational institutions to perpetuate such traits as punctuality and diligent application of effort, by those in authority who set them tasks, thus inculcating duty and conformity to the norms of society and its pecking order. Continuing reproduction of working and capitalist class division in contemporary Britain thus correlates with access to wealth and opportunity (Giddens 2004). The hidden curricula can be critically seen as a 'glass ceiling' and access to such factors as health, wealth and opportunity, as explained in detail in Marxist philosophies, is closed: yet this also provides a compelling reason to examine perceived realities beyond these limitations.

Equality of opportunity in relation to the concept of 'glass ceilings' becomes difficult for education to address; moreover, critics argue that education itself is structured to deny opportunity, beyond that given by the circumstances and intellect of the individual. Ranciere (1991), for example, proposes that education has become blind to the universal view that all human kind seeks developmental growth; that it fails to encourage emancipation and both sets and inculcates limits upon the life expectations of (adult) students. In critiques of the critical view, of 'education as consumption', sociological voices suggest that advantage, in its many facets, is more likely to be inherited; that equal opportunity, enhanced life chances, and transformative well-being, cannot be purchased. In contrast, Ranciere (1991) argues that learning cannot be denied to anyone who chooses to make it their quest in either an auto-didactic or taught fashion. He contends that the 'school master' can enhance understanding when explications have a spiritually driven design, working

tirelessly to achieve understanding in the student: that the student can 'achieve' in such processes irrespective of diverse intellect or social standing.

### *2.5.3: Class and Mobility*

Giddens (2004) explains the theoretical stances of Marx, Weber and Olin-Wright when considering class based arguments; he develops the view that occupations have 'pecking orders' with differing levels of income and status, in wider social perception. In gender terms Giddens (2004) suggests that education was historically a male preserve; that rapid social and economic change in twenty first century Britain has not only altered the occupational presence of women (for example) in quantity, but also in (hierarchical) level and that education has both played a part and influenced this change in the structure of society. The move from principally, homemaker, to needing to work (for economic necessity), to wanting to work has seen radical change to female gender relationships and to the accompanying motivations by both genders (Giddens 2004). Whilst the historical (inter-generational) change in status of both genders is not a central focus here, the intra-generational view clearly is. Educational achievement is argued by the Department for Education (2006), to be influential in creating career opportunities and access to wealth and can alter life trajectory irrespective of class, gender and ethnicity. Mobility within the lifetime is therefore an important factor in measuring the level of agency that might be achieved before and after engagement.

### **2.6: The hidden curriculum in demographic and sociological terms**

Research originating from the University and College Union (2011) and published by the British Broadcasting Corporation, suggests that: "There are huge local variations in levels of education within Britain's adult population" (Coughlan in BBC 2011) and that the, map of achievement and underachievement, underlines the importance of improving access to education (Map reproduced at Appendix 2). The social context, motivations and aspirations of individuals' development through an understanding of their sociological past, offers a complex picture of demographic difference. The evidence (at appendix 2) points to regions, districts, towns and cities of both

privilege and disadvantage; where access to education may have a range of differential values. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) views can be adapted to consider such demographic factors in terms of the locality, area or region of upbringing. The concept of 'habitus' used by these authors moves beyond the geographic and suggests that social groups have a system of dispositions, schemes of thought, actions, and perceptions, to create behavioural norms (Brentano 1907), which connotes sociological influence on their motivation to be educated. They point to individual and group future expectations; that these expectations are confined; that thoughts are bounded by differential levels of expected opportunity in life and that what becomes the educational norm might, in later adult life, form the basis of assumed disadvantage. Baudrillard equally uses (a different form of map) the phrase "The map precedes the territory" (1966:166); that actions of mind prescribe (in critical terms) inaction because social structures might be stacked against the overcoming of earlier levels of low educational achievement and wider deprivations. Pre-ception rather than perception encapsulates whether adults have a-priori agendas of escape from past or present levels of agency, whether this emerges as a result of physical or economic movement, or because of felt intrinsic or imposed educational advantage or disadvantage.

## **2.7: Adult curricula**

Richardson (2007) contentiously suggested a radically elitist position; that FE is better suited to, "other people's children" (p411). The origins and mediated assessment of the status of curricula is located amongst arguments of class and status in Britain (Simmons 2009), this contemporary view is no less evident in the adult curriculum, where FE and distance learning institutions offer affordable education, to those who feel the need to re-visit learning in their adult years. HE, in contrast, is, in contemporary terms, setting a price which makes access more problematic. Contemporary rhetoric has coined the phrase, 'The Cinderella Service', for Institutional FE, which is defined as: "a poor neglected person or thing" (Collins 2000) and which highlights, critically, its regard and esteem in contemporary British society. Foster (2006) called it, 'the neglected middle child', yet the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP)

reverse it, stating: “It is required to meet the skills needs of the economy; to provide new chances for people whose encounter with the school system was less than satisfactory, and respond to the demands of employers as well as students” (TLRP 2008a:2). In developing this theme, in a section of commentary which the TLRP researchers called “supporting the middle child” (TLRP 2008a:28), they state:

*“Tutor-student relationships are also crucial to the success of FE in helping disadvantaged, under-achieving and excluded people of all ages to develop their often fractured identities as learners, with the aid of government initiatives to widen participation.”*

(TLRP 2008a:28)

The theme of remedial and second chance institutions is discussed later, however, support for those whose past educational achievements leave them less competitively equipped, exemplifies the values underpinning FE institutions, and distance learning, and as a spin-off, labels institutional FE as impoverished (Coffield 2000b; 2007, Leitch 2006, Robinson 2006). It is an emphasis placed on FE institutions by Government, that they concentrate their efforts upon the development of skills, however, there remains a tension between developing competence (skills for doing), and competencies (skills for thinking and cognitive growth) (Crowther 2004b).

### *2.7.1: The traditional adult curriculum*

From the origins of workers education, the YMCA and political and social movements, adult education has continued to claim a distinct and different purpose to that of other forms of education. Traditionally, adult education expanded through community organisations and became associated with developing learning which enhanced the social role of the adult. Guided by humanistic objectives of democracy, adult education organically grew its own definition, style and purpose out of the original democratic thinking and actions of influential founders such as Lindeman (1926) and Bryson (1936).

The curricula associated with traditional adult education required no entry qualifications and carried little by way of assessment, which resulted in limited quantification and variable standards; engagement being driven primarily by ‘the

desire to learn' of those undertaking learning. Adult education has, in recent years seen significant decline in student numbers; the steepest fall having occurred in the proportion engaged in leisure subject education (Mason 2009). Leisure based education is where forms of student and teacher co-determined adult curricula are evident and where Government funding has been eroded in contemporary terms (Mason 2009). The economics of adult education delivered by institutions means that provision is dependent on income flow; and whilst traditional and humanistic forms of adult education are offered to those individuals willing to pay, this limits scope and subject offering.

Adult curricula, as seen from a liberal tradition, requires: 'freedom from the constraints and compulsions of the state' where: 'the free development of individuality is one of the leading essentials of well-being' (Carr and Hartnett 1998:47). Democratic adult education, it seems, leads to forms of diverse curricula which may be politically deemed at odds with the best interests of the nation: an argument proposed and won by the politics of the 'New Right' in the 1990s (Carr and Hartnett 1998), and lamented by traditional views of adult education. Through the revision of all layers of education, from nursery to university, the 'New Right' was able to propose curricula which were formulated by the interests of business and the emerging business of education and in order to employ standardisation routines across all sectors of education. In adult education the introduction of centralised curriculum controls influenced what was deemed legitimate for inclusion and valuable for adults to learn. In centralist curricula, powers of inspection were expanded and funding directed at curricula that met the requirements of the 'New Right' - influenced traditional and democratic forms.

Despite new controls, adult education remains imbued with the desire to emancipate and empower and is resistant to specified and standardised outcomes. This defines the most important fundamental difference between traditional adult and dominant contemporary curricula. The hegemony of 'New Right' policies and the rise of online learning (Department for Business Innovation and Skills 2013) have meant that centrally controlled curricula are

now the dominant adult provision, where accessible and funded provision is aimed at learning for employment related competence.

### *2.7.2: The skills curriculum*

The rise to pre-eminence of the skills curriculum has been achieved by the 'New Right' through greater levels of control and inspection. Liberalisation has also been pursued in 'New Right' education policies by 'rolling back the state' so that educational institutions can appear to run as independent businesses, with self-determining objectives. Whilst the institutions of curriculum delivery have been freed to manage their own destiny, the curricula that they deliver have remained under the influence of central 'New Right' ideologies.

Thompson (2009) raises the profile of the FE curriculum as competence versus competency, using Bernstein (2000) as a narrative source and justification for rethinking institutional FE. Synonymous (in Government rhetoric) with competence development, is the estimates of value that higher skills brings to the wider British economy (Foster 2005, Jones & Moore 1995, Leitch 2006). This link between skills growth, economic prosperity for Britain, and the notion of global competitiveness is, and has been, promoted by Government; Institutional FE being identified as one of the principal instruments of its delivery. Relevant publications supporting this view include, 21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential, (Skills 2003), 14-19 Education and Skills (Skills 2005) and Skills: Getting on in business, getting on in work (Skills 2005).

Institutional FE has thus figured amongst the range of this prescription in critical terms, this creates the strategic expectation and dictates a *modus operandi* to achieve its fulfilment; in short, many loud and powerfully political voices tell it what it is and what it must do! The consequence of setting such a strategy is that it provides, alternatively, the principal institutional 'Raison d'être' for FE and locates its presence as a place to develop vocational learning. Such a singular 'reason for being', seen at starkly face value, is critically reductionist rhetoric yet, when funding is aimed at such outcomes, planned strategy and objectives follow. The critical factor in such change is consistent with the phrase: "He who

pays the piper, calls the tune” (Browning 1888). In economic terms, the FE curriculum is no longer able to depend upon constant and regular forms of income from Government, but all PCE has to market these products and services more widely, making them more attractive and saleable, whilst being (overly) regulated by processes, policy and procedures; commentary suggests:

*“Successive waves of regulation and market-inspired policies have resulted in a culture of diktat and discipline, performativity and managerialism (Coffield 2006, 18–19). In an increasingly differentiated system, while the more prestigious schools and sixth-form colleges will continue to provide A levels or other courses perceived to be of high status, such as the International Baccalaureate or the new Cambridge Pre-U qualification, the remit of FE colleges is likely to increasingly encompass the disaffected, the marginalised and other more challenging sections of society.”*

(Simmons 2009: 167)

The waves of regulation received and enacted by FE includes, the Tomlinson Report (Tomlinson 2004), Guaranteeing Standards (DFES 1997), Moser Report (Moser 1999), Curriculum 2000 (DFES 2000), Success for All (DFES 2002), Foster Report (Foster 2005), Leitch Review of Skills (Leitch 2006), Raising Standards, Improving Life Chances (DFES 2006), FE and Training Act (LSC 2007), Raising Expectations (DFES 2008). The focus of these prescriptive initiatives was to position the responsibility for skills development, and the deficits identified in the workforce of Britain, within the remit of the FE curriculum; deficits being identified in institutional performance, human and relative world economic competition terms. In more recent times Government has funded the Learning and Skills, Improvement Service (LSIS), as a body responsible for raising the performance of the FE sector. Adding further emphasis to raising standards this Quango, is responsible for the provision of additional funding from the Skills Funding Agency to deliver programmes of institutional improvement, focussed on enhanced skills learning. Stronach (1989) coined the term “policy hysteria” (in Avis 2009:653) and given the extent of past and continuing current directives such as the Wolf Report (DFE 2011), it might appear that the neglected middle child (Foster 2006) and the PCE curriculum are, critically, being instrumentally micro-managed.

## **2.8: Global competition, capitalism and dominant curricular agendas**

Driving the agenda of, 'improving the skills of the nation', is the view that the world is a competitive place, with adversarial country pitted against country; that we are enduring: "an increasingly competitive environment where old and new competitors consistently 'up the ante' in pursuit of competitive advantage" (TLRP 2008b:4). The TLRP team use the terminology of, 'Creating a war for talent', and, 'ripping up the level playing field', (2008b) when describing the growing economies of the second (developing) and third (under-developed) countries and its impact on the first world (developed). The view that economies with lower cost labour and resources can reduce the standard of living and lifestyle of the wealthier states becomes the political mantra, and an imperative for change. The curricula of FE, HE, and the workforce of developed states, feeling under threat, gives impetus to curricular investment which addresses world human capital (Putnam 1995, 2000), whilst also having due regard for financial, physical, social and natural forms of capital. In political circles, the debate over wage/price competition on a global scale, has translated into a need for higher productivity and greater efficiency in British Industry. I contend, that in FE curricula, this dominant view has not resulted in developing the innovation and effectiveness of students, but has promoted curricula which emphasises efficient workforces and demotes the idea of achieving a cohesive society. Dominant curricular policy, I conclude, rests on a (divisive) "target and audit culture" (TLRP 2008a:29), where an over use of "outcome based curricula can have potentially damaging effect, if used in an overly prescribed way" (Maher 2004:53).

## **2.9: The adult remedial and 'second chance' curriculum**

In the unique and specific context of adult students the agenda of Institutional FE is considered appropriate, in political terms, for a range of purpose. These include remediating poor skills (up-skilling), and provision of skills for moving between jobs and work-related specialisms. Remediation also includes providing learning opportunities for those with a range of abilities, mental and physical. It further provides a capture point for those with prior difficulties, who have reached an age beyond compulsory school requirements of attendance.

These all have wider implications consistent with individual levels of personal agency and an ability to progress and to live an independent life. In both an enabling and challenging sense institutional FE provision works to assist students with transitions, from rudimentary coping skills, to moving on and up; students might therefore expect an institutional FE education to develop the factors of helping with independence, getting a job, and/or finding either another, or a better paid job (Simm et al 2007). The research by Simm et al (2007) raises concerns about vulnerable persons in society thus:

*“Early leaving was more likely to involve learners who were recorded as disadvantaged according to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), this was common to both age groups (16-18 and 19+). A significant proportion of cases also involved drop-out from a course either at or below the level of the learner’s existing highest qualification.”*

And;

*“Among those aged 16-18, cases of early leaving were significantly more likely than completions to involve learners from non-white ethnic backgrounds, and learners who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) before starting the course. Cases of early leaving among learners aged 19+ were more likely to involve learners with a long-term health problem or disability and learners studying courses at below Level 2.”*

(Simm et al 2007)

The nature of this research, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007 involving a telephone survey of 2180 FE leavers, suggests institutional FE is more aptly a ‘parking area’ rather than educative (TES 2011). It is not the remit of this thesis to deal with such diversity, however, it will pay significant attention to learning difficulties which participants identify as having interfered with their progress, and the second chances provided in such courses as Access to Higher Education.

## **2.10: Distance and part-time institutional curricula as an adult alternative**

In contrast to Institutional FE, the distance curriculum offers a different pathway to growth. The accessibility and flexible nature of delivery enables adult students to pursue current job and career aspirations at one and the same time, through flexible study patterns outside of working hours. Institutional FE

competes with this provision by offering evening courses with fixed attendance hours whereby the student must attend; (normally), on a fixed day and time.

In an article for the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, Matthews (2007) remarks: “staff who are prepared to give up one evening a week to learn something new will also perform better at work — whatever their choice of subject”, and, “as many as 45% (of employers) say it has had a beneficial effect on how they do their job” (CIPD:2007). Night schools, part time, and blended learning approaches, day release, block release, or a mixture of methods, has, for many years been adopted by employees, unemployed, leisure and career changing students, as a means of development and change. Lifelong learning and the demands for economic survival co-exist with the desires of adults to grow (Jarvis 2006). Figure 4 (Gibson 2011), can be applied to a range of curricula and delivery modes, yet it provides an important commentary about and for these part time students.

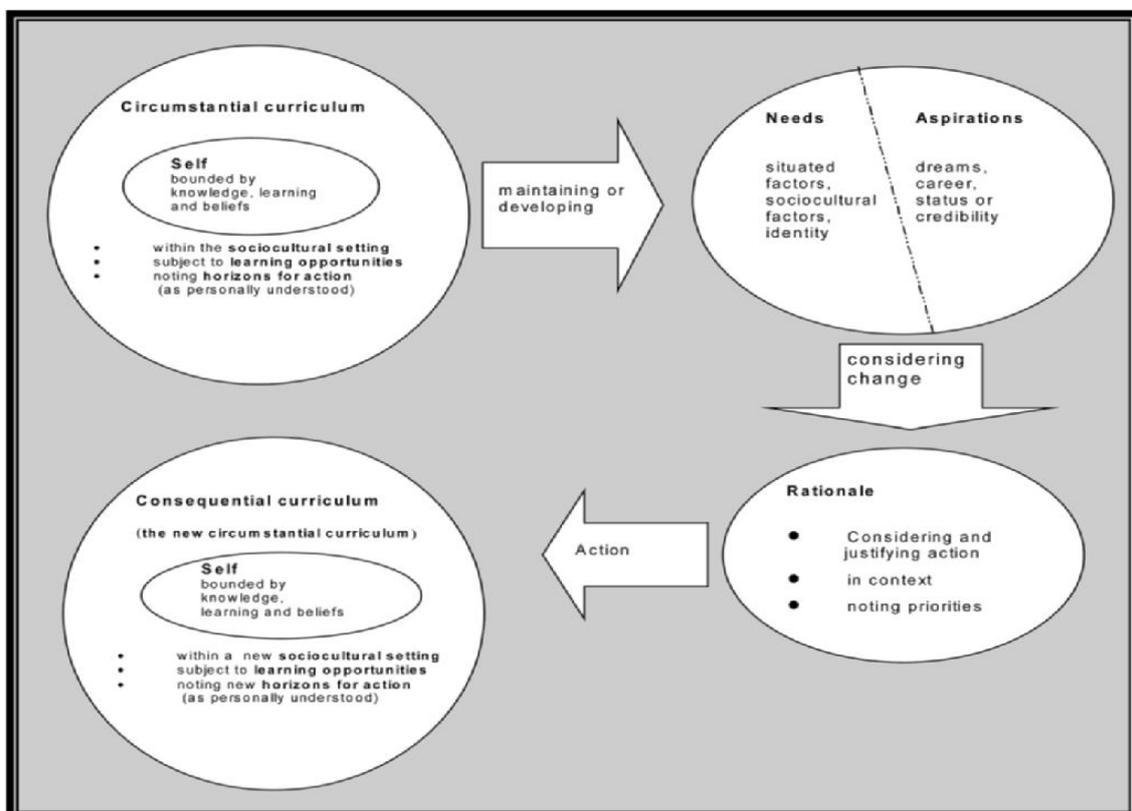


Figure 4: The new theoretical model: deciding on action. The circumstantial to the consequential curriculum (Gibson 2011:335)

The circumstantial curriculum outlined by Gibson (2011), suggests that we come to know our relative position within the context of work. Reflections on future needs and aspirations create emergent desire to become more advanced and over time, we rationalise the need for developmental action, using the context of work and career. Through the deliberate act of signing up for a course of learning, we are exposed to more than was expected, and whilst still bound by an enduring sense of self, move to consider opportunities beyond the boundary of work. It is thus possible to conceive of students reflecting upon their circumstances as both a need to keep pace with change, and to move beyond current level of assumed agency and status.

Although Gibson (2011) refers to a concept which he calls the circumstantial curriculum, it appears that the circumstances are closely related to that which the student is able to aspire toward i.e. identity and agency are bounded (Simon 1982).

### **2.11: Adult identity: life and work experience seen as a curriculum**

How a person has lived their own life and is able to recount their experience is symptomatic of identifying how the self has arrived at the present day.

Resonant reflection suggests:

*“The self, coherent, bounded, individualized, intentional, the locus of thought, action and belief, the origin of its own actions, the beneficiary of a unique biography.”*

(Rose 1998:3)

Employment can be contributory to both imposed and chosen individual development which influences sense of identity; being valued for the stability it can offer to self (Giddens 2004) and the esteem derived from being able to make an economic contribution to the well-being of self, and the upkeep of dependents. In wider and critical terms, however, self-identity Knowles (1970) argues is derived from experience. Knowles (1970) continues that: “if that experience is not being used then adults feel rejected” (1970:50); moreover, he claims that experience closes down self, such that we become less open minded, and more habitual in adulthood. In contrast, social science contends that we are not just concerned with self when establishing an identity, but also

with realising our connections with social groups. In this respect, the social norm of having a job, working with others and making a contribution provide a basis for movement, and allow us to find and know 'our place' in society. Distinctive definitions beyond the social and amongst theories of the self suggest that we employ our own agency to negotiate a place for this sense of self-identity; where we bring together our personal with the social environment, and where we are able to create and recreate our identity (Giddens 2004).

## **2.12: Curricula and lifelong learning – a summary**

This chapter has reviewed a range of texts relevant to APCE curricula as a dominant force in the delivery of lifelong learning. It critically points to the structure, range and diversity of student issues embraced by curricula which have a politically prescribed *raison d'être*, yet potentially a more complex application by students. The preceding text argues that contemporary curricula have prescribed modes of delivery based upon technocratic traditions (Golby 1989), and dominant industrial production models. It paints the picture of being driven by an agenda of competence where doing is dominant (Dewey 1966) and that pursuit of past lost educational opportunity, improving life chances, and increasing income, in a competitive local and global economy, has become ideologically dominant in contemporary British APCE, and more overtly evident, in FE and Distance learning offerings. In HE, new factors indicate that there are risks for universities in becoming institutions for mass degree delivery, whilst concurrently and separately being defined as seats of research and higher learning. The separation of HE as distinct from other APCE, provides contemporary challenges which are presently unfolding and where curricula, through finding a 'widening participation' place in mass degree HE, has yet to be fully revealed.

In this context the next chapter will consider adult transformation themes and the layers of complexity added by looking more closely at and contrasting, instrumental, mechanistic, and communicative (Habermas 1984) implications for adult learning, with agency and identity and more humanist notions of transformation.

## **CHAPTER 3: ADULT TRANSFORMATION THEORY: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This second literature review chapter will develop, analyse and critique the thematic perspectives of transformative theory. Extensively available, the literature spans a range of perspectives from behavioural and sociological notions of identifiable stages in adult development, to the more complex cognitive psychological factors of holistic critical awareness, to the humanistic and spiritual elements of consciousness and self-respect.

The literature analysis will critique these themes and perspectives in relation to the potential they have in explaining how meaningfulness might be supported in adult students, and conclude by examining to what extent adults might achieve understandings about their own sense of agency and transformed identity, via the educational structure of lifelong learning curricula. The chapter will also review empirical studies which have looked at the lifelong learning experiences of adults. The analysis will discuss the contribution of other research; evaluating whether transformation claims have been established as an important feature of engagement.

### **3.2: Theme 1: stages in adult development**

This section defines and explores the exponents of theory who support a staged approach to adult growth and development. At the interface of the biological, sociological, and psychological, theory proposes a range of ideas, models, and concepts which assert homogeneously identifiable natures and trajectories to the human life course.

#### *3.2.1: Transformative maturation across the life-course.*

Adult maturation can be conceived as an accumulation of a number of periods and layers of life where a combination of circumstances influences the planned or serendipitous nature of life trajectories. What specific factors take primacy in revealing or denying other ways of being, are therefore important for this research. In this thesis, the range of psychological and sociological factors

encountered by the participants is expected to be contributory to any transformative well-being achieved via confrontation with curricular structures.

The motivations for educational self-development can be conceived as both critically emergent and self-created, both planned and imposed, both endured and sought out. Despite such diversity, theorists seek to find patterns and motivations for adult trajectories, from reflections on childhood, to the beginnings of career and mid-life, and in adulthood, from adolescence to old age.

Erikson (1959: 1963) for example is best known for the formulation of stages of development, throughout the entire life course. His contribution investigates underlying motivations in adult development and considers, in binary representations and through empirical observational research, how sense of self in adolescence, generation of meaningful relationships in young adulthood, feelings of accomplishment in middle adulthood and fulfilment in later life, might contribute to self-narrated identities in adulthood (Wilt et al 2010). Bauer et al (2005) suggests that the search for psycho-social wellbeing and the search for redemption from past actions are more evident in adult stages of human maturation. Bauer et al (2010) therefore critically contends that we self-narrate both the positive and negative experiences of life, making amends for the bad and celebrating the good in that which is affectively and memorably influential. In contrast, others play a part in our lives and education in adulthood might well be a stage in life, where self-development is also pursued for the benefits it delivers to dependents and connected others. The existence of characteristics or stages in adulthood is empirically contentious and moreover, the potential for change from 'selfish' satisfaction to selfless generativity might also be criticised as both highly individual and dependent upon the biographical experiences of the person under analysis: in short we live different lives.

Kegan (1994) extends Erikson's views to embrace factors which influence intrinsically understood sense of own power, influence, and control. He refers to a constructive developmental framework of five stages which he calls orders of

the mind. He takes Piaget's four stages adding a fifth, and distinctively adult, order of consciousness as detailed in Table 2.

Stage	Piaget's construction	Kegan's construction of consciousness
1	Sensory motor intelligence	Fantastical and illogical mind
2	Pre-operational thought	Sovereign mind
3	Concrete operations	Socialised mind
4	Formal operations	Self-authoring mind
5 (adult)		Transideological and self-transformative mind

Table 2: Comparison of Piagetian theory to Kegan's construct of consciousness (adapted from Kegan 1994:19).

Kegan theorises that stages of development are about changes experienced in the subject-object relationship. He states:

*"What I mean by "object" are those aspects of our experience that are apparent to us and can be looked at, related to, reflected upon, engaged, controlled, and connected to something else. We can be objective about these things, in that we don't see them as "me." But other aspects of our experience we are so identified with, embedded in, fused with, that we just experience them as ourselves. This is what we experience subjectively—the "subject" half of the subject-object relationship."*

(Kegan 2010: 2)

The staged relationship of self to the agency we have is thus, in part, determined by what we choose to reflect upon. What we are, what we do, the relations we have, the decisions we make, and the meanings that we attribute are influential upon identity. Despite this complexity the meaningfulness derived from seeking out, achieving and thriving from activities and associations which are controlled by the individual, structure, provides the framework through which control can be exercised. Thus, the subject is the controller but is also the subject of control through acceptance of the use of structure

The relevant adult stage in Kegan's (1994) work, are those which he also describes as the institutional (fourth order) and the inter-individual (fifth order). These refer to subjective views of self-authorship, identity and ideology. These are, objective views of interpersonal relationships and mutuality (institutional stage) and: "the inter-penetrability of self-systems" in the inter-individual stage

(Kegan in Brock 2010:124). In less dense terms, the developmental stages referred to are the growth and the appearance of the socialized mind, the self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind. Kegan (1982,1994) argues, moreover, that when we get to the edge of his proposed fourth order, humans start to lose the whole (past) picture and retain only part of the data which created an experience. In this sense, self-authoring, (which fills in the self-storied biography from an individually subjective angle), recognizes self-partiality as objective, yet is aware (in order to move to the fifth order), that it has also fabricated a sense of self. Kegan (1982) argues that we become a self-transforming self, and through reflective explanation to self, we are more able to deal with contradictions and able to live beyond the need to defend a particular point of view. Kegan thus suggests that contradictions can be accommodated and is embraced by, what Elias (1997) describes as, “the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of world views and the specific capacities of the self” (p4). In critical terms, Kegan relies upon cognitive growth through stages as the basis for the development of adult capacity to become critically self-reflective (Kegan 2000). More pragmatically, he ignores human stubbornness, the inability to see alternatives, ego flaws and the impact of socialisation, in relation to stereotypes. The extent and capacity of adults to see that they are responsible for own action or inaction through staged maturation, is also complex. At the level of the general we might argue, that which appears to us is not what we truly comprehend; equally the selfish self might ignore, by choice, what is painful to confront. In this sense we can critically argue that adults enhance and deepen perceptive capability through the life-course.

Arguably, adults derive a sense of status from quantity of income, position and responsibility levels at work and at home and critically compare self to others, rather than consciously contemplating their stage of maturation. Here we might say that reflecting on and realising growth through maturational stages is a fallacy; that there is considerable empirical evidence in society, of mature people without such desires and that, critically, doing well in life, might be serendipitous; inconsequentially relevant to right place, right time and nothing more. It can be equally argued that what we are educationally exposed to might

also be a function of serendipity. Critically, the nature of the curriculum encountered might be of equal importance to the stage of maturity. Habermas, (1984) for example, points to instrumental and communicative forms of learning as having altogether alternative purpose and outcomes and suggests:

*“Instrumental learning is about controlling and manipulating the environment, with emphasis on improving prediction and performance. Instrumental learning centrally involves assessing truth claims—that something is as it is purported to be. Communicative learning refers to understanding what someone means when they communicate with you. This understanding includes becoming aware of the assumptions, intentions and qualifications of the person communicating.”*

(Habermas 1984:59)

It is difficult to establish what we might take from a lifelong learning encounter, and whether this is differently unique in the more mature stages of adulthood.

Maslow’s (1954) ‘Hierarchy of Needs’, is, perhaps, one of the most significant and widely quoted stages of development, models and theory relative to ‘reaching for a higher ideals’. Commonly seen as a model of human motivation, it professes that there is a structure to human desires, which informs realisations of growth and well-being. Maslow (1954) provides a model of this and a structured view, in (adapted) diagrammatic form (see figure 5).



Figure 5: After Maslow (1943) Hierarchy of Needs

In empirical terms this model suggests adults strive for movement upward through the hierarchy, across the life-course. In critical terms the model simplifies growth and is taxonomic in nature. Classifying human statuses ignores that proposed lower order status needs are to be fulfilled before higher order, yet it is conceivable (and personally observable) to note that humans put aside lower order factors, in sacrifice for those deemed higher. Equally, Maslow (1954) might be accused of creating a taxonomy which purports to exemplify what humans 'should' seek in life, rather than what they do. Human motivation must therefore be seen in the circumstances of its diverse existence where, to want or need to change depends upon what one desires; what one dreams about achieving for self, which is diversely relative in importance to own life, and in realising the degree of agency deemed by an individual to be necessary for successful existence.

### *3.2.2: Reflecting upon meaning for greater agency in the future*

Levinson (1978) proposes that there are four periods in the human life cycle, childhood (0-20), early adulthood (17-45), middle adulthood (40-65) and late adulthood (60+). These are further broken down into stable and transitional periods (Levinson 1978) forming nine stages; early adult transition (17-22), entering the adult world (22-28), the age 30 transition (28-33), settling down (33-40), the mid-life transition (40-45), entering middle adulthood (45-50), age 50 transition (50-55), culmination of adulthood (55-60). This author's work considers and conceives of that which causes individuation, construction of the inner self, the imagined world and the search for the needs of self, as separate from the demands of the external and everyday world. In and amongst these considered periods/stages is what he describes as the stable and transitional periods, such as the stage popularly known as 'adult mid-life crisis' (Levinson 1978). Critically, these concepts point again to the difficulties when generalising and proposing the existence of a singular life-course theory, drawing us to the view that existence of specific generic pathways is dubious, and biographical progress is diverse. The title of this author's work, "The Seasons of a Man's Life" (Levinson 1978) gives away a particular emphasis, that of its concentration on males, and thus reifies inherent critical claims of gender bias. An important

justification for this critique of the theory is the timing of the research and the buoyant socio-economic circumstances prevailing in the west throughout the 1970s and 1980s; those circumstances being less evident in contemporary times. In contrast, the turbulence of unemployment, globalising business interests, increasing populations, growing concern for inequalities and social cohesion are amongst the growing concerns of contemporary Britain; temporal transferability thus becomes an adjusting issue. The dreams of what is attainable and achievable by an adult individual are arguably shaped by the temporal nature of the current sociological and economic circumstance.

Competitive economic factors and an empirically evident consumerist society shape present desire, yet may not answer what we need to feel fulfilled. Feeling 'connected' to human kind is but one view that says we have to accept that we cannot exist in isolation; that society needs structure to function and that we must dream of our future wants and needs in the context of an interdependent state of being and moral democratic justice beyond self, imposed by structures which mandate self-regulation. Alternatively, a future view of an individualistic and even more competitive world could be contemplated; where being business 'savvy' and being well paid sublimate morality thus pursuing educational self-improvement across the life-course.

Moral growth can be considered an important staged movement issue; that we must know right from wrong as we mature. Kohlberg (1981), for example, contends that a "cognitive-conflict model of change" (Crain 1985:16) is important, in the a-priori developmental stages of adult moral growth. Kohlberg (1981), who also works in and from a Piagetian tradition, describes three periods (as levels) and six stages across the life-cycle (Table 3). Although the earlier period stages are important for children to begin to develop understandings of rules, right and wrong, and that later, singular views of right and wrong become increasingly disputable, in period two, (level three) Kohlberg (1981) contends that motives for action move beyond (child-like) 'deal making' between parties: that adult feelings for others change the person's outlook from simple compliance, to a considered relativistic approach. In level four this view

expands to acceptance of the need to obey the rules of society, and in level five to uphold what a 'good' society should embrace.

Period	Level
1 Period of pre-conventional morality	1. Obedience and Punishment 2. Individualism and exchange
2 Period of conventional morality	3. Interpersonal relationships 4. Maintaining the social order
3 Period of post-conventional morality	5. Social contract and individual rights 6. Universal principles

Table 3: Stages of Adult Moral Growth. (Adapted from Kohlberg in Crain 1985)

In adult specific respects, what should be present in a fair and just society is compared to what is. Kohlberg additionally suggests that we reflect upon rights, fairness, justice and democracy as good causes and values for societies. In the final maturational period 3, level 6, he relates to the development of dignity for all and moreover proposes the contentious view, that dignity is and can be a cause which might involve infringing given laws imposed by wider society. Such examples as Gandhi and Martin Luther King are cited as "level six" (Crain 1985:7, Merton 1968). Whilst Kohlberg (in Crain 1985) denies that the foregoing is a universal model of maturation, particularly as he claims that he observed societies and regions which did not move to, or beyond, level three, he suggests that the moral movement by adults to higher levels was desirable and should be encouraged through being a structured part of a person's education.

Kohlberg's (in Crain 1985) theory adds a range of social dimensions of humanistic concern for others which expects more from the person than the British capitalist system itself might portray. Moreover, he suggests that moral 'rightness' changes across the life-course, and cognitive-conflict models create dissonance and that cognitive turmoil, and by deduction, processes of self-resolution, may also be implicated. In criticism, the model proposes that conflict has the effect of creating 'good' change, and in this respect the theory can be accused of over-simplifying what is learned from such episodes. Moral right is clearly more complex and diverse than simply pronouncing what is and what

generates upward movement and conversely, what is irrelevant in dogmatic forms of Western enterprise, related education. As a specifically critical example, civil disobedience is often pursued by those seeking social equity, yet the moral guidance of reflecting upon and about subversive action entails moving amongst and balancing self, and contestable notions of what is (or might be) deemed democratic (in social equity terms).

### *3.2.3: Child to adult: memories and self-doubt*

Piaget (1953), given that his work on cognitive growth centred on child development, seems distinctively out of place in research about adult identity and agency. In contrast, his research into ontogenesis across the earlier years has been supplemented by his later commentary on the impact of social environments across later developmental stages (Piaget 1972). Piaget (1953,1972) contends that developmental stages continue albeit at differential rates into adulthood. In his considerations of transitions from adolescence to adulthood he suggests that we learn to: “destroy the present (society), in order to elaborate better ones” (Piaget 1972:159). This suggests adults have the capacity to reflect upon, move from and between, simplicity, (a self within a society with distinctive and objective classifications and taxonomies), to complexity, (a self within a society of potential alternatives), through proposing and testing hypotheses of a future self, in a future imagined existential state. Moreover, he contends that this occurs irrespective of whether we have experience or knowledge of that hypothetical state. In this way, he proposes that intelligence is not an innate internal characteristic of an individual; that it is having, and confronting, life experiences, which shapes and develops the degree of agency of the adult (Piaget 1951).

In critical terms, Piaget (1951) applies a range of concepts of child development from early differentiation of self from objects, through to later, hypothetical thinking, without considering how these factors might also proceed across the whole of life. His child applied concepts, such as adaptation, assimilation and accommodation, for example, are nevertheless relevant in the research of adult capacities to realise change; adjustment of schema being also important in

establishing how adults might adjust perception across the lifespan, and importantly, the extent to which adults are more effectively and affectively able to realise others' points of view. This is suggestive of maturational stages being a developmental continuum of egocentrism to altruism. Comparative evaluation of Piaget's work suggests that whilst the foundations of youth 'set up' the individual for future performance there might be further developmental stages that are not comprehensively explained by the movement from concrete action to iconic autonomy.

Amongst the given and empirical knowledge that adult experience grows through the life-course, is the view that having experiences provides not just a subject but also a context in which the experience occurred, and thus a contextually specific and knowable incident upon which to reflect (Brookfield 1995b). Circumstances of relative success through to abject failure can thus have a critical bearing upon how we might reflect. Freud (2001), in this vein conceived of the mind being comprised of three systems, the ego (the conscious mind), the superego (ego-ideal and conscience), and the id (inherited instincts), in his explanation of the stages of personality. His theory, borrowed from physics terminology (Psychodynamic theory), contends that energy is never lost or gained within a system, but moves around. In the personality, Freud (2002) suggests, energy moves from one emotion to another; from one motive to another; that energy which is blocked from being expressed is displaced upon a substitute, and that the differing blocks experienced explains differences between personalities and thus justifies diversity and individuality. Freud (2001) goes on to explain that the continuous conflict between ego, superego and id creates defence mechanisms, primarily unconscious, that work to distort or deny intrinsically held conceptions of individual reality. This concept is valuable in investigating repression, projection, reaction, regression, denial, rationalisation or displacement and whether engagement in APCE, is contributory to developing a balance between these three systems.

### 3.2.4: Education fit for adult staged developmental purpose

Educational development, as a pathway of choice, can be chosen consciously for a reason and regarded as a pathway where issues of personal importance can be addressed. Education which commences from and proceeds to the singular objective of raising competence is therefore critically ignorant of diverse student objectives, unless it embraces individuals as valued and diversely motivated beings.

In seeking educative correction, development, or change, adults will, I suggest, seek provision which is relevant and specifically aimed at their imagined needs. Knowles (1970,1973,1975,1980,1984) suggests, in response to such need, that adults develop along multiple dimensions simultaneously, however, the core principles of his theory of andragogy state, “adults are most ready to learn when the learning meets an immediate life need” (Knowles 2005:223). The distinctive difference of Knowles to previously discussed literature is that he identifies a developmental stage which is uniquely adult. Knowles (1984) uses a criticism of the application of pedagogy, (conceived as the delivery of a child style of learning) in adult education, to justify his Andragogical model. He suggests the assumptions made about teaching in a pedagogical way are not distinctively appropriate in adult teaching and learning, and that five features make an Andragogical approach more effective and meaningful. These are:

1. *Self-concept: Arrival at a sense of acceptance about self-direction in life.*
2. *Experience: That accumulation of experience becomes a resource for learning.*
3. *Readiness to learn. An adult learns that which he/she needs to function in the real world.*
4. *Orientation to learning. Adults orient toward things they need to know and/or to solve problems.*
5. *Motivation to learn: Adult attitude and motivation to learn moves from the distinctively extrinsic to the intrinsic.*

(Adapted from Knowles 1984:12).

Contemporary critics of the claims made by Knowles point to Andragogy being a style of learning and teaching, rather than a way of being, i.e. that educators merely adapt their style in response to felt assumptions, whilst engaged in adult educational encounters. In the instrumental and democratic style of Dewey

(1966) Knowles (1984) pins his justification on psychological and economic factors that he empirically observed, for example later he says:

*“Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries) but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life and the like).”*

(Knowles in Knowles et al 2005:68)

A sense of balance between adult extrinsic and intrinsic drivers is important in addressing existential circumstances; sense of psychological well-being and purposeful growth should not be ignored, moreover, driving factors need to be critically considered.

Biographical narratives of before and after educational engagement are important in order to establish, contrast and clarify the contribution of work, life and the curriculum employed in adult’s educational experience (as distinct from the preceding factors). Jarvis (2006) provides a diagrammatic view consistent with this aim, reproduced at figure 6.

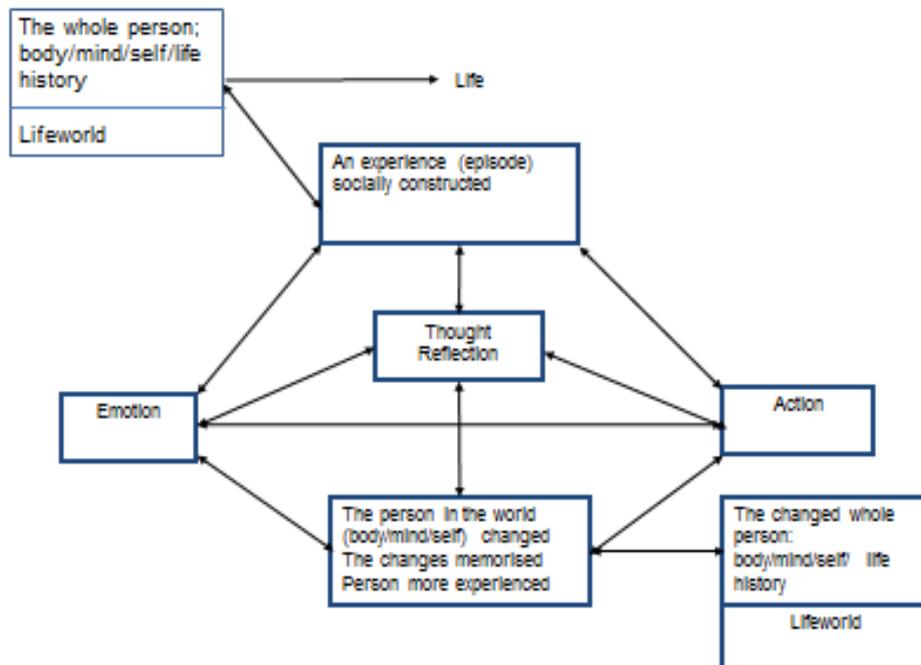


Fig 6: The transformation of the person through experience Jarvis (2006:16)

Jarvis (2006) argues that the adult student is more than a cognitive machine. This humanistic, 'whole person' approach, suggest assimilation and accommodation are influences which change the whole person. Differentially, in adulthood, the strength of learned emotions, comparison with similar and pre-experienced situations and their related consequences, adds complexity and other dimensions to any sense of growing experience and self. The diagram at figure 6 however provides rich possibilities for analysis and determination of how educational episodes have impacted the life-world, agency and identity of research participants.

In figure 6 Jarvis outlines that the adult comes to an experience with a holistic understanding of their place in the world. The experience influences emotions, causes reflection and reframes and adjusts how a person takes action subsequent to the influential experience. He then contends that experience revises memory and generates a new state of being (after Heidegger 1962).

In complementary texts (Knowles et al 2005), we find further development of andragogical themes and variations. Coe et al (2005), for example, develops how adults who have been away from academia exhibit anxiety; she remarks: "They worry about being embarrassed by asking dumb questions or giving dumb answers" (p121) and are concerned for their sense of cognitive dexterity versus younger students.

### *3.2.5: Stages in adult development – a summary*

A range of theorists contend that life-course growth in adults can explain similar generalizable outcomes and that these can be mapped through stages of maturation. Critically, these stages are applied by those theorists as if life itself provided similar homogenous experiences, and resulted in uniformity of reflective change. Jarvis (2006) begins to dispute this notion and adds further complexity by not describing any form of general outcome; rather, he avoids this by explaining that experiences are diverse. In contrast, curricula are delivered and managed in a structured fashion: I contend here that awarding bodies, who provide such curricula, expect a course of study delivered in (say) Aberdeen, to deliver a similar experience to that of Bristol i.e. congruence with AB expectations is achieved across the sector by the application of quality control

measures. In providing this “technocratic, means-ends product” (Golby 1989:30), we/they introduce a ‘constant’ rather than a variable, and might expect these constants to produce consistently similar experiences. Levels, stages, periods and orders in adult growth and change provide an argument for generic similarity, yet their foundation in behaviourism belies their critical provenance, the consequences of socialisation, the diversities of psychologies and the perceptions of the individual, all add to the rich complexity, conveniently avoided by taxonomic life stage theories.

### **3.3: Theme 2: Transformation through critical/political awareness**

This section will explore psychological and sociological theories associated with the second identified theme of critical and political awareness and evaluate the proposal that, in order for a person to change, they need to be aware of what they (currently) are and are not; in essence, having a view about what they might envisage becoming via the employment of educational inputs. In this sense the review will deal with theory, concepts and models which suggest that awareness of self, own circumstances, alternatives to and revisions of current, self, and circumstance, are relevant to the construction of a theoretical understanding of how and if educational pathways might influence identity. The important emphasis of this section is about ‘awareness of’, as distinct from an individual’s tactics employed in the ‘management of their awareness’ which will be defined and explored later in the review; critical awareness thus refers to a felt sense of dissonance between what is and what might be, whilst political refers to individual felt views of external (from self) change causation.

#### *3.3.1: Differing essences of critical and political awareness*

Delivery of teaching and learning occurs in a social context and can be considered a political act (Freire 1970). Freire’s work is generally positioned amongst theory related to informal education, but is applied here beyond its origins, to the institutional world of lifelong learning. His critique of the banking model of education (1970) suggests that the educator makes deposits into a silo (the metaphorical adult student) and fills the silo with information to be stored for later use. In borrowing this metaphor for the process of APCE, we suggest

that the informational deposit given is politically flavoured, with essences of cultural ideologies (Teacher, Region, Institution, Policy etc). Freire (1970), proposes and argues, that we should adopt reflexive opposition to such 'banking education' through teaching others to be more critically aware.

In individualised political terms, bringing to reflective consciousness what caused the student's own status is what Freire might encourage. Seeing the previously unseen is critically important in terms of who 'really' is the oppressor.

In establishing the view that education offers a way out of self or structural oppression, it is important to hear if this is actually so. If education can provide such release, can oppression be recognised in such an a-priori fashion? Equally, dissonance between the present and desired self of participants must therefore be about degrees of pre-recognition of such oppression. Freire (1970) proposes that it might be found in observing complicity with dominant cultural norms and says: "to be is to be like and to be like, is to be like the oppressor" (p30); critical discovery of contradictions in and of the self, and working (educationally) to find a way out or an explanation, in this sense might be considered transformational. Self-affirmation, self and wider human worth, ability to influence, finding motivation to change and receiving ethical guidance, all appear to reside in rejecting hopelessness for self and others, and the recognition of cultural instruments of domination; Freire argues these are the desirable outcomes of education for critical and political awareness and which sit in critical juxtaposition to a 'competence only' agenda.

Freire sees critical and political awareness in the context of imposed powers regulating society: in context, the dominance of a skills proficiency agenda in lifelong learning might be considered such a power. In contrast Brookfield (1995a), identified four major fields of research in adult learning, which work against politically singular, these are;

- Field 1- Self-directed Learning
- Field 2- Critical Reflective Learning
- Field 3- Experiential Learning
- Field 4- Learning to learn

In later work (2005), he expands the political emphasis of fields 2 and 4 and contends that adults have seven critical learning tasks to accomplish, namely:

*“Challenging ideology – revealing inequities.  
Contesting hegemony – challenge to unjust orders.  
Unmasking power – recognition of the play of power.  
Overcoming alienation – realising the possibilities of freedom(s).  
Learning liberation – the release from shackles.  
Reclaiming reason – concern for “deciding values” to live by.  
Practising democracy – acceptance of the failings and inconsistencies of democracy.”*

(In Merriam et al 2007:257)

In order for an adult to realise transformation, Brookfield (2005) contends adults need to become more aware of the potential(s) of a deeper sense of analysis of self and, the world that surrounds them; to comprehend that the (over) familiar can be re-evaluated (Adapted from Deleuze 1993), and more essentially, that the not yet known is a resource for avid critical exploration. Arguably, the first three major research areas in Brookfield’s (1995a) list define modes of learning, yet it is in the fourth where he starts to question what is differentially found in undertakings by students: he proposes that within the learning process we find both the deliberative and serendipitous; moreover, he begins to question diversity of reasoning, assumptions and beliefs. In this way Brookfield sees awareness as the development from inside the person as an awakening of consciousness to political ideology. Critically, any such awakenings have diverse strengths, and are dependent upon whether individuals feel they have materially relevant, positive or negative, consequences, for the self. Rationalising that students have a duty to address the seven tasks above is therefore an imposition from an educational without, rather than a realisation or critical reflection from within.

Critical reflection is about, and dependent upon, what, and how, the student reflects in order to conclude, and decide, that they need to employ education to enhance status and skill set. In experiential terms, what the learning brings from their past and how it relates to the present and the future are diverse, disputable and differentially interpretable. In criticism of Brookfield’s (1995a) research classifications is the possibility that ‘being critical’ is an academic pursuit; that living an ‘ordinary’ life has nothing to do with politics or criticality; that some or

all of the seven factors might be imposed by teaching (and teachers), rather than purposively by students; learning, for them might be considered relatively apolitical. In 1995, for example, Brookfield wrote a seminal text aimed at teachers and said:

*“Our practice is informed by our implicit and informal theories about the processes and relationships of teaching. Our theories are grounded in the epistemological and practical tangles and contradictions we seek to explain and resolve.”*

(Brookfield 1995b:183)

Such commentary suggests that teaching seeks to employ the tool of theory in a specific fashion; that it is employed by an artisan, proficient in the ways of a specific style of learning. He continues by justifying the use of theory to name our practice; to break the circle of familiarity; to account for teachers who are absent; to avoid groupthink (Janis 1972), and to: “locate theory in social contexts” (pp186-188). Critically, Brookfield (1995b), proposes that teachers must model critical analysis and question assumptions openly, but this does not mean that it has the effect of transforming the student. Moreover, we need to question, if such modelling exists and endures in the psyche of the adult student or, if it is seen as a tool to be employed in the context of the student’s academic and/or everyday life.

Brookfield (1995a) perfects his stance and proposes that students should employ the use of critical lenses, to analyse situations. He comments that teachers, learning their craft, should be encouraged to adopt different stances. Everyday life, however, is evidentially not an ‘all consuming’ academic activity; we empirically live in a world where economic and social imperatives (real life) dominate much thinking and rule out the political and critical reflections evident, in the academic world of theoretical contemplation.

In further contrast to Brookfield (1995b), Palmer (1998) takes a humanistic stance. He proposes that exposure to an imposed science based, quantitatively dominant style of education is corrosive; he suggests that life itself has taught adult students that the world is complex and inter-related, with many empirically observed subjective and qualitatively explained contradictions. Palmer (1998),

using a political awakening approach, seeks to encourage students to reflect and to realise a greater value in subjectivity and says:

*“For objectivism the only good idea is an inert idea that like the lepidopterist’s prize the butterfly is no longer elusive and on the wing but has been chloroformed, pinned, boxed and labelled. This way of knowing may render the world lifeless-but that, say its proponents, is a small price to pay for what they call objective truth.”*

(Palmer 1998:52)

In later work he attempts to expose the cleavage between academia and adult experiences and a life lived under the sentence of duty to others, rather than the provision of equal investment in self and others. Akin to Janis (1972), he sees this as a mask; the need to critically and politically expose to oneself, that which needs to be addressed in the pursuit of vocational fulfilment, saying, in poetic verse:

*“Now I become myself.  
It’s taken time, many years and places.  
I have been dissolved and shaken.  
Worn other people’s faces.”*

(Palmer 2000:9)

Palmer (2000), draws upon Jung (1981) and his theories of archetypes and the collective unconscious; in contrast: “Jung focuses not on the heroic figures of mythology, but on the individual challenge that each person faces in becoming heroic in his or her own life” (Murray 2009:109).

Spiritual development is, critically, an ephemeral notion, established primarily by affective and narrative modes of description; the changed person claiming raised critical and political awareness through feeling different about self, others and circumstance. Capra (1975,1984, 2002) justifies this claim and picks up on a point made by Palmer (1998); that of inter-connectedness. This contemporary lead is taken from the theoretical stance and context of eco-literacy, which suggests natural forces have equal relevance to that of scientifically explainable alternatives.

Working between disciplines, Capra (1984) established that the technical jargon within specialisms becomes a barrier to communication between experts in differing fields. His work on breaking down communication barriers is

emphasised in: “Here’s Capra and he is saying that in light of the recent discoveries in quantum physics we have to structure society in a certain way” (1984:43). It is how disciplines work at the edge; how theory becomes communicative to lay-persons; how it becomes a feature of ‘new’ understanding for the (perhaps uninitiated) adult student; how critical political awareness can be raised across the object-subject divide, which proposes a revision of curricula so that they embrace values education.

Concepts of education for sustainability (Stirling 2001, Lovelock 2000, Capra 2002) and the ideals of global prosperity, inexhaustible materialism, consumerism and world peace (Schumacher 1993) contest contemporary educational ideologies; a new politics of world inter-connectedness having ascended to prominence in recent years. Growth of populations, the carrying capacity of the planet and the difference between rich and poor, are but a few of the challenges presented by modern science, which Capra (2002) and others raise; value systems, Capra (2002) argues, require education (and although ecology is not the focus of the research), to bring influence to the curriculum so that it can revise human values toward political and critical awareness of eco-literacy, within and beyond the simplicity of the competence agenda.

### *3.3.2: Critical political awareness – a summary*

This theme began by establishing that adult students start from a point of educational departure into new fields of study, which have outcome expectations of a pre-defined nature; such new fields having the potential to deliver both the known and the serendipitous. Student ways of knowing what they have confronted, in terms of transformative critical and political awareness, is an area for discovery; it is therefore one of the potential interstices between competing perceptions of both apolitical and prescribed lifelong learning agendas. Raising awareness can alternatively be observed as the adult student’s pursuit of their own “hero’s journey” (Campbell 1949). In Campbell’s story, change begins with crisis where:

*“An education that is transformative redirects and reenergizes those who pause to reflect on what their lives have been and take on new purposes and perspectives. The transformation begins when a person withdraws from the world of established goals to unlearn, reorient, and choose a fresh path.”*

(McWhinney and Markos 2003:16)

Authors in this section offer differing perspectives about dealing with the journey into an educational unknown. Freire (1970) focuses distinctively on structure versus agency; Brookfield (2005) on raising the student’s skill and capacity to see, discuss and develop the critical. Alternatively, Palmer (2000) and Capra (2002) focus upon that which may not be critically known by the student, focussing specifically on spiritual humanism and ecology respectively. In summary, it is difficult to conceive that students start out with the expectation that they will know all that passes during a course of learning. It is, however, conceivable, that some of what passes may be familiar to them from experience, allowing both a ‘naming’ and ‘labelling’ process to occur and for realisations about current life to become apparent.

### **3.4: Theme 3: consciousness management**

This theme will introduce and focus principally on Mezirow’s core set of dimensional theories, focussing finally on those related to reflective capabilities, and initially on those relevant to the growth capacity of adult students and student awareness of their potential. It will consider relevant psychological and sociological features of consciousness, how the self-concept is theorised, and how experiences are embraced in the formulation of a changed identity, as defined by a range of his and complementary texts.

Management of awareness is distinctively different to managing the range of student confrontations and crises emerging from mastery of the material and data in a course of learning. Awareness involves consideration by students, of what and how data in a course of learning can effectively permeate, so that it has lasting positive impact. In this sense, the concepts of permeability and/or imperviousness of the student’s psyche discussed above (Palmer 1998), will be further developed, and the commensurate influence of reflection and reflective capacities of adult students discussed.

### *3.4.1: Consciousness management; mechanism or organism?*

Over a range of iterations, Mezirow's theories of transformative learning have developed to contend that, changing perspectives can emanate from differing dimensions. The first dimension is where learning provides educative information and subsequent growth, which builds upon the current knowledge of the student. In this respect, the student is "painlessly" (1994:223) able to make transitions by adding and building upon their existing knowledge through the linking of past and present understandings of their experiences. In the second dimension, learning is described as "painful and epochal" (1985:112) and where, he contends, substantial critical re-evaluation of the self has genesis; where one's thinking and schemas are disrupted and where forms of dissonance (Festinger 1957), are created. Such an assertion implies that the act of learning delivers data and both extrinsic and intrinsic feedback which causes conflict in the adult student self; if epochs engender the birth of such combative ideas and intrinsic tensions, it may be possible to suggest that the encounter itself is the catalyst. Challenging self to develop, Mezirow also argues, is itself a disrupting and epochal experience, which contests what an individual knows, which realises change.

Festinger (1957) argues that conflict generates disequilibrium in, and of, the self, opening up cognitive gaps between what is (experience view) and what might be (belief view). The action taken to resolve the 'gap' between experience and belief results in change, which has the appearance of a quantum leap, rather than the step change, described in the first dimension above. Rationalising Festinger's (1957) view in Mezirow's second dimension, would therefore suggest closing the gap is an attack upon the self-concept and synthesises a paradigm shift (Kuhn 1962). In the diagram (Figure 7) which follows, Mezirow contends that learning has 'how, when and why' aspects wherein meaning is transformed across the student's sense of the known, the new, and the problematic. Learning process types 1 and 2 (Figure 7) are represented as relative to the first dimension (painless) whilst 3 is located in the second dimension (epochal). Theories based on this second dimension, which are argued to elicit more effective approaches to teaching, have been spawned;

these include Kember et al (1999), Cranton (2004), Snyder (2008) amongst others.

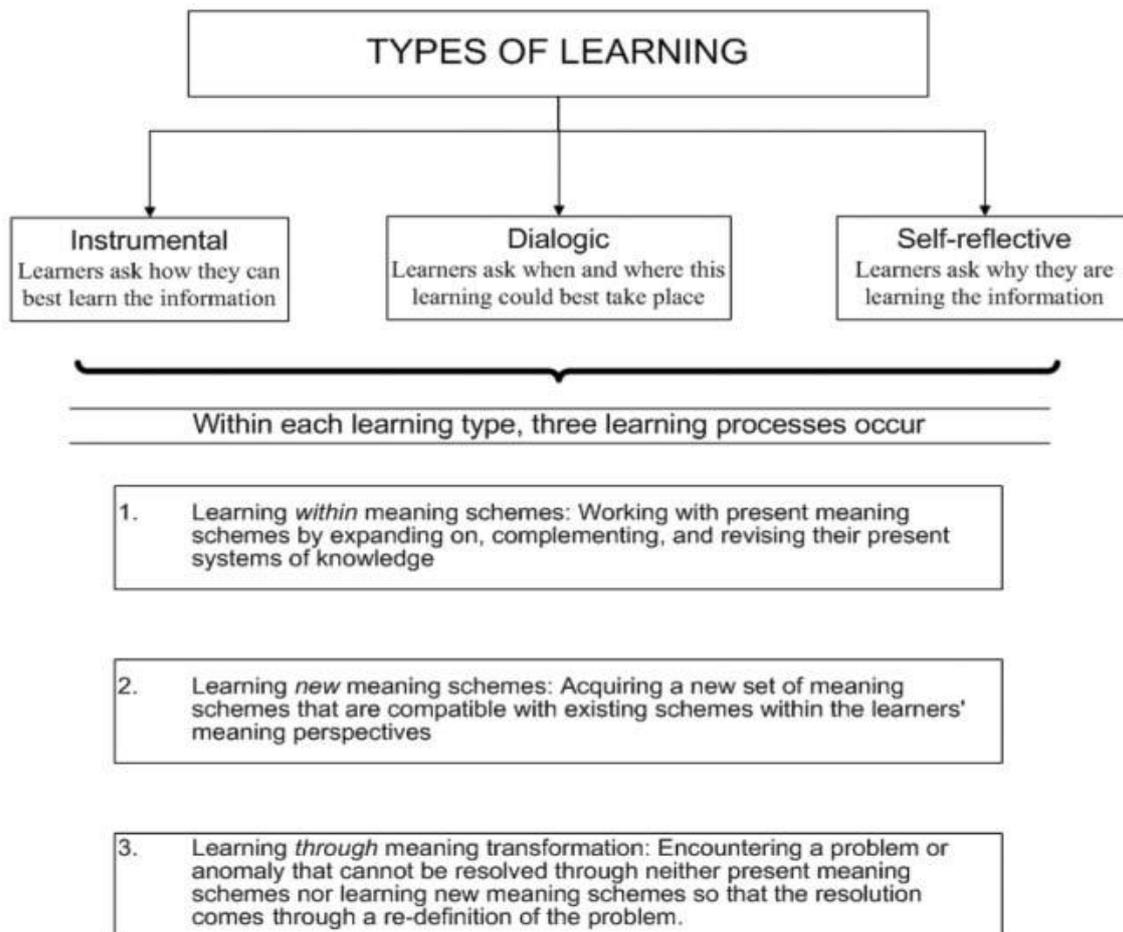


Figure 7: Diagrammatic Representation of Mezirow's (1985) Revised Transformative Learning Theory Kitchenham (2008:111)

Dirkx , in conversation with Mezirow, in contrast, draws upon the influence of curricula directly when saying:

*“Whereas the curricula and instructional processes within higher and adult education have traditionally focused on using the course content to deepen our intellectual or cognitive capacities, consideration of the life of the inner world directs our attention to the imaginative and emotional dimensions of our being, of connecting with and integrating the powerful feelings and images that often arise within the context of our pursuit of intellectual and cognitive growth.”*

(Dirkx et al 2006:128 )

Dirkx (2006) critically suggests that feelings and emotions cannot be isolated in the curriculum encounter; that confrontation with the new, the unknown, and problematic, is an important and relevant factor (of complexity) when (and if)

attempting to raise or enhance consciousness, by challenging current knowledge.

In this respect, Mezirow (1985) draws upon Habermas (1984), where instrumental means to draw upon the prescriptive, controlled, manipulated and intentional environment, whereas communicative learning is purported to provide an understanding of the intentions and nuances of the transmitter. For clarity, Mezirow conflates the practical and emancipatory sub-divisions of Habermas into communicative learning i.e. what someone means when they communicate; some of which will generate emotional responses, as they collide with the present values of the student, which Dirkx (2006) describes thus:

*“That part of our being that shows up in seemingly disjointed, fragmentary, and difficult to understand dreams, of spontaneous fantasies that often break through to consciousness in the middle of carefully orchestrated conversation.”*

(Dirkx 2006:126)

Kegan (2000) is also drawn into agreement with this view, insofar as Mezirow points to his contention that adult critical self-reflection provides the resource upon which, beliefs, values, and feelings can be evaluated. Marsick (in Mezirow 1990), calls this, “challenging self-blinding beliefs” (p40), and “building bridges between insights” (p41).

Amongst the instrumental and dialogic processes (see figure 7), we find an agenda of rationality yet, in the self-reflective, the employment of introspection and/or dialogue between student and others of differing beliefs, we unearth what Taylor (2001) portrays as a: “non-conscious affect; where meaning structures are altered without deliberate rational examination” (p 220). De Sousa’s view (1991) is more radical when he says that, “No logic determines salience: what to notice, what to attend to, what to inquire about. And no inductive logic can make strictly rational choice” (p223). Roth, however (in Mezirow 1990), contends that we should question irrationality by examining whether students seek to approach or avoid questions and problems of a ‘conflictual’ nature when saying: “Do they (students) entice themselves out of bed in the morning with thoughts of what they will enjoy doing (approach) or, do they remind themselves of the undesirable consequences of staying in bed”

(avoidance)? (p121). Mezirow (1990) would suggest both are relevant and that for some, “education is an attempt to escape from the wounds of the past” (p206) and overcome the trauma of its recollection (Levine1997, Janet 1907); that moving ahead is to therapeutically heal one’s self-concept. These and other concepts introduced by Habermas (1984), together with those developed by Mezirow, offer two distinctive factors, namely the instrumental (structural), which is of significance to this thesis insofar as they relate to curricula as a structure, and the communicative (reflective), insofar as they relate to transformational experiences.

#### 3.4.2: Mezirow’s transformative theories

Mezirow (1978) contends that transformative learning starts out, and develops from, the following elements (in hierarchical order):

- (a) *A disorienting dilemma.*
- (b) *Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame.*
- (c) *Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change.*
- (d) *Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.*
- (e) *A critical assessment of assumptions.*
- (f) *Provisional trying of new roles.*
- (g) *Planning of a course of action.*
- (h) *Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans.*
- (i) *Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.*
- (j) *A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective.*

(Mezirow 1978:123)

Given that (identity) disequilibrium is Mezirow’s (1978) starting point, it might be argued that change could be achieved through adaptation and assimilation by the individual. Feuerstein (2002) suggests that this is action based upon past experience and intelligence. Theory, in this fashion, suggests that assisting students with adaptations to an/new environment is a purpose of education. From a psychological, Gestalt based view, disturbing the self-concept, however, can cause disequilibrium of the individual beyond that of the purely academic, and pervade the wider sense of worth and esteem (Tice 1997) and ultimately, identity. The experience of transformation, Mezirow (1978) argues, is realised as both adaptive and assimilative and when coupled with reflective thinking and discontent for the present status quo, the student is moved into actions such as

personal comparison of self, to a better self, and self, to others. Critically, however, Imel (1998) argues that transformation is not the singular goal of education; that not all students are predisposed to transformation nor is the teaching environment able to consistently deliver. Education might therefore be better and more meaningfully described by adults, as the place where information and credentials are sought out and gathered, yet in equal measure a range of transformational experiences and consequences are unwittingly amassed.

Dirkx (1998) saw that adult learning was more widely purposive and using Mezirow's theories, postulated that transformative learning was important in consciousness raising, critical reflection, individuation, development, and for making the unconscious, conscious. Ingham and Luft (1955) provide a model which evokes reflective action on and about self and current knowledge and exemplifies the point Dirkx (1998) raises.



Figure 8: The Johari Window. (Ingham and Luft 1955).

The application of this diagram, named after the inventor's first names, Joseph and Harrington, is to make the unconsciously known, conscious; and to provide a focus for the reflective capacity of the originator about what is yet unknown. In this sense, the model is both instrumental and communicative. Where it is used

as a model of/for self or subject area knowledge self-evaluation, the areas are completed by the student as follows;

Area 1 = what I, and others know about me.

Area 2 = what is known about me by others, but not me.

Area 3 = what is known by me, but not known by others.

Area 4 = what is not known by me, or others (what we both know; that we don't know).

The model then draws the reflective attention of the creator to the open, secret and unknown knowledge areas in their life/learning but can also, critically, expose student frailties. Using this educational tool as a metaphor for self-prescribed action is about answering the call, to comprehend the presently unknown. The unknown area can thus be linked to Mezirow's (1978) structure and in respect of the unknown area, to Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (discussed in the next chapter). The diagram in figure 9 emphasises how reflection depends upon the context; context facilitates reflection within a curriculum which is within a particular institutional environment, the synthesis of which, might be considered new and transformative knowledge.

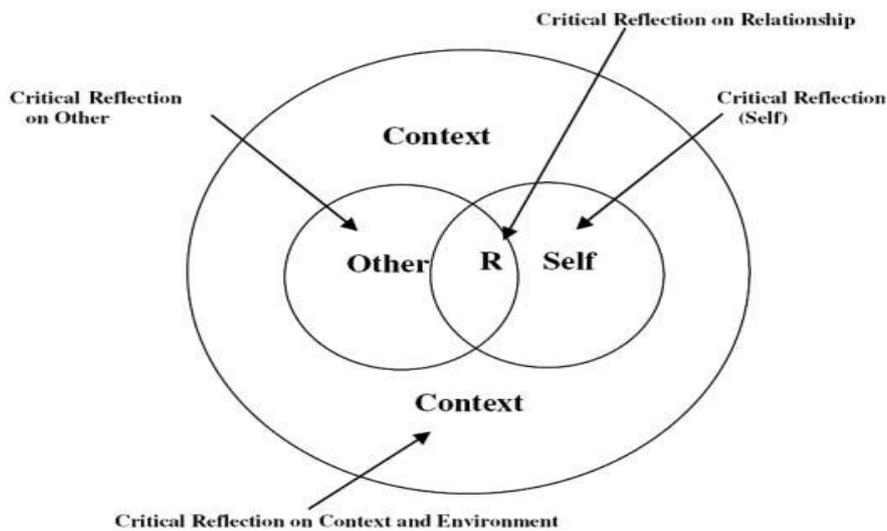


Figure 9: Developing Authenticity as a Transformative Process (Cranton and Carusetta, 2004:276)

Turning finally, in this section, to reflection, Mezirow (1994) expands his theory to embrace differing forms. He locates transformative reflective processes amongst conscientization (a term closely associated with Freire 1970 and a term used to bring consciousness into awareness) and enhanced perceptual

capability. He develops three forms of reflection namely, content, process and premise (Kitchenam 2008:114). Each of these represents a basis upon which instrumental and communicative learning is able to transform. In content and process, transformation is the expectation of change as learning proceeds and knowledge level increases (instrumental), yet Mezirow (1994) and Dirkx (2001) point to premise reflection as profoundly transformative; as “spiritual” (p128) and “messengers of the soul” (p126) experiences, where crises and conflict abound and emancipatory quantum change is inculcated and the unknown revealed.

In the introduction to this chapter, Mezirow (1994) was positioned as the elaborator of the view that we structure our assumptions, and that new experience is assimilated and transformed, by one’s past experience, however, the significance of the expected curriculum and the (perhaps unexpected) paradigm shift of the transformational can be critically positioned as leading to considerable perceptual change. Mezirow (2000) says that “Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind” (p19). He cites Novak when saying: “Perspective transformation represents not only a total change in life perspective, but an actualization of that perspective” and goes on to say; “In other words life is not *seen* from a new perspective, it is *lived* from that perspective” (p24).

### *3.4.3: Reflective capacity, meaning making and identity: Spiritual perspectives*

The concept of reflection, is not new, from modern interpretations of Aristotle (1998), we know that reflection is an essential feature in guiding utilitarian and moral action and that Dewey (1933) and Kolb, (1984) too cite the benefits of learning from this experience. Schon’s seminal (1983) work however, allows for a critical review of the concepts of 1) reflection in action, 2) reflection on action and 3) reflection as action in the context of consciousness management.

Schon (1983) founded his work on the theme of the reflection in action of professionals, and in particular, the concepts developed by him have seen

wider contemporary use in, and beyond, creating, enhancing and encouraging reflective capacities in others. In this 'form' of self-learning, individuals are able to critique any instrumentalism in the given and inductive curriculum and move toward the more self-deductive and thus achieve autonomously constructed realisations which are congruent with the self. Schon's original ideas can be critiqued as an imperative which has been consumed by a genre. For example, Flanagan (1954) who predates Schon, proposes the use of critical incidents to prompt recollection of emotions during an experiential episode, Peters (1994) employs the data (objective finding) method to unearth objective and subjective views, whilst Brookfield (1995b) proposes the exploration of different perspectives by using differing lenses and DeBono (1990), famous for lateral thinking, suggests the widening of perspective consciousness via the wearing of different hats. Reflection itself has thus found a place as a tool for educators to employ, rather than as a natural human occurrence, yet when reflection has emancipatory purpose, the activity can be more positively seen as action in the pursuit of meaning.

In wider criticism and in a Jungian sense, different reflective meanings might be achieved at different life stages. Jung (1995), refers to reflections upon and about challenging self to become 'whole' as an adult, and of the journey toward becoming such, as representative of the archetypal hero's journey, which Murray later described as "being heroic in his or her own life" (2009:109). Critically, however, much of lifelong learning is presented as certification for the purpose of improving income level and not that of becoming wiser, personally heroic or authentically congruent. In contrast, Fromm (1976) argues a moral case for achieving a sense of personal authenticity through the vehicle of 'becoming' (more) educated rather, than the 'having' of an education. Such authentic work on the self-concept, Fromm might argue, is longer lasting, more individually meaningful and consistent with challenging self, to become.

Jung, in spiritually evident fashion, used dreams in his professional practice, proclaiming them as windows in the soul (1997). Here, we might be mindful of students' dreams of 'becoming' and, in Jungian terminology, achieving the

casting off of 'the shadow' (the defeat of the negative counter-ego) of past repression (perhaps educational). Such frustration, which may have previously remained unchallenged, is to structurally re-centre the self and where he contends that this form of confrontation is also to allow the affective re-centring of the spirit; to achieve balance between anima (female in male unconscious) and animus (male in female unconscious). Jung argues that we employ the rational functions of thinking and feeling, and the non-rational functions of sensation and intuition, when pursuing meaning in duality; through this and reflective action, Jung contends we have the potential to come to know self, better. In research, Murray, (2009), employed the Jungian principle outlined when he compared the experiences of students pursuing professional qualifications, through the application of the "hero's journey" model (Campbell 1949). He remarks in his research conclusion that, "these participants have described this spiritual level of understanding (which) can lead to significant, long-lasting growth and change" (p127). Murray (2009) additionally established that the journey was more valid as a shared experience, where others observed the passage of the individual and contributed to the celebration of the experience; he says:

*"Professionals using the Heroic journey model have shown that self-study is not an individual endeavour. Self-knowledge is gained not only through personal reflection and self-assessment, but also through discussion with and feedback from others."*

(Murray 2009:127)

With Kerenyi (2002), Jung continued to explore the mythological nature of the human spirit characterised by the Hero's Journey and the archetypes which he claimed were passed down through the core behaviours and ideas of proceeding generations of humankind. In more contemporary thinking this procession has been theoretically revised, synthesised and defined as Memes (Beck and Cowan 1996). In this theory, what is functionally required by existence is transmitted to the individual by social signs and signals in the environment. Beck and Cowan (1996) suggest that these might be called "geopolitical currents" (p12). In simplified form, the individual scans these currents and positions themselves amongst and in relation to them (Beck and Cowan used colours in their model). The Meme (individual and collective core value

system) is then reflectively compared to self to establish if the individual 'feels' healthy (congruent) or unhealthy (incongruent) in the current environment, which (may) then prompts action. The critical claim beyond Jung's original theories is that Memes allow not just for growth, but also for regression across time and circumstance, and that human feelings of congruence are fluid, dynamic and temporally defined i.e. Beck and Cowan would argue that instrumental and epochal change is more complex than individual's structural and agentive perceptions, implicating environmental circumstance as the culprit.

In summarising and in critique of the Jungian theoretical view, and the propensity of persons to reflect appropriately, we unearth sociological, psychological and spiritual dimensions that integrates and divides both a stage view and that of a changing sense of consciousness, where individuals and society temporally move together or apart. Society is theoretically proposed as providing the prescription for its own temporal norms, where the individual constantly compares, contrasts and recasts their sense of congruence with what is. Critically however Kant (1998) makes such a simple notion more complex by saying: "We cannot know what things are in themselves; we can only know them as they appear to us" (1998:12). Spiritual forms of reflection thus rest on deeper investigation of diverse biographical origins and, moreover, individual perceptions of an apparent nature.

In critical contrast Weinstein (1985) developed a method for measuring, what he called "unforgettable experience recall" (UER), in which he asked participants to remember incidents that provided unforgettable experiences, which by open explication and, more importantly, by internal repetition to the self, and by affective connections, contributed to self-knowledge. In previous research he defined self-knowledge as knowledge of one's character, power, strengths, limitations, and potential (Weinstein 1976), going on to test this by developing courses of learning designed to enhance self-knowledge. Weinstein focussed on dissonance creating factors, flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1994) and the consequent actions taken to reconcile behaviour with feelings. In 2009, Murray,

conducted research on 13 students using the methods developed by Weinstein and comments:

*“Course experiences suggest that self-knowledge development has critical spiritual dimensions. When supported in moving to this deeper, holistic level of self-study, participants’ descriptions of their experiences illustrate their awareness of and appreciation for this mysterious, connecting, and transcendent level of self-understanding.”*

(Murray 2009:127)

Whilst in many ways Weinstein’s approach employs the factors evident in Jungian theory combined with the reflective practice of Schon, and the critical incident approach of Flanagan, these activities, in combination, were critically deliberately applied and directed at purposive teaching to raise consciousness, so it is little wonder that design led to outcome! In both flow and UER is the act of reflection on the past, which clearly influences the perspectives of those involved. Such a view suggests that students are/were carrying ‘baggage’. Baggage are those thoughts which cement current attitudes and Murray’s (2009) contention is that attitude and challenge to present perception of identity, can be drawn out by employing a specific curriculum.

#### *3.4.4 Consciousness management – a summary*

Mezirow, Habermas and Dirkx have been discussed as central to the theoretical positioning of this review and thesis. The instrumental and the communicative have been developed as wholly different approaches influencing student’s identity when undertaking studies in a curriculum. In the case of Habermas (1984) the separate and distinctive view of emancipation in education and the emancipatory potential of education have been conflated with the communicative. The instrumental has been defined and criticised as those factors controlled and manipulated by those seeking to control the educative environment, the communicative being that which cannot or will not be controlled, as it collides with the diverse beliefs of the students that it encounters. In this sense, what emerges from the communicative is presented by theory as epochal and suggestive of unexplainable leaps or changes in students. These may have origin, in part, in forms of reflection, but seem unable to exist in isolation, from evidentially necessary structure and instrumentalism.

In a range of consciousness management theory, opening the student's mind to issues of subjectivity and/or objectivity, coming to know through 'critical incident' style self-analysis are positioned as theoretically contributory to learning as a journey of self-discovery. Jung and the more contemporary theories proposed by the spiral dynamics of Beck and Cowan (1996), contends that reflective capacities can be expanded to embrace the spiritual nature of the learning experience in a curriculum which, with the right environment, can engender consuming flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1994), whilst at the same time, shutting down externally troubled consciousness, to provide a form of reflection, where past personal identity can be cast off, to allow 'becoming' to enter the psyche.

### **3.5: Theme 4: self-regard**

In contrast to the previous fix on consciousness management, the review here has more to say about the therapeutic benefits of forming a positive view about self.

#### *3.5.1: Propositional self-knowledge, consequences and efficacy*

"The person can be seen as a scientist constantly experimenting with a personal experience; for Kelly a person is a form of motion" (Pope and Denicolo 2001:24). This observation about Kelly's work contends that knowledge can be constructed differently (see figure 10); that which constitutes meaningfulness to self, is individualistic and found inside of the self and that those meanings become significant to the student through critical discourse with others (Kelly 1970). The way we make life meaningful, according to Kelly (1970), can be defined as our predisposition to perceive the world in the fashion that we have experienced it. The meaning that an experience generates becomes the present validated truth and to change 'personal truths', requires confrontation with an experience which is sufficiently and alternatively valid.

In figure 10, the person as scientist, (Kelly 1970) is set incongruently amongst the competing factors of development, growth and change, which on the one hand appear contingent and apparently accidental (Idiographic), and which employ highly subjective, non-positivistic methods (Verstehen) to interpret the

world; where he contends that individuals strive for a sense of self-authenticity and derive personal benefit (Utility) from setting a directional life course.

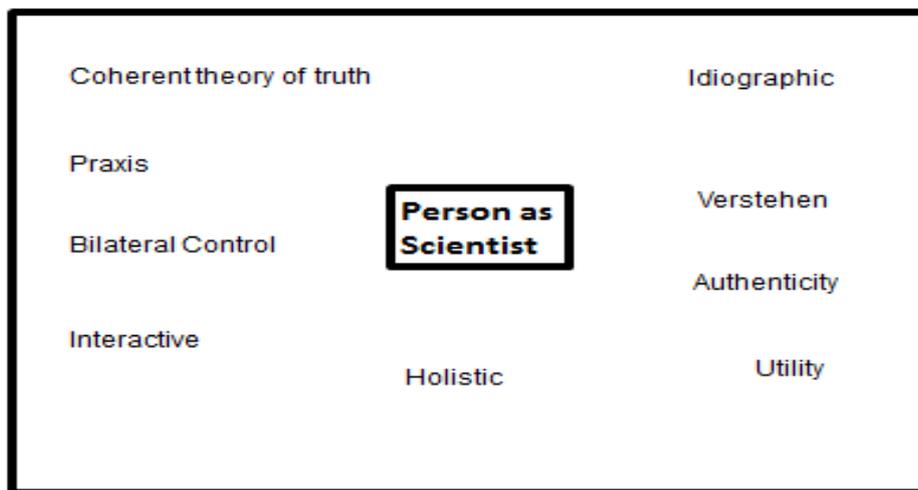


Figure 10: Knowledge as a Construction of Reality (Pope and Denicolo 2001:56)

The employment of this ‘self-made theory’ is then employed in life (praxis) to create an individual and therefore diverse (between individuals) construct of ‘the truth’ which is changed by experience (constantly) through confrontation with others, who can influence and be influenced. Kelly (1970) thus provides a structure to his empirical observation of humans through the application of personal construct psychology. In critical terms, Kelly sets the person amongst a world of diverse influences and contends that we compare ourselves to others in order to establish our self-worth. Critically, such notions assume universal fragility of adult egos, however, in context it proposes a means by which we can examine if adult education can enhance self-confidence.

In contrast, Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory provides the terminology ‘reciprocal determinism’ where attention is paid to a (role) model that is a target for the individual to imitate. This reverence for influential others, in synthesis with Kelly’s view, arguably creates greater complexity, as it narrows the field of view of the individual to the seeking out of attributes (seen in influential others), as a focus for future imitation. Bandura thus contends that attributes have been collected and then are memorised and replicated, to align with the behaviour of

the person being imitated. Although imitative tendencies are generally presented as more significant for adolescent and child role model understandings, the concept has wider application in this review, primarily because it implicates not just a person's sociological environment, but also who persons associate with. Bandura (1977) suggests; that which is imitated, is determined by what is considered worthy of imitation and in turn, that which is imitated, changes the surrounding present environment.

Bandura (1997) went beyond imitation in later research, expanding from social learning to social cognitive theory, wherein he discussed the relationship between the personal, the environment and behaviour and the self-regulation of belief systems, leading to feelings of efficacy.

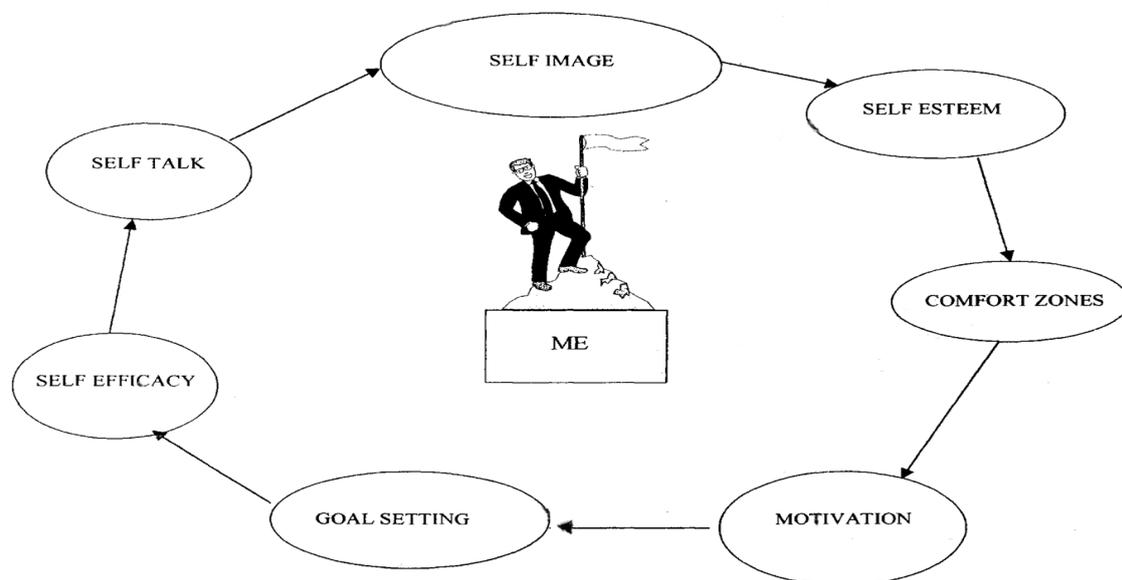


Figure 11: The Efficacy Cycle (Cook 2005)

In the diagram above (Figure 11), originating from my work on youth motivation; I present a model of Bandura's ideas in an attempt to represent and rationalise the circular movement of self-efficacy growth developed by Bandura (1997). In explanation, this model, proposes that receiving evidence of self-worth from others, or from the environment, causes positive inner dialogue, which contributes to the growth of self-image.

Receiving positive academic performance feedback can lead to enhanced inner conversations and self-image growth, which raises self-esteem. It is important in

the critique, to recognise that esteem differs according to the degree of familiarity with the activity in hand, its degree of difficulty, and the acceptability of the sense of challenge involved (depicted as comfort zone). Given that the activity or task and the context of its execution is deemed to be within the individual's scope, then the motivation to complete the task is estimated as high, and the goal of completion is possible. In the completion of the (new) challenge, the feedback from accomplishment feeds feelings of efficacy and so on, in cyclical fashion.

This model and the underpinning Bandura (1997) theory sums up how students might regard education as a catalyst for personal feelings of efficacy growth, and in establishing whether an increased control (Rotter 1954) can be achieved to continue subsequent educational advances.

In criticism, and given that educational encounters involve teachers and other students, we might suggest developmental growth is an obligation felt in the person, rather than given by influential others in the educative process. In contrast, Vygotsky (1978), in much earlier work, contended that growth is more effectively achieved through the involvement of influential and significant others. His Zone of Proximal Development theory (Figure 12) identifies, in constructivist fashion, how positive (teacher) interventions, can enhance personal capability and expand potential.

The central circular zone in figure 12 depicts the developmental potential of the person in unchallenged state. The outer concentric circle depicts the potential of the person when challenged to academically achieve, together with the extent of the potential that would be conceived as achievable by that person, if assisted, coached, taught or mentored to that level. The area outside of both circles represents future potential that cannot yet be entertained by the student and the expansion room available for the coach, teacher or mentor to grow the student's learning and/or potential over time.

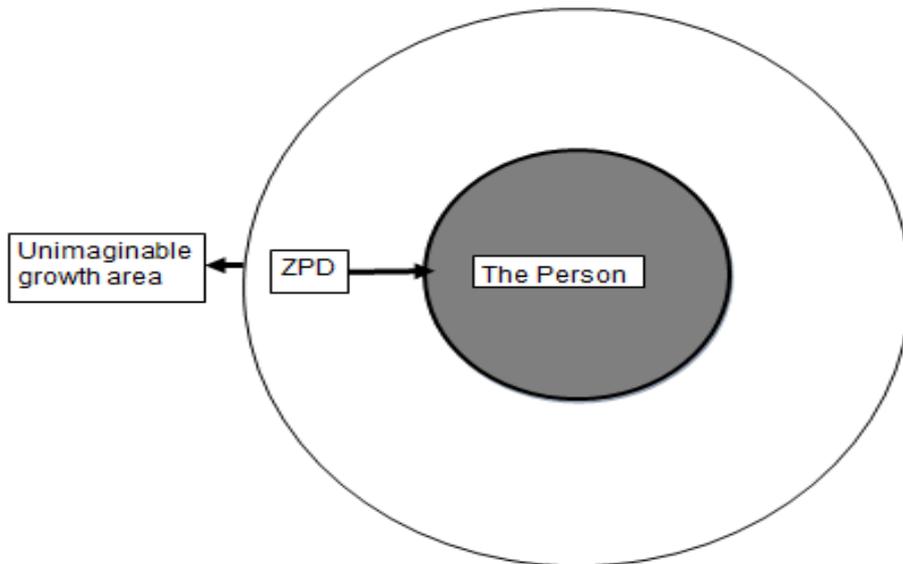


Figure 12: The Zone of Proximal Development (adapted from Vygotsky 1978)

In a different iteration of this theory, Adair (1996) referred to the unimaginable area as the “panic zone”; where the student might go beyond the level of comprehension and be set adrift of commensurate self-esteem. In critical terms, this makes the determination of the size of the ZPD subjectively estimated and individually diverse.

### 3.5.2: Education as therapy

In APCE is the further agenda of remediation; i.e. the acceptance that some skills and competencies wane and others become ascendant over time; that poor levels of credentialed competence might restrict progress, development, and access of persons to growth and opportunity, and that the lack of qualifications, as possessions, may present ‘glass ceilings’ to a person’s ability to contemplate change. Critically, therefore, this denotes dealing with the present, current and likely inadequacies that an individual has, believes to exist, or is likely to encounter in both their educational and subsequent journey; moreover, these inadequacies connote the need for critical therapeutic action by educational bodies.

Rogers (1961), a humanist educator, is renowned for suggesting that we cannot teach another person; we can only facilitate his or her learning, and was an

exponent of person centred psychology. His specific relevance here is in his work on self-actualisation (1951) and his view that a person is the best expert on their self, particularly when it comes to setting, working toward, and achieving own goals; arguing that achievement was relative and dependent on the quality of the environment that a person occupied. Alike to Bandura, a positive self-concept is, in his view, essential for the person to flourish. Moreover, that when the person is in a state of actualising that which they want to be or become, the person feels a congruent sense of self-worth. Developing from this sense of a valuable self is Roger's notion, that positive self-regard can be evident in two differing ways. Unconditional positive regard by others, where the individual is loved for their own sake and given the freedom to experiment; secondly positive regard which is conditional and dependent upon action which is expected by others. These concepts of congruence are significant as Rogers (1961) argued; to have a self-image which differs from how we want to be, causes the development of defence mechanisms to protect the ego. In this sense, Rogers (1961) developed similar thinking to Festinger (1957).

Critics of the therapeutic turn argue that it is not the remit of the educational provider to be caught up in anything but the provision of learning yet, the ideological agenda of lifelong learning, suggests the opposite; that increasing imperatives are heaped upon PCE and APCE in pursuit of factors such as reducing unemployment, upskilling and enhancing life chances. Embracing the affective domain proposes dealing with a diversity of persons who feel both hurt by lack of opportunity and/or joy from being able to achieve what they want to be. Moreover, mandated advice and guidance systems (Dept. Education and Skills: National IAG Policy 2003) and procedures decree that institutions must do something (cognitively) about it.

Bringing an emotionally turbulent negative past and/or present to the educational encounter is not to be critically unexpected. In contrast, engendering positive emotions can be seen as helpful to the educational encounter. Damasio (1991) for example, hypothesised that emotions guide behaviour and that emotions are essential in rational decision making. He

contended that humans cognitively compare what goes on in the outside world with that of the emotions in their inner personal world, deploying their subjective self as a witness to actions which have meaning for self. Damasio suggests his somatic markers theory explains the existence of an “evolutionary inherited auto-pilot” ([www.bigthink.com](http://www.bigthink.com)); where emotions encourage us to make correct decisions based upon the degree of opportunity or threat presented in a given circumstance. The perceived benefits or dangers recognised through the emotional (somatic) markers then provide data to consciousness: the feelings evident to consciousness, being stored in memory, and retrieved for future planning. Damasio (1991) can, however, be criticised for assuming that it is emotion alone that provides somatic markers, critically we should separate the act of reasoning from emotion, yet emotion might be the product and cause of such reasoning

### *3.5.3: Realising changed identity*

Coming to know that I am not the same after an episode of learning; being able to recognise in, and recall from memory, what I was, and to compare such reflective realisations to what I now am, entails making the time and space for action. To be able to recognise that change has happened, and that I am the perpetrator and agent of my own change, is critically relevant. Yang (2008) distilled, through a review of what constitutes realisation of growing adult wisdom, the following factors:

- a) A composite (change) of personality characteristics or competences.*
- b) The positive (recognisable) results of human development.*
- c) A collective (accumulation of) system(s) of practical knowledge.*
- d) A process that emerges in real-life contexts.*

(Yang 2008:62)

In focussing specifically on factor b, Yang (2008) quotes Erikson (1982) when contending that becoming wiser is about advancing cognitive structures, developing ‘ego’ strength and becoming more virtuous. In contrast, Murray (2009) argues that through the process of introspection, afforded by the provision of space and time, we come to know self and begin to reveal self to self. Critically therefore, some models point to the ‘Vygotskian’ need for the interjection of coaches, mentors and teachers to raise cognition from without,

whilst others focus on reflective capacities from within. In a merged model of both, Bhogal et al (2004) claim from their research, that merely becoming a student is significant in raising esteem; that their participants squared and rationalised their everyday identity with their new student identity, thus maintaining rather than decentring; adding new identity rather than casting off the existing. This suggests changed identity is critically emergent and layered; that it is more complex than just 'changing'; in metaphorical terms identity can thus be conceived as a product of an individual's porosity and is laid down in a sedimented fashion

Ecclestone (2004) suggests that individuals co-author identity shifts, paraphrasing her comments, she contends that identity is "fragmented, fractured and in flux and that pedagogy helps individuals analyse how identity is discursively constructed" (2004:60). Such a claim critically contends that education has latent therapeutic qualities which stroke the ego; elevating personal identity as a subject of reflection for the student.

In a shift from sociology to contemporary psychology, Lacan (1977) argues a more complex position to identity and contends that the psyche is made up of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. Lacan (1977) contends that, in the imaginary, in childhood, we endure a mirror stage in human development which continues through adulthood; that we discern those beings that we wish to emulate and construct this as a desire which becomes an imperative to develop beyond our current sense of self, and toward a (better) different 'other'. By imposing this desire upon self, we might observe and regard ourselves as less than we want to be, which Lacan termed the concept of 'the gaze'. This concept is alike to self, looking back at self; encouraging change in identity as though there were another self, giving instruction. Driven on by the symbolic (and embedded via learning as we grow from childhood) view that we must obey this contract with the self to 'become', and in the fear of not becoming, our identity becomes fluid and part of a journey toward a new sense of what we should be. In contrast, institutionally provided courses of learning are chosen as an adult developmental tool; their existence in correcting an ineffective 'life plot'

(Learning Lives 2008a) can be critically conceived as a deliberate act of bringing about and confronting the perceived need to do something differently. In institutional learning Crick (2007) contends that identity can shift by coming to know and understand personal “learning power” (2007:151); where attention moves between knowledge and the person and where structures combine with the student’s own sense of ownership of responsibility.

#### *3.5.4: Self-regard – a summary*

This theme has considered a range of theories outlining and critiquing how adult students might form an internal view of themselves, their ability levels and their potential, across a range of affective and cognitive areas. Whilst Kelly (1970) contends that experiences are met with expectations and transformation is limited by preconceptions, Bandura (1977) suggests that positive reinforcement of performance can lead to efficacious feelings and expansive transformational capability. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978), depicts transformation limited by that which can be conceived as possible, arguing that transformation requires the intervention of more knowledgeable others. For Rogers (1951), congruence of what we are, with what we are learning to become, is vital for transformational growth and finally, Damasio (1991) contends that our evolution and our experience of emotional contact with the world, lays down markers based upon a continuum of utilitarian benefit versus threat.

For the most part, each of the above theorists are psychologists, so, simplistically there is an expectation that intrinsic and extrinsic factors provide the comparison for what transforms. In critical juxtaposition, what comes from sociological status is not so easily identified; what turbulences exist in the life of the person is complex, often un-discussed and unknown. Coming to know self and formulating a sense of positive identity in the present, is argued by authors such as Fromm (1991) to be, ‘up for sale’; that self-regard, in contemporary Britain, is subject to significant and rapid change, which drains away the power of the individual. Becoming the servant of an economically dominant agenda prescribes identity formed from the role that we play in society, notably that of

work (1991). Moreover, Fromm argues, that we experience alienation in such circumstances and that:

*“He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of his world, as the creator of his own acts – but his acts and their consequences have become his master.”*  
(Fromm 1991:117).

Identity is argued, in psychologically general terms, to have a range of perspectives; paraphrasing Gunn (2001) these include:

*“Phenomenological...Sense of ‘free being’ (notion of agency) and multiple identities.  
Psychoanalytical....psychosexual development....defensive mechanisms....past markers which delineate action in the present.  
Biological....the biochemical and the personality.  
Social – immediate family, friends and work, gender, ethnicity, class and....the culture of residence.”*

(Gunn 2001:1)

Working within and amongst such a daunting range of variables, is to establish the complexity of the human psyche and that understandings entail the examination of the participant’s ‘experience of self’; that the emergent, serendipitous and the routine (Fromm 1991) are critically important features of identity formulation, and that the pursuit of a (economic) living is an equally all absorbing and energy consuming part of such complexity.

### **3.6: Distinctive sociological contributions**

Durkheim (1952), in his seminal discussion of suicide, discusses the condition of Anomie, which he defined as a feeling of aimlessness and/or despair (Giddens 2004) and where modern life has the predilection for creating a lack of meaning in individual’s lives. The anomic condition proposes that we are fooled into thinking that we rely solely upon ourselves. When faced with (the appearance of) only self to resolve the epochal characteristics of life, Durkheim (1952) suggests we are prone to feelings of isolation and egoistic suicide. In such circumstances, ties to social groups are broken and the individual feels set adrift from society and alone. Durkheim continues by defining Anomic Suicide as a condition caused by instability in society and/or conflicts between the circumstances and the desires of individuals, where social regulation is missing

or inadequate to guide the person's development. Finally, he defines Altruistic Suicide and Fatalistic Suicide which he suggests are associated with being over-regulated by society; in the former, and where self-sacrifice guides action in the latter. These sociological and psychological research based findings, are important theoretical factors in understanding when and how a person feels congruence between and with self, their plans for the future, the ability of those plans to be achieved and their realistic potential of such plans.

### 3.7 Empirical studies in lifelong learning

The Learning Lives project was arguably the most significant study in Britain which dealt with the impact of adult learning and is evaluated here to establish how this thesis builds upon and differs from the work of the project. The summary results of the Learning Lives project are detailed in figure 13 below.

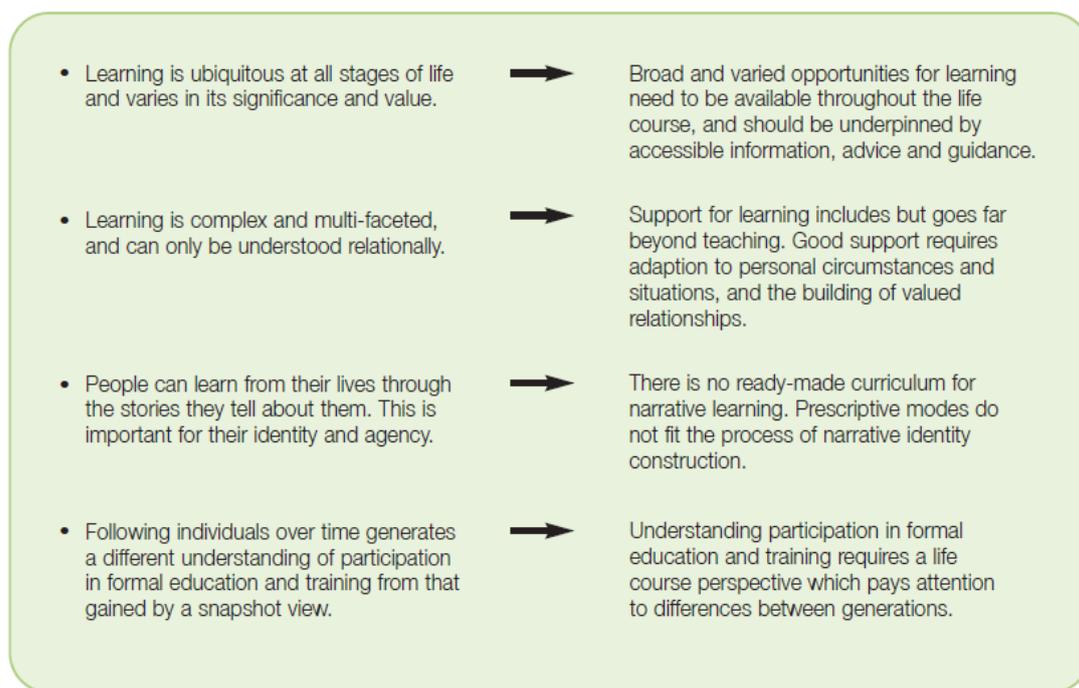


Figure 13: Summary results of the Learning Lives project (Biesta 2008:1)

The Learning Lives project spanned a 3 year period included 150 adults, comprising over 500 interviews and employed a biographical approach to the central question, which was, 'what does learning mean?' (Biesta 2008).

Whilst I can agree with the project's understandings, that learning is complex and multi-faceted and that people can learn from their lives, the Learning Lives project was not positioned to assess the impact of curricula which are increasingly seen as imposed, nor did it recognise the compromise of choice of curricula that participants might have to make. Incidents which prompt educational action and subsequent meanings, I argue, are also constrained by the nature and content of curricula which are most widely available and which are deemed valuable and legitimate to career expectations by society at large; this view underpins my research design as distinct from that of the Learning Lives project.

In this sense, while learning is ubiquitous (Biesta 2008), the means of transforming the self in this thesis is argued to be dominantly in the hands of institutions where curricula are politically prescribed. The social and political structure of curricula cannot thus be ignored in the establishment of what learning means. Goodson et al remarks:

*“The Learning Lives project started trying to understand learning from a different position to that which is normally taken. We started by asking people about their life histories and began to focus down on the main learning incidents in their life. Significantly for many people this did not involve externally mandated curriculum but grew from internally generated narrative activity.”*

(Goodson et al 2010:9)

Goodson et al continues by suggesting that people have the freedom to learn and quotes Rogers (1969) in justification. This research, however, starts from the view that when people freely engage it is important to try to understand the consequences and influences of the curriculum and what happens to those who successfully tackle dilemmas and incidents in their lives (Levine 1997, Janet 1907).

Unlike other investigations, this research deals with disorientating dilemmas (Mezirow 1991) and incidents encountered by mid-life adults in Britain. Other studies have focussed on transformation and the dilemma of ill health (for example Baumgartner 2002) whilst, Carter (2002), for example focuses on the experience of dilemmas for differing genders.

The unique nature of this research is to investigate the impact of lifelong learning curricula at a time when they have been recast as a means of achieving competitive advantage in global business terms. Evidence, Mason (2009) suggests, points to a reduction in adult attendance based education and growth in both formal and informal on-line education. The Learning Lives project proposes new forms of support and the building of valued relationships to counter these changes; this research, however, seeks to establish how adults might achieve their own transformation through 'what is' dominantly available, and how those dominant curricula perform.

In earlier research in 1994, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) commissioned a 5 year project entitled, 'The Learning Society Programme' (Coffield 1999a). This lifelong learning research was subdivided into 15 projects with over 50 researchers and £2.5 million in funding. The overarching aims were to contribute to understanding about how skills were acquired at and for work, the issues and concerns for participation in lifelong learning in PCE and ultimately, to inform the design of workplace and institutional learning.

The research examined PCE holistically looking at a range of issues such as knowledge and skills for employment, guidance services across the youth to adult learning market, core skills, and the impact of learning on skills and pay. The research also compared aspects of education and training provision across Europe but most of all focussed on what constituted future potential models for a learning society.

Coffield (1999b), as a result of the programme and its findings, said that:

*“The learning society needs to be underpinned by multiple learning opportunities at every age, at every stage and at every level of achievement.”*

(Coffield 1999b: 496)

The Learning Society research differs distinctively in focus, insofar as Coffield (1999b) saw learning for work as a modern, competitive activity driven by historical notions of class and power relations. In contrast, this research seeks to understand how adults are able to realise well-being, raise individual self-worth and resiliently challenge affective notions of disadvantage.

A range of research has investigated lifelong learning from differing perspectives. Learning as a catalyst for adult transformation of the self and identity is thus the unique focus for this research.

*“There is still much that is not known about transformative learning and much to learn about how people revise their interpretations about the world around them.”*

(Taylor 2007:189)

This research seeks to make a further unique contribution that both builds upon and adds to existing understandings about adult transformational revisions.

### 3.8 Literature summary and research position

Mezirow (1978) contends that learning and transformation are connected through two different, yet complementary factors. The instrumental factor might, at first glance, encapsulate the purpose of curricula; the structured ‘what a student must know’ view. The communicative factor embraces both the epochal confrontation with the new and the potential for emancipation of the self achieved through confronting the work expected by the lifelong learning curriculum. The research focus is thus to establish the nature of the transformational experience and proposes to look at both the instrumental and the communicative (Mezirow 1978); the part that the structure of curricula have played in engendering coherence and the transformation of participant identity realised through evaluation of revised levels of agency, giving purpose for research action.

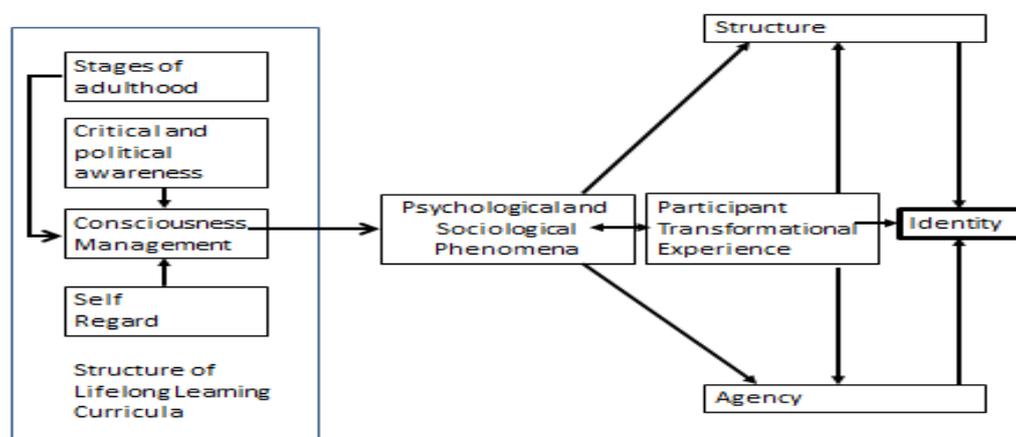


Figure 14: Research theory and participant experience: a synthesis.

The diagrammatic view in figure 14, makes connections between the theory discussed and participants' experiences; change is measured through the collection of data which evidences revisions in the soma, the cognition and social status of the participant; interpretively accumulated, this change constitutes their transformational experience. The themes developed in the literature review are synthesised with the structure of lifelong learning curricula (uniquely important in this research). Data gathered from the present consciousness of the participants is then analysed to expose currently understood phenomena. This research is, in this way, concerned to expose phenomena in the participant's transformational experience and compare, contrast and synthesise with current theory. This research, therefore, seeks to expose new and/or contest and/or confirm insights, and to inform how adults might be better supported in lifelong learning encounters.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1: Introduction**

The research set out to hear the recounted experiences of six mid-career and mid-life adults who had re-engaged successfully with education. Research interviews were conducted after an episode of lifelong learning in Further and/or Higher Education, or both. In some cases, participants had/have continued into more education at higher levels, and their accounts reflect what they had experienced up to the date of interview.

The research question principally asked: can lifelong learning curricula be identified as the structural vehicle and catalyst for adult transformations? Beyond this initial line of inquiry the research also asked if and how evidence of transformational change could be identified in the recounted experiences of participants.

Through the transformative educational literature of Mezirow, the objective of realising the nature and extent of agency revision via somatic, cognitive and social change in participants emerged as an important area of data capture. These areas provided a focus for data gathering which, it was believed, could be evaluated through phenomenological hermeneutic analysis of the participant's educational journey. An instrument was therefore designed to provide data for analysis which showed how lifelong learning curricula might have influenced participants' sense of these personal and developmental agency factors. These data were then analysed using hermeneutic methods and analysis focussed on whether contemporary forces in lifelong learning curricular structures had a deleterious effect on the realised sense of agency of participants, or whether there were more positive, transformative and meaningful personal benefits to be achieved by choosing a course of adult lifelong learning.

## 4.2: Research approach

### 4.2.1 Researching the experiences of others

Research which employs an ontology of co-constructed reality (Lincoln and Guba 2000) and proceeds to epistemological interpretations in order to 'know the world' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005) faces the criticism of those who require objectivity through positivistic approaches. This research acknowledges the subjective nature of its foundations but justifies the hermeneutic analysis of dialogue as a uniquely relevant method by which the experiences of the participants can be understood by others. In this context the research is concerned with:

*“The constellation of procedures, conditions, and resources through which reality is apprehended, understood, organised and conveyed in everyday life. Interpretive practice engages both the hows and the whats of social reality; it is centred in both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity.”*

(Denzin & Lincoln 2005:484)

Analysing participant accounts in an archaeological and interpretive fashion, and bringing together a range of reconstructed accounts has meant that the research is able to accept subjectivity as an essential feature of representing and re-presenting the lives of the participants. I further argue here that the personalised truth beliefs of participants can be justifiably distilled and validated by/from the establishment of both similarities and differences of their human experience. The phenomenological hermeneutic methodology in this research was therefore justifiably employed, because of its appropriateness to the questions under review, and its fitness for purpose versus the outcome of informing future action for the benefit of students of APCE. The 'crisis of authority' (Lincoln and Guba 2000) emerging from political mantras of lifelong learning, which underpins the research, is deliberately questioned via the representative voices of participants; how adults perceive their educational experience is thus under the microscope in the research, in order to test whether prescription and/or choice of lifelong learning leads to their anticipated political ends and/or reveals other outcomes.

#### *4.2.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology*

Kvale describes the hermeneutical interpretation interview method, as an “oral discourse transformed into texts to be interpreted” (1996:46). Interpretation of the participants’ texts takes place “through a process in which the meaning of the separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text” (1996:47).

Textual analysis in this research, proposes exposure of meanings through the gathering of specific participant accounts, and then moves to deliver a more condensed interpretation by better comprehending the social circumstances of each participant.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research was employed to “expose the complexity of their ‘being; through re-presentation; their accounts being systematically reviewed, such that their experiences could be understood” (Kvale 1996:55). Bringing together interpreted understandings of the essences of participant experiences was both the justification for, and the objective of, the research, which delved into the interstices of those participants’ experiences, so that the phenomenological, hermeneutic method, could attempt to elucidate “how people come to see things as they are” (Denscombe 2007:81).

What constitutes individuals’ ‘perceptions of truth’ is embedded in their description of experiences (Husserl 1970). The accounts generated from conversation about experiences in this research can thus be justified as providing the source data which describes and explains how the participants came into knowledge and meanings of both themselves and of their world (Heidegger 1962). This research, informed by hermeneutic phenomenological methods and theory, required the use of a cyclical and archaeological hermeneutic approach across a number of readings where the structure of these readings moved from the whole to the detail in a back and forth fashion to distil and condense the data, and to provide the conditions leading to deeper understandings as readings progressed. Coming to know the person and what has shaped their past, present and current view was also important in realising how similar adult engagement with structure might have different outcomes.

Equally important was the question of whether persons, with diverse backgrounds and experience, have different or similar outcomes. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was therefore conceived as the most appropriate means by which an exploration of the present consciousness of participants could bring their phenomena to my awareness and create access to a detailed understanding of their experiences.

### **4.3: Data Collection Method: Interviews**

#### *4.3.1 Justification*

The interview data were realised through a co-constructed dialogue between each of the participants and me. The responses to planned questions (at appendix 4) and the recounted experiences of the participants targeted the overarching question of whether curricula could be identified as the structural vehicle and catalyst for adult transformations. How the curriculum they had encountered contributed to transformative change to both their exhibited and perceived agency change was essential in generating data that I could analyse, at both an individual and comparative level.

I employed a dialogic qualitative approach (Bakhtin 1986) in this research as a vehicle to collect data, and importantly, to collect data which I believe bears witness to the factual and perceived passage of the participants through their educational encounter. Equally, I employed this approach to hear the descriptive recollections, explanations, applications, analyses, compositions, judgements, appraisals and evaluations of the research participants in the stated and explicit context of having completed the encounter as a meaningful whole. My approach was therefore to hear accounts in deeper, more powerful thick and subjective description (Geertz 1973), of having moved and lived in, amongst and through an adult educational experience. This, I believe, enabled them to openly narrate, and for me to hear the details of, their journey from their vantage point and horizon of recollection, and which used their own meaningful examples and biographical testimony to shape their responses.

#### *4.3.2 Theoretical critique and defence of the approach*

Critics of this approach might argue that the subjects themselves are contaminated (Wengraf 2001) and that what they had to say was not only unscientifically formulated, but deeply coloured by so many variables, past and current, and that it defined their texts as a polemic. In defence of such accusations, the research, as already stated, was planned as a phenomenological hermeneutic enquiry in order to drive at the meaning that the participants had achieved, via their own words, and through what they personally recounted. Having lived through such experiences, their accounts established and recounted what they perceived and believed to have been meaningful. Accounts of experience also permitted not just a subjectively coloured set of beliefs, but description shaped out of their experience and the participant narrator's sense of current and past reality, at a given time and place in their lives (after Chase in Denzin & Lincoln 2005:667). Recounting was equally separated from the experience; this is because the data were collected at a point and place uniquely separate to their episode of curriculum engagement. This is also important because it allowed for 'sedimentation' of the consequences into 'the being' of the narrator, such that they could profess what qualitative and quantitative movement had become personally evident, in their own estimations. The participant accounts provided an understanding of the range of change in their lives after the educational encounter. This was important in establishing whether change was associated with their educational experience or had been otherwise attributed.

Semi structured interviews offer interviewees the opportunity to express their opinion whilst maintaining a focus on the subject of investigation. The purpose of using them was to understand the participants' points of view through the use of pre-planned, but open ended, questioning. The technique of building rapport was employed in this approach so that participants could express a detailed position, whilst also offering me the opportunity to clarify those positions, as the interview proceeded. Such an approach is highly valid as it is the direct result of my conversations with participants and sufficiently flexible, so that I could

change direction in order to explore relevant issues, as they emerged, in more detail.

I therefore justify the gathering of data through semi-structured interviews as the main research approach, because they offered the research the most comprehensive, wide ranging and subjectively authentic measure of the participant's experience. Validity was further enhanced by returning every transcript to each participant and achievement of agreement to the content.

#### *4.3.3 Research Pilot*

The design was formulated following a pilot with a volunteer, who I knew had recently completed a qualification. She was known to me insofar as she had been in a group of students taught by a colleague. I had indicated to him my research needs and he canvassed the completing group, whereupon, she volunteered to take part.

I conducted the pilot in a local college using a semi-structured interview approach which I had planned from reflecting upon theory and what I believed I wanted to know. This pilot interview was recorded and completed under the already approved ethics supplied to the university (see appendix 7), although none of the data was planned or expected to be subsequently used in the final research. At the end of the pilot, I spent around 30 minutes discussing the interview with the volunteer interviewee, making notes of what went well or might be revised. From theory and reflection I chose to continue with the use of a semi structured interviews because this performed generally well in the pilot as a data collection device.

In supervision conversations and from the experience of my previous Masters Degree research, I was aware that deep and detailed analysis would take a lot of time and having consulted my pilot notes decided to limit the interviews to six research participants, who had completed studies in the recent past.

#### *4.3.4 Participant Selection*

I had originally set out to recruit six participants who had experienced FE, justifying the relevance of this because FE was the setting in which the lifelong learning skills curriculum was/is principally delivered. The criteria subsequently changed because of recruitment difficulties so that all had completed an educational episode within the last three years, and/or were presently participating in higher education and had successfully completed FE and/or HE courses of learning. For practical reasons, the participants needed to be in the South-West of England.

Some many months earlier, my wife had completed a qualification at a local college and had made the acquaintance of two mature women. She was able to introduce me to them and both offered to be participants. One of these recommended another male, and my supervisor recommended another. My third female came from contact with a local school and my third male from a recommendation made by a colleague. None of these were personally known to me and in many ways were enlisted by chance and by recommendation.

The sampling and selection approaches used were opportunistic, insofar as I followed up leads which were recommended (Wengraf 2001) and the snowball technique was used because one participant recommended another (Denscombe 2008, Wellington 2000). The opportunistic and snowball approaches expanded the sample more quickly and gave me contacts that I was able to approach through recommendation. My wife and others assisting were aware of the kind of participant I was seeking and provided contact details for me to follow up. Both of these approaches have strengths and weaknesses which are outlined below; however, the combination of approaches realised the number of interviewees needed for the research.

In employing both opportunistic and snowball approaches, I am aware that it may have resulted in interview subjects that were known to each other, and that these persons may share similar characteristics. However, I was looking for participants who had been successful in FE encounters; getting to such a unique group would have been difficult to achieve without this help. As both a

drawback and a benefit, this also meant that I had little control over who became part of the group, which satisfied an important need to find persons that I did not personally know and had not taught; nor were there any secondary associations such as friends of friends that knew me. Conversely, I did accept that those who recommended others might have misunderstood my criteria, which in practicality led to the expansion of participant experience to embrace FE, HE in FE and HE experiences: this caused revisions to my initial plans. One participant in particular had encountered FE and HE as a distance learning experience, which caused me to reflect on appropriateness.

Strengths and weaknesses of sampling approaches are widely debated (Wengraf 2001, Denscombe 2008, Wellington 2000). Wellington (2000) for example positions both opportunistic and snowball approaches as: “the only option in small-scale research” (p60) and Wengraf (2001), commenting on Opportunistic sampling, says that it: “takes advantage of the unexpected (and affords) flexibility” (p103). The ultimate use of these approaches, therefore, evolved out of the process of conducting fieldwork.

I initially contacted each of the participants to confirm their willingness to be involved and arranged a suitable time and place, and then interviewed them for between forty minutes to one hour over the course of June to August 2011. All of the interviews were in the surroundings of their own home or in a mutually agreed leisure based location to intentionally achieve informality, in both my approach and to generate an openly relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere. I had previously set the objective of meeting on their terms, from a mixture of pragmatic participant availability, what I felt was the need to achieve a comfortable state of mind in the participants and the feedback from the pilot. The location of the college was mentioned by my pilot interviewee as being too formal and a little threatening. She remarked that it brought back too many memories of being assessed and challenged. This comment was influential in determining location.

A pen portrait of each participant is attached (at appendix 8) which details that they were mature adults. All participants had experience of a current and/or

previous career in a variety of work places. Some had moved between work and family commitments where periods of child rearing had meant leaving employment and of these, all were seeking re-entry into employment. Others were seeking new opportunities within current or new forms of work.

Some consistency of background was important to the research and consequently set objectives which limited the application of the research to those who have been successful in APCE. This factor was not, however, seen as a drawback, but consistent with the aim of understanding how success had been achieved and what it meant.

#### *4.3.5 The participants*

In summary Jane was from the South West, a mother to two children and seeking a new career in educational psychology or teaching, returning to work after child rearing, having also recently moved north but still within the region. Rachel, a mother of three, was seeking a career in teaching or supervision at primary or nursery level and was born and had lived in a similar place in the South West all her life. Sophie had two children and had moved to the South West from the South East; she had experienced a range of careers, from fruit picking, health care and retail, none of which satisfied her ambitions. She, more recently, had achieved her later life goal of becoming a secondary school teacher. Kevin had two children and having moved extensively around the world, had retired from military service and was seeking a career in teaching. Clive had no children and, like Rachel, had moved north within the region. He had trained as a teacher but gave up the profession to find work in the leisure sector. John was the exception, in terms of locality he lived in Liverpool and worked in the public sector at a senior level, and had focussed on improving his status within or above his current job role. He had remained with the same employer for many years and was the father of two children. Participants ranged in age from late 30s to 60 years and further details are included in the pen portraits (at appendix 7).

#### *4.3.6 Interview procedures - structure*

Structure in the interview was provided by using a list of pre-planned questions (Appendix 4) which were to be openly expanded upon, as relevant to the participant's responses. These questions had been revised after the pilot phase based upon my volunteer interviewee's feedback, and my experience of that test interview, to include facial and body signals which I determined would be noted by observation throughout the interviews. The pilot suggested that this action was needed as and when this was germane to the achievement of accurate participant representation; the signals, I decided, were to be noted in brackets, and included in the transcript for participant approval.

The pre-planned questions used in the research, were further redeveloped so that the participant would focus on and/or be returned to the central semi-structured themes being developed. This revision came from a particularly important lesson which I came to understand from the piloted conversational responses and transcript analysis and evaluation, where the pilot often strayed outside of the scope of the research. In the formal research phase, the six participants were encouraged to expand upon their responses when 'in the flow of recollection' and where co-constructed prompts were individually created during the interviews; particularly so when key measures of influence emerged from their discussions. The interview length of 40 minutes came from both the pilot and an estimate of needed time versus the revised and simplified questions devised after the pilot, which I understood to be an acceptable time frame and which I considered, did not interfere with the participant's comfort and needs; I found however, that I often needed the additional twenty minutes for participant expansion beyond the planned questions, and to avoid cutting off the interview too abruptly.

#### *4.3.7 The interviews*

Interviews were relaxed and flexible so that participants could recount their experiences in their own diverse words and develop dialogue within a framework, which provided a guiding structure and appropriate pace.

The delivery of the questions (at appendix 4), was preceded by an introductory discussion which was not recorded but gave the participant time to check and sign ethical consent documentation (appendix 9), be briefed on administrative matters, follow up and interview duration.

Recorded questions 1-4 were fact finding to ensure that the participant background was clearly stated and appropriate. Questions 5-8 developed data about changes that had occurred over the period of educational engagement whilst 9 and 10 were directed at data about the nature of the curriculum and what the participant got out of their engagement, respectively. Questions 11-14 called upon the participant to reflect upon their before, during and post educational encounter, and focussed on collecting transformation data. Questions 15 and 16 were designed to provide data on their expectations of the curriculum and what it had delivered. This also acted as a second checking device for questions 9 and 10. Question 17 was designed to provide a point of reflection upon sense of self and status and to develop data from the subsequent discussion. Question 18 asked the participant to see self through the eyes of others, such as spouse, friends, family and associates, so that they reflected upon how others presently saw them. This was to provide data about change noticed about them by others. Question 19 was designed to provide data about participants' attitudinal change over the period and finally, question 20 was to provide data about present social sense of identity. Questions 19 and 20 were also designed to extend data capture on the theme of transformation at the interview close but were specifically considering political, economic and sociological factors that the participant may have encountered. These questions were all conducted in conversational style and electronically recorded.

During the interview, I delivered the questions and followed up in appropriate areas and noted (using the record counter on the device) when an expression or change of body language occurred, which had relevance to the participants' recollections. The interview was terminated with thanks and a re-statement of the process.

#### *4.3.8 The interview records*

The research interviews were recorded, as planned, using an electronic digital device, and I informed each participant in detail, before commencing the interview, on the expected stages of subsequent contact. The recorded accounts were then transcribed by me over the period of July to October 2011. I then returned the written transcript of their interview to each participant by e-mail, with receipt notification. Changes were made by two participants because of errors in hearing the recorded material, and one of these also requested a minor revision; all participant requested amendments were made and reconfirmed using e-mail communications. This then led to final participant approval of the transcripts, which were entirely conducted by e-mail. I then evaluated and analysed the interviewed participants' transcripts using the hermeneutical circle approach.

#### **4.4: Ethics**

Participants consented voluntarily to be part of the research and were each provided with a written copy of the ethics protocol to be employed (see appendix 8). All participants were provided with telephone, e-mail and address information of the researcher and the University contacts, to enable them, should they wish to do so, to enquire further about the content and nature of the research. I read out the details of the project on the consent form and offered them the time and opportunity to read the consent. Each participant was asked to sign the consent to evidence that they agreed (example at appendix 9). Agreement was achieved with all participants to provide, review and correspond on the subsequent written transcript of their interview.

The research employed interviews which asked the participant to recall aspects of their past; these had the potential to bring back episodes of emotional recall, which may have been distressing. All participants were briefed at the beginning of the interview that they could stop at any time. Should they have been in any way distressed by any discussions or subsequent reading of their transcript, they were advised that they could withdraw at any time. The participants were also briefed that the final work would be made available via the academic

community, to research based interests and may appear in wider published materials.

The names of the participants in the research have been changed to provide anonymity and, to protect participants from identification, no institutions, agencies or corporate bodies have been implicated via individual participants' transcripts. The data obtained from the interviews have been secured on computers with protected access and used for the sole purpose of this research activity, research presentations and papers. All participant research data produced has been checked and verified both by the originator and the subjects as a true, accurate and valid account, with signed agreements completed.

The research has sought, at all times, to ensure respect for the participating persons and bodies and to represent them accurately and adequately in the pursuit of knowledge. Methods have been planned and executed with this concern uppermost and questions asked of participants, were formulated to solely answer those posed by the research. Conclusions made by the research seek to genuinely interpret the participants' journeys in a valid and authentic way and with reflexive sensitivity.

## **4.5: Data Analysis**

### *4.5.1 Approach to analysis*

For the research to 'see things as participants saw them', I employed interpretative phenomenological condensation which was adapted from Kvale (1996:194) and which required several readings of the texts. This was to expose and hypothesise causal conditions and evidence of phenomena, which may have had consequences for the participants.

Husserl (1970) might argue that paying attention to these data, which constitutes a human experience, unearths the participant's internal 'private' world yet can expose the impact that their public world might impose. The interviews sought to achieve the objective of: "discover(ing) variation, portray(ing) shades of meaning and examining the complexity" (Rubin and Rubin 2005:202) of human endeavours so that the participants' words could

become clearly understandable to those implicated in the lifelong learning curriculum debate. The Phenomenological Method (Spiegelberg 1960) proposed description, investigation and phenomenological reduction of essences in the participants' texts, such that their experiences could be intersubjectively described through investigation and distillation of their essences via data analysis. Condensation and distillation of data essences are the means by which participant accounts could re-presented and represented.

#### 4.5.2 Data analysis procedures

The full data analysis process is illustrated in Figure 15

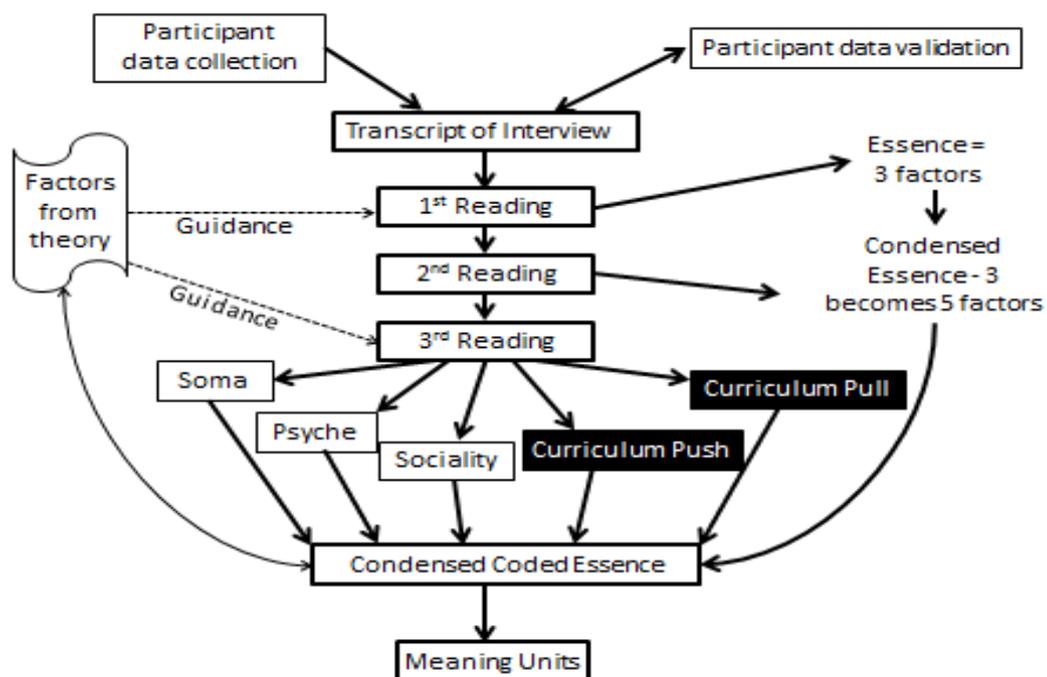


Figure 15: Research Data Analysis

#### *First Reading*

Condensing of data in this research required that each participant text was first read as a whole to get the sense of it and reveal what was meaningful for the participant. This first reading was conducted in the light of, and alongside, questions arising from theory (Factors from Theory: Appendix 3).

The theory and literature review proposed that participant agency change could be identified by analysing participant movement under the headings of:

1. What evidence can be identified in the body of the participant (as recounted/felt as an experience of the Soma).
2. What cognitive change has the participant realised (recounted as a positive revision of the holistic psyche).
3. What social revisions are perceived and recounted (sense of belonging and connection in society as observed by self and/or others).

### *Second Reading*

A second reading then employed a manual coding of agency change factors in each transcript (Appendix 5) which identified and distilled initial influences for subsequent analysis and provided the data codes under the headings of soma, psyche and sociality in Appendix 6. This process was then applied to all participant interview transcripts (Bryman 2008) to refine and develop the analysis, eliminate duplicate data, and to verify and authenticate the hermeneutic circle approach.

What emerged from the second analysis phase, however, was that soma, psyche and sociality were not the only evident analysis factors. Analysis suggested that the curriculum structure seemed to present challenges of an alternatively coercive and reflective nature to the participants. Coercive challenges were categorised under the heading of 'curriculum structural push' and were those which were interpreted to be the affectively understood educational challenges imposed on the participant that had behavioural undertones and structural consequences. Others were categorised as curriculum pull, because they were evidently those which encouraged positive and negative introspection upon the participant's current and future potential.

Dominant amongst curriculum pull, was the recounted participant evidence of the development of the act of reflection. The identification of the pull factors contributed to what appeared to be a re-evaluation of the self in and amongst a new and revised understanding of own abilities. Furthermore, the dissonance

between past feelings and affective understandings of the self, and those of a refreshed and more capable current self, appeared to have been closed by engagement with the curriculum's challenge. Curriculum push, on the other hand, was imposing a range of conditions and expectations on the participant, which were dually determined by the institutions' rules, policies and procedures and what the participant imagined was normally expected student behaviour. Some of these were pragmatically coercive, such as, 'if you don't succeed you won't be any more competitive in the job market', whilst others expected the participant to come to rely upon themselves and draw upon accumulated past knowledge and current learning to authenticate their efforts. In this respect the curriculum appeared to be emerging as the focus of the challenge; the enemy to be overcome and the means (for some) by which past failings could be eliminated. Via analysis, curriculum push and pull were added making up the final 5 headings for analysis (see appendix 6). Data from participants' accounts were condensed under these additionally identified themes, in the same fashion as those of soma, psyche and sociality.

### *Third reading*

The second reading, having provided a holistic overview of participant change, under both the three planned and two emergent headings, was subjected to a third validation reading. This was to ensure that the global understandings of headings and their respective codes at appendix 6 had accurately identified;

a) The transformational concepts recounted by the participants.

and

b) To further analyse the text in combination with what had been hypothesised by theory at appendix 3.

A return and re-review of theory proposed that the participants' text should be further interrogated from a different perspective (Denscombe 1998) and in order to provide triangulation. The process suggested by Denscombe (1998:294) was adapted so that theoretical hypotheses and concepts could provide a new and alternative perspective. By seeing the data from more than one position, the data could be more accurately located, compared and complemented.

Condensation and distillation of appendix 3 resulted in the following being applied to each account to identify;

*The structural curriculum role through:*

Asking and evidencing, if and how participants felt that their curriculum had achieved its purpose, as they perceived it.

Establishing participant pre-encounter perceptions of personal status.

Identifying factors which guided their use of the curriculum.

Noting the thoughts, life satisfaction, epochal occurrences and reflections of participants which called them to employ educative action.

These comparatively grounded the practical consequences of engagement in and across the before and post development encounter.

*And the Transformative factors through:*

Evidencing the affective post education impact, of the curriculum, upon career, self and influential others.

Exploration of metaphors, analogies and descriptive statements around which, affective notions of developmental change congealed.

Examining perceived sense of post-educational self, in terms of status, knowledge of self, self-image and esteem.

Hearing, reporting and evaluating how the participant saw their future life developing as a result of their encounter.

This involved extracting relevant lines of each participant's response into a grid. I then took the original text of each participant and represented it as evidence in interpreted and condensed form in "meaning units" (Kvale 1996:194).

These interrogations of the text explored the affective domain and the transformative features of curriculum engagement so that, in synthesis with research theory, I was able to explore how participant social reality was constructed across the educational encounter (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

What it meant to the participants to be fulfilled in life, as judged by their micro influences of self, others and hegemonic political and social edicts, all seemed, alternatively, critically possible to me. I wanted to know what might have been influential upon them, and why their action seemed to be driven by diverse and complex motivations.

An example of the means by which this was achieved is outlined in the tables below. The table is an extract of Jane's responses to each area of analysis and

the full version, to exemplify how Jane's meaning was validated, is reproduced at appendix 10. A further meaning units table for Sophie is reproduced at appendix 11, in order to show how this consistent process was applied across all participants.

*The structural curriculum role: Asking and evidencing, if and how participants felt that their curriculum had achieved its purpose, as they perceived it.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 100-104: when I first left I was like... well I can apply for this, I can apply for that and I did apply for things, didn't get a job immediately obviously, but I did.	Curriculum has eventually got Jane a job

*The structural curriculum role: Establishing participant pre-encounter perceptions of personal status.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 6-7: I wasn't working and I decided that was what I was going to do. I knew that I wanted to work in a sort of nursery; pre-school area	Not working, bored and grasping for direction – epochal reflection on lack of purpose

*The structural curriculum role: Identifying factors which guided their use of the curriculum.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 92-93: I did think it would raise my earning potential a bit!	Wanted to improve income level
Lines 209-210: I wanted to do something that would get me somewhere; to give me something at the end of it.	Wanted to feel valued and valuable; to be noticed and revered

*The structural curriculum role: Noting the thoughts, life satisfaction, epochal occurrences and reflections of participants which called them to employ educative action.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 166-168: I was over forty when I did it, I wish I'd have done it before, because it took me a long time to work up to it and I wish I'd have done it when I was thirty not forty	Seeking to make up lost opportunity – epochal reflection on lost opportunity

*The structural curriculum role: Comparatively grounding the practical consequences of engagement in and across the before and post development encounter.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 25-26: I wanted to do something, and there was a qualification that I could do that would take me on to that sort of work.	Jane needed challenge and needed to seek fulfilment in order to feel complete

*The transformative factors: Evidencing the affective post education impact of the curriculum upon career, self and influential others.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 66-67: whereas now I would be more confident to say well actually, I'm going to apply for that job, because I've got my qualification	More willing and able to rely on self, has moved on, sense of hope via improved inner dialogue: less inhibited about meeting others. Self-esteem and personal valuation improved.

*The transformative factors: Exploration of metaphors, analogies and descriptive statements around which, affective notions of developmental change congealed.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 67-68: I've got my qualification, I do know what I am talking about Lines 85-86: I think I did it to prove it more to myself	Jane had healed her past educational feelings of disadvantage Jane had reflected that she was more able than she previously gave herself credit for.

*The transformative factors: Examining perceived sense of post educational self, in terms of status, knowledge of self, self-image and esteem.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Line 18: I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree	Jane was able to realise that even higher levels were within her capability

*The transformative factors: Hearing, reporting and evaluating how the participant saw their future life developing, as a result of their encounter*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 157-161: I have a bit of a seed in the back of my head about doing something else, it might take me a couple of years to get around to that but, from time to time, it's like childbirth isn't it, pain lessens and I think there is a bit of me that goes maybe, I will do something else. Either another college course or maybe another step up.	Jane had personal plans to achieve, which she had reflected, were not going to be easy, but would be resiliently pursued. She was prepared to allow for reflective time, before making that choice.

#### *4.5.3 Data validation and comparison*

The meaning units of all participants were then accumulated, which generated multiple instances of similarly interpreted experience. Quantitative analysis of these similar experiences was not attempted because of linguistic variation and because of the uniquely different development of the interview of each participant. In each interview, whilst the guiding questions were consistently applied, the direction of the participant's accounts took differing co-created turns, precluding accurate, relevant and meaningful quantitative analysis.

The codes identified in the 'impact of curricula' document at (appendix 6) were then compared to the meaning units to confirm the consistency of data and the accuracy of the "structure and relationship of meaning" (adapted from Kvale 1996: 201).

#### **4.6: Data quality and generalisation**

The quality and trustworthiness of data in this application of interpretive phenomenological hermeneutical research, relies upon "how communication occurred, why it occurred and who it occurred with" (Kvale 1996: 243). In terms of how the research occurred; careful planning and piloting had established that the same interview questions had to be consistently asked of all participants, albeit adjusted in situ, to embrace the expansion of diversely relevant participant themes. Using semi-structured interviews provided both a consistency of structure and the ability to hear the accounts of the participants and reduced researcher influence. Interviews were conducted under institutionally determined ethical guidelines for the sole purpose of understanding how curricula might influence adult agency. This determined why it occurred and prescribed the collection of data relevant to the research questions which was pre-approved by the ethics committee. The participants in the research were screened in the preamble to every interview, determined to have the appropriate attributes for inclusion in the research and who provided their data voluntarily, without duress, and all subsequently approved their accounts of proceedings.

What was heard and the subsequent construction of summary views of data produced by the research, inevitably suffers from the possibility of influence of the researcher, the situation and the timing. The planning of interviews and subsequent data collection was outside of any power influence between researcher and interviewee; participants were free to develop their accounts and be represented exactly as they had recounted. This research has sought to be transparent, true to intent and open to scrutiny at all times. It has sought to employ the conversations with six participants, to make sense of their experience and to bring understanding to their lifeworld (Husserl 1970).

The participant screening indicated that all adults had conceived of the need to enter or re-enter employment and/or change in order to realise ambitions and goals, which had reflectively risen to individual consciousness over time. 'Representing a wider population' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:667) from this research or generalising from the results is difficult, insofar as the participants have diverse past life experiences, future goals and expectations. The research was therefore sensitive to these aspects of difference (Wengraf 2001) and the different meanings the participants have derived from the educational encounter. Diversity, however, even with a relatively small sample, distilled some aspects of outcome similarity which becomes important in deriving understanding of the adult students' needs before, during and after the encounter; this research, however, sought to establish both similarity and difference. The goal is thus not generalisation to all adults but better recognition of the diversity of issues facing an adult population. This sets an alternative agenda for what might be deemed 'educational quality' insofar as quality in APCE is dominantly measured by numbers of achievers and inspections of teaching.

Despite the foregoing, "the transferability, relevance and applicability" (Denscombe 2007:299), of the research offers insights into how the findings might more generally apply to other adults' experiences of lifelong learning.

#### **4.7: Informing and reflecting on methodology**

This research has employed and interpreted the accounts of those involved in a contemporary period of rapid social change, in an attempt to contribute to understandings about how the participants practical attempts to 'rebalance', change or seek agency through educational development could be understood in transformational terms. In essence, the research attempted to use hermeneutic interpretations to see and understand the participant's experiences 'through their eyes' and from their point of view, such that the cultural and social forces that might have influenced them could be made critically apparent and moreover, to realise how this could provide existential understandings (Heidegger 1962) of the participants. The research design offered opportunities to investigate how individuals, with differing views: "speak a discourse and produce their own subjectivity" (Scott & Usher 1996:140; Foucault 1978). In this sense, dialogue was argued to be able to illuminate if "reality is both one and many" (Parrott 1996:48) and if it could seek out what perceptions and perspectives might aid the participants to come to know what their efforts have meant (Brentano 1995). Comparative exemplification was afforded by the same structured questions being asked of all participants.

Parrott (1996) continues in critical view that we construct and co-construct our own reality, i.e. that we self-direct and self-determine our potential. Analysis of participant accounts offered the opportunity of investigating, to what extent potential is determined intrinsically and alternatively, what is dictated or imposed by the machinations of the participant's environment. Whilst this form of enquiry raised many further issues, and revealed how difficult it was to neatly categorise participants' responses it embraced the authentic potential of multiple perspectives, which constituted the self-determinations of those participating.

The phenomena established from hermeneutic examination asked, 'How do participants see things?' (Maynard 1989 in Denzin and Lincoln 2005) and paid particular attention to the specifics of the social structures constituting lifelong learning, as the principal focus, to bring into relief, the world of the participant (Maynard 1989 in Denzin and Lincoln 2005). This deliberately proposed a

focus on the meaningful actions of participants and their: “interpretations of meaning as characterised by a hermeneutical circle” (Kvale 1996:47). In this respect texts were, initially (the first pass), subjected to an overview of meaning to generate the specific findings, then subsequently interrogated in closer fashion, to expose distinctive participant sensibilities. The approach I believe, had the potential to make phenomena discernible, such that the forces acting upon participants could be revealed and those with an interest in developing and improving adult education might more distinctively and effectively be able to work with the research based understandings.

Foucault (1988) has critically argued that practices of the self are not something that is invented by the self; that it is found in culture, and are imposed. Such an assertion was directly relevant to this research; analysis of the experience of education by adults, as a site in which a particular culture pervades, was open to investigation e.g. did adults position themselves differently when becoming ‘a lifelong learning student’, did this contribute to becoming something other, or did such locations of alternative culture permit revisions to their knowledge and increase their willingness to learn; was this permeability (openness to learn again) of the self, not evident in their everyday life? In a cultural sense, modern education has coined the term and condition widely of ‘the learner’ and in so doing, gives the term ‘learner’ a specifically recognisable status. Biesta (2009) however critically remarks:

*“Learning’ is not an activity but a judgement about change, therefore people cannot be ‘engaged in learning’ (but they can be engaged in studying) people can be students but not learners.”*

(Biesta 2009:3)

An emergent question was: can an adult transform into a student who learns? Biesta comments and continues “to refer to something as learning can only be done after the event; to call something learning implies a value judgement about what counts as (good, worthwhile) learning” (2009:36). This research was planned to reveal what the adult participant felt was good and worthwhile in the given curricula, and in order to reveal consequential participant agency status. The Learning Lives project looking separately at both informal biographical

learning and participation in formal education focussed on learning and what it might cause people to subsequently do. This research in distinctive contrast, has been concerned to hermeneutically examine the accounts of adults' experiences to establish if (at the adult life stage) a synthesis of formal and informal reflective and reflexive skills based learning, delivered through lifelong learning curricula, has alternative and/or specific transformational consequences.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1: Introduction**

This chapter will summarise the findings of the research and will outline the principal understandings from participant accounts, which have been distilled and validated by using the hermeneutic circle approach to analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to employ the headings of soma, psyche and sociality, curriculum push and curriculum pull to justify the post engagement data summarised at appendix 6. Each of the participants' voices will be introduced through validated examples and finally expanded upon through the interpreted meaning units in the subsequent discussion.

### **5.2: Preliminary analysis of research data**

#### *5.2.1 Soma*

The existence of the soma and somatic experience, is outlined in the neurobiological work of Damasio (1991,2001) the psychological work of Janet (1907) and Freud (2001,2002) and the spiritual psychology of Levine (1997). The concept and theme of 'soma' is used in this research to define and identify the bodily felt constituents influencing individual's performance and their automatic intuitive responses. These include 'gut feelings', sense of foreboding and expectation, recognition of danger in an automatic way and avoidance of it (Damasio 1991, 2001), the freezing response (Levine 1997), surrender to outside forces, becoming 'stuck' (Lynch and Field 2007), and trauma. In transformational terms, this research employs the term 'soma' to evidence if negative 'feelings' in the somatic self exist and if they appear to have been overcome through engagement.

Preliminary data analysis confirmed a range of somatic influences: being stuck in unsatisfying work (Sophie, Kevin, Clive, John): being constrained by significant bouts of personal illness (Sophie), loss of self in the consuming flow of caring for family members (Jane, Rachel, Sophie) and feeling insulated from friendships (Jane, Rachel, Sophie). Some participants also described a sense of foreboding from changes in personal relationships (Sophie, Clive). Social dissonance was somatically perceived by all because of past educational

disadvantage and lack of competitive qualifications. Reflections on what a future without change might have meant, having meaningful work to do and a sense of wasting time and missing out on life opportunities was particularly dominant for all. The post encounter stage revealed a more connected being, more open and less defensive persons who were ready to resiliently tackle their own needs. Data of somatic constituents can be established by reference to the interview transcripts of each of the participants. Somatic impact data from Sophie is presented in Table 4 to exemplify.

Pre curriculum	Post curriculum
<p><i>I was packing milk, very hard graft, 6 days on and 2 days off and it was job and finish so if a machine broke down, you could be there until midnight.</i></p> <p><i>I had no idea what a UCAS form was.</i></p> <p><i>I did all sorts of jobs, nothing satisfied me, I did.. you know, shop work, till work, cashier work, book keeping, well I don't think there are many that I haven't done.</i></p> <p><i>I had cancer, I had to go into hospital; I had to have a Mastectomy. I left XXXX, I wish I hadn't, mind you I say I wish I hadn't I would have got sick pay.</i></p> <p><i>When I got the cancer, it was like, you know, you don't know what is going to happen to you, do you?</i></p> <p><i>I have always known that I wanted to do English and secretly desired to go to University; mind you things have changed since the fifties, but it wasn't for my class of person.</i></p>	<p><i>I did really well on the Access course, and it was like a dream; I really..really..really wanted to do University. I had no concept of what it would be like, but I loved it.</i></p> <p><i>I'm proud that I've done Uni, I'm proud that I have got a job and I am supporting myself....I'm capable, and I'm told I do things.</i></p> <p><i>I wouldn't mind doing all my GCSEs in Geography and History, Science and Art..love it, go to school for a couple of years it would be great..</i></p> <p><i>Writing those essays and doing that research, got me through the Chemo brilliantly.</i></p> <p><i>People perceive me in an entirely different way now, even if I have got my common old voice on, they still look at you in a different way, when people ask what are you doing, and I say I am a teacher.</i></p> <p><i>I paid off my debts; paid off my student loan about two years ago.</i></p> <p><i>I did some writing, I got some plays put on, did a bit of directing, and you can unload a lot of that angst into some of the characters.</i></p>

Table 4: Somatic Extracts: Sophie

### 5.2.2 Psyche

Psyche refers to the both conscious cognition and recall from the subconscious. This existence of psyche and its application in this research is exemplified by such theorists as Brentano (1995) and Jung (1995) although extends to those others outlined in the literature review. The principle use of the conceptual theme in this research is in identifying cognitive change. Participants defined pre-encounter constituents such as lack of self-belief from past and current levels of education (Jane, Rachel, Sophie, Clive) and negative reflections about what others might say or assume about their educational achievements (Jane, Rachel, Sophie, Clive). Cognitive issues raised by all participants were related to frustrations about ability to progress (John for current work), being unsure of own capabilities and skills for new work and a lack of qualifications and/or credentials related to experience (all). All participants professed that they needed to do something to prove the worth of their life experiences and cognitive capabilities. All expected that, if successful, a return to education would equip them for their choice of new direction. Finally, all suggested that they had felt that they were presently 'standing still' and that the boundaries of what they could do needed to be expanded.

Clive's responses are detailed in Table 5 to exemplify pre and post curriculum data.

Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum
<p><i>I ticked Psychology, Sociology as well, I didn't even have the wit to get a dictionary out, to find out what they were, I thought, well, tick that one. I had no idea what I was getting myself into.</i></p> <p><i>I was ungraded at O level for Mathematics.</i></p> <p><i>I had to learn how to write!!! essays and... I was awful when I started.</i></p> <p><i>I was brought up very old-fashioned, I felt so over-dressed, and I queued up, and I told them what I wanted to do; to become a teacher.</i></p>	<p><i>Doing education as an adult opened my eyes to things I think a lot of people find hard to believe.</i></p> <p><i>I was the number one Mathematics student.</i></p> <p><i>I learned to stand up in front of people..totally terrified, can't talk to strangers..still find it, sometimes, a bit awkward, to actually stand up in front of people and teach, it was just something else.</i></p> <p><i>I actually taught nursery. I am very, very, proud that I actually did it, I had a proper job, only for a year, but I did it.</i></p>

<p><i>I had been going through a sense of frustration, I had been driving a fuel tanker in C, carrying oil and diesel and this is gospel, I was sat in the cab of my lorry, having lunch at P, having my lunch, and I had just done the deliveries to the fishing boats. I've got two live crabs scuttling on the floor of the cab, these are to take back for my boss, and it was like, this light bulb thing, what are you doing here?</i></p> <p><i>I always felt intellectually outgunned, that's my upbringing.</i></p> <p><i>I guess it was frustration, I couldn't work out what on earth was wrong.</i></p> <p><i>(In earlier education) I was dragged out of the classroom and made to sit this exam, and I scraped through by the skin of my teeth.</i></p>	<p><i>I had a classroom, full of little children, that were listening, waiting to be told what to do next, whatever it is, and I was very proud of that.</i></p> <p><i>I've only recently, in the last few years, been able to stand up straighter and be proud of who I am.</i></p> <p><i>It's done nothing but enhance my life, it has cost a few personal things, but on the whole..no..fabbo..more people should do it, especially when they are adults.</i></p> <p><i>I don't get stressed very often any more, I don't get mad, I don't get angry much any more, I'm a much better person, and I am sure everyone would agree, than I used to be.</i></p> <p><i>It opened my eyes to so many things, just being in education, let alone what education did for me professionally.</i></p>
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Table 5: Psyche extracts: Clive.

### 5.2.3 Sociality

Sociality in the research is the theme and concept used to evidence participant change in accounts of belonging, equality and strength of social disposition. It also refers to what makes adults successfully social and how the personal impact of wider change in society is perceived in and by the adult. This includes the links to psyche above, insofar as it includes their reflective sense of value for self and the plight of others. This raised issues of class (Jane, Rachel, Sophie, Clive), inequality beyond just educational comparisons of self to others (Jane, Rachel, Sophie, Kevin, Clive) and feelings of being insulated from society by circumstance (Jane, Rachel, Sophie, Clive).

The pre-encounter status was, for all, about breaking out, meeting new people, taking on a challenge, proving others wrong about what they could do and ultimately conquering their own perceptions about the opinions of others.

Rachel's data is presented in Table 6 to exemplify aspects of sociality.

Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum
<p><i>I had been at home, as a mother raising the children and I felt I wanted to work with children in a career, so I did the Access course.</i></p> <p><i>I had gone and got myself a job and then worked for companies for several years and then left to raise a family and I had been at home, as a mother for years, so I didn't know if I would be able to cope with the study and raising children.</i></p> <p><i>I was supposed to go on to do the A levels and I didn't, I opted out at the last minute, and got a job, because I saw friends earning money, so I said to my parents, I don't want to go to college, I don't want to do A levels, I'll go and find myself a job.</i></p> <p><i>I don't want to leave this area and my children are in a secondary school and we've got a few years left to see them through, and I wouldn't be prepared to move.</i></p> <p><i>I was a mature student; because it would allow you to be trained on the job, you will be receiving a wage, and you be there for your family still, and you won't have to travel.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst I was at home with my children, I enjoyed it so much working alongside them, I was very proactive if you like, and took pleasure out of seeing them learn, and expanding their thinking! People said to me, you would be good working with children.</i></p> <p><i>On the Access course really, there was a time when, I caved in and didn't think that I could continue with it; pressures of different subjects demands, and family life and not feeling I could do it.</i></p>	<p><i>I'm working in a school, where I am working as a one-to-one, a teaching assistant.</i></p> <p><i>It's like a fresh start.</i></p> <p><i>I suppose, I have always connected with children, I wouldn't just say I like them, I just have a lot of time and patience for them and I am interested in them, and their thinking, and their development.</i></p> <p><i>Going back in; into the University and working with young; a lot younger people, I think that takes some guts; you know and you were a lot more older than them and they are looking at you and you know, what are you doing here! I feel I fitted in very well with them and had a lot to offer them because I had life skills which they didn't have and when it came to discussions and debates.</i></p> <p><i>I personally feel that I would not have had the confidence to go in and apply for a job like that, had I not worked there before, or gained the respect of those that I would be leading.</i></p> <p><i>Whenever, if I had any weak moments; when I thought gosh, this is tough, I can't do it, it was the support of friends on the course, we helped one another.</i></p> <p><i>My husband was brilliant, and he has supported me all the way through it and said, you know, if that's what you want to do..then go for it and the children were very good when I needed to do some study.</i></p> <p><i>If it required studying, I wouldn't be afraid to do it, I wouldn't, because I feel that I could. I could because I</i></p>

<p><i>I didn't see the job that I had before as a career, it was a job that, I sort of, went into.</i></p> <p><i>I was doing FE, that was a whole new thing with me, because it was working with computers, I can remember being scared stiff at having to do Power-point presentations and things like.</i></p>	<p><i>know I would have the support of the family, yes, I have done it before so...it doesn't scare me.</i></p> <p><i>I am teaching assistant, working alongside teachers who are fully qualified, if you like, and I feel, well, I am not one of them, but I could be, and I am as good as them.</i></p> <p><i>My Mother in law, bless her, she's no longer with us, she thought I had changed since being at Uni, she thought I had become more outspoken with people.</i></p> <p><i>I did it because it would open up more career options for me, and because I wanted to work with children, I wanted a change....(although) I am getting poorly paid, (I am) richer in person I guess, because of the experience I think I have developed as an individual, and at the end of the day, money isn't everything.</i></p>
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Table 6: Sociality extracts: Rachel

#### 5.2.4 Curriculum push

This concept and theme was added at the data analysis stage of the research because participants recounted behavioural elements in what the curriculum caused them to do which influenced soma, psyche and sociality. This additional theme was not initially applied to the pre-encounter views of participants because it emerged as part of later data analysis. Later analysis of research accounts includes expectations and difficulties with the practical, such as curricular testing and assessment and the reflective, where new knowledge contested current and future participant perceptions of self and knowledge. The concept of push therefore refers to the range of participant realisations where the curriculum challenged them to produce the product of learning, and evidence of both personal and academic change. Evidence of curriculum push is provided in Table 7 and exemplified by Rachel who said:

*There was a time when, I caved in and didn't think that I could continue with it; pressures of different subjects demands, and family life and not feeling I could do it; feeling confused by it all.*

This evidence from Rachel suggests that the 'push' of the curriculum was a disorientating dilemma and a daunting expectation. In comparison to everyday life, becoming immersed in the entirely different pursuit of education was a challenging change. For Jane, the curriculum pushed her to fit education into her life and she recalled a conversation with her husband saying: *'I've got to type; actually I have got to study this weekend.'* Sophie, talking about her Access course, was pushed to go on to University and said:

*We had Study Skills with a mentor, who was very nice; who I got on with; who was very supportive of everybody, I would have taken that UCAS form, binned it and gone and got a job. But I took it to the chap there, and he said, oh you can do that, you can do that easy, so if somebody told me I could do it, then I could do it!. Filled in the UCAS form and the rest was history.*

John remarked on how he was encouraged to apply his learning in the workplace and reflectively remarked: *'it encourages you to sit down and think, how the academic writings can be applied and made to work.'* For Kevin, however, the workload of the curriculum was more of a shock; despite being a diligent time manager he said:

*I wasn't getting as much done during the week as I would have liked to have done, so obviously, Saturdays free but having to work all day Sunday.*

The curriculum was pushing John into making sacrifices which are illustrated by his comments about making time to study where he said: *"Sunday..I am just going to shut myself away and do this"*, whilst Clive talked about how the curriculum was pushing him to become compliant to a specific way of thinking and said:

*'the hard part for me, I always found was, thinking what they (The teachers) told me to do and focus on it, I find that quite difficult, even if I know what is required.'*

#### *5.2.5 Curriculum pull*

The alternative realisation of the theme and concept of 'pull' of the curriculum was also identified during the research phase and likewise blurred the boundaries of soma, psyche and sociality to form a synthesis of affective factors. The research definition of pull is that it unearths how the participant

reflected on past self and the 'becoming' self through the challenges presented by the curriculum. The evidence of these reflections includes what the participant believed to be true and came to know about self and society. It further unearths what and how new information and knowledge, received through their curriculum, has influenced participants' meanings.

Data from Jane, Kevin and John is presented in Table 7 to exemplify both aspects of curriculum push and curriculum pull. In these cases, pre and post-curriculum data are not separated.

<p><u>Jane</u></p>	<p><u>Curriculum Push</u></p> <p><i>I went straight in at level three and there was talk about going on; going on to university from there, and to begin with I hadn't thought about it, but a few of us thought well, that was probably the kind of way we were going to go. After the two years though I didn't; I took a year and then decided well actually, I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree.</i></p> <p><i>So now I work with the speech and language therapist, umh, but I am based in a children's centre in E.</i></p> <p><i>When I moved up here, to volunteer for the Portage and that led onto things, I didn't realise that there were things, I mean, that there were other things working in a pre-school that you could do, working with pre-school children.</i></p> <p><i>I would be more confident to say well actually, I'm going to apply for that job, because I've got my qualification, I do know what I am talking about; I may not have the experience; I may not have been doing that job for as long as you but (lowering voice) I've got loads of experience.</i></p> <p><i>I wanted to prove to myself that I could and to prove to people that I could.</i></p> <p><i>At the end of my BTEC course there was this mad panic about getting this in and that in, I'd go well I can't do that...I needed someone to shore me up a bit.</i></p> <p><i>I don't think I would be doing, or working where I am because I think I would have gone.... well, I haven't got the experience to do it, so I think it has made things better. I have a bit of a seed in the back of my head about doing something else, it might take me a couple of years to get around to that but, from time to time, it's like childbirth isn't it, pain lessens and I think there is a bit of me that goes maybe, I will do something else.</i></p>
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	<p><i>I did all sorts of evening classes; started off with GCSEs and A levels and those sorts of things which were clearly entertainment at the time; something to do but I wanted to do something that would get me somewhere; to give me something at the end of it.</i></p> <p><i>I don't take things on face value as much and as maybe I used to.</i></p>
<u>Kevin</u>	<p><u>Curriculum Push</u></p> <p>Kevin's experience was explained via Open University (OU) and University encounters</p>
University	<p><i>(Did education prepare you for responsibility?) I had two.. well three placements, in different schools, in different localities, with different social backgrounds, so I have been at one location with quite an affluent .. not many social problems, I'd say and then other schools where, you know that there are problems, so yes, it was very helpful in that respect.</i></p>
OU	<p><i>I had to do studies off my own back..I had a tutor to liaise with but maybe one tutorial every two weeks, possibly once a month or so.</i></p>
OU	<p><i>The onus is very much on student as opposed to mainstream where you have got that contact all the time.</i></p>
University	<p><i>Doing my PGCE with deadlines for essays and stuff, that's well things started getting a little bit..it didn't go horribly wrong but there was a lot of, well I've really got to work today</i></p>
OU & University	<p><i>I am going to get through this next qualification, and there has been times during the last eight months, where I have actually thought, this isn't for me but then I have thought, well don't be so daft, you've really worked hard, give it a go.. it's me putting pressure on myself, rather than anybody telling me that I can't do it</i></p>
OU	<p><i>I have always said to younger members of the band, rather than sitting looking out the window or watching a video... do it.</i></p>
OU & University	<p><i>With my Open University course, by year three or four, you know exactly what you are doing, I've got my deadlines, I have got that, almost regurgitating, but I am following a pattern</i></p>
University	<p><i>I have put my life experience skills into that mix as well, but without the education side of things, (that would probably work somewhere else) but I would have to mix them all together to get the end product.</i></p>
University	<p><i>Some of the stuff we did at university was quite diverse, yes and it was to get you to .. into critical thinking, self-evaluation.</i></p>

## Curriculum Pull

John

The data below exemplifies aspects of curriculum pull where John is still in the process of undertaking education at higher level having completed lower levels of learning.

*I am doing it is, mainly for a challenge, in terms of current position, employment wise, it's either a case of look for another job, a new challenge or stay where I am and do something from an academic perspective.*

*I think one of the things we covered early on in the course, was about reflective practice, trying to introduce that into the organisation, to make it a reflective organisation.*

*It's called viral change, the idea is, that you sow the pathogen, and sometime in the future, things explode and the change occurs.*

*So it was a question of, well do I want to stay here and do something different or try and generate something different for myself, or look for something else and really, the job market at the moment doesn't really lend itself to going out and looking for something different.*

*We're having this discussion because I am not driven by status, I saw it as an opportunity to stretch myself and to do something that I haven't really done before. I keep saying to J it's not the ceremonials that drive me.*

*I think it was more personal stretching than anything else; I am not looking to have a string of letters after my name.*

*You have got to come up with the ideas; come up with the reading to support your ideas, that's half of it.*

*I have certainly changed the way I think, umh.. I am a lot more likely to sit down and work through the implications of where things are taking the organisation, I have got a lot more time for the academic side as well. You know, there is a lot of really good stuff out there which you just have to go and look for it, actually, just having access to the University Library alone has opened a new world.*

*It's opened up a new world as well, being a little more reflective, I've been able to apply and use (reflection) better which has been great.*

*I can tie the academic side to the practical side.*

*It was because I needed something more, work related but something interesting, stimulating, and maybe just to push myself, I*

	<p><i>mean I just don't want to just sit back and go with the flow.</i></p> <p><i>It's about questioning, that's probably what I have got better at, it's not just like an automatic shoot from the hip, it's more of a structured, "how did that happen", why did it happen, can we .. so it's given me a more structured way of thinking.</i></p>
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Table 7: Curriculum push and pull extracts: Jane, John and Kevin.

### **5.3: Structure versus agency in the curriculum**

#### *5.3.1: The need for structure*

The five themes from which participant data is distilled and summarised in tables 4-7, and in overarching fashion at appendix 6, suggest that adults realised that lifelong learning curricula, applied to adults, had distinctively recognisable structures. Structure emerged as important to the participants and evidence was distinctive enough to warrant separation via the two additional categories. Curricula pushed and pulled in an overt clear and simple fashion and participants were expected to both perform and reflect on their performance in assessment. Outcomes were rational and intentional and were manifestly about setting up the circumstances of challenge; what was to be learned was formally evident through the application of these outcomes. These informed the student about what was being assessed, and provided an indication of the expected competence(s) in their area of subject study. These competences were collected as a result of successful completion.

#### *5.3.2: Structure recognition*

Outcomes based assessments were consistently employed across participants' curricula and were identified as that which tested them to exemplify and demonstrate competence; all participants in the research recognised that skills development had been achieved, albeit it had been difficult for them to do so. Kevin gave evidence of curriculum push saying: '*essay deadlines caused me conflict between work and family life,*' whilst Rachel added that: '*word processing and confrontation with assessment caused me to be scared stiff.*'

#### *5.3.3: Reflections on status*

Evidence suggests that participants endured regular contemplation about their current status, which guided their choice to employ education, which was

determined differently across genders. For the three males, it was determined by their personal aspirations which emanated from unhappiness with current work and/or principally social status. Clive remarked: *'I want to be a teacher,'* but then said: *'my wife, she laughed at me; I took umbrage,'* and John said: *'my boss he can't see the point of my education.'* For the three females, it was determined in soma and psyche by the practicalities of current life, dependent support, to build upon lost experiences, and in sociality to provide social (re) engagement and to re-find a sense of direction for their medium to long term future.

For both genders, rumination upon, and about, relationships and home circumstances and past educational achievements (or perceived lack of them), impacted confidence factors related to self, versus the perception felt to be present/evident by others, which was coupled with a personal sense of becoming older. Social status and obligations to others also featured for example, John recounts how his: *(my) 'multiple identity of father, manager and breadwinner'* had been revised from the purely experiential role he occupied at work to occupying the role of an academic student and through curriculum pull, how he found cognitive purpose saying: *'it is not the status alone.. it is the challenge too.'*

Rachel, a mother, past office worker and Access student, presented a case for validating past non-academic experiences, and the rewriting of the value of her experiences when she states that: *'you can achieve if you want to.'*

#### *5.3.4: Reflections on Identity*

Clive credited education with helping him to find a range of new identities; a somatic journey from directionless-ness and drifting into cognitive fulfilment in educational work, finding friends and into an association with a new partner, whilst Sophie talked about how education had revised her former identity, so that she was: *'more logical, able to balance views and take a calmer and wider perspective.'*

### *5.3.5: Reflections on authentic career preparation*

Curricula were cognitively adopted by participants in an attempt to realise employment aspirations pre-contemplated as personally desirable, to realise an improved competitive market positioning for career. Authentic certification was planned to evidence ability in a given career, so that they would be ready to change their respective career trajectories.

### *5.3.6: Reflections on personal circumstance*

Epochal factors were diverse, these ranged from life threatening illness, cognitive reflective dissatisfaction with current life and progress, changes to and in, the quality and reliability of close relationships, imagined sense of comparative status to others, lack of (meaningful) career status and/or enforced change of career. Changes in life related to children growing up and being less dependent were also evident, as was the attempt to realise changed income and/or status. The epoch of having less disposable income/ needing more income/ having regular income and/or regard from others, was evident across all participants and is particularly emphasised in the sociality of Rachel's account at table 6.

### *5.3.7: Post education careers*

The research established that participants were employed in a range of paid or voluntary roles (full and part time directly after the course of learning). In male cases, the encounter led to a promotion at work, achievement of the expected employment position and employment in an unrelated area respectively. For females, all were in some form of work which was not related directly to the initial curriculum followed; a chance conversation (June 2012) has established that one is now unemployed.

## **5.4: The transformational curriculum**

### *5.4.1: Confidence and esteem*

Evidence principally under the thematic headings of soma, psyche and sociality unearthed that curricula have a more complex role which is meaningfully employed by participants for example Kevin said: *'I wasn't qualified .. I had to get myself sorted.'* This complexity, however, is difficult to separate from the

technical rationality of the course of study. Affective notions of personal achievement, it seems, are developed as a cumulative phenomenon across soma, psyche and sociality. This self-discovery, self-understanding and self-congratulation became increasingly apparent to the participants as they progressed, Clive remarks: *'the whole new experience is more valuable than its independent bits and pieces.'*

In equal measure, beyond the subject learned, their own individual needs provoked their actions and guided their reflections toward making more fundamental longer term changes to their own persona.

Evidence that changes to the self became evident to self and others, during, and post, the educational encounter, is provided for example by Rachel:

She remarks:

*I think the study from the Access centre and right through to going to R, has possibly made me a more confident person, not probably, it definitely has.*

And as stated in aspects of sociality, that her Mother-in-law had regarded her, in positive terms as: *'more outspoken.'*

This reified achievement of better preparedness for career, enhanced self-belief and increased (assumed) capability vis-a-vis employability (not just career pathway initially chosen).

There was evidence that engagement with the curriculum had realised psyche change and somatic outcomes to familiar and habitual cognitive lines of thought throughout and built enhanced reflective capacity, such shifts universally enhancing the locus of self-belief and control in affective terms.

Participants' responses justify this assertion thus;

Sophie: *I am quite proud of myself, that I have done all that on my own, I mean obviously you have support along the way from mentors and I am the only one of us (in her family) that has ever done a degree, and I'm the youngest.*

Jane: *Actually to me, I think it's made a difference, maybe I am not top of the tree anywhere and maybe I am not earning megabucks but that's somebody else's standard isn't it, that's not particularly my standard.*

Kevin: *If I sit down and be really honest with myself, I am really quite proud of myself, and lots of people tell me, you should be proud of yourself, lots of people tell me that they are very proud of me but getting that in there (pointing to head) !*

In this context, ability to conquer being controlled by others and simultaneously reclaiming ownership of self-determination, was a major somatic and cognitive factor.

In the later stages of learning, participants realised a worth in their acquired 'new knowledge' which engendered a transformed state of consciousness in the psyche and soma, about their own current and future capabilities and potential beyond the skills they had developed. In this respect paraphrasing Clive who remarked about his new command of English and what it meant said:

*I think much more..about doing English Lit..... (Reading is valuable)*

*Your final perception of reading a novel ....I can see more....(He was able to enjoy a greater depth of meaning)*

*It's done nothing but enhance my life. (New knowledge meant greater 'intrinsically felt cultural wealth)*

#### *5.4.2: Structured emancipation*

Structure regularly reappeared in the cognition of the participants to support the view that they understood the need for it in learning matters and in the support to their educational development. Curricula pushing and pulling in this sense were understood as pathway to change (alike to a roadmap); the provision of this roadmap being evidentially more vital at the start of the educational encounter, than at later points as participants progressed.

When asked to recount early versus later experiences;

Clive stated: *I had no idea what I was getting myself into, and we were all gathered in the classroom and she stands up and does her bit, and I had to put my hand up and say I don't really know what you are on about..this is the very first session..what the hell...it was a nature-nurture debate, which I now know lots about. Then I hadn't got a clue, but they were fantastic.. the course was fantastic..the tutors were amazing*

And at the end of the interview declared;  
*I feel personally liberated.*

Rachel stated: *I hadn't got A levels at school; I didn't do them at college either*  
And at the end of the interview when talking about theory said;

*If I hadn't have been and done that course at X (tapping at the table), I wouldn't have seen other ways of educating children, other forms; Steiner, Montessori, and that course gave me the luxury of going into different establishments; that children, actually, do very well in different learning environments, and that gave me greater awareness.*

In contrast, Kevin was less satisfied with the quality of the academic experience and when asked about his course, he saw greater purpose in the world of practical learning, saying:

*Most of the time it was learning off of the teacher that you were with, I could see why people were doing the X (practical course) so that they could get the work experience, but I was recommended to do the Y (University course) because you get more theory based stuff and balancing them up, I think that the X would have suited me better.*

Educational challenge was employed by participants to progressively grow consciousness. Transformation was realised by participants when challenge was successfully addressed and confirmed by their ability to apply, (not just receive), new understandings. Achievement of milestones during education and the quality of the surrounding support in education was thus crucial to maintaining their motivation to persevere to completion. Sophie's remarks about: '*wanting to go on from Access study to University*' in the preliminary analysis are replicated by Clive, Rachel, Jane and Kevin whilst John has already made a further and even higher step into Masters level of study.

Accounts identified that participants encountered tipping points in life (epochs), which were contributory to providing the self-motivation necessary to address and support entry into education; such epochs providing cognitive reflective inner dialogues, which supported working toward somatic closure to the episode of learning. Most of all, and consistent, was that their accounts provided a record of their desire to prove to self that the educational journey was uniquely transformative, worth-while and beneficial for self and other dependents.

#### *5.4.3: Curricula beyond credentials*

The initial hermeneutic analysis suggests that lifelong learning curricula have dual outcomes; clearly patent is how the participant gets a qualification, which

contributes to transformational change. Secondly and apparent, and an ironically concealed finding threaded through their accounts, is a range of diverse and affective complexities, beyond achieving competences. Personal barriers, evident at the beginning of the educational journey, were self-constructed from a diverse mixture of past personal and experiential knowing, for example Jane said:

*I started to do evening classes and I did A levels. Going on fine, something happened then I'd say I am not going back and Sophie remarked this isn't for you, you're not good enough.*

Yet the given structure and pathway, in the form of a chosen curriculum, were important as a catalyst to change. When receiving teaching, and living through the educational experience, engagement encouraged reflection of both a somatic and cognitive nature. These results were significantly represented in the participants' responses and exemplified by the stories recounted in each research participant's journey. For example, Jane remarked about those who knew her in the past and what she felt they might now observe about her when saying:

*It has taken me a long time to get around to it but I think if any of those people were to bump into me now, I'd be a completely different person.*

Rachel described how increased confidence allowed her to go from FE to success at subsequent HE study:

*I think the study from the Access centre and right through to going to University, has possibly made me a more confident person, not probably, it definitely has.*

In sociality terms, the often unqualified support of other students, support workers and teachers, helped to form a bond of collegiality and friendship which for some has endured. Nevertheless, memories of the collegiality linger distinctively in all participant responses.

As discussed in the literature review, soma, cognition/psyche and sociality, are target areas which, when positively influenced, constitute evidence of transformation. Transformation is evident if:

1. In the Soma, an indication of holistic, bodily felt change is recounted by participants, and is evidentially related to claims of 'well-being'.
2. In the Psyche, if cognitive movement by participants is claimed and examples and evidence are given.
3. In Sociality, if participants confirm greater understandings of connectedness and interdependence of self to communities, and can exemplify enhanced appreciation of such things as diversity at work and in wider society.

These transformations must be such that the participant feels more somatically comfortable with, capable of cognitively dealing with, and able to find support in the challenges confronting their contemporary life.

## **5.5: Agency over structure**

### *5.5.1: Harnessing the system*

The overt intent of lifelong learning education is to alter the cognition of the student in a specifically mechanical way. In this respect, claims of enriched personal competence are collected via certificated authentication processes. To have a qualification means having hit a recognised benchmark or standard in a subject, and at a recognised level in that subject. In transformational terms, however, becoming authentically qualified gives access to, and provides credibility to apply for, new or revised levels of work. Subject to successful (open) competition between individuals for work, access to income from obtaining new/revised employment has short term transformational capacity. In more complex juxtaposition, however, is how participants identified the impact of personal educational achievement as evidenced by wider transformational factors, which have longer term effect.

In respect of the overt curriculum (the curriculum structure set objectives for achievement), there was agreement by all participants that their curricula provided the focus for gaining new skills and abilities, which led to a sense of being more able to see how to compete in the/a job market or enter higher education. Sophie said: *'I was expecting to gain some qualifications, to be able to get a better job'* and similarly Rachel felt it was: *'to give me the options.'* In

this respect all participants were initially able/motivated to find work. Moreover, completion of the overt curriculum led to greater levels of perceived personal authenticity for a particular job role and formerly perceived notions of incompetence had been, for the job purpose in mind, rectified where Rachel continues by saying: *'if you do have a degree, it is a definite benefit.'* An important factor was having ability validated by certification; celebration of this led to a sense of being more expert in a given field, the ability to produce certified evidence of capability, and to present self assertively, without fear of challenge, by subsequent relevant parties. In some instances the qualification was needed for (re) entry into employment and in others, to progress to higher levels of education and all achieved this initial aim.

At its most basic, the overt curriculum had provided the participant, with something to study and do which was distinctively different from their activities in everyday life; some indicated that it: *'got me out of a rut'* (Sophie), *'gave me something positive to do'* (John). Attendance in classes at the teaching institution, challenged their relative and growing discomfort with the familiar, and provided the environment and the circumstances where they were expected to reach for and achieve alternative goals presented to them. Data suggests this challenge was regarded as part of a wider emancipatory release. Responses similarly expressed were: *'it gave me greater awareness'* (of what the anticipated work was about – Jane, Rachel, Kevin, John) and: *'being in an environment where I can get help'* (Jane, Sophie, Clive, John), justify and exemplify this factor.

Participants encountered personal reflections which challenged their notions of personal efficacy. 'Damaged' notions of past ability, potential and capability were both competence and competency related. Competence enrichment (the individual rose to a challenge they set themselves) in this sense was the process by which the participant gathered the skills necessary to explore the desired career trajectory, which the curriculum outcomes required them to demonstrate. Participant evidence suggests that this skills 'push' improvement was structured in the curriculum around assessment and although sometimes

complex and multi-staged, it became understandable via teacher led, structured guidance. For example, participants recount: '*I struggled with computing*' (Rachel) and '*doing presentations!*' (Jane), '*completing health and safety documents*' (Sophie) and '*creative writing*' (Clive). Competency, however, (the necessary associated thinking skills), was evidentially more difficult; to revise their thinking they were tasked to change the way they thought and problem solved: examples include problem solving itself, selecting and using tools for decision making, making a coherent argument in a debate and developing critical reasoning. Adult participants found solving the assessment challenges of the skills agenda as presented, stimulating, motivating and empowering, albeit daunting, but worked out how they could be successful by working closely with (supportive) teachers and peers.

#### *5.5.2: Validating own growth*

In respect of their growing sense of own agency, regular and detailed reflections by the participants on how they were growing self by the push and pull of the curriculum, was influential in bringing to consciousness that which remediated skills beyond just those required for work, Clive for example focussed on wider English and Maths from Access level to degree and said: '*it was mind boggling.*' This emphasis surfaced through participant concerns for not having relevant work experience (particularly a gendered issue for women returners to the job market), and/or feelings of out-of date skills deficiencies. These deficiencies were almost entirely affectively recounted, despite most participants having little or no access to comparing their current skills to that of current market expectation, the curriculum tending to instil a fear of this unsubstantiated and untested dimension.

Jane remarks:

*I started off as a volunteer with Portage then they offered me a job, so I must have been doing something right! But I always kind of felt that I didn't have as much experience*

Sophie said:

*I tried to visit (XYZ School) there once or twice but they wouldn't let me because I used to look after the SEN kids. I saw a job come up, and I didn't think I would have a hope in hell*

Rachel said:

*In order to do something more, I felt that with me having a degree, it might enable me to get a better paid job in the future.*

There was also evidence that participants' curricula encouraged scanning of career and higher education opportunities on a local basis, yet the imperatives driving lifelong learning, such as the political ideas of global threat to employment, and/or national issues of world competition, were completely absent, as was any regard for political rhetoric. Participants were therefore much more concerned with immediate local use of their anticipated qualification via their curriculum vitae, to realise local career development, and were less concerned about whether the detailed modules in what they had learned were useful or not, in getting the job that they felt was now possible. Jane suggested that, although she had heightened awareness in her new specialist subject, she saw the curriculum in an apolitical way when saying:

*I don't think you look at things the same as when you are eighteen or twenty. When you see this on the telly, they are all sitting around discussing things; the world and so on; it didn't happen for me, those sorts of things.*

Rachel in similar style remarked, when asked about political awareness:

*I don't think that I think that deeply about those things to be perfectly honest; I don't think that it (education) has changed me dramatically, being in adult education I don't think that it has made me change my views too much.*

Curricula provided 'set agendas' for students to complete assessment activities in a 'push' sense yet, they also had qualities which could evidentially pull understandings out of the student's past experience. Clive remarked on his psychology curriculum that he had to learn what nature versus nurture meant and said to the teacher:

*I don't really know what you are on about..this is the very first session..what the hell...it was a nature-nurture debate, which I now know lots about. Then I hadn't got a clue.*

Using his experience of life he was able to make sense of the learning expectation and subsequently said:

*I had to learn how to write essays and... I was awful when I started.. like I say.. I didn't know what the nature- nurture debate was all about.*

Participants in the research were also introduced to other work opportunities which they had not previously known existed, for which they would qualify, should they graduate. In respect of current ability, participants recounted surprise about the quality and relevance of what they already knew, particularly so when the curriculum asked them to work on specific areas in which they remarked that they had limited expertise. This had the positive effect of growing self-reliance and validation of their past practical life experiences as educative. Examples include: *I knew I had a good brain*, (Sophie) and: *'I have always been able to make people feel comfortable'* (John), skills gleaned from past life became valuable in this contemporary context. In a more profound way these encounters with a curriculum fed back a changed and validated disposition of esteem. Participants came to know education; they achieved greater understanding of the sophistications which determined learning 'levels' in education, and became able to compare their own pre-existing understandings to those levels (previously having been un-certificated, so not valid). All participants reported a growth in reflective capacity through being in a (safer) place where learning was a focus of activity, and where permission was given to thinking (in a structured fashion) as a justifiable and valued pursuit. In contrast, negative remarks emerged such as: *'doing education was self-indulgent and selfish,'* (Jane) in both time and money terms. Rachel expressed anxiety about: *'ignoring partners, children and dependents'*; torn between earning and learning, they, on the one hand, particularly females, revered the advice of curriculum professionals to persevere through the challenge, yet continued through the mix of somatic need and push and pull, fit their 'real' lives into a revised schedule. Participants indicated that curricula encouraged them, at one end of the spectrum: to *'practise imitative skills'* (Kevin -often of the teacher) and, at the other, to confront the unfamiliar and present unknown areas of their future work ambitions and to conquer their fears of being challenged on new and past (often deemed failed) areas of learning in the process where Sophie confirms by saying: *'it (education) was a way to move up, to escape.'*

Participants all separated out the distinctiveness of the curriculum area studied from their experience of it, describing it as a journey for self and not as a

collection of skills, competences, and achieved outcomes. This defines the difference between the factors of soma, psyche and sociality and that of curriculum push and pull but also indicates how they are connected.

The specifics of the curriculum studied received unanimously little detailed attention in their recounted narratives; however, having a qualification led to some discussing the need for more, which was evidentially driven by newly acquired expectations of further educational success, and less so by the achievement of a better career. In all cases, the participants were pulled from feeling hemmed in by sociological notions of their class, background, ability, basic skills, gender and past vocation, and pushed into a greater sense of psychological personal worth, emancipation and equity and moreover, harmony with a more assertive self.

### **5.6: Lifelong learning curricula and their transformational role**

Somatic factors, in this research, are those which best described participant expressions of 'felt' holistic movement to a new level or stage of self. In this respect, there were remarks interpreted as therapeutic.

For example, Sophie drew a vivid internalised picture of what she thought others saw when they looked at her, saying:

*I expected someone (at work) to tap me on the shoulder and say, come on sussed you out, come on sling your hook*

And:

*I am always looking for what I am doing wrong, I'm always looking for.. why did that mistake happen.. that must be my fault. I'm always looking for..something is going to happen*

And when painting a picture of her expectations in earlier life said:

*My sort of class went to factories, to shops, to cleaners.*

In similar fashion, Clive characterised himself in before and after state when saying:

*I always felt intellectually outgunned, that's my upbringing. I've only recently, in the last few years, been able to stand up straighter and be proud of who I am.*

He further recounted that, in the past, he conceived of others expectations inaccurately, using an incident to illustrate how he acted upon what he had come to think of as appropriate behaviour, and which caused him personal embarrassment, saying:

*I had heard about an open evening for an Access course, and this was pre any kind of internet or anything like that, so I put on my best suit; a tie, I was the smartest person there, I was brought up very old-fashioned, I felt so over-dressed, and I queued up, and I told them what I wanted to do; to become a teacher.*

In post educational terms their responses were revised to: *I am a more confident person* (Clive), and: *'I am proud of myself'* (All in similar terms). The participants also described feeling less threatened and more connected to others' experiences, in a state of fulfilled capability and extended capacity to make further progress. They described their pre-education state in terms of being unable to contemplate a positive future, whilst post educational encounter dialogue was more positive; in metaphorical terms, 'wounds had been healed' and, 'ready to move on again'. From beginnings of being daunted by the challenges that educational encounters might bring, learning became increasingly enjoyable; a place where they could drop the defence of an incoherently organised future self to allow alternatives to permeate and sediment. There were recurring accounts that participants looked forward to the days and hours when they were attending as a release from the everyday aspects of their lives. Examples include: *'I absolutely loved it'* (Clive), and: *'Go back to Uni! I would jump at the chance'* (Sophie). Accompanied by the opportunity to ruminate, participants indicated that they had achieved a new level or stage. They felt themselves to be more authentically individual, less held back, and more willing to rely upon the new knowledge of themselves when making decisions, or proffering commentary or advice to others, in and out of the institutional learning context. For example John remarks about his studies and its consequences thus:

*I saw it as an opportunity to stretch myself and to do something that I haven't really done before..... It's opened up a new world as well, being a little more reflective, I've been able to apply and use (reflection) better which has been great.*

In cognitive matters, participants' past lives morphed from being a hindrance to their own progress, to a rich cupboard of stories; 'a new sense of coherence' was recounted. Participants were able to remark that academia had taught them theories which named what they had often, in life, experienced and all claimed to be able to structure their thinking in multiple ways from the

encounters with education, through a synthesis of a-priori experiences and new (to them) theoretical understandings. This had the positive impact of growing their self-reliance and engendered feelings of having moved on; words such as: *'I wanted a change'* (Rachel), became: *and 'I have done it'* (Rachel). Moving on was also described as a cognitive imperative, where the participants felt they had retained a grounded social sense of self, which precluded them from concluding that others would see them as being different. Others, however, did see them as different; the achievement of the qualification changing the status of the participants intrinsically or extrinsically or both. An example detailed previously in Table 6 is: *'My mother in law..she thought I had become more outspoken'* (Rachel). Such responses validate and evidence newly found inner strength and assertiveness.

A changed sense of self, validated by an awarding authority, was discussed by all participants in their sense of pride in achievement, with better coping skills, feelings of having achieved greater balance and an enhanced sense of direction stated. Revised inner dialogues pervaded all participants, their descriptions suggested realisation of a metamorphic change. Clive in table 5 said: *'it was like a dream'*, Rachel said: *'I never dreamt that I would do it'* and Jane concluded that: *'I am a completely different person.'*

The participants claimed changed identity versus their own aspirations and no longer saw the move to 'having' (an identified life-course) as important and regarding their past 'career dominated' thinking as flawed. In this sense, participants experienced a critical review of what they were learning to become and not all relished the picture that they saw for self and anticipated career. In at least two thirds of the cases, the need to become socially and culturally different, as well as specifically qualified, was too big a change to contemplate and whilst still successful in the educational phase, were not so successful versus the originally planned career revision phase. None of those failing to achieve their stated initial career aspiration were remorseful or hurt, however, by the realisation of an alternative interim career, as all had deliberately chosen other paths and felt that they had made a better and more informed choice. Clive's account indicates how he revised his plans of being a teacher

when saying: *'friends of mine tell me that it was really after I came out of teaching that, I came to be like they remembered me'* because of *'rules to be obeyed'*. Importantly, however, was that the alternative realised or unrealised career had little impact or reduction to the acquired, affirmative participant psyche and confidence in a differently described identity.

Despite the majority having not achieved original career plans (some subsequently have), all deemed themselves a success from the point of view of making progress into changed forms of work. In terms of the regard given to them by others, all remarked that others saw them differently, but did not feel themselves to be characteristically different. Specific examples, suggest a: *'more opinionated'* (Rachel) *'more aware'* (Jane) *'less inhibited identity'* (Clive) and *'proud'* (Kevin), less concerned about expressing their own point of view: that point of view and disposition had itself shifted was significant across all participants who were inclined to recount that education was employed as a bridge between their former life and the current. In discussions all exhibited a greater sense of consciousness, tolerance and awareness of the diversities of others, to whom they all, universally, felt more equal, yet their words expressed a more forgiving essence of others' cognitive and moral ineptitudes, as seen from their transformed plateau. Participants appeared to have become generally encouraging of others toward learning and in recommending and proposing an educational experience as a pathway to change for others, who fell both inside and out of their sphere of influence.

In considering how participants engaged with the ideological world, a research question had been assigned to look specifically at critical awareness and whether participants had developed a status which made them more aware of wider justice/injustice, equality/inequality. Without exception, all rejected that the curriculum had influenced them to be more activist in their community or in wider society; all saw the curriculum purpose as a focus for their individual skills and knowledge that they felt was needed for personal progress, and not as a challenge to any sense of the political status quo. This area of the research has revealed a contradiction between what some research has said about the

nature of the post learning participant (as seen from the participants' perspective). Participants described their own revised somatic, psychological and social status; confidence, self-belief and assertiveness were all evident, but none appeared to apply this politically in their post educational phase. Rachel said: '*I am not a political person*', she defined herself as: '*a little more critical*' and Clive felt there was more attraction in pursuing the apolitical interests of his music and said: '*politics bores me to death.*' Moreover, up-skilling for the benefit of the nation was vigorously and universally denied as being any part of their awareness or journey.

The findings point to evidence that the structure of lifelong curricula can influence agency in a duality of ways. The curriculum pushes and simultaneously pulls participants by directing practical action and encouraging reflection through 'push'. In pull, successful curricular engagement provides fulfilment, rearranges inner participant dialogues and enhances social disposition. These findings suggest a two way connection between push and pull and that of soma, psyche and sociality.

### **5.7: Discussion**

The discussion section will develop, analyse, synthesise, critique and justify the contribution of the soma, psyche and sociality transformative themes, in greater individual and comparative depth, comparing and deepening the principal claim. This claim is that it does not matter whether learning is undertaken at FE, HE in FE and/or HE level; that APCE lifelong learning curricula all have transformative potential. This discussion will then begin to address and theorise how identity might be influenced through the employment of lifelong learning curricula. The discussion will then reconsider and present participants' meaning units in relation to the research questions asked and retrospectively re-analyse the data for evidence of any pre-contemplation by participants of curriculum push and pull factors.

### 5.7.1: Transformative theory revisited

Mezirow (1978;1981;1991) suggests that most of what we learn revolves around solving our problems. In this discussion I contend, that based upon the research evidence, lifelong learning curricula are principally employed by adult students as problem solving devices. Results and justificatory examples, in Tables 4-7 acknowledge that the subject chosen irrespective of level, by participants, became secondary in their experience of doing learning. Participant's sense of pre-organised purpose is also proposed, as the very grounding mechanism which (re-) delivers the vital organisation and structure lost by life encounters, which counters the congealed nature of their current life, and previously obscured their sense of clear personal direction.

Justifying these points is the evidence that all participants met the outcomes of their lifelong learning curriculum and achieved career related movement. Pre curriculum comments in tables 4-7 gives evidence of trauma, indecision and self-denigration whilst post curriculum tables 4-7 exhibits the pride and empowerment of achievement.

The extracts of participant accounts of a changed sense of self through cumulative reflection are condensed in table 8 and indicate a journey from, and out of, chaos, where not being in control of the means of their livelihood and/or being ill equipped to be self-sufficient and self-reliant had come to be reflexively and reflectively known as a problem to be solved.

Participant	Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum	Factor	Evidence
Sophie	<i>I did all sorts of jobs.</i>	<i>I'm proud that I have got a (meaningful) job.</i>	Soma	Table 1
Clive	<i>Going through a sense of frustration.</i>	<i>I don't get stressed anymore.</i>	Psyche	Table 2
Rachel	<i>I didn't feel I could do it (education).</i>	<i>It's like a fresh start.</i>	Sociality	Table 3
Jane	<i>I need to move on again</i>	<i>Do something that got me somewhere.</i>	Push	Table 4 +
Kevin	<i>I was encouraged to get out there and re-train.(But was unsure).</i>	<i>Do it! (education).</i>	Push	Table 4+
John	<i>I probably got a little bit lazy in learning</i>	<i>It's opened up a new world</i>	Pull	Table 4+

Table 8: Journey from chaos

This inner reflective dialogue of inadequacy and/or unpreparedness for self-sufficient progress became an individualised search for a purpose in a curriculum, where they sought to realise a “metamorphosis of the self”. At the same time they surfaced into repetitive cognition, the chaotic yet interconnected range of problems inhibiting their own progress.

Lynch and Field (2007:1) label these issues as, “being stuck, becoming unstuck and blockages between learning contexts”. Biesta (2006), suggests that students have, “little influence on the content, purpose and point of their learning” (Biesta 2006:177), yet, whilst participants in this research all started out with blockages to their ability to transit from a sense of discomfort with career and life progress, all were able to lose themselves and their worldly feelings of inadequacy, in an empowering structure. Whilst the structures evident in gaining access to APCE were difficult to negotiate, once part of learning communities, they were able to embrace and employ the personal agency necessary to overcome the mechanistic expectations of the chosen curricula, for the purpose of achieving self-directed transformation. Confirming this view is a distinctive paper by Lynch and Field (2007), who, amongst the lifelong learning project, investigated agency growth. This research, and that of Lynch and Field (2007), confirms that the need for achievement in adulthood sufficiently dissolves the fear of authoritative structures, reframes past self-marginalisation (Foucault 1977), and prepares the participant for educational self-investment. In this sense, a new stage of adult existence and identity brought about by the catalyst of educational action and reflexive contemplations compels the participant to seek improved self-regard.

At table 9 is evidence supporting the view that the serendipitous outcomes unsuspectingly and unconsciously embraced changing levels of consciousness, and life/career dissonance awareness.

Participant	Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum	Factor	Evidence
Sophie	<i>It wasn't for my class of person.</i>	<i>I'm capable.</i>	Soma	Table 1
Clive	<i>What are you doing here?</i>	<i>I'm a much better person</i>	Psyche	Table 2
Rachel	<i>I caved in</i>	<i>I am as good as them</i>	Sociality	Table 3
Jane	<i>I didn't have as much experience as some of the other girls.</i>	<i>I've got my qualification.</i>	Push	Table 4+
Kevin	<i>I'm not qualified to do what I want to do</i>	<i>I am still learning</i>	Push	Table 4
John	<i>What is the point of me devoting time to it (education).</i>	<i>A more structured way of thinking</i>	Pull	Table 4

Table 9: Self-regard

Previous denial of the narcissistic investments necessary to achieve personal actualisation, combined with a growing sense of dissonance with problematic life and status quo are, it seems the powerful issues participants sought to consciously correct. Critical re-evaluation of the self required a structure through which meanings could be assessed (Mezirow 1985): where “the aetiology of (past) actions” (Kitchenam 2008:114) and factors yet to be unveiled might “transform (future) meaning schemes” (Kitchenam 2008). The reflections of the participants, as seen from the vantage point of having completed this education, were narrative evaluations across aspects of content, process and premise (Mezirow 1995): Content reflection, being their reflections on past actions, as seen through what they previously knew; process being their recollections of the causes of those actions through newly acquired ways of thinking and premise, being a more radical re-evaluation of their values and beliefs as seen from their post educational experience perspective.

The movement achieved in their ability to perceive subjectivities and claims to objectivity by others, and the ability to have an intrinsically valued and informed opinion and/or the capability to discern plausibility of the arguments of others, is crucial to understanding how the growth in inner strength and self-reliance transformed. Evidence suggests that the lifelong FE, HE in FE and HE learning curricula, overt and hidden, all delivered significant perspective transformations

which revised “habits of mind” (Mezirow 2000:119) and through ‘perspectives management’ the educative experience, altered participant points of view about self, career, and their potential to cope with a future new identity (See Table 9). Mezirow (2003) points to: “The process of critical-dialectical discourse (which) centrally involves assessing the beliefs of others, to arrive at a tentative best judgment” (2003:59). Evidence of participants’ ‘grounded-ness’ from past experience, their ability to link this to the (apparent) wisdom of received theory and then very readily see the application, was evident in interviews with them (Example appendix 5). Additionally, participants expressed that their lecturers led them to expect (critical) reasoning to be a focus of the growth of their wider competencies, embedded in their curriculum; interview evidence suggests that they unwittingly learned this skill effectively. In support of this Kohlberg (2003) remarks that transformation is: “achieved through reasoning with focus on the particularity of differences in points of view.” (Kohlberg in Mezirow 2003:62).

#### *5.7.2: Extent to which a structured curriculum influenced the soma*

Evident in participant accounts was the straight-forward view that lifelong FE, HE in FE and HE learning curricula all provided a focal purpose for the participant to pursue, what they believed to be, a new and meaningful direction.

All participants were undergoing transitional reflective thinking and formulating a way forward, based upon something they felt would be meaningful to them and their career; that which had ‘bodily’ been a factor causing, in some, depression, had been released through commencement. In some cases reflective thinking was employed to fulfil past contemplations of career, in others, to resolve the feelings of dissonance in current life and in others to cure the pain accompanying lack of future purpose.

Table 10 compares the somatic influence of transitional reflection across five of the participants (Sophie is detailed at Table 4).

Participant	Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum
Clive	<i>I lacked confidence.</i>	<i>Respected for what I did (as a teacher).</i>
Rachel	<i>I wanted a change.</i>	<i>Made me a more confident person.</i>
Jane	<i>I am not (laughing) a particularly confident person.</i>	<i>Life is more positive now.</i>
Kevin	<i>Being an X unfortunately, we are not very confident in our own abilities.</i>	<i>I am Mr X with a tie that has made me a completely different person.</i>
John	<i>We did all the different tests, and I came out as a big cynic, which didn't surprise me.</i>	<i>I feel I have also become more driven to do something with it (what has been learnt).</i>

Table 10: Somatic influence

Participant accounts suggest that realising a stage in adulthood, combined with reflection and reflexive reviews of circumstances, surface the need to pursue psycho-social well-being in a 'bodily' felt way; having meaningful purpose being crucial to the pursuit of contentment, challenge and sense of somatic well-being. It further appears that the pursuit of challenge emanates from a wider range of reflections upon life and career, and is more meaningfully concentrated during epochal episodes. Distinctive examples include John, who recounted that: '*I was stuck in a rut, my boss wasn't likely to move on to make way for my development*', and that challenges amongst the familiarity of his job had waned. For Rachel, the thought of going back to a mundane, nine to five, job following a child rearing break was anathema to her. Her view was that the work previously available to her, given qualification status was: '*just a job and not a career*'. Sophie, however, had encountered dissatisfaction with a marriage, a critical illness, a child who had grown up and left home, within a short period of time, all of which centred reflections upon the need to move and change. These regularly reoccurring moments of reflection suggested corrosion of the soma: the chosen way out was to take transformative action versus the pain felt by such unsettling inner dialogues.

Wounded by the impact of these metaphorical arrows, participants appeared to reach for both inner peace and remediation by taking a more selfish stance, and greater levels of responsibility for self-directed change. Mezirow (1990) called

this a function of metacognition, “as that of informing and regulating cognitive routines and strategies” (1990:8). He continues by saying: “Epistemic distortions have to do with the nature and use of knowledge....reification...seeing a phenomenon produced by social interaction as immutable, beyond human control” (Mezirow 1990:15). The attempt to take back personal control, to tackle their own socio-cultural and psychic distortions, was clearly evident amongst the research participants (See Table 9).

Socio-cultural distortions, evident in participant accounts, suggested that particular belief systems were pre-eminent in the soma, at the time of the epochal episodes. These beliefs expressed by the participants enshrined the view that they were in a (recognisable through reflection) particular power relationship with circumstance, and that in this relationship of (often imagined) hopelessness, inevitable negative outcomes could be expected. Gould (1978) and Mezirow (1990) unpack these as psychic distortions, suggesting that we presuppose outcomes, which in themselves generate: “unwanted anxieties that impede taking action” (1990:16). Seeing a new way forward thus appears to be the process adopted by participants, wrenching oneself from circumstance by thrusting oneself into an alternative environment. In this sense, the widely used term, ‘a change is as good as a rest’, was embedded in the structure: education was chosen as the vehicle to deflect the pain from the soma, by occupying a greater part of the conscious mind, giving an alternative focus for thought and both institutionally, and metaphorically, providing a ‘defensive bunker’ in which the soma could be reconstituted and healed, in the flow of the curriculum (See Curriculum Push Table 7).

Amongst all participant accounts was the unsolicited praise for the support mechanisms given by both own family, close relations and institutional sources. Common was the sense of community created amongst the student groups that participants engaged with (Lave & Wenger 1991). The value given by participants was clear, on this aspect of somatic need; Sophie said: *‘I would have never have survived without the Life Skills and English Teacher’*, Kevin describes: *‘X has been a rock’*, Rachel: *‘I couldn’t have done it without their*

*support*, Jane described how the children were attended to during times she needed to study and Clive said: *'R bent the rules for me, I think she could see something that probably a lot of people couldn't see.'* In all of these accounts, institutional and some family supporters recognised the value that the encounter with FE, HE in FE and HE curricula had to the participant; participants recounted how their supporters gave up their time so that they could feel safe, to devote time and attention to healing their damaged soma. In this respect affective/emotional permissions were given (Fenwick 2003) and taken differentially by participants from those sources into their practical engagement with a course of skills study.

### *5.7.3: Extent to which a structured curriculum influenced the psyche*

Snyder (2008) argues that: “transformative learning involves profound shifts in the understanding of knowledge, the world, and ourselves” (2008:163).

Csikszentmihalyi (1994) suggests that:

*“The reflective self seems to literally inhabit our brain, directing our thoughts, interpreting our emotions, while all of the time selectively storing and retrieving information without explanation or justification.”*

(Csikszentmihalyi 1994: 23).

The combination of shifts to understanding, the growth of reflective capability and capacity, together with the educationally achieved revisions to more positive selective recall, were evident as the fundamental psyche influencing factors unearthed in the research (See Table 5). Thinking differently about the world was thus equal in importance to them thinking differently about self. Reshaping the psyche might thus be argued as dual in nature; that, in achieving a greater understanding of the ‘outside world’, the participants reframed their opinion of current and past self. Past life, in these realisations, gained relevance and provided self-esteem; the need to be identified by the career that the student had or expected to follow, became of lesser importance; the need to be seen as a validated educational success (See Table 10) was reframed as a: “life course correction” (Rathunde 2010:91) not a personal past failing. Rathunde, in this context, goes on to say:

*“Sustained interest and optimal experience are more likely to occur when an affectively charged intuitive mode works in concert with a deliberative rational mode, then experiential wisdom is not only the recognition that both modes are important, but also the capacity to put oneself in situations where the interrelation of these two modes is optimized.”*

(Rathunde 2010:91)

The argument here is that the psyche of the adult participant was engaged in the flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; 1996) of a recognisable, other self; that of being (named and identified as) a student. In so doing, the cognitive thinking space and the structure of curricula in synthesis, beyond instrumental lifelong learning agendas, permitted the student to see that they comprised multiple selves; their transformation of psyche is what Dirkx (2000) calls the process of individuation through perspective's transformation (Mezirow 1991). Dirkx (2000) suggests: “learners compose their lives by using imagination and critical reflection to interpret their life story, within the social context,” (2000:1). This deepening sense of wholeness recounted, and in some cases observed, was the profound shift in psyche and of self ‘in the world’, and amongst their dominantly encountered range of social contexts.

In every participant, the most significant change to the psyche was the belief that they had become capable, and had set aside (but, significantly, not banished) past educational incompetence, and some self-doubt demons. Being proud was unanimously evident (Tables 4, 8, 9 and 10). Maslow (1954), Knowles (2005) and Bandura (1997) all remark on how changed relationships between the personal, the environment, and behaviour are significant. Without exception, in and from the educational environment, the participants drew personal pride; all exhibited the body language of pleasure when recounting this part of their narrative (noted in brackets in participant accounts), and all paused in the process of recounting the achievement, suggestive of a kind of ‘wallowing’ in the moment of re-telling. The therapeutic healing of the self-concept (Habermas 1984) this suggested, was a combination of having a curriculum purpose imposed upon them (structure), and the exercising of mastery over that structure (communicative agency). Mezirow (1978) might call this the (re)integration of a new sense of improved self-regard and moreover, a self-regard which was learned and employed as a transferrable skill, rather than

employed with the singular purpose of job related competence, for which the curriculum was created. In distilling these factors across the participants they all had, in similar order and fashion:

1. Reflected on present status
2. Realised a personal sense of inequity
3. Established a-priori evidence upon which to base the decision for personal change
4. “Unmasked” (Brookfield 2005) the demons causing inactivity
5. Considered how life would be better without the demons
6. Sought out (voluntarily) a curriculum that seemed relevant (at the time)
7. Engaged with the subject matter of the curriculum as a deflection from present feelings of inadequacy
8. Accessed serendipitously the liberating aspects of the hidden curriculum
9. Used the educational space as a shield from everyday life, participating with like-minded others to conquer the possibilities of failure
10. Connected with the motivation to take change actions by receiving and working with disruptions to present understandings (Snyder 2008) in both an instrumental and communicative way (Mezirow 1981; Habermas 1984).
11. Achieved realisations that their opinion of self was held without adequate reason
12. Made evolving commitments to self and consciously considered alternatives (Reisetter et al 1995) and their consequences.
13. Achieved realisations of the need for commitment to self
14. Experienced feelings of emancipation emerging in the psyche
15. Accepted the challenge of on-going and resilient commitment to self.
16. Planned a course of action (based upon the curriculum undertaken)
17. Tried out the course of action
18. Integrated (via deeper reflective capacity) a new perspective into the persona and psyche

Whilst these stages above are not exhaustive, the transformation of the participants followed a discernible and broadly similar developmental pattern. The significance of the curricular structure was to guide the participant through and to a particular route of 'output' from the course of education. Evidence from the participants' achievement of a career change from that which they studied was, however, mixed; for example, John remains in the employment which prompted him to undertake study and which has had an effect on his seniority

In contrast, Rachel tried out aspects of an intended career in teaching and came to realise that the profession was delivering a particular form of education to children that was not to her liking. However she dismissed the idea that the continuing education challenge was the issue. In a similar way Clive described having tried out the expected career but disliked it so much that he suffered torment and said he had:

*It (teaching) changes you..you are working in a professional environment, I mean I got my wrists slapped for not turning up to staff meetings!*

It would seem that curricula can revise the psyche in favour of improved self-regard (See Table 9) providing cognitive markers for self-reliant reflective thought, in both short term and longitudinal fashion. In respect of career, however, notwithstanding that general economic circumstances might preclude entry into an expected career; the subject studied had less influence on the transformation achieved. The self-concept was itself enhanced by the holistic educational encounter (See Table 4), leading to a more resilient and adaptable adult, but the curriculum studied was not so important and was seen by participants as having a temporal 'sell by date'. Pinxton et al (2010) concurs when saying that: "results show that interventions aimed at specific academic domains (e.g., math self-concept) are more effective compared to interventions aimed to enhance general academic self-concept" (2010:705). Pinxton (2010) argues that whilst the student must have a specifically relevant area to study for the sake of meaningfulness and in order to develop a knowing of that which is important, subsequent expectations and use of the knowledge obtained, is less transformationally valuable. Murray (2009) takes up a similar point, but from the view of the experience of being with others of similar mind, when saying:

*“The participants also began to understand self knowledge development as a relational process. They recognized the role and value of learning about self through connection and support from other students. And finally, through their experiences of the Heroic journey model, participants recognized self-knowledge development as a spiritual, as well as an intellectual, emotional, and relational process.”*

(Murray 2009:126)

Revision to the psyche from the participants’ point of view was about recognising the value of their own self investment: that although the subject matter of study was relevant to future career potential, it was less significant than the spiritual act of challenging self to come to know that the journey of transformation is, in itself, more valuable.

Whilst there was no dissent from the post-learning cognitive recall of pride amongst all participants, it was evident that not all felt the same degree of connection to being, or becoming, more ‘academic’. The idea of having an academic self-concept, as distinct from their everyday work and employment persona, was unimaginable. None of the participants claimed to be more academic, or to want to become an academic. The psyche remained rooted and uppermost in the pursuit of knowledge for remediation and/or to change career.

All responses pointed to having endured curricula, taught in the recent and distant past (at school and college), which were uninspiring and devoid of an interest in diverse emotional (Goleman 1996) and multiple (Gardner 1999) levels of student intelligences; where affective gaps between their needs in earlier educational encounters had been opened up, but were not positively fulfilled. Academic theory, it would appear, was also seen as less valuable to participants in their everyday lives; that is they gave it little regard in its pure form, yet ironically, when individually challenged, participants saw value in its practical ability to structure ‘real life’. Nevertheless the reawakening and relevance of theory amongst the curricula studied, had reasserted itself in their adult life, in a diverse and positive range of ways.

In table 11 this reassertion is considered alongside evidence of psyche transformation across 5 participants (Clive’s response is at table 5).

Participant	Pre Curriculum	Post Curriculum
Sophie	<i>I was quite happy, we had a child, a house, a cat, a dog.</i>	<i>I read a strange book written by a symbolist/novelist. I think I was the only student who read it.</i>
Rachel	<i>I had left school (without qualifications) and then, I had gone and got myself a job.</i>	<i>Steiner, Montessori, and that course gave me the luxury of going into different establishments; that children, actually, do very well in different learning environments, and that gave me greater awareness.</i>
Jane	<i>I decided I wanted to do something, when we moved up here from P.</i>	<i>Raising awareness of how important it is to speak to your children, and what sort of things, you know, when they are babies, to encourage their communication.</i>
Kevin	<i>I wasn't qualified, because I didn't do any A levels, or a degree.</i>	<i>You get a three hour afternoon lecture, unless you have the actual.. you know unless the child is there, you know about it but that's as far as it goes and then they put you on a course, and all of a sudden, having had that child in my class, the mist starts to clear.</i>
John	<i>The big issue for me has been time, we all have different life styles and I guess ours, is a particularly busy life-style.</i>	<i>I will be looking (at theory) and reflecting upon how can I apply this; it is not just nice to know, it has got to make a difference.</i>

Table 11: Psyche influence

#### 5.7.4: Extent to which a structured curriculum influenced the sociality

Participants recounted that they were identified by friends and family as having a different disposition, subsequent to their successful educational encounters; they felt, and were seen as, more assertive and forthright in their views and opinions, and more evidentially able to make sense of their purpose in life. Boyd and Meyers (1987) see this movement as the growth of individuation; Freire (1970) might explain this transformation as realising emancipation through gaining a voice (in a political sense), and Jung (1995) as the growth of (political) consciousness. Participants were drawn by their motivated need to enhance beyond competence to cognition, primarily for finding career development, but incidentally, and somewhat serendipitously, through FE, HE in FE and HE

curricular structures which encouraged general expansion of their intellect (Dirxx 2001), and beyond the mechanistic prescription of skills. This somewhat hidden aspect of the curriculum exposed adult students through their emphases upon difference, integration and individuation.

The source of educational difference was identified by participants as their own unorthodox past engagement with learning, in earlier stages; all persons proclaimed that they had wasted some of their previous educational opportunity, and in these cases, that their desire to conduct education in adulthood, was driven by perceived current career disadvantage; this reflective response being formulated from their narratives at an adult vantage point. Participants recounted that they found little joy in learning whilst young and came to know an educationally refreshed, willing and enabled self, somewhat later in life.

Wider perceived disadvantage in life, it seems, can be reinforced by past educational performance and life stage.

Participant	Pre Curriculum state	Participant interpretation basis
Sophie	<i>You're not good enough.</i>	<i>Class</i>
Clive	<i>Intellectually outgunned.</i>	<i>Comparison self to others</i>
Rachel	<i>I hadn't got A levels.</i>	<i>Own historical performance</i>
Jane	<i>My age was against me.</i>	<i>Current maturity</i>
Kevin	<i>I have to work harder than most.</i>	<i>Resilient action in the face of challenge</i>
John	<i>You have to drive yourself.</i>	<i>Concern for being overtaken by competition</i>

Table 12: Perceptions of disadvantage

An interpreted summary of data across participants provides further depth to these perceptions in table 12

The dissonance in the comparison of their past to present self was in their explanation of feeling less able in society and therefore different (normatively). Education in adult life had, ultimately, become recognisable as a tool for personal change and the means by which their negative aspects of feeling different could be corrected.

Integration became apparent in participant recollections as established by their making of connections between living and written theory. Having formerly and

differently not aligned theory with experience, they had become guarded about their ability to be authoritative. Evidence such as: *'I still find it difficult'* (Clive: table 5), *'I just can't see it is a new ability'* (John), *'I expected someone to tap me on the shoulder and say, come on sussed you out'* (Sophie). Through engagement they were able to establish that their former thoughts and ideas had resonance with the theories that they had read, and been taught, in their adult course of learning. In this sense, and contrary to ideas of 'speaking truth to power' presented by (Coffield 1999a), participants were able to match aspects of their life to some of those evident in theory (Bathmaker 2010). Learning how to learn thus became increasingly intentional; the adult participants were deepening their own learning for intrinsic reasons, beyond the structured outcomes required. Through raised perception they were looking for justificatory relations between the subject matter and their own experiences, and in the process acquiring: "publicly assessed and valued knowledge" (Crick 2007: 138) via an authoritatively approved curriculum.

Finally, factors of becoming intellectually equal in a uniquely individual way were discussed. Participants' views were grounded in their connections between, and reflections upon, difference and (the lack of) equitable integration of self into society, where lost past opportunity meant (imagined by most) that others judged them as 'class' different and less intellectually able. This invention of the mind follows the theory of Lacan (2001) and his concept of 'The Gaze'. Participants in the research indicated that they self-observed themselves 'being observed' in psychogenic fashion; they imagined that they could be seen as a form of fraud.

Having such opinions and ego representations of self, meant self-exclusion from experiencing growth, isolation from others and denial of developmental change. Participants, it seems, imagined self as different rather than similar, inferior rather than equal. Freud (2002) might argue that this distortion of reality was repressive: that we cannot truly know how we project ourselves, so we invent a story which seems to ring true out of self-analysis. This invention was evident in participants' psyche, even though they had not experienced adequate feedback justifying such a conclusion, from others. Kelley (1972), would argue,

that attribution theory explains how we attach this causal relationship, however, Kelly (1970) would go further and point to the students' past experiences as the pre-defining factor upon which causation is defined. Until the participants' new educational experiences were able to shift this attribution, the dominant place for their blame was the inadequacy of the self. In this sense participants expressed how engagement with others provided new, emancipatory experiences.

Being transformed was recounted in a fashion akin to the re-birth and renewal of 'The Phoenix' rising from the ashes. Participants explained how they saw their inner self as a new and enabled person, yet the outer, perceived self, continued to imprison their potential; the experience of the educational environment and the learning encounters being the transformational catalysts giving permission for such re-birth.

### **5.8: The politics of adult lifelong learning in the curriculum**

Thus far, the research has represented the participant accounts through the lens of their own recounted transformative experiences and placed a spotlight on three aspects, namely, soma, psyche and sociality. In this fashion, the participant's voice has been interpreted through phenomena of an 'inside self to outside of self' nature, using hermeneutic approaches. The research, however, unearthed 'outside to in' factors and the presence of educational policy enacted through curricula, which is considered below.

Participants undertook education in a particular form of environment with (potentially) dominant forms of practice. Whilst it is 'out of scope' for this research to examine teaching practices, the influence of structure over agency in terms of rules, policies, procedures and regimes in teaching, is clearly within remit. The environment of FE, HE in FE and HE education, being imbued with the artefact of work and career, thus structurally emits its purpose. Equally, participants were expected to adopt the work ethic of a student. This involved imposed temporal deadlines, quantifiable amounts of student output and 'qualifiable' outcomes against which students were expected to perform, and had evidential consequences for the research participants. Rachel (in sociality

table 6) said: *'there was a time when, I caved in and didn't think that I could continue with it'*; Clive (in psyche table 5) remarked: *'I was awful when I started'* and *'I didn't know how to read a novel'* whilst Jane (in pull table 7) recounts: *'there was this mad panic about getting this in and that in.'*

The first factor evident relates to the presence of instrumentalism (Habermas 1984; Mezirow 1981) and structure. Participants all indicated a clear need for structure and moreover, they expressed the need to be instructed about surviving the environment of education. Achieving balance between home and family life, meeting and adhering to deadlines, understanding what was considered 'good' in academic terms, were all considered alien to the participants at their beginnings. What were pre-eminently present were memories of school life and the expectations of power exerted in a negative way by past academia. In instrumental fashion the structures, despite participant fragility evident from curricula, provided for these 'knowledge getting' needs (Bruner 1986). Participants quickly realised that if they were to be successful, they had to become acquainted with the rules and all did so effectively.

A second factor was that participants made regular mention of being educated with younger (adult) persons. From the outset of study, participants were aware that they were amongst students for which they felt the need to "other" (Hegel 1977) and ironically did so by 'othering' themselves as distinctively different from them (all were older). In this respect Clive remarked:

*I was learning..I was in my thirties; some of my colleagues well they were something like twenty years old, stuff they take for granted.*

*Rachel who said:*

*Working with young; a lot younger people, I think that takes some guts; you know and you were a lot more older than them and they are looking at you and you know, what are you doing here!*

Jane describing an interview said:

*The woman who interviewed me kind of implied well, you're nearly fifty, are you going to be able to crawl on the floor with children... I do wonder whether my age was against me.*

That there were differing points of experiential view in the classroom held significance for adult participants in, for example, developing depth in discussions, and in providing other pluralistic opinions about society. Recognition of plurality was stated as a 'competency learning experience' in itself, and was somewhat unexpected in their respective contexts, yet this provided opportunity for them to "try on" other (younger) points of view (Mezirow 2000:21). All of those experiencing such plurality of view came to attach value to it, and to reflexively realise a conscious sense of inter-generational connection.

Third was the participants' recognition of the wider hegemonic landscape of curricula designed to take the participant toward work and/or revised work and career. The dominance of this grounding was consistent with the purpose for which each participant re-engaged with education, thus they found the content meaningfully (Knowles 2005) directed at the purpose for which they enrolled. In contrast, and in more ironic terms, participants felt that institutions seeking to elaborate existing frames of knowledge in the participants were confined to mandated rules of outcomes, written to, and for, what the participants saw as a dominantly younger audience. In learning new frames, (Kitchenam 2008) participants often found themselves re-covering the exact same ground that they would have covered when younger, and being assessed in similar fashion. This 'circuit' of re-learning was, however, endured; participants were significantly and sufficiently focussed on passing the course and attributed great value and significance to it, such that they were able to endure despite the repetition involved.

Participants recounted and exhibited transformed habits of mind (Kitchenam 2008); what emerged in their accounts was a sophisticated understanding of what would be academically assessed and what would not, with differential learning methods being applied by participants respectively. This, I contend, was evidence of participants having (later in life) learned to learn more effectively and as an adult, having achieved better proximity to their teachers. Evidence suggests that knowledge of their growing ability was a combination of,

“motivation, sense of direction and desire with an increased sense of agency and self-direction”, (Crick 2007:138) that is they had intent, for which there was transformative purpose (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1989). Crick (2007) describes this thus:

*“The dimensions of learning power provide scaffolding for the ways in which students encounter the formal content of the curriculum. All of these operate together through the shared, and sometimes locally created, language stimulated by the learning dimensions, and through metaphors, icons and heroes which carry meaning in the classroom.”*

(Crick 2007:150)

The fourth factor was participant recognition of the presence of a hidden curriculum, beyond that of any career and work prescription, in the subject of study. Sense of intrinsic purpose met with challenge in a supportive place (Vygotsky 1978; Palmer 2000), where feedback on performance was structured, regular and overt; quality of performance was measured, structured, and shared between students; diversity was valued; where the circumstantial movement to the consequential curriculum (Gibson 2011) could be achieved. Participants negotiating this structure commented on what Murray (2009) referred to as: “becoming heroic in his or her own life” (Murray 2009:109). Far from being a technocratic hindrance, participant’s narratives pointed to ‘structure’ (whatever they differentially deemed that to be) and constructed individually for them, a sense of utility of/in the curriculum, which they could transparently comprehend, and ‘essentialise’ as a structure to assist with realising their own educational needs.

## **5.9: Summary**

Evidence and discussion presented here suggests, that participant’s pre-educational consciousness had realised a state of incongruity, with how they expected their future life and career to develop.

This incongruence is evidenced from the data presented in the discussion, in table 13.

Participant	Pre Curriculum state	Factor
Sophie	<i>I thought it was a way to move up, to escape.</i>	<i>Soma</i>
Clive	<i>What are you doing here?</i>	<i>Psyche</i>
Rachel	<i>As a mother raising the children and I felt I wanted to work with children..I didn't want to go back into an office job.</i>	<i>Sociality</i>
Jane	<i>I wanted to something that would get me somewhere</i>	<i>Push</i>
Kevin	<i>I thought, I have got to leave (the military) at some point; I'm not qualified to do what I want to do.</i>	<i>Push</i>
John	<i>Do I want to stay here and do something different or try and generate something different for myself?</i>	<i>Pull</i>

Table 13: Incongruence across the factors

Reflections upon the dissonance between what looked likely and what might be, encouraged the action to resolve anticipated undesirable eventualities. Choosing competence based lifelong learning as a tool to realise career opportunities, they were able to set an otherwise unrealisable agenda for change. Their action to employ the social artefact of curricula, as an instrument for change, was to redirect their trajectories. In so doing, they pre-eminently nurtured and, moreover, learned to affirm their own self-esteem.

Curricular objectives in lifelong FE, HE in FE and HE learning are presented as structured outcomes for the principle purpose of achieving a qualification to get a job. It seems that participants' reflections upon their own individual forms of incongruence provide the motivation for action to alter expectancy. The reflections of participants before engagement suggest that they planned a new career as a vehicle to address incongruence. Whilst curricular structures have narrow sets of objectives, it seems that the participants had conceived and formulated individual plans for realising alternative ends.

Table 14 gives evidence of this subversion and suggests that wanting 'to be/to feel' has a more profound directional impetus for transformation but the instrument employed to achieve provides both the essential physical environment and challenge.

Participant	Pre curriculum plan	Post curriculum outcomes	Dominant Factor
Sophie	<i>I could be who I wanted to be (a teacher).</i>	<i>I'm on my way now, I'm free</i>	<i>Soma</i>
Clive	<i>I wanted to be a teacher</i>	<i>I am very proud to achieve</i>	<i>Psyche</i>
Rachel	<i>I wanted to work with children.</i>	<i>I am a teaching assistant working alongside (and equal to) teachers</i>	<i>Sociality</i>
Jane	<i>I wanted to work in a nursery.</i>	<i>I am better now..more confident</i>	<i>Soma</i>
Kevin	<i>I just want to be the best teacher.</i>	<i>I am Mr B with a tie</i>	<i>Soma</i>
John	<i>I want to stay in my current employment but do something different</i>	<i>I am helping out the chief executive</i>	<i>Psyche</i>

Table 14: Subverting expectancy

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1: Curricula and curriculum models in lifelong learning**

#### *6.1.1 Political structure and personal agency*

Can lifelong learning curricula be identified as the structural vehicle and catalyst for adult transformations, and can we discern evidence of transformational change in the recounted experiences of those employing this pathway?

Curriculum studies can be described as the: “interdisciplinary study of educational experience” (Pinar 2008:2). In critical terms the structure of curricula, and the experience of undertaking adult based development under the directional umbrella of lifelong learning, are exposed as evidentially founded upon the Tayloristic principles of standardised outcomes, which employ production line delivery. FE, HE in FE and HE curricula in this research are shown to prescribe what should be learned, and are portrayed to students as being the pre-eminent skills needs of potential employers. Participants were expected to develop specific vocational competencies through this process of learning. FE and HE in FE Curricula, in this respect, were the principal agents of a: “set agenda whilst HE had a more emancipatory flavour; all curricula, however, had standards which were expressed as outcomes, results and achievements rather than activities or tasks which underpinned knowledge” (ATL 2006 and vividly evidenced by Clive at 5.5.2). The experience of and conclusions about the participants in this research importantly reveal that they worked to unwittingly subvert the hegemony of these objectives (Table 14), yet were dependent on its structure to guide them to new understandings (Table 8) that, at the beginning of studies, were not apparent, but which ultimately released them from anomie (Table 9).

Construction of curricula with specifically mandated outcomes are, therefore, equally capable of bringing about transformation in adult’s consciousness, self-image, self-regard and self-esteem, as those of traditional adult education. What matters, however, is whether the dominantly available curricula in FE and HE in FE and HE can continue to sustainably embrace the diversity of adult need.

### *6.1.2 Structure and emancipation*

Stenhouse (1983) proposes from an academic's perspective, that objectives design curricular models are seriously flawed and that we should accept that: "education counts as being worthwhile for its intrinsic value" (McKernan 2008:xv). However, Stenhouse (1983) does not acknowledge, as this research exposes, that they are being creatively used across APCE and recognised by students as a positive developmental tool (Tables 4-14). There is also much evidence of the potential of lifelong learning curricula to bring about adult emancipation, via the significant reflective actions of participants (Table 9). Moreover, what is revealed by the research is that, in practice, the constitution of lifelong learning curricula delivery is evidentially received as a process, whilst being presented as a packaged consumer product, which is manipulated and exploited in practices to accommodate diverse student need. Evidence concludes that adults employed this instrumental, behaviouristic, lifelong learning curriculum as an instrument for their own transformation effectively: the dimensions of the data spanning soma, psyche and sociality confirmed that participants generated entropy for the institution and positively reframed what they had learned through their own diverse range of past experience. In this respect they were essentialising their own personal growth and development over prescriptive structures. In subverting such objectification and finding purpose in personalised subjective needs, they brought the process into the realms of their own life experiences and the search for personal emancipation through praxis (Grundy 1987), which was evidentially complicit with, and co-hosted by, the overt curriculum.

Traditional critical views of adult education as a school of thought describe the role of lifelong learning, in contemporary institutional terms, as predicated upon developing skills and competences for work, and which exhibits a preoccupation with the stereotypical disadvantaged, uncooperative and sometimes non-sociologically compliant adult student (Cook 2012), who perceive their disadvantage in diverse ways (Table 12). The curriculum developers' role is thus expected to support an ethos and attitude which veraciously lays claim to righting the ills of sociological injustice and inequality and to defend the coercion

implied by centrally manipulated lifelong learning agendas, yet in critical terms, singularly provide a 'one-size fits all' design. Field (2009), for example, suggests FE institutions delivering lifelong learning are seen as: "predominantly working class" (Field 2009:659) and that class representation in FE: "mirrors wider society, deriving as much from working class failure as from working class disadvantage" (Thompson in Field 2009:659). This research suggests that these critiques of disadvantage are both reductionist (justified by table 12) and elitist (justified by post curriculum responses in table 14) in their nature, and subjectively colours students, the teacher-student relationship and relevant institutions unfavourably. Evidence at table 12 suggests curricula have to embrace a diverse, perceived range of adult disadvantage, as well as that of the real. This suggests that lifelong learning curricula, in practical and implementable terms, must seek to allow flexibility of interpretation in practise. In wider policy terms, this means centralised political forces must relinquish some of the mechanistic levels of surveillance and control.

This research contends that adults come to the encounter with a will to succeed, and a motivated desire to take from education that which overcomes their failings of the past. Moreover, political pre-contemplations of their own past suffered injustices, is less evident than their will to be a better person for themselves. In this sense, the worth of present instrumental lifelong learning curricula cannot be so singularly condemned, by critics from the historically traditional areas of Adult Education, as unfit for purpose and inaccurately proffers critical accusations of lack of inclusivity. This research evidence contends through a psychological and sociological evaluation, that adult students are able to find inclusion in such instrumentalism and structure; that power (of and in education) is not simply acted out upon subjects (Usher et al 2001) because their own agendas ultimately rule out such possibilities. Usher, on this point states:

*"The emphasis on learner-centred curricula, on negotiation and even competence based curricula is an attempt to counter the oppression of the knowledge or discipline based curriculum."*

(Usher et al 2001:89)

Such powers in FE, HE in FE or HE curricula are not a notion evident in the consciousness of participants in this research; competence, in their view, is not having a tussle with theory in their versions of conscious perception. Pinar (2008), remarks that: “Theory functions to provoke you to think” (Pinar:8) yet adult participants said they were provoked as much (and in specific cases more) by their reflections on/of self and personal circumstances in their developmental quest. The rhetoric and symbolisms of a competence versus theory agenda may have resonance with teachers and managers of FE and engender a cause for concern to HE, but the implications of claims that lifelong learning curricula can have lesser status is obscured and inconsequential in these research findings.

Evidence here suggests that institutions should recognise the positioning of curricula, of whatever persuasion, in similar terms to that of student understandings, i.e. that of simply a vehicle for listing what information needs to be imparted, and what they are asked to recount via assessment, is sufficient and valuable. Politicising the conception is to give curricula a life form and power which is agentive. In this research the curriculum emerges alternatively as a distinctively necessary structural factor and thus an artefact and moreover, a cultural artefact which lists, in the form of outcomes, what dominant business factions of society regard as essential for a given profession. This research contends that when FE, HE in FE and HE curricula are enacted, delivered and flexibly interpreted in contemporary institutions, adults are able to develop agency and well-being beyond the singular competences of their prescription.

Participants chose to be engaged in lifelong learning initially because they believed that it could bring their competence up to date; that the aim of being able to achieve (re) employment in a career which had initial representational personal meaning, was more likely to occur by collecting authoritative certification; this being in keeping with the present and dominant climate of credentialism (Collins 1979) in Britain. That such conditions of credentialist domination exist in contemporary Britain is not of the successful participant’s making, yet this research suggests that all found alternative value in using the

curriculum as a structural instrument. The findings indicate that this instrumentalist initial role is not an indicator of final outcomes, nor is it a guarantee that the student will pursue the course of career developed by the curriculum studied. Across all five defining factors of the research, tables 4-7 show evidence of participant transformation and tables 8-14 refine the psychological growth and sociological developmental change achieved across curricula delivered at FE, HE in FE and HE levels.

The measurement of emancipation is not defined by means-ends job achievement, rather, this research defines that contemporarily available, instrumentally designed lifelong learning curricula, can affectively release adult potential transformatively.

### *6.1.3 Curricula and identity*

During the application and study of lifelong learning curricula by participants in this research, an alternative purpose was found by them, from within self, and moreover amongst student colleagues and from supporters, teachers, and support workers. In education they found a temporary personal identity in being a student. Participants found this status to be helpful when explaining to others what they were currently doing, and felt justified by being identified as a student and person with a specific career and general level of income intent in mind (Pre curriculum evidence table 14). What therefore followed, were persons who were able to gain a sense of order and identity from the structured objective of becoming part of a specific vocation; from this purpose they were able to make sense of the wider aspects of their lives and gather strength to continue to successful graduation.

There is evidence from this research that adult participants preconceived their chosen curricula as initially providing a subject focus, and yet subsequently found alternative sense of purpose for revising their lives beyond the instrumental and mechanistic intent of being qualified for work; becoming immersed in educational activity which took them out of the 'every day' became their imperative (Tables 4-7). In affectively influenced narratives, they recount how they were searching for something that was an escape route but which

equally reified and gave a sense of wider structure, direction and purpose to their current lives, which offered hope to any future vision of both career and life (Table 11). Their choice to engage with structured education was an act guided by the practical expectations of learning new competences, for the purposes of advancing in, or changing the trajectory of, their respective careers. What ensued, however, was not a quiet enclave of development, but further epochal participant realisations that they could not escape: “the exercise of their liberty” (Ranciere 1991:23 and data in tables 9, 10 and 14). In critical terms, the role of the hegemonic technocratic curriculum (Golby 1989), as understood in contemporary dialectics, was decentralised as the participants singular aim. Participants subconsciously hijacked and subverted curricula for the purpose of realising diverse and individual degrees of self-respect and esteem transformations; what was more important, however, was that the structure aided and abetted the achieved transformation.

The ultimate career success from the participants’ engagement with lifelong learning curricula was not so straight-forward. Ideological expectations (education increases employability), cause and effect (an educated person is a successful economic person) and economic life direction were not fully resolved by engagement. Participants were evidently able to give themselves a sense of invigorated and transformed vocational identity through the early post qualification period, yet in realising a meaningful sense of subsequent and long-term career, and later revised identity, the curriculum role had a more profound and longer term impact on sense of worth and esteem, but shorter term value for obtaining intended employment. The curriculum could thus be more accurately described as a structural instrument for getting participants out of the perceived senselessness of life epochs and daunting familiarity and into a new and challenging environment where (some) past educational failings can be corrected and personal agency, in a range of aspects of life, recaptured (Table 8). Participants were, at the same time, re-viewing and re-framing their present as a point of life correction, committing past educational failings to a ‘buried’ cognitive archive. In this respect psychological remediation is co-resident with

the pursuit of the new and the embraced transformations, which have the propensity to cure negative reflections of past failure.

Sense of control over life and career emerged across all participant accounts. Re-engagement with education provided a place where head, heart, mind, body and spirit (Covey 2004) could have an unencumbered space for (re) development and reconnection, a place where inner dialogue could be nurtured back to health, and where the worth of an improving and improved self, to self, in monastic fashion, could be reacquainted. Engagement with structured delivery of lifelong learning curricula had a deep impact on the personal agency of some participants and redressed lost agency in others. Agency, it seems, is removed or reduced by chaotic levels of uncertainty in both life and career; importantly, lifelong learning curricular structures are, however, complicit in providing a range of coping tools which can, when successfully negotiated, both sustain and reinvigorate individual's esteem. The most significant of these educational tools is the enhancement of positive reflective capacity (Table 9), which engenders a positive sense of (re) validation for/to self and by others. Re-enhanced self-reliance, self-belief, improved sense of authenticity, wider cognition of justice and injustice and a greater sense of egalitarianism can be established and transformation achieved, in this way.

#### *6.1.4 Curricula as instruments of social cohesion*

Feeling attached and meaningfully employed are important in encouraging the release of generative adult contributions to society. Notions and realisations of belonging and worth by adults, are essential to feeling emotionally aware of 'we-ness', meaning concerned for society, rather than 'me-ness' which is concern for self before society (Bollen and Hoyle 1990). Curricula, in this sense can be employed to achieve a wider perspective than self and self-interest.

Lifelong learning curricula, it seems, have structure which can: "lead the student to these unanticipated, rather than just predicted outcomes" (McKernan 2008:3) in an imaginative and openly critical way, "which is open to translation into practice" (Stenhouse 1975:4). Current political control of lifelong learning curricular structures, however, contends that values and purpose are the

legitimate remit of ideological education policies which lead to individualised competence. Control and the impositions by dominant forces of the 'New Right' and neo-liberal global economy (Pinar 2003) might be considered a potential threat to the individual well-being of participants who employ these curricula, yet this research suggests, at local level, that centralist policy is reformulated by personal dialogue (Pinar 1975) between the educator, who proposes a catalytic syllabus, and a student, who expresses what they require in differential fashion, so that students progress to knowledge and achieve understandings (Mezirow 1990) about self and about how society can flourish co-operatively. Social cohesion is thus promoted by overt knowledge assimilation and socially, through the individual emotional adjustments generated by overcoming a shared educational challenge, the observation of peers and a supportive institutional environment.

In contemporary Britain, the cultural artefact of lifelong learning curricula is, it appears, a reflection of a temporal form of hegemonic thinking, and thus designed to deliver what wider society currently proclaims to be valued. Arguably, these powers of prescriptive individual competence are laid at the door of employers; what is included and that which is excluded or omitted, having a critical dimension. A more pragmatic and research evidenced view, however, concludes that FE, HE in FE and HE curricular design is both reflective of today's fashionable imperatives and a bureaucratic and procedural: "social efficiency" (Bobbitt in Pinar et al 2008:117) text. In this research, curricula fail to achieve the social control of students, whether implicated or not, by design. What does, however, make it a unique social artefact, is its use as a checking device for students' work and in this respect, singularly controls the teacher (rather than student). This factor reveals and identifies the lifelong learning curriculum's unique educational purpose and role, whilst simultaneously concealing itself from all stakeholders but teachers. Participants in this research recognised the relevance of some but not all curricular content, accepted the view that their teachers were vital to their success and that assessment applied was an instrument to be endured.

Centralised awarding bodies, that are empowered by socially and politically engineered consent to reflect what society expects adults to individually know, are reduced to generalities in their outcome prescriptions. The idea that theory and practice can be separated amongst such generality, and moreover, that it can control and standardise the nature of the student's experienced encounter is untenable; this leaves the field open for local teacher/institutional interpretation, in a multitude of humanistic ways, by and for, both student and teacher, but leaves institutions enslaved by the mechanistic assessment that they must administer. The combination of competence (vocational) and theoretical is, as Usher et al develops how students realise: "the means by which a humane power can be deployed where people become individuals responsible for their own market position" (Usher et al 2008: 84) but where teachers are denied such liberty. In less economic and competence based prescriptive terms, participants in this research were enabled to feel the growth of inner strength and connectedness that is increasing authenticity (Table 9) built upon a less cluttered vision of the future and the factors of life experience, credential growth, affirmative and positive feedback to self and improved sense of optimism (Rogers 1961); teachers were alternatively required to deliver 'the party line'.

#### *6.1.5 Lifelong learning curricula and the creation of well-being*

Adult lifelong learning curricula have symbolic significance and a clear location amongst the discourses of work, education and training. Despite claims by academics that we have: "rejected the narrow instrumentalism of the Tyler period" (Pinar et al 2008:853), there is much evidence in this research to say that hegemonic controls continue to restrict the flexibility of lifelong learning curricula content and delivery, in contemporary PCE institutions. Whilst Pinar (2008) continues and suggests that curricula have been released from the grasp of the bureaucrat, this research defines lifelong learning limited by teaching inspections and post-delivery audit. In adult education Usher et al (2001) say that experiential learning is: "neither emancipatory nor oppressive, neither domesticating nor transformative" (Usher et al 2001:105). However, this research disputes this contention, having found the experience of adult lifelong

learning to be both emancipatory and transformative; moreover, the research evidence refutes that vocational education is: “designed to produce flexible competencies and a predisposition to change” (Usher et al 2001:111). This was particularly evident when successful students’ final trajectories indicated that their journey led them to self-prescribed needs (Table 8), rather than those expected by following a distinct vocational pathway. Adult participants in this research were resistant to changes being imposed on them, yet achieved transformative and agentive self-realizations through engaging with structured forms of education and distinctively democratic forms of negotiated curricula.

Significant to a wider research implication were the improvements and developments associated with student self-regard (Table 9) which, this research demonstrates, has limitations. For the individual, coming to know that what they know is not sufficiently robust enough to secure longer term well-being is a journey best embedded in self-directed discovery; in this regard, if I cannot conceive of my limitations (Simon 1982; Ingham & Luft 1955), then how can I be motivated to address them? Structurally, however, limiting thinking to having (ness) rather than being (ness) (Fromm 1976), where the economics of existence dominantly occupies the adult psyche (Table 11) and where education is socially inter-connected with access to work, we find compulsion, regulation and coercion of the self. The challenge for equitable and wide ranging engagement by all social strata is therefore profoundly difficult: the paramount probation for lifelong learning curricula being to eradicate and/or reduce the need for remediation at the stage that it is discovered, where individual progress can be made through self-motivated valuing of the educational experience at all ages and stages of human development.

The efficacy cycle (Cook 2005), and the choice by participants to seek positive external interventions (Vygotsky 1978) by professionals, has value for participants, who had come to the realisation that they needed to return to learning in adult life (Table 12). On the one hand, however, access was restricted through their perceptions of social stigma, (both real and imaginary), policy shortfalls in class based inequity, and both the availability and/or

inadequacy of directed funding streams. On the other hand, were individuals' own assessment of the value and personal comparative worth of participating effectively in educational activity, to their longer term well-being. Market developments in education modelled on past industrial methods seek to satisfy the 'supply and demand' for education in an increasingly globalising economy, but leave behind the metaphorical adult 'waste' of those that fail to engage with its benefits. A significant limitation of lifelong learning curricula is that if we choose to 'commodify' humans as labour, then we should also consider the investment needed to recycle the commodity. In humanistic terms, safety nets, like social welfare, are exploitable and wasteful, yet attractive and diverse lifelong learning curricula can fulfil the role of providing a greater over-arching human purpose.

The participants in the research demonstrated their commitment at FE, HE in FE and at HE levels, to a form of learning which brought them into closer proximity with the dominant economic forces pervading education and industry. This research evidence proposes that emancipatory transformational lifelong learning curricula should be designed to explicitly state what conformity is, and not to consign it to a hidden, unsaid, 'dark corner', where it awaits its own exposure. In observing and analysing 'shifts' of participant position through their accounts, it is interesting to note that there is a clear movement of some, from unable to cope with the demands of developing a stable sense of career direction, to that of becoming both able and unconcerned. In this way, the curriculum employed had the role and impact of drawing the participant closer to the political hegemonic social core of contemporary capitalist Britain i.e. to hold down a job. It appeared that improved reflective capacity enabled them to find ways of revising behaviours and attitudes, which, by their own admission, had previously excluded them from gaining employment, on a given or desired career pathway. In a similar sense, participants encountered a significantly different reality when achieving employment in their chosen vocation. For some, the reality of being in the vocation of choice was not what was expected and thus the course of education had failed to prepare them fully. In this respect, compulsion to follow given educational pathways might be regarded as wasteful

of the student, teaching institution and public funds. Personal transformations, however, remain evident, even in cases where these were 'acted out' (i.e. where hegemonic cultural shift was not achieved) rather than lived.

Whilst accepting the widely quoted view that lifelong learning curricula are undeniably behaviouristic in construction, adult experiences, irrespective of the subject and level of study, have transferability and in contrast to the claims of Usher et al (2001), go beyond being just a: "tool for motivation" (2001:112). In this fashion, a range of adult education texts have inadequately considered the positive instrumental power of the contemporary lifelong learning curriculum. A range of texts argue that adults come to know self-discipline and thus adjust, through their own maturity, to acceptance of the given nature of society; seeking a productive place and sense of value becomes the self-regulatory activity. In contrast, the distinctive and unique contribution of this research is to establish that adult FE, HE in FE and HE lifelong learning curricula; all provide regulation; all re-deliver (lost sense of) direction; all reground the student through the provision of a knowable developmental structure; and as Biesta remarks when discussing new forms of emancipation, allow the student to clear the failings of the past from cognition and: "(re) begin by doing things differently" (Biesta 2008:176).

## **6.2 Strengths and limitations**

The empirical research has been conducted before, during and alongside an extensive literature review. This has provided strength from the standpoint of amassing a wide range of past and current views of curricula, and identity transformation understandings. Reading widely and then employing relevant theory has inevitably led to the dilemma of what to leave out, but has been informed by a range of themes outlined in the literature review.

Past and current Government have developed, and are regularly revising policy in the PCE sector. This shifting ground provides the constant concern and limitation that changes in policy, influencing FE, are presently evolving. Nevertheless, APCE specifically has seen little attention because of high levels

of youth unemployment in the British economy of 2013. This has demanded urgent action by the sector. This deflection of emphasis for FE, combined with an imminent change to school and college leaving age, is changing the balance of curricula toward youth and youth apprenticeship provision. The current 2013 FE revisions to funding, the focus away from APCE and cost cutting in the wider economy, combined with an increase of fees for University courses, have not been considered by the research and might be seen as a temporality limitation.

As has been mentioned in the main body, the research has recognised how lecturers, family and support workers beyond the institutions of delivery, have been influential in bringing about participant change. One limitation is that the extent of change conferred by participants' supporters influence has been confined to who (and what), the participant chose to recount. In this respect the absence of a range of other participant support voices, could also be considered a limiting factor. In contrast, however, the multiple readings of participants' texts has unearthed and represented the quality of support that they have received.

### **6.3: Implications for lifelong learning policy**

Lifelong learning curricula are currently and widely understood to be significant in providing specific modes of delivery, based upon the technocratic traditions (Golby 1989) of outcome statements, against which assessments are levelled. They are both criticised and simultaneously praised for their emphasis on competence development, remediating lost educational opportunity, giving a sense of place to those excluded and improving adult life chances. The wider implication of these findings suggests that students choosing to use the curriculum do so, initially, because of an interest in a specific career and, subsequently, to fulfil a need to become ultimately engaged in work that is individually meaningful. What becomes alternatively apparent is its use as a way of providing an individually structured and transformative vehicle for transitions. Whilst the curriculum and its organisation is a means of spelling out how the journey along its path should be structured toward achieving a wide range of individually diverse career ends and needs, its role prompts more

significant transformational change. The critical implication for PCE institutions is in empirical evidence which suggests that curricula are extensively micro managed; quality systems employed are, at best, highly subjective and wasteful in both economic and human terms. At their worst, the implication is that they denigrate the transformative purpose that adult students who employ them seek to discover. This purpose should be more widely incorporated in lifelong learning curricular design.

In contrast, if curricula are employed by adults as a simple list of things to know, they become a means of obtaining certification without engagement with the deeper sense of meaning that skills and competence learning can provide. Such superficial engagement would be unworkable for employers and bring wider stakeholder accusations of meaningless qualifications without rigour. Rigour and depth of meaning, to the adult student and to the employer, however, are differently competing concepts. For adults, rigour is about affective knowing, whilst for employers, it is critically reduced to competence.

Enhancing curricula for adults are thus served by such a list of subjects, concepts and theories yet improvement calls for the liberalised negotiation of assessable activities for each, between provider, potential employers and student. If we are to make lifelong learning work, the conclusion of this thesis is, that curricula must be more consistent with the purpose of developing a: “profound condition of the self” (Thompson 2009:40) i.e. where learning has depth of individual meaning, and is not based on a one-size-fits-all, competence approach.

Participants in this research, broadly, pointed to lost opportunities earlier in life, when accessing education, in which they sought to be better prepared for the world ‘that is’, and a world in which they hope to make equitable progress. Opening up all forms and pathways leading to pre University qualifications, for all persons, which can be accessed across the lifetime, in a practical and economically efficient fashion, is urgently needed. Moreover, the founding of an educational system that permits universal access consistent with a wider range

of life stages established in this research, e.g. post child rearing and post redundancy or working with the aftermath of economic, sociological or psychological trauma (Levine 1997; Janet 1907), more equitably addresses the needed provision. An important caveat here is that remediation of some aspects of adult learning calls for the participant to return to aspects of education covered in current secondary education and community learning. Whilst adults can, as this research reveals, cope with conducting (re) learning amongst diversely aged others, this aspect requires sensitivity, careful management of diverse aspects of individual esteem and a horizon which looks beyond the purely economic institutional profitability of courses on offer. Consistent with advancing access to appropriate remediation or development in adult skills learning, in an openly available fashion, is the revision necessary to both general attitude and policy toward lifelong learning. A campaign which focuses on the benefits to the individual, beyond work and career, thus requires deeper investigation, with closer attention being paid to changing demographic structures and sensitivity to reduced longevity of employment.

Contemporary rhetoric about lifelong learning falls woefully short of encouraging industry's recognition of the part they must play in an integrated system of lifelong learning which seeks to develop human potential through involvement with education. The research evidence suggests that the principal beneficiary of adult education is the participant, yet, evidentially, wider society reaps the benefit from lower levels of dependency upon the state. The evidence that none of the participants in the research were initially out of work, following skills development, whilst not conclusive, or offering wider generalisation, indicates that education can provide a bridge to pump prime an individual's motivation. Improving hope and realising positive results from Government policies in assisting adults back, or into work, requires that we evaluate those who are between, in, or working their way out of, forms of dependency on social welfare and assist not only with encouraging independent economic well-being, but with the realisations that self-respect can be self-earned if educational activities are given a wider humanistic brief. The subsequent beneficiary of industry, where educational development can transfer human potential into activities with wealth

creating application, has to accept that both education and the condition of unemployment have social costs to which they must make a greater contribution.

Participants in this research universally denounced (see evidence at page 141) an interest in developing a political voice in the process of doing study. Interpretation of their post experience voices suggests “docile bodies” (Foucault 1977) are produced and whilst short term utility can be achieved by hegemonic, political and economic forces, through such conditioning of human labour, history suggests, that repression is not a long term solution. In this sense, what is both left out of the curriculum (acts of omission) and that politically prescribed but manipulated (subversion) must be equally laid open to scrutiny. In critical contrast, participants who moved forward into higher education recounted greater levels of concern for social reform than those halting at further education level. FE, evidence suggests, is producing low levels of critical awareness, which is an issue of long term and wider significance for a socially cohesive Britain. Evidence from participants’ accounts did, however, suggest that FE and, increasingly, HE ‘outcomes related’ educational practice, was not a deliberate attempt to control, but a dominant practice which has been acculturated and embedded in a “Groupthink” (Janis 1972) style. The change evident when comparing FE and HE style was best encapsulated by quoting John, a student in HE who said:

*It's about questioning, that's probably what I have got better at, it's not just like an automatic shoot from the hip, it's more of a structured, “how did that happen”, why did it happen, can we .. so it's given me a more structured way of thinking.*

Palmer (1990) and Capra (2002), in critically wider commentary, challenge science and business interests to move beyond cause and effect styles of thinking; they suggest that education should develop toward an ecological framework, to embrace the epochal and chaotic inter-dependencies of human experience rather than continue to manipulate causes to achieve effects. Whilst consent to emancipating educational practices remains vital to improving growth for individuals’ sense of agency, curricula must, nevertheless, continue to

evolve, in order to provide structures which enable adults to find meaningful life purpose pathways.

#### **6.4 Methodological implications**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) address two possible views when discussing similar methodological approaches to that employed in this research. These suggest a dichotomy of view expressed as an understanding of the authentic characteristics of the participant, versus the researcher's interest in the other's story (2005:661). In methodological terms, this advice has significant implications for researchers.

In the stage of planning, the researchers' aims are to tackle the investigation and analysis without preformed expectations. Suspending the judgement of the researcher is not, however, so simple. Because curiosity is often motivated by having personal experiences which ignite deeper interest, the researcher must therefore accept that they come to the encounter with preconceptions. In the introduction I declared a significant interest in understanding the journey toward the enhanced agency of others. In methodological terms, this poses the difficulty of finding own story in the accounts of others. In contrast researchers must accept that, in the process of doing research, their expectations can be contested and that their pre-devised careful planning must undergo dynamic revision to accurately embrace the participants' accounts.

Research which employs phenomenological hermeneutics in analysis expects to employ techniques to unearth data. This ranges from using common sense, looking for themes and frequently mentioned factors and observing the feelings and emotions expressed by participants in the process of giving their account (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Researchers might employ such methods as a confirmatory action but would be better advised to expect revelation and emergence. Moreover, concepts and themes which are revealed, and which emerge, cannot be easily compared across interviewee accounts. Researchers must be aware that different lives create different accounts and different meanings so much so, that the evidence is buried in accounts. Pre-defined

labels planned, can therefore be insufficient to represent participants without multiple readings, many researcher moments of reflection and revision in order to drive at validity of interpretation.

Generalising from six participants also has implications, as does the nature of the sampling methods employed. Finding participants is no easy matter for small scale research and how they were engaged is important in the avoidance of bias. Nevertheless opportunistic selection and 'word of mouth' recommendation are helpful in finding willing persons, but this is no guarantee that the results will be any less diverse.

In establishing implications and contributions it is important for the researcher to return regularly to the theories and literature, from which, the research drew guidance and to dynamically re-elaborate the research question. This is important in coming to know what the relative strength of the research data is. Reflection on and reappraisal of the evidence sets an appropriate tone for the writing stage and tempers theoretical assertions.

### **6.5 Implications for practice**

This thesis proposes that APCE has been colonised by curricula written by authorities for a stereotypical audience and purpose, which has been presumed by curriculum designers. The assumption has been that students of PCE are collecting qualifications for the purpose of enhancing career related benefits, and that adult practices must adjust to comply. Given that this purpose is subverted by adult clients, to realise remediation and/or realise transformed identity, designers themselves become implicated as a glass ceiling. Advice to designers from this thesis is that we must liberalise and democratically negotiate assessable activities between provider, employers and student. We must recognise in structures that adults are a distinctively different educational customer to be embraced. This entails being able to provide openly negotiable learning outcomes, whilst continuing to maintain pre-existing structural rigour.

The conflation of 'standard' practices across FE and HE, at all and any age of engagement, appears flawed in present practice and succeeds only because the client adjusts meaning and finds purpose in personally subverting the

'standard' curriculum. Advice and guidance practices must, therefore, seek providers who are sensitive to adult needs and who can give evidence that they embrace the specific diversity of adult education.

Support for the reflective growth of adults suggests a curriculum which should promote teaching, with less explanation and more discursive activity. Curricula, of this nature, should be clearly and supportively structured. The purpose of structure and the planned subject matter should be communicated to the adult client, as an aid to tracking their progress. In terms of the sense of meaning current lifelong learning curricula deliver beyond competence, there is participant evidence that curricula enhance sociological understandings, yet dull adults' political potential. Achievement of identity change, which denies individuals will to political action, can simply generate another glass ceiling. Whilst this 'higher' glass ceiling allows for the individual growth of agency, this research contends, that it does not deliver the means by which individuals can totally remove it. A greater focus and emphasis on politics might thus enhance the sociality of the adult and engender the will to make changes in society, for the longer term benefit of all adults.

## **6.6 Contribution to knowledge**

Lifelong learning curricula are founded upon the prescription of up-skilling and/or remediating skills, and are presented by authors such as Field (2006), Edwards (1997) and Coffield (2000a) as a coercive and imposed force. This thesis has examined these dominant curricula and adult experiences in detail in the context of their transformative potential.

This thesis differs from the 'Lifelong Learning project' and 'Learning Society research' because it focusses on lifelong learning curricula which are dominantly available and moreover, on the transformative potential of those curricula. By employing the context of lifelong learning, the research singularly focusses on the transformative value and causes of positive change in adults. In this context the thesis alternatively argues that the articulation of the experience of positive learning is altered by pride in achievement, that social class is a

'spur' to engagement and that achievement contributes to identity growth through enhanced esteem, which promotes and intensifies well-being, resilience and empowerment. In short, achievement through a mechanistic curriculum is equally transformationally valuable. Distinctively, this thesis adds that identity is not just embodied, as the Lifelong Learning project defines, but situationally embodied and therefore subject to the needs of the person at that time, and in that situation. Situations and circumstances are influential in causing disorientating dilemmas and as a consequence 'problem solving' becomes a dominant reason for engagement.

This thesis, further contributes to knowledge by proposing that adults using curricula do so, out of a need to have structure reintroduced to their way of being. In turn structure is necessary to provide sense of purpose, bring clarity to direction and to enhance the ability to control life trajectories. Trajectories can be eroded in adulthood over time by the wearing of a mask (Goffman 1959), for career purposes, and by living a life which becomes incongruous with own sense of meaning and authenticity, over that time. Lack of authenticity, this contribution proposes, generates dissonance and the journey to regain a sense of self-worth and value is provoked into action.

Mezirow (1981-2006) and Habermas (1984) critically point to instrumentalism as a force to be countered and communicative education to be embraced. This research, however, establishes that instrumental outcomes designed, lifelong learning curricula are a necessary part of a whole and effective form of education.

This research proposes that, for adults, the imposed focus of a set of prescribed outcomes provides a challenge to conquer. As a result of this challenge, auto-didactic capabilities provoke new forms of reflection on past, current, and future life experiences and expectations. Without this challenge, the desire to reflect can be limited to acts of introspection. Whilst Mezirow conceives of epochs, Festinger (1957) points to dissonance, and Flanagan (1954) to critical incidents, this research contributes that FE, HE in FE and HE curricula become the focus

of reflective action which prompts adults to devise a personal strategy for mastering their outcomes: achievement consequentially can provide the esteem to tackle epochs and incidents in wider life. In this way, reflections which employ such an 'enemy like' structure progressively encourage the production of further personal outcomes, which has the potential to provoke the enhancement of agency.

Through supportive feedback across a course of learning, progress and achievement feed self-esteem and confidence has the potential to rise. As outcomes are further achieved, confidence begins to feed the actualising qualities of the student and their more positive internal dialogues. Ultimately identity is reframed by this growth in agency and pride in achievement follows.

This theory suggests that adults ultimately benefit from compliance with any form of curriculum. It further proposes that adults are content to employ curricula as a tool for reflection on self, on circumstances, and on future opportunities and to re-find purpose through and in curricular structures. Critics of lifelong learning propose a theory of domination and recommend resistance; this thesis contends that compliance works too and that the lived experience of the participants in this research is worthy of more extensive research. The alternative description contributed is that adult students reflect on episodes of successful learning as a structured way of regaining self-belief, the result of which is actualisation.

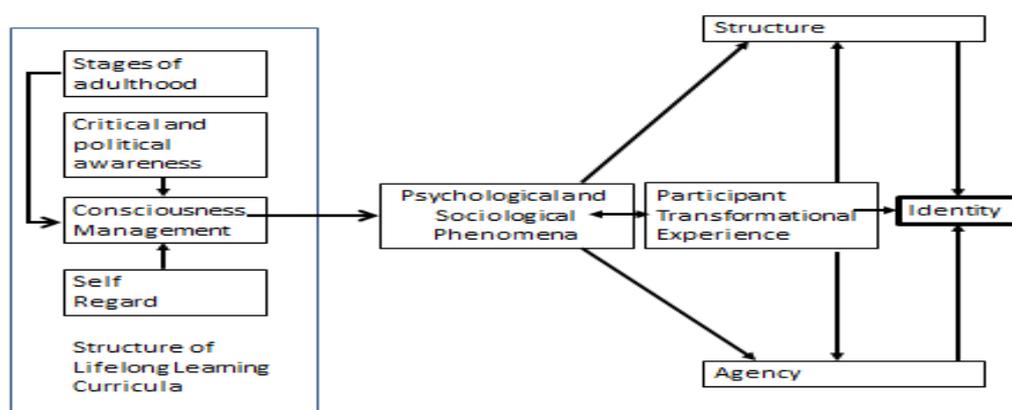


Figure 14 (Reproduced): Research theory and participant experience: a synthesis

The research theory and participant experience diagram at figure 14 and reproduced again above, proposes that a synthesis of stages of adulthood, critical and political awareness and self-regard, operate through the filter of consciousness management in adults. Confrontation with the challenge of any curriculum is a potential catalyst which makes the adult both porous to, and stimulated by new knowledge.

Stimulated by this new challenge, and being in a place where their reflections can be affectively supported bodily, cognitively and socially, provides the 'monastic' structures and healing capabilities necessary to overcome. From overcoming, the virtuous nature of positive feedback, nurtures transformations which feed self-esteem and actualising potentials. The experience of success is that which ultimately influences identity change which endures and triggers a metaphorical 're-set button' so that life can be tackled anew. This thesis agrees with the Lifelong Learning project, that through the re-telling of their experiences, people regain agency, but also contributes that participants achieve well-being from the feelings of pride in achieving transformation through the lifelong learning curricula of FE, HE in FE and HE; having met and overcome the challenge of the prescriptive, they move to make more profound revisions to their somatic, cognitive and social selves.

Given that this was the interpreted experience of all six participants and that they experienced different curricula in different institutions, at different times, it seems reasonable to deduce, that similarity in their accounts suggests that any legitimate adult FE, HE in FE and HE lifelong learning curriculum has the potential to achieve such empowering and transformative outcomes.

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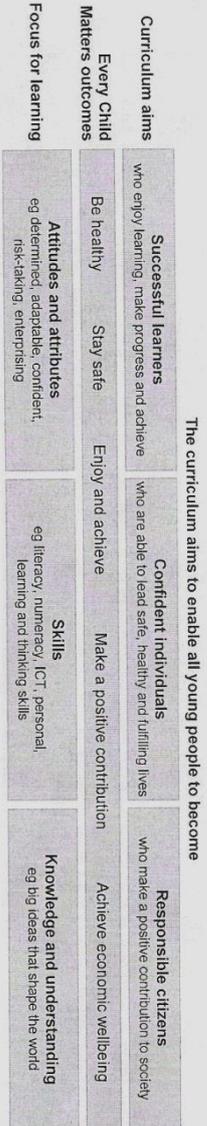
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# Appendix 1

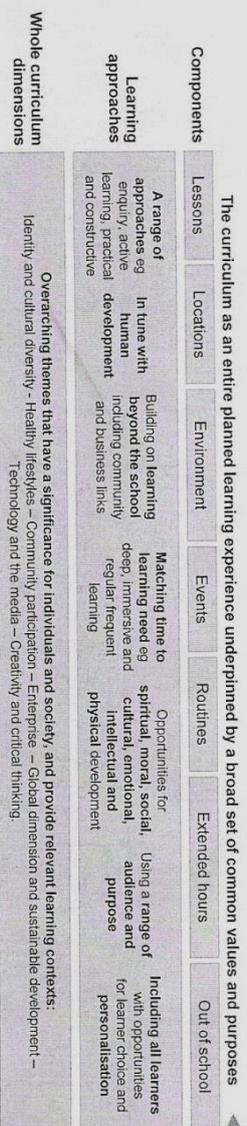
## A Big Picture of the Curriculum

Three key questions

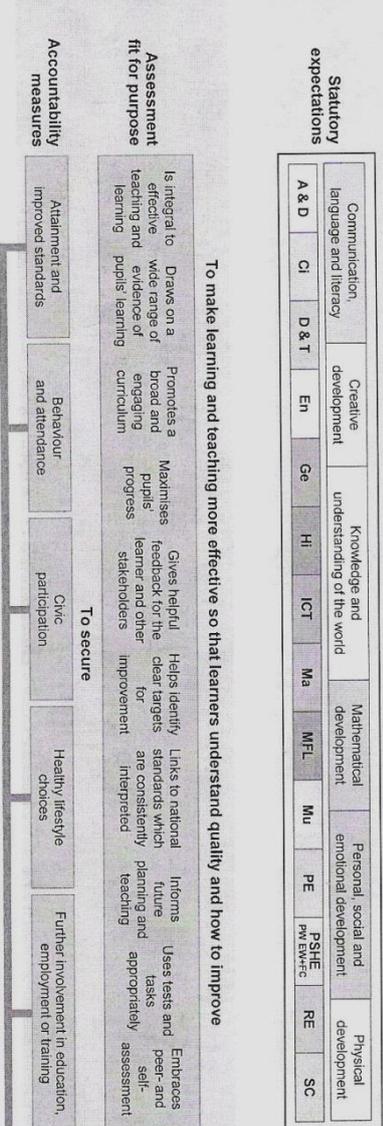
**1** What are we trying to achieve?



**2** How do we organise learning?

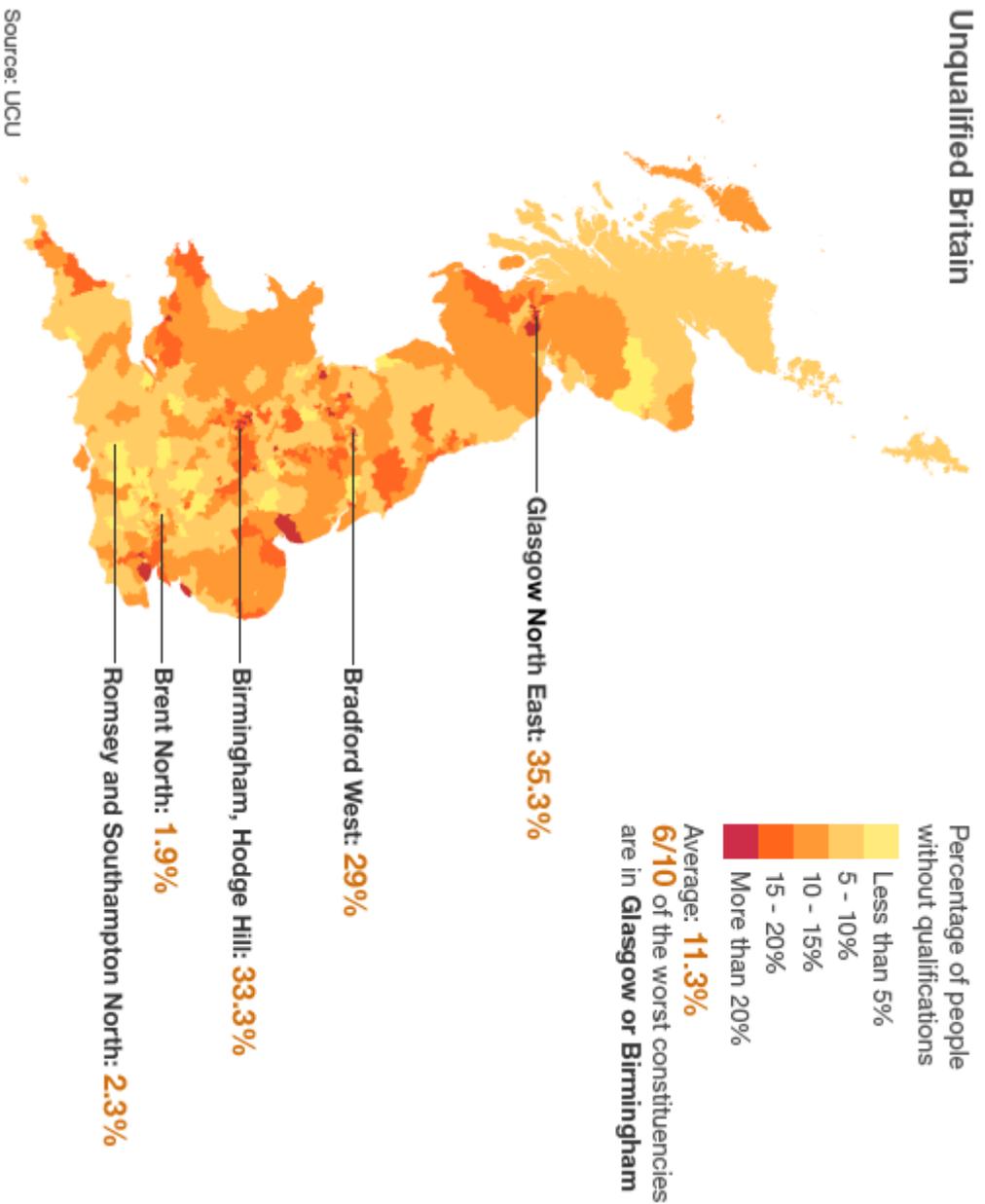


**3** How well are we achieving our aims?



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# Appendix 2



Source University and College Union (available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14233114>)  
Accessed

22 July 2011 Last updated at 09:31

## 'Two Britains' qualifications gap emerges in study

**Factors emergent from theory**Soma

Do students – elaborate existing frames, learn new frames, transform habits of mind and transform points of view?

Is education a possession?

Did participants move status?

Did education improve social mobility?

Did participant's predefined ambitions change as a result?

Was FE remedial and/or second chance?

Were past skills remediated?

Did participants exhibit changed disposition?

Were participant aspirations bounded?

Was the purpose selfish or selfless?

What turning points were encountered and what significance did they have?

Do students achieve authenticity of and in self?

Have students encountered disequilibrium?

Do adults (who struggle) project their problems onto others as a defence to self?

Is education about conquering fears?

Does education allow students to name their past self and thus work towards a new self?

Does education cause reflection and greater understanding of self?

Does discontent with present student status quo cause engagement with education?

How is meaningfulness changed?

How do students identify themselves – what is the nature of changed identity?

What has happened to students feelings of opportunity or threat?

What part does being challenged take?

Do students think better of themselves?

Does learning change self-image?

Does learning influence self-esteem?

Is education a pursuit of authenticity?

Does learning have a healing (past) potential?

Do students change their sense of self to being different after education?

Does education allow the casting off of past self-doubts?

Do students come to know self more effectively?

Does valuing self improve?

Do adults live in a circle of familiarity – does education shake them out of it?

Did students feel more congruent?

Do students see education as part of a journey?

Psyche

Realisations and/or confrontations of transformative adjustment through involvement with an FE and/or distance learning curriculum

Diversity of significances of both an intrinsic and extrinsic nature

Did participants feel the system hindered them?

Did students feel hemmed in by legislated requirement in FE?

Were learning difficulties overcome?

Did participants realise their ambitions?

Did participants have feelings of accomplishment and/or fulfilment?  
 Was there an appearance of the socialized mind, the self-authoring mind, and the self-transforming mind?  
 Were participants more or less critically reflective?  
 Are students able to see the previously unseen?  
 What and do epochs occur in adult learning  
 What was the evidence of stages to/in learning and/or any semblance of linear pathways across those participants as seen from today?  
 Do participants project their future lives and existence- do they hypothesise what their future self will be like?  
 Has cognitive conflict (Kohlberg) played a part?  
 What factors caused them to be less effective in past educational encounters?  
 What is assimilated and what is accommodated?  
 Do students conquer inhibition?  
 Does critical thinking open up dissonance?  
 How is motivation to 'do' more evident?  
 What varieties of additional intelligences become noticeable?  
 What emotional consciousness states are perceptible?  
 Did growth of reflective capacity produce solutions for other areas of student's lives?  
 Does education improve autonomy?  
 What validates the journey?  
 Is education a spiritual experience?  
 Did students experience direct consciousness raising teaching?  
 Have students experienced a greater sense of consciousness from education?  
 Do students experience consciousness raising?  
 Does education change the way we see things – do we move what we see?  
 How are intrinsic and extrinsic perceptions compared?

### Sociality

What are the post FE and distance, learner realised outcomes?  
 Are they compelled in mature terms?  
 Discovery and securing of new career direction and income generation  
 Macro and micro influences at play  
 Whether teachers adopt a rigid or flexible approach in delivery  
 Has income increased and job level developed?  
 Does education guarantee the minimum for survival or more?  
 Did the education get them a job and did they stick with it?  
 Did students see the world of work as competitive?  
 Did participants think employers valued their learning?  
 What was the impact of doing education "with" others?  
 Were there any similarities and differences of the life course of the participants?  
 Were participants driven by what they should do or what they wanted to do?  
 What were the different life course trajectories of participants and what significance does this have?  
 Has duration of absence from education played a part?  
 What moral change has occurred if any?  
 Do they see themselves as currently or previously oppressed or held back by lack of education?

Does education revise student value systems e.g. ecological change?  
Does getting on with real life get in the way of realising what is wrong?  
Is education an indulgence and does it distract us from concern for others in our lives?  
To what extent do students achieve being what they want to be?  
How do students challenge themselves?  
Are students more adaptable after educative experiences?  
What things deflected students from their course of learning?  
How were deflections overcome?  
Do students become imitators of that dominant in society or imitators of that gleaned from education?  
Did students recognise geo-political currents in society and were they driven by this?  
Do students look for convenient truths?  
Are students changing received knowledge versus their own experience of it?  
How was student's sense of values adjusted by education?  
Does education reveal factors that are more likely to make the student successful?  
Do students become less concerned about complexity or more concerned?  
Do they conduct the (Brookfield) 7 critical tasks?

#### Education environment

What push or pull factors had greatest impact?  
Are the drivers for transformation extrinsic, intrinsic or both?  
Is doing education part of rejecting hopelessness?  
Is being critical simply an academic pursuit?  
Does education narrow the subject-object divide?  
Were feelings and emotions taken out of the learning arena was it clinical?  
What issues do student's say matters to them?  
How do students exhibit that they can do more as a result of education?  
What influence does the teacher have on self-respect of students?  
Is education the singular catalyst for the above?  
Does education improve deductive powers?  
Is education about Schon's achieve goals, maximise winning and reduce negative feelings plus increase rationality argument?  
Do students become immersed in the alternative world of doing education?  
Is learning therapeutic?  
What did students experience versus what were they taught and what was the consequent differences?

## Interview Plan

### Format of interviews

1. Introductory preamble.
2. Introduction to nature of the research.
3. Participant details collection
4. Outline of the research interview, timing, recording, transcription, and form of questions
5. Explanation of ethics, right to withdraw and possible follow-up agreement; ethics consent signature
6. Questions delivery
7. Conclusion, thanks and what happens next.

### Interview questions

1. Can you tell me about the FE course that you undertook and why you chose to do it (Title, Content, Duration, Level)?
2. What work/occupation do you do now
3. (Subject to 2 above) What did you do before the course?
4. What does your current job/work/occupation entail?
5. How does your current work differ from that which you did before?
6. What occurrences in yourself, your own career or personal life, prompted you to change direction (if appropriate)
7. What are the differences that you feel are relevant now?
8. Did you expect the course you took to enhance your work, personal, social status or any other aspect of self development – if so what was dominant in your thinking?
9. What did the course curriculum expect you to know and to be able to do, following completion?
10. What form did your studies take and how was the group constituted and course delivered?
11. Reflecting upon the experience today, did you (personally feel) you got what was expected, and in what way have you put this into use?
12. In recollecting experiences, during studies, can you indicate the impact it had on your career and those supporting you?
13. In retrospect, were there any unexpected or problematic moments/factors/issues that emerged before, during or since completing the course, which you directly relate to undertaking the course?
14. Can you describe the overall impact on you, of going through the FE experience?
15. (Subject to answers at 9, 10 & 11 above) What adjustments did you make to your own life, whilst undertaking the course; what emerged from the need to adjust/ what demands did this make?
16. Do you feel that the FE experience has caused any unexpected (subsequent) revision to career or personal relationships?
17. How has the course caused you to see your own life and career direction differently today?
18. How would you explain the experiences of post-course change to others?
19. To what extent, if at all, have your feelings toward doing learning changed?
20. (Subject to a range of responses above) The next questions are aimed at your sense of social identity post curriculum engagement
  - 20.1 How has your sense of own status changed (career, academic, personal)?
  - 20.2 To what extent do you think differently of yourself since completion?
  - 20.3 How and in what ways, has the curriculum raised your critical awareness e.g. political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors?

Transcript of the interview with [REDACTED]

Interviewer

This is an interview on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011 with [REDACTED] at her home.

Interviewer (I)

The first question I would like to ask is can you tell me about the Further Education course that you undertook and why you chose to do it.

[REDACTED]  
The Further Education, umh I attended night classes before I went back umh, my children were the right sort of age and I decided I wanted to do something, when we moved up here from [REDACTED] I decided well, I wasn't working and I decided that was what I was going to do. I knew that I wanted to work in a sort of nursery, pre-school area and I did a BTEC; a part time BTEC at [REDACTED] College over two years, going into college twice a week I think it was. Sort of nine until three or something, that was over two years.

|  
Umh so this was a childcare course, the content of which led you on to more education or did you do more than just that?

[REDACTED]  
We talked about more, I mean, the course, was the first that I had done and there were other mature learners in the group that had done level two and the course I did was umh level three, some had moved onto that, I went straight in at level three and there was talk about going on; going on to university from there, and to begin with I hadn't thought about it, but a few of us thought well, that was probably the kind of way we were going to go. After the two years though I didn't; I took a year and then decided well actually, I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree so I, well it wasn't something I set out to think about.

|  
So you went from a BTEC into a bit of a break and into a degree?

[REDACTED]  
Yes

|  
So you were working before that? What kind of job were you doing before that?

[REDACTED]  
Before I moved up here, my children were sort of pre-school age, that's how I got involved with the local pre-school, the local primary school; you know those sort of things, which is why when I came up here I wanted to do something, and there was a qualification that I could do that would take me on to that sort of work. At the same time I volunteered to be a Portage home visitor, because W had Portage, so I knew about that and within a few months of doing that they offered me a job. It was a paid job; it was only part time but it meant that I could fit that in and use it as evidence for the course that I was doing, and it all fitted in so, I did that for twelve months after I left and before I decided that actually .....(indicating need to move on again)

|  
So what work are you doing now then?

[REDACTED]  
So now I work with the speech and language therapist, umh, but I am based in a children's centre in [REDACTED]

|  
So what exactly does that entail?

1

Key:

coloured blue = Soma  
coloured green = Psyche  
coloured red = Sociality

for that job but there is no reason why someone with a BTEC and lots of experience wouldn't be able to apply

So did you expect the Further Education and the Higher Education course that you have done, to enhance your work; to enhance your personal status and to enhance your social status, or any one of those?

I wanted to do it because I wanted to prove to myself that I could and to prove to people that I could, yeah I guess people who want to get on have a degree and I guess it's the area that I work in that is not really recognised as a profession, is it?

Increasingly it is!

Yes its coming but it is doing so slowly, so I expected it to be; I expected it to allow me to apply for jobs that I would not have applied for before, but I think I did it to prove it more to myself

So were you doing this for you or were you doing this for somebody else or were you, well why were you doing this?

Ohh I was (clear focus) doing this for me, I don't think I expected; there was nobody else kind of; I wanted to do be able to not prove exactly but prove to myself that I could do it and other people as well but not because they were putting any pressure upon me it was just something in my heads I think. Yes I did think it would raise my earning potential a bit!

So you did have some kind of career development in mind

Yes

And the personal things?

(Long pause) What the confidence?

Did it happen

The confidence thing.. yeah I am certainly, yes, but the longer I am out of college, the longer I am out of University; my levels are dropping again. Certainly when I first left I was like... well I can apply for this, I can apply for that and I did apply for things, didn't get a job immediately obviously, but I did. In the back of my head I am thinking ..I still want to pursue that maybe it takes me a little while to get there but I still want to pursue what I always wanted. There was one thing; I did go into it; thinking that I wanted to teach; I wanted to teach nursery; foundation stage and I was interviewed for a PGCE course at [redacted] College and didn't get a place. Umh the woman that interviewed me, looking back on this now; at the time I wanted to pursue it; but the woman who interviewed me kind of implied well, you're nearly fifty, are you going to be able to crawl on the floor with children etc dah-de dah. I didn't think about it at the time but I do wonder whether my age was against me; I am not saying I didn't get a place because of that, but I kind of lost confidence on that. But I still... but now I go well...I'm too old to do that (Laughing).

3

So in respect of doing all this learning, and thinking back and thinking forward now, have you got what you expected out of it?

Have I got what I expected out of it? No because I wanted to teach, and I thought that I was going to, maybe I was a bit naive; I wanted to teach I was sort of thinking, I can get jobs, I can earn that much, I can contribute to... you know, it didn't happen so it's not ...; I am still doing more than I would have done if I hadn't done it but I guess I haven't ended up where I thought I was going to end up, I guess that's life isn't it?

OK, During the process of doing education, at whatever level, thinking generally about all the education that you have done, is there anything you could pin down as unexpected or problematic during that period. What could have got in the way, were there any difficult moments or factors that occurred that may have made you say enough! I am out of here?

(long pause) My confidence levels as I have said I am not a particularly confident person and I panic at the last minute; I know; before I started; before we moved up here, when A was very tiny, I started to do evening classes and I did A levels. Going on fine, something happened then I'd say I am not going back, I am better now; yeah my confidence levels; I mean at the end of my BTEC course there was this mad panic about getting this in and that in, I'd go well I can't do that... I needed someone to shore me up a bit; AB will tell you that I was like that at the end of the degree as well but Oh she'd say yes you can, but that's my personality I guess.

So people around you were helpful then?

Yeah for me that was very important

And at home?

To a certain extent, M wasn't with me the whole way through; I sort of said to him I want to go back and do this as a full time thing and he let me give up work and he really was brilliant, the days I've got to type; actually I have got to study this weekend, you know, he would take W out and keep him out of my way and so in that respect, but he never got really involved in what I was doing to be able to say, you can do this...

So it was very much an individual or personal thing then?

Yes

What adjustments do you think you made to your life while you were undertaking learning; to your home life perhaps, any at all?

Yeah, I think it's a huge thing, I guess particularly well I don't know whether I can explain this well, but they were fairly young, quite a thing; I mean I had to give up work, not that we were dependent on my salary but, it helped and the whole thing of the house at times, deadlines, when they had to be met, and I am a last minute person me! If the deadline is on Friday I don't start until the Monday and the children; they had to leave me alone and let me get on with it and ask Dad for anything they wanted; that sort of adjustment stuff. Just family life really.

4

-1  
-2  
-3

I  
Life and career direction then; do you think things are more positive now, or are they much the same or..?

■ No I think they are more positive, certainly I don't think I would be doing, or working where I am because I think I would have gone... well, I haven't got the experience to do it, so I think it has made things better. I have a bit of a seed in the back of my head about doing something else, it might take me a couple of years to get around to that but, from time to time, it's like childbirth isn't it, pain lessens and I think there is a bit of me that goes maybe, I will do something else. Either another college course or maybe another step up

I  
So if I was to say to you, I'm going to bring all your friends around and what I want you to do is to explain to them what has happened to ■■■■■ now that she has done some education, what would you say?

■ What to them? (Laughs) Yeah..I did it..Yeah I did it...I decided I was going to go back and do it and I was over forty when I did it, I wish I'd have done it before, because it took me a long time to work up to it and I wish I'd have done it when I was thirty not forty ...yeah I think I; I'm glad I did it..

I  
And that's important isn't it, that sense of..

■ I think probably, some of my friends would go, She's put herself out a lot, I don't know why,.. what difference has it made? Actually to me, I think it's made a difference, maybe I am not top of the tree anywhere and maybe I am not earning megabucks but that's somebody else's standard isn't it, that's not particularly my standard

I  
I agree with you there is an important link between the internalised and externalised sense of self and whether it is consistent, and I guess in part, that is what I am trying to find out through this research.

■ I mean I would like to think, that I can do a bit more, that I could earn a bit more, but actually that isn't the reason or rather that isn't the main reason

I  
So has your attitude to doing learning changed as a result of doing what you have done...will you do any more?

■ Yeah I'd like to think I would, I am semi-toying with; I am always semi-toying with maybe I could do this or maybe I could do that! Also I think; I'd like A (daughter) to do more. Having thought through it and said, it has taken me such a long time to go back to it, that I'd like to think that it has had some effect on her, she is not going to go off to University now, she's not interested at all but, I'd like to think that she would look back and think, well Mum did it when she was a bit older; maybe I could go back and do something.

I  
So a bit of role modelling?

■ Yeah maybe, that wasn't a reason for doing it but I'd like to think it has had some sort of effect

5

I  
In a way you have answered a lot of questions about those post learning feelings, which are very important for me to find out. I am not trying to lead you in any way shape or form but do you genuinely think differently of yourself now before learning; is there a different [redacted] there now?

Yes I think there probably is, when I first left school, I mean, I left school I did twelve months at [redacted] College, and then went into a job; I went into an office job. I think I was quite lucky I went into an office job in a surveyors and I mean a lot of people in there were chaps who had gone to University and you know quite a lot of educated people. They were wonderful to me, they took me under their wing and I sort of feel that; I felt then, there were already the seeds of, I wish I'd have done that, I wish I had those experiences. It has taken me a long time to get around to it but I think if any of those people were to bump into me now, I'd be a completely different person, I think, not that I would, I'd be able to say, I've done it too!

Probably not the kind of thing that you naturally do

And it would probably never occur to them that I was thinking that way. My degree is probably not; the area that I work is probably not that ..... (Implying lesser status). Certainly I feel ... I did all sorts of evening classes; started off with GCSEs and A levels and those sorts of things which were clearly entertainment at the time; something to do but I wanted to do something that would get me somewhere; to give me something at the end of it not to do needlework or whatever.

I have one last question, it might not be as quite straight forward as it seems; or maybe; I don't know but do you think you are in any way, more politically aware, more economically aware, more socially aware, more technologically aware or more environmentally aware; all of those differing factors; is there a greater sense of awareness in [redacted] now, of things, than was previously the case.

A bit, I think to be perfectly honest in my forties, I don't think you look at things the same as when you are eighteen or twenty. When you see this on the telly, they are all sitting around discussing things; the world and so on; it didn't happen for me, those sorts of things. Perhaps not as much as it should have, but you do have to be a bit more aware even if it is just inside your subject so yes, I do take a bit more notice. I am not a particularly political animal anyway, I never was before and I am not now, but yeah within what is going on in education a bit more there.

And just one more question about the higher education piece, which often claims to introduce criticality. Do you think [redacted] is a more critical person than she ever was?

Yeah possibly in thinking around things but, as I say, I am not an overly political person but yes I do have my opinions; I am not the sort of person who is going to voice those out loud but yes I don't take things on face value as much and as maybe I used to. I think I might have done when I was younger, I might have been different

Thank you very much for the interview, what I am going to do is type up the recording and then send it to you or allow you to read it in some way and if there is

anything you want to change feel free to do so. At some stage it is possible I might want to come back to ask one or two more questions is that OK?

Yes I don't mind

# Appendix 6: Impact of Curricula Summary

<p><b>Impacts of Curricula –Themes Identified</b></p> <p><b><u>Curriculum Push</u></b>          Possess evidence of ability          Prove new status          Overcome past failings          Be more competitive in the job market          Get a job          Be seen as an expert in a field          Demonstrate competence          Get out of a rut          Name why fulfilment is lacking          Achieve balance          Achieve self-reliance          Be authentic          Find a distraction          Be challenged          Feel less threatened          Something positive to do          Compelled to learn          Subject upon which to project past failings</p> <p><b><u>Curriculum Pull</u></b>          Elaborate other work opportunities          Realisations of abilities          Changed disposition          Be self-reliant          Be more reflective          Confront own level of knowledge          Confront past failings          Provide certification          Confront the unfamiliar          Reflect on the self versus others          Create positive dissonance          Celebrate selfish and indulgent investment          Contemplate income          Achieve part of a journey          Validation</p>	<p>Provide present unknowns to be conquered          Contemplate status          Offer and demonstrate imitative skills provision          Celebrate adaptability potential          Be able to do more          Alter pre-existing frames of meaning</p> <p><b><u>Transformative - Soma</u></b>          Enjoyment of learning          Less threatened          Capable          Reflective          Temporarily fulfilled          At a new level and stage          More connected to others experiences          Able to see a positive future          Less self-defensive          Aware of what is not yet known          Less held back by self          Able to contemplate confronting present unknowns          Changed values          Healed          More authentic          Increased self-knowledge and reliance          Ready to move on again</p> <p><b><u>Transformative – Psyche</u></b>          Pride in achievement          Better coping (with own ability) skills          Preparedness to look at things in multiple ways          Aware of own micro factors          Able to use examples from own life to illustrate knowledge          Can structure thinking based on theoretical foundations          Not confined to one specific career direction – critical of what drove past thinking          Able to rely on own knowledge</p>	<p>Felt like they had moved on          Insecurity in being different – possible actor in another field          Less bounded by what they presently know          Less oppressed by what is          Less inhibited          Greater sense of own self          Positive sense of hope for self          Raised criticality but not necessarily changed criticality          Sense of self balance (therapeutically)          Better sense of macro status quo          Validated as able and capable          Self-valuation and esteem raised          Improved inner dialogue          Able to work the educational system for their own needs – have a new insider view          More self-respect          Critical of the way education is done          Sense of new identity</p> <p><b><u>Transformative – Sociality</u></b>          New career achieved          Diversity awareness          Aware of macro influences          More equal to and with others          Dispositionally different (as noted by others)          Both more and less forgiving of cognitive and moral ineptitudes          Changed class level          Less inhibited          More interested in encouraging others to see the value of learning          Conscious of others          More opinionated by objective factors albeit guided by a convenient set of personal truths          See education as a wider catalyst for society</p>
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## **Participant Pen Portraits**

### **Jane**

Jane lives in rural Devon with her husband, daughter and son. Her son has special educational needs. She is 50 and attended a college to complete a BTEC after a period of work. Having spent some time working in child related areas, including work in an educational needs setting, she returned to education to achieve a degree at university. Jane has conducted training in speech and language therapy and is now working at a family centre.

### **Rachel**

Rachel lives in a major town in Devon with her husband, two daughters and a son. She is in her forties and has lived in the county for all of her life. Leaving school as early as she could, she went to work in an office. She left office work to have children and to be a full time mother. In order to progress, she returned to education at a local college and successfully achieved an Access to Higher Education qualification. More recently she went to university and achieved a degree. Rachel is now working in a primary school assisting children with mathematics and English.

### **Sophie**

Sophie lives in city in Devon and moved there after the death of her husband in Cornwall. She originally lived in the South East of England and was brought up in a large family. She was a Carer at a younger age and was unable to continue her education because of a range of family issues. Sophie is 60 and now lives independently and in her fifties decided to realise her younger ambitions in education. She attended colleges to obtain the necessary entry qualifications for university entry and now teaches in a school.

### **Kevin**

Kevin is in his early forties and lives in a major town in Devon with his wife and three children. Having had a successful military career he returned to his home area to begin a second career. During his military service, he conducted a range of qualifications but wanted to obtain a degree. His military and subsequent circumstances meant that he needed to conduct his further education via distance learning. Having completed the degree he went on to complete a post graduate qualification and is now a primary school teacher

### **Clive**

Clive is in his fifties and lives in a major town in Devon with his wife who he married very recently. He was previously married and working in Cornwall in the Fisheries industry. More recently, and following change to his domestic life, he went to college to obtain an Access to Education qualification. He moved to Devon and tried out a range of work and finally re-entered education with the purpose of becoming a teacher. With a new partner who has encouraged his progress, he joined the teaching profession and taught in Scandinavia and in Britain. He has left teaching to join the leisure industry in more recent times.

### **John**

John, who is 44, lives in a major city in the North West of England with his wife, who works in the FE sector and two children. John is a manager in the public sector and whose education through college and subsequently at the Open University was being enhanced (at the time of interview), by taking a Masters Degree.



Graduate School of Education

## Certificate of ethical research approval

### STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

**READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: PAUL ALEXANDER COOK

Your student no: 580024709

Return address for this certificate: ASHBY OAK, 15A HOLLAND ROAD, EXMOUTH, DEVON. EX8 4AU

Degree/Programme of Study: Professional Doctorate (EdD)

Project Supervisor(s): Deborah Osberg

Your email address: pac204@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07813 186499 or 01395 268286

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed  .....date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010

**NB** For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
last updated: August 2009

# Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 580024709

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**Title of your project:** The experiences and consequent impact of Further Education on Adult students

**Brief description of your research project:** The research seeks to explore what past students say about their Further Education (FE) experiences after completion of their studies, and whether, and in what way, they may have been transformed by the experience. The research will hear students' accounts to establish, if and how FE education might inspire them to/or not to continue their educational journey further. The research will also consider aspects which did and/or might inspire the individual and equally, that which doesn't and/or did not. The interviews used to gather data, will interpret a range of participant realities and encountered difficulties, (if any), educationally, and in their lives, in the production of an altered consciousness.

**Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):** There will be approximately (12) participants. All participants will be over the age of eighteen (18) and will have completed a course of Further Education (FE) and/or a course of Higher Education in an FE setting. Participation will be voluntary however some contact will be made from data available via Alumni Organisations of two South West Colleges in which I work. No vulnerable adults will be party to the research.

**Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs)** a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

All participants will be protected by ensuring their anonymity. A consent form will be presented to all participants for signature. Participants will be made aware of the purpose and intent of the research, including details of, with whom, the research will be shared (relevant University personnel and research communities) before being engaged, and as prescribed under the Data Protection Act. Participants may equally choose to be associated with the work if they wish, should they explicitly request association, they will receive acknowledgement as will be mutually agreed.

**Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

Participants will be interviewed using a semi structured style for between thirty and forty-five minutes, and those interviews recorded. Recordings will be transcribed and then checked for accuracy and/or a transcript will be made available for comment by the participant, before including the data in the research. The research data interpretations will be shared with the participants and a full copy of the final written work made available for edit or revision by the participant(s). Confidentiality is assured through the original data remaining out of the public domain and securely stored. All participants will be able to withdraw at any time for any reason. Interview length and content will be agreed between researcher and participant, and will observe the needs of the participant as a first priority i.e. cease if the participant is in any way disturbed by the encounter or otherwise uncomfortable.

**Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):**

As participants may be engaged without prior knowledge of their physical needs, all participants will be interviewed at premises which can provide unencumbered disability access. In all invitations to interview, a request for any specific needs will be made and honoured in full.

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Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
last updated: August 2009

All recorded interviews will be securely stored on a personal home computer with password protected access and Firewall protection. Protected back-up will also be provided by a secure external hard drive with the same (as above) protection.

**Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

There are no known exceptional or ideological issues of concern noted.

---

***This form should now be printed out***, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

**N.B.** You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

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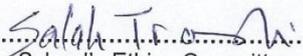
**This project has been approved for the period:** until: 30/9/2014

**By** (above mentioned supervisor's signature):  .....date: 5/1/2011

**N.B. To Supervisor:** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

---

**SELL unique approval reference:** ..... 2 | 10 | 11 | 11

**Signed:**  .....date: 27/02/2011  
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

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This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

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Chair of the School's Ethics Committee  
last updated: August 2009

## CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

### Title of Research Project

The experiences and consequent impact of Further Education on Adult students

### Details of Project

This research project looks at students who have completed study in further education (and Higher Education in a Further Education College) and asks what the impact has been. It will ask those interviewed, whether further education studies have increased or reduced their willingness to do more study; whether study has influenced career direction, whether the knowledge that they have gained has changed their views of the world and whether they feel differently about themselves after study versus before.

I am a Professional Doctorate student at The University of Exeter and am collecting this data, so that I can understand what issues there are, for adults who have taken further education qualifications. The purpose is to clarify what does and does not inspire adult students and what the teaching professions might do to improve the adult learners' experience.

### Contact Details

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:

Paul Cook, EdD Student Administration, Department of Education, Exeter University, Heavitree Road, Devon EX1 2LU.

Tel 00 44 (0) 1392 263240, e-mail: [pac204@ex.ac.uk](mailto:pac204@ex.ac.uk)

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Deborah Osberg Graduate School of Education, St Lukes Campus, Exeter University, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2LU.

Tel 00 44 (0)1392 724888 e-mail: [d.c.osberg@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:d.c.osberg@exeter.ac.uk)

### Confidentiality

Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of *your* interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below). Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The original data will be held for five years and then destroyed.

### Anonymity

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name, but I will refer to the group or groups of which you are/were a member at the time of study and only where appropriate, the groups you are part of now.

### Consent

I voluntarily agree to participate and to the use of my data for the purposes specified above. I can withdraw consent at any time by contacting the interviewer.

**TICK HERE:**  **DATE**.....

**Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data**

Name of interviewee:.....

Signature: .....

Email/phone:.....

Signature of researcher.....

2 copies to be signed by both interviewee and researcher, one kept by each

Meaning unit table: Jane

1. *The structural curriculum role: Asking and evidencing, if and how participants felt that their curriculum had achieved its purpose, as they perceived it.*

**Appendix 10: Meaning unit table: Jane**

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
<p>Line 18: I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree</p> <p>Lines 53-55: I am not sure that having the degree qualification, leads me into doing anything that I couldn't have done with just the BTEC</p> <p>Lines 67-69: because I've got my qualification, I do know what I am talking about; I may not have the experience; I may not have been doing that job for as long as you but (lowering voice) I've got loads of experience</p> <p>Lines 72-74: qualification wise, you don't, I mean, if two people were applying for the same job, and one has only got the BTEC and one has got the degree, then I guess, they would probably go for the degree</p> <p>Lines 84-85: I expected it to allow me to apply for jobs that I would not have applied for before</p> <p>Lines 100-104: when I first left I was like... well I can apply for this, I can apply for that and I did apply for things, didn't get a job immediately obviously, but I did.</p> <p>Lines 116-118: I can get jobs, I can earn that much, I can contribute to... you know, it didn't happen so it's not ...; I am still doing more than I would have done if I hadn't done it</p> <p>Lines 155-157: certainly I don't think I would be doing, or working where I am because I think I would have gone.... well, I haven't got the experience to do it, so I think it has made things better.</p>	<p>Curriculum has prepared Jane for the next level of study.</p> <p>Curriculum has conferred ability to learn but level of qualification structure has compelled her to continue upward.</p> <p>Curriculum has enhanced both confidence and transferrable skills. Qualifications speak louder than experience</p> <p>Advanced curriculum level has made Jane more employable but concern about competitive advantage is a recurring reflection.</p> <p>Curriculum has opened up more possible job opportunities</p> <p>Curriculum has eventually got Jane a job</p> <p>Curriculum has provided wider choice of job opportunity and ability to choose. Jane is 'job ready'</p> <p>Curriculum has increased level at which Jane was subsequently working</p>

2. *The structural curriculum role: Establishing participant pre-encounter perceptions of personal status.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
<p>Lines 4-5: my children were the right sort of age and I decided I wanted to do something</p> <p>Lines 6-7: I wasn't working and I decided that was what I was going to do. I knew that I wanted to work in a sort of nursery; pre-</p>	<p>Jane felt lack of challenge and need to re-engage with society via work</p> <p>Not working, bored and grasping for direction – epochal reflection on lack of purpose</p>

<p>school area  Lines 23-25: my children were sort of pre-school age, that's how I got involved with the local pre-school; the local primary school; you know those sort of things, which is when I came up here  Lines 48-49: prior to doing the BTEC at XYZ College; I didn't really know; I mean I helped out in the pre-school  Lines 50-51: I didn't know what you could do, so I decided that I would; when I moved up here, to volunteer for the Portage  Lines 63-64: I always kind of felt that I didn't have as much experience as some of the other girls  Lines 65-66: I can see that now but at the time well, I was always, I'm not sure you know  Lines 80-81: I wanted to prove to myself that I could and to prove to people that I could, yeah I guess people who want to get on have a degree  Lines 127-129: I started to do evening classes and I did A levels. Going on fine, something happened then I'd say I am not going back, I am better now; yeah my confidence levels  Lines 195-196: when I first left school, I mean, I left school I did twelve months at XYZ College, and then went into a job  Lines 197-198: I went into an office job in a surveyors and I mean a lot of people in there were chaps who had gone to University and you know quite a lot of educated people.</p>	<p>Tried voluntary work in order to realise sense of direction, needed a sense of purpose</p> <p>Previous qualifications were inadequate – epochal reflection on capability  Unclear, lacking direction and guidance</p> <p>Lacking confidence – epochal reflection comparing self to others.  Difficulty in making decisions and taking new steps- epochal 'prone' status.  Felt educational position was not sufficient versus desired job role – epochal reflection on self-adequacy.  Unsure about ability and potential and lacking resilience – epochal retreat.</p> <p>Had regrets about dedication to past education and level achieved.  Felt less able than peers at work in last position and did not want to revisit those feelings in future work.</p>
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*3. The structural curriculum role: Identifying factors which guided their use of the curriculum.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
<p>Lines 25-26: there was a qualification that I could do that would take me on to that sort of work</p>	<p>Needed to get the right qualifications – reflective evaluation of possible future career</p>
<p>Line 67: I'm going to apply for that job, because I've got my qualification</p>	<p>Wanted skills relevant to desired job –post educational esteem growth</p>
<p>Line 81: I guess people who want to get on have a degree</p>	<p>Wanted to raise own educational standard</p>
<p>Line 85: to apply for jobs that I would not have applied for before</p>	<p>Wanted to be freed from current lack of choice</p>

Lines 92-93: I did think it would raise my earning potential a bit!	Wanted to improve income level
Lines 116-117: I wanted to teach I was sort of thinking, I can get jobs, I can earn that much, I can contribute to... you know	Wanted to realise self-defined career aspirations rather than 'do a job'
Lines 209-210: I wanted to do something that would get me somewhere; to give me something at the end of it not to do needlework or whatever.	Wanted to feel valued and valuable; to be noticed and revered

*4. The structural curriculum role: Noting the thoughts, life satisfaction, epochal occurrences and reflections of participants which called them to employ educative action.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 5-7: I decided I wanted to do something, when we moved up here from P, I decided well, I wasn't working and I decided that was what I was going to do.	Wanting to do something positive with her time
Lines 17-18: After the two years though I didn't; I took a year and then decided well actually, I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree	Inspired by a previous period of successful education
Line 27: I volunteered to be a Portage home visitor, because W had Portage	Own child needed support and wanted to learn more about how
Lines 72-74: I mean, if two people were applying for the same job, and one has only got the BTEC and one has got the degree, then I guess, they would probably go for the degree	Wanted to be competitive in the job market
Lines 80-81: I wanted to do it because I wanted to prove to myself that I could and to prove to people that I could, yeah I guess people who want to get on have a degree	Recognised a degree as the benchmark needed to be secure in future job
Lines 92-93: it was just something in my head I think. Yes I did think it would raise my earning potential a bit!	Wanted to raise standard of living
Lines 107-109: the woman who interviewed me kind of implied well, you're nearly fifty, are you going to be able to crawl on the floor with children etc dah-de dah.	Had hit an age at where action was deemed more urgent
Lines 166-168: I was over forty when I did it, I wish I'd have done it before, because it took me a long time to work up to it and I wish I'd have done it when I was thirty not forty	Seeking to make up lost opportunity – epochal reflection on lost opportunity

*5. The structural curriculum role: Comparatively grounding the practical consequences of engagement in and across the before and post development encounter.*

Jane's response	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 25-26: I wanted to do something, and	Jane needed challenge and

<p>there was a qualification that I could do that would take me on to that sort of work.  Lines 40-41: I get to work with the health visitors, and if they have got children which they have got concerns about</p> <p>Lines 84-85: I expected it to allow me to apply for jobs that I would not have applied for before</p> <p>Line 110: I do wonder whether my age was against me</p> <p>Line 136-138: I sort of said to him I want to go back and do this as a full time thing and he let me give up work and he really was brilliant</p> <p>Lines 147-149: I had to give up work, not that we were dependent on my salary but, it helped and the whole thing of the house at times</p>	<p>needed to seek fulfilment in order to feel complete</p> <p>Wanted to do a job which was relevant to her son's condition and learn more about a range of child difficulties</p> <p>Wanted to be able to contribute to the household in more than a domestic fashion</p> <p>Realised she was getting older</p> <p>Realised the need to be supported through the experience</p> <p>Realised the need to make space for the educational encounter</p>
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*6. The transformative factors: Evidencing the affective post education impact of the curriculum upon career, self and influential others.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
<p>Lines 17-18: I took a year and then decided well actually, I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree.</p> <p>Lines 51-52: I didn't realise that there were things, I mean, that there were other things working in a pre-school that you could do.</p> <p>Lines 55-57: experience wise and confidence wise, that it was useful, you know, the confidence is there for me to apply for that, I might have a go at that.</p> <p>Lines 66-67: whereas now I would be more confident to say well actually, I'm going to apply for that job, because I've got my qualification</p> <p>Lines 99-100: The confidence thing.. yeah I am certainly, yes, but the longer I am out of college, the longer I am out of University; my levels are dropping again</p> <p>Lines 155-157: (Career views) I think they are more positive, certainly I don't</p>	<p>The FE learning inspired Jane to continue; she had enjoyed her experience and felt less threatened by academic challenge.</p> <p>Came into new knowledge of what was possible, more able and open to consideration of alternatives; hungry to learn more</p> <p>Jane was feeling more capable and able to see a positive future; willing to contemplate and confront present personal unknowns</p> <p>More willing and able to rely on self, has moved on, sense of hope via improved inner dialogue: less inhibited about meeting others.</p> <p>Self-esteem and personal valuation improved.</p> <p>Jane was at a new level and stage, increased self-knowledge and coping capability, sense of a different self which needs further educational feeding'.</p> <p>Capability improvement has made Jane less defensive. Able to accept</p>

<p>think I would be doing, or working where I am because I think I would have gone.... well, I haven't got the experience to do it, so I think it has made things better</p> <p>Lines 160-161: I will do something else. Either another college course or maybe another step up</p> <p>Lines 165-169: (Laughs) Yeah..I did it..Yeah I did it...I decided I was going to go back and do it and I was over forty when I did it, I wish I'd have done it before, because it took me a long time to work up to it and I wish I'd have done it when I was thirty not forty ...yeah I think I; I'm glad I did it..</p> <p>Lines 170-173: my friends would go, She's put herself out a lot, I don't know why,.. what difference has it made? Actually to me, I think it's made a difference, maybe I am not top of the tree anywhere and maybe I am not earning megabucks but that's somebody else's standard isn't it.</p> <p>Lines 177-178: I mean I would like to think, that I can do a bit more, that I could earn a bit more, but actually that isn't the reason or rather that isn't the main reason</p> <p>Lines 184-186: I'd like to think that it has had some effect on her, she is not going to go off to University now, she's not interested at all but, I'd like to think that she would look back and think, well Mum did it when she was a bit older.</p> <p>Lines 201-203: I think if any of those people were to bump into me now, I'd be a completely different person, I think, not that I would, I'd be able to say, I've done it too!</p> <p>Lines 220-222: I do take a bit more notice. I am not a particularly political animal anyway, I never was before and I am not now, but yeah within what is going on in education a bit more there.</p> <p>Lines 226-228: yes I do have my opinions; I am not the sort of person who is going to voice those out loud but yes I don't take things on face</p>	<p>challenge.</p> <p>Jane was able to move on (and up) again and is prepared to try new things.</p> <p>Jane had reflected on how proud she was of her achievement and inspired herself. She had achieved (temporary) fulfilment and was able to use her own life experience as the example.</p> <p>Jane had achieved a more authentic view of herself and was less oppressed and balanced by/about what is</p> <p>Jane had achieved self-respect whilst being grounded in own situation and status.</p> <p>Jane had provided a positive role model for her family and was proud of that achievement. She had become both conscious and encouraging of others in educational matters.</p> <p>Jane recognised that others saw her differently but also equal to those she had compared herself to in the past.</p> <p>Jane had achieved a focus on her specialism which is enduring. She had become aware of macro influences on her area of specialism.</p> <p>Similar to above but Jane had become more opinionated and to some extent politically aware and critical.</p>
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value as much and as maybe I used to. I think I might have done when I was younger	
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*7. The transformative factors: Exploration of metaphors, analogies and descriptive statements around which, affective notions of developmental change congealed.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
<p>Lines 40-44: I get to work with the health visitors, and if they have got children which they have got concerns about, I go out and see; I sort of; can't make full assessments and I'm not allowed to do one-to-one work with the children, but I can go out and suggest, well these are the sort of things you should be doing</p> <p>Lines 56-57: the confidence is there for me to apply for that, I might have a go at that.</p> <p>Lines 67-68: I've got my qualification, I do know what I am talking about</p> <p>Lines 85-86: I think I did it to prove it more to myself</p> <p>Lines 110-112: I do wonder whether my age was against me; I am not saying I didn't get a place because of that, but I kind of lost confidence on that. But I still... but now I go well ..I'm too old to do that (Laughing).</p> <p>Lines 136-138: I sort of said to him I want to go back and do this as a full time thing and he let me give up work and he really was brilliant, the days I've got to type; actually I have got to study this weekend</p> <p>Lines 171-173: Actually to me, I think it's made a difference, maybe I am not top of the tree anywhere and maybe I am not earning megabucks but that's somebody else's standard isn't it.</p> <p>Lines 201-203: It has taken me a long time to get around to it but I think if any of those people were to bump into me now, I'd be a completely different person, I think, not that I would, I'd be able to say, I've done it too!</p> <p>Lines 227-228: I don't take things on</p>	<p>Jane had achieved an increased level of responsibility and meaningfulness from the work she wanted to do. She had achieved specialist status which required use of her new skills.</p> <p>Jane had realised that she had acquired valuable transferrable skills</p> <p>Jane had healed her past educational feelings of disadvantage</p> <p>Jane had reflected that she was more able than she previously gave herself credit for.</p> <p>Jane had developed resilience and was able to accept setbacks by externalising rather than internalising rejection.</p> <p>Jane had reflected upon her efforts to achieve a degree and realised how others had helped and supported her. She had learned to make time for bringing about her own change.</p> <p>Jane had reflected upon her own achievement and realised through re-evaluation that she was alternatively wealthy.</p> <p>Jane had achieved a greater sense of equality with others. She was prepared to group herself amongst a higher stratum.</p> <p>Jane had realised that her opinion was</p>

face value as much and as maybe I used to.	valuable and had acquired critical analysis skills.
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*8. The transformative factors: Examining perceived sense of post educational self, in terms of status, knowledge of self, self-image and esteem.*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Line 18: I've done that; I'm doing this, why can't I go on and do that sort of degree Lines 56-57: the confidence is there for me to apply for that, I might have a go at that. Lines 66-67: whereas now I would be more confident to say well actually, I'm going to apply for that job	Jane was able to realise that even higher levels were within her capability ] ] Jane was prepared and ready to tackle new and challenging work and education. ]
Lines 102-104: In the back of my head I am thinking ..I still want to pursue that maybe it takes me a little while to get there but I still want to pursue what I always wanted. Lines 128-129: I am better now; yeah my confidence levels Lines 155-156: No I think they are more positive, certainly I don't think I would be doing, or working where I am because I think I would have gone.... well, I haven't got the experience. Line 171: Actually to me, I think it's made a difference.	Jane had become able to regard herself as more able and had further untapped potential which needs to be released  Jane was less inhibited and more outspoken Previous life and work had become more valuable and worthwhile for Jane to recount
Lines 201-203: I think if any of those people were to bump into me now, I'd be a completely different person, I think, not that I would, I'd be able to say, I've done it too!	Jane was less concerned about other's opinions than was previously the case. Jane had reflected upon her achievement and had assessed herself as having gained status

*9. The transformative factors: Hearing, reporting and evaluating how the participant saw their future life developing, as a result of their encounter*

Jane's responses	Interpreted meaning units
Lines 157-161: I have a bit of a seed in the back of my head about doing something else, it might take me a couple of years to get around to that but, from time to time, it's like childbirth isn't it, pain lessens and I think there is a bit of me that goes maybe, I will do something else. Either another college course or maybe another step up.	Jane had personal plans to achieve, which she had reflected, were not going to be easy, but would be resiliently pursued. She was prepared to allow for reflective time, before making that choice.

Line 177: I would like to think, that I can do a bit more, that I could earn a bit more	Jane was expecting a further rise in status and earning power and was motivated to continue
Lines 181-182: I am semi-toying with; I am always semi-toying with maybe I could do this or maybe I could do that!	Jane has become empowered to make her own decisions when she is ready and not be solely reliant on others for direction

Meaning Unit Table: Sophie

*1: The structural curriculum role: Asking and evidencing, if and how participants felt that their curriculum had achieved its purpose, as they perceived it.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 149-152. I had no idea what a UCAS form was, then we started to talk Uni's, and I was encouraged really, you know I did really well on the Access course, and it was like a dream; I really..really..really wanted to do University. I had no concept of what it would be like, but I loved it.</p> <p>Lines 168-172. I know writing those essays and doing that research, got me through the Chemo brilliantly; kept me busy, and you know it was like tearing your hair out some days, trying to feed this brain, and how to structure these essays. I did really.. really well and I have learned such a lot but there were very good people on the course.</p> <p>Lines 254-260. She gave me such a lot of encouragement, because she gave me that..you can do this... you can do this... you're clever you are, that's good that bit of work... and I really needed that because I had no belief. When I went to University there was one lecturer, MXX XXXX, he was fantastic, he was very supportive of me, he got me a job at the JXX PXX (Pub); and my Drama, not only the teachers but the other kids, they were all in their twenties, I was the old lady, but I had a great time</p> <p>Lines 287-288. Absolutely yes, you know, I have done well in my job, I've always done well in my job, because I work.</p> <p>Lines 302-305. my status has totally changed, people perceive me in an entirely different way now, even if I have got my common old voice on, they still look at you in a different way, when people ask what are you doing, and I say I am a teacher</p> <p>Lines 444-446. Uni, I'm proud that I have got a job and I am supporting myself, you know I'm independent, I'm capable, and I'm told I do things..my reports are good,</p>	<p>Curriculum gave Sophie a sense of fulfilment and feelings of being capable. She was proud of her achievement and was ready to move on again.</p> <p>Sophie was able to cope with what life threw at her. She was able to confront her unfamiliar situation and immerse herself in learning. She was becoming resilient and self-reliant.</p> <p>Sophie had realised the value of learning. She was challenged to achieve and encouraged to reach for higher ability and to confront her past failings. She was less held back by past failings and prepared to take risks as was being validated as capable and able.</p> <p>Sophie had achieved a new job, at a higher level and was doing well in it. Her past work ethic was still evident despite being better qualified. She felt able to do more than ever before.</p> <p>Sophie had changed and improved her status. Her insecurity had been defeated and her past 'actor status' had released her from oppression. Her job role made her feel more equal and less different in class terms.</p> <p>Sophie had obtained a new job she had become independent and authentic. She was now self-reliant and was prepared to celebrate the investment she had made</p>

<p>relations are good.  Lines 485-490. I think it made me more reasoned, more logical, a much more educated approach I suppose, much more liable to listen to both sides, and not just take the one thing that I was passionate about and force it. Much wider, much calmer way of looking at things; I still rant at the telly when that woman was on, that was the worst!.. that woman who ruined Britain, Regan ruined America at the same time.</p>	<p>in herself.  Sophie valued herself more highly and had an improved sense of own identity. She was more conscious of others and prepared to be more forgiving and balanced. She was prepared to be critical however of powerful others and willingly gave her opinion on those she thought abused power.</p>
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*2: The structural curriculum role: Establishing participant pre-encounter perceptions of personal status.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 2-7. I did all sorts of jobs, nothing satisfied me, I did.. you know, shop work, till work, cashier work, book keeping, well I don't think there are many that I haven't done. When I was in O, interestingly, I was a Nursing Auxiliary, which I loved, and I thought I would like to train to be a Nurse, really love to do that, and I went to this little exam that they give you, if you haven't got qualifications; passed it with flying colours, and then they said, well, fill in this pack, take it home and fill it in. Well it was huge, I had no idea, so I just put it away and didn't try.</p> <p>Lines 16-19. was married, had S, had an old Grandmother who had Alzheimers who I was looking after and needed to work to keep finances going, so couldn't do it, didn't do it again, couldn't do it.</p> <p>Lines 26-27. this was 1987, deep recession, no jobs: so picking flowers in the fields, cutting cabbage all day Sunday, doing that 12 hours a day, 7 days a week; really hard work.</p> <p>Lines 29-33. I finally got a job in a laboratory at XXXXX Dairy, testing the milk, which I quite liked, and then it was taken over by XXXX, moved to XXXX, which was 20 miles away. I was taken on there, because I had a permanent contract, but not in the laboratory, it was on the factory floor, and it was take it or</p>	<p>Sophie had drifted between jobs, found a job she liked but was defeated by form filling and felt incapable of completing a job application. She was unable to deal with paperwork and put off because of lack of skills.</p> <p>Sophie was locked into class based feelings of deprivation where she had to look after an elderly family member whilst trying to make enough income to survive. Her time was consumed by coping rather than making progress in life and career. Sophie changed her life but was caught in the trap of manual work or no work. She needed to work long hours on low wages to survive.</p> <p>She felt she had to work whenever and wherever work was available. Others were controlling her life.</p>

<p>leave it. So I was packing milk, very hard graft, 6 days on and 2 days off.  Lines 110-112. When I started my PGCE I had £3500 overdraft it was almost out of limit; I mean I had lived for almost 3 years, I had a second husband.</p> <p>Lines 145-147. before I knew what an Access course was, I was expecting to gain some qualifications, to be able to get a better job. To have a reasonable income, a steady income; to be able to look after myself, that's all I expected.  Lines 237-240. We weren't educated, were we back then? We were taught what our class was and mine was lower working class, that's what I was taught, and that's where it was really, so the women didn't work after they were married, obviously, so you went to work in a factory or a shop or an office, that was the three choices.  Lines 245-248. I had no aspirations, I was quite happy, we had a child, a house, a cat, a dog, we had animals, we'd got our vegetables, seemed OK you know OK. When I moved to XXXXXX I went whoa.. I met different people here and it made me see a different world and I was itching for that a bit then.  Lines 296-299. Things that I missed, I would like to do now, I wouldn't mind doing all my GCSEs in Geography and History, Science and Art..love it, go to school for a couple of years it would be great.. or go to College maybe that might be a bit more appropriate for a couple of years.  Lines 416-420. it's a class thing, I am convinced, because if you come from a family that isn't what we would have called middle class, it doesn't matter who you are, you can still go to college. At my school, nobody went to college from my school, unless they paid, Others went from high school to college to Uni, but my sort of class went to factories, to shops, to cleaners.</p>	<p>Sophie had achieved Access course and degree success but had not overcome her financial past. She maintained a resilient attitude to achieving her job goal as a teacher. Relationships were also problematic.  Sophie's expectations were simple and realistic; she had not dared to dream of anything more than a long working life.</p> <p>Sophie's expectations were class based but was able (in hindsight) to see that her class had held her back. She also had inter-generational 'class' obligations to realise and these set the glass ceiling on her expectations which made her thinking bounded and oppressed.</p> <p>Previously content, a move caused a change (epoch) to Sophie's surroundings and environment. The location was full of people who inspired her to learn so that she could be part of their society.</p> <p>Sophie had regrets about past level of education and wanted to urgently make up for the intellectual stimulation and the education time that she had lost.</p> <p>Sophie saw 'the map' of her future in class terms and adjusted her expectations accordingly. She regarded her lack of money as being the limitation to her expectations and that this status would not change.</p>
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*3: The structural curriculum role: Identifying factors which guided their use of the curriculum.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 40-42. I saw a little advert; I didn't really know what it was advertising, but the strap line was, get a couple of A levels, improve your chances of getting a job, well I thought I could do that!</p> <p>Lines 71-74. Drama got me through everything I think, coming towards the end of the 3 year course, doing an English degree, is very dry; you don't get to know many of your tutors, although one or two were very good. Drama was very good, it was like a big family.</p> <p>Lines 91-93. I have always known that I wanted to do English and secretly desired to go to University; mind you things have changed since the fifties, but it wasn't for my class of person so I never dreamt I would do it.</p> <p>Lines 145-148. I knew what an Access course was; I was expecting to gain some qualifications, to be able to get a better job. To have a reasonable income, a steady income; to be able to look after myself, that's all I expected really.</p> <p>Lines 150-152. I did really well on the Access course, and it was like a dream; I really..really..really wanted to do University. I had no concept of what it would be like.</p> <p>Lines 175-177. What made me go for that advert? Because it said get some qualifications, get a better job! So I have always worked, my family have always worked; none of us got anything easy you know</p>	<p>Sophie was trying to make ends meet, despite the epoch of illness she needed to get more income and be independent.</p> <p>Sophie wanted to use the experience of education to realise new friends and to move in different circles. She was searching for a safe place (using a course of education) to heal the wounds of illness, loss of husband and relationships.</p> <p>Sophie dreamt of being an English Teacher and had been influenced by a time when those around her were better educated. She wanted to achieve her long standing dream.</p> <p>Sophie wanted to get out of a rut and to improve income and status. Her early expectations were frugal and illness had left her without a purpose. She needed something positive to do.</p> <p>Initial learning inspired an appetite for more. The curriculum was in part chosen to achieve the dream of going to university. She wanted to raise her status further.</p> <p>Sophie wanted to be self-reliant and independent. Work meant income and income meant independence.</p>

*4: The structural curriculum role: Noting the thoughts, life satisfaction, epochal occurrences and reflections of participants which called them to employ educative action.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 36-39. I had cancer, I had to go into hospital; I had to have a Mastectomy. I left XXXX, I wish I hadn't, mind you I say I wish I hadn't I would have got sick pay and it would have been easier.</p>	<p>Sophie suffered ill health and was unable to work – this epoch was a turning point and when she was unable to hold on to her job, gave it up without a fight.</p>

<p>Lines 42-47. when I came out of hospital, I thought, it was about 6 weeks before I started my chemo, and during that 6 weeks, I went to the college, spoke to, you know, whoever it is, the applications people, they gave me some essay titles; sent me away to write an essay, I did that, and they accepted me. I was embarrassed to think of my punctuation at the time.</p>	<p>Sophie felt her education was poor and had received a life changing shock. She felt compelled to do something and realised that her lack of education might be a barrier, particularly her English.</p>
<p>Lines 245-248. I had no aspirations, I was quite happy, we had a child, a house, a cat, a dog, we had animals, we'd got our vegetables, seemed OK you know OK. When I moved to XXXXXX I went whoa.. I met different people here and it made me see a different world and I was itching for that a bit then.</p>	<p>Previously content, a move caused a change (epoch) to Sophie's surroundings and environment. The location was full of people who inspired her to learn so that she could be part of their society.</p>
<p>Lines 160-164. when I got the cancer, it was like, you know, you don't know what is going to happen to you, do you? As they were going to offer me Chemo I assumed that it would all be OK, and I never had any thoughts of dying, really, and I saw that opportunity in the paper and it sort of, lit up, so I had to go for it; that's why I applied for it.</p>	<p>Sophie was shocked into living life for today but immediately planned for living life into the future. She wanted to overcome the illness by setting a long horizon for her life by achieving desirable future work.</p>
<p>Lines 278-279. I've not thought about it a great deal, too busy, you know life is too busy isn't it? You have to get on with it.</p>	<p>Sophie needed a significant distraction from a range of other difficult life factors. She chose education as a safe haven.</p>
<p>Lines 445-448. I'm told I do things..my reports are good, relations are good, but I am always looking for what I am doing wrong, I'm always looking for.. why did that mistake happen.. that must be my fault. I'm always looking for..something is going to happen</p>	<p>Sophie needed to tackle past feelings of insecurity and not being equal to others. She employed education to balance the scales in her favour and to achieve a more authentic and certificated academic self. This was reframed into a thirst for knowledge at later stages of educational engagement.</p>

*5: The structural curriculum role: Comparatively grounding the practical consequences of engagement in and across the before and post development encounter.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 4-8. I was a Nursing Auxiliary, which I loved, and I thought I would like to train to be a Nurse, really love to do that, and I went to this little exam that they give you, if you haven't got qualifications; passed it with flying colours, and then they said, well, fill in this pack, take it home and fill it in. Well it</p>	<p>Sophie was defeated by hurdles placed before her she wanted a responsible and worthwhile job but didn't have the skills and personal resilience to achieve this objective. Past educational failings stopped her progress.</p>

<p>was huge, I had no idea, so I just put it away and didn't try.</p> <p>Lines 25-27. This was 1987, deep recession, no jobs: so picking flowers in the fields, cutting cabbage all day Sunday, doing that 12 hours a day, 7 days a week; really hard work.</p> <p>Lines 32-36. I was packing milk, very hard graft, 6 days on and 2 days off and it was job and finish so if a machine broke down, you could be there until midnight really, and my marriage was going, son was grown up by now, so I finally snapped and left home, and obviously was under a lot of strain; a lot of stress.</p> <p>Lines 44-46. I went to the college, spoke to, you know, whoever it is, the applications people, they gave me some essay titles; sent me away to write an essay, I did that, and they accepted me.</p> <p>Lines 53-58. If I hadn't been attending a college where we had Study Skills with a mentor, who was very nice; who I got on with; who was very supportive of everybody, I would have taken that UCAS form, binned it and gone and got a job. But I took it to the chap there, and he said, oh you can do that, you can do that easy, so if somebody told me I could do it, then I could do it!</p> <p>Lines 62-65. Write down what you fancy, and I will write down what I think you should do. Obviously I wrote down English, because that is what I wanted to do since I was a kid, and I wrote down Media.</p> <p>Lines 73-77. Drama was very good, it was like a big family, we were in Drama one day and (the tutor) she's going round everyone and said, what are you planning to do.. start my own theatre company or design my own costume, do this or do that; she's coming toward me and when she came to me she said what are you going to do? I said teaching and she said YES!</p> <p>Lines 91-93. I have always known that I wanted to do English and secretly desired to go to University; mind you things have changed since the fifties, but</p>	<p>Sophie felt hard manual work was what she had to do to survive.</p> <p>Sophie needed to escape her current life by leaving everything behind her but could only do this when her significant obligations had been fulfilled. She felt threatened by lack of a positive vision of the future</p> <p>Sophie was surprised by being accepted as a student but needed to get out of the rut of manual work.</p> <p>Sophie was inspired by the support given in FE. She felt able to confront the unknown only if she felt supported. She felt different to others and needed reassurance and advice from others for whom she had regard.</p> <p>Sophie wanted to realise her ambition of being good at English and chose to confront and overcome past failings/level of knowledge.</p> <p>During degree education Sophie had come to realise that her dream of teaching English was possible. The early part of her journey had now been validated and she was able to make challenging career decisions.</p> <p>Sophie put practical survival before all else. She had come up against glass ceilings and been deterred but was now</p>
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<p>it wasn't for my class of person so I never dreamt I would do it.  Lines 124-125. I paid off my debts; paid off my student loan about two years ago.</p> <p>Lines 145-148. I knew what an Access course was I was expecting to gain some qualifications, to be able to get a better job. To have a reasonable income, a steady income; to be able to look after myself, that's all I expected really.</p> <p>Lines 163-168. I saw that opportunity in the paper and it sort of, lit up, so I had to go for it; that's why I applied for it, and because I wasn't working, I could do it; because I was on sick, because I was having Chemo, I could do it and I got sick pay, and I only had to pay 10 quid for the course. I was on benefit if you like; sickness benefit, so I can't sit about and do nothing, so doing that was my job.</p> <p>Lines 175-177. What made me go for that advert? Because it said get some qualifications, get a better job! So I have always worked, my family have always worked; none of us got anything easy you know.</p> <p>Lines 181-182. Everything was getting worse and worse and I thought it was a way to move up, to escape.</p> <p>Lines 233-235. I didn't know you could be an editor or .. half of those jobs out there and could well have been capable of doing, been capable of doing at the end of Uni if I had known.</p> <p>Lines 302-305. My status has totally changed, people perceive me in an entirely different way now, even if I have got my common old voice on, they still look at you in a different way, when people ask what are you doing, and I say I am a teacher,</p>	<p>less held back.</p> <p>Worried about financial insecurity, she needed to be debt free. Wanted to be self-reliant.</p> <p>Needed to get a job which she felt she was able to do at a higher level than in the past. Wanted to achieve higher status.</p> <p>Sophie needed a practical distraction from the epoch of illness. She needed something positive to do to distract her from the illness and to avoid feeling sorry for herself.</p> <p>Sophie needed a better job and higher income level.</p> <p>Sophie needed to get out of a rut and change status.</p> <p>Sophie had reflectively realised that a better education in her earlier years, was the means to her desired career. She was able to elaborate the lost opportunity from this position.</p> <p>Sophie was able to celebrate her educational investment as the tool by which changed status had occurred.</p>
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*6: The transformative factors: Evidencing the affective post education impact of the curriculum upon career, self and influential others.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 123-125. I finished my PGCE, but within a year I had paid all my debts. I paid off my debts; paid off my student loan about two years ago.</p>	<p>Sophie had finally overcome hardship by getting a well-paid job and had accomplished her educational journey. Sophie was inspired and able to see</p>

<p>Lines 150-152. I was encouraged really, you know I did really well on the Access course, and it was like a dream; I really..really..really wanted to do University. I had no concept of what it would be like, but I loved it.</p> <p>Lines 199-202. Once I knew I had got the job, I did a lot of the research about all the different religions because when I was at school, there was only one religion, and it was a convent as well, so it was only one segment of one religion. The first few months was really hard.</p> <p>Lines 228-230. I think I am quite passionate about aspects of our school, and the kids and things that are happening and quite annoyed at others but no where's perfect.</p> <p>Lines 265-268. I did some writing, I got some plays put on, did a bit of directing, and you can unload a lot of that angst into some of the characters saying it; you see the character saying it, and it's just gone then pheeew..</p> <p>Lines 294-299. If I could go back to Uni, I mean I have got 2 A levels, an O level, a GCSE if you like, a degree and a PGCE and an Access course in between. Things that I missed, I would like to do now, I wouldn't mind doing all my GCSEs in Geography and History, Science and Art..love it, go to school for a couple of years it would be great.. or go to College maybe that might be a bit more appropriate for a couple of years.</p> <p>Lines 366-368. It's such a shame but I do think that school is so boring in mainstream there's... I mean what's wrong with doing practical things? There's health and safety gone bloody mad!</p> <p>Lines 374-377. I mean what do you do....It's so hard ..'what do I have to learn English for it's rubbish'! Well you are English, and you live in England..'yeah but I don't know nuffink'..well actually, you don't know anything (laughs).</p> <p>Lines 443-448. I'm proud that I've done Uni, I'm proud that I have got a job and I am supporting myself, you know I'm</p>	<p>things more positively. Access validated her as capable of proceeding.</p> <p>Sophie was able to take on the challenge of teaching Religious Education. Despite knowing little about the subject she was empowered to use her research skills to construct a course of learning for her students.</p> <p>Sophie has a more balanced point of view and less oppressed by what is. She can see things from different perspectives and offer her opinions more forcefully.</p> <p>Sophie harnessed her educational development as a means of expressing herself and unloading her past 'class based' insecurities through drama/theatre</p> <p>Sophie's identity had been transformed by being a student. She was enthusiastic about being a student who could achieve even more than her present journey had allowed. She had moved on to becoming less bounded and had more self-respect.</p> <p>Sophie was able to regard her profession and deliver critical commentary about it. She had become more opinionated about her profession as was concerned for its future.</p> <p>Sophie recounted a conversation with a student – she was able to evidence her skills in English and to express how she wanted to help others succeed. She was a more forgiving person for the experience of transformation.</p> <p>Sophie was able to express how she had been transformed and how her new teacher identity was effective. She</p>
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<p>independent, I'm capable, and I'm told I do things..my reports are good, relations are good, but I am always looking for what I am doing wrong, I'm always looking for.. why did that mistake happen.. that must be my fault. I'm always looking for..something is going to happen.</p> <p>Lines 485-488. I think it made me more reasoned, more logical, a much more educated approach I suppose, much more liable to listen to both sides, and not just take the one thing that I was passionate about and force it. Much wider, much calmer way of looking at things</p>	<p>remained, however, concerned that she would be seen as a fraud/ seen as an actor. Nevertheless this concern was the 'spur' to maintaining even more academic progress.</p> <p>Sophie had developed a balanced approach. Although criticality was raised about professional life, she was able to deal with diversity and was more conscious of differing views and perspectives</p>
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*7:The transformative factors: Exploration of metaphors, analogies and descriptive statements around which, affective notions of developmental change congealed.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 218-222. Oh yeah I am quite proud of myself, that I have done all that on my own, I mean obviously you have support along the way from mentors, friends, but largely I have been on my own, single, and with living on my own, with no one at home so I am quite proud of myself, that I have gone through all that, and done all that.</p> <p>Lines 270-275. I wrote a piece about my Dad, that got put into a play, several students did it, it wasn't just me; it was a symbolic play called the Petersburg Illuminations and it was based on, forgot the name of the novelist now, but a strange book written by a symbolist/novelist. I think I was the only student who read it. The play got put on and listening to it, it just made it seem like it happened to someone else.</p> <p>Lines 314-316. The funny thing is, like the naughty kids, and the ones who have got holes in their trousers and you know that they haven't got any dinner money, and they are eating rubbish, I would have been that kid.</p> <p>Lines 334-336. Yes I am proud of myself, probably less proud than my brothers, who are very proud of me, I am the only</p>	<p>Sophie was proud of her efforts and achievements. Her past had been healed, felt like she had moved on and up, had raised self-esteem and more equal (albeit concerned about being re-labelled with her past identity).</p> <p>Sophie was so confident with her new abilities that she creatively expressed how she had become a writer. Her inner dialogue was externalised, she was able to use her own life as a form of learning/teaching and was able to see the experience in a different way/perspective.</p> <p>Sophie was able to reflect upon her past and present and see her own transformed self as she was (and might have become) but now is.</p> <p>Sophie is proud of her achievement and proud for 'her class'. Able to see her own life and that of others in a balanced and</p>

one of us that has ever done a degree, and I'm the youngest.	positive fashion.
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*8: The transformative factors: Examining perceived sense of post educational self, in terms of status, knowledge of self, self-image and esteem.*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 93-96. I went from; I've gone from being, fretting about every bill, having an overdraft, not being able to afford stuff to having savings and a house, well I have always had a house, but it has totally changed me.</p> <p>Lines 168-172. I know writing those essays and doing that research, got me through the Chemo brilliantly; kept me busy, and you know it was like tearing your hair out some days, trying to feed this brain, and how to structure these essays. I did really.. really well and I have learned such a lot but there were very good people on the course.</p> <p>Lines 245-248. I had no aspirations, I was quite happy, we had a child, a house, a cat, a dog, we had animals, we'd got our vegetables, seemed OK you know OK. When I moved to XXXXXX I went whoa.. I met different people here and it made me see a different world and I was itching for that a bit then.</p> <p>Lines 287-290. I have done well in my job, I've always done well in my job, because I work; I did well in a cabbage field, and would do well as a decorator, because I work hard, and I am careful, and I am conscientious, I've always been like that and I think that, it's paid off really.</p> <p>Lines 302- 304. My status has totally changed, people perceive me in an entirely different way now, even if I have got my common old voice on, they still look at you in a different way.</p> <p>Lines 334- 336. Yes I am proud of myself, probably less proud than my brothers, who are very proud of me, I am the only one of us that has ever done a degree, and I'm the youngest.</p>	<p>Sophie claimed that the sacrifice had been worthwhile and that she was more self-reliant, proud of her achievements, had moved on and had transformed her identity.</p> <p>Sophie had grown from the epoch of illness via the employment of education to a knowledgeable teacher who was conscious of how others had supported her to a new sense of self.</p> <p>Sophie was inspired to move from a 'safe' place; to take the risk of self-development through the epoch of meeting others who were (more) educated than her. She was motivated to realise changed status.</p> <p>Sophie continues to attribute her achievements (in part) to hard work which was her early pre-educational way of thinking. Her efforts educationally, she acknowledged have transcended the 'manual labours' of the past.</p> <p>Sophie remarked about how others saw her as a more important person in society. As a school teacher she had become an important (and assumed to be) educated person to be acknowledged.</p> <p>Personal pride had built Sophie's sense of self and esteem. She had changed her 'class' through education and was acknowledged by her family as having made a significant transformation.</p>

<p>Lines 443-446. I'm proud that I've done Uni, I'm proud that I have got a job and I am supporting myself, you know I'm independent, I'm capable, and I'm told I do things..my reports are good, relations are good.</p> <p>Lines 485-488. A much more educated approach I suppose, much more liable to listen to both sides, and not just take the one thing that I was passionate about and force it. Much wider, much calmer way of looking at things.</p> <p>Line 512. I always say I am an organic teacher you know!</p>	<p>Sophie had regained self-respect and an improved inner dialogue albeit tempered by moments of reflexive and reflective thoughts about her original past.</p> <p>Sophie had achieved a sense of inner peace and balance. She was dispositionally different and conscious of others and their perspectives on life. Her desire to be isolated by her opinions had been revised.</p> <p>Sophie remained individual and proud about her unusual pathway to becoming a teacher</p>
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*9: The transformative factors: Hearing, reporting and evaluating how the participant saw their future life developing, as a result of their encounter*

Sophie's Response	Interpreted Meaning Units
<p>Lines 102-103. I do think that my life experience is useful in the way that I deal with people and kids.</p> <p>Lines 206-209 That's it really two new subjects, well three actually because I have got Life Skills as well; I am trying to adjust to the students and the way you are asked.. you know, a big learning curve but I think I am getting there slowly..slowly.</p> <p>Lines 501-503. When I retire, I guess I might have a chance to do a bit of travel, and if I think there is a chance of that I will take it. I really would prefer to travel with somebody, because it's not so much fun on your own is it?</p>	<p>Sophie had come to know that her past was a valuable 'storehouse' of knowledge and information to use and develop in her teaching.</p> <p>Sophie had been asked to develop her teaching practice by taking on more subjects and responsibility. She had learned to listen to the diverse needs of her students and was working to encourage them to improve and develop. She was more forgiving of their shortcomings although continued to learn empathy at the 'coal face' of her work.</p> <p>Sophie had become financially secure but was no longer in a relationship. She was concerned for what this might mean in retirement and wanted to form a relationship with someone who would share her desire to be further educated by travel.</p>