

**A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING ADULTS IN A
CULTURALLY DIVERSE CONTEXT**

RAYMOND WALES

Student number: 7605160

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and Global Change



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SUPERVISOR: PROF. Z. GROENER

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Key words

Adult learning

Transformative learning

Diversity

Culture

Context

Multiculturalism

Perspective transformation

Pedagogy

Learner

Frame of reference



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Abstract

The post-modern society is described as a society on the move, a phenomenon the anthropologist, (Vigouroux, 2005) describes as 'flows'. These flows are mostly manifested by people moving in and towards countries with better economic prospects. In most African countries there is a large-scale migration from rural to urban areas and a lot of trans-national migration across countries, due to recent socio-economic and socio-political trends. Democracy in South Africa became a powerful drawing card on the African continent for those nations plagued by poverty, unemployment and civil wars and migration to South Africa became increasingly popular. Therefore, democracy in South Africa is also a spatial process, which transcends local and national geographical spaces. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of global, national and trans-national flows in adult education. More specifically, the study intends to shed light on the challenges facing educators teaching through the medium of English to adult learners from culturally diverse contexts. Therefore, this study investigates the challenges faced by educators teaching adult learners in culturally diverse contexts. To understand these challenges I draw on theoretical perspectives based on notions of diversity, multicultural and intercultural education. My study is rooted in a qualitative research paradigm. Subsequently, I draw on qualitative methods to understand, in this case semi-structured interviews to explain and describe the influence of diversity on teaching practice.

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Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Adult Education and Global Change at the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, University of the Western Cape. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Raymond Wales

Signed:

Date



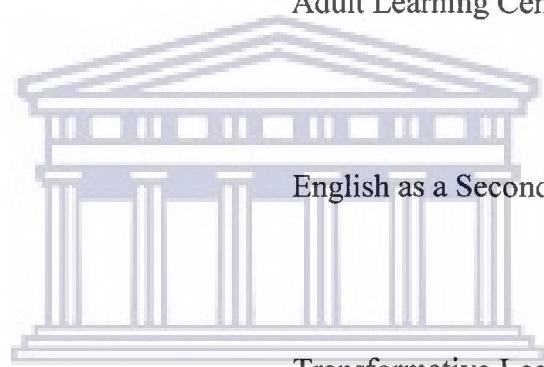
Glossary of terms

DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ARESTA	Agency for Refugee Education, Skills Training and Advocacy
IQMS	Information Q and Management Systems

ALC Adult Learning Centre

ESL English as a Second Language

TL Transformative Learning



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Section 1

Introduction

Background to this study

After 1994, the situation in South Africa was one that resonates strongly with endings and beginnings. It was the demise of the system of apartheid and the beginning of democracy, a time of expectation, optimism and anticipation for many previously marginalised citizens. Thus, current-day South African society is influenced by post-apartheid policies and legislation that differs significantly from previous colonial and apartheid socio-historical contexts. Prior to democracy, education systems were segregated along racial lines to ensure that people of colour supply the demand for an unskilled and semi-skilled labour force. This was achieved through legislation that prohibited the teaching of blacks in domains other than government registered schools (Department of Education, 1995). Therefore, adult education was not high on the agenda driving government policies and legislation, in part because it ensured the establishment and maintenance of a low-level, unskilled and illiterate black working class and also most importantly it ensured the preservation of white minority control and power in relation to education, knowledge and skills. This means that adult education was entangled with the political and economic forces at play and resulted in minimal or no focus on the provision thereof prior to democracy.

However, post-apartheid South Africa with its democratic principles of redress, equality and the provision of equal opportunities for all ensured that adult education became a strong feature underpinning educational provision for those denied the opportunity due to apartheid. In fact, momentous developments in the adult education sector included research on adult education in such projects as the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC, 1992) and the Participatory Research Project (PRP, 1993) of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) that led to the policy for the adult education sector (Reconstruction and Development Programme RDP, 1994). As government adult education for black people was limited during the apartheid era, efforts were made to establish a value system, one that conforms to internationally accepted standards such as respect for “human dignity”, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom...”(Section 1(a) of the Constitution 1996). As a result, the socio-historical adult learning context shaped

current practices in Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) but most importantly on the ways that it impacted teaching methods in adult learning classrooms.

Furthermore, democracy and globalisation resulted in not only spatial migration from rural to urban areas but significantly in relation to trans-national flows as previous strict border control policies became more flexible (Vigouroux, 2005). South Africa's cultural diversity is predominantly due to immigration in the period after 1994, when many refugees from African countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Angola, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Ethiopia fled to South Africa with aspirations to enjoy the benefits of democracy (Burke, 2005). This means that adult learners in ALCs are therefore not a homogeneous group as they come from different backgrounds, rural and urban but also from different parts of the African Continent. Subsequently, ALCs are multilingual and multicultural classrooms that are not fixed, stable and static but dynamic fluid and vibrant. As a result, a study that explores the current teaching methodologies in ALCs can shed light on the extent that teaching and learning practices reflect democratic principles of redress, equity and equality associated with respect and values towards acknowledging cultural diversity.

The purpose of the study

Post-modern society is a society on the move, referred by Appadurai (1996) as the notion of flows or trans-national migration. Due to South Africa's status on the African continent there is a large-scale trans-national migration from other African countries, even more so since democracy promised advancement in socio-economic and socio-political trends. These immigrants are speakers of foreign languages, have different identities and cultures and as such, it can pose challenges for educators and learners in adult learning contexts. The purpose of this study is to specifically explore the ways that adult educators should take into account their teaching and learning practices and the ways that learners are compelled to navigate their learning in diverse adult learning contexts.

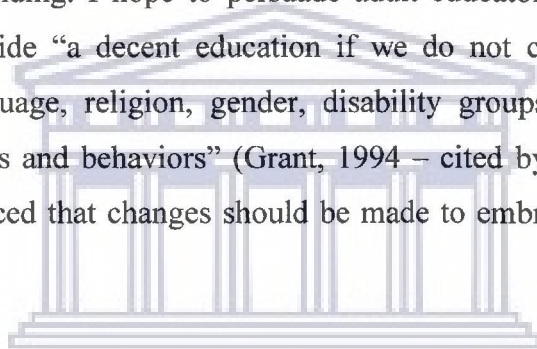
The scope of the study

This is a qualitative study and data collection includes semi-structured interviews of four educators and twelve adult learners at a specific adult learning centre. It is a small scale study; its findings can be used to generate debates and discussions about the effect of diversity in adult learning contexts. As a result, the insights gained from the study could inform educator perceptions of how immigrant adult learners perceive and make sense of

adult learning and teaching in diverse adult learning contexts and its importance in shaping adult education practices.

The motivation of the study

This study aims to investigate teaching and learning practices within a diverse context at Sunrise Adult Learning Centre in greater Cape Town. I will investigate the teaching methods to ascertain the ways in which it enables learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in a culturally diverse context. Informed by my many years of teaching experience, I am fully aware of the fact that learners learn in different ways. Teaching should not only involve transfer of knowledge in proportion to curriculum content, but also the ability to fully understand and demonstrate the necessary communication and understanding. I hope to persuade adult educators that traditional methods can no longer provide “a decent education if we do not consider diversity regarding race, culture, language, religion, gender, disability groups, non-traditional roles, attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors” (Grant, 1994 – cited by Carignan et al., 2005). I am therefore convinced that changes should be made to embrace multicultural practices.



The significance of the study

The significance of this study is that it focuses on a fairly unexplored territory of diversity in South African adult learning contexts. There is a plethora of information on this topic in relation to mainstream school challenges but little attention is given to adult learning contexts in South Africa. Another area of significance is the issue of adult educator training in relation to teaching and learning in diverse contexts where learners are not only from various cultures but also have a repertoire of languages that can be viewed as a resource or a hindrance in diverse adult learning contexts. As a result, my research focuses on adult educators' perceptions of teaching and learning in diverse adult learning contexts, its pedagogical implications for teaching methods and the ways that adult learners respond to this pedagogic experience to access knowledge and resources.

Research questions

My study will be guided by the following question:

Are adult educators using teaching methods that enable adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in adult learning?

Sub-questions

1. What teaching methods are currently in practice?
2. How do current teaching methods impact on adult learning?
3. How do educators perceive current teaching methods of adult learning?

Section Outline

Section One: Introduction and background

This section introduces the study and provides a background to the unintended consequences of migrating into new spaces, in particular South African educational spaces, in this case the adult learning context. Furthermore, it provides the purpose, scope and significance of the study.

Section Two: Literature Review/conceptual framework

This section provides a literature review/conceptual framework that draws on Mezirow's transformative learning theory and highlights previous work done on transformative teaching principles.

Section Three: Research Design and Methodology

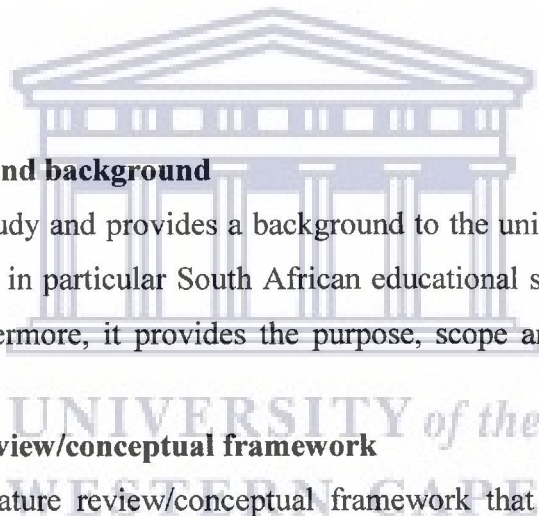
Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology and includes a description of learners in the study, research instrument and the procedures for data collection, methods of data collection and analysis.

Section Four: Data-analysis

In section four I present an analysis of the data collected from the adult learners and educators.

Section Five: Findings, recommendations and conclusions

Section five provides a summary of the study, general conclusions and recommendations.



SECTION 2

LITERATURE REVIEW / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The literature on curriculum and policy does not reveal that much research has been conducted on the impact of current curriculum and accompanying teaching strategies on immigrant students in South Africa in the context of adult learning. It mostly, focuses on multilingualism in education within the South African context, with its nine official languages (Heugh, 2000). The need to get to terms with the current situation should be even far greater because the situation becomes much more challenging where there is an increase in enrolment of immigrant learners at ALCs. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to focus on international and national literature that is relevant to my research question. My study deals with teaching and learning practices in an ALC within a culturally diverse context. The literature that frames this study falls into two broad strands: firstly that of culture, language and space and secondly reviews of literature to build a conceptual frame of a transformative pedagogy. For this reason, I surveyed literature that concentrates on adult learning within a culturally diverse context and then aims to contextualize this study within the broader framework of adult learning as culturally responsive. As a result, the intention is for the literature review to provide “a lens and perspective” (Heugh, Pluddeman, Alexander) in order to understand and explain the nature of adult learning practices in a context of diversity at an ALC in greater Cape Town.

The notion of Culture

Malkki (2009) argues that the representation of countries on world maps can clearly be delineated and distinguished through coloured lines that demarcate different countries or nationalities and that this results in notions of culture or society as a spatial phenomenon. Therefore, there does exist an understanding of a world fragmented, divided and segmented into spaces of variation according to tastes, value systems, communities of practices, societal ways of doing, norms and belief systems. Subsequently, a taken for granted perception of culture exist in the belief that each country has its own unique flavour and culture. For instance in South Africa such a view of culture will refer to Cape Townian culture, African culture, Coloured culture and South African culture to encompass the whole country. Similarly, the world map then implies a view of culture as fixed and stable based on the way it visually depicts and demarcate different nation state.

However, Gupta and Ferguson (2009) argue that a change is needed in the traditional perceptions of space and culture. Space should be seen as dynamic and evolving thus the lenses that individuals and groups draw on must accommodate culture as also as fluid and diverse. This means that such a view can accommodate a dialogic relation between what is viewed as other and own culture but more importantly it can open up contested meanings of them and us, dominant powerful cultures and adaptation by minorities and thus the relations of power imbalances.

Furthermore on the notion of culture, Guild (2010) raises the issue of “sameness” and “diversity” (p. 1-3). This study echoes the sentiment that cultural difference is produced and maintained in a field power relations where the disempowered remains on the periphery in relation to access and knowledge. For example, one notion of diversity takes into account learners whose culture is instilled in them, that it’s their behavior and beliefs, their language and dialect that differs from the superior culture. Yet, the expectation remains that the other must conform and adapt to the established and most valued culture. This can be especially true in schools and adult learning contexts where a curriculum can be viewed as neutral and bias free by the dominant culture.

Taking this further, Vaughn (2010) argues that in plural societies there tends to be an ongoing question about in whose culture and language, whose values and beliefs should be transmitted in education. Evidently, in most education institutions across the world, the dominant culture determines what should be taught and learned in a formal education setting. In multicultural education the “system, the teacher and the learner” are the key role-players. In this traditional setting the teacher and the system “share the same dominant culture and the learner not”. Vaughn asserts that in the light of opinions, values and ideologies that are transmitted knowingly or unknowingly, a critical theory and social change should serve as an important medium for education and learning. Relating to the political setting, including “socio-cultural issues, globalization, oppression, and power within society” and “increasing cultural racial/ethnic diversity”, a critical theory and social change education must be applied to challenge inequality across social, economic and political spheres (p. 171-173).

Curriculum, diversity and Adult Learning

Historically from the 19th and 20th century formal discourses have influenced a great deal of policy and practice in education and the focus was primarily on traditional teaching of formal knowledge, patterns and rules to be followed and then ultimately regurgitated as facts (Ivanic, 2004). These discourses then, viewed knowledge as a set of skills to be taught, learnt and mastered. As a result, knowledge and learning was seen as something that could be meaningfully visualised in taxonomies and rationalised into tables arranged across the two-dimensional space of the textbook page. As a result, the historical context of teaching subscribed to a method of 'do as prescribed'. There was thus minimal interaction or acknowledgement of diversity in learning or how knowledge is valued in different communities or cultures.

Despite liberal and critical paradigms to the curriculum in relation to diversity, Hargreaves and Goodson (1997) state that perceptions of diversity have been used and misused so often and for so many conflicting reasons and agendas, that it has become a contested issue. This means that if one uses these terms relationally it becomes imperative to demarcate and clearly delineate the stance taken because in most cases it alludes to one of the following: race, socio-economic class, gender, language, culture, sexual preference or disability. Thus notions of diversity, curriculum and learning can be viewed as complex, contested and multifaceted. As a result, in order to understand and shed light on this issue in relation to adult learning contexts, I draw on four categories of multicultural positions or approaches to the curriculum in international contexts i.e. mono, liberal, pluralist, and critical multiculturalism proposed by McLaren (1995).

The first position is mono-culturalism which adopts the stance that everyone is assimilated into the discourse of the dominant culture. They do not see that schools have to change to adapt to the needs 'new' school population but that new entrants need to adhere to notions of conforming to and internalizing the ethos and traditions of the schools. It thus becomes the melting pot, wherein the inferior cultures are 'melted down' for successful assimilation into the norms of the dominant culture. As a result, learners' histories, traditions, norms, cultures and languages are 'melted down' and gradually assimilated into the discourse of the school until they sound like, act like and belief like the powerful and dominant culture of institutions.

Next, McLaren (1995) refers to the liberal version that believes that individuals from diverse race, class and gender groups share a natural equality and a common humanity. Proponents of this approach assume a position of ‘culture-blindness’ and normally insist that they view learners as human beings and not by the histories, cultures or traditions. Thus integration with the ideals of the dominant culture remains and it does not entirely acknowledge difference as a means to understand and explain.

From this emerges a pluralist approach that focuses on difference as opposed to ‘sameness’. Difference is the starting point and cultural styles become the agenda and are driven by terms like the acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity. They aim to teach ‘open-mindedness’ and harmony, yet this view can be superficial in the sense that culture is viewed as having to do with food, religion, dress codes, weddings and customs. It remains ignorant on issues of identity, social capital and cultural histories.

In contrast to all the previous approaches, a critical theory approach concerns itself with issues of social justice and change in relation to the curriculum and pedagogy. Proponents of this approach argue that it is imperative to involve learners in the understanding of ideologies in order to unmask or unveil social inequalities and forms of oppression thus enabling them to be truly liberated or freethinking. It is an emancipatory approach where educators and learners confront their own prejudice and stereotyping in terms of race, class, and gender power, then to analyse the curriculum and materials to expose the limitations and guide thus guide learners towards a process of critical thinking and transformation in their practices at schools, communities and societies.

The above have clear implications for adult learning in general but even more so for diverse teaching and learning contexts in South Africa. Finally, the literature highlights different approaches to the issue in diverse contexts (Meier & Hartell, 2009; McLaren, 1994; Hargreaves and Goodson, 1997). Subsequently, since diversity in education is such a multifaceted phenomenon, educators need to acknowledge the significance of cultural differences and transform practices that will lead to social justice and change.

Studies on curriculum, and diversity learning

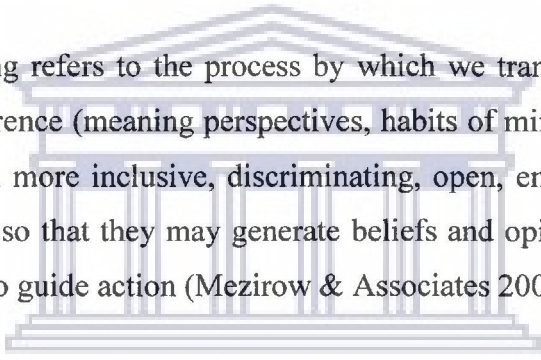
Secru (2006) draws on teachers from various contexts such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland Spain and Sweden in order to understand and explain the ways that contexts impact on culturally inclusive curriculum practices. The study found that, in these contexts it is crucial to have a linguistic understanding but also that knowledge of culturally inclusive teaching is imperative. Teachers, therefore, have to be endowed with the basic “knowledge, skills and attitudes” and thus the training theories of diversity in teaching are highlighted as a core component for success and change in attitudes.

In a South African context, Carignan et al. (2005) investigate diversity in relation to cultural diversity at a South African school to understand the ways that the school history and culture includes aspects such as values, religions, languages, attitudes, beliefs and are reflected in teacher perceptions of inclusive teaching. The study found that cultural differences are viewed as a “challenge and a complex issue. They make the point that cultural difference should be viewed as a resource rather than a problem” and conclude that where ethnic/ cultural diversity is not honored in an educational context, diversity should at least be prominently feature in learning support materials and textbooks, as well as “pedagogical strategies” (p. 383-391).

Gay (2000) claims that students from ethnically diverse backgrounds will make better progress if taught through their own culture. To effectively teach ethnically diverse students, pre-service educators must be adequately trained and prepared for culturally responsive teaching. Combined with a knowledge base about teaching ethnic and culturally diverse students, teachers also need to know how to design curriculum and teaching strategies. What is even more important for culturally responsive teaching is to prepare classrooms in such a way that they are supportive and functional stimuli for learning. In addition educational resources should consider “cultural variables” and acknowledge specific “learning needs, preferences and styles of learners”. Planning and designing of “instructional environments” need to be cautiously prepared by taking into consideration social and cultural measurements in designing of tasks, means of communication and setting up of information (p. 58).

Teaching adults in a culturally diverse context

Mezirow (1991) refers to developing “a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective” when teaching adults from diverse contexts (p.167). He argues that each individual has a distinct frame of reference that is, adult’s meaning perspective, which is “primarily the result of cultural assimilation and the idiosyncratic influences of primary caregivers” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). The function of a frame of reference is that it enables an individual to understand situations and experiences, since “they selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Therefore, it offers a possible explanation for the learning process in a culturally diverse context, and the learning and changes that an individual experiences in learning. This process of learning and understanding is captured the following definition:



Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets, mental models) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (Mezirow & Associates 2000, pp. 7-8).

Understanding the learning process is essential to developing more effective education programs and identifying factors that would aid the migrant nationalist during his or her intercultural experience. To explain his point Mezirow, 1991 refers to the metaphor of a sojourner that travels to another culture to live for an extended period of time and that out of necessity for survival, out of a need to relieve stress and anxiety often experienced as the stranger struggles to meet basic needs, it requires the sojourner to look at his or her world from a different point of view – a perspective of the world that is often in conflict with personal values and beliefs. The sojourner who is successful at working through and learning from these kinds of cultural experiences has the potential to become inter-culturally competent within the host culture. This metaphoric analogy links well within adult learning contexts and as such the field of adult education might better offer transformative learning theory to implement teaching and learning processes from a diversity perspective.

Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (TL)

In the work of Imel (1998) Boyd and Myers draw on Mezirow's notion of the "process of discernment" which they argue is of cardinal importance when individuals construct meaning. The evolving meaning structures have been acquired throughout a lifetime and become frames of reference that are grounded in the individual's "cultural and contextual experiences" and the manner in which they behave and interpret events (p. 5). This means that in mean-making individuals activate frames of references, reflect on previous experience and revise possible ways of being, thus discerning what is permissible in any given context claims. Subsequently, in foreign contexts, individuals go through a process of discernment in relation to their cultural norms, beliefs and behaviour in order to align themselves to possible change in perspectives. As result, the process of discernment is something that happens in the mind or head of individuals.

In contrast, Grabove (1997) argues that transformative learning is social rather than an introverted, in the mind process. She claims that learning and understanding are embedded in communication in the form of "critical discourse" (p. 91). It cannot be taught but must be experienced in a process where learners become critical thinkers and in this regard the role of educators is critical in facilitating a transformational learning process. Learners are "encouraged to challenge, defend, and explain their beliefs, to assess evidence and reasons for these beliefs; and to judge arguments" because they are not responsible for their own learning transformation, but is possible when learning fits their frames of references.

In this regard, Taylor (1997) highlights the importance of context and argues the process of the discernment is not straightforward but in fact context dependent. Therefore, different frames of reference, cultural and contextual experiences play "an influencing role in the process of transformative learning" (p.3). These factors include the immediate surrounds of the learning event as well as "the more distant background context involving the familial and social history that has influenced the individual growing up" (p. 3). As a result, the process of discernment is both dependent on deep introspection but most importantly it is a social phenomenon because context can foster or limit opportunities for transformative learning.

To shed light on the notion of context Taylor (1997, p. 5) draws on the case study of Marie Claire – an American who lived in Switzerland. Marie became aware of interculturalism, by critically reflecting on her American experience, and engaging in dialectic relations with others. The study highlights that through constant interaction and discourse with others, Marie Claire “questioned her deeply held assumptions about her own culture in relation to the host culture” (p. 6). As a result, the social context, environment, the interaction and communication facilitated introspective and reflective processes and thus the social world is important in the process of transformative learning.

Moreover, King (2000) investigated the effects of implementing a TL approach in college-level English Second Language (ESL) Programmes. She found that 66.8% of 208 adult learners’ demonstrated gains in self-esteem and self-confidence, developed intercultural awareness, changed their views of learning about English and American culture. As a result, these findings show that a TL approach in an ESL setting enabled learners to interact, foster critical reflection and helped with coping mechanisms in challenging situations.

For the above reasons, Baumgartner (2001) centralises an introspective approach to transformative learning and argues for a cognitive-rational approach to transformational learning. He also asserts that knowledge is not “out there” to be discovered, but it is shaped by means of interpreting and re-interpreting new experiences. As soon as people are engaged in critical reflection, and re-evaluate the assumptions they have made about themselves and about their world, people start to realize that something is not consistent with what they hold to be true. Reflections on their meaning schemes - which include beliefs and values - can result in a perspective transformation or change in world view. These transformation processes, supported by a frame of reference, “are structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions” (p.5). When a frame of reference is recalled and accompanied with reflection, a paradigm shift takes place which is addressed by the theory of “perspective transformation” (Taylor, 2008, p.6).

Adding to the literature on the notion of the process perspective transformation, Cranton (2002) asserts that transformative learning occurs when the individual critically examines his or her view, accommodates alternatives and consequently changes viewpoints to create meaning. In this view then transformative learning is a process in which individuals

incrementally change their views and only afterwards realize the transformed or adjusted view. However, Cranton argues that this is not a straight-forward process because it is normally easier to “maintain habits of mind than to change” (p.66). As such changing perspectives are challenging in “the learning process by which adults come to recognize their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them” but a “significant or dramatic event” might bring about questioning assumptions and beliefs (p.54).

Meier & Hartell (2009) adds to the literature in relation to the role that educators play in facilitating cultural diversity and transformative learning. They found that “educators need to recognise the validity of differences. It requires firstly a reappraisal of educators’ own personal and of institutional ideologies and perceptions, and secondly a frank conviction and dedication to facilitate and manage learner diversity” (p. 180). To be able to achieve this, a total transformation in personal and institutional ideologies should occur – a change in perspective.

However, Merriam (2004) highlights a gap in the literature on transformative learning and asserts that “numerous studies have documented that growth and development are outcomes of transformational learning” but the level of cognitive functioning which enables someone to become engaged in the transformational learning process, has not been questioned. She argues that according to Mezirow’s transformative learning which appears to lead to “more mature, more autonomous, more ‘developed’ level of thinking”, it might also be argued that to be able to engage in the process in the first place requires a certain level of development and in particular, cognitive development. Experience and context alone are not sufficient to experience the effect of transformation.

Based on Clark and Wilson’s theory that sociocultural context is integral in transformative learning and adversely addressed in Mezirow’s transformational learning theory, Merriam and Ntseane (2008) examined how cultural context shapes the process of transformational learning in an African context, namely Botswana. Several writers are cited (Avoseh, 2001; Ntseane, 2005; Preece, 2004) who have argued that African value systems and learning are in essence collective, rather than individually. Merriam et al found in their research three “culturally specific factors”, namely “spirituality and the metaphysical world, community

responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles". Their findings reveals how "cultural context" shapes to this, is a sound cross-cultural communication which can only be acquired by an in-depth understanding and knowledge of ethnically diverse students. In the final instance, classroom instruction techniques should match the "learning styles" of diverse students. (2002, p. 106-113)

Furthermore the above gap in the literature is taken up by Newman (2012) who contests and critiques Mezirow's TL Theory in that it "has grown repetitive and the theory too generalized" (p. 49). He asserts there does not exist a phenomenon 'transformative learning' rather 'good learning' and agrees that there can be an element of change but not total transformation. Mezirow (2000) concedes that in reality learning takes place in "complex institutional, interpersonal, and historical settings [and] must be understood in the context of cultural orientations embodied in our frames of reference" (p. 24). However, an individual's frame of reference may "include distortions, prejudices, stereotypes, social context, and lack of knowledge" (Cranton, 1994, p. 27). Yet, in adult learning contexts the notion of transformative learning does hold merits in that it can open up deep-rooted beliefs and prejudices in dialogue and discussion in ways that foster change in attitudes and thinking.

Finally, educators' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and identities are crucial to facilitate critical reflection, and in creating a community of learners in which values respect for diversity and difference are developed, upheld and promoted (Mezirow, 1991). It is through dialogue, debates and interaction among learners that introduce new languages and cultures as well as different ways of describing, conceptualizing, and experiencing the world. As a result, the learners' interaction enables them to both share and question their own and others' frames of reference, allowing critical reflection to occur (Foster, 1997).

Section 3

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

According to Clough and Nutbrown (2007) methodology entails how “research questions are articulated with questions asked in the field” (p. 23). Additionally, Bryman (2012) describes a research method as “simply a technique for collecting data” (p. 46).

This research aimed to find out if educators of adults are using teaching methods that enable adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in adult learning contexts. For this purpose, the study makes use of a qualitative research design in order to explore the effectiveness of the notions and perceptions of diversity in relation to teaching and learning. The intention is to collect data without disturbing the natural setting of Sunrise ALC and to analyse and interpret the data by means of patterns and themes that emerge from the data. As a result, a qualitative approach is therefore relevant to this study as it allows the researcher to become an instrument in observing and documenting how educators teach in the adult learning sector where learners come from diverse settings, situations and countries. Thus qualitative researchers are interested to discover how people have constructed these meanings. I am deeply interested to know or understand how adult educators make sense of diversity and what strategies they employ to accommodate foreign learners. To be able to achieve this, a qualitative design will best assist in attaining this objective.

In conceptualizing this research aim, I considered the guidelines as stipulated in Barbour’s (2008) chapter on “Research Design” (p. 40 – 41). What interested me most was what methods of teaching are engaged to teach adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds. Are students’ cultural contexts taken in consideration while teaching takes place? If my findings do not show any prove of pre-service training for educators of adults, recommendations should be made to necessitate this limitation. To achieve the research aims I considered a quality form of inquiry by means of an interview schedule.

Bryman (2012) asserts that “structured interviews” is easy to satisfy the researcher’s program since appropriate questions are put directly to participants; that the chances for the “nature of the data” to be influenced by “personalities and moods between the interviewer and the interviewee” are limited; that “structured interviews” are more easy to verify than unstructured interviews (p. 229). Denscombe (1998) draws a distinction between “facts and

opinions” (author’s quotation). Factual information does not depend that much on a respondent’s personal judgements and attitudes. In the case of opinions respondents are required to express their feelings, values and “to weigh up alternatives” (p. 89). The questionnaire for this study included both factual and opinion questions (See Appendix A). A letter asking permission for access to conduct the field research was forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.

Descombe (1998) further distinguishes between open and closed questions, for example: Do you think learning support material/subject contents, representing learners’ culture, will positively contribute to learners’ interest and participation in class? Explain why do you think so? Do you employ different methods of instruction in your classroom? What are they? (See Appendix A) According to Hartas (2010, p. 224) structured interviews require “predominantly ‘closed’ questions”.

The results I gathered after my research enabled me to assess the following: are current methods of teaching taking into account culturally diverse contexts? Is cultural diversity addressed and taught in pre-service training of educators? Are traditional teaching methods still engaged and in which degree do they advantage or disadvantage classrooms that are becoming more and more linguistically diverse? What pedagogical skills are practiced to the enhancement of learning, understanding, enjoyment and satisfaction of both educators and learners? I was, therefore, convinced that changes had to be made and existing practices modified to gratify multicultural practices.

Research Design

The literature shows different perspectives on research. The following viewpoints clearly encapsulate this study. Clough and Nutbrown (2007, p. 1-21) assert research to be “persuasive, purposive, positional and political”. Additionally, Johnson and Cristensen (2008, p. 23-26) portray research to be “explorative, descriptive, explanatory, predictable and influential”. This study was an attempt to convincingly explore a phenomenon, namely the practices within a culturally diverse context, described and explored the nature of the phenomenon, contextualized the study and finally stated what the research had achieved and what changes it might bring about.

Bryman (2012) claims a research design to be “a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (p. 46). A research design articulates, therefore, what data is required and what methods are going to be used to gather and analyse this data. This research is a phenomenological study that was interested in the phenomenon of adult educators teaching adults learners from diverse cultural backgrounds at Sunrise Adult Education Centre in Cape Town. According to Suter (2012), phenomenology is often cited as “lived experience”, meaning (author’s quotation) there is interest in how a person’s (or group’s) experience becomes embedded in consciousness and what meaning that carries” (p. 366). The study was interested in the phenomenon of an educational interaction between educators and adult learners and to what extent “lived experience”- in the case of teachers, their teaching experience and in the case of learners, their cultural lived experience - enhanced learning. I conducted interviews with 4 adult educators who answered several questions, including “How do you feel about teaching adults from different cultural backgrounds? Why do you think so? Did your training include a module or modules on culturally diverse/culturally responsive teaching? Do you think it is important?” Educators’ perspectives were best be able to “redefine and construct” the situation (Woods, 2006, p. 3) due to their “lived experience” through teaching culturally diverse groups.

Selection of participants

Adult educators and adult learners formed the participants of this study. The participants geographically originated from 6 different countries and were involved in an adult learning program at Sunrise ALC. Learners are from local communities living in urban and surrounding areas of the Cape metro region. More importantly, the Centre is inclusive in the sense that it also enrolls learners from other countries on the African continent such as asylum seekers and refugees. For this study I selected participants purposively according to the needs of this study. While considering the compilation and size of the sample language was critical for sensible communication during the interviewing process. Therefore, an intentional choice was made of adult learners whose level of speaking and understanding would ease the interviewing period.

After taken the above-mentioned criteria in consideration I interviewed a total of 13 adult learners. The selection was done by the English teacher who had been, according to the Centre manager, in the best position to validate the sample. Due to the parameters of this study 13 learners and 4 adult educators were selected for the study.

Method of data gathering

A structured interview was designed to gather data for analysis. The purpose of the interview was to discover to what extent culturally responsive teaching contributes to learning and understanding. Singleton et al. (1993) proclaim 'face-to-face interviewing' to be "the oldest and most highly regarded method of survey research... (p. 261). One of the reasons for this is the high response rate opposed to questionnaires with which response rates are fairly low. Other advantages of interviews are that it can deliver great amounts of data which will ensure the researcher fuller "insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening" (Wilkinson and Birmingham, p. 44). I succeeded in achieving reliability and validity due to my indirect involvement as a researcher, my following-up of questions, patience, especially while respondents answered open-ended questions.

All research entails collection and analysis of data "whether through reading, observation, measurement, asking questions, or a combination of these or other strategies" (Blaxter et al., p. 183). The data I collected concentrated on "asking questions". Gibbs notes qualitative data is "essentially meaningful" but also displaying a great deal of diversity in terms of "human communication behaviour, symbolism or cultural artefacts" (p. 2). Hartas claims that irrespective of what the nature of data is, "it is necessary to ensure its accuracy, fairness and security" (p. 121).

I conducted face-to-face structured interviews to generate data on different "views and opinions" relating to teaching adults in a culturally diverse context. An interview schedule (structured interview) was designed to gather data for analysis. The purpose of the interview schedule was to discover to what extent culturally responsive teaching contributes to learning and understanding. Bryman asserts that the structured interview is commonly applied in "survey research" due to its ability to assure standardization of "both the asking of questions and the recording of answers" (p. 210).

Research instrument

The research instrument was an interview schedule drawn from the research and sub-questions. The research was an attempt to learn more about how adult learners behave in their “natural setting”, namely, a culturally diverse context. During the fieldwork “variables affecting unfolding events ... must be discovered and observed as they occur” (p. 186). Furthermore, all data that might surface in the data collection must be considered. A structured interview schedule enabled me to collect data from individual responses. According to Hartas (2010), one of the main features of structural interviews, is that all interviewees should be asked the same questions and in the same way. This will contribute “to facilitate the comparative analysis of the data that are produced through the interviews” (p. 62).

Data-capturing

Literature advises piloting of interviews to ensure that the questions are useful and asked in the correct sequence. While I was setting up the interview, I made sure that possible sound disturbances did not negatively affect recordings. The required time for the interview was honoured to ensure maximum information from interviewees.

Since I tape-recorded the interview I made sure of the interviewees’ consent. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) propose the following advantages of recording: First, it will help you to capture the entire interview without being distracted by note-keeping. Second, the recording and constant eye-contact will strengthen the seriousness of the interview. The disadvantage is that it could influence the intimacy of both the interviewer and interviewee where they feel they are acting for the audio-tape rather than experiencing a natural talking to each other.

Terre Blanche et al. cite Seidman (1991) who propose that an interviewer should adhere to the following:

- Listen more, talk less,
- Follow up on what the participant says,
- Ask questions when you do not understand,
- Ask to hear more about a subject,
- Explore, don’t probe,
- Avoid leading questions,

- Ask open-ended questions which do not presume an answer,
- Follow up and do not interrupt,
- Keep participants focused and ask for concrete details,
- Ask participants to rephrase or reconstruct,
- Do not reinforce the participant's response, and
- Tolerate silence and allow the interviewee to be thoughtful.

Keeping 'process notes' throughout the interview, is advisable.

Data-analysis

Data were collected and structured for analysis. Wilkinson and Birmingham suggest that analysis "typically involve grouping the responses to each question from all interviewees to make comparison between respondents easy" (p. 63). Bryman depicts the following techniques: Data have to be prepared for transcription to be programmed into computer software. Data will then be examined to trace 'core themes. Identification of themes should be done by means of 'coding' each transcript. Through this process the data are structured into their 'component parts' and given labels. The analyst will then search "for recurrences of these sequences of coded text within and across cases and also for links between different codes" (p. 13) Hereafter is the sense making part by 're-listening to the recordings' and coding the transcripts. The data are interpreted with the research question as a starting point. The data analysis stage is about 'data reduction' when the high volume of information that the researcher has gathered is reduced to make sense of it. As I explored the data, the categories which I developed, served as a framework to analyse the data.

I followed the following tips for data analysis as proposed by Wilkinson and Birmingham:

- Transcribed the interviews
- Typed up significant notes
- Gathered together transcripts, notes and other documents in a preliminary record
- Cut and pasted data into themes, patterns, trends, etc.
- Organised categories into subcategories and arranged them in order of importance
- Edited data to remove any extraneous details and ensured that interviews were reflected in a fair, balanced and accurate way

- Selected and edited actual quotations to illustrate the emerging themes, taking care to avoid extreme views and ensured that the participants' identities were concealed
- Thought about investigating emerging issues further, perhaps by using alternative instruments

I captured the data in an electronic data file for analysis. I was cautious not to lose any data and therefore kept a backing on my desk top and C-drive of my laptop during the data capturing. I considerably applied the different steps which Terre Blanche et al. (2006) suggest. While I was setting up the interview, I made sure that possible sound disturbances did not negatively affect recordings. The required time for the interview was honoured to ensure maximum information from interviewees. Since I tape-recorded the interview, I made sure of the interviewees' consent by filling out and signing a consent form. I conducted the entire interview without being distracted by note-keeping. I identified the major themes emerged from the data as well as sub-themes. I then colour coded the themes with colour pencils.

Ethical considerations

The nature of much qualitative research compels the researcher to be very wary of possible harm to interviewees (Gibbs, p. 8; Wisker, p. 86). Drew et al. claim that "every researcher has a responsibility to protect the participants in the investigation" (p. 56). The relationship between the researcher and participants should therefore be one of mutual trust and confidentiality (Gibbs 2007; Johnson & Christensen (2008, p. 106 – 109). Johnson and Christensen cite Diener and Grandall (1978) who distinguish between three areas which have to be taken into consideration during social research. They are: the relationship between society and science, professional issues, and the treatment of research participants. For this study I was particularly wary of ethical issues and procedures that might be harmful to participants and hereby proved that the research was both "feasible and ethical" (Marshall et al., p. 82).

Numerous studies refer to the importance of providing information to participants before participating in a study. The researcher must provide the participant with all relative information that might play a role in his or her willingness to participate (Boudah, 2011; Christensen and Johnson, 2008; Gibbs 2007; Gilbert, 2009). I did, therefore, provide

prospective participants with an information letter (See Appendix C) which provided details about myself and the research “that is relevant to their decisions to assist” (Gibbs, p. 101). To secure every participant’s consent, I prepared a ‘participation consent form’ in which reasons and aims of the research were set out and explained. The following considerations were taken into account:

- The research aims and processes as well as ultimate purpose of results.
- Information that will be kept confidential and will not be “released after the research for any other processes or use without the approval from the participants” (Wisker, p. 89).
- Discarding/ destroying of audiotape material.
- What will happen to the data they have provided?
- Their right to withdrawn from further participation in the research process.

Literature informs about the importance of obtaining access and consent from institutions at which the research is being conducted (Blaxter, 2010, p. 156-157; Christensen and Johnson, 2008, p. 115; Boudah, 2011, p. 145). This study asked consent for access to an Adult Learning Centre. To gain access to this institution, I requested permission from The Western Cape Education Department by means of an “application letter for access to do fieldwork” (See Appendix D).

Confidentiality is of paramount importance in social research and should be guaranteed to all role players in a research project. The onus rests on the interviewer to explain to respondents that data will only be used for the insinuated purpose of the research and will not be made known to any other person (Bless et al. p. 103; Babbie, p. 67; Johnson et al., p. 119). According to Bless et al. “... a respondent will feel free to give honest and complete information” (p. 103). Babbie claims that researchers should at all times refrain from using “the term *anonymous* to mean *confidential*” (p. 68; Italics in the original).

Anonymity should be considered in all types of research. “Subjects’ interests and well-being are the protection of their identity” (Babbie, p. 67). “Respondents can be identified by number instead of by name” (Bless et al., p.103). Johnson et al. note that anonymity means to withhold the identity of participants from everyone, including the researcher (p. 119). In this study students were informed about the ultimate aim of data-analysis to be used for possible

change in policy by the Department of Education. I assured participants that their anonymity would be protected.

Data-gathering will be kept in a safe place where no-one else, other than myself has access to. This information will be kept for five years.

Since the research project was registered by the University of the Western Cape I remained and will still be faithful to the research ethics procedures as stipulated in the university's research ethics policy.



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SECTION 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In section three, the research design and methodology of the study was discussed. This chapter discusses the data collected regarding the perceptions of adult educators teaching adult learners from diverse cultural backgrounds at Sunrise ALC in the greater Cape Town. As a result, it presents the analysis and the results of the information collected for this study. It also illustrates the relevant themes that emerged from the data, which is clearly identified and explained. These themes revolve around the research questions and they include the issue of adult educators using teaching methods that enable adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in adult learning.

The landscape of Sunrise ALC

Sunrise ALC has a diverse learner population. Firstly, learners are from local communities living in urban and surrounding areas of the Cape metro region. More importantly, the Centre is inclusive in that it also has learners from other countries on the African continent such as asylum seekers and refugees. Sunrise is registered with the South African Education Management Information System (IQMS). Learners are fortunate to obtain an education based on the Department's standards and within the South African Qualifications Framework, and accredited by the National Department of Education.

Adult learners

At Sunrise Adult Learning Centre are 233 adult learners registered. The following table displays the demographic compilation of the learners:

	Burundi	Somalia	DRC	Rwanda	Angola	Uganda	Malawi	Ethiopia	South Africa
M	3	18	96	0	1	1	0	1	34
F	6	9	48	1	2	0	1	0	12
Tot.	9	27	144	1	3	1	1	1	46

Age range and age average

	Burundi	Somalia	DR Congo	Rwanda	Angola	Uganda	Malawi	Ethiopia	South Africa
Range	16 – 64 yrs	17 - 58 yrs	15 - 52 yrs	1 learner	33-34 yrs	1 learner	1 learner	1 learner	15 - 29
Av	30	30	32	25	39	24	38	40	18

I interviewed 13 participants – 9 males and 4 females. The participants represented about 7 % of the total student enrolment. Seven of the interviewees were from the Congo – about 5 % of the students enrolled from the Congo. The rest of the interviewees were as follow: 1 from Ethiopia (100 % represented), 2 from Somalia (7 % represented), 1 from Burundi (11 % represented) and 1 from Tanzania (100 % represented) and 1 from South Africa (100 % represented).

The participants reside across the Cape Flats, some a walking distance from the Adult Learning Centre, while a majority resides a radius of approximately 10 kilometres away from Sunrise ALC, in areas such as Retreat, Grassy Park, Observatory, Athlone, Bonteheuwel and Delft. They are forced to make use of public transport which has financial implications given that the participants are unemployed and come from poor socio-economic circumstances. Sunrise ALC’s limited resources hamper educational advancement because adult learners do not have the financial means to copy additional learning materials. This means that these learners have to cope with numerous identities related to language, social prestige and culture and can result in unequal power relations.

The next section presents the data and summary of interviews with adult learners in relation to their perceptions of diversity.

Learners' perceptions of cultural diversity at Sunrise ALC

The participants presented different opinions on cultural diversity which was clearly confirmed in the following responses below.

Niyonizigiye responded,

It is very different because we are learning more about the culture, because we are too many countries: DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, all of them we meet here, so, if meet, we are together. We can change our mind and our opinion about our culture” they learned. It is, however, not clearly stated if cultural diversity was experienced by means of teaching or by means of learners’ social interaction and accompanying notion of ‘sameness or oneness.

Ya. There are many cultures and each culture have it’s own – how they do the stuff.

Ya, we are learning also that in class (Augustine).

Kashif stated that he was exposed to cultural diversity when he learned about Coloureds and Zulu. Moosa explained how they shared their different cultures in groups and by completing worksheets.

They responded as follow:

They teach us about different cultures – Coloured and Zulu (Kashif).

So we do in group to share each other. Worksheets are about different cultures. We compare cultures (Moosa).

Data further portrayed how adult learners experienced cultural diversity and in which manner they have become aware about cultural diversity.

The responses were as follow:

No, here I'm learning also about the South African culture. There is South Africa history. I know a lot. I started in level one – now it's level 3. I know a lot about South Africa now (Augustine).

Especially the subjects. How they teach us, is different than in our country. In Tanzania we do a lot of subjects, but here you have to choose subjects. They teach us about cultures – Coloured and Zulu (Kassim).

Yes, I understand. She does comprehension over different cultures. For example, she was talking about body language. We was learning about this and she said inn Korea, when you greeting, like physical or body. When you say like that, but here in South Africa, if you say “Hi”, it just a greeting way. So she is teaching us about different cultures (Etenia).

Not like here, but to us one thing you must do like Maths you can do also. You can do everything but you must just focus in Math. But you can do everything, but here you must focus just in one thing. It's different, but me, in my country, I can do everything (Ernest).

You see here, like in our country, we are learning in French. If we are here in South Africa, they speak English. So we are not able to speak English. So we are here. They try to make us to understand English and to communicate (Niyonizigiwe).

So, now you'll be one society, but if they discuss the cultures, they will be like one. For example like me, before I didn't know but today I know, so I can't share my friends today and I can sit with them, I can greet with them (Josiane).

The above responses accentuate Mezirow's theory which claims that a transformation in perspective “requires the sojourner to look at his or her world from a different point of view – a perspective of the world that is often in conflict with personal values and beliefs”. The sojourner who succeeds in interpreting and learning from different kinds of cultural experience has the potential to become inter-culturally competent within the host culture.

Furthermore, the “frames of reference” which teachers are supposed to cultivate amongst their learners will contribute to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets, mental models) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Diversity in relation to curriculum content and change

Once again, the learners responded in different ways:

Christoph responded as follow:

We put all our cultures away. We try to compare that way to our different cultures and each and everyone just express himself just to show exactly the way he thinks and the way we started and we try to compare. We don't judge like you culture is not good or that culture is better than this, but we try just to understand each other how these people live, how the other people live, to be able to live with everyone in the community.

Joseph stated:

Last week I see the teacher spoke about culture. We did talk about Congo. I said no, I know in the Congo there is a lot of trouble. People dying. Here, also in South Africa the matter is no exciting, but if you see in “The Sun” everyday people is dying, but no too much – a little bit.

Josiane explained as follow:

Yes, in the class there's too much people. There's Congolese, Congo DRC.

Niyonizigiye revealed the following:

It is very different because we are learning more about the culture, because we are too many countries: DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, all of them we meet here, so, if meet, we are together. We can change our mind and our opinion about our culture.

Yan stated the following:

Yes, but I'd like to add more disciplines – subjects.

Augustine explained in the following manner:

No, here I'm learning also about the South African culture. There is South Africa history. I know a lot. I started in level one – now it's level 3. I Know a lot about South Africa now.

Joan stated the following:

No, I don't see any changes.

The above indicate how adult learners experienced the changes to the curriculum. One learner stated that he met other students from other cultures. Sunrise ALC is to him a meeting place where he experienced 'one-ness' and the opportunity to exchange opinions. Another learner would prefer more disciplines. The learner from South Africa, however, stated that she did not experience any changes to accommodate cultural diversity.

The words and phrases "compare", "express myself" and "we are together" implied adult learners' participation in and understanding of the culturally diverse context that they found themselves in. The literature affirms what the participants experienced. While actively involved in social interaction the traditional perceptions of space and culture were changing. Participants could draw lenses through which they experienced culture as fluid and diverse. The South African participant, however, could not experience this change due to her perception as them and us and the notion of them as a minority that must adapt to the dominant culture.

The next question required learners to explain changes to content that enabled them to understand learning in a culturally diverse context. I asked learners to reflect on their understanding the teaching and learning. The theory on this issue argues that the process of learning should be cautiously planned and cautions that if teaching methods are not properly planned, it will become prescriptive, mundane and routine (Baxter, 2004; Birkenholz; 1999).

From the responses below, it seemed that there was no common understanding on teaching methodologies that incorporates diversity and learning.

Teaching and learning practices in a culturally diverse context

As before, the learners responded with a range of opinions that reflected their understanding.

Christoph responded as follow:

Here, we got two books to study. It's one book which shows the South African reality. Especially South Africa, how was South Africa before apartheid, how it is now, after apartheid, how different democracy can be in the country. That book just tell us what is South Africa.

Etenia explained as follow:

No, Maybe I just started for two weeks. It didn't a long time to study at Sunrise. For example, English, we don't write on the blackboard, the teacher gives us paper and just read – it is student-centered. We just do by ourselves. Then if there is something wrong we gonna ask the teacher, she's gonna help us. Yes, I understand. She does comprehension over different cultures. For example, she was talking about body language. We was learning about this and she said in Korea, when you greeting, like physical or body. When you say like that, but here in South Africa, if you say "Hi", it just a greeting way. So she is teaching us about different cultures.

Abdul responded as follow:

It's good. (Is it?) Ja, we have really.... Everyone has his own problem but we try now explain more of than that. We have no nothing problem in Aresta. They do everything for us. Yes, like are material, are chairs, are tables are bords. Everything is good for us.

Ernest revealed the following:

Ya, to understand the book (But you can't take the books home, hey?) Ya, that is a big problem, especially I am sitting here. I want to have that book to my place, because the more learners they come to learn to school, you come to your place you shaking also, but when you not have that stuff. That is not right. (There's nothing to help you further?) We need to have a book.

Josiane explained as follow:

Teacher talk about other things, but to talk about like DRC, talk about how our culture, other culture, like that, but we learn. She teach us how to write, how to learn, how to talk.

Moosa stated the following:

You see, Mathematics I learn in my country, I couldn't finish, but now when I came here, I know more Mathematics than ever before. In our country we don't make English like here, you see, we don't speak English in school. We also do learn about other cultures.

Rashaad stated:

The contents is for different countries and cultures (Rashaad).

Niyonizigiwe explained:

You see here, like in our country, we are learning in French. If we are here in South Africa, they speak English. So we are not able to speak English. So we are here. They try to make us to understand English and to communicate.

Yan responded as follow:

My country, English is poor, but here, it's very good. I understand. For me, I t's not difficult. They teach different cultures.

Augustine explained in the following manner:

In English we talk a lot. We learning new words like how to break the sentence. In Life Sciences we talk about our body, the name of the bones, fingers. We also study about the different cultures. We don't compare, we just say the cultures of South Africa, they do stuffs here, like Xhosa cultures and Afrikaans, Zulu, ya, many cultures (Augustine).

How they teach us is different from my country. There by my country, Tanzania, we do a lot of subjects, but here you have to choose the subjects (Kashif).

No, I think a little bit. It's like a little stuff, like they believe in, like what's going on in their country – why they here and all that stuff (Joan).

From the above responses it is quite evident that uneven knowledge existed on teaching and learning practices within a culturally diverse context. Therefore, there are different perspectives on pedagogical implementation of teaching and learning. This phenomenon is clearly depicted in the researched literature where McLaren (1994) refers to “mono-culturalism” when an opinion is adopted that everyone assimilates into the discourse of the dominant culture. However, it is quite evident that educators found themselves in a foreign space in relation to theoretical understanding of teaching and learning. Likewise, adult learners found themselves in a foreign space where teaching and learning are not practiced to

stimulate intercultural understanding. Furthermore, all the participants neglected to mention diversity in relation to curriculum content and change.

Curriculum changes

The participants responded as follow:

Yes, the way we used to study, here it is like a: first, we put all our cultures away. We supposed to not be first what we are and what we may and now it sometimes after learning something, we try to compare that way to our different cultures and each and everyone just express himself just to show exactly the way he thinks and the way we started and we try to compare. We don't judge like you culture is not good or that culture is better than this, but we try just to understand each other how these people live, how the other people live, to be able to live with everyone in the community (Christoph).

There is a really big difference, sometimes... are we talking about the cultures, can we... it'll be difference but Yes, yes, yes. I learnt in Life Orientation. On this and I remember talking about African cultures, so really I knew now, but, I don't know (how to express?) How can I explain to you, but I have my opinion, but I can't express (Abdul).

Yes, not too much since I am been at the school, but last week I see the teacher spoke about culture. We did talk about Congo. I said no, I know in the Congo there is a lot of trouble. People dying. Here, also in South Africa the matter is no exciting, but if you see in 'The Sun' everyday people is dying, but not too much – a little bit (Joseph).

Yes, in the class there's too much people. There's Congolese, Congo DRC. (But there are other, also). There are other, there's Somalia, but you see Somalia speaks Swahili. You ask people from DRC speak Swahili. But she makes us to understand everyone (Josiane).

Ya, the peoples, the books are for here (Rashaad).

It is very different because we are learning more about the culture, because we are too many countries: DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, all of them we meet here, so, if meet, we are together. We can change our mind and our opinion about our culture (Niyonizigiye).

Yes, but I'd like to add more disciplines – subjects (Yan).

No, here I'm learning also about the South African culture. There is South Africa history. I know a lot. I started in level one – now it's level 3. I know a lot about South Africa now (Augustine).

Especially the subjects. How they teach us, is different than in our country. In Tanzania we do a lot of subjects, but here you have to choose subjects. They teach us about cultures – Coloured and Zulu (Kashif).

No, I don't see any changes (Joan).

Content changes

Responses were as follow:

Ok, the content is in Congo. Here, we got two books to study. It's one book which shows the South African reality. Especially South Africa, how was South Africa before apartheid, how it is now, after apartheid, how different democracy can be in the country. That book just tell us what is South Africa. Another teaches us how to arrive, how to live, how to talk with someone else, how to communicate in a community and we used to study that maybe one book for South Africa today. For example, and next day for example, Wednesday we use another one just tried to combine to understand South Africa and to talk also about other stuff like the general stuff supposed to talk to people, supposed to meet people, supposed to make research and supposed to join more. For example library, to go there, how to fill our forms, how to get a job, all that stud in into another book (Christoph).

No, Maybe I just started for two weeks. It didn't a long time to study at Irista. For example, English, we don't write on the blackboard, the teacher gives us paper and just read – it is student-centered. We just do by ourselves. Then if there is something wrong we gonna ask the teacher, she's gonna help us. Yes, I understand. She does comprehension over different cultures. For example, she was talking about body language. We was learning about this and she said inn Korea, when you greeting, like physical or body. When you say like that, but her in South Africa, if you say "Hi", it just a greeting way. So she is teaching us about different cultures (Etenia).

Like us – to school, we do everything in primary school, but in our school you must choose what you think you must do. Not like here, but to us one thing you must do like Maths you can do also. You can do everything but you must just focus in Math. But you can do everything, but here you must focus just in one thing. It's different, but me, in my country, I can do everything (Ernest).

It's good. (Is it?) Ja, we have really.... Everyone has his own problem but we try now explain more of than that. We have no nothing problem in Aresta. They do everything for us. Yes, like are material, are chairs, are tables are bords. Everything is good for us (Abdul).

Ya, to understand the book (But you can't take the books home, hey?) Ya, that is a big problem, especially I am sitting here. I want to have that book to my place, because the more learners they come to learn to school, you come to your place you shaking also, but when you not have that stuff. That is not right. (There's nothing to help you further?) We need to have a book (Joseph).

Teacher talk about other things, but to talk about like DRC, talk about how our culture, other culture, like that, but we learn. She teach us how to write, how to learn, how to talk (Josiane).

You see, Mathematics I learn in my country, I couldn't finish, but now when I came here, I know more Mathematics than ever before. In our country we don't make English like here, you see, we don't speak English in school. We also do learn about other cultures (Moosa).

The contents is for different countries and cultures (Rashaad).

You see here, like in our country, we are learning in French. If we are here in South Africa, they speak English. So we are not able to speak English. So we are here. They try to make us to understand English and to communicate (Niyonizigiye).

My country, English is poor, but here, it's very good. I understand. For me, it's not difficult. They teach different cultures (Yan).

In English we talk a lot. We learning new words like how to break the sentence. In Life Sciences we talk about our body, the name of the bones, fingers. We also study about the different cultures. We don't compare, we just say the cultures of South Africa, they do stuffs here, like Xhosa cultures and Afrikaans, Zulu, ya, many cultures (Augustine).

How they teach us is different from my country. There by my country, Tanzania, we do a lot of subjects, but here you have to choose the subjects (Kashif).

No, I think a little bit. It's like a little stuff, like they believe in, like what's going on in their country – why they here and all that stuff (Joan).

Learning materials' changes

Responses were as follow:

Ok. We really use everyday. A special book as we've got two. We have to use each and everyone got a book. Yes, it address diversity even for South African lesson, for example Mandela's life into that book and they give each and everyone that book time to read together, what happened in that story and then, they give us maybe papers which we have to fill for example to answer

questions from the book. Maybe writing our own understanding about the story and sometimes we use also our own books. The handwriting they write there if you for example want to explain yourself, how you understand one word, example cannot write in English, can even write it in your mother tongue language in your own book then to combine teachers book, the papers they give us and your own book. They combine it to understand what has happened to be able, maybe to write test and to give easily to communicate with others (Christoph).

When the teacher teaches us something he just teaches us history only. We don't have the materials to proof it, for example, in Ethiopia for example if we are learning about what you call it, microscope, we can't see what is microscope in physically we just learn about it is history. But in South Africa there is a lot of materials. When we are learning about microscope we can microscope physically and we can touch it. We can do what we learnt in history (Etenia).

Ya, she gives us the books to learn and to read and to understand. She explain (Ernest).

Yes, she did ask she always do that, like and when she want to let us lesson today, she use to make some of copies and just she give us paper and then, put on the board and then the title of the lesson. And then explain and then and read and what is then our papers and then explain more and just do it some of us, sometimes is décor the use to write solutions on the board. That's what she use to teach us (Abdul).

(Do you get hand-outs? Material, learning materials, paper?) Some of we have. (Can you make your own copies?) Another book, teacher say you can make one copy, but it's a problem for us, because it's a lot of pages. The copy now is R1 (Joseph).

I must start come to school. I must stay quiet to hear and to learn to understand (Josiane).

The learning materials, we learn about other cultures (Moosa).

Me, I'm new come this country. I came to South Africa, December last year. I don't know English. To me explaining here, is from Iresta. So this teacher explain to me, I understand (Rashaad).

Teacher don't collect all the cultures, but we learn about each other's Culture (Niyonizigiye).

I don't have materials. I have difficult to buy it. I don't have money. They send me money. Then I can buy (Yan).

We use a book, we have a board, books, pens. Sometimes they print the papers – they give to all of us. They write on the board also (Augustine).

They teach us about different cultures – coloured and Zulu (Kashif).

Like papers. Some of them are about diversity, but others no really (Joan).

Learning support materials, learning strategies and methods of teaching.

The data I collected reflected what Guild (2010) pronounces as “sameness” and “diversity” (p. 1-3). His study echoes the sentiment that cultural difference is produced and maintained in a field power relations where the disempowered remains on the periphery in relation to access and knowledge. For example, one notion of diversity takes into account learners whose culture is instilled in them, that it’s their behavior and beliefs, their language and dialect that differs from the superior culture. Yet, the expectation remains that the other must conform and adapt to the established and most valued culture. This can be especially true in schools and adult learning contexts where a curriculum can be viewed as neutral and bias free by the dominant culture.

Taking this further, Vaughn (2010) argues that in ‘plural societies’ there tend to be an ongoing question about in whose culture and language, whose values and beliefs should be transmitted in education. Evidently, in most education institutions across the world, the dominant culture determines what should be taught and learned in a formal education setting. In multicultural education the “system, the teacher and the learner” are the key role-players. In this traditional setting the teacher and the system “share the same dominant culture and the learner not”.

Participants responded as follow:

Here, we got two books to study. It’s one book which shows the South African reality. Especially South Africa, how was South Africa before apartheid, how it is now, after apartheid, how different democracy can be in the country. That book just tell us what is South Africa. Another teaches us how to arrive, how to live, how to talk with someone else, how to communicate in a community and we used to study that maybe one book for South Africa today. Yes, it address diversity even for South African lesson, for example Mandela’s life into that book and they give each and everyone that book time to read together, what happened in that story and then, they

give us maybe papers which we have to fill for example to answer questions from the book (Christoph).

Moosa explained how he was benefitted from the teaching strategies in the following way (2013):

We just start to write Mathematics then I don't know, but when she explains to us, than I understand. English is also same thing. And the teacher write on the board. We do groups – we discuss. Teacher maybe give us worksheet, for example, or Mathematics. So we do in group to share each other. Worksheets are about different cultures. We compare cultures.

Adult educators

The Adult Learning Centre employs 4 adult educators whom I interviewed. Three of the 4 participants were females. Their ages are ranging from 29 years to 58 years. The data showed that Sunrise ALC was the only place where they are employed. They lived in the Cape Peninsula within a radius of approximately 10 kilometres – Grassy Park, Wynberg, Heathfield and Lansdowne. Interviews revealed that 1 of the educators had a Diploma in Adult Education. One educator had no training in adult education at all. The other two adult educators had university degrees – one with a B. Tech Diploma in Adult Education and the other educator with what he called “Studies in any field”.

This means that Sunrise ALC employs educators with various forms of expertise, knowledge and qualifications. Therefore, it could hold unintended consequences for teaching methods, attitudes towards the curriculum and perceptions of teaching adults from diverse contexts.

Curriculum and cultural diversity of adult educators

The literature reveals that during the 19th and 20th century policies and practice in education gave much focus was on traditional teaching of formal knowledge, designs and guidelines which had to be followed and ultimately regurgitated as facts (Ivanic, 2004). Knowledge was viewed as a set of skills to be taught, learnt and mastered. Consequently, there was minimal interaction or acknowledgement of diversity and learning or how knowledge was valued in different communities or cultures.

Furthermore, Hargreaves and Goodson (1997) stated that despite the liberal and critical paradigms to the curriculum, perceptions of diversity were misused to fit peculiar agendas, so much so that diversity has become a contested issue. The notions of diversity, curriculum and learning had therefore become a complex, contested and multifaceted issue which according to McLaren (1994) positioned itself in the following modes: mono-culturalism, liberal, pluralist and critical multiculturalism.

Educators' perceptions of cultural diversity

The participants presented a range of opinions on curriculum and cultural diversity which echoes the above arguments. I interviewed four educators. I asked them whether it makes a difference to teach learners from different countries. Their responses follow below:

Margaret responded,

Our culture is different from theirs. It's their culture to talk loud to each other. If I talk loud to you it'll be if I'm cross with you. If I talk loud it's like I have an argument with you. I would rather teach the foreigners, they have respect still.

For one South African educator cultural diversity was embedded in "otherness". Adult learners are different from the culture that she represents. Her perception infers difference in terms of social values. For her cultural diversity means "our culture" and "their culture". Her response reflected what McLaren views as "culture-blindness" when learners are viewed as human beings and not by their histories, cultures and traditions. Furthermore, her understanding of cultural diversity, would lead to what Ivanic (2004) argued as traditional teaching where minimal interaction or acknowledgement of diversity in learning occurs. For Margaret integration with the ideals of the dominant culture remains and it does not entirely acknowledge difference as a means to understand and explain cultural diversity. The difference is fixed and leaves no space for intercultural relations and understanding.

Charmaine stated:

You see, each person is an individual and they are all your students, but you also have to take into consideration that they come with different ideas and different perspectives. So, with that in mind, you have to actually change some of your teaching styles to make sure that everyone else understands in the class.

It seems that for Charmaine, cultural diversity should accommodate learners' different ideas and perspectives. Therefore, methods of teaching should be adapted so that learners can understand. The educator "acknowledging and celebrating cultural diversity" and aim to teach 'open-mindedness' and harmony which is according to McLaren a "pluralistic approach" where the focus is on difference opposed to 'sameness'. It remains ignorant on issues of identity, social capital and cultural histories.

Rosa responded by saying:

Yes there is a huge difference the language barrier is one, the level of understanding. Your linguistics, your dialect, everything has to be correct. It has to be slowly. It has to be comprehensive – all levels of that.

For Rosa teacher diversity is in language and understanding. Secru (2006) found that in these learning contexts it is crucial to have a 'linguistic understanding' but also that knowledge of culturally inclusive teaching is imperative

Yahana responded as follow:

It's not a difference, but quite a challenge. You see, people come from different countries, like people from the DRC, they speak French, people from Angola they speak Portugese, so to build a class to come together, is quite a challenge. Yes, you see the curriculum must be something that you put them together so that you can start from the scratch so you can just go step by step.

However, Yahana is from Angola is of the opinion that diversity is no difference but a challenge which Carignan et al. (2005) view as a 'complex issue'. Diversity should at least be prominently featured in learning support materials and textbooks, as well as "pedagogical strategies". Therefore, cultural difference should be viewed as a resource rather than a problem.

From the above responses it is quite evident that uneven knowledge existed on teaching and learning practices within a culturally diverse context. Therefore, there are different perspectives on pedagogical implementation of teaching and learning. Furthermore, different levels of theoretical understanding of cultural diversity. There is, however, an acknowledged otherness and differences in relation to linguistic ability and culture, but all participants failed to clearly state teaching methods that will value cultural diversity. The data is further in line with the researched literature what McLaren (1994) refers to as "mono-culturalism" when an opinion is adopted that everyone assimilates into the discourse of the dominant culture. However, it is quite evident that educators found themselves in a foreign space in relation to theoretical understanding of teaching and learning.

The next section required educators to give their understanding of the ways that the curriculum makes provision for cultural diversity. The purpose was to understand the link between curriculum content, their methods and learning support materials. Below follows the responses. From the responses below, it seems that there is no change in the curriculum that valued cultural diversity.

Diversity in relation to curriculum content and change

Once again, the educators responded with a range of opinions that reflected there is minimal interaction or acknowledgement of diversity in learning and the way in which knowledge is valued in different communities or cultures. In relation to curriculum content and change,

Margaret stated:

You see, their language is not English so I would teach them history. I will bring a DVD then they will understand better, so it's more about visual. I spoke to them about Steve Biko, but I had a film up of Martin Luther King. In the exam they showed they got more marks because of the film.

Margaret viewed change as a focus when teaching history and accompanying supportive visual aid material. "It's more about visual" and inter-cultural teaching and learning did not feature.

Furthermore, Charmaine responded:

Not change the course as such. I still use the books and the means we have available.

For Charmaine there is no change in the curriculum. Courses stay the same. Books are the main resources for teaching and learning. She followed the prescribed courses. The using of books implicates neutrality in relation to teaching and understanding diversity.

In addition, Rosa replied,

Yes there are certain areas that had to be adapted. We cannot adapt the curriculum. We adapt it in class. We keep the curriculum in class, but we make notes for ourselves about the adaptation, so that when the Department does come they don't see changes, but we know where the changes should be. So, the curriculum is not changing per se, but as educators we change certain areas. We adapt, we don't change, just adapt.

Rosa's explanation refers to the Department of Education that prescribed a curriculum that appears to be not suitable for teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context. Her adaptation to the curriculum, however, does not specify what changes she tried to bring about to, according to Mezirow (1991), implement learning processes from a diverse perspective. As a result, the curriculum is a prescribed document that must be followed without taking diversity into perspective.

Finally, Yahana stated:

Yes, you see the curriculum must be something that you put them together so that you can start from the scratch so you can just go step by step.

Yahana depicted the curriculum as something that you construct to help the educator to teach step-by-step. Therefore, the curriculum is an official document where learners need to assimilate and adapt to the learning content.

From the above responses it is clear that there were uneven perspectives and knowledge on what a curriculum is. Frames of references for cultural and contextual concepts in relation to teaching do not feature. Furthermore, foreign contexts in relation to theoretical understanding and curriculum perceptions, is vague. Further is revealed individualistic beliefs on the one side, and institutional ideologies on the other side. All the participants neglected to mention diversity in relation to curriculum content and change

The next question required teachers to explain their teaching methods when teaching adults from diverse contexts. I asked educators to reflect on their teaching methods, changes and adaptations that they employed to teach from a diversity perspective. Theory on this issue argues that the process of learning should be cautiously planned and that if teaching methods are not properly planned, it will become prescriptive, mundane and routine (Baxter, 2004; Birkenholz; 1999). From the responses below, it seems that there is no common understanding on teaching methodologies that incorporates diversity and learning.

Teaching and learning practices in a culturally diverse context

As before, the educators responded with a range of opinions that reflected there is minimal understanding of transformative teaching methods within a respect for diversity framework. .

In relation to this responses were as followed,

Margaret responded:

I'm teaching grade 12 History and they never ever did History in their whole life. There is a handbook, but I realised I can't teach this – I must go to grassroots level.

Margaret is not interested in using prescribed books because she is of the opinion that the learners will not cope. Therefore, she does not acknowledge adult learners have a frame of reference in relation to history and learning about history in informal contexts. Also, she undermines the capabilities of her learners and might expose them to traditional teaching methods where learners are viewed as empty vessels that in need of knowledge that has to be regurgitated. She is, however, not clear about what specific content and how she is teaching the content. The notion of cultural diversity does not feature in in any way, especially not taking into account learners 'values, religions, languages, attitudes and beliefs'.

Charmaine indicated:

Not change the course as such. I still use the books and the means we have available. I haven't changed the curriculum as such, but I have to implement their opinions and allow them to bring their views into the class situation as well.

Charmaine revealed that she taught the contents as set out in text books as well as accommodating learners' views and opinions. This means that she does acknowledge adult learners prior frame of reference and views teaching and learning as an interactive process that included learners perspectives and opinions. In Charmaine's case the utilizing of books imply neutral values while learner-input of opinions and ideas does not qualify implications of teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context.

Rosa responded as follow:

My core method is a personal approach. Do not call me miss this. Call me Rosa. If you call me Rosa, I'm closer to you than a teacher, so the personal touch for me is more relevant and more becoming than just being a teacher standing up here and teaching not learning. I need to know from them where they come from. They need to where I come from. These are my norms. These are my standards and I expect it comes from you as well. If it doesn't, then let's talk about it. I do not allow a learner to interrogate or manipulate anybody in class.

She also views teaching and learning as a process acknowledges diversity however it remains in a paradigm of otherness and difference – ‘where they come from’, ‘where I come from’. Teacher power is clearly evident in stating ‘these are my norms’ and ‘these are my standards’. A compromise in terms of cultural differences is implied but no clear understanding of accommodation of different cultural variables and consideration of social and cultural measurements. According to Grabove (1997), learning is social rather than an introverted, in the mind process. Educators are therefore critical in facilitating a transformative learning process. Learners should be “encouraged to challenge, defend, and explain their beliefs, to assess evidence and reasons for these beliefs; and to judge arguments”.

Yahana explained:

The content is especially grammar. We are focusing on reading and writing and speaking – communication.

Yahana's focus is on reading, writing and speaking rather than inter-cultural teaching and learning. Cultural diversity should at least be prominently feature in learning support materials, text books and teaching methods.

From the above responses it's once again clear that there were uneven perspectives and knowledge on what a curriculum is. Data also revealed different perspectives on pedagogy. According to Boyd and Myers (1988), the notion of a “process of discernment” is not happening in construction of meaning. Learners should be encouraged to activate their frames of references, reflect on previous experiences and revise possible ways to decide what is permissible in any given context. However, the notion of accommodation and assimilation into traditional methods of teaching is embraced.

Furthermore, foreign contexts in relation to theoretical understanding and curriculum perceptions, is inexplicit. It is further revealed that individualistic beliefs on the one side and institutional ideologies on the other side are at play. All the participants neglected to mention diversity in relation to curriculum content and change

The next question required teachers to explain their perceptions of diversity in relation to teaching and learning materials. I asked educators to reflect on their understanding of what a learning resource is, what it means to teaching and the advantages thereof from a diversity perspective framework. From the responses below, it seems that there is no common understanding teaching and learning materials that incorporates diversity in teaching and learning.

The use of textbooks in a culturally diverse context

Similar to previous questions, the educators responded with a range of opinions that reflected there is minimal understanding of transformative teaching in relation to learning support materials within a respect for diversity framework. In relation to this responses were as followed:

Margaret indicated:

They got books, but that books mean nothing. So, I would go to the classes like grade 8 and I would build it up from there. I would go to the libraries, books and DVD's. That is how I would make them understand.

Margaret's response was somewhat vague. She did not explain to what extent the books mean nothing. Margaret is not interested in using prescribed books because she is of the opinion that the learners will not cope. Therefore, she does not acknowledge adult learners have a frame of reference in relation to informal contexts. Also, she undermines the capabilities of her learners and might expose them to traditional teaching methods where learners are viewed as empty vessels in need of knowledge that has to be regurgitated. Adult educators need to facilitate cultural diversity and recognize the validity of differences.

Charmaine responded:

We do a lot of reading comprehensions so that they get to practice so they get their reading skills, cause the class that I have now, many of them have difficulty reading.

For Charmaine reading skills are of utmost importance. The nature of the contents of comprehensions is not explained. In Charmaine's case the utilizing of books imply neutral values while learner-input of opinions and ideas does not qualify implications of teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context. Once again, adult educators need to facilitate cultural diversity and recognize the validity of differences.

Rosa explained:

If the content says a comprehension, we rather use a code rather instead of a comprehension task. They can tell us here the code is. From the code you take them from what they know to what they don't know and then we go onto a comprehension. So, you need to initiate something first before you can really ... Like a picture on adults. A code can be anything.

She also viewed teaching and learning as a process but Rosa's "codes" do not in any instance show proof of an awareness of culturally diversity teaching and learning. Secru (2006) argues that linguistic understanding is crucial, but knowledge of culturally inclusive teaching is imperative.

Yahana responded:

Like normal teaching. We use group work and conversation. For level one, we only use the white board and we use also like posters. If I'm going to teach like the days of the week or month of the year, I will use a calendar poster to explain to them. We start from the alphabet, every year. I'm teaching only level 1.

Yahana regarded group work and discussions as most important. No explanation of the nature of teaching and learning was given. Responses ranged from autocratic choices of content material to reading and comprehension, to "a personal approach" which implies teacher control. Adult educators need to facilitate cultural diversity and recognize the validity of differences.

From the above responses it is clear that there were uneven perspectives and knowledge on learning support materials. Educators exposed that they used learning support materials in a varied ways. Again, individualistic beliefs and institutional ideologies regarding the use of learning support materials were evident. All the participants neglected to mention in which manner learning support materials were utilised to promote teaching and learning in a cultural diverse context.

Frames of references for cultural and contextual concepts in relation to teaching did not feature. Furthermore, foreign contexts in relation to theoretical understanding and curriculum perceptions, is inexplicit. Further is revealed individualistic beliefs on the one side, and institutional ideologies on the other side. All the participants neglected to mention diversity in

relation to curriculum content and change. Participants also neglected to mention diversity in relation to linguistic and cultural values hidden in texts.

Department of Education in supporting the curriculum from a culturally diverse Framework

All three South African teachers indicated that they used books that were prescribed by the Department of Education. They responded in the following way:

The Subject Advisor advised me to stick with Black Consciousness. Paper 1 is Steve Biko and Martin Luther King and paper 2 is “the Road to democracy” and the “TRC (Margaret).

We receive that from the Department but I also use the Internet quite regularly. Rosa also has a few books in the office that we use. They do get worksheets on a regular basis. There are ... each person is allowed to use the books but they are not allowed to take them home, Ok, but we must make copies for them and give them what they need and we give them worksheets. They get homework on a regular basis (Charmaine).

Anything that is relevant to the learner. Level 4 we cannot change anything. We have to teach as prescribed (Rosa).

Books, pictures and photos. Inside our programme we got like also a integrated study, so we are trying to integrate South African society (Yahana).

Margaret and Charmaine indicated they had to make use of books prescribed by the Department of Education. Charmaine revealed that books were prescribed and provided by the Department of Education. Learners are not allowed to take the books home. Rosa stated that they were not allowed to change anything to the curriculum. Yahana’s focus was on integration of learners into South African culture rather than cultural interaction.

The above responses are addressed in the literature of Gay (2000) who claims that students from ethnically diverse backgrounds will make better progress if taught through their own culture. To effectively teach ethnically diverse students, pre-service educators must be adequately trained and prepared for culturally responsive teaching. Combined with a knowledge base about teaching ethnic and culturally diverse students, teachers also need to know how to design curriculum and teaching strategies. What is even more important for culturally responsive teaching is to prepare classrooms in such a way that they are supportive and functional stimuli for learning. In addition educational resources should consider “cultural variables” and acknowledge specific “learning needs, preferences and styles of learners”. Planning and designing of “instructional environments” need to be cautiously

prepared by taking into consideration social and cultural measurements in designing of tasks, means of communication and setting up of information (p. 58).



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SECTION 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

Section four presented an analysis of the data. This section provides a discussion of the findings of this study that relate to a transformative approach to teaching adults in a culturally diverse context at Sunrise ALC. In the discussion, this chapter makes a link between the findings of the study and the literature.

SUMMARY

The research problem that this study addressed is: Adult educators are using teaching methods that do not enable adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in adult learning. This study, therefore, guided me to investigate teaching methods that adult educators utilise at Sunrise ALC.

The aim of the study was to investigate teaching and learning practices within a culturally diverse context at Sunrise Adult Learning Centre in greater Cape Town.

I investigated the research question: “Are adult educators using teaching methods that enable adult learners from culturally diverse backgrounds to participate in adult learning?” It has guided me to investigate teaching methods that educators used and how learners from a culturally diverse background perceive learning within a culturally diverse context.

My study is rooted in a qualitative research paradigm. Subsequently, I drew on qualitative methods to understand, in this case semi-structured interviews to explain and describe the influence of diversity on teaching practice. My experience as a teacher was advantageous and attributed to the successful accomplishment of the research. For my research I selected 13 adult learners and 4 adult educators. The participants were geographically diverse and originated from 6 different countries.

The purposive sampling of the participants was appropriate for this study. All the participants in the study experienced in one or another way cultural differences and the impact thereof on teaching and learning. I could have made the group of participants more diverse by adding more learners from additional countries. This would have portrayed a more universal view and the impact of teaching methods in a culturally diverse context.

To obtain an understanding of teaching and learning within a culturally diverse context I drew on theoretical perspectives based on notions of diversity, multicultural and intercultural education. I

found Mezirow's transformative learning appropriate to understand teaching and learning in culturally diverse contexts. Mezirow (1991) refers to developing "a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective" when teaching adults from diverse contexts (p.167). He argues that each individual has a distinct frame of reference that is, adult's meaning perspective, which is "primarily the result of cultural assimilation and the idiosyncratic influences of primary caregivers" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). It is these frames of references that contributed to the understanding of teaching methods at Sunrise ALC.

I used an interview schedule as a research instrument to gather the data. I gathered data by conducting face-to-face-interviews which was carried out at Sunrise ALC. Taking into consideration the cultural diverse nature of the study the interview schedule was the most suitable to use as research instrument. Bearing the research question in mind I designed the questions in the interview schedule around the following themes: Adult learners in contexts of diversity, with specific focus on curriculum and methods of teaching. The questions were well considered and structured because the data gathered was a key factor to conduct an investigation of this study.

When analysing the data literature research studies done by McLaren (1994), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), Guild (2010), Vaughn (2010), Ivanic (2004), Hargreaves and Goodson (1997), Carignan et al (2005), Gay (2000), Mezirow (19991), Boyed and Myers (1998), Grabove (1997), Meier & Hartell (2009) and Merriam (2004) helped me to understand and describe the practices of teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context.

The data revealed that teaching methods were out-dated and irrelevant to the constant culturally diverse contexts prevailing in South African ALCs. The data has proved that intercultural methods of teaching do not prevail at Sunrise ALC.

Findings

Anticipated findings confirmed

The following anticipated findings were confirmed by the data:

- (a) There is a limited understanding of teaching and learning in diverse contexts at Sunrise ALC. The findings of this study echo the expected outcomes and reported similar findings to those which I reviewed in the literature. In a study done by Guild (2010) the issue of “sameness’ and ‘diversity’ is discussed and concluded with the sentiment that cultural difference occurs and is sustained in relations where the disempowered remains on the periphery in terms of access and knowledge. The one notion of diversity, namely that culture is instilled in a person and is therefore different in behaviour and beliefs, culture and dialect from the superior culture. The expectation remains that the other must conform and adapt to the establishment and most valued culture.
- (b) My study confirmed the educators’ misunderstanding of ‘curriculum’ when they exposed haphazard teaching methods and provision of learning content. For one educator, curriculum is linguistics and language structure. For another, curriculum means teaching History at grassroots level. For another educator curriculum means teaching a ‘code’. The different levels of understanding curriculum revealed that educators have not been trained to teach adult learners from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- (c) My study further confirmed that perceptions on diversity have been used and misused for own agendas. In order to understand these disputable issues, McLaren (1994) described how mono-culturalism assumes that everyone is assimilated into the discourse of the dominant culture. They do not realise that the current establishment should be changed to adjust to the needs of the ‘new’ school population but rather obeying the ethos and traditions of the establishment. Consequently, learners’ histories, traditions, norms, cultures and languages “are melted down and increasingly assimilating into the discourse of the school until they sound like, act like and believe like the powerful and dominant culture of institutions”.

McLaren further explores diversity by referring to the liberal version which believes that individuals from diverse race, class and gender groups share natural equality and collective humanity. Supporters of such a view adopt a stance of 'culture blindness' and observe their learners as human beings and not according to their histories, cultures and traditions. Therefore, the ethos of the dominant culture remains unchanged and does not acknowledge difference as a means to understand and explain.

- (d) This study shows that because of the speedy acceleration in culturally diverse contexts in ALCs there will always be a need for research to be done on the validity of curriculum and accompanying methods of teaching.

Two unexpected findings

The findings of this study reflected in general outcomes that were expected and in line with the literature of McLaren ((1994), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), Guild (2010), Vaughn (2010), Ivanic (2004), Hargreaves and Goodson (1997), Carignan et al (2005), Gay (2000), Mezirow (19991), Boyed and Myers (1998), Grabove (1997), Meier & Hartell (2009) and Merriam (2004) whose focus of study is on curriculum, diversity and adult learning. However, there were two unexpected findings that included (a) unequal qualifications or knowledge of diversity in adult learning contexts; (b) a paucity of resources to support learning.

- (a) One educator holds a Diploma in Adult Education, the other educator a B-Tech in Adult Education, another educator experienced cultural differences while teaching English as a foreign language for a while in South Korea and the Angolan educator a Bachelor's Degree in Education being able to "teach everything". This unequal qualifications of educators prohibit them from what Boyd and Myers (1988) view as the 'process of discernment' when individuals construct meaning and add value to meaning structures. These meaning structures are grounded in the individual's 'cultural and contextual experiences' and the manner in which they behave and interpret events. The lack of professional pre-service training leaves a vacuum due to an absence of a frame of reference to reflect on previous experiences and revise ways to be able to discern what is acceptable in any given context.

- (b) The minimal exposition of learner support materials Learner support materials is depicted in the data as a limitation in their learning process. Furthermore, data implied that the contents of text books do not purport cultural diverse contexts in its fullest sense. Learners are therefore not exposed to a cultural diversity that will, according to Mezirow (1991), guide them through dialogue, debates and interaction that introduce new languages and cultures as well as different ways of describing, conceptualizing, and experiencing the world. Learners are further deprived the opportunity to, according to Foster (1997), interact and be able to both share and question their own and others' frames of reference, allowing critical reflection to occur.

Based on the data of this research I am convinced that the cultural awareness existed among the adult learners has promising prospects for embracing multicultural practices. In this regard Gay (2000) confirms by stating that educational resources should consider "cultural variables" and acknowledge specific "learning needs, preferences and styles of learners".

Theoretical insights

My study is framed within particular theoretical perspectives and is producing new theoretical insights into how cultural diversity impacts on teaching and adult learning in culturally diverse contexts. New insights are generated in the following ways:

1. Perspective Transformation in Adult Learning

- (a) My study is theoretically framed by Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning Theory which is rooted in the belief that: learning is inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective to enable someone to generate beliefs and opinions that will guide action, Mezirow (1991); Gay (2000); Meier & Hartell (2009); McLaren (1994); Hargreaves and Goodson (1997). The data has revealed that all these qualities that researchers are connecting to a transformative approach to teaching and learning of adult learners in a culturally diverse context can be accomplished in Transformative Learning.

(b) The inter-cultural awareness among the adult learner participants strongly corresponded with learning in culturally diverse contexts which included: culture which consists of aspects such as values, religions, languages, attitudes, beliefs and culturally responsive teaching (Carignan et al., 2005; Gay, 2000); different frames of reference (Myers, 1988; Taylor, 1997; Baumgartner, 2001); critical reflection (Grabove, 1997; King, 2000; Cranton, 2002). The aforementioned links well with Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning and identifying factors in the field of adult education. Understanding the learning process is crucial in teaching adult learners in a culturally diverse context.

(c) Adult educators viewed learners as 'other' and the host culture as 'own' which revealed meanings of 'them' and 'us'. This, according to Gupta and Ferguson (1992), will lead to dominant and powerful cultures and adaptation by minorities and thus cause relations of power imbalances. Cultural differences are maintained in these power relations and the disempowered stays on the periphery in relation to access and knowledge. The educator and the system shared 'the same dominant culture and the learner not'. Educators' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and identities are therefore crucial to facilitate culturally diverse teaching, and in creating a community of learners in which values respect for diversity and difference are developed, upheld and promoted (Mezirow, 1991).

(d) Educators experienced, according to Merriam (2004) a low level of cognitive thinking to engage in a transformative learning process that will adhere to Mezirow's "more mature, more autonomous, more 'developed' level of thinking". Adult learners are aware of cultural diversity but are not sensibly engaged in a process to experience the effect of transformation in learning.

2. The interaction between transformative learning and teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context confirmed

The findings of this study confirmed the asserted interaction between transformative learning and teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context, (Secru, 2006; Carignan et al. 2005; Gay, 2000; Mezirow, 1991). Validation of this interaction between transformative learning and teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context was shown in the following ways:

- (a) The data revealed adult learning in a culturally diverse context as a process which entails adult learners' interaction with people from different cultural contexts, the facilitation of adult educators and the interdependency of the learning process on cultural awareness.
 - (b) Adult learners exposed how they have been advantage from being actively engaged in exchanging views on different cultural backgrounds. The ignorance of cultural diversity among adult educators revealed a gap in mutual understanding and learning in a culturally diverse context.
 - (c) A particular behaviour category that highlighted this study was the misunderstanding of the curriculum and therefore accompanying methods of teaching which support researchers' argument that knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and identities are crucial to facilitate critical reflection, and in creating a community of learners in which cultural values as well as respect for cultural diversity are developed, upheld and promoted.
3. Transformative learning has the potential to facilitate teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context.

The data has shown that besides interaction among adult learners from different cultural backgrounds TL has the ability to facilitate a diversity of learning styles. This finding converged with what researchers have argued in the literature as follow:

- (a) Inclusive learning – according to Mezirow adults learn through a process in which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference by making them more inclusive. Adult learners realised after sharing their 'frames of references' that they have learned new knowledge – “before I did not know, but now I know”.

- (b) Reflective learning – students could learn by critically reflect on their own historical and cultural background, especially when they referred to the political situation in the own countries.
- (c) Learning through social interaction – learning is, according to Grabove (1997), social rather than an introverted in the mind process.
- (d) Learning to become culturally self-aware – interaction among the learners foster critical reflection and helped with coping in challenging situations.

4. Suppositions on the role of Transformative Learning in pedagogy

My study has common suppositions on the role of Transformative Learning in pedagogy with the research done by McLaren (1994), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), Guild (2010), Vaughn (2010), Ivanic (2004), Hargreaves and Goodson (1997), Carignan et al (2005), Gay (2000), Mezirow (19991), Boyed and Myers (1998), Grabove (1997) and Meier & Hartell (2009). My study focus was on teaching methods in culturally diverse contexts. On the other hand, however, Merriam (2004) and Merriam & Ntseane (2008) broadened my understanding and knowledge of the role that cognitive level of understanding in learning as well as the role that culture plays in the process of Transformative Learning.

- (a) Merriam (2004) highlights a gap in the literature on Transformative Learning and therefore argues that the level of cognitive functioning for becoming engaged in a transformational learning process has not been questioned. She asserts that according to Mezirow’s transformative learning which appears to lead to “more mature, more autonomous, more ‘developed’ level of thinking”, it might also be argued that to be able to engage in the process in the first place requires a certain level of development and in particular, cognitive development. Experience and context alone are not sufficient to experience the effect of transformation.

(b) Merriam & Ntseane (2008) examined how culture context shapes the process of transformational learning in an African context, namely Botswana. Several writers are cited (Avoseh, 2001; Ntseane, 2005; Preece, 2004) who have argued that African value systems and learning are in essence collective, rather than individually. Merriam et al found in their research three “culturally specific factors”, namely “spirituality and the metaphysical world, community responsibilities and relationships, and gender roles”. Their findings reveals how “cultural context” shapes to this, is a sound cross-cultural communication which can only be acquired by an in-depth understanding and knowledge of ethnically diverse students. In the final instance, classroom instruction techniques should match the “learning styles” of diverse students (2002, p. 106-113).

The findings of these studies converge with the data of this study that on the one hand adult learners were actively involved in conversations about different cultures and the cultural differences that prevailed. On the other hand, however, the cognitive level of understanding among adult educators did not reveal any frame of reference to understand and facilitate teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context.

According to Meier & Hartell (2009) “educators need to recognise the validity of differences. It requires firstly a reappraisal of educators’ own personal and of institutional ideologies and perceptions, and secondly a frank conviction and dedication to facilitate and manage learner diversity” (p. 180). To be able to achieve this, a total transformation in personal and institutional ideologies should occur – a change in perspective.

5. The need for a curriculum that enhances culturally responsive teaching prevailed.

The data revealed that curriculum is a central necessity for teaching adult learners in a culturally diverse context.

The participants of this study articulated the need for a curriculum that will fit teaching and learning in culturally diverse contexts. Adult learners revealed their understanding of cultural diversity but lack motivation and value of cultural diversity through facilitating the process of teaching and learning.

Based on the data I am convinced that both adult learners and educators can benefit in a transformative learning process in the following ways:

- (a) A discernment and acknowledgement of cultural differences is of paramount importance.
- (b) Transformative Learning offers an alternative to a “do as I say” approach to teaching and will ensure ownership of learning strategies and understanding and valuing of teaching and learning in a culturally diverse context.
- (c) Transformative Learning as a theoretical framework has the ability to facilitate a diversity of teaching and learning styles.
- (d) It can establish teaching and learning at AICs from a cultural diverse perspective.

Further investigation

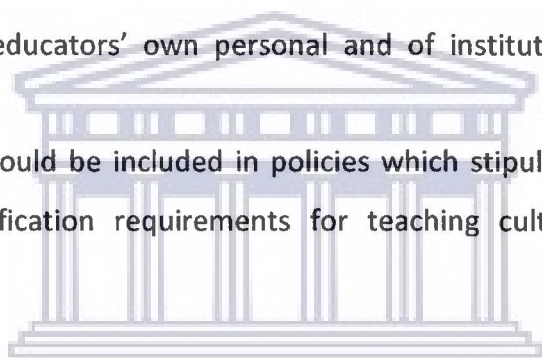
None of the participants explained how the curriculum should be adapted in order to teach adult learners in a culturally diverse context. A critical theory approach should be considered which concerns itself with issues of social justice and change in relation to curriculum and pedagogy. Learners should actively be involved in understanding ideologies with the aim to ‘unmask or unveil’ social inequalities and forms of oppression to enable them to be truly liberated or freethinking. This is an emancipatory approach that will enable educators and learners to confront their own prejudices and stereotyping in terms of race, class and gender power. It will also contribute to analyse the curriculum and learning materials to expose the limitations and guide learners towards a process of critical thinking and transformation in perspectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the purposes of this research, that is, to inform ways adult educators should take into account cultural diversity when developing curriculum in teaching a group of culturally diverse adult learners.

I make the following recommendations to future course designers:

- (1) A focus on cultural diversity;
- (2) A focus on utilising cultural and other experiences as a resource for teaching and learning;
- (3) A standardised level of qualification for different levels of learning e.g. Levels 1-3 and Level 4;
- (4) A reappraisal of educators' own personal and of institutional ideologies and perceptions;
- (5) Clear directives should be included in policies which stipulate academic and or professional qualification requirements for teaching culturally diverse adult learners.



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CONCLUSIONS

This study is limited because the sample of educators consisted only of four educators. Although I interviewed 13 adult learners they were not fully able to express their views on curriculum and method of teaching.

The study has shown that the Western Cape Education Department is still prescribing books and learning support material that are out-dated and no longer serve the purpose for the increasing culturally diverse populations that enter ALCs.

The study has further shown that methods of teaching maintains a view of 'other' and 'own' culture and revealed contested meanings of 'them' and 'us' within the dominant culture and the tacit acceptance and adaptation by the minority and thus relations of power imbalances.

Finally, educators' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and identities are crucial to facilitate critical reflection, and in creating a community of learners in which values and respect for diversity and difference are developed, upheld and promoted (Mezirow, 1991). It is through dialogue, debates and interaction among learners that new languages and cultures as well as different ways of describing, conceptualizing, and experiencing the world is introduced. As a result, the learners' interaction enables them to both share and question their own and others' frames of reference, allowing critical reflection to occur (Foster, 1997).

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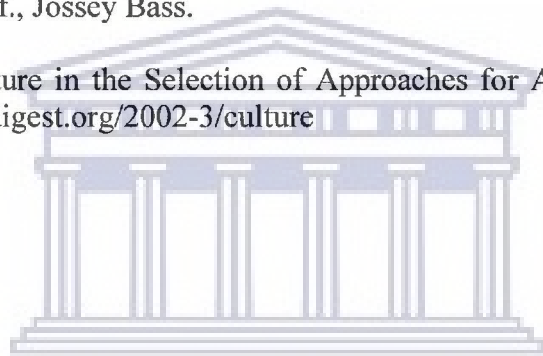
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APPENDIX A1

Interview Schedule for Educators of Adults

Identifying particulars:

1. Name:
2. Address:
.....
3. Telephone number:
4. Gender:
5. Race:
6. Age:
7. Marital status: Married Single:
8. Number of dependants:
9. Place of employment as an adult educator:
.....
10. Qualifications as an educator:
11. Qualifications as an adult educator:

Adult Educators and Cultural Diversity

1. Where are your students from?
.....

2. Does it make any difference to teach a class in which there are learners from different countries?

.....
.....

3. Have you made any changes to the curriculum in order to accommodate learners from culturally diverse backgrounds?

.....
.....

4. If yes, which changes have you made to the curriculum to:

4.1 Content

.....
.....

4.2 Learning materials

.....
.....

4.3 Method of teaching

.....
.....

4.4 Teaching strategies

.....
.....

5. Have you made changes to your curriculum to enable adult learners to value cultural diversity?

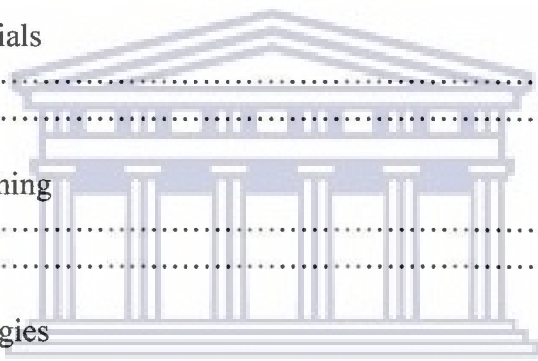
.....
.....

6. Have you made changes to your curriculum to enable adult learners to become culturally self-aware? If yes, what changes?

.....
.....

7. Have you developed some knowledge of your adult learners' culture? Please explain.

.....
.....



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8. Did your training include a module or modules on culturally diverse teaching? Do you think it is important? Why?

.....
.....
.....

9. Do you think that the current curriculum design should be redressed to accommodate culturally diverse teaching and learning? Why do you think so?

.....

10. Do you think a curriculum that accommodates cultural diversity will ensure a transformation in your perspective on teaching learners from culturally diverse backgrounds? Why do you think so?

.....
.....

Adult Educators, Methods and Cultural Diversity.



11. What teaching methods do you use to address the cultural diversity of your learners?

.....
.....

12. Do you think learning support material/subject contents, representing learner's cultural context, will positively contribute to learners' interest and participation in class? Explain why you think so.

.....
.....

13. Does your questioning and discussions of topics or contents relate to the diversity of your learners? Please explain.

.....
.....

14. Do the learning material/subject contents inspire critical thinking? Explain why you say so.

.....
.....

15. How important do you regard learners' interaction while sharing and critically reflecting on their cultural background? Please explain.

.....
.....

16. Do you think it is important to guide and assist learners in their critical thinking while reflecting on their cultural backgrounds? Why do you think it is important?

.....
.....



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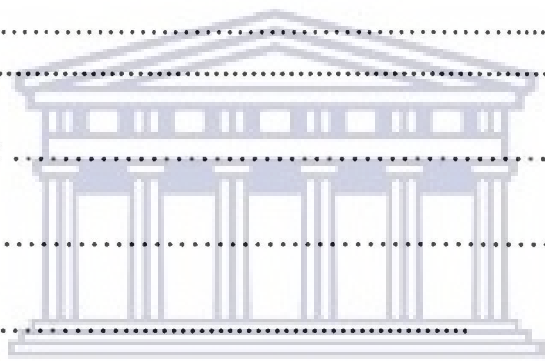
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APPENDIX A2

Interview Schedule for Adult Learners

Identifying particulars

1. Name:
2. Address:
.....
3. Telephone number:
4. Gender:
5. Nationality:
6. Age:
7. Marital status: Married Single:
8. Number of dependants:
9. Place of employment:
.....
10. Current study:



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Adult Learners in Contexts of Diversity:

1. Which country are you from?
.....
.....

2. Does it make any difference to be part of a class where learners come from different countries? If so, what difference does it make?

.....
.....

3. Have any changes to the curriculum been made to address the cultural diversity in your class?

.....
.....

4. If yes, what changes have been made to the curriculum to address the cultural diversity in your class in terms of:

4.1 Content

.....
.....

4.2 Learning materials

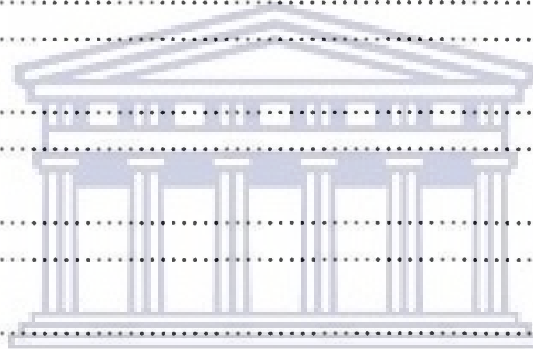
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4.3 Method of teaching

.....
.....

4.5 Teaching strategies

.....
.....



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5. Do the changes that have been made give value to the cultural diversity in your class? If yes, please explain.

.....
.....

6. Do the changes that have been made contribute to your becoming culturally self-aware? Please explain.

.....
.....

7. Have you shared some knowledge about your culture in class? If yes, what?

.....
.....

8. Do you think it is important to share ones culture with each other? Please explain.

.....
.....

9. What method(s) of teaching would you prefer to satisfy your learning needs? Please explain.

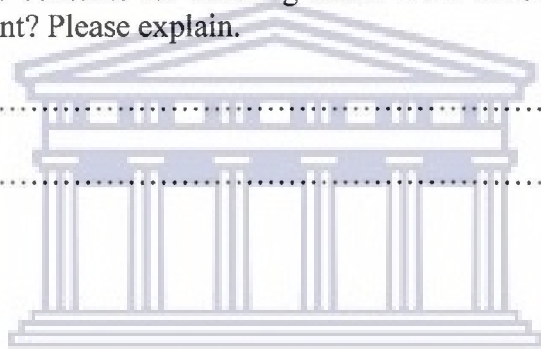
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10. Do you think it is important that educators accommodate learners' cultural diversity during lessons? Please explain,

.....
.....

11. Do you think the contents for teaching adults from different cultural contexts, should be different? Please explain.

.....
.....



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APPENDIX B Information sheet

Dear Participant,

I am Raymond Wales. I am a Masters Student in Global Learning at University of the Western Cape. I am investigating the methods of teaching that adult educators use when teaching adult students from diverse contexts. I am carrying out this research to help alert adult educators about the importance of constructing curricula that facilitate the participation of learners from culturally diverse backgrounds; to generate new knowledge about curricula and cultural diversity; to find out what approaches/models for teaching in a culturally diverse context are being utilized; to analyze the changing cultural diversity among adult learners in an Adult Learning Centre; to make some recommendations pertaining a more contextualized and transformative pedagogy on fostering students' transformative learning in a culturally diverse context.

The findings of the study will be captured in a research paper. No personally identifiable details will be released, only averaged information.

To gather data for analysis and to discover to what extent culturally responsive teaching contributes to learning and understanding, you will kindly be requested to participate in a face-to-face interview. To ensure accuracy and legitimacy of the data analysis process, interviews will be audio-recorded.

Please be informed that your participation is voluntary and you are not being forced to take part in this study. If you agree to participate, you may stop at any time and discontinue your participation. If you refuse to participate or withdraw at any stage, you will not be prejudiced in any way.

All individual information will remain confidential. If I ask you a question which makes you feel sad or upset, we can stop and talk about it. There are also people from the local Western Cape Education Department who would be willing and available to counsel you if you require such assistance. If you need to speak with anyone after I have left, a professional person can be reached at the following number: 021 9592231.

Mr. R. Wales

Telephone number: 072 4959864

Email address: 7605160@uwc.ac.za

If you have any other questions about this study, you may contact Professor Zelda Groener at 021 9592231 or email at zgroener@uwc.ac.za.



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APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding methods of teaching that adult educators use when teaching. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so.

I received a letter that provided details of this research project.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____





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APPENDIX D

Permission for fieldwork

Raymond Wales
8 Japonika Street
Rustdal
Blackheath
7580
01 May 2013

Dr. A. Wyngaard
Western Cape Education Department
Cape Town
8000

Dear Dr. A. Wyngaard

Permission for fieldwork

I am a registered student at the University of the Western Cape in the Education Faculty, student number **7605160**. I am in the final stage of my literature review and will soon have to start with fieldwork.

My research topic is: **A Transformative Approach to Teaching Adults in a Culturally Diverse Context**

I am investigating the methods of teaching that adult educators use when teaching adult students from diverse contexts. I am carrying out this research to help alert adult educators about the importance of constructing curricula that facilitate the participation of learners from culturally diverse backgrounds; to generate new knowledge about curricula and cultural diversity; to find out what approaches/models for teaching in a culturally diverse context are being utilized; to analyze the changing cultural diversity among adult learners in an Adult Learning Centre; to make some recommendations pertaining a more contextualized and transformative pedagogy on fostering students' transformative learning in a culturally diverse context.

I herewith would like to ask your permission to conduct fieldwork at one of the Western Cape Department of Education's Adult Learning Centres in the Cape Peninsula; which will best suit the nature of my research topic.

I am fully convinced that my research will contribute to Adult Teaching and Learning.

I sincerely thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

..... (R. Wales)



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