THE FACILITATION OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: A STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATORS' WORKING KNOWLEDGE

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ ORIGINALITY

I certify that this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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Judi Opte
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ABSTRACT

This study explores adult educators' working knowledge in the facilitation of transformative learning. It explores transformative learning from the perspective of the educators involved, considering their experiences and their descriptions of incidents. Although there is a growing interest in research into transformative learning, there are few studies that explore the ways educators foster transformative learning. This has been identified as a key direction for research (Taylor 1997, 2000).

The theoretical framework for this study is developed through two approaches; namely, through the literature of transformative learning in adult education and through concepts of narrative, discourse and identity. This thesis argues that Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has limitations when considering social interactions involved in transformative learning. The narrative approach, developed from the literatures of social work, narrative therapy, organisational learning, discursive psychology and education, is introduced to explore issues involved in facilitating transformative learning.

In this study I utilise narrative research because of its potential to explore working knowledge in a comprehensive, contextualised way. I investigate educators' working knowledge through in-depth interviews, inviting educators to relate stories of transformative learning from their practice. The educators' working knowledge is then analysed through metaphor analysis and case examples.

The educators in this study used a range of metaphors when talking about their practice of transformative learning. The metaphors indicate that these educators provide a multifaceted role to foster transformative learning.

Through writing and analysing selected stories of practice as case examples, this thesis presents the facilitation of transformative learning as narrative intervention. I conclude that facilitation of transformative learning requires
capabilities in reading issues and positioning self within interactions. Further, I explore the ways that educators' professional identities are being produced through their working knowledge.