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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Working knowledge about the facilitation of transformative learning

Introduction ... 1

Key ideas that frame the study ... 2

Transformative learning

Working knowledge

A story of developing professional interests

Overview of the study ... 8

Outline of the study

Theoretical framework for the study

Narrative research and studies of working knowledge

Context of the study: interface of community work and adult education

Context of the study: postmodernity, adult education and community work in Australia in the late 1990s

Organisation of the thesis ... 17

Dilemmas in constructing the thesis

Outline of the structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 Issues involved in the facilitation of transformative learning

Introduction ... 21

How does transformative learning occur?: perspective transformation ... 23

Triggers for transformative learning

The process of transformative learning

Transformative learning and rationality

Considering defensive responses and resistance

How does transformative learning occur?: a narrative approach ... 36

Language and meaning

Story and experience

Storytelling communities

Stories are constructed with discursive resources

Stories, discourses and identities

The facilitation of transformative learning as narrative intervention
Implications for the facilitation of transformative learning ... 45
A normative or strategic viewpoint
Power relations and transformative learning
View of 'self'
The role of educators who facilitate transformative learning ... 51
Conclusion ... 55

Chapter 3 Research methodology
Introduction ... 56
Narrative research ... 58
Introduction
Working knowledge and professional practice
Narrative research and educators' working knowledge
Narrative interviews
Case example method
Metaphor analysis
An intensive approach to research
Application of narrative research in this study ... 72
Introduction to the educators
Interview format
Processes for analysing and writing the data
Discussion of the methodology ... 83
What was selected as a significant incident?
The process of telling a story of practice
How do interviewees construct stories of practice?
Conclusion ... 87

Chapter 4 The facilitation of transformative learning: metaphor analysis

Introduction ... 88

Contextual factors ... 89

Features of the accounts

Metaphors used by the educators ... 92

Introduction

Seeing things differently

Shift

Journey

A new environment

Emergence

Becoming in touch

Energy

Converging stories

Cooking

Conclusion

Issues in facilitating transformative learning ... 97

Perspective transformation

Disorienting dilemma - new information

Disorienting dilemma - social interactions across difference

Critical reflection - new possibilities

Rationality - emotionality

Rationality - other ways of knowing

Metaphors of transformative learning: discursive resources ... 107

Seeing things differently

A new environment

Shift and journey

Emergence

Becoming in touch

Energy

Converging stories

Cooking

Conclusion ... 117

Chapter 5 Case examples: the facilitation of transformative learning as narrative intervention

Introduction ... 118

Selection and construction of the case examples ... 119

Selection of the case examples

Structure of the case examples

Analysis of the case examples

Common features of the interventions

A story that is told, a story that is retold

Case example 1: Sandra's story ... 123

Introduction

Summary of the intervention

The issue

The impact of the issue within the group

The intervention

Results of the intervention

Case example 1: Analysis of Sandra's story of practice ... 132

Overview of the case example

What feature of the group narrative claimed the educator's attention?

What alternative narrative does the educator bring into play?

What moves occurred in the subject positions of the participants?

What moves occurred in the subject positions of the educator?

The educator's story of professional identity

Case example 2: Bev's story ... 142

Introduction

Summary of the intervention

The issue

The impact of the issue

The intervention

Results of the intervention

Case example 2: Analysis of Bev's story of practice ... 150

Introduction

What feature of the group narrative claimed the educator's attention?

What alternative narrative does the educator bring into play?

What moves occurred in the subject position of the educator

What moves occurred in the subject positions of the participants?

Interventions in polarities

Chapter 6 Working knowledge: capabilities in reading issues and in positioning self

Introduction ... 155

Professional working knowledge as capabilities in reading complex issues ... 156

Reading strategies

Framework of reading strategies

Example of a sequence of reading strategies

The significance of the sequence

Benefits of each reading strategy

Reading repertoires: a speculative discussion

Working knowledge as capabilities in positioning self within interactions ... 166

The educator intervening by moves in subject position

Bev's case example

Sandra's case example

Chapter 7 Working knowledge, professional identities and postmodern narratives of practice

Introduction ... 170

Production of professional identities ... 171

Multiple readings of ourselves

Provocateurs and evocateurs

Discourse navigators

Facilitators of possibilities

A perspective on authority

The emergence of postmodern narratives ... 177

A trend

Issues for the research and writing of practice ... 181

Methodological challenges

What are the results of this storying of practice: for the educators?

What are the results of this storying of practice: for the researcher?

Bibliography ... 185

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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.

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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.